

"Animals are such agreeable friends-they ask no questions, they pass no criticisms." ~ George Eliot

A number of years ago, I was walking down the street and noticed a small, black cat several yards ahead looking at me. I was reminded of a meme I have that goes something like this.....*dogs are for people who need to be worshiped as gods. Cats are for people who are strong enough to have a god stand on their chest at 5:00 AM demanding a sacrifice.*

While I love dogs, I am a sucker for a cat, especially a friendly one. I have my own rescue, a little black cat named Merlin. But, I digress.

As I approached, she didn't move. So I stopped, stooping to reach out to her. She rubbed against my hand in a friendly gesture and allowed me to scratch behind her ears, while she purred softly. I lingered there for a few moments, enjoying the interaction. I spoke gentle words to the cat, a mantra to myself as well as to her....my mind disengaging from the 1001 things floating around in my brain, like a train in a train yard jumping tracks. I was in the here and now, enjoying the moment.

Then, without warning, she scurried off with her tail in the air, like she was late for a meeting. To other places and adventures, I was sure of. Watching her go, I shrugged and continued on my way to my own places and adventures as well, saying a silent prayer to St. Francis of Assisi to protect the little gal in her travels. Me? Changed by a gift from a cat.

"O Lord, each day as evening descends and the world becomes hushed, grant us peace to quiet our bubbling minds to reflect and be grateful for the day that we lived. In Jesus Christ our Lord, amen.

**Submitted by
Annie MacDonald**

*In all things, love.
In non-essentials, liberty;
In essentials, unity.*



Dated Material: Please Deliver By Saturday, August 27, 2022

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The Bell Tower



OFFERING HOPE AND WELCOME TO ALL THROUGH JESUS CHRIST



All Are Welcome!

As an open and affirming church, ALL are welcome into our family. The Good News of God's grace is for everyone regardless of age, abilities, race, sexual orientation, gender identity, income, physical and mental health, education, or strength of faith. There is nothing we do, have done, or will do that can separate us from God's love. And since God makes no exceptions, neither do we.



Summer Worship Concludes

We would like to thank all of the speakers that brought messages at our outdoor services this summer.

They've all shared interesting parts of their life and faith journeys and inspired us with their sincere and earnest words.

It is our plan to continue the summer outdoor worship again next year. Our outdoor sanctuary continues to be a wonderful place to gather for worship or just to sit and reflect.

Our final two speakers for this summer are:

Doug Ross..... August 28 (9:30 AM)
Peter Steeves.....Sept 3 (6:00 PM)

Welcome Back Picnic



**Sunday, August 28
after 9:30 Worship**

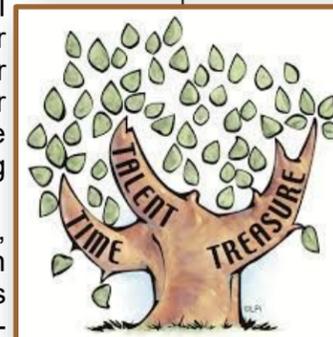
After our 9:30 worship we will have food and fellowship time together. This will also be the kickoff of our stewardship season and we will have information about education opportunities for all ages and other ways you can become involved here at First Christian Church.

Stewardship

This past Sunday we began our three-week 2023 Stewardship Campaign. We will conclude the campaign on September 11th with the collection of pledge cards during worship. You'll notice that the pledge cards will not just indicate our financial pledges for 2023, but also other ways we can share our gifts in the coming year.

Our denomination, The Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), is blessed with an amazing ministry focused on stewardship: The Center for Faith and Giving.

Their website, centerforfaithandgiving.org, answers the question, "What is Stewardship?"



Christian stewardship is grateful and responsible use of God's gifts in the light of God's purpose as revealed in Jesus Christ. Christian stewards, empowered by the Holy Spirit, commit themselves to conscious, purposeful decisions.

Stewardship is lived out in:

- Living and telling the Good News
- Sharing God in seeking justice, peace, and the integrity of creation in an interdependent universe
- Wisely employing God-given human resources, abilities, and relationships
- Sharing the material resources we hold and giving them in service, justice, and compassion
- Providing for future generations
- Sharing in the life, worship, and responsible stewardship of the Church and of its mission
- Both for the individual and for the community, stewardship is a joyful act for the sake of God's world.

We recommend exploring the resources offered by The Center for Faith and Giving, both at their website and on YouTube. We've learned a lot and we've been inspired by them.

**Sincerely,
Stewardship Servant Group**

(219) 462-5615



September 2022



Volume 31 Number 9

The 9:30 in-person services will continue to be live-streamed at 9:30 and will be available for viewing later from our website.

Servers for September



September 4

Deacon Team: Team #2
 Greeters: Madison & Casey Weitzel
 Scripture Readers: Jim & Penny Pysh
 Sound Technician: John Springsteen
 Building Monitor: Larry Biggs
 Elders: Peter Steeves, Kae Howell

September 11

Deacon Team: Team #1
 Greeters: Carol McCreery, Wilma Ault
 Scripture Readers: Jeff & Casey Weitzel
 Sound Technician: Jim Pysh
 Building Monitor: Tom Wheele
 Elders: Dave Yeager, John Springsteen

September 18

Deacon Team: Team #2
 Greeters: Lori Timm, Berna Hurley
 Scripture Readers: Sharon Wiegand, Sally Oestreich
 Sound Technician: Chris Clifford
 Building Monitor: Al LeBio
 Elders: Leslie Maxwell, Janet Biggs

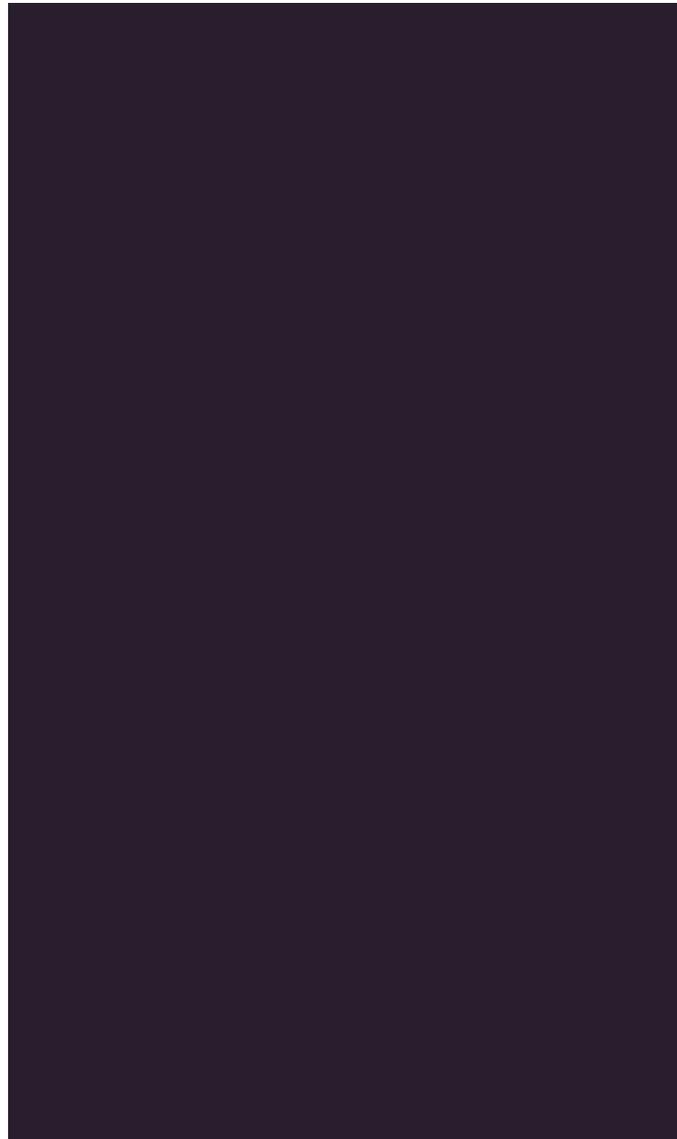
September 25

Deacon Team: Team #1
 Greeters: Dave & Sheri Gow
 Scripture Readers: Terry Pickering, Stephen Howell
 Sound Technician: John Springsteen
 Building Monitor: Allen Hamilton
 Elders: Janet Biggs, Kae Howell



Worship Attendance

7/31/22: 21 at 7:30 70 at 9:30
 8/06/22: 15 at 6:00 PM
 8/07/22: 69 at 9:30
 8/14/22: 13 at 7:30 78 at 9:30
 8/21/22: 13 at 7:30 79 at 9:30



Staff and Council

Pastor: Rev. Tim Trussell-Smith
 Office Administrator: Terry Pickering
 Director of Music: Dan Pritchett
 Nursery Attendant: Nikki Lawrence
 Council President: Doug Ross
 Vice-President: Ruth Lang
 Council Secretary: Susan Mowbray
 Treasurer: Mickey Koehler
 Assistant Treasurer: Allen Hamilton

Office Information

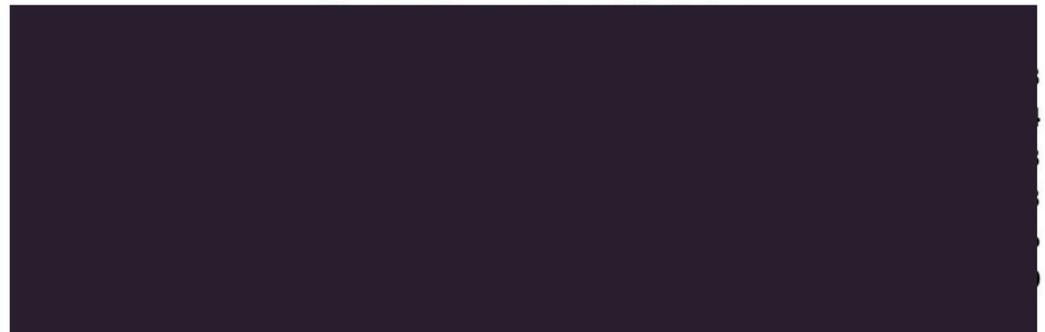
Monday-Friday 9:00 AM - 3:00 PM
 Church Phone: (219) 462-5615
 Office email: sec@fccvalpo.org
 Website: valpo.church



September 2022



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Fall/Winter Worship Schedule Begins Sunday, September 11th 9:30 AM Family Worship and Children's Worship Every Sunday 10:45 AM Education for All Ages 5:00 PM Youth Group						
9:30 Worship 	Labor Day Office Closed 	9:30 Mary Circle Hostess: Nan Steeves Lesson: Anne Egolf	6:00 Elders Meeting 7:00 Choir Rehearsal	10:05 Five After Group	 6:30 Popcorn and a Movie Night	6:00 PM Outdoor Worship Speaker: Peter Steeves
9:30 Worship 10:45 Sunday School 5:00 Youth Group	 7:00 Hannah Circle at Michele Hurst's Home	1:00 Staff Mtg 6:30 Men's Fellowship Dinner	6:00 Facilities Mtg	10:05 Five After Group 	Bell Tower Articles Are Due Today	
9:30 Worship 10:45 Sunday School Council Meeting 5:00 Youth Group		1:00 Staff Meeting	The <i>Bell Tower</i> Is Published 7:00 Choir Rehearsal	10:05 Five After Group		
Reconciliation Offering 9:30 Worship 10:45 Sunday School 5:00 Youth Group	Terry is On Vacation and Out of the Office		1:00 Staff Mtg 7:15 FCC Bookies <i>The Incredible Winston Browne</i> 7:00 Choir Rehearsal	10:05 Five After Group		



Join Us for Popcorn and Movie Night

September 9th, 6:30 PM



Come join us for our own celebration of the Popcorn Festival at Popcorn and Movie Night. We'll enjoy freshly popped popcorn and other snacks as we watch a family-friendly movie in our Fellowship Hall.

Growing Hope Globally Colombia Program Visitors

During the first week of October, members of the Growing Hope Globally Program in Colombia will be visiting Indiana and one of their stops will be right here at First Christian! Come join our friend, Rev. Carlos Malave, and several Colombian farmers who have benefited from the support of Growing Hope Globally. See the kind of impact our participation in this amazing ministry can have and meet some new friends! We'll have a definite day and time in the next edition of *The Bell Tower*.



Sunday School Returns!

Sunday School for all ages will resume on September 11th. Following the 9:30 Worship Service, we will have classes for adults, youth (grades 6-12), elementary grades, and PreK/K.

Youth Group for 6th-12th graders will meet at 5:00 PM on Sunday nights in the Youth Room.

Monthly Discussion Group - Raising Good People Conversation Group. "Raising Good People" is a new monthly resource about how to raise our kids to be compassionate, kind, thoughtful people. Anyone involved in the

lives of children is welcome. We will meet every 4th Sunday following 9:30 worship.

If you haven't yet registered your child for Sunday School, you can sign up on our website (valpo.church).



Saturday, October 1st

The church's annual Fall Work Day will be Saturday, October 1st, 8:00 AM to noon. We'll have plenty of good fellowship, hot coffee, and donuts, AND plenty of worthwhile tasks to get accomplished to get our grounds and facility ready for the winter.

If you can only spend an hour helping, that's fine. We will appreciate whatever time you can donate. If you would like to bring gloves and rakes, etc. to work outside that would be helpful, but there will also be lots to accomplish inside to. Cleaning supplies will be provided.

PLEASE RING DOORBELL



When the Doorbell Rings

As most of you reading this know, I'm the church's office administrator. I'm here each day, all day, through the week. When I'm alone in the building, I have the door locked for safety with a sign placed on the door pointing to the doorbell. Some of the complete strangers that rang that doorbell have been pretty amazing people. I'm also happy to say many of them have become friends that I admire.

The first time Elizabeth rang the doorbell, I went to the door and saw a woman with four large bags in her hands. She had one bag for the Food Pantry, one full of

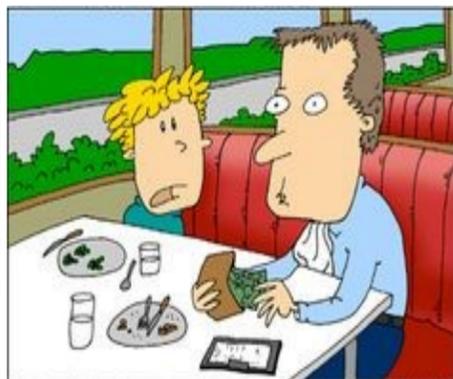
shoes for Share Your Soles, another with bras for Free the Girls, and one full of random craft items for any of our teachers that could use them. She told me she had some other things in the car but had other places that usually needed those.

As it turns out, Elizabeth is retired and she now goes to garage sales and pays the dimes and quarters for scarcely worn shoes and other items that she knows people in need can use and then she will track down the places that will connect those items with the people who need them.

Since her first visit two years ago, she has stopped by many times, sometimes with one bra or one pair of shoes or three cans of soup. She thinks of this as her new career, one that Jesus hired her to do by loving her and giving her His example: Loving those less fortunate and in need.

Elizabeth isn't the only one that I've become friends with after answering that doorbell. When I think the world has become angry and selfish, I cling to knowing that there are everyday people doing amazing things for others, selflessly and without reward or praise...at least in this life. But oh, the reward they'll receive when God someday welcomes them home!!

Terry



So how come the waitress gets 15 to 20 percent and God only gets 10?

greatly appreciated.

As always, your time, interest, donations, energy, and your great suggestions are recognized by pantry volunteers as helping with the pantry program.

Nan Sharon

FCC Bookies

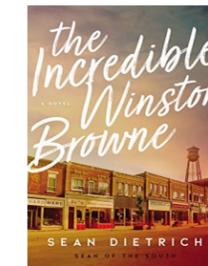
The FCC Bookies meet on the fourth Tuesday of each month at 7:15 PM at the church. Anyone that likes to read is invited and encouraged to join our group.



You can read the book and come planning to discuss it, or come and hear if it's a book you'd like to add to your reading list.

The next two books we'll be discussing are:

September 17
The Incredible
Winston Browne
by
Sean Dietrich



The Speckled Beauty
..... A DOG AND HIS PEOPLE
RICK BRAGG
AUTHOR OF *ALL OTHER BEASTS*

October 25
The Speckled Beauty: A Dog and His People
by
Rick Bragg

We will be discussing whether to meet in November or not, due to the Thanksgiving holiday. The decision will be posted in the October *Bell Tower*.

Host/Hostess Training

Due to illness, the training scheduled for August 18th had to be postponed. The training has been rescheduled for Thursday, September 1st, at 6:00 PM. Events held here at the church require a trained host/hostess to be present at all times. Whoever that host is must know where things are in the building, how things work, the alarm system, and how to accommodate for weddings.



News From the Pantry

Pantry numbers are staying steady with 145 families served, providing food for 355 people. 64 Kids' Kits were given out. Although school starts soon, it was decided that as long as the items we pack are available, kits will continue to be offered. Perhaps they can help on the weekends. Very large numbers of some food items have been donated to the pantry and the volunteers are planning to use them in various kits that are healthy and easy to make with the items provided. Kits for bean salad went well, and macaroni salad and cottage pie kits will be offered.

Also, with school beginning, it was decided that laundry detergent will be offered to help with laundry and school clothes preparation.

Of course, "basic" food items are always appreciated; but we're making a special request ahead of the holidays this year: Please, please do **NOT** donate any canned pumpkin!! The pantry has Several shelves full, and it is not an item that is requested even when various recipes are offered at holiday time. Otherwise, any other food items donated are

Our Valpo FCC



Administrative Leadership Team (ALT)

What is an Administrative Leadership Team and what does it do? In years past or in other organizations, it may have been known as the Cabinet or even an Executive Board. FCC has ALT.

Members shall be the officers of the Church Council, Ministry Team Leaders, and the Pastoral Staff. The council vice-president will be the ALT presiding officer.

Current Council officers are Doug Ross, President; Ruth Lang, Vice-President; Mickey Koehler, Treasurer; Sue Mowbray, Secretary; Barb Wheele, Larry Biggs, and Rev. Tim, Ministry Leaders.

There are three things that the Administrative Leadership Team is responsible for:

1. Updating the Role and Function Handbook yearly to reflect any changes.
2. Coordinating programs among the Ministry Teams, Servant Groups, and other ministry groups in the church.
3. Coordinating the church calendar for different events.

Nominating Ministry Team

The Nominating Ministry Team is appointed by the President of the Council and shall consist of the immediate past president, who serves as team leader; an Elder; a Deacon; and a man and a woman from the Congregation. Currently, Mickey Koehler is the team leader.

Other members include Doug Ross, Linda Farris, Ron Herlitz and Sue Mowbray. This Team has been charged to find 5 Elders, 6 Deacons, 1 Trustee, and the council officers of President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer, and Assistant Treasurer for the 2023 year. Some people may choose to stay in their current positions; others have reached the limit of their terms and must be replaced.

The candidates for all positions

will be presented at the September 18th Church Council meeting. If approved, they will be presented at the Congregational Meeting on October 23rd. Other members of the church can be nominated at the Congregational Meeting.

Blessings, Cheryl Girman

Hannah Circle Resumes

September 12th

Hannah Circle will be meeting the second Monday of September, the 12th, because of the Labor Day holiday. Join us at the home of Michele Hurst, 205 Kimrich, on the west side of Valparaiso, at 7:00 PM. Call Michele for specific directions.

We will be discussing Simon Peter's Mother-in-Law. Relevant scriptures are Matthew 4:12-13; 18-22; Mark 1:14-34; John 1:35-51, 21:1-13.

Please feel free to bring resources you may find concerning this Biblical woman.



Fall Bazaar
Saturday
November 5
9:00 - 2:00

The All-Church Fall Bazaar is coming up in about two months! Yikes! Time for all of us to get busy.

**Make it! Bake it! Sew it!
Grow it! Paint it!
Decorate it! Create it!**

We are looking for your creative gifts to provide wonderful things for this year's Bazaar.

Be watching for sign-up sheets in about a month for additional ways you can contribute.

Saturday, November 5th, is the date, and it will run from 9:00 AM to 2:00 PM in the Fellowship Hall.

Besides a wide variety of craft items, offerings will include carry-out beef stew, pie, all kinds of

Mary Circle Resumes Tuesday, September 6th

The Mary Circle meets on the first Monday of the month in the church library at 9:30 AM. Due to Labor Day, we'll meet on Tuesday, the 6th of September. The hostess will be Nan Steeves and the lesson will be led by Anne Egolf. The Lesson Theme will be Women of the Bible.

Date	Hostess	Lesson
10/03	Sal O	Katy H
11/07	Marge C	Janet B
12/05	Luncheon	
01/02	Sharon C	Kae H
02/06	Kae H	Anne E
03/06	Berna H	Sue M
04/03	Sal O	Janet B
05/01	Luncheon	

Mary Circle Officers

Chairperson: Nan Steeves

Vice-Chair: Sue Mowbray

Service: Berna Hurley

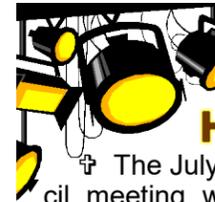
Study/Worship: Sharon Crowder

All women of the church are always welcome to attend either or both of the Mary Circle meetings or the Hannah Circle meetings.

cookies (mix-and-match style), and a variety of beautiful and healthy house plants.

As has been the tradition here for many, many years, raffle tickets will be printed and made available for sale in order to win

this beautiful homemade quilt. Quilters Carole Homer, Ulrike Jannausch & Joyce Knauff are joining forces to create this year's quilt.



JULY COUNCIL HIGHLIGHTS

✠ The July 17th church council meeting was opened with a prayer and a devotion offered by President Doug Ross. He encouraged us to remember our welcome statement and our theme of welcoming all. Rev. Tim spoke about the big picture and the insight of our welcome statement to be all inclusive and stressed that all should feel welcomed when they enter our church. Including the words "gender identity" to the welcome statement was discussed. Cheryl Girman made the motion to adopt the wording, seconded by Becky Springsteen, and the motion was passed. (The new wording can be found in the welcome statement on the cover page.)

✠ The ALT team reported that they are working on updating the Role and Function Handbook. There have been several versions through the years and there's confusion at times over which version should be relied upon. Rev. Tim and Terry will go through the files and remove any documents that have now become outdated so everyone will be referencing the same documents. Hopefully, the updated Role and Function document will be completed by the next Council meeting.

✠ Treasurer Mickey Koehler reported that we have \$15,000 in the regular checking account and that our bills are being paid. There was some confusion over the amount of giving listed in the bulletin for the prior Sunday's giving. To be clear, the giving amount listed each Sunday in the bulletin only includes the giving designated for the General Fund and does not include money designated for other giving funds, such as Building fund, Week of Compassion, Food Pantry, etc. That figure also doesn't include the e-giving through PushPay or Credit Cards. Terry only receives that information at the end of each month from Mickey so it is not listed in the bulletins. Mickey reports he is in the process of shredding all documents from 2010-2014, which is allowed by law. He is also filing all the IRS forms in a timely manner. PushPay is charging us \$1,500 yearly, which is \$50-\$60 per month. At this time PushPay is processing about \$2,000 in giving per month from not only members but also people that have moved or no longer attend but still support the ministries of the church. Mickey also asked for a financial secretary.

✠ Trustees: No report

✠ Elders: Doug Ross reported that the outdoor services were going well and that the elders had sent out cards to our homebound members.

✠ Deacons: No report.

✠ Worship: Diane Yeager reported they have a meeting planned for July 20th.

✠ Education: Ruth Lang thanked John Springsteen for the work he did building the set for VBS. She is working on a children's workshop and is hoping to offer preschool, kindergarten, elementary, and high school for next year. She is looking for teachers and training will be available. She would also like to do a money-making project so the kids can make Christmas bags for the kids whose parents use the Food Pantry, perhaps a car wash. An important education meeting is scheduled for July 31st.

✠ Stewardship: Dave Yeager, Doug Ross, Mickey Koehler, and Rev. Tim have met. Doug asked that the servant groups get their budget requests for 2023 turned in as soon as possible.

✠ Facilities: Larry Biggs said it's been challenging to get the electrical work done for the audio visual system. Likewise, it's been challenging to get estimates on the concrete sidewalk curbs that need repaired. Facilities is working on the LED lighting in the sanctuary and directing the lighting to the chancel and communion table. Any work on the parking lot will wait until next year. Because of the high cost of oil, sealing it will be discussed next year. Comcast has contacted Larry about a faster internet service for the church at the same cost or possibly even

reducing the current cost. A Fall Work Day has been scheduled for Saturday, October 1st, from 8:00 AM – Noon.

✠ Nominations: Mickey is working on it. Possibly the number of elders could go up by two.

✠ Policy on Host Fees: Ruth said we currently charge \$1,000 for weddings and is that too much? Again, there seems to be many conflicting forms for building use and those need to be sorted out. It was pointed out that the two people that hosted the events held at the church on May 1st have not been paid. Becky Springsteen suggested that the host fee should be separate from the building fee. Cheryl Girman and Becky said it had to be clarified for members and non-members. Hosts should be able to receive pay and it shouldn't be expected that they donate that money back to the church. Doug suggested that we table the discussion for now.

✠ Campus Planning: Cheryl Girman said there was nothing to report at this time.

✠ Doug closed the meeting with prayer.

The next council meeting will be September 18th, following worship.

**Respectfully Submitted,
Carol Kuznicki**

College Addresses

Dear Parents of College Kids,

We would love to get the addresses of your sons and daughters who are studying away from home on campus at colleges near and far. We would like to stay in touch with them

so we can send cards for their birthdays and maybe even a box of munchies or a little pizza money once in a while. If you could let Terry know what their address is at school, she can share those addresses with anyone from the church that would like to send them something by mail. Please know that we miss and love your children. Thanks!

