Dear Friends,

This coming Sunday, March 4, is an important time in the life of First Church. After the 8:15 a.m. and 10:45 a.m. services, our District Superintendent, Roger Russell, will conduct a “Called Church Conference” for the purpose of voting on a proposal to remodel the older structure of the church physical plant. All members of First Church are eligible to vote. The Building Committee, Finance Committee, and the Church Council have all looked at the plans, and recommend that we proceed. What is included in the remodeling is the following:

1. Restructure the second floor to reconfigure the music rehearsal area and music storage area while adding a code-specific access to the youth room.
2. Finish the youth room that was started when the Atrium and new classrooms were built. The room has been framed, but the construction needs to be completed. This room is directly under the Atrium.
3. All of the existing rooms across from the current music room will be refurbished, to be used for various groups in the church.
4. The restrooms near the Fellowship Hall will be remodeled, and a shower added to each of them.
5. The ladies restroom and the small kitchen adjacent to the Heritage Room will be remodeled. The restroom will be made larger and will serve as a family restroom. The kitchen will be made larger and will be equipped so that food can be prepared, and not have to be carried from the Fellowship Hall kitchen.
6. The heating and cooling system for the entire older building will be replaced. This will include the boiler and the cooling and heating units in each room.

The cost of the project is $2,250,000. We already have over $300,000 on hand from people who have been giving to the Building Fund, anticipating that this project was something coming in the future. That means, we will need to raise $1,950,000 to fund the project over a three-year period.

If the project is accepted by the congregation, we will then move into a Capital Campaign to raise the funds for the project during the month of March.

I encourage you to make it a point to be present to vote this Sunday at either 8:15 a.m. or 10:45 a.m. and to prayerfully consider what the vision and future of First Church will be. Our future is not just about a building, it is about ministry and mission; but, our building is an important part of that, as it enables us to effectively provide facilities that can be used to fulfill that vision and mission.

See you Sunday,

Alan
In Church This Week

In Sympathy: Sympathy to Joe & Kathy Harrison and family, on the death of his sister, Virginia Davis, who passed away on February 10, 2018 in Herrin, IL.

In Sympathy: Sympathy to Quincy & Katy Scott, Jr., and family, on the death of his father, Quincy Scott, Sr., on February 24, 2018.

Sign-Ups for New Church Directory: We will begin SIGN-UPS for the new Church Directory, this Sunday, March 4, following both services. SIGN-UPS will continue every Sunday through April 1.

PICTURE DATES WILL BE APRIL 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9 AND 10

Volunteer Host or Hostess Opportunity on Photo Dates: We need about 30 volunteers to take 2-hour sessions during the photo dates. You would be signing people in, answering questions, etc. This is an opportunity to volunteer and help with an exciting event! Thank you!! Sally Washburn and Nancy Mitchell

ATTENTION SNOWBIRDS!: If you don’t think you’ll be back in time to sign up for your picture for the new directory, you can e-mail Nancy Mitchell at NANCYB25@MCHSI.com

Special Called Church Conference: This Sunday, March 4, AFTER BOTH the 8:15 a.m. and 10:45 a.m. services, a “Called Church Conference” will be held to vote on accepting the Phase II project.

Saturday Night Live: Saturday Night Live will not meet in March. Watch the calendar for the next get-together in April. See you then!

SIGN UP TODAY! AMERICAN RED CROSS BLOOD DRIVE at FUMC

Monday, March 12
1:30 - 5:45 p.m., Heritage Room
www.redcrossblood.org

IMPORTANT NOTICE: If you removed towels or linens from the kitchens, please put them back in the same kitchen they came from. Also, if you have taken any linens and towels home to wash, please return them as soon as possible. Thank you!!
Ah! Here is some interesting background on the upcoming service music for March 4, 11, and 18.

We begin with Johann Sebastian Bach (1684-1750), and continue with composers who revered Bach! Bach is quoted as saying “The final aim and reason of all music is nothing other than the glorification of God and the refreshment of the spirit.” Although an incredible musician and composer, he never sought “fame and fortune.” In fact, most of his music was quickly forgotten after his death. But, thanks to Felix Mendelssohn (1809-1847), the music of Bach is revered, promoted and performed. Mendelssohn’s close friend, Robert Schumann (1810-1856), studied under Bach, and was written on the day of Mendelssohn’s death, Schumann’s close friend.

The service music for March 11 is composed by Robert Schumann (1810-1856). He studied the music of Bach and said it enriched his powers of insight into how to write music, and insights into the creative powers of the human mind. The Postlude is a Gigue, much in the style of Bach. The Offertory, “Remembrance,” was written on the day of Mendelssohn’s death, Schumann’s close friend.

The service music for March 18 is composed by Frédéric Chopin (1810-1849). He urged his pupils to practice Bach every day to strengthen their fingers and exercise their minds with the mathematical music. Chopin began his practice every day with one or more of the Preludes and Fugues of Bach’s “Well-Tempered Clavier,” a two-volume set of 24 preludes and fugues, composed in every key. Chopin wrote his own set of 24 Preludes, no fugues, and you will hear one during the Offertory. Chopin’s piano music incorporates dance music from his native Poland and other countries. He took the then new genre of the “Nocturne” (invented by John Field) to a deeper level of sophistication. You will hear one of his beautiful Nocturnes at the Prelude, and a Mazurka (a lively Polish dance) at the Postlude.

The children of Sunday School and Children’s Church will be joining the Sanctuary Choir for the singing of the anthem, “Blessed Is He Who Comes,” on Palm Sunday, March 25, at the 10:45 a.m. worship service. The children will be practicing during the first few minutes of Children’s Church at the 10:45 a.m. service. Pick up a copy in the Narthex to practice at home.

On Palm Sunday, March 25, the children will rehearse with the Sanctuary Choir in the Sanctuary at 10:00 a.m. At the 10:45 a.m. worship service, the children will join Nacia for Children’s Time and remain for the anthem. They will be dismissed to Children’s church following the anthem.
Help decorate the Sanctuary with lilies this Year on Easter Sunday, April 1

**Easter Lily Order Form 2018**

To order a lily and place a memorial/honor listing in the bulletin, return this form to the church office **no later than SUNDAY, MARCH 11**. (You may order an Easter Lily for $10.00 or you may bring in your own on Good Friday, March 30, but **all dedication information must still be in to the office by March 11**.)

Please take the lily home on Easter morning after the late service.

**Name______________________________________________________________**

In Memory / Honor of (circle one) ________________________________________

- Enclosed is $10.00 for each lily. Total $______________
- I will bring in a lily on the morning of March 30 (Good Friday).

**SUNDAY CHRISTIAN EDUCATION**

**Children's Opportunities**

- **Sundays at 9:30 a.m. Children's Sunday School** - (K - 5th grade) uses Deep Blue from Cokesbury. The morning begins with music at 9:30 a.m. in Room 415.
- **Sundays at 10:45 a.m. Children's Church** - (K - 5th grade). All children are invited to Children's Church following the Children's Time at the 10:45 a.m. worship service.

**March Sunday School** -

**Youth Opportunities, 9:30 a.m.**

- **Faith development through Bible lessons, emphasizing a relationship with God through Jesus.**

- **Middle School** meets in Room 410 and uses On the Go.
- **High School Class** meets in Room 409 and uses a variety of materials connecting the lessons of the Bible with issues relevant to today’s youth.

**Adult Opportunities, 9:30 a.m.**

- **Renew** - Lenten Study continues - **The Women of Easter**, by Liz Curtis Higgs. Renew is a group of women seeking deeper meaning in their lives through Bible study, reflection, and prayer. They meet at 9:30 a.m. in Room 402. Women of all ages are welcome.
- **The Investors Class** - Lenten Study continues - **Who is This Man?** by John Ortberg. Investors is an intergenerational class for all adults. They meet at 9:30 a.m. in Room 404 (the Chapel). Everyone welcome!
- **The Electives Class** - Scripture studies are led by John Sims. They meet at 9:30 a.m. in the Heritage Room. All are welcome!

**Small Group Opportunities**

- **Tuesday Morning Lenten Study** - Meets at 11:00 a.m., in Room 410. The study, **What Wondrous Love: Holy Week in Word and Art**, is led by Pastor Alan. There is no study book required for this class.
- **Grateful Hearts** - Lenten Study, **The Women of Easter**, by Liz Curtis Higgs, 6:00 p.m., Rm. 308.

**Youth Group** meets at 6:00 p.m. weekly on Wednesdays in Room 409 and Fellowship Hall.