



THE FIRST WORD

News from the First United Methodist Church
of South Bend, Indiana

In the heart of the city since 1831

December 21, 2011

Issue #449

UNEXPECTED GIFTS

This season is one where we intentionally plan to give; to one another, to the church, to charities; over and over we are reminded that to get tax credit for 2011 we need to get it in! But this year I am reflecting on gifts I did not expect.

A nephew is living with me now, with all the mixed blessings of a 14 year old. Looming over me, this baseball-loving kid sees his future as burnished gold, glowing in his expectation. Was I ever like that?

Our church is hosting homeless men every night, 16 to 20 at a time, and we can sign up to volunteer for a couple of hours an evening, sharing time and prayers and laughter with this lonely and needy group. A poem of gratitude and need is included in the newsletter, written by one of our guests. Have I written a poem like that lately?

Our cluster hosted a jazz concert last month, and raised several thousand dollars for Children of Abraham, sending healing supplies to the neediest corners of the world, neglected by others. Have I paid that much attention to those far away?

A friend decided I was a Scrooge for not having a Christmas tree in my house, especially now that I have a kid; she showed up late one night, with fresh-cut tree, lights, balls, and a glowing star. We set it up in the living room, and it glows with beauty. When was the last time I went out of my way to make sure there was beauty in my life – or in someone else's life?

Research shows that if we keep a "gratitude journal" for just two weeks, the effects on our mood for the next 11 months is measurable. Being consciously grateful for the gifts in our lives...

Well, at least in this newsletter, I've begun my journal!

Merry Christmas; may God bless you with unexpected gifts.

Mary L. Hubbard

Worship Schedule

Worship, Chapel
9:00 a.m.

Sunday School
10:00 a.m.

Worship, Sanctuary
11:00 a.m.

Church Office Hours

Monday - Thursday

7:00 a.m. - Noon

12:30 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.

Friday: 7:00 a.m. - Noon

Phone: (574) 233-9463

Fax: (574) 233-9478

First Staff

Mary L. Hubbard
Senior Pastor

Robert Lewis
Associate Pastor

Marsha Dollar
Administrative Assistant

Wishart Bell
Director of Music

Leora Nauta
Organist

Lou Anne Wilson
Financial Manager

David Frey
Coordinator of Youth Ministries

Ben Noell
Building Manager

John Jung-Zimmerman
Upper Room Director

**HAVE YOU REMEMBERED
FIRST CHURCH IN YOUR
WILL?**

RECITAL



Our organist, Leora Nauta, will present a Christmas-themed organ and vocal recital on Sunday, January 8th at 1:15 p.m., following a potluck in the Social Hall. Please plan to attend and bring a dish to pass for the potluck.

The recital will take place in the church Sanctuary. This is Leora's gift to the congregation of First United Methodist Church. Donations collected will benefit the church's music department. Leora will be joined by her medieval singing group *Quaterna Mediaeval Ensemble*.

PROJECT WARM (WEATHER AMNESTY PROGRAM)

We want to report that Project Warm is a success! The men that have been coming to the church for the Weather Amnesty Program have been quiet, pleasant, and eager to please. Thanks to the Hope employees, our volunteers have been free to spend time just visiting with the guys.

One night one of the men mentioned he was looking for a job -- and a volunteer got him in touch with Notre Dame for a specific position, and she says he has a good chance at it. Steve Huffman said he spent time in prayer with another one, and another one had some un-addressed health problems, and a volunteer went with him to Memorial -- where he got good care.

If you are interested in volunteering, you can sign up from the church website: www.firstumcsb.org

Donations of socks, gloves, and snacks are always needed.

Below is a poem that was written by a guest in our basement Project Warm shelter on a night when it was below 20 degrees:

*My God, my Lord, I ask of thee please,
I beg of you set this troubled soul free.
May I walk this whole day thru,
Let my heart cling to you.
Lord of Lords, and king of kings,
my soul and heart will always sing.
Please reach my hand, and I will see,
My Jesus Lord, I will always believe.
I am in the street tonight.....the loneliness,
the darkness.....where is the light.
The bitter cold, the terrible chill,
I wonder the next day will I have the will.
I sleep in a nest of other men,
I wonder will my pain and turmoil ever end.
Walk with me O Lord on this day,
help me find the healing day.*



PRAYER LIST



Following is a prayer list. Please remember to include these people in your regular prayers:

Brandon Berger - Deployed to Afghanistan	Mary Lou Gordon - Health concerns
Jonathan Mayers - In military service	Ron Florey - Health concerns
Michael Pershell - In military service	Marilyn Prue - Health concerns
Stephen Gramza - In military service	Carol Goodhew - Health concerns
Jeremy Martin - Special needs	Mary Jo Beemer - Health concerns
Christyne Woolridge - Health concerns	Al Levy - Health concerns
Jim Pickens - Health concerns	David Easterbrook - Eye Problems
Willa Pickens - Health concerns	Beverly Torres (Stone Soup) - Health concerns
Thorin Grey Yeager (Deb Mayers' Grandson) - Health concerns	Hugh Warren & family - Loss
Craig Tornquist & family - Loss	

Also remember to pray for our members in long-term care, assisted living, and independent living:

Martha Abernethy	Betty Byers	Mary Jo Beemer	Margaret Grant
Ruth Garen	Virginia O'Hair	Rich Daniels	JoAnn Ballard
Clem Gramza	Hannah Messersmith	Jo Perkey	Betty Barnes
Hugh Warren	Jim Borden	Thair Best	
Melvena Stenger	Jeanette Koehler	Margaret Wickizer	

Additionally pray for:

Our Bishop Mike	Our Church	Our Pastor Mary
Our District Superintendent, Cindy	Our Church Staff	Our Pastor Bob

A CHRISTMAS GIFT YOU CAN GIVE EVERY WEEK OF THE YEAR

Our church helps many people at Christmas and throughout the year. We have received another opportunity. This comes from Madison School, just four or five blocks from the church. We already have two or three scout groups that use our church members as leaders. On Thursday we received a request for the service of adults who could work in the Kindergarten classes helping children in one on one situations or working with a small group.

What an opportunity to share your life and your gifts of praise, encouragement, love and friendliness; as well as a spirit of Christian joy. Hopefully you will be able to give an hour at least once a week. You will be so pleased to see the smiles on the children's faces and the pride that everyone has when the task is so well done. If you have questions, please call Pauline Medhurst (277-2726). We would love to begin helping the children shortly after the holidays.

Here is a wonderful opportunity to introduce a young child to many positive aspects of life. Let's have Christmas every week.

The First Word is published bi-monthly by:

First United Methodist Church

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Phone: 574-233-9463

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Check out the website:

www.firstumcsb.org

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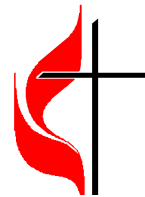
RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

A GREETING FROM THE CELTIC MUSICIANS



*Count your full years instead of your
lean; Count your kind deeds instead of
your mean.*

**Join us for Worship Sundays at 9:00 a.m.
and hear the Celtic Musicians play.**



The People of The United Methodist Church

- Help people in their community
- Accept you for who you are
- Offer a place to belong
- Care for and support each other
- Show respect for other religions
- Support people facing difficulty
- Welcome diverse opinions and beliefs
- Guide others to find deeper meaning