



# THE FIRST WORD

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

In the heart of the city since 1831

December 8, 2010

Issue #424

## GOD WITH US

When some have asked me my favorite Bible verse, I have replied, “Jesus wept”. They think it is funny (and so do I), because it is the shortest verse in the Bible.

It speaks to me strongly of God’s compassion, and the miracle of Christmas - “God with us”, Immanuel.

The miracle is not that we love God, and yearn for God, and wish for God; it is that God loves us, yearns and wishes for us! That the Maker of the Universe wants to condescend to us - short-lived people, distracted, dysfunctional, well-intentioned but bumbling along...God identifies with us!

Jesus is proof of that. He had his diapers changed by a loving mother (and maybe Joseph, too!), went to school, learned to read, had his Bar Mitzvah (“*son of the covenant*”, similar to our confirmation), worked hard as an adult - taught, healed, preached, demonstrated - and died, badly. And it hurt.

This is our God.

The Name above all names, the **I AM**, Yahweh almighty, loves us enough to show us, beyond a doubt, the great love our Creator has for us.

Jesus wept, because he had friends he loved. Fully human, fully divine.

God’s love is with us. Immanuel.

Mary L. Hubbard

## Worship Schedule

Worship, Chapel  
9:00 a.m.

Worship, Sanctuary  
10:30 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

Marsha Dollar

Administrative Assistant

Wishart Bell

Director of Music

Betty Woodland

Organist

LouAnne Wilson

Financial Manager

Diana Green

Coord. of Children's Ministries

David Frey

Coordinator of Youth Ministries

Ben Noell

Building Manager

John Jung-Zimmerman

Upper Room Director

HAVE YOU REMEMBERED  
FIRST CHURCH IN YOUR  
WILL?

## A GREETING FROM THE CELTIC MUSICIANS



*May your neighbors respect you,  
Trouble neglect you,  
The angels protect you,  
And heaven accept you.*

Please join us for Worship in the Chapel Sundays  
at 9:00 a.m. and hear the Celtic Musicians play.

## SURVEY REPORT

The Education Commission wants to thank you for completing the Education Survey. There were many thoughtful ideas about ways that we can make changes in our education program, the worship service and the church in general. Thank you for taking time to share your ideas and concerns. There were 76 surveys submitted.

The committee has carefully read your responses and will share the results with the Worship Commission and the Church Council, which will meet in January. Also, a brief summary of the comments from completed surveys will be in the following issues of the First Word.

We have much to be proud of (if you can be proud of your Christian work) in our church. Of course, there are also several areas that we might improve or change. Everyone is needed to GROW OUR CHURCH.

## KID'S NEWS

By Diana Green

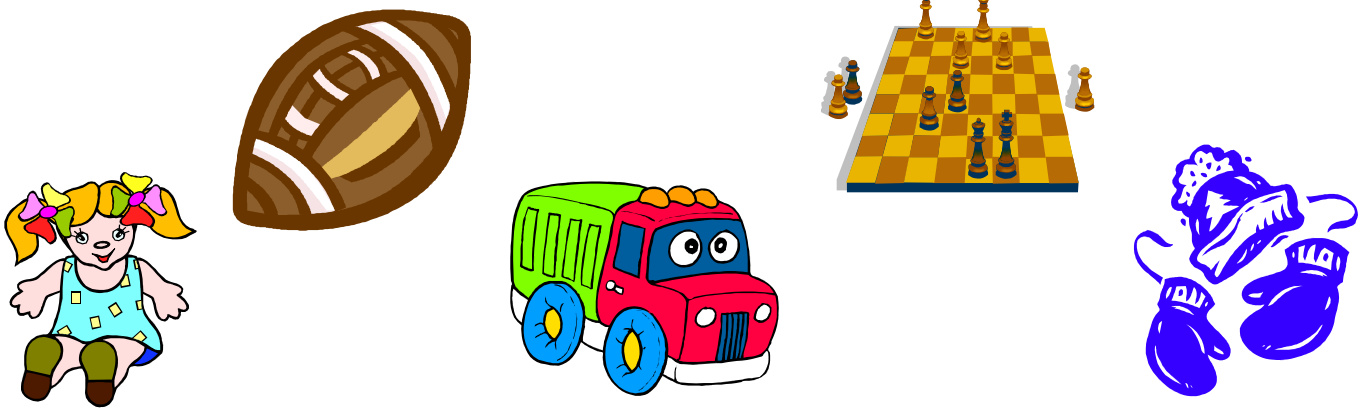
It is Advent, so Christmas is the heart of the Promised Land! Our children will be hearing the Christmas Story from Luke and learning how our Christian brothers and sisters in other countries celebrate Christ's birth. We will make Christmas Tree ornaments like the ones made in Germany and we will create a presipios (a live nativity scene) like is done in Italy!

How are you preparing your heart for the coming of Jesus?

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### CHRISTMAS STORE ITEMS

**December 12** is the last day to bring toys, hats, gloves and teen items to the church. These things will be delivered to the Christmas Store at Broadway Christian Parish. This is a great way to support the mission of our sister church.



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### KEEPING CHRISTMAS

We hope that each member of our church and your many friends are enjoying the thoughts of the First Church families. We printed 350 copies of the devotional. Over 150 of these were gifts from our church members to their friends and families.

A special thank you to Jan Seabaugh for designing and printing the cover. Diana Green typed all the copy and the Education Commission put the booklet together. We welcome your ideas about KEEPING CHRISTMAS.

## PRAYER LIST

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

Chris Dooley (Dolly Slack's Grandson) - Deployed to Afghanistan	
Elijah Jones - In military service	Liz Reinke - Health concerns
Michael Pershell - In military service	Peggy Soderberg - Health concerns
Stephen Gramza - In military service	Al & Maxine Jones - Health concerns
Jonathan Mayers - In military service	Debbie Webb - Health concerns
Jeremy Martin - Special needs	Marilyn Prue - Health concerns
Barbara Dobson - Health concerns	Maria Dattilo - Health concerns
Ron Florey Health concerns	Joan Martin - Health concerns
Wayne Jackson - Health concerns	Carol Goodhew - Health concerns
Mary Lou Gordon - Health concerns	Dylan Mayers - Health & Family concerns
David Case - Health concerns	Bob Natharius & 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	Mary Etta Rees
Ruth Garen	Virginia O'Hair	Rich Daniels	JoAnn Ballard
Clem Gramza	Clarence Dickey	Jo Perkey	Betty Barnes
Hugh & Lois Warren	Marian Wilson	Jim Borden	Thair Best
Freda Mossman	Melvena Stenger	Betty Fisk	Al & Maxine Jones
Hannah Messersmith	Al Aguirre		

**Additionally pray for:**

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

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Dear FUMC Family:

Your church music department wants to thank you for the generosity you showed during our recent back-to-back fundraising events. You purchased every crumb of the baked goods we brought in October, and 110 of you either came, or invited friends and guests to our spaghetti dinner. (Jim Gramza makes a mean sauce!) There were entire tables of people from outside the church. Between the two events we netted close to \$1,300.

Wishart Bell

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South Bend FUMC,

Thank you for letting me share the joy of missions from God's Country Cooperative Parish with your congregation on November 21.

Your prayers and support are greatly felt and appreciated.

Shalom,

Katie Peterson

P.S. - Our youth loved visiting South Bend this summer.

## THE LORD'S PRAYER (Continued)

Submitted by Winslow Phillips

“Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors.” If any one sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. (1 John 2:1) If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. (1 John 1:9) God forgives us because Jesus has paid our debt upon the cross. In this we see the sufferings of Christ and his death for our redemption.

“Lead us not into temptation.” Jesus was in all points tempted like we are, yet without sin. His sympathy for us is complete. He was touched with the feeling of our infirmities. (Hebrews 4:15) When Satan desires to have us to sift us as wheat, Jesus prays for us that our faith fail not. (Luke 22:31, 32) This shows our Savior as our high priest, ministering for us and watching over us in tender sympathy.

***More to follow on December 22***

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## NOVEMBER MISSION TALLIES

**Food Pantry:** For the month of November, the Food Pantry served 565 families, representing 2,234 individuals. 35.7% of those served were new for the month of November. On November 23, the Food Pantry had an all time high of 182 families, representing 732 individuals.

**Soup Kitchen:** 1,153 people were served and 759 carry-out bags were given away for a total of 3,633 cups of soup served in November. Additionally we served 308 plates of food at the Thanksgiving Dinner.

**Upper Room:** 16 residents at the end of November (14 men and 2 women)

Following are two Advent Devotionals that didn't make it into the Devotional Book, so we thought we'd give you all a treat and share both of them with you, via *The First Word*:

### SILENT NIGHT/HOLY NIGHT

*Silent night, Holy night!  
Son of God, love's pure light.  
Radiant beams from thy Holy face.  
With the dawn of redeeming Grace.  
Jesus Lord at thy Birth.  
Jesus Lord at thy Birth.*

I have always loved going to church on Christmas Eve because the service was always full of scripture readings and beautiful music. I usually sing in the choir and ring bells. However, the best part of sitting back in the choir loft is when the church is dimmed. The spot lights outside shining through the stain glass windows of Jesus and the Gospels. Then the minister starts with the only lit candle, lighting the candle of the first person in each row. These people in turn light the candle of the person next to them and so on. I watched in joy and amazement as the light grew bigger and brighter. I wondered if this was what it was like the night Jesus was born and the bright star shone above him in the stable. In my eyes, this was truly the pure and radiant beams from all of us and the Grace of God with his son, Jesus Christ! May we always keep this pure, radiant beam or light with us every day, not just on Christmas.

Beverly Gramza

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### MY LITTLE STORY OF CHRISTMAS

**OH! CHRISTMAS! THE TREE! THE ANGEL ON TOP! THE ORNAMENTS! THE KITTEN CLIMBING UP THE TREE! THE TREE TUMBLING DOWN!** All joyous memories, until my favorite uncle died just a few days before Christmas. He was only 52 years old. Even at my young age, I knew that was too young to die.

I knew our Christmases would never be the same. This uncle always brought surprises & fun, especially when sitting next to me at the dinner table. He would casually reach over with his fork and take a bite of food off of MY plate. It always brought a giggle out of me. I missed him every Christmas until about 1952.

Then there was a joyful event that erased my sadness. I heard Mother and Dad leave the house about 2:30 a.m. on Christmas morning. I was eleven years old and finally managed to go back to sleep. About 7:30 a.m., Dad came home, without Mom, and shared the good news. Our family now had a special little baby, born on Christmas -- on Jesus birth day. Her name was (and still is) Donna Marie. I knew that was a special name for a special babe born on a special day. Her birth on His day has given our family the joy to celebrate Jesus' birth and Donna's too, which we all do on every Christmas Day.

The big sister,

Janet Rawles Thompson

## AS FAR AS WE CAN GO

“He was a cowboy from Oklahoma, and his story is familiar to most of us. He had been in Kansas City seeing things he had never even imagined. His eyes had been opened on that visit, and he went back to Oklahoma singing to his friends, ‘Everything’s up to date in Kansas City; they’ve gone about as far as they can go!’

“He then proceeded to describe just how far they had gone. He saw 23 gas buggies on one day, he said. He put his ear to a strange apparatus and heard someone talking. They called it a telephone. He saw a skyscraper seven stories tall, ‘about as high as a building ought to go.’ No wonder, then, that he went back shaking his head in wonder at all those folks in Kansas City who had ‘gone about as far as they could go.’

“That young man reflected an instinct as old as humanity, one that is a problem for us, the feeling that when we reach certain levels, surely, we’ve gone about as far as we can go. There is the story of the Hebrew people in Moab, for example. Remember? They had overcome great odds, and had escaped from the Pharaoh in Egypt, and were bound for the Promised Land.

“But something happened to them on that journey from captivity to the Promised Land. They reached Moab, and found it comfortable, and they began to settle down there. ‘We’ve gone about as far as we can go,’ they said to one another, and several years passed without another step being taken toward the Promised Land. Finally, one of God’s messengers appeared to them with this message. ‘You have stayed long enough at this mountain. Get up and get going.’ In short, they hadn’t really gone about as far as they could go.

“...A church or an individual begins to die when the message it hears is ‘You’ve gone about as far as you can go.’ We find our life renewed and invigorated when we keep reaching out and growing. “...The minute we sit back and say, ‘We’ve gone about as far as we can go.’ Life begins to go out of us. It is when we set hard goals for ourselves, and in the name of Jesus Christ reach out for them, then we grow. This is the message that we need to hear, that we must hear. As much as we would like to, we cannot stay the same as a church. Anytime our objective becomes simply to retain what we have, we start to die. For churches weren’t created for the purpose of surviving - they were created to spend themselves in service and in growth.”

[Eugene Brice, sermon, Kansas City]

You and I are the same way. We are not created for the purpose of surviving. We are created for service and growth. We celebrate that fact each week when we give our offerings to God. By giving our money, we move toward God’s goal for our soul - service and growth.

[Herb Miller]

John Claypool said, “Death will make generous givers of us all.” [Sermon, Lubbock, Texas] Our financial stewardship to God’s work gives us the opportunity to become generous givers before it is too late to enjoy the sense of meaning and purpose that comes with that generosity.

“Not to give to those in need what is to you superfluous is akin to fraud.” [Saint Augustine]

The First Word is published bi-monthly by:

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**Check out the website:**

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**RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED**

## **SANCTUARY CHOIR CHRISTMAS PROGRAM**

Our Sanctuary Choir present's Robert Ray's "Gospel Magnificat" on Sunday, December 12 in the 10:30 service.

"My soul doth magnify the Lord": The Virgin's answer to her cousin Elizabeth, who hails her as the mother of the Savior, blessed among women. This Canticle of the Blessed Virgin Mary (Luke 1:46-55) traditionally formed the basis of the Catholic Vespers Service. Following the Reformation it was taken up by Lutheran and Anglican churches for their evening prayer services. It has been set to music by every major composer since Robert Ray is known for his adaptations of traditional sacred texts to reflect the African American Catholic experience. He treats this text in musical language that expresses Christian faith in a wonderful cultural idiom. We hope you can join us.

Wishart