



THE FIRST WORD

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

In the heart of the city since 1831

April 20, 2011

Issue #433

A PLAGUE OF SQUIRRELS

Three churches in the same community had the same problem – squirrels getting into the building, being terribly destructive.

Being from differing faith backgrounds, each had its own unique approach, based upon their belief and practice.

The Baptists, ever practical, simply called an exterminator, who got rid of the squirrels, repaired where they came in, and sent a bill.

The Unitarians had volunteers who lovingly caught the squirrels in a humane trap, took the squirrels miles away, and released them.

The United Methodists did something similar – they caught the squirrels in the same sort of trap, but then brought them into the sanctuary, baptized them and made them members. Now the squirrels only come into the church on Christmas and Easter.

The pageantry and joy of both seasons beckons us out of our ruts of complacency and habit. Each pokes at us, reminding us of the eternal meddling in the ways of mortals. Each brings beauty and pleasure, and stirs old members of good times with family. God calls us to be better than those baptized squirrels, to more than Christmas and Easter.

Each Sunday has music, prayer, God's word read, celebration and pathos. And with each Sunday we worship God, we build stronger bonds with one another in community; and when joys or sorrows move our little boat, we have others who help row for us.

Each Sunday we build stronger bonds with God. More than the rite of membership, more than the sacrament of baptism, our hearts connect with God, our souls are nourished, and our spirits grow – so that when times of joy and sorrow come, our little boat has a broader keel, a deeper rudder, and someone who loves us at the helm.

See you Easter – and beyond!

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
- Marsha Dollar
Administrative Assistant
- Wishart Bell
Director of Music
- Betty Woodland
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?**

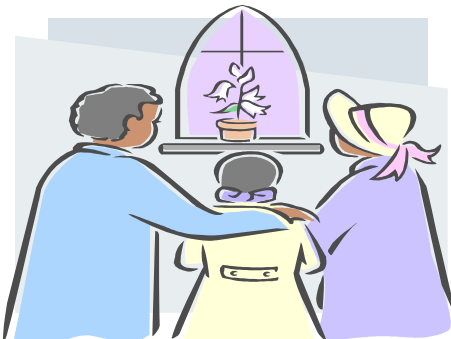
DEAD MONEY

“In banking circles the term ‘dead money’ is used to describe the forgotten money on deposit in national banks. You would think that people who deposit money in the bank would certainly remember it, but that is not the case. National banks alone hold fifty million dollars in 2,329,678 accounts whose owners are never heard from....

“That is not the only kind of dead money. Excavations in the Mediterranean have turned up another tragic kind of money that has been ‘dead’ for centuries. In the fascinating book, *Gods, Graves and Scholars*, it tells of bodies uncovered at Pompeii with bony fingers still clutching gold and silver coins. Money that had been dead since the lava of Mt. Vesuvius covered it.

“In the religious view of life, there is another sort of dead money - that which is never invested in human life. The Parable of the Talents speaks to this, of how one servant hid his money (made it dead), so to speak, and how two other wiser servants made their money come alive through investing it and were rewarded for their stewardship.”

[*The Christian Ministry*, James Langley]





PEEK-A-BOO FAITH

My grandson Austin is now 8 months old, and he is starting to learn and enjoy the game of peek-a-boo. He especially enjoys the anticipation of that childhood game. Just last week when we visited him, I would hold Austin and Marsha would peek around my shoulders to surprise Austin. It did not take him long to catch on, and he even began to look for Marsha before she actually appeared over my other shoulder.

Some child development experts believe that this simple game for children is an important part of their development. Children need to learn, they say, about “object permanence” – meaning that small children have to learn that things and people do not cease to exist just because the child cannot see them. Playing peek-a-boo helps a small child to learn to trust – to trust that the world exists, to trust people to come back to them, and to trust that what they cannot see any given moment is still real.

Austin is already applying this game to his life. We watched him watch his mother when she left the room – looking carefully in the direction she left, waiting in anticipation for her return, and then greeting her with a big smile. Trust has to be learned, and of course that is why it is so sad that some children grow up without adults who are trustworthy.

I drove home from visiting Austin and reflected on this simple childhood game of peek-a-boo. I found myself thinking about why it is that so many adults seem unable to believe in God just because they cannot see God or prove God’s existence. Could it be that these persons never learned the basic trust which comes from playing peek-a-boo? Could it be that a lack of trust in what we cannot see or prove is typical of those who missed this most basic childhood lesson of trust?

God is real, even when we do not fully experience God’s presence at any given moment. Real faith is based upon trusting God during the tough times, when things are not easy, and when God may even seem distant. Even a child can learn to trust that the one who loves us will return, will be there for us, and will hold us once again.

During this season of Lent, we read in the Gospels about how the disciples had to learn to trust Jesus.

During his ministry Jesus was constantly surprising them, coming to them on the water, surprising them like a ghost, and sending them out to share the Good News on their own, before calling them back together to be strengthened by his presence. Even after Easter, Jesus would appear to them intermittently. Why? Perhaps they needed to learn to trust Jesus even when they could not see him. Perhaps Jesus knew that they would need a deeper, trusting faith to help them endure life without him. Maybe that is why Jesus said to Thomas, “You have believed because you see me, blessed are those who do not see and yet believe.”

May we all be strengthened by that kind of peek-a-boo faith.

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	Peggy Soderberg - Health concerns
Michael Pershell - In military service	Marilyn Prue - Health concerns
Stephen Gramza - In military service	Carol Goodhew - Health concerns
Jonathan Mayers - In military service	Margaret Grant - Health concerns
Jeremy Martin - Special needs	David Case - Health concerns
Dylan Mayers - Family concerns	Wayne Jackson - Health concerns
Ron Florey - Health concerns	Martha Abernethy - Health concerns
Mary Lou Gordon - Health concerns	Clem Gramza - Health concerns
Virginia O'Hair - Health concerns	Family of Clarence Dickey - Loss
Betty J. Byers - Health concerns	

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	Hannah Messersmith	Jo Perkey	Betty Barnes
Hugh & Lois Warren	Marian Wilson	Jim Borden	Thair Best
Melvena Stenger	Betty Fisk	Jeanette Koehler	Margaret Wickizer

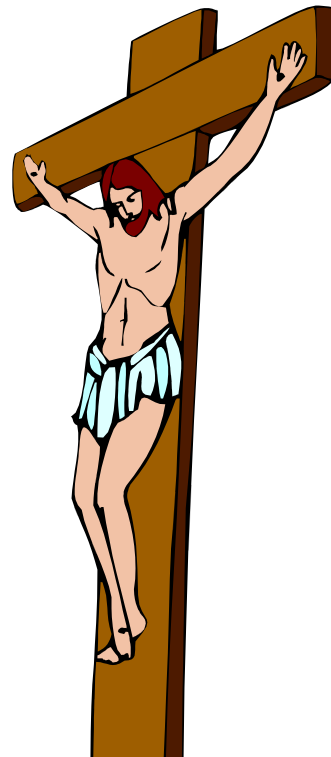
Additionally pray for:

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

EASTER JOY

Jesus came to earth, to show us how to live,
How to put others first, how to love and how to give.
Then He set about His work, that God sent Him to do;
He took our punishment on Himself; He made us clean and new.
He could have saved Himself, calling angels from above,
But He chose to pay our price for sin; He paid it out of love.
Our Lord died on Good Friday, but the cross did not destroy
His resurrection on Easter morn, that fills our hearts with joy.
Now we know our earthly death, like His, is just a rest.
We'll be forever with Him in heaven, where life is best.
So we live our lives for Jesus, think of Him in all we do.
Thank you Savior; Thank you Lord. Help us love like you!

By Joanna Fuchs



FIVE (5) LESSONS ABOUT THE WAY WE TREAT PEOPLE

Submitted by Gene Stroes

This is part four of a five part submission:

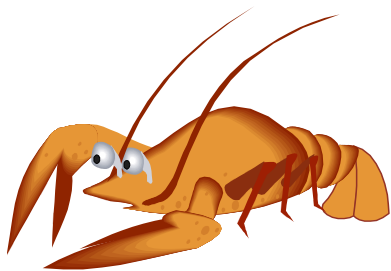
Fourth Important Lesson - The Obstacle in Our Path

In ancient times, a King had a boulder placed on a roadway. Then he hid himself and watched to see if anyone would remove the huge rock. Some of the King's' wealthiest merchants and courtiers came by and simply walked around it. Many loudly blamed the King for not keeping the roads clear, but none did anything about getting the stone out of the way.

Then a peasant came along carrying a load of vegetables. Upon approaching the boulder, the peasant laid down his burden and tried to move the stone to the side of the road. After much pushing and straining, he finally succeeded. After the peasant picked up his load of vegetables, he noticed a purse lying in the road where the boulder had been. The purse contained many gold coins and a note from the King indicating that the gold was for the person who removed the boulder from the roadway. The peasant learned what many of us never understand!

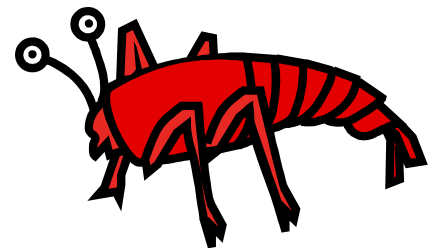
Every obstacle presents an opportunity to improve our condition.

Watch for the final lesson on May 11.



CRAWFISH BOIL

April 29, 2011
5:00 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.
Social Hall



First United Methodist Church is partnering with Episcopal Church of St. James and St. Augustine Catholic Church in this wonderful event to raise money. The money collected will be split between the following three ministries: Civil Rights Heritage Center, St. Margaret's House, and the Upper Room.

In order to make this event run more smoothly, there will be separate dinner sessions. The tickets will cost \$22.00 each. At the time you purchase your tickets, you will need to specify if you will be attending the 5:00 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. dinner or the 7:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. dinner. The dinner will consist of traditional Cajun favorites like gumbo, jambalaya and much more. Entertainment will be provided at both sessions!

If you would like to volunteer to be a Dessert Coordinator for the Crawfish Boil, please contact David Easterbrook. For more information on the event or to purchase tickets, you may contact David Easterbrook at (574) 232-0475.

The First Word is published bi-monthly by:

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Check out the website:

www.firstumcsb.org

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A GREETING FROM THE CELTIC MUSICIANS



*Count your health instead of your wealth;
Love your neighbor as much as yourself.*

**Join us for Worship in the Chapel 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

