



# THE FIRST WORD

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

In the heart of the city since 1831

February 23, 2011

Issue #429

## Church Leadership Retreat; *INTO THE FUTURE*

We had a fascinating time with our district Superintendent a couple of Saturdays ago. Everyone was invited, but we did focus on pushing for our leaders (formal and informal) to come. And many did! We met for several hours, with free-flowing and wide ranging discussion, and spoke with great honesty and frankness.

While in political terms honesty and frankness translate out of diplomatese into “ugly”, this was not at all the case. We were glad to not play games, and to hear each other clearly!

After listing our strengths and weaknesses, we worked at translating what we have to build on, so that we can make the transition from a Good Church to a GREAT Church! And we had many things upon which to build.

Our missions (Upper Room, Food Pantry, Soup Kitchen, Stone Soup); our incredible theological diversity with great unity on core values (Jesus is Lord, God is love); our diversity racially, economically, socially; our emphasis on service and inclusion; our worship.

Now, some listed items both as strengths and weaknesses (communication, our worship, our outreach), and we seemed fuzzy on what exactly was the difference between missions and outreach.

I was very impressed with how we ended; a listing of four areas defining ourselves, which we plan to build on for our future.

- 1. We are a church with diverse people**
- 2. We are on a spiritual journey together**
- 3. We want to grow, numerically and spiritually**
- 4. We serve God by serving others**

In the next three months, a smaller team from those who attended will meet and list three action steps under each heading, and bring it back to the larger group. I hope to create an informal group to monitor and guide us, reminding us of where we have been and where we want to go, to help prod us forward.

We can create a future about which we can be excited!

## 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?**

## HOW YOU CAN LIVE LONGER!

“We can continue to follow God...even after our life on earth has ended....

“The final test of a good steward is how you guide the use of your money after death... The disposition of our wealth is our last opportunity to proclaim our Christian faith. In a Christian will, the amount that is left is not as important as the testimony that it gives. Even very small estates can benefit the cause of Christ and bear witness to your life of Christ even after you are gone. Will you include God in your last will and testament?

Will your last act be a testimony that your interest in the Lord’s work is not limited to its benefits to you in your lifetime? Let your last testimony acknowledge that God’s kingdom is forever and that you want to do your part by leaving a portion of your estate for its continuing ministries and missions.

“There are many considerations in drafting your last will and testament. First, provision should be made for your loved ones. Always pray about God’s will for the disposition of your estate - your will is the last say you have in following God’s will for your life. Second, seek competent legal advice. There are many ways of disposing of your estate and various tax opportunities to be considered. One possibility is to distribute portions of your estate during your lifetime to allow for personal supervision by trusted Christians. In any event you should have a will; dying without a will results in the state distributing your wealth in a way that you may not desire. Also, be sure you name an executor or the state will do so for you. Third, make your will when you are young and healthy and then change it in the future as needed.

“How can you live longer? How can your influence and testimony endure? Proper planning can allow your resources to work for the advancement of God’s kingdom long after your death. Be a good steward all of your life and beyond and...JOIN THE JOY!”

*[The VaryIdea, Trinity Baptist Church, San Antonio, Texas]*

## GOODWILL DONATIONS

Remember, you can bring your Goodwill Donations to the Church. For each full box we give to Goodwill, they give us \$5.00 vouchers, which we give to the Upper Room residents when they successfully graduate and need to set up house-keeping.

## THE FIRST GOSPEL

We are so pleased to announce a Bible study of the book of Mark. The book shares many of the stories of Christ and his teachings in a very succinct and readable manor.

“Doc” Rushing, a recent attendee of our church, will be teaching the course on Sunday morning at 10:00 a.m. Doc is a recently retired trucker who has previously been a teacher in some Christian colleges, as well as a pastor in some small churches.

The class will meet in a room to be announced from March 6 to May 22. Please sign up for the course in the Gathering Room on Sunday morning or by calling Helen Banas at 277-2139.

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## SOMETHING NEW

How about instead of giving up something for Lent you try taking on a new challenge. From 11:30 a.m. until 12:30 p.m. each Thursday during Lent and again in the evening from 6:30 p.m. until 7:15 p.m. we will have a prayer and meditation time in the Chapel. This will be a quiet time given to communicating with God. We will meet together and have a short prayer time to get us started. This will be followed by a brief discussion with some suggestions about how to meditate. The rest of the time will be spent praying privately and meditating.

Why not give this a try??? Just come to the Chapel starting on March 10<sup>th</sup> at either 11:30 a.m. or 6:30 p.m. and spend time with other Christians and with God.

Mary Gergesha, Leader of meditation period

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## VITA Volunteer Income Tax Assistance

### Free E-file Tax Preparation Services

The Tri-County Tax Team's VITA Program led by United Way of St. Joseph County is an IRS-certified program which provides free e-filed income tax preparation to individuals and families with an adjusted gross income of less than \$49,000. Call 2-1-1, 8 am-5 pm, to schedule a VITA appointment.

#### Did you know?

As much as \$5,666-or more-could be waiting for you!

#### Did you work in 2010?

You may be eligible for the Earned Income Credit (EIC) and Child Tax Credit (CTC)-even if you don't owe income tax. (Earned Income limits for married workers are \$5,000 higher)

<u>For the EIC, if you have:</u>	<u>Earned income less than:</u>	<u>Claim an EIC up to:</u>
1 child	\$35,535	\$3,050
2 children	\$40,363	\$5,036
3 or more children	\$43,352	\$5,666
No children	\$13,460	\$ 457

  

<u>For the CTC, if you have:</u>	<u>Earned more than</u>	<u>Claim a CTC up to:</u>
1 or more children	\$ 3,000	\$1,000 per child

#### Make sure you get your Making Work Pay Credit

Many workers got the Making Work Pay Credit in 2010 in their paychecks. But if you were self-employed, or didn't earn enough to have income tax withheld, you can claim this credit on your tax return.

**(Our Gathering Room is one of the VITA Sites)**

## 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	Bruce Slack - Health concerns
Jeremy Martin - Special needs	David Case - Health concerns
Maxine Jones & Family - Loss	Mary Lou Gordon - Health concerns
Matthew Barreiro & Family - Loss	Barbara Dobson - Health concerns
Clem Baker & Family - Loss	Joe Harnish - Health concerns
Ron Florey - Health concerns	Dylan Mayers - Family concerns
Wayne Jackson - Health concerns	
Bill Easterbrook (David Easterbrook's father) - 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	Clarence Dickey	Jo Perkey	Betty Barnes
Hugh & Lois Warren	Marian Wilson	Jim Borden	Thair Best
Freda Mossman	Melvena Stenger	Betty Fisk	Maxine Jones
Hannah Messersmith	Margaret Wickizer	Jeanette Koehler	

**Additionally pray for:**

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

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## BEGINNING EXPERIENCE WEEKEND RETREAT FOR WIDOWED, DIVORCED AND SEPARATED PERSONS

The retreat will be held at Lindenwood Retreat Center, Donaldson, Indiana from 7 PM Friday, March 4 to 3 PM Sunday, March 6, 2011. This Christian-based Retreat helps grieving single-again persons to emerge from the darkness of grief, depression, anger and loss in order to move into the future with renewed hope and new beginnings. Call Teresa at (574) 261-0123 (night) - e-mail at [greenlight7113@sbcglobal.net](mailto:greenlight7113@sbcglobal.net) or Marilyn at (269) 684-0882 (daytime) [Mercymeme@aol.com](mailto:Mercymeme@aol.com) or Becky at (260) 768-7350. The next BE Weekend is July 22-24, 2011.

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## SINGSPIRATION/HYMN SING

" The welcoming Committee is in the planning stages for future activities. A Singspiration/Hymn Sing is being considered, but we need to pull together a mini-hymnal, would you please help us by each submitting a list of five favorite hymns? More is fine. They might be remembered from childhood and don't need to be in the hymnal currently (we will try to look them up). Also add a note if you might be willing to do a special hymn or instrumental, a group is good too, let's share our talents! Thanks!

## CAMPUS MINISTRY SPECIAL OFFERING

The Indiana Conference encourages congregations to receive a Campus Ministry Special Offering during the month of February to assist in the support of our United Methodist-related ministries on state university campuses. Envelopes for your donations will be included in Sunday's bulletin (2/27).

### Five reasons to support Campus Ministry here in Indiana:

1. Your future pastor is looking for spiritual direction on a college campus today.
2. Our campus ministries spiritually impact not only students, but entire campus communities.
3. "Campus ministry is one of the most important places for the church to be in mission today."  
- Dr. Alice Knotts
4. Your giving supports the leadership development, intentional spiritual guidance, and life changing missions that are shaping our future church and world leaders on campuses today.
5. "If campus ministries had not been there, I wouldn't be in college."  
- Aryielle a student at Indiana State University

Please give generously and invest in the future leadership of our church and our Indiana communities.

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## AND GOD SAID "NO"

Submitted by Winslow Phillips

I asked God to take away my pride, and God said, "No."

- *God said it was not for God to take away, but for me to give up.*

I asked God to make my handicapped child whole, and God said, "No."

- *God said her spirit is whole, her body is only temporary.*

I asked God to grant me patience, and God said, "No."

- *God said that patience is a by-product of tribulation. It isn't granted, it's earned.*

I asked God to give me happiness, and God said, "No."

- *God said He gives blessings; happiness is up to me.*

I asked God to spare me pain, and God said, "No."

- *God said "Suffering draws you apart from worldly cares and brings you closer to Me."*

I asked God to make my spirit grow, and God said, "No."

- *God said I must grow on my own, but God will prune me to make me fruitful.*

I asked God to help me love others as much as God loves me, and God said, "**Ah, finally, you have the idea.**"

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**On Sunday, March 6, we will be taking a special offering for Stone Soup. Please plan ahead to give generously to this organization that helps so many people with their housing costs, utility bills, learning to budget their money, etc.**

The First Word is published bi-monthly by:

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**Check out the website:**

**[www.firstumcsb.org](http://www.firstumcsb.org)**

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## **A GREETING FROM THE CELTIC MUSICIANS**



*Count your blessings instead of your crosses;  
Count your gains instead of your losses.*

**Please 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

