



THE FIRST WORD

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

In the heart of the city since 1831

December 22, 2010

Issue #425

DO IT YOURSELF CHRISTMAS

Each Christmas is a do-it-yourself project. We each determine what it will be like for us.

I remember a devastating Christmas, where my brothers were unmercifully picking on me, the new baby sister was a pure irritation and distraction, my parents were too harried to intervene with a middle child's too-tender feelings. I shut myself up in my room with a big piece of paper (taller than me!), and drew a huge Christmas tree with dark green crayon, covered with red, blue and purple balls, and drew wrapped presents beneath the tree. This, of course, mirrored the 12 foot tall tree in our living room, about twenty feet away. I hung it up on my wall – behind the door, so that when it opened and one of my tormenters was there, that wicked persecutor could not see my beautiful tree. It was just for me – it was *mine, all mine!*

I made my own corner of Christmas for myself, and my wounded little feelings. In adult terms, I was taking responsibility for my own emotional life, my own chosen celebration of the holiday.

No one can make a Christmas for you.

You can choose to accept those festive invitations. You can choose to buy gifts and give them with no thought of anything in return. You can give yourself in service to others, so that they can have a more festive Christmas. You can decorate – or not decorate, whichever would make you feel better.

Jesus came, God into this world, and we celebrate. It was a miracle!

The tiny family, not having much reason to feel festive at all, huddled in a stranger's outbuilding – or a cave – and doting on their gift that day, the new born baby. Later, some guys they didn't know showed up with presents – but that day, it was just some smelly shepherds pushing their way into the private space, gawking in adoration.

How would you like to celebrate? Family, friends? Alone, but grateful? Spending time on the phone, reconnecting?

You may need to huddle this season, letting hurt feelings heal. You may need to reach out to someone who would be alone otherwise. You may need to take care of yourself before others. Or, you may be able to gather with friends, with family, and cut loose!

Whatever you need to do, that's okay.

Give yourself permission this year – celebrate Christmas, do it in the way that fits.

Remember, though, that while we may draw a tree for ourselves, no matter how beautiful the crayon, the real thing is better. And *celebrating* Christmas – the real thing – is the important thing. Not *how* you celebrate, but that you *do* celebrate.

Mary L. Hubbard

Worship Schedule

Worship, Chapel
9:00 a.m.

Worship, Sanctuary
10:30 a.m.

(until January 2)

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 the Irish hills caress you.
May her lakes and rivers bless you.
May the luck of the Irish enfold you.
May the blessings of Saint Patrick behold you.*

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

TIME CHANGES FOR SUNDAY WORSHIP SERVICES AND SUNDAY SCHOOL

**After our survey, we decided
beginning January 2, 2011 worship
services will be held at 9:00 a.m. and
11:00 a.m. Sunday School Classes
will begin at 10:00 a.m.**

**Please remember to make these
changes in your plans!**

CHURCH FINANCES

On behalf of the Finance Committee, I want to thank all of our members for their financial support they have given to our church during 2010. Our goal has been to provide a “balanced budget” so hopefully everyone has paid their 2010 pledge. If not, please send in a check at your earliest convenience.

Due to challenging economic conditions, we did not have enough income to meet our continuing expenses and we had to recently borrow \$17,000 in order to meet our current expenses. Therefore, I am requesting a year-end “appeal” asking you to consider sending in an additional check if possible for us to pay off our loan. Please make the check payable to “First United Methodist Church” and make a note on your check for “loan payoff appeal”. Thank you in advance for your consideration.

Respectively submitted,

Spike Abernethy, Finance Chairman

THE LORD’S PRAYER (Continued)

Submitted by Winslow Phillips

“Deliver us from evil.” Jesus won the victory on the cross. He said, “And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me.” (John 12:32) “Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out.” (verse 31) “I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven. (Luke 10:18) Jesus is the victor in the great controversy between good and evil. He will bruise Satan’s head at last, for He came not only to destroy the works of the devil (1 John 3:8) but to destroy the devil himself. “That through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil. (Hebrews 2:14) And He has promised to bruise Satan under our feet shortly. (Romans 16:20)

“For Thine is the Kingdom, the Power, and the Glory for ever.” This reminds us of the words of the great prophecy of Revelation 11:15, when “the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, “The Kingdoms of this world are become the Kingdoms of our Lord, and of His Christ; and He shall reign for ever and ever.”

“Amen.” Jesus, Himself takes this name. In the Book of Revelation (3:14) we find these words: “These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God.”

NCC CHRISTMAS SPECIALS TO AIR ON CBS, ABC, NBC

No matter where your family celebrates the holidays, you will be able to enjoy an ecumenical musical spectacular. National Council of Churches produced television specials are airing on all three major networks –CBS, ABC and NBC.

A Christmas for Everybody (CBS) is a special Christmas Eve broadcast from the United Methodist Church of St. Paul and St. Andrew (SPSA), located on the Upper West Side of New York.

Lessons and Carols (ABC) will be produced at Trinity Church in lower Manhattan. Listen as the music of Trinity Wall Street and its renowned Trinity Choir, Family Choir, and Youth Chorus fill the historic sanctuary with the joyful noise of hymns and carols in celebration of the birth of Christ.

On Christmas Day, tune into NBC, where Christmas Angels awaits. The musical special celebrates Christmas through the music and memories of youth from different Christian denominations across the United States. You can find out more about the programs and check local listing at www.interfaithbroadcasting.com/liturgical.aspx.

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	Chris Leeke - Health concerns
David Case - Health concerns	Dylan Mayers - Health & Family concerns
Margaret Wickizer - 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	Al & Maxine Jones
Hannah Messersmith	Margaret Wickizer		

Additionally pray for:

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

UPPER ROOM CELEBRATION

It was a wonderful day we all had on Friday, December 10th. We were finally able to open our doors to the community with an Open House in the afternoon and a Celebrate Recovery Dinner that evening honoring Rev. Gary Forbes, the Founding Pastor of the Upper Room. Our own South Bend Mayor, Steve Luecke, attended the open house and was impressed with the program and its residents. The men and women upstairs did a great job hosting the open house and then meeting with 60 some people who feasted together that evening.

Special thanks to the Board Members, Mission Commission Members, Deborah Mayers, The Skillet Restaurant, and Pastor Mary for their work and support that made the day possible. The dinner featured presentations by two of our residents and recognized Gary Forbes vision which began the ministry and the generous donations of Ralph and Barbara Dobson which are taking our expanded program into the future.

Although there are a few items outstanding, we realized a profit of \$1,400.00 on the dinner so far and are hoping for a few more donations from the envelopes that people took with them. I am proud and humbled by the devotion of so many to those who are truly trying to change their lives and bring a message of hope in recovery to others.

Gratefully,
John Jung-Zimmerman, M.Div.
Upper Room Director



A CHRISTMAS PRAYER FOR PASTORS

Nearly every year I have offered a “Christmas Prayer for Pastors” because I know what a hectic and demanding time of year this is for those who lead our churches. Perhaps not all church members, and certainly not many visitors who show up during this season, realize how tough it is for their pastors to be able to celebrate Christmas themselves (and with their families) in the midst of preparing and leading so many Christmas celebrations for others. I can remember many years of coming home on Christmas Eve, actually early on Christmas morning, after leading and preaching at several Christmas Eve services, and trying to muster the strength to assemble toys and other Christmas gifts for my children.

Even more, I can remember many years when my Advent and Christmas preparations were interrupted with urgent but unexpected pastoral needs – like illnesses, deaths, funerals, marriage disruptions, threatened suicides, etc. Trying to handle those pastoral needs in the midst of preparations for extra Christmas celebrations can be quite demanding.

I especially remember one Christmas Eve when the Worship Committee of our church decided to forego having those little candles that everyone enjoys lighting while singing “Silent Night.” Even though that was not my decision, guess who spent most of Christmas Eve having parishioners and especially visitors literally yell at me for “ruining” their Christmas?

Yes, Advent and Christmas can be a tough time for pastors and their families. So I offer this prayer for them, in hopes that God will strengthen them for these busy days, but also in hopes that all of us will be more understanding if things are not “perfect” for us. Please join me in this prayer:

Gracious God, whose coming we celebrate during Advent and Christmas, may You come swiftly and powerfully to the pastors and the people of Indiana. Protect those who are traveling, guide those who lead, comfort those who grieve, and strengthen those who are weakened by illness, by heartache, or by discouragement.

Especially I pray, O blessed Lord, that You may bring JOY into the lives and ministry of our pastors. Let their preparations for worship services be blessed with responsive parishioners and visitors. Let their sermons be filled with the power of Your Holy Spirit speaking and working through them. Let their hectic times be balanced with times of peace and reflection. Let their ministry during this Advent and Christmas time bear the fruit of the JOY of this season – not just for those they lead, but also for themselves and their loved ones.

And may You, O God, grant each pastor a time of personal respite and renewal during the afterglow of Christmas, so that Christmas JOY may be fully born in each one of their hearts this season. I ask these things, most Gracious God, in the name of the One whose coming we celebrate, even Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

KID'S NEWS

By Diana Green

The last two months we have welcomed new friends into the Promised Land. It is exciting to share what we do and what we are learning with others. As is appropriate for December, the children are learning about how Christmas is celebrated in other parts of the world. It is fun for them to see that there are Christians all around the world and we celebrate Jesus' birthday in different ways, but we all love Jesus!

There will be no Promised Land on December 26.

KEEP YOUR CHILDREN SAFE

By John Peterson

Parents of children in our current time have a difficult task: raising their children in an age where computers, cell phones, and media players are always present. How do you secure your household computer to make sure that they're safe? How do you help them understand the dangerous yet vast knowledge available on the internet? Here are some helpful suggestions from a technician I know:

1. First, have a conversation with your children about the Internet. Points to cover might include the concern you have for their safety in the digital world; the fact that you, not they, are legally responsible for their actions on the internet; not giving out personal details to unknown persons on social networking sites; and the difference between services like iTunes, Rhapsody and Napster and their not so legal cousins such as Limewire, BitTorrent, and similar sites that provide pirated digital content.
2. One of the most important things you can do to protect you and your family is to install an antivirus program on your computer. Most new computers come with some form of antivirus program preinstalled. If your computer doesn't have antivirus software or the software is out of date, you may want to investigate software like AVG Free. In addition to antivirus software, installing an antispyware program such as Spybot S&D with the included TeaTimer monitoring software can help you to make sure that your computer is not infected and sending your personal information without your permission.
3. To protect yourself and your children online, there are several options. Some of these options cost money while others are free. A service that I am currently recommending to my clients is a free service called OpenDNS. This service is maintained by a large community of parents and concerned citizens and offers a wide range of site filtering options that are continuously updated by the community. They provide detailed documentation on how to implement this service. It does require an initial time investment but requires very little interaction after that. This service can be found at <http://opendns.com>

Net Nanny is one of the oldest filtering systems on the web and provides a premium feature set and controls that are practically unrivaled. It is a subscription based service that has an initial cost of \$49.99 for a household plus an annual or monthly cost to keep the service up to date, much like antivirus programs. Net Nanny can be found at <http://www.netnanny.com>

A TRUE STORY

“His name was Fleming, and he was a poor Scottish farmer. One day, while trying to eke out a living for his family, he heard a cry for help coming from a nearby bog. He dropped his tools and ran to the bog. There, mired to the waist in black muck, was a terrified boy, screaming and struggling to free himself. Farmer Fleming saved the lad from what could have been a slow and terrifying death.

“The next day, a fancy carriage pulled up to the Scotsman’s sparse surroundings. An elegantly dressed nobleman stepped out and introduced himself as the father of the boy Farmer Fleming had saved.

“‘I want to repay you,’ said the nobleman. ‘You saved my son’s life.’

“‘No, I can’t accept payment for what I did,’ the Scottish farmer replied, waving off the offer. At that moment, the farmer’s own son came to the door of the family hovel.

“‘Is that your son?’ the nobleman asked.

“‘Yes,’ the farmer replied proudly.

“‘I’ll make you a deal. Let me take him and give him a good education. If the lad is anything like his father, he’ll grow to be a man you can be proud of.’

“And that he did. In time, Farmer Fleming’s son graduated from St. Mary’s Hospital Medical School in London, and went on to become known throughout the world as the noted Sir Alexander Fleming, the discoverer of Penicillin.

“Years afterward, the nobleman’s son was stricken with pneumonia. What saved him? Penicillin.

“The name of the nobleman? Lord Randolph Churchill. His son’s name? Sir Winston Churchill.

“Someone once said what goes around comes around.

“Jesus said it another way: ‘Give and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be poured into your lap’ (Luke 6:38).”

[*Trinity Times*, Sammie Rainey]

The First Word is published bi-monthly by:

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www.firstumcsb.org

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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICES

7:00 p.m. and 10:00 p.m.

We will be doing the “Lessons and Carols” at both services this year. Please plan to join us as we celebrate with scriptures and hymns.

YULOTTA SERVICE

On Christmas morning at 8:30 a.m., the Lowell Peterson family will keep an old Swedish tradition called Yulotta. The Yulotta Service will be held in the Chapel. This is a worship service in which we begin Christmas with the Christmas Story. We have kept this tradition for many years and we invite you to join us in the Chapel. Following the service, there will be refreshments in the Gathering Room.