



THE FIRST WORD

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

In the heart of the city since 1831

December 10, 2009

Issue #401

THE ADVENT OF CHRIST

Jesus came into the world as God, to show love and care and incredibly generous forgiveness.

What a gift.

And what a gift we can give to ourselves – to love ourselves enough to treat our bodies well, to get enough rest, to be good to ourselves. Caring for ourselves can mean taking time off to rest – or spending time doing challenging new things – or going out of our way to build up our circle of friends. Forgiving ourselves is part of the package – just as God forgives us, we need to let go of the old, ruined, self-condemnatory packages we load ourselves down with – give them up, and let God deal with them.

What a gift we can give to others – to love them enough to treat them well (sometimes we treat strangers more kindly than we do our own family!), to be good to them – to meet them wherever they are in their journeys, and walk along with them a ways. Caring for them is a gift – an unwrapped gift at Christmas time, giving what we can of ourselves and our resources, so that they may live more abundantly. Forgiveness – letting go of our hurts others have inflicted, and to stop blaming them for it! Forgive in the same way that we want God to forgive us.

Advent means something or someone coming. For the last several weeks of advent, we've been preparing for celebrating the coming of God's gift to us, Jesus.

I like what Craig Tornquist says – our life is what God gave to us – what we do with it is our gift to God.

Be generous this Christmas – to yourself, to others. Love, care, forgive.

Mary L. Hubbard

Worship Schedule

Worship, Chapel
8:45 a.m.

Sunday School
9:45 a.m.

Worship, Sanctuary
11:00 a.m.

Church Office Hours
Monday - Friday
7:30 a.m. - Noon
12:30 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.
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
Cathy Johnson
Church Growth Coordinator

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

A GREETING FROM THE CELTIC MUSICIANS



*May you know nothing but
happiness from this day forward.*

Please join us for the 8:45 a.m. Worship Service
(in the Chapel) and hear the Celtic Musicians play.

THE MERRIMATES

The Merrimates invite everyone to join us as we gather in Room #38 on the third floor at 9:45 a.m. on Sunday mornings from September through May. We enjoy a time of fellowship over coffee and light refreshments followed by a presentation. The presenters are members of our faith community who give generously of their time to share some aspect of their faith journey. Our class could be the means of the spiritual growth and fellowship you are seeking. All are welcome. Come and see!

COVENANT BIBLE CLASS

The Covenant Bible Class will be studying "The Early Church", using the DVD narrated by Ray Vander Laan beginning on October 18. Join us Sundays at 9:45 a.m. We are located on the second floor next to the Paradise Pictures Room.

THIS AND THAT

This and That is couples and families studying various topics and interpreting our everyday lives in a Christian context. We meet Sunday mornings at 9:45 a.m. in Room #22 on the second floor.

POTPOURRI CLASS

Join us in the Parlor Sunday mornings at 9:45 for the Potpourri Class. We are a group of friends meeting to share new ideas and explore old ideas. Our goal is to mold diversity into community.

NOVEMBER 24, 2009 CHURCH COUNCIL MINUTES

Spike Abernethy reported for the Finance Committee in two sections:

Meeting our 2009 budget: He stated we are in a “challenging position”. We are down about \$20,000.00 in income. Committees have been watching their budgets, so we can come in less than expected in expenses. It is hoped that more dollars will come in before the end of the year. If all of our apportionments are paid, we will be approximately \$60,000.00 in deficit. Noel Yarger responded by passing out a more detailed list of expenses, which included the projected expenses through the end of 2009. The Stewardship Committee suggested we have a “Second Mile Giving” with a goal set of \$66,000.00. Crews Perkey made a motion to have a Second Mile Campaign Drive beginning Dec. 7, 2009 with a goal of \$66,000.00 or more. Sue Wright seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. A letter will be sent to congregants signed by Rev. Hubbard, Bill Soderberg, Vern Casteel, and Noel Yarger.

Spike presented the budget for 2010: We discussed the budget line-by-line. Discussion was held as to how we might balance the budget. More money needs to be found or cuts, including salaries, may have to be made. It was moved by Crews Perkey and seconded by Don Lawther that the payback to restricted fund of \$6,000.00 be removed from the budget, the Celtic Musicians budgeted amount of \$10,400 be removed from the budget (this would be funded separately outside of the budget), Stewardship’s request of \$3,000.00 be removed from the budget, and office expenses be reduced by \$4,500.00, thus reducing the 2010 budget by \$23,900.00. The motion failed. It was felt that we did not have enough information to reduce the budget at this meeting. It was moved by Crews Perkey and seconded by Marty Casteel that the \$6,000.00 payback to restricted funds be removed from the 2010 budget along with \$4,500.00 office expenses, \$6,000.00 be removed from the utilities budget and \$3,000.00 be removed from Stewardship, thus removing a total of 19,500.00 from the 2010 budget at this time. The motion passed unanimously.

Don Lawther, Trustees Chair, stated Central UMC building has been sold for \$14,500.00. We are in the process of getting an appraisal on the Roush farm estate. The elevators have been certified. We are awaiting clarification on asbestos testing. Infrared testing on our wiring, as required by our insurance, will be done Dec. 30. The work on the roof over the chapel is completed. The South Bend Medical Foundation is no longer using our parking lot.

Pitner Traugher gave a presentation requesting funding for renovation of the Upper Room facilities by the Upper Room Board. It is estimated the renovation will cost approximately \$172,000.00 to complete. The timing is critical, since the donor wishes to match funds earned prior to December 31, 2009. The Upper Room board requested the Church Council approve a letter of intent to make the requested funds available. Spike Abernethy requested we submit a request to Zurich Insurance to make sure we are covered with enough fire/liability, etc. insurance. It was moved by Noel Yarger and seconded by Sue Wright that the Upper Room Renovation document be approved with the following modifications: The word trust be changed to fund rather than trust, and the Upper Room remains a part of the unified budget. The motion passed unanimously.

Karen Anderson reported Missions are going well and reminded everyone to support the Dec. 5th Fish Fry/Bazaar/Silent Auction to benefit The Upper Room.

Linda Phillips reported we have 12 new people coming to church and 6 are joining on Dec. 13th. There will be those joining in both the 8:45 and 11:00 services. She stated she has seven people in mind for the next new member breakfast. We have had 14 new first-timers in the last four Sundays. Let’s make people feel welcome by wearing our nametags.

Rev. Hubbard stated Larry Thompson created the garland of thanks used in Worship Sunday. Cathy Johnson has attended a weekend workshop on developing Wesley Covenant Groups. She plans to develop some small groups. Bill Soderberg is being replaced in 2010 by Sue Wright as Council Chair. Everyone appreciates all the fine work and dedication that Bill has given to the Church Council. THANKS, Bill, for a job well done.

Respectfully submitted by Karen Anderson, Secretary

PRAYER LIST

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

Mark Heyliger, MSG - In military service	Jim Borden - Health concerns
Stephen Gramza - In military service	Hannah Messersmith - Health concerns
Jonathan Mayers - In military service	Floyd Hugus - Health concerns
Michael Pershell - In military service	Gene Thompson - Health concerns
Jeremy Martin - Special needs	Becky Hurtik - Recovery
Pearl Rogers' Family - Many concerns	Gabriele Jamison - Health concerns
Peggy Soderberg - Health concerns	Maxine Jones - Health concerns

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

Martha Abernethy	Betty Byers	Gene (Art) Snyder	Mary Etta Rees
Ruth Garen	Virginia O'Hair	Rich Daniels	JoAnn Ballard
Clem Gramza	Clarence Dickey	Ivan Biddle	Jo Perkey
Hugh & Lois Warren	Marian Wilson	Jim Borden	Betty Barnes
LaVergne Hagenbuch	Freda Mossman	Melvena Stenger	Betty Fisk
Hannah Messersmith	Al Aguirre	Thair Best	Jack Fassnacht

Additionally pray for:

Our Bishop Mike	Our Church
Our District Superintendent Doug	Our Church Staff
Our Pastor Mary	

CHURCH FINANCES AS OF 12/9/09

Income: \$441,833.34

Expenses: \$487,817.09

Deficit: \$70143.75*

***Includes apportionments due**

SHOULD WE TITHE THE "GROSS" OR THE "NET"?

"The Lord's tithe is 10% of our gross salary or wages, or 10% of our net gain if we are in business for ourselves... What is deducted from our gross pay is for our own good. We in fact get it back, including what is provided by our income taxes"

"If a person tithes only... 10% of his actual pay, he is forgetting that the deductions ultimately are his as well. To tithe only the 'net' borders on giving grudgingly.... Furthermore, once a person begins to think of 'gross' and 'net' and opts for the latter, he will find himself thinking of other items that, though not deducted by his employer, he himself will deduct from God"

[*Tithing*, R.T. Kendall]

* * *

"You make a living by what you get, you make a life by what you give."

[*Select Stewardship Sermons*, Billy Graham]



OUR PLEDGE WILL NOT BE LOWERED

We recently completed our pledge card for 2010 for the local church where Marsha has her membership (bishops and other clergy are not members of local churches). We typically tithe our income to that church, and then we also make a variety of other gifts – including offerings to every church where I preach each Sunday, gifts to various United Methodist agencies, and of course other appeals.

This year, for the first time ever, we had to make a decision about our pledge as we anticipated a decline in our income in 2010. We bishops have voluntarily rolled back our 2010 salaries to the 2008 level, which means an actual decrease from this year to next year. When we discussed this situation, Marsha and I both immediately agreed that we will not lower our pledge for 2010, and in fact we decided to increase it.

I share that story not to brag about our generosity, because I know many, many people are giving and being generous in ways that exceed ours. I am not in the business of “bragging” or comparing my giving habits to anyone else.

I share that story because it illustrates for me the truth that our giving is not really tied to our income – it is tied to our desire to be grateful to God. Of course our income is a factor in our giving, but it is not the essential factor. The most important factor is our desire to express our gratitude to God.

Many congregations are discovering and sharing this truth. I see lots of church newsletters and websites, and I notice that there is far less emphasis upon “giving to support the church budget” and more emphasis upon “giving as an expression of gratitude to God.” I salute that shift, and I believe it is more healthy than the annual attempt to “meet the budget.” Of course every church has to develop and follow a realistic budget, but our focus is better placed upon stewardship rather than just fund-raising.

So I pray that you will determine your 2010 pledge in a way that reflects your income, but also in a way that reflects your desire to express your gratitude to God.

KID'S NEWS

By Diana Green

Three of our children memorized the 23rd Psalm in its entirety. Congratulations to Anna Adamsson, Hannah Easterbrook and Eila Ehmen! During December our children and youth are preparing for our presentation on Christmas Eve. We are also having fun learning more about Christmas. We've played Christmas charades and found some interesting information about the *12 Days of Christmas Song*.

PENNY UPDATE

As of December 7, we have collected \$463.04 toward our goal of a "Mile of Pennies!" Thanks to everyone for their help.



BROADWAY LAYWOMAN HONORED BY INDIANA WOMEN'S PRISON

Phyllis Newton, a member of Broadway UMC in Indianapolis with years of service and deep passion for the Indiana Women's Prison ministry, was recently named IWP's Religious Services Volunteer of the Year. (For those of you who don't know - Phyllis Newton is Diana Green's mother.) She received a quilt made by the offenders. She also received a standing ovation from the 150 volunteers, guests, staff and offenders present for the annual IWP volunteers event. Newton was chosen from more than 400 volunteers at IWP. She was honored for her work as an instructor-mentor in the PLUS unit of the prison and for her service in United Methodist Women.

NOVEMBER MISSION TALLIES

- Food Pantry:** For the month of November the Food Pantry served 429 families, representing 1,617 individuals.
- Soup Kitchen:** 1,236 people were served and 1,048 carry-out bags were given away for a total of 3,144 cups of soup served in November. Additionally, 400 plates of food was served at the Thanksgiving Feast!
- Upper Room:** 19 residents at this time (15 men and 4 women)



I'm Not Sayin' – I'm Just Sayin'

There is a new phrase (at least new to me) that is making the rounds. It usually is offered by younger people or by sports commentators, and it goes something like this: "I'm not sayin' - I'm just sayin'"

I heard a sports commentator recently use it this way: "I'm not sayin' their defense is bad, I'm just sayin' they rank last in the league in giving up points."

It is an interesting phrase. It is used to stop short of being accusatory or judgmental, but it goes on to state a truth that is obvious. Sometimes I hear it being used in short-hand such as, "I'm not say' it is (blank), I'm just sayin' ...". The end of that sentence, the obvious fact, is actually omitted, because it does not need to be stated.

An interesting phrase. I personally like it and think it is healthy. A church consultant might say to a local congregation, for example, "I'm not sayin' this church is dying, I'm just sayin' you don't ever seem to have any new professions of faith." A lay member of a congregation might say to a pastor, "I'm not sayin' you are a bad preacher, I'm just sayin' we don't get much out of your sermons." Or a pastor might say to a congregation, "I'm not sayin' this is a cheap church, I'm just sayin' our stewardship is poor."

I am not sure that phrase is very good grammar, but it may be effective. Such a phrasing may help us to state the facts without judging or labeling one another. Such a phrasing might help us to hear one another's criticisms or concerns more easily.

So here is my Advent version of that phrase:

I'm not sayin' it is time to get ready for Christmas, I'm just sayin' that Christ is coming! The problem with the Advent Season is that it comes just before Christmas, and we too easily get caught up in Christmas preparations so that we miss the real message: Christ is coming. We state that truth in our communion liturgy, "Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again." Yet we seldom talk or preach about the good news of Christ coming into our midst again and in new ways. Advent is the season to focus upon that good news, and yet we in the church often miss that message by only preparing for Christmas. So here is my reminder:

I'm not sayin' it is time to get ready for Christmas, I'm just sayin' that Christ is coming!

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THE CHURCH DIRECTORY

You are all familiar with “Murphy’s Law”! We have been experiencing our fair share of what can go wrong will go wrong, when it comes to the Church Directory.

Originally, we had announced the directories would be ready before Christmas. That is no longer the case. It will definitely be after the holidays; but we cannot give you an exact time frame right now.

Sorry for the delay!

JOIN US CHRISTMAS EVE



**7:00 p.m.
THE CHILDREN'S
NATIVITY DRAMA**



**10:00 p.m.
LESSONS
& CAROLS**