

Special points of interest:

November 2007

- Healthy Congregation Update
- New Wheels for Kevin Fundraiser
- Message From the Moderator
- Annual Thanksgiving Dinner

Stewardship 2008

This fall, we're proud to present "The Big Secret of Giving: Hidden Treasures in Life and Church," by Bill Green, Executive for Faith and Giving in Local Church Ministries, United Church of Christ. This outstanding 30-day stewardship devotional is an excellent

resource to help each of us reflection on our spiritual act of giving.

Each Sunday you will receive a 7 day devotional booklet as you leave the church (extra copies will be



Autumn

available at the church). The Stewardship team hopes that you will spend at least 15 minutes on each devotional.

Early in November, each member will

receive a pledge card. We ask that you consider all you have received in this past year.

Remember Pray
"God will meet your needs with generosity exceeding yours..." (Philippians 4:19)

"Ask, and it will be given you...." (Matthew 7:7)

With many decisions to make, often among equally important things, we need guidance. What we give, and how, is among those decisions.

Before you give, ask for help. Pray about it. Then return the Pledge card on or before November 18 – Stewardship

Women's Fellowship

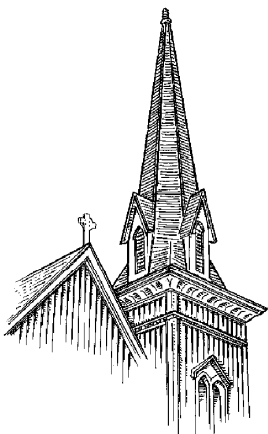
Please join us for a Kitchen Expansion update meeting November 12th at 7:00 p.m.

Gene Asbury, Architect, will join us.

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Healthy Congregation Update



Recently the Healthy Congregation Team and I met to evaluate process I have been doing with your congregation, what we've done and what lies ahead.

Since the whole process takes some months, it seemed like a good idea to update all of you, as well.

So far:

In July and August I led three workshops: Systems, Thinking, and Personality Disorder. Sixty-five of you participated in those.

Leading those workshops and being with you at other events has been a privilege and the words of a song, run through my head, "We've come this far by faith"... and faith will lead us on.

Work still to be done:

Experience with many congregations has taught me there are three important steps a congregation has to take in order to be ready to call a new pastor.

- Take time to look back. Someone has said our past not only affects our present; it determines our future. Not dealing with the past certainly changes the future.

- Consider the present. Where are you now? How do you see God's continuing work among you? What have you learned during this interim time.
- Look to the future. Where is God calling you as a congregation?

Dag Hammarskjold had a prayer for just such a time as this: "For all that has been, thanks. For all that will be, Yes!"

This work takes time, but it isn't easy to be patient.

During these last 4 months I've heard great appreciation for Beth who as your interim pastor continues the journey with you. I've also heard some impatience with part of the process. Impatience is natural. I don't know anyone who likes uncertainty and waiting.

When congregations rush the process, the new pastor often becomes their unintentional minister, especially after a long pastorate which ended badly. The good news is you are making progress and you will get there. This is a church I could happily be a part of... if you just

had weekly communion. Some months ago when I first talked with Rod Hawkins and Ruth Trower we had a general agreement about what I might do, but also left the plan open because none of us were entirely sure just what is needed.

When a church conflict is nasty, the process is very clear. When a church is like yours and there is little visible conflict and many good things going on, it isn't always so clear cut. Yet there seemed to be a need for finding ways to deal with what happened and how to make sure it doesn't happen again. As we have worked together for a while, the process seems clear.

Stage 1: This one we've done! There were 3 workshops: Understanding, System, and Personality Disorders - When I asked the question during those, "When you think about what happened with Mark, what words come to you?" the answers were as varied as you are.

Words such as betrayed, disappointed, angry, sad, confused, regretful, and some who said they just

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Healthy Congregation Update

The good news is that you are making progress and you will get there.

want to get over it and not keep talking about it. The array of answers is to be expected. The challenge is when people are in many different places, how do you make room for one another? Are those of you who are impatient to move on, willing to provide space for those who are still struggling?

I suspect this is the kind of situation Paul meant when he talked about our bearing each others burdens.

Stage 2: This is where we are now and we need your help to get to the stage after this one. At this stage there is a lot of information gathering.

On October 7, 2007, ten of us met after church. I shared a kind of *preliminary* report about what I've observed what may be the four most important issues for you to deal with before

a new pastor is called.

On October 21st, I met with the Mission Study Task Force who are preparing material which allows the pastoral search to begin. That will fill in some more of the pieces.

I also have been begun interviewing individuals about your experience and what you see as the issues.

The conclusion of this phase of our work will be a Preliminary Congregational Report on December 2, after church. I hope you'll come.

Stage 3: A group of sixteen people will be asked to form an Action Planning Team to look at how the congregation might best respond to the issues which have emerged.

People here will know much better than I do

what will work for you.

After they have done their initial work, everyone in the congregation will be invited to attend focus groups where all of you will have an opportunity to respond to the ideas and provide additional input.

After those meetings, the Action Planning Team will refine the plan and take it to your Council. If the plan is confirmed, then steps for implementation will be put into place.

If you have questions or comments, please give me a call at 827-6212 or email njroberts@verizon.net.

Norma Roberts,
Congregational Specialist

November Anniversaries

Robert & Jane Little - Nov 9th
Dick & Marcia Nagy - Nov 12th
Dick & Diane Swanson - Nov 13th
Michael & Lin Walton - Nov 22nd
Robert & Mary Scott - Nov 22nd
Ed & Margaret Bork - Nov 26th
William & Helen Chase - Nov 30th



November Birthdays

Birthdays -

Helen Chase - 1
 Ed Bork - 2
 Becky Blum - 5
 Madeleine Luna - 5
 Robert Scott - 5
 Claire Benjamin - 7
 Mildred
 Messamore - 7
 Gwen Yurieci - 9
 Jack Harrison - 10
 Kristy Hosack - 11
 Mary Davis - 12
 Owen Keeton - 16
 Paige Shipley - 16
 Garrett Staver - 16
 Laura Verplaetse - 16
 Kyle King - 17
 Andrea Brown - 18
 Marc Herren - 18



Susan Lutes - 23
 Donald Mason - 26
 Lori Blankenship - 28
 Carlyne Engle - 28
 Don Kearfott - 28
 Brent Paterson - 29

Dick Harrison - 19
 Eric Verplaetse - 19
 Terry Small - 20
 George Benjamin - 21
 Eleanor Kummer - 22
 Lin Walton - 22

Fall Group and Bake Sale

Thanks to all of you our Fall Group and Bake Sale was another rousing success! We made a record breaking \$3,418.97. With only a half dozen items priced over \$10, that means we sold LOTS of items to achieve this result.

In addition to providing the community with reasonable priced merchandise, we gave items to seven groups: the Crisis Nursery, Jesus House, McLean County Humane Society, Regional Office of Education (cap and gown for GED graduation ceremonies),

Safe Harbor, Donna Thomas, the Sandwich Lady, and Sugar Grove Nature Center. The remaining items (two pick ups and two vans full) were split between Home Sweet Home Ministries Mission Mart and the Salvation Army Thrift Shop. We supported our environmental mission by recycling cardboard and wire hangers.

Thank you for donating baked good and merchandise. Thank you for putting your items on the tables. Thank you for working before, during,

and after the sale. Thank you for buying raffle tickets for the afghan. Thank you for buying merchandise.

Charlene Beringer and Terry Small,
 Group Sale Coordinators

Christian Education

The month of October was filled with opportunities to grow in faith, and November promises to have just as many. The kids in the Garden have finished the creation unit and will begin learning about the story of Ruth and Naomi. This is a wonderful unit. I encourage anyone who has an interest in working with our younger set to answer that call. You will be blessed!

We will also be teaching the children about the various elements in worship and their history and purpose. As a part of that, we will be finding ways that our children can more fully participate in worship.

The adults will be studying “The Wired Word”, a weekly lesson that takes a current event and looks at it biblically. I have been a part of these lessons before, and they are always



interesting and thought-provoking.

Advent is just around the corner! The adults will be participating in a study called, “Pausing on the

Road to Bethlehem”, a study by Ann Weems.

The younger children will be learning about Mary and Elizabeth in the Garden. We will have an advent event on December 2 which will include decorating the church, as well as activities for the younger set.

We are all so blessed to belong to a church community that values learning and growing in our faith.

Praise and thanks to our God!

Kathy Otto

Money Matters

September 30, 2007

GENERAL FUND	ACTUAL	BUDGET
Receipts	\$173,610	\$173,235
Disbursements	\$151,472	\$168,244

5 YEAR CAPITAL CAMPAIGN

2007 Results through September

Pledged	\$26,850
Received	\$17,581

Thank you for your contribution to the ministries of St. Luke Union Church.

New Wheels for Kevin Fundraiser

Thank you to everyone in the congregation who helped in any way to make our fundraiser such a success. It was a blessing to watch everyone pull together for a great cause that had a positive ripple effect in the community. To date we have raised over \$28,000.

We all look forward to seeing Kevin coming to church in his new wheel chair.



Kevin, Becca and Carson with Becca's parents, Roger and Donna Ewert

You've Gotta Eat!!!

Come one, come all to our November Soup Supper.

Thursday, November 8th at 5:00 p.m., we will be having our monthly "Theme" dinner. Agape Committee will provide

Potato Leek Soup and Vegetable Soup.

If you would like to bring a dish to pass or crackers, breads, or anything to go with the "Theme," please feel free to do so. For

those unable to bring a dish to pass, the dinner will cost \$4.00.

Everyone is welcome!

World Community Day

World Community Day will be celebrated on Friday, November 2nd at 6:30 p.m. at First Christian Church, 401 W. Jefferson St., Bloomington with a covered dish supper.

Please bring your own

table service and a dish to share. Beverages will be provided. The program "Embracing Justice Under God's Tent" will be presented by women from Wayman AME and St. Luke Union Churches. Church World Service

Projects: Kits or money for kits will also be collected that evening.

Please join Church Women United for the evening.

Home Bible Class

The Home Bible Class will meet on Thursday November 8th at 1:30 p.m. in Fellowship Hall.

Our study is Lesson #2 “Reluctant Prophets and Faithful Foreigners” from our study book “Above and Beyond.”

Hostesses will be Ida Kempin and Margie Marquardt.



The families of
Charles H. “Pete” Peters and
Nadine Yurieci

Thank You Notes

The Greiner family wishes to thank friends at St. Luke Union Church for the prayers, cards, and get-well wishes for John, Clara and her sister Evelyn.

Thanks to all!

Thanks so much to my church family for all of your prayers, calls, cards, visits and concerns during my recent surgeries.

What a blessing you are!

Sincerely,

Margie Marquardt

We wish to thank all of our St. Luke Union friends for the cards and expressions of sympathy after the loss of our father/father-in-law/grandfather, Melvin Finch.

Your support was greatly appreciated.

Jim & Cathy Finch and
Melissa Kummer

We send our gratitude and most sincere thanks to Pastor Beth, our Good Shepherds, Carol and Chuck Parlette, our St. Luke Union family for your prayers, calls, and support through our recent injuries and a lengthy illness.

The Hammers,
Mark, Barry, Marilyn, Jay

Stewardship

As Pastor Beth mentioned in her sermon on Sunday, October 28, we have lived in abundance. Please reflect on how God has abundantly provided in your life and prayerfully consider how you will support St. Luke Union Church in 2008. Pledge cards will be mailed the first part of November, and Dedication Sunday is November 18. As in the previous years, your pledge amount will remain anonymous.

It's up to us to consider how we're going to accomplish the three goals Council continues to strive toward: 1) attract new families, 2) grow in Bible study, and 3) improve facilities. Will we continue to be able to support the basic operating expenses such as salaries and utilities, or will we be able to grow in our programs

and membership to meet the goals set by Council? This journey is a process, not an end. I'd like to end by repeating a prayer from the stewardship weekly devotional:

Giver of life, source of freedom and assurance, we are reminded by the psalmist that yours is "the earth and its fullness; the world and those who dwell in it." From your hand we have received all we have, and are, and can be. Help us to use your gifts wisely and teach us to share them generously. May your love in Christ show in us for others. Remind us that in all we face nothing can separate us from your grace and blessing but our own betrayal. Amen

If you have questions about the stewardship campaign, please contact Tammy Desmond, Penny Kellogg, or Pastor Beth.

Council News

Council Update:

- Activated Nominating Committee
- Approved vacation request for Pastor Beth
- Met with and approved new members, Wil and Betty Stevenson
- Dedication Sunday will be Nov 18th
- Resource Ministry requested approval of funds for financial audit
- A representative from personnel is needed for Resource Ministry

From the **PASTOR**—



November, the month of Thanksgiving....

I love the fall and especially the idea of a month of Thanksgiving. I am amazed at what I can put on a Thanks- giving list this year.

I am most of all thankful for my family, my husband and his new job, my son Paul who's diligent inspires me daily and for the opportunity to celebrate with friends and family Aly and Shawn's marriage and the beginning of their life as a married couple.

I am thankful for this congregation. For the fact that just 15 months after one of the most horrific months of this congregation life ... new life and healing abound.

I am thankful that this congregation has been willing and continues to work on grief work, knowing they will be strong on the other side of grief. It is not easy work, we get tired of talking about the embezzlement and betrayal yet we know that unless we do ... we won't move through our grief.

I am thankful for this summer and fall, for an amazing Vacation Bible School with lots of children and adults, having a great time, learning about God and the Bible.

I am thankful for a new sign... that brought in visitors to a wonderful ice cream social.

I am thankful for a wonderful Fall Round Up. For great volunteers that created games, ordered bouncy things, cooked food and created advertising and sent it around town. I am thankful for our visitors, family and friends who celebrated the fall season with us.

I am thankful for teachers and students that are actively engaged in Bible Study on Sunday mornings and through out the week.

I am thankful for new carpeting!

I am thankful for a great group sale and all of our "junk and treasures" and all the folks who work to make it the most successful ever.

I am thankful for a great team of folks, willing to "stand" with Kevin and Becca and help Kevin get a "new set of wheels". It is amazing to see so many helping hands making a difference and letting our community know we are a friendly church with the Big Family feel.

I am thankful for the opportunity to serve as your pastor!

Thanks and Glory to our Amazing Creator, Patient Redeemer and Always Present Sustainer.

Blessings,

Pastor Beth

Message From the Moderator

What a great theme for this year's stewardship: Congregational Vitality ... *READY, SET, GROW!*

My first thoughts are growth in numbers. One of the goals of the Vision and Ministry Council this year has been to attract new families (and singles) to our church family.

This past month we welcomed Wil and Betty Stevenson to our congregation. They are a delightful couple, transferring to us from the Park United Presbyterian Church in Streator. Wil and Betty have wasted no time involving themselves in our adult Bible study programs offered here at St. Luke Union Church. They have added great perspective to our discussions. Please take the time to visit with them during fellowship hour after Sunday services.

Another thought comes to me about growth. Our physical growth. Those of us who use the building several times during the week, know that we have to take our turn with the conference room, the kitchen, and the fellowship hall. It usually works out when we take a close look at the calendar to see what

all is going on, but wouldn't it be nice to have a little, or a lot, more space in the kitchen, maybe another conference room, larger bathrooms and a drive on the west side of the building? What about a choir room? How about an elevator to the basement level? These are a few of the dreams from the Kitchen Remodeling Task force. Much of our building is not handicap accessible. A few of the expansion ideas would bring our building into the 21st century. Parents and grandparents would have the ability to spend time in the Garden area with the children on Sunday mornings if it were accessible to those with walkers, wheelchairs, bad knees, hips ... and other age related aches and pains!

The third area of growth, which is closest to my heart is a desire for spiritual growth in all members of our congregation. Our Learning Ministry Team has offered many more opportunities for spiritual growth over the last two years.

We have Sunday morning Adult Sunday School. Wednesdays are an evening

for fellowship over dinner and study that has morphed from Alpha to Beta and now Omega.

Weekly study on Thursday evenings is our First Place Bible study. For day timers, Home Bible Study meets monthly on the second Thursdays in the afternoon and the Wednesday Lunch Bunch group gathers at noon every Wednesday while sharing a brown bag lunch and Bible study.

As a part of the Presbyterian Women fellowship, our Lamplighter's circle meets every 4th Tuesday evening to study the current Horizon's Bible Study which is studied by thousands of PW's all across the globe.

There are so many opportunities available for all to participate. But the desire for your own spiritual growth has to come from the yearning of your own heart. Learning Team can only present you with these opportunities. During this year's stewardship drive, we are offering 30 days of meditations for each family to share.

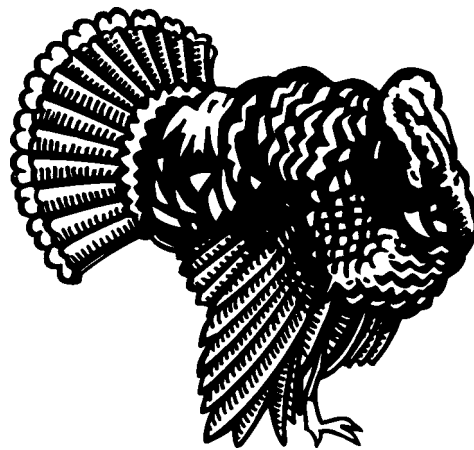
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November