

YOUR 2010 CHURCH COUNCIL

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ST. PAUL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

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St Paul United Church of Christ

JANUARY / FEBRUARY 2010 NEWSLETTER

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PASTOR PATTI'S PONDERINGS—

Blue Christmas? Have an Epiphany

There's nothing like unmet expectations to shatter our hopes; like inner turmoil to disturb our peace. There's nothing like stress-filled words to shake our love; like worries and cares to rob us of our joy. Somehow the four candles of Advent, hope, peace, love and joy seem too easily to get blown out by the winds of anxiety, fear, loss and change.

Have you, or someone you love, had a blue Christmas this year? Lots of folks do—and even those of us who would say we had a good, or even a wonderful Christmas, have had “blue” moments. When memories of times gone by make us misty-eyed for what was. When the realities of today just don't measure up. When we yearn for something we just know we can't or shouldn't have. So, when our Christmas is blue, what do we do? How can we find peace of mind, and shake those blues away? The key, I believe, is in adjusting our expectations to see the bigger picture. The Magi, those wise guys from 2,000 years ago, can help us get through the letdown of post-Christmas blues. Let's travel with them for a moment, and see if they can help us get a clearer vision. Who were these Wise Men? We don't know much about them, or how many there were... even though tradition assigns them names. What we do know, is that they paid attention. They watched the stars and saw a sign—a sign of hope for a different future. And when they saw that sign, they got busy. They talked with each other. They planned a trip—to see for themselves. They gathered resources, and gave it all they had. They believed they would find what they were looking for, and prepared presents, just in case. They wanted to be ready.

After many, many long days and weary nights, they arrived in Bethlehem, drawn there by the star. They found baby Jesus, the Child of Hope. And they worshipped him, and gave him the gifts they had prepared—gold, frankincense, and myrrh. We call this day “Epiphany”. Epiphany stands for the day we set aside to remember the visit of the Magi.

PASTOR PATTI'S PONDERINGS—Continued

Because of what happened when the Magi visited Jesus, our language made up a new word! To “have an epiphany” is to suddenly have something click or fall into place. It’s to “get it,” to have a clear and satisfying answer to a troubling question. When the wise travelers found baby Jesus, they knew in their hearts that he was special, that the world would be saved by this seemingly powerless baby boy. And they worshipped him. Their hope wasn’t answered forever in that moment—many hard times still lay ahead. Their dreams haunted them, warning them that King Herod was out to get this Child Savior, so they snuck out of town by a different route. They still had many weary miles travel to return home, and wonder how it all was going to pan out after all. Still, in their moments of doubt, they had the memory of the Baby to hold onto—the miracle of knowing that the signs they saw in the sky were answered in the mystery of a baby’s birth. They had participated in that miracle by seeking him out, and giving him the gifts of their hearts.

We have that same miracle to hold onto. The coming of the Christ-child offers us hope, not for a “quick-fix,” but for something much bigger than that. We hope for the healing of the whole world. We hope in the cosmic movement of the stars, in the unfolding of history and time, that God is at work. The Bethlehem baby reminds us that we are loved, no matter what. And God is not finished with us yet.

As a cure for the “Christmas blues,” may God grant each one of us an “Epiphany.” May we remember God’s love revealed in the birth of a child, and may we take the long view, and look for the healing of the whole world. May we prepare our gifts, and give them joyfully, knowing that they, too, will make a difference.

Pastor Patti

LENT IS JUST AROUND THE CORNER

On February 17 at 7pm there will be a joint Ash Wednesday service with St. James. Watch the Web calendar/weekly email update/bulletin announcement sheet for details.

Seminary Intern Wally Tatara is working with Pastor Patti and St. James UCC on a program for Wednesday evenings during Lent, as part of his Internship experience. Mark your calendars now—this is sure to be a dynamic opportunity!

ACTIVITIES

Upcoming Events:

- **Soup & Salad Luncheon — January 17, 2010 immediately following the service.**
Sign up sheets are on the Opportunity Table.
- **Sauerkraut Dinner—March 5, 2010**

We still need help with Coffee Hour’s. If your interested but not sure how it works, see Bev Miller or Betsy Marl.

OUTREACH & MISSION

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT TO:

Cass Corridor, Ronald McDonald House meals, E-Home Bingo, SASS Thanksgiving Basket, Advent Folders, Salvation Army Bell Ringers, SASS Christmas Basket, Adopt-a-Family gifts, and the Christmas Fund (Veterans of the Cross) Offering

MONTHLY OPPORTUNITIES:

Outreach and Mission Meeting	January 4 & February 1 7:00 p.m.
Cass Corridor	January 23 & February 27
E-Home Bingo	January 19 & February 16
Ronald McDonald House Meal	January 21 & February 25
Loving Yarns Needlework	Wednesdays from 1:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.
Loving Hands Quilt Group	January 9 & February 6 at 10:00a—2:30p

SPECIAL OPPORTUNITIES:

Lenten Folders begin February 17
In late winter or early spring there will be a chance to help fill gift boxes to send to our service people. Please watch and listen for details in the bulletin and during announcements in church.

BULLETIN BOARD

Check the Bulletin Board outside the Chapel for current Mission activities and thank-you notes

FOR DETAILS ON OPPORTUNITIES CONTACT:

Kay Girbach, Margaret Auten, Robyn Girbach, Bruce Finkbeiner, Lisa Hartman, Gayle Rogers

COTTAGE MEETING THEMES—FALL 2009 (continued)

Every committee report your work regularly and timely.
List committee contacts so people know who to contact.
Put Covenant of Behavior into hymnal.

Ideas for increased stewardship

Office management: Limit number of bulletin inserts. Use email more than snail mail to save postage. Financial secretary needs a backup.
Use of financial resources: Make budget cuts so we aren't in the red. Make the best use of our Memorial resources. Don't start projects until there is money for it. Budget for repairs. Use Endowment funds to pay for needed building repairs.
Use of building: Rent out the church at a fair market value—or ask for donations: for new things, we'd need to check on health dept. regulations and possibly have to upgrade the kitchen; for existing things like weddings and kitchen rental to the Chocolate lady, charge a fair market value for our services. Develop a hold harmless policy. Check out inviting Northridge to rent our church on Saturday nights.
External resources: Work with the denomination for support and resources during this time of financial exigency.
Stewardship of building and grounds: hire a handyman for small repairs. Separate parsonage repairs from church building repairs. Sell the parsonage down the road, and offer the pastor a housing allowance.
Education: Encourage financial stewardship of all our members.

Ideas to improve our welcome

Open the church: Church is too locked up, make it perceived as more open—how to do this while keeping people and stuff safe.
Quit fighting: We need to find a way to stop the infighting that still exists in the church, and develop more comfort and understanding.
Recruit new members: Develop a membership committee to develop our skills for bringing in new members, spread the word of our church. Bring in an outside trainer.
Lead youth: We need leadership for our youth.
Pastoral presence: Pastor should be more available to people.
Involve new members: Ask new members for suggestions.
Tend to space: At times our coffee hour is getting jammed—not enough seats. What to do?
Involve children and youth more.
Non-intrusive welcome: Welcome newcomers but don't overwhelm them with too much information at once.
Reach out: Visit others in community, not just members of our congregation—reach out to others and offer help.
Build enthusiasm.

Ideas for framing our church identity and mission

Find our own niche: What is unique about who we are as God's people, distinguishing us from other churches? we could be a church for folks 55 and up, for example.
Grow: Grow in whatever areas God blesses us, don't only focus on young people.
Reach out: to Brecon Village more; provide transportation from Brecon to here.

QUILT GROUPS BAZAAR & BAKE SALE—A HUGE SUCCESS!

GREAT NEWS! The Craft Bazaar and Bake Sale held on December 5th raised over \$1,000! Isn't that wonderful? Who would have thought that we would bring in that much! Some of the money will be given to the Loving Hands Quilt Group and some will go to the Prayers and Squares Ministry.

The remaining items (stockings, ornaments, jewelry, etc.) have been given to Social Services in Saline. We understand they will have a night where children will be able to come in and shop for "free", so our items will certainly bless some families. Isn't it a great feeling to know that we are making a difference in people's lives?

The Silent Auction was fun and a great success as well as the Christmas Revisited section of the sale. It brought even more fun and variety to our sale. There were also other tables setup to benefit other ministries such as Pine Ridge and the Gospel Choir.

Thank you to all those who baked goods, cooked soup and chili, made crafts, set up & cleaned up, priced items, sold crafts & food, and those who planned and organized our first Bazaar & Craft Sale! We want to thank Florine for taking over the "kitchen" for us. We appreciate all that you do for us, Florine. Also thanks to all of you who donated items for our sale and helped with the setup and cleanup. We would also like to thank Gayle Rogers for stepping up and organizing the bazaar details on Friday. Neither Karen or I were able to be there, so the responsibility fell on Gayle. Karen had a another death in the family and was out of town, and I was sick (again).

We understand that some people who donated handmade items were upset by the low prices. As a group, we decided to price low for 2 reasons:

1. The Prayers and Squares Prayer Quilt Ministry isn't about money, it's about the prayers. We just wanted to make enough money for us to purchase fabric and batting for future quilts. The Loving Hands Group will be making a quilt for the Ice Cream Social again and we needed money for that. We didn't want to be greedy.
2. We understand that times are tough for many people and wanted to make it possible for people to purchase our items and enjoy them. Several people commented how nice it was that our prices were affordable for them.

Next year, we will ask those donating items to please price them before they bring them in (if they choose to). This way, crafters will be able to assign what they consider to be a fair market value for their handiwork. This was the first time St. Paul had done a Christmas Bazaar, so it was a new experience for us. We've learned a lot from this first experience and will carry that knowledge with us as we make future plans.

If you have feedback to give us about the bazaar, please contact either Karen Basile, at the church office 734-429-7716 or email: secretary@uccstpaul.org, or Mary Ann Sweet 734-355-8251 (day) and at 734-439-3048 (evening) or email: grambino1@sbcglobal.net.

PARISH NURSE NEWS: Survey Results

A total of 21 responses were received from the one survey. The area identified as the greatest interest were in the area of disease prevention which included exercise, stress management and nutrition. Also programs addressing the aging process, depression and self esteem received the most responses. People have expressed an interest in meditation and prayer classes. We will try to address these topics in the coming year. I will try to contact those individuals that expressed a need for individual counseling.

~Greta Graban—Parish Nurse

ANNUAL REPORTS & COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP UPDATE—2010

ANNUAL REPORTS — It's time again to start preparing your Annual Reports. Please have your reports emailed into the church office no later than Sunday, January 31st.

COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP UPDATE — An updated list of committee memberships, teams, ICM, etc. is needed to publish in the 2010 Committee Membership List. The following information is needed: Name, Phone Number, & Email address. Please email your complete list to the office at secretary@uccstpaul.org.

“SIT & SEW” - COME JOIN US—LOVING HANDS QUILT GROUP

Starting in 2010 the Loving Hands Quilt Group will be meeting more to “Sit & Sew” together. We will get together each month for a “Sit & Sew” day where everyone brings in any project they would like to work on.

We will have coffee and tea, play music to work by, and eat a packed lunch for a break at 12:00pm. If anyone needs a helping hand or has a question, there will be other sewers there to give guidance. Everyone can work at their own pace and skill level on whatever project they wish to.

The Loving Hands Quilt Group will meet the 1st Saturday of the month (except for the month of January) from 10:00am—2:30pm.

Our next scheduled gathering is Saturday, January 9th — We will Sit & Sew as well as discuss patterns for the Ice Cream Social “Raffle” quilt. (Normally we would meet the 1st Saturday of the month, however January 2nd is too close to the end of the holidays).

Please join us if you can and bring a friend! It will be a good time of fellowship and fun!

COTTAGE MEETING THEMES—FALL 2009

Signs of Growth and Vitality

Increased membership
Sound Projection/Hearing Impaired System (paid for)
People are accepting of changes i.e. Praise Band.
Church has benevolence level not seen in other places.
Congregation is involved in decision-making.
Family feeling.
Letting the pastor know she's appreciated.
It's okay to have different opinions.

Ideas to improve worship

Sermon: Make the sermon more interactive—outline on screen, on bulletin, guiding sheet to fill in blanks. Sermons could be improved by translating what the Bible passage means more for our time, how to apply it in our lives now. How to relate to issues in our time—more direct, not in parables.
Service Length: Many wish we weren't so focused on time, others want the service to be limited to an hour. Resolve this tension by addressing the meaning and components of effective worship.
Prayer: Address the prayer time in the service—do we still want to take concerns, have individual prayers offered? How can we better utilize the prayer cards? Use prayer chain more. Should we email prayer concerns in the weekly update? Some people prefer saying, others singing, the Lord's prayer—be sure to vary it so everyone has time that works for them.
Music: Like variety. Some experience music as too loud. Include old hymns as well as new; pay attention to the wording on traditional hymns—be true to the traditional language. Permission to say “Amen” when a hymn is finished. Like Praise Band music. Have a praise service about every 4-6 weeks, or at another time, i.e. Saturday night. Make it really different. No background on the hymn words—too hard to read.
Meditation: Create an meditative environment in the sanctuary prior to the service.
Special Services: Have young adults light candles at Christmas time.
Service Time: Revisit service time in spring—10am is good time.
Announcements: Limit time for announcements, put in a place in the service that doesn't interrupt the flow of worship.
Creeds: In Apostles Creed explain what “catholic” means—universal/all-inclusive.
Communion: Worship committee sets how communion is given.

Ideas to improve communication

Put announcements up on screen during worship services
Have the office covered more hours during the week.
Report attendance each Sunday.
Submit more of what we do to local papers, radio, local TV station
Work on the church's website.
Give out proposed budget two weeks before the congregational meeting.
Have another round of cottage meetings in 6 months.
Publish where we are financially in a more timely fashion; include a chart on the wall.
Explain the Memorial Fund, what it is and how it's used. [this could be published on our Website]

FROM THE DESK OF GERALD MILLER

This past Sunday we held a Congregational Meeting concerning Phase 1 of the Building maintenance projects. There was confusion during the meeting. I hope I can relieve some of it.

First concerning the windows. The \$65,000.00 relates to the complete restoration it that is needed. It is felt that a complete restoration will not be necessary. We must remember that these windows are over 100 years old and this is the first time that St. Paul has done any work on them.

Concerning cost and where the money will come from. St. Paul has received a gift of \$130,000 with no strings attached. We feel that we should use this money for the repairs. When the time comes to beautify the sanctuary the money should come from the Congregation as we did with the elevator project. We need to place money for this project in the Building Fund.

Finally, all who desire to serve on the committee for the Stain Glass Windows may contact Gary Braun or me. The Building and Grounds Committee also need more members. We seem quick to offer suggestions but not quick to offer help to carry them out. Step up today!

May God bless you and your family this Christmas Season and may the New Year bring you peace.

Gerald Miller, Congregational President.

ALL-CHURCH RETREAT: COTTAGE MEETINGS REVISITED

Join St Paul Church Council for a Sunday evening potluck fellowship, discussion, and planning time on Sunday, January 31 at 4pm. We will be discussing and expanding on the ideas generated in the cottage meetings, and making plans for the new year. Bring your ideas and some food to share. Meeting will be held in the church basement.

AFFORDABLE ADULT DAY SERVICES AT E-HOME

Evangelical Homes of Michigan is pleased to receive a grant from the Ann Arbor Area Community Foundation (AAACF) that makes available funds to provide adult day services to individuals with low income. The grant comes from the Anna Botsford Bach Fund for Seniors, which was founded in 2003 to provide support to the elderly and their caregivers in Washtenaw County. Under the terms of the grant, individuals may receive adult day services up to four hours a day, three days a week.

Adult Day Services at the Memory Support Center have been designed to give a personalized approach and attention to persons with mid-to-late-stage dementia. Through engaging activities and meaningful relationships provided by experienced employees, this program promotes the self-esteem and dignity of these individuals. In addition to providing social, spiritual, and recreational care for members, this program creates a network of support to provide much-needed assistance and education to caregivers and families.

One in every two people over the age of 85 will have dementia, regardless of race, gender, or socio-economic status. Providing care for individuals with dementia is expensive, time-consuming, and emotionally draining for families and caregivers. This is why it is important that the services of the Adult Day Care program be available to everyone, including individuals who cannot pay. The grant money allows us to provide adult day services to anyone in the community regardless of their ability to pay. Memory loss has no boundaries—it has the potential to affect anyone regardless of their socio-economic status.

The Memory Support Center, located on the campus of Brecon Village in Saline, opened its doors in October of this year. The Adult Day Services opened November 1st, and operates 7 days a week, depending on the need. Regular rates for the Adult Day Services are \$16.75 per hour, two hour minimum. For more information on accessing adult day services or qualifying for the grant support, please contact Kelly Adams at (734) 295-9811.

THANK YOU FROM RON BOLDMAN

Rose, my family and I thank all of you for the wonderful day honoring me as Pastor Emeritus at St. Paul Church. The service, the coffee hour, the plaque and all the special letters of remembrance have truly blessed us. We thank you and praise God for it all. Thank you. Love, Ron & Rose Boldman

2010 PRAYERS & SQUARES SCHEDULE

The Prayers & Squares Prayer Quilt Ministry meets on the 2nd Tuesday of every month at 2:30pm. Please join us if you can to help grow this important ministry. To receive reminders of upcoming meetings, sign up at: <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/prayerquiltministry/>

MEMBERSHIP INQUIRY CLASS

2 Sundays, February 21 and 28 from 4-5:30 pm in the Fellowship Room across from the Sanctuary

Week one will cover the basic teachings and practices of the Christian faith, as well as the United Church of Christ.

Week two will cover the history and organizational structure of St. Paul UCC, and what it means to be a member at St. Paul.

All are invited to attend—whether a member or not; it's a great opportunity to learn more. To register, sign up on the sheet on the Information Table or see Pastor Patti. Registration Deadline: Feb. 14 (Valentine's Day)

LET'S HAVE A FRESH START

Please pick up your dishes by the end of the year from the Fellowship Room. After January 1st they will be donated.

MARTIN LUTHER KING JR DAY — VIEWING OF VIDEO CLIP

On Sunday, January 17 at 4:00 pm there will be a viewing and discussion of a 15-minute documentary video clip, "What Makes Me White." Pastor Patti and Tom saw this clip at the UCC General Synod meeting in Grand Rapids and found it to be really interesting. Rev. Renee Jackson and members of First Congregational Church Ypsilanti will join in on this special MLK Jr. Day Youth and Adult Christian Education event. If you would like nursery or child care to be made available, contact Pastor Patti. Guests are invited to bring a finger food to share, if they wish.

MEMBERS NEEDED — STAINED GLASS RESTORATION SUB-COMMITTEE

Building and Grounds Committee is looking for members to serve on the Stained Glass Restoration Sub-Committee, this Sub-committee is being formed to determine best course of action to restore our 100 year old stained glass. Committee will meet for the duration of the project. Size of the committee will be limited to 5 - 7 members and will report to the Building and Grounds Committee. Please contact Gary Braun gbraun1015@aol.com if you are interested.

FOOD PREPARERS NEEDED — CASS CORRIDOR

FOOD PREPARERS NEEDED — The group who cooks for Cass Corridor retired at the end of December. We really need two to four people to prepare the food between 10:00 am and 12:00pm on the fourth Saturday of each month. If you could help one or more months, please contact Bruce Finkbeiner 944-3135.

2010 CHURCH OFFICE HOURS — CHANGE

NEW 2010 PASTOR HOURS

Beginning Jan. 4 Pastor's office hours will be as follows:

Mon. 12:30p-4:30p and Tue. 8:30a-12:30p and by appointment.

You may reach the Pastor directly at any time at 730-9808. E-mail: pastor@uccstpaul.org

NEW 2010 CHURCH OFFICE HOURS

Beginning Jan. 5 the church office hours will be as follows: Mon. 1:00p-4:00p (volunteer staffed). **The church secretary is available Tue., Wed. & Thurs. 8:30a-2:30p.** Volunteers in the office on Monday's will not have access to confidential information. If you have confidential information to pass along, please email Karen Basile at the church office or call during her office hours, Tuesday through Thursday. **429-7716. Email: secretary@uccstpaul.org**