

December

CHRIST
THE SAVIOR
is BORN!

Church Staff

Pastor: Evan Lash

Director of Music Ministries: Rose Marie Dure

Coordinator of Youth Ministries—Jennifer Casper

Coordinator of Children & Family Ministries: Robin Podell

Secretary: Sharon Daniels—Receptionist: Becky Read

Housekeepers: Phyllis Jones & Pam Braddy

Maintenance—Paul Lux

Discovery Days Preschool Staff

Dorothy Cahill, Shawn Cothran, Kyleen Fuller,

Laura Gray, Jaunda Kneller, Shae Taylor

calendar



Over 2,000 years ago, a baby was born into this world—a gift of life, of hope, of love, and eventually great joy. He was a fragile thing as all babies are. He only survived because he was loved and cared for—the necessities of life. His family, His friends, and many of His faith, knew that Jesus was a great gift from God to them. He is also a great gift of life, hope, love, and joy to you. A gift is only really a gift when it is received. My prayer for you this Christmas is that you receive your gift and share Him with others.

The following is a favorite Christmas story of mine. I no longer remember the source, but I am sure that the author will not mind if I share it with you.

“it’s been thirty years since I last saw her, but in memory she’s still there every holiday season. I especially feel her presence when I receive my first Christmas card.

I was 12 years old and Christmas was only two days **away. The season’s first blanket of white magnified** the excitement.

I dressed hurriedly, for the snow was waiting. What would I do first—build a snowman, slide down the hill or just throw the flakes in the air and watch them flutter down?





Our family's station wagon pulled into the driveway, and Mom called me over to help with the groceries. **When we finished carrying in the bags, she said, "Bob, here are Mrs. Hildenbrandt's groceries."**

No other instructions were necessary. As far back as I **could remember, Mom shopped for Mrs. Hildenbrandt's** food and I delivered it. Our 95-year old neighbor lived alone, was crippled from arthritis and could take only a few steps with a cane.

I liked Mrs. Hildenbrandt. I enjoyed talking with her; more accurately, I enjoyed listening to her. She told me wonderful stories about her life-about a steepled church in the woods, horse and buggy rides on Sunday afternoons and her family farm without electricity and running water.

She always gave me a dime for bringing in her groceries. It got so that I would refuse only halfheartedly, **knowing she would insist. Five minutes later, I'd be across the street in Beyer's candy store.**

As I headed over with the grocery bags, I decided this **time would be different though, I wouldn't accept any** money. This would be my Christmas present to her.

Impatiently, I rang her doorbell. "Come in, come in," she said cheerfully. "Put the bag on the table." I did so more hurriedly than usual because I could almost hear the snow calling me back outside.

She sat at the table, picked the items out of the bag and told me where to set them on the shelves. I usually enjoyed doing this, but it was snowing.

As we continued, I began to realize how lonely she was. Her husband had died more than 20 years before, she had no children, and her only living relative was a nephew in Philadelphia, who never visited her.

Nobody ever called on her at Christmas. There would be no tree, no presents, no stocking. For her, Christmas was now only a date on the calendar.

She offered me a cup of tea, which she did every time I brought in the groceries. Well, maybe the snow could wait.

We sat and talked about what Christmas was like when she was a child. Together, we traveled back in time, and an hour passed before I knew it.

"Well, Bob, you must be wanting to play outside in the snow," she said as she reached for her purse, fumbling for the right coin.

"No, Mrs. Hildenbrandt, I can't take your money this time. You can use it for more important things," I resisted.

She looked at me and smiled. "What more important





thing could I use this money for, if not to give it to a **friend at Christmas?" she asked and then placed a whole quarter in my hand.**

I tried to give it back, but she would have none of it.

I hurried out the door and ran over to Beyer's candy store with my fortune. I had no idea what to buy—comic books, a chocolate soda, ice cream. Then, I spotted a Christmas card with an old country church in the woods on the cover. It was just like the church Mrs. Hildenbrandt described to me, and I knew I had to buy it.

I handed Mr. Beyer my quarter, and borrowed a pen to sign my name.

"For your girlfriend?" Mr. Beyer asked.

I started to say "no", but quickly changed my mind. "Well, yeah, I guess so."

As I walked back across the street with my gift, I was so proud of myself I felt like I had just hit a home run to win the World Series. No, I felt a lot better than that!

I rang Mrs. Hildenbrandt's doorbell. "Hello, Mrs. Hildenbrandt," I said as I handed her the card. "Merry Christmas."

Her hands trembled as she slowly opened the enve-

lope, studied the card and began to cry. "Thank you, very much," she said in a whisper. "Merry Christmas to you."

ON a cold and windy afternoon a few weeks later the ambulance arrived next door. My mom said they found Mrs. Hildenbrandt in bed; she had died peacefully in her sleep. Her night table light was still on when they found her, and it illuminated a solitary Christmas card with an old country church in the woods on the cover."



H O P E
L o v e
J o y
P E A C E

Merry Christmas
From
the Church Staff

THANK YOU!

THANK YOU! THANK YOU! THANK YOU!

Thank you, thank you to all who gave so generously to the Gifts for Mary project.

Once again you showed that FUMC folks truly do **share Christ's Love.**

Ann Darrah, Manager of Maternal and Child Health and staff received the gifts. The staff commented **"It was an awesome out-pouring of Love".**

Thank you again for your thoughtfulness.

Jan & Bev

We would like to thank all our church family for all your prayers, calls and visits during the time of our surgeries. It was so appreciated.

Linda & John Straub



All in our Church Family Life



Welcome Baby!
Samuel Zeedyk, born
October 30, son of
Dennis & Marina, and
little brother to
Thomas & Alicia



We gratefully
acknowledge the
following gifts

In Memory of
Robert Reickel
Joyce Cooper

In Memory of
Earline Evans
Joyce Cooper, Pat
Spahn

In Memory of
Muriel Thistle
Pat Spahn



Merry Christmas!



Discovery Days Preschool

I can hardly believe it is already December! The children had a great November. We finished collecting the money from our Trike-a-thon that was held

in October and the children raised \$1,698 for St. Jude Children's Hospital! **I am so proud of them!!**

Mrs. Cahill and Mrs. Fuller's 2 & 3 year old class will begin the month learning about our community helpers and then prepare for Christmas. The two year olds are learning their shapes and the 3 year olds are beginning to learn how to print their first name!

Mrs. Taylor and Mrs. Cothran's Pre-K class are being introduced to some wonderful Bible stories, which **lead in to the best story about Jesus' birth!** These children are also learning their phone number and address.

All classes will attend a service which Pastor Evan will read a story and they will sing some songs for their parents.

We hope you all have a relaxing holiday.

Jaunda Kneller &
The Discovery Days Staff

63rd ANNUAL
CHRISTMAS VESPERS

The annual Vesper Service will be presented by the handbell choirs, the Chancel Choir and Praise



**Christmas
Cantata**

Choirs and the Winds of Worship all lifting hearts and hands to offer praise to God and offering our annual gift to our congregation and the community!

This tradition began in 1945 under the direction of the beloved Edward Soetje who directed the choirs in this church for 50 years!

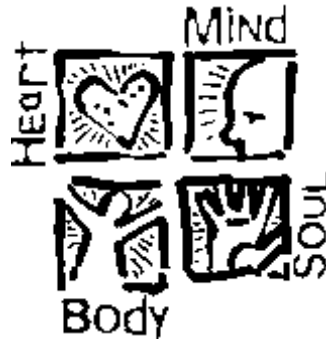
In recent years the attendance at this concert has diminished. I would like to encourage your support by coming to the service and bringing others with you. The choirs spend many hours in preparation to provide this offering and we would like to invite your sharing in this time!

UMW Library Book Correction

In Memory of Deidre Joyce Stephani
given by Joyce Carey Cooper



First United Methodist Church is partnering with the Wellness & Rehabilitation Services of La Porte Regional Health System to offer members of the congregation a discount for Wellness Center memberships. For the months of



November and December, all members of First United Methodist Church are invited to participate in any of the fitness classes for only \$20 per month; or a Wellness Center Gym Membership for only \$25 per month; or gym membership plus unlimited classes for a total monthly fee of only \$35. (No other discounts apply) A one-time \$20 orientation fee applies to all new members. Those interested in participating must bring a copy of this article in Tower Talk to receive the discount.

The Wellness & Rehabilitation has facilities at The Crossing located at 1203 Washington Street, La Porte (this is the largest facility with the most equipment) as well as six other facilities in the area, although some are limited and designed more for rehabilitation purposes. The newest site is now open in Westville, 156 S. Flynn Road.

There are numerous classes to participate, including Yoga, Zumba, Strength Training or Circuit Training.

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The Wellness Center at The Crossing is open from 5:30 a.m. until 8:00 p.m. Monday thru Friday, and 7:00 a.m. until 12:00 noon on Saturday. (Hours at smaller sites may vary).

We encourage you to pick up one of the flyers outside or the church office for a **"Take One Week"** of classes and use of any fitness center for \$5.00. The flyer also has a listing of all the facilities and services provided.

God has blessed each of us in so many ways, and we should take special care of our bodies to enjoy all the blessings God has for our future. So please consider this opportunity provided by First United Methodist Church to start that fitness program today that you have been considering; make the Holidays more enjoyable instead of dreading the potential for adding on extra pounds with the Holiday **fare; or just get an early jump on your New Year's Resolution!**

If you have any questions about the program or locations, please call The Wellness Center at The Crossing (219) 326-2480.





63rd Annual

Vesper Service

December 6, at 4:00

Our Praise and Chancel

Choirs,

Alpha and Gloria Handbells,

and Winds of Worship

share this concert with you

in celebration of

the birth of Christ.



Order your Poinsettia Today!

If you want to provide a poinsettia plant for our sanctuary this Christmas Season, fill in this form and return it to the church office no later than December 6.

The poinsettias will all be purchased from one source and the cost will be \$10 each.

All poinsettias
may be picked up after the 9:00 p.m.
Christmas Eve Service.

Donor: _____

Amount enclosed: _____

In memory of:

In honor of:

DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS

1. Pat Barnes Kessler
2. Joan Trimble, Jim Weis
3. Karen Waltz
4. Margaret Howes, Ciera Kurzydlo
5. Don Baugher, Mary Condon, Terri Dragos, Anita Lebo, Shirley Morris, Sherry Price, Jenni Walker
6. Tom Condon, Jean Larson, Diana Singleton, Matthew Steele. Joanne Thornburg
7. Joyce Cooper, Ryne Walker
8. Jason Martin
9. Jessica Crass, Jim Sweet
10. Leona Collins
12. Colleen Fairley
14. Maxine Harris, Jerry Mayes
15. Barbara Euler, Louise LeRoy, Paul Richey
16. Olivia Richey, Joslyn Ruiz
17. Jake Bunce, Cathy Hofer, Nina Salyer
18. Krista Caldwell, Rob Walker
19. Jaykob Ruiz
21. Dee McCarty
22. Roger Singleton, Tammy Stump
23. Kitty Maurer
24. Kris Cook, Linda Jackson
25. Ralph Howes
26. Dorothy Glanz
27. Stephanie Kaiser, Greg Lash
28. Jim Leonard
29. Jim Day, Troy Llewellyn, Jen Shelton
30. Jill Melnyk, Dustin Price, Jordan Rasiuk



USHERS THIS MONTH

8:00— Lester Chadwick, Nina Salyer, Sharon Welty,
Tim Welty

10:30—Donn Weiler, Paul Graham, Don Welch,
John Woods, David MacCartney

HOSTESS COMMITTEE: Becky Dunbar, Betty Jones, Sharen Kooyenga, Beth Overmyer, Nina Salyer, Carol Bigg, Marlene Shreve, Linda Shuler, Mary Lu Simerlein, Mitzi Simerlein, Regina Smelser, Jamie Smurdon, Diane Stassel, Sandy Striggow, Karen Swanson, Sandra Trueblood, Karen Waltz, Carole Weeks, Joan Welch, Mary Welch, Pat Zeisig, Becky Zurawski

FLOWER CALENDAR:

Dec. 6 Harper/ A. Chadwick
13 Available
20 Bowers
27 Available

Year to date average attendance: 300

Year to date general budget income: \$337,716.06

Year to date general budget expense: \$333,819.33



calendar

First United Methodist Church

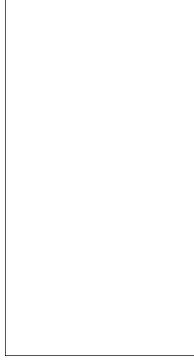
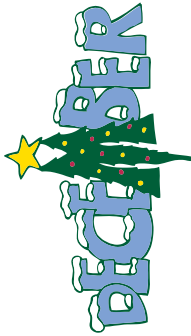
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SUNDAY SERVICES

8:00 - Chapel Service
9:00 – Contemporary Service
10:30 - Sanctuary Service

OFFICE HOURS
Monday - Friday
8:00 to 4:00



Sharing Christ's Love