

LAPORTE FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

TOWER TALK

DECEMBER 2011



SOME THOUGHTS ON PREPARING FOR CHRISTMAS.



Lists are a necessary chore. I believe that you need to make lists. However, I do not believe that your list should be of things that you have to get done. You know what I mean - a list of chores that you don't want to do, but feel that must be done. I am talking about a different kind of list - a list of things that you want to do. List those things that you want to do this Christmas - a list of priorities - a list of things that you look forward to including as part of your Christmas celebration. A list of those things that make Christmas special for you. A list of those things that may not get done if you are focusing instead on the "have to" list.

Make your list - enjoy the anticipation, and the actual doing of the things on your list. If you find yourself just doing things on the list and checking them off - you are working on the wrong list.

Gifts are the way to celebrate Christmas. Christmas by definition is a gift. A Gift of life and hope, and joy. Here is my "list" of gift suggestions for you this year.

Give time. Give your time. This is really a gift of yourself. Take your

time and give it away. Think about the who, the where, the when, and the why of this gift. Nothing is more precious than giving your time.

Give a gift of perspective. Read Philippians 4:1-8. We are people of faith. God is at work in this world. God has a plan. God is ready to help - and can help. Change is coming. Don't like today? - Don't worry - pray! Change is coming. Look up! Look out! Expect the best!

Give a gift of love. Share.

Give someone a smile.

Give the gift of laughter. Tell a joke. Be silly. Think of some crazy gift that will give the recipient real deep down sense of the enjoyment of laugh.

Give the gift of presence. This is similar to the gift of time, but sometimes the best gift is just being with someone to listen, and to understand, and to be a reminder of what's really important in life.

Give the gift of tradition. Make a new tradition with someone you care for. Establish a way to celebrate Christmas that is special just for you and your loved one. Every Christmas we celebrate by . . . . . It is special because it is something we always do - together!

This is a list of Christmas giving suggestions that all boil down to the reality that every worthwhile gift includes giving yourself.



DECEMBER 11TH DURING THE 10:30 SERVICE



CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICES 5:00 PM AND 9:00 PM



DECEMBER 25TH 9:30 AM JANUARY 1ST 9:30 AM



For those of you who have not been able to attend my class on John Wesley, here is an overview.

John Wesley was a Priest in the Church of England who founded the Methodist movement. For John, salvation was not so much about getting into heaven as about being restored to the people that God always intended us to be. In his early adult life John struggled with trying to live up to his own Christian ideals, but he was usually frustrated.

I have had similar frustrations in my own life, but then, don't we all from time to time? In the seventh chapter of Romans, Paul expresses the same sentiment "For I do not do the good that I want, but the evil I do not want is what I do." (NRSV) Even when I do good, I usually wind up being proud of myself for how good I am. The truth is, it isn't hard to be a good Christian, IT IS IMPOSSIBLE – on our own power.

That is what John Wesley discovered. On an overseas voyage, a storm scared John to death, he thought he was going to die. That is normal. What wasn't normal was a group of German Christians on board who were not afraid of dying in the storm. John realized that he didn't have the same kind of faith that they had and he wanted that kind of faith. He wanted faith that trusted God in life or death.

One night at an evening prayer service, John found the faith that he sought. He realized that he was not capable of manufacturing his own faith, it was already given to him as a gift of God's grace. This became John's message – God has already done it all for us! Yes, we are saved by God's grace, through faith, but even that faith is a gift of God's grace itself, offered to all. All that we need to do is to receive it.

But there is the rub, how do we receive God's grace? It seems like it should be a no-brainer, yet often we still try it the DIY way (Do It Yourself). John realized that our task is to open up our hearts. God won't force our hearts open, but God has given us ways to open our hearts and these John called the Means of Grace. These are our spiritual disciplines (prayer, Bible study, fasting, worship, sharing with others, and receiving Communion) and doing good to others. John was very clear that these things do not earn us grace, but they are the ways that we open our hearts to receive the grace that God is already giving to us.

I study John Wesley because doing so helps to keep my Christian walk from being a DIY project. John teaches me how to let the Carpenter from Galilee work in my life.

Happy Thanksgiving!

Jim

God Bless ,

Jim

*Over the river and through the*



From the  
Director of  
Adult  
Ministries

*woods to  
Grand-  
mother's  
house we  
go.....*

My memories  
are vivid and  
my family  
traditions run

deep. That is something we can all identify with, wouldn't you agree?

This is the time to reflect on where your journey began. Family, church, and community all contribute to the threads woven into our life journeys. This is also the time to look forward, where exactly is that journey taking you now? Family, church, and community still contribute the threads that weave our lives.

This month will soon turn extremely busy. Gatherings and shopping will consume a majority of your free time. By the end of this holiday season vacations will be in order. That explains why the snow birds leave shortly after the holidays!

While all of our running and funning is enjoyable, please make sure that you focus on "The Reason for the Season". During the early weeks of this month, purposely take the time to prepare your hearts and minds for the arrival of the blessed Christ child.

Wishing you; the love, joy, and peace that only Jesus Christ can provide. *Go tell it on the mountains, that Jesus Christ is born!*

Praying you through

JoEllyn

# Happy Birthday!

1. Pat Kessler
2. Jim Weis
3. Karen Waltz
- 4. Margaret Howes (90)**
5. Ciera Kurzydlo
5. Don Baugher
4. Terri Dragos
5. Anita Lebo
5. Shirley Morris
5. Sherry Price
5. Jenni Walker
6. Willis Brown
- 6. Tom Condon (90)**
6. Jean Larson
6. Diana Singleton
6. Matthew Steele
6. Joanne Thornburg
- 7. Joyce Cooper (90)**
7. Ryne Walker
8. Jason Martin
9. Jessica Crass
- 10. Leona Collins (96)**
12. Colleen Fairley
- 14. Maxine Harris (90)**
14. Jerry Mayes
15. Barbara Euler
15. Louise LeRoy
17. Jake Bunce
17. Cathy Hofer
17. Nina Salyer
18. Rob Walker
21. Mary Coleman
21. Dee McCarty
22. Roger Singleton
22. Tammy Stump
23. Kitty Maurer



24. Kris Cook

24. Linda Jackson

**25. Ralph Howes (90)**

27. Stephanie Kaiser

27. Greg Lash

28. Jim Leonard

29. Jim Day

29. Troy Llewellyn

29. Jen Shelton

30. Jill Melnyk

30. Dustin Price

30. Jordan Rasiuk

## HAPPY ANNIVERSARY



4. John and Beverly McGing

5. Gene and Cindy Harper

**19. Bill and Pam Wampler (57)**

**26. Richard and Barbara Euler (57)**

30. Robert and Catherine Eldridge

30. Scott and Tricia Zila

## FLOWER CALENDAR

December 4– Gene and Cindy Harper

December 11– Ralph and Margaret Howes

December 18– Ed and Karen Bowers

December 25- Available

## USHERS

8:00 Lester Chadwick, Sharon Welty, Tim Welty, Youth

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

## HOSTESS COMMITTEE

Becky Dunbar, Betty Jones, Sharon Kooyenga, Beth Overmyer, Nina Salyer, Carol Biggs, Marlene Shreve, Linda Shuler, Mary Lu Simerlein, Regina Smelser, Diane Stassel, Sandy Striggow, Karen Swanson, Sandra Trueblood, Karen Waltz, Carole Weeks, Joan Welch, Mary Welch, Becky Zurawski

## UPCOMING ACTIVITIES FOR CHILDREN AND THEIR FAMILIES



### Sunday School: Sundays @

**9:00 and 10:30 A.M.: Sunday School classes for Nursery– Grade 5 @ 9:00 and 10:30 AM Services.** "Parenting your Child," a class for adults started on Sunday, November 27th 2011. We meet in Room 201 during the 10:30 AM Service and discuss topics concerning parents of younger children and share resources to help with parenting in today's world.

**JIF: All Church Caroling!: Wednesday, December 14 @ 5:30 P.M.** We will be caroling up and down Michigan Avenue to

announce the coming of Christ! Wear warm clothes and boots! Treats and hot cocoa will be served afterward!

**Wednesday, January 4, 2012 at 5:30 P.M. will be our Epiphany Celebration!** Come and share in the "LIGHT" of Jesus!

**An Afternoon in Bethlehem: Saturday, December 3, 2011: 1:00 – 3:00 PM @ LaPorte First Church of God:** This is another opportunity to help prepare you and your children for Christ's upcoming birth. Any questions, please call Marty Briggs @ 2198514496.

**JIF: Wednesday**

**December 7, 2011: "A Baby Shower for Jesus!"** All are invited to this mission project to collect supplies for needy mothers and babies in our community. This year our gifts will be going to **Dunbrook.** Fellowship, teaching, games, and "Mary (Jaime Ruiz)" (maybe "Jesus" will be there, too!) opening gifts are all part of the festivity! If unable to attend, please graciously send a slightly used or new, wrapped baby item for our shower. Thank you!

**Parent's Afternoon Out! Saturday December 10, 2011 @ 1:00–3:00 P.M.** Children and

youth will gather together for playing, learning, and baking goodies for Christmas Eve Services! I, Robin, have received a message from St. Nick... we are on his route for this afternoon for visiting! Please bring your little ones to see Santa! What an amazing season for worshipping Christ!

**Junior's Adventures: Financial Peace University: Congratulations to Emily Chadwick, Nathan Chadwick, and Michael Smelser for completing Junior's Adventures!**

Continued prayers for their lives and their stewardship of God's resources for His Glory!

## PARENTING CLASSES



Two new classes will be starting on November 27th at

10:30! Parenting your Child and Parenting your Teenager will be offered for anyone who would like

to attend.

Parenting your Child will meet in room 201 and will be led by Robin Podell.

Parenting your Teenager will meet in the room behind the chapel and will be led by Jennifer Casper

## SHOEBOX UPDATE

Shoebboxes, shoeboxes, and more shoeboxes! Or, in other words, thank you, thank you, thank you! As a church, we collected enough shoeboxes and money to donate 125 shoeboxes— including the \$7 shipping cost! What a

great way to start this holiday season! Thank you for making Operation Christmas Child part of your holiday gift giving and helping to share the true message of Christmas with children all around the world.



### Spiritual growth through looking, giving, living, learning, and loving.

The youth had an amazing time at **Acquire the Fire!** They came back excited to share their experiences with the rest of the group. Out of that, a new adventure has begun! **Spread the Fire!** Is a prayer

group the youth have started on Sunday mornings at 8:30. It was such an awesome thing to see the youth excited about praying and praising God! What is so great about this group is that they formed it out of a want to grow spiritually— it was their idea, not mine! And, that'd when I know God is working among them!

In November, we focused

on giving thanks to those who have helped us along our spiritual journey. During the advent season, we will be focusing on the four weeks of advent and what each week means— hope, peace, joy, and love. We will look at how the birth of Jesus should be celebrated rather than with shopping and commercialism.

If you must do Christmas shopping, think of the

youth before you start shopping. You can buy a gift card for things you buy every day. What an easy way to support the youth!

Anyone is welcome at any youth activity at any time!

Contact Jennifer Casper if you have any questions. (219) 575-0135 or [mrsghost628@yahoo.com](mailto:mrsghost628@yahoo.com).

Blessings,  
Jennifer Casper

## A CHRISTMAS GROCERY LIST BY ROY GROPP



Read Matthew  
21 vs. 22

1 Thessalonians  
5 vs. 16 -18

A poorly dressed lady walked into a grocery store. She approached the owner of the store and humbly asked if he would let her charge a few groceries. She explained that her husband was very ill and unable to work, they had seven children and they needed food.

The grocer scoffed at her and told her to leave his store.

She said: 'Please, sir! I will bring you the money just as soon as I can.'

He told her he could not give her credit, since she did not have a charge account at his store.

A customer overheard the conversation, walked forward and told the grocer that he would stand good for her bill. The grocer asked in a very reluctant voice, 'Do you have a gro-

cery list?'

She replied, 'Yes sir.' 'O.K.' he said, 'put your grocery list on the balance scale and whatever your grocery list weighs, I will give you that amount in groceries.'

She hesitated a moment with a bowed head, reached into her purse and took out a piece of paper and scribbled something on it. She laid the piece of paper on the scale with her head still bowed.

The grocer and the customer were amazed when the scales went down and stayed down.

The grocer turned to the customer and said, 'I can't believe it.'

The customer smiled and the grocer started putting the groceries on the other side of the scales. The scale did not balance so he put more and more groceries on them until the scales would hold no more.

The grocer stood there in utter dis-

gust. Finally, he grabbed the piece of paper from the scales and looked at it with greater amazement.

It was not a grocery list. It was a prayer, which said:

'Dear Lord, you know my needs and I am leaving this in your hands.'

The grocer gave her the groceries and stood in stunned silence.

She thanked him and left the store. The other customer handed a fifty-dollar bill to the grocer and said; 'It was worth every penny of it. Only God Knows how much a prayer weighs.'

I believe prayer is one of the most powerful tools God has given us. Many people have needs this Christmas. I encourage each of us to offer Christmas Prayer Shopping Lists this season and trust God to work Christmas Blessings and Miracles in your life. Experience the true meaning of Christmas. Pray without ceasing.

## SALVATION ARMY BELL RINGING



**Salvation Army  
Bell Ringers**

Celebrate the holiday season by helping others!

The youth will ring bells for the Salvation Army on December 3rd from 9am until 8pm at Walgreens East.

On December 17th, anyone from First United Methodist Church can take a 2 hour shift at Kmart anytime between 9am until 8pm. Please see Jennifer Casper to sign up for your time slot. The more the merrier!

If you aren't able to ring bells, maybe you can stop by and drop some money in the bucket.

This year, the Salvation Army is helping more people than ever. Their main funding comes from their Christmastime bell ringing. What can you do to love your neighbor?



## WORSHIP THROUGH ADVENT AND CHRISTMAS

Dec 4– 2nd Sunday of Advent  
Psalm 85: 1- 2, 8– 13  
"Restore Us O God, Peace"

Dec 11– 3rd Sunday of Advent  
Psalm 126  
"Restore Us O God, Joy"

Dec 18– 4th Sunday of Advent  
Psalm 89: 1-4, 19– 26  
"Restore Us O God, Love"

Dec 24– Christmas Eve  
Luke 2: 1– 7, 8– 20  
"What Not to Miss at Christmas"  
5:00 and 9:00

Dec 25– Christmas Day  
One worship time at 9:30 in the sanctuary

January 1– New year's Day  
One worship time at 9:30 in the sanctuary



On behalf of Discovery Days Pre-school, thank you to Carolee and Harry Gardner for the cornstalks, Bonnie and Rudy Netzer for the corn and cornstalks, and Pam Huff for the school supplies donations. Our teachers have ingenious uses for these materials. Thank you to all of the parent volunteers for the Halloween parties. We're enriched by your generosity. Thank you, Kris Cook, Director of Discovery Days PreSchool

To All at the First United Methodist Church,

Thank you so much for allowing us to use your space for rehearsal! We really appreciate it!

The Cast and Crew of Little Red Riding Hood and the Power Mutants Thank you dear church family of the LPUM Church. Thank you Pastor Evan for your hospital visits, so good to know people care. Thank you friends for the beautiful cards, the visits and all those that took time to sign the "Get Well" sheet. It was a joy to see all the names of our church family. Thank you, God Bless the LPUM Church. Willa Smith

Thank you, thank you, thank you to all who gave so generously to the Gifts for Mary program and showed once again that we at the First United Methodist Church truly do share Christ' love. Your gifts were delivered to the LaPorte Hospital and the staff of the maternal and Child Health received the gifts saying "It

was an awesome outpouring of Love." Many babies will be kept physically warm, and many hearts will be as warmed by your giving. Thank you again.

Jan Mayes and Bev Barnes  
Dear Pastor Lash,

Your church was the perfect site for my Tri Kappa Convention. Friendship hall looked so warm and inviting with our Fall decorations and the beautiful new floor really set the homey mood. Your secretary and maintenance staff were so helpful to us.

I also appreciated the sympathy card I received on the death of my father. Knowing so many share my sorrow makes it a little easier to bear.

Thank you so much for all your kindness and support.

Suzanne Schafer  
Tri Kappa Province Officer

## CHRISTMAS LUNCHEON



All women of the church are invited to the annual Christmas luncheon on Thursday, December 1, at 12:00 noon in Friendship Hall. The price

of admission is a salad that serves at least 6-8 people. Rose Marie Dure and Eleanor DeMarco will provide the entertainment. This will be a festive way to begin the Christmas season, so we hope you will join us.

**NEW  
Member  
Class**

**DECEMBER 1ST  
2:00 AND 6:30**

## DISCOVERY DAYS



Just a guess-we've experienced our first snowfall of this winter season, right? Another guess, your Christmas shopping isn't completed. You don't have to guess that December is filled with excitement for the students. Themes for December will be "bible stories and Christmas" for the afternoon and PreK classes; "Russell the Sheep", Santa, and Jesus for the 2 YO and 3 YO. Parents will be invited to attend

Christmas services conducted by Pastor Evan in the Chapel. The students will then enjoy their Christmas Break from Dec. 21 until they return to school on January 3. We thank you for your gifts, your gifts of friendship, and your prayers. We, the Discovery Days Staff, send Christmas Blessings to you and yours this Christmas Season.

Kris Cook  
Director of Discovery Days

## FOR SALE

We never thought we would leave LaPorte but now we have and need to sell our Pine Lake Cemetery plot in "Prairie, Lot 18H, grave 35" space for 2 urns, asking \$400. Please contact Lamar and Jim Koontz, 14460 Middle Fairway Drive, Spring Hill, FL. 34609. Phone: 352-593-4644.



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# Calendar Page

**LAPORTE FIRST UNITED  
METHODIST CHURCH**

1225 Michigan Av  
LaPorte, IN 46350

Phone: 219-362-2443  
www.laportefumc.org



# TOWER TALK

Non Profit Organization  
U. S. Postage PAID  
LaPorte, IN 46350  
Permit No. 60



## CHURCH STAFF

Pastor—Evan Lash

Director of Adult Ministries—  
JoEllyn Chadwick

Director of Music Ministries—  
Rose Marie Dure

Coordinator of Youth Ministries/  
Receptionist—Jennifer Casper

Coordinator of Children & Family  
Ministries—Robin Podell

Secretary—Sharon Daniels

Housekeeper—Phyllis Hendrickson

Maintenance—Paul Lux

Discovery Days Preschool  
Director—Kris Cook

Teachers—Dorothy Cahill, Beth  
Foster, Stacy Owen, Shae Taylor

**Merry**



**Join us on  
Christmas Eve  
at 5 P.M and 9 P.M  
And Christmas Day at  
9:30 A.M.**

**Sunday Services**

**8:00—Chapel Service**

**9:00—Contemporary Service**

**10:30—Sanctuary Service**

**Sunday School for all ages—  
9:15 and 10:30**

**Office Hours**

**Monday thru Friday**

**8:00 to 4:00**