Tidings

Sharing the stories of life-changing ministries

Issue 723 January 2010

WORSHIP SERVICES
(9, 11 am)

HIGHER GROUNDS & SUNDAY SCHOOL
(10 am)

SENSE GOD PERSONALLY
(pages 1-3)

SEEK GOD PASSIONATELY
(page 5)

SERVE GOD PURPOSEFULLY
(page 4)

open hearts
open minds
open doors

...giving, serving, sharing

The Best Gift Ever — YOURSELF

This week I reread an important statement about life written by the Apostle Paul: ***"Don't be misled: Bad company corrupts good character"*** [1 Corinthians 15:33]. Another way of saying it is ***"Don't kid yourself that you're any different from those you hang out with. We become a reflection of those around us."*** Basically, Paul means that if you spend time with those who are fearful or apathetic, you'll probably learn to be afraid and indifferent. Surround yourself with vulgar, self-absorbed people and guess what you'll be known for? Rub shoulders with people who complain about life; and you'll discover that, in no time, you'll be complaining, angry, and bitter !

But here's the corollary: If bad company corrupts good character, then it may just be that the reverse is also true: ***good company develops good character.*** Courageous people who follow through on big dreams bring out courage and hope in others. Generous people bring out joy and generosity in others, while faithful, caring people tend to surround themselves with compassionate, spirit-filled people.

It naturally follows then that Christians who want to become more like Christ surround themselves with people who reflect the image of Jesus in all that they say and do. They worship together; they work together for the common good; and they find new creative ways to share the Kingdom of God. The question is with which group are you most closely aligned?

Looking back over 2009, it is easy to see that God has been with us, guiding and helping us *"make disciples and make a difference"* in such activities as the community breakfast, Hearts and Hands, and Advent Conspiracy; and when I eagerly look ahead to 2010, I believe while I pray that God will continue to change lives through our ministries. I invite you to join us in fulfilling the mission of First Church and, in the process, discover for yourself that by giving, serving, and sharing you have given the best gift ever — YOURSELF!

"Therefore, encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing" [1 Thessalonians 5:11].

"Christians who want to become more like Christ surround themselves with people who reflect the image of Jesus in all that they say and do."

sense God personally

SAY A PRAYER & SEND A CARD

"I thank God upon every remembrance of you."
[Philippians 1:3]

WEEKLY ACTIVITIES

SUNDAY
Choir, 6 pm
IHS Youth, 6 pm

MONDAY-FRIDAY
Walking, 8:30 am

MONDAY-THURSDAY
Learning Center, 9 am

MONDAY
Girl Scouts, 3 pm
Boy Scouts, 6:30 pm

TUESDAY
Bells, 6:30 pm
Hasty Small Group, 5:30 pm

WEDNESDAY
Women's Bible Study, 9:30 am

JANUARY ACOLYTES

9 am Blended Service
January 3: Elissa Erb
January 10: Isabelle Erb
January 17: Caleb Young
January 24: Kaylin Burge
January 31: Abby Stoveken

11 am Traditional Service
January 3: Ben Demhlow & Joshua Erb
January 10: Andy Boley & Corey McClung
January 17: Allison & Emily Pickering
January 24: Jillian Leo & Bryce Sayre
January 31: Ben Demhlow & Corey McClung

JANUARY USHERS

9 am BLENDED SERVICE
Brian & Fred Burge
Steve Bodnar

11 am TRADITIONAL SERVICE

January 3
Rex Bush, Ken Cox, Chris Henderhan, Jim Schmidt, Bob Woodford

January 10
Fred Dearman, Wayne King, Jeff & Pam Middleton, Charles Pickens, Warren Epperly (WA)

January 17
Rick Blauvelt, Larry & Marilyn Croucher, Joe Hutchinson, Tim Sayer

January 24
Wes Clarke, Gene Duncan, Karen Fenton (WA)

January 31
Rex Bush, Ken Cox, Chris Henderhan, Jim Schmidt, Bob Woodford

DATES TO REMEMBER

JANUARY 4: UMW Executive Meeting, 1 pm
Program Leadership Meeting, 7 pm
Trustees Meeting, 7 pm
JANUARY 7: Faithgirlz, 3 pm
JANUARY 8: Senior Luncheon, 12 pm
Violin Recital, 6 pm
JANUARY 9: Suzuki Violin, 10 am
Girl Scout Cookie Rally, 2 pm
JANUARY 11: Girl Scout Troop 5527, 6 pm
JANUARY 12: Children's Ministry Meeting, 5 pm
Church Council Meeting, 7 pm
JANUARY 14: Girl Scout RSU Meeting, 5:30 pm
Cub Scout Meeting, 6pm
JANUARY 16: Community Breakfast, 8 am
Cub Scout Event, 8 am
JANUARY 21: Faithgirlz, 3 pm
Cub Scout Meeting, 6 pm
JANUARY 23: Community Breakfast, 8 am
Suzuki Violin, 10 am
JANUARY 25: Judy Geary Group, 5 pm
Girl Scout Troop 5527, 6 pm
JANUARY 27: Sarah Circle, 7:45 pm
JANUARY 28: Mary Martha Circle, 1 pm
Esther Ruth Circle, 1:30 pm

sense God personally

HOSPITALIZED

Elma Boyd **Mahlon Fauss**

SAY A PRAYER & SEND A CARD

"I thank God upon every remembrance of you."
[Philippians 1:3]

The church family extends its sincerest condolences to the family of **Sarah Jane Keith** following her death on December 14.

Come, celebrate the beginning of a new year with good friends and a comfort-food dinner including meatloaf, scalloped potatoes, and baked beans. A program of familiar music will be provided by the Williamstown Women's Club Musettes. In the event of school closings due to bad weather, the luncheon will be canceled. We'll be looking for you, eager to share the warmth of fellowship and good food with you.

Please bring a vegetable or salad dish.

Young at Heart Luncheon

Friday, January 8, 12 pm

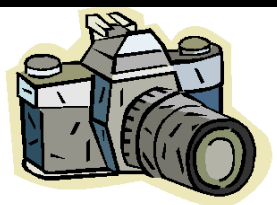
Happy New Year! January seems to be the time of starting over with a clean slate and a time of making resolutions for a better you in the coming year. As you make your resolutions for 2010, consider resolving to be more active in First Church. God needs you; we need you. It may mean becoming an usher, helping the Trustees with a project, or joining a ministry team. No matter how much time you choose to dedicate, your church will be the better because of your service; and you will know that you have done something that honors and glorifies God because like His Son, you have "served rather than being served." The opportunities for "...making a difference" are endless!

BIRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARIES

January 3: Virginia Branson, Allison Constable, Matthew Young
January 4: Shirley Lutz
Carron Wilfong
January 5: DeEtta Epperly
Allison Gobbs
January 6: Nan Clarke
January 7: James Fenton, Chip Pickering, Steve Parks
January 8: Karen Nicewarner
January 10: Lauren Blauvelt, Janet Hasty, Austin Westfall
January 11: Scott Lutz
January 13: Stefanie Nelson
January 14: Ellie Ash
January 19: Luke Ankrom
January 20: Jessie Boley, Pete Miller, Nathan Westfall
January 21: Bob Meadows
John & Tammy Burge
January 22: AnnMarie McCallister
Karen Young
Lloyd & Kelly Roberts
January 23: David Armstrong
Claire Strobl
Floyd & Hope Mason
January 24: Braden Wilfong
Robert Woodford
January 26: Craig Fenton
January 27: Warren Epperly
January 28: Abbie Gedon
Charlotte Gray
Prince's mom
January 29: Eddie Constable
Janaury 30: Brady Ankrom
Carole McCallister
January 31: Brian Burge
Kathleen Varner

serve God purposefully

LEAD WITH VISION — *"Where there is no vision; the people perish."* [Proverbs 29:18]



focus on the...

2010 LEADERSHIP TEAM

CHURCH COUNCIL CHAIR	**Chip Pickering** (clpickering@suddenlink.net)
LAY LEADER	**Brian Boley** (bboley@pchs1.com)
COUNCIL SECRETARY	**Betty Ball** (banne236@msn.com)
TRUSTEES CHAIR	**Steve Bodnar** (sbodnar@access.k12.wv.us)
FINANCE CHAIR	**Jon Dehmlow** (jsdehmlow@sbcglobal.net)
STAFF-PARISH CHAIR	
PROGRAM MINISTRIES CHAIR	**Kriss Bodnar** (kbodnar@subbenlink.net)
LAY MEMBER TO ANNUAL CONFERENCE	**Delores McCallister** (deloresbmcC@aol.com)
MEMBER-AT-LARGE (2 YEARS)	**Pam Middleton** (Pamela.middleton@bpd.treas.gov)
MEMBER-AT-LARGE (2 YEARS)	**Matt Young** (youngs@marietta.edu)
MEMBER-AT-LARGE (1 YEAR)	**Jim Hostottle**

PROGRAM MINISTRIES

CHILDREN'S TEAM	**Kianna Anderson** (fumcwmst@yahoo.com)
COMMUNICATIONS TEAM	**Cyndy Goldsworthy** (princecasey1313@yahoo.com)
EVANGELISM TEAM	**Saundra & Brian Boley** (bboley@pchs1.com)
HOSPITALITY TEAM	**Jennifer Fenton** (jnfrfntn@yahoo.com)
MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY	**Kianna Anderson** (fumcwmst@yahoo.com)
MISSIONS TEAM	**Cathy Engle** (ecengle@att.net)
PRAYER TEAM	**Cyndy Goldsworthy** (princecasey1313@yahoo.com)
VISITATION TEAM	**Marilyn Croucher** (mjcroucher@gmail,com)
WORSHIP TEAM	
YOUTH TEAM	**Joe Webb** (joewebb@suddenlink.net)

FINANCE (Discipline 258.4 — Ex-officio Members: Church Council Chair, Pastor, Programs, SPRC, Trustees)
Jon Dehmlow [Chair], Evan Bohnen, Stephanie Nelson, Lorrie Webb
Ed Engle [Treasurer], Shirley Mills [Financial Secretary]

NOMINATIONS (Discipline 258.1 — Ex-officio Members: Lay leader, Programs)

Class of 2010	Class of 2011	Class of 2012
Shelly Ash	Jennifer Fenton	Bob Hasty
Tom Bobbitt	Jean Pickering	

STAFF-PARISH RELATIONS (Discipline 258.2 — Ex-officio members Church Council Chair, LM to Ann. Conf.)

Class of 2010	Class of 2011	Class of 2012
Kathy Albertson	Ed Engle	Shelly Ash
	Cyndi Pyles	Barbara Wilson
		Karen Young

TRUSTEES (Discipline 258.3 with 2524-2551)

Class of 2010	Class of 2011	Class of 2012
Steve Bodnar	Ron Anderson	Brian Burge
Fred Burge	Clay Lutz	Kevin Cutright
Julie Delaney	Raymond Parrish	John Shaffer

sense God personally, seek God passionately, serve God purposefully

PRAYER: Spiritual Communion

Prayer is the heart of man in communion with the heart of the Father. It is the heart of the Father bestowing grace and mercy upon the heart of man. And it is the whole heart of man seeking to know the whole heart of God. Prayer is essentially the communion of two hearts. C. H. Spurgeon said, "True prayer is not a mere mental exercise, nor a vocal performance, but it is far deeper than that — it is spiritual communion with the Creator of heaven and earth. God is a Spirit unseen of mortal eye and only to be perceived by the inner man; our spirit within us, begotten by the Holy Ghost at our regeneration. Prayer is a spiritual business from beginning to end, and its aim and object end not with man, but reach to God Himself."

PRAYER POINTS

Praise God Who has invited you into His circle of fellowship through Jesus Christ. Thank Him for His invitation to love Him with your whole being (Mk. 12:33). Commit yourself to Deut. 10:12: "To fear the LORD your God, to walk in His ways, to love Him, and to serve [Him] with all your heart and with all your soul."

[adapted from *The Prayer Factor* by Sammy Tippitt]

PRAYING THE HEART OF GOD

Know God. Know God's heart. Then: Pray God's heart into the creation. Creation is waiting for that reality to be so — for the people of the Spirit to retake the rightful oversight of the creation under God the True Spirit. This is the paradigm for prayer ministry — to know the will from the clear teaching of the Bible and by the experience of the Spirit, and then to pray it into existence. Praying Christians have known about this principle all their days of prayer. A burden to pray enters their heart. They know the person, and they are given some sense of how they are to pray. Then they pray until the intercession is accomplished. Today, ask God for Him "to initiate" in your praying. When you find yourself thinking of someone and offering a prayer, take this as God at work, reshaping your inner prayer life.

PRAYER POINTS

Praise God for the humility which Christ displayed in coming to earth and going to the cross for you (Phil. 2:8). Ask God to give you a servant's heart.

[adapted from *Power Praying (hearing Jesus' Spirit by Praying Jesus' Prayer* by David Chotka]

***"Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others. Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus"* [Philippians 2: 3-4].**

CORE VALUE
LEAD WITH GRACE

Discipleship is not comfortable or convenient, but costly. We realize that many people live with deep spiritual wounds and broken dreams and are skeptical of the motives of others. As Christians, we are called to break through barriers that make us prisoners of our past and to be conduits of God's grace. We believe we are at our best when we set aside our wants and needs and share a smile or a kind word with others. Therefore, we will strive to be a blessing to everyone and to look for new, creative, and relevant ways to offer grace in a skeptical world. We will forgive when we have been wronged; we will believe the best of others when we don't understand; we will comfort because we have been comforted; and we will serve others before being served ourselves. By reaching out with gentleness, respect, and patience, we will inspire others to believe in the authenticity of our commitment to Christ. [Pastor Steve]

"Grace is love that cares and stoops and rescues." [John Stott]

Ministry Moment

PRAYER

To John Wesley, prayer was more than a declaration of our needs and our praise. It is a return to God of the divine breath (or Spirit) that animates our life toward God. Through the Spirit, we receive the life of God. In the Spirit we are enabled to give this life back to God in the form of praise and prayer. Prayer thus completes the circuit of God's life: God's life comes into the world, effects our transformation, and returns as we faithfully respond to God. Prayer is the outstanding instance of our response, for in prayer we stand gratefully before God as those who have received and who now offer back to God the holy sacrifice of praise. Because prayer is the expression of our life toward God,...it includes the articulation of our deepest feelings as well as our desired for God's presence. [*The Wesley Study Bible, NRSV*]

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"Therefore, encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing."
[1 Thessalonians 5:11]

LEAD WITH VISION —
"Where there is no vision; the people perish."
[Proverbs 29:18]

SENSE GOD PERSONALLY ***through engaging WORSHIP and PRAYER***

SEEK GOD PASSIONATELY ***through BIBLE STUDY and SMALL GROUP sharing***

SERVE GOD PURPOSEFULLY ***through SPIRITUAL GIFTS and faithful STEWARDSHIP***