

THE HERALD



From the Pastor:

January 2012

In last month's newsletter I mentioned the book *Five Practices of Fruitful Congregations* written by the Rev. Robert Schnase, a bishop of the Missouri Conference of the United Methodist Church. He proposes that healthy discipleship includes the following practices: 1) Radical Hospitality; 2) Passionate Worship; 3) Intentional Faith Development; 4) Risk-Taking Mission and Service; and 5) Extravagant Generosity. Over the next few months I want us to consider each of these practices.

Hospitality is not for the purpose of growing a church or helping the budget by finding more people to give. It is for the purpose of inviting people into a relationship with God. We live in a different world than that of "Christendom" that was experienced in the 50s and 60s. At least 40 to 60% of people have no church relationship at all. Rev. Schnase wrote, "People need to know God loves them, that they are of supreme value, and that their life has significance."

Hospitality is a theme found throughout the Bible. The ancient Israelites were instructed by God to "love the stranger," because Israel herself was a stranger in the land of Egypt (Deuteronomy 10:19). In the Parable of the Last Judgment (Matthew 25) one of the standards by which the sheep will be separated from the goats is whether one has welcomed the stranger. Jesus' hospitality was "radical" because Jesus implores us to break down the barriers that divide us, to step over the boundaries that separate us. The apostle Paul wrote, "Welcome one another, therefore, just as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God" (Romans 15:7). In Hebrews (13:2) we read, "Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by doing that some have entertained angels without knowing it."

Most churches, especially smaller churches, think of themselves as very friendly. The problem is that often times the church is such a close knit group it is hard for visitors and strangers to enter in. When you come to worship, do you go to someone you do not know, introduce yourself, and express gratitude for their presence? Or do you go immediately to your friends? There is no reason why a worship visitor should not have been greeted by a number of people by the time they leave worship.

How inviting is our building and grounds? Consider shopping malls and retail stores today. Their grounds are well groomed and beautifully landscaped. They keep their facilities up to date with contemporary colors. Their buildings are fully accessible and shoppers feel secure with fire security systems. Bathrooms are bright and roomy. These people who frequent these malls have the same expectations of the church! Just good enough is no longer good enough! As Dr. Schnase wrote, "Facilities speak a message to people about what church members think of themselves, how importantly they take their mission, how confidently they see the future of their church. Our buildings tell the world what our church thinks about children, senior citizens, persons with disabilities, and visitors. What message are we sending?"

We need to take seriously the role of ushers and greeters. Rev. Schnase wrote, "Churches that practice Radical Hospitality don't merely have ushers and greeters; they also train them, teach them, prepare them, and make their service a vital ministry. Their ushers and greeters don't merely point, they escort; they don't merely pass out papers, they make people feel at ease. They take note of names and introduce visitors to the pastor and to others."

Churches that practice radical hospitality follow up on visitors with notes, phone calls, and visits. They provide programs that attract people to come.

Next month, we will consider "passionate worship."

Raymond A. Meester



JANUARY BIRTHDAY GREETINGS

- 02 Christina Evans
- 04 Jeffrey Hunzeker
- 05 Mia Jensen
- 06 Rodney Ell
- 07 Isaiah Guillatt
- 07 Carolyn Plants
- 10 Karen Griffin-Sieber
- 12 Missy Bahr
- 13 Bradley Griffin
- 14 Barbara Crawford
- 15 Miley Smith
- 17 Patricia Doering
- 18 Helen Weber
- 19 Kent Burklund
- 19 Ken Smetter
- 20 Shirley Dively
- 20 James Robertson
- 22 Jane Bitney
- 22 Danelle Oliver
- 22 Elisabeth Wahlgren
- 23 Patricia Wahlgren
- 27 Phyllis Foreman
- 28 Sharon Wells
- 31 Bruce Hunzeker

Please notify the church office if your birthday or anniversary was omitted or incorrect so we can make the necessary changes.



OUR SYMPATHIES

...To the family and friends of Margaret Shiller who died 11/21/11. Margaret is Greg Mason's aunt.

...To the family and friends of John

David Beurivage who died December 4, 2011. John is the father of Frances' Beurivage's children.

...To the family and friends of Darwin Wells who died December 9, 2011. Darwin is the brother of Arnold Wells.

...To the family and friends of Fern Barker who died December 13, 2011. She was 103 years young.

...To the family and friends of Ann Watkins who died December 21, 2011. Ann is the wife of James Watkins and mother of Lisa, David, and Chris Watkins.

WELCOME

We welcome Sharron Scheidt to the fellowship of Heritage Presbyterian Church. Sharron joined December 11, 2011.



2012 SYNOD SCHOOL

It's not too early to begin thinking about Synod School 2012. It will be held July 22-27 at Buena Vista University in Storm Lake, Iowa. The theme will be "Singing the Lord's Song in a Strange Land". Synod School is a special learning and personal enrichment experience for all ages. Classes are available for adults, youth and children.



PLEASE BE IN PRAYER FOR

Health Issues: Amber, Duane Schweitzer, Katrina, Eli, Bettina Burklund, Marcia, Gladys, and Ron Smith.

Please update prayer requests with Marilyn Smith or the church office weekly.

CONGRATULATIONS

To Shawna Haas and Raad Almasaudi on the birth of their daughter, Sameera Raad, born December 19, 2011.



CHRISTMAS BOXES FOR HERITAGE SHUT-INS

Big thank you to all who provided monies and other treats and items to fill the Christmas boxes. Also, thanks to all who helped put the boxes together and then to get them delivered. Involved with this project were Bev Traudt, Ilah Harmon, Marilyn & Jessica Smith, Mary Crouch, Kay Schweitzer, Loretta Neill, Kay Traudt, Barb Shaeffer, Marilyn McDonald, Ramona Meester, Leanne Miller, and Earl Robinett. Thanks also to Marilyn McDonald for making some inspirational sheets with verses and puzzle pieces, and also provided candy Santas, and made doggie bag holders for the boxes.



HERITAGE BOOK CLUB SELECTIONS

The book club meets in the Gibson Room at 7:00 PM. Selections for upcoming months:
 January 9: *A Voice in The Wind* by Francine Rivers
 February 13: *Song Without Words* by Ann Packer
 March 12: *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks* by Rebecca Skloot

THANK YOU

...To the following who helped serve lunch at the funeral of Ann Watkins Friday, December 23rd: Marilyn and Jessica Smith; Matt Crouch; Earl Robinett; Gary Siemers; Jeanette Emert; Vicki Murphy; and Tam, Emma, Hunter, and Ashton Traudt. Kay Traudt.

OPERATION: UNDERCOVER CHRISTMAS

...helped spread the joy of Christmas to our church members! Whether it was donations of pocket change, cash/checks, or gift cards, the Mission Committee was able to send gift cards to over twenty individuals or families. Some gift cards were given to those who may be struggling through this economy . . . or to someone who has experienced a major change in their life . . . or to say "thank you" for all that they do for the church or others. Thanks for helping us "take care of our own" as we went undercover to spread the joy of Christmas.

Additional note: The Church Office received a number of phone calls and thank you cards from those who had been remembered by the undercover Christmas. The remembrance and generosity was very appreciated by all.

CHRISTMAS JOY



Thank you to everyone who donated to the Christmas Joy Offering. We received \$535.65. The Christmas Joy Offering is one of the four special offerings of our national church with the donations distributed equally to the Board of Pensions for assistance programs to retired church workers and to the Presbyterian racial ethnic schools and colleges. Your generous gifts to this offering will bring *Good News of Great Joy* to the poor in circumstance or spirit.



OFFERING ENVELOPES FOR 2012

Assigned offering envelopes may be picked up in the Narthex. If you wish to have envelopes and there is not an already assigned box for you, please let the office know and we will get one to you.



FINANCIAL INFORMATION THROUGH 11/30/2011

Expenses	\$137,839.89
Receipts	<u>113,638.39</u>
Deficit	\$(24,201.50)

All receipts and expenses for December had not yet been posted as of this printing.

**ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING
JANUARY 29, 2012 IMMEDIATELY
FOLLOWING WORSHIP SERVICE**

FOOD PANTRY

Heritage has been amazing in the support of this program. Many people are getting something to eat because of your donations. Unfortunately, this continues to be a problem in our community. Your continued support is important. Thank you.



WINTER WEATHER POLICY

KFOR Radio and local television stations will be contacted by 8:00 AM on Sunday morning if worship will be cancelled due to inclement weather.



NEWLY ELECTED ELDERS, DEACONS, AND NOMINATING COMMITTEE

At the Congregational Meeting on November 13, 2011, the following persons were elected:

Elected Elders for Class of 2014: Lew Sieber, Karen Griffin-Sieber, and Arlene Toombs

Commissioned Deacons: Joanne Lahm, Robyn Throckmorton, and Jane Bitney

For the 2012 Nominating Committee: Jay Weyers, Jeff Pierce, Barbara Shaeffer, Scott Minks, Bob Forman, Phyllis Foreman, and Mike Lagueux

CONGRATULATIONS



...to Gina Meester who graduated December 17, 2011 from the University of Nebraska at Omaha. Her field of study was elementary education. She is the daughter of Pastor Ray and Ramona Meester.

PER CAPITA ASSESSMENT 2012

Heritage pays a per capita assessment each year for every active member to cover certain costs of the Presbytery Synod, and General Assembly. For 2012 the cost is \$32.17 per member. Please consider writing a check and placing it in the blue "Per Capita" envelope that was mailed to you, or there are blue envelopes in the pews – and place it in the offering plate or mail to the church office. This will allow more pledges to go to the mission and ministry of the church.

HERITAGE BIRTHDAY CLUB

Congratulations to Delia Thompson on joining the Heritage Birthday Club.

Donations (usually 1 dollar per year of life) are made to our endowment fund. These gifts will be used to ensure that our ministry can continue in the future.

CHANGE OF OFFICE HOURS IN 2012

Because of budget restraints, Session voted to reduce the number of hours for the administrative assistant. Office hours will be reduced from 20 hours to 15 hours a week. Beginning January 2, office hours will be Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday, 9:00 AM to 2:00 PM. We are hoping that on Tuesdays we can find volunteers to answer the phone and help with some office work. If you are willing to volunteer one Tuesday a month, from 9:00 AM to 2:00 PM, or if you are willing to be a substitute on a Tuesday if the regular volunteer cannot make it, please contact Pastor Ray. We will train you on the use of the phone and may train you for other office tasks.

DECEMBER (12/11/11) SESSION HIGHLIGHTS

- Examined and approved newly elected Elders and Deacons, and scheduled their ordination/installation for January 8, 2012.
- Scheduled Annual Congregational Meeting for January 29, 2012
- Approved Earl Robinett and Judy Guillatt as commissioned Deacons for another year.
- Approved the membership on Sharron Scheidt on reaffirmation of faith.
- Approved changing the office hours from 9:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m. Wednesday through Friday each week, effective January, 2012.
- Scheduled the Session Annual Retreat and Session Meeting for January 27 & 28, 2012.



January 15: Articles received after this time may not be included in the Newsletter.