

FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH NEWS

DECEMBER 2011

OPEN HEARTS, OPEN MINDS, OPEN DOORS

VOLUME 2 ISSUE 6

LIVING OUR VISION CAMPAIGN ENDS AND BEGINS

The headline may be confusing, but it is accurate. The most intensive phase of the Living Our Vision Campaign is nearing its end. Church families have received commitment cards to be returned immediately to the church office, we have had the major events including the Ministry Celebration on October 23 and the Reunion on November 13. On December 4 we will announce the total of commitments received by that date, and will be celebrating the generosity of all the congregation.

That's the ending. The beginning is now to get ready to do construction in the spring. The commitments we have raised will enable us to start work on the elevator project for the church. Since at the time of this writing we don't know for sure what the total amount committed will be, we can't be more specific about how much work will be done, but construction will be starting in the spring when conditions for construction become favorable. We have some final details to complete with our architects, and then we will need to get estimates for the construction and construction financing, and when all these details are complete, we will have a congregational meeting to consider the recommendations.

When you see them, please give a word of appreciation to the members of the Campaign Committee, who worked very hard this fall: Bernie Auten, Chairperson; Lorraine Naslund, Prayer/Vision Chair; Dixie Lederer and Sue Auten, Coordinators; Karen Warner, Ministry Celebration Chair; Connie Sixta, Communication Chair; Curtis Miller, Audio-Visual Chair; Ron McKeever, Follow-Up Chair; David Copple, Pilot Chair; Christine Mettler, Children and Youth Chair; and Cal Worden, Crown Team Chair. They have all provided significant leadership for the future of our congregation!



CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICES

First Church will celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ with special services on Saturday, December 24:

5:00 PM: Family Service featuring the Chancel Choir and other special music and a special children's story during the service.

8:00 PM: A Festival of Lessons and Carols, where we hear the prophecies and stories of the birth of the Messiah. If you would like to be a reader in this service, please contact Rev. Brewer.

11:00 PM: Communion as we welcome the day of the Birth of our Savior.

All three services will include the traditional lighting of candles and singing of "Silent Night".

If you would like to provide special music at any of the Christmas Eve services, please contact the church office.

Because Christmas Day is a Sunday, we will have only one service at 10:00 on December 25. We will also only have one service at 10:00 AM on January 1, 2012, New Year's Day, and there will be no Saturday evening service on Saturday, December 31.



THE CHURCH IN MISSION

World AIDS Day is December 1st- We will be taking up a special offering on December 4th. The Nebraska Conference has challenged us in the past to contribute \$1 per member for this HIV/AIDS crisis that affects us on a local, national and worldwide level. Contributions to this fund translates into ministry, travel, medical care and compassion. These funds even help local efforts right here in Norfolk to help those dealing with HIV/AIDS. The United Methodist Global AIDS Fund is working to raise \$5 million through a new initiative, "20/20: Visioning an AIDS-Free World". This year, another action United Methodists can take is committing to making annual contributions of \$20 up to \$2,020 through the year 2020. The UMCOR Advance number for the 20/20 program is #982345, where 100% of contributions go directly to support these compassionate programs.

Community Garden- If you had a garden and wish to re-apply next year, please see Cheri for an early application. If you would like a new garden plot for next season, new applications will be available after the first of the year.

Recycling at FUMC- This month we received \$26.00 from Green Fiber, just from recycling our trash! Please continue to bring your paper, magazines, phone books, paperbacks, and cardboard to our Green Fiber bin located in the west parking lot.

EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES / SMALL GROUPS

Do you have an idea for a new study or group? Visit with Cheri about the possibilities!



Heart to Heart: A Spiritual Journey for Women

Attention Women! Are you looking for a women's group that provides support for each other as well as growth in your own faith? Here is a great opportunity for you in 2012!

Heart to Heart is a refreshingly different spiritual support group in which women seek, hear, and come to understand God's will for their lives as they tell their own stories, explore Sacred stories (Bible Study), share in prayer and journaling exercises, and learn new ways to become a more spiritual person. Women who take this study together often develop bonds with others in their church family and create lasting friendships.

This 12-session program is adaptable to a 45-60 minute meeting, either over the noon hour, in the evening or even a Saturday morning. You will receive your own personal prayer journal and lots of opportunities to be creative. If you are interested in attending a group such as this, please fill out the registration form located on the volunteer board or on the rack in the 1st floor hallway.

Start off your New Year right with a short-term Bible study!

Bible 101: Introduction to the New Testament

Starts Wednesday, January 4th, 6:00 PM for 7 Weeks

For Sr. High and Adults Facilitated by Cheri Kneifel

RSVP your registration to Cheri at the church office, 402-371-2785.



CHILDREN'S MINISTRIES

Christmas Program- December 18th, 11:00 service

The children will be involved in our Church Christmas Program again this year. They are practicing hard on their songs. Please attend Sunday school if you want your children to participate. They will be better prepared. The program notes went out on October 30th, and there is also information on your Sunday School Calendar that was sent out the first of the year. If you have questions, please contact Cindy Booth.

Sunday School Mission Project

During this rotation (thru Dec. 18th) Sunday school children will be collecting the following items for the Wesley Crisis Nursery. To help our children be successful, you may also bring donated items to the Gathering time room during Sunday school and put them under our special Christmas tree.

- | | |
|--|------------------------|
| 1. Duffle Bags/Suitcases for children moving
Into foster care | 8. Napkins |
| 2. Size 3 to size 6 diapers | 9. Paper towels |
| 3. Baby wipes | 10. Kleenex |
| 4. Pull-ups (all sizes) | 11. Spray Lysol |
| 5. 100% fruit juices | 12. Disinfecting wipes |
| 6. Hand soap | 13. Hair brushes |
| 7. Toilet paper | 14. Spray Detangler |



Volunteers Needed for Sunday School

Hooray! Our needs list is shrinking thanks to those who are stepping forward to help! Please consider volunteering and finish out our needs for the school year! WE NEED YOU!

Rotation Sunday School (Preschool-6th grade)

Jan 8-29

SS rotation Leader for Storytelling
Shepherd for Preschool & Kind/Ist

Feb 5-26

SS Rotation Leaders for Art & Science

Mar 4-25

SS Rotation Leader for Storytelling, Video, &
Music/Movement
Shepherd for Kind/Ist

Apr 1-29 (no SS Apr 8)

SS Rotation Leader for Art, Science &
Games

May 6 & 13

SS Rotation Leaders for two centers,
your choice
Shepherd for Preschool & Kind/Ist

HOSPITALITY MINISTRIES

Help Us "Open our Doors"!

We REALLY need more greeters! Greeters are our front-line ministers of welcome and are VITAL to the health of our church. If you can help in this ministry, or you have questions about it, please contact Karen Warner at 402-371-2678, or sign up on the volunteer board in the parlor.

Blessing Bears

We are collecting new or 'gently used' bears during the Advent season on our Blessing Bear Tree! Consider bringing a new teddy bear (or gently used) to put on our tree. These bears are for anyone that knows of a child that needs to be welcomed to our church or needs extra comfort from our congregation. You are welcome to take a 'blessed' bear at any time from the special basket in the front of the sanctuary.

GREETINGS FROM THE PASTOR



Rev. Dr. James S. Brewer

What an incredible fall we have had! I don't mean just the weather, although it has been wonderful in itself, but all the ministries we have participated in and celebrated this fall. I've long contended that churches need to have more parties, and it seems like we have had a number of parties in the past few months:

We've celebrated the start of Sunday School and Confirmation classes for the fall. Third graders received their bibles, as we celebrate building new Christians for our world;

We've celebrated many ministries in the church, with special banners made that describe many ministries of the church. I don't think anyone truly realizes how many things our congregation does until we see this kind of graphic display.

We've celebrated being a congregation that is moving forward to improve and update our building so that we truly live Open Hearts, Open Minds and, especially, Open Doors, making our building accessible.

We've worked hard, doing the usual activities of the church that we do every fall, plus creating a new Pictorial Directory and conducting the Living Our Vision campaign. Many people have worked very hard on these efforts.

Yet as we have done all these things, I have also noticed a good, positive and happy spirit among all of you who have been working so hard. It's been good to hear laughter, to see smiles, and to be here with people who have been working very hard, yet enjoying it. We are blessed with many volunteers all the time, including people who do things so quietly that we only see the good results, not the effort behind the result. Thank you all for everything you do for the life and future of First United Methodist Church. We are a great congregation in a great community!

END OF THE YEAR FINANCES

December is, of course, the final month in the year for our finances. We are grateful for all our church families who provide the financial support to keep the church operating every year, and trust that you will each continue to provide that support for the ministry and mission of First United Methodist Church.

If you are making a year-end gift, please get it to the church office no later than Friday, December 30. We do not get mail delivery at the church on Saturday since the office is closed, so please plan accordingly.

Also, whenever a gift is given to the church, please mark it with your offering envelope number. Numbers have been assigned to all our families, and if you need to know your number just call Juli Rahfeldt at the church office and she will help you.

Finally, if you would like to arrange direct deposit of your regular offerings, just call Juli and she can help you with that as well.

Thank you for your continued generous support for First United Methodist Church.



GIFT IDEAS THAT MAKE A DIFFERENCE!

Need a meaningful Christmas gift for a child, grandchild, or friend? Consider giving them a gift card for summer camp at Camp Fontanelle! Cards are in \$25 and \$50 denominations and do not expire. These are also great for birthdays, Confirmands or Youth Group members. To get a card, or for more information, catch Ron McKeever at church or contact him at 402-371-3956. To learn more about Camp Fontanelle go to www.campfontanelle.com.

Equal Exchange /Fair Trade will be selling products on December 4th between services. Consider giving these life-sustaining products to friends and family this Christmas!

We are also offering a **new way** to purchase Equal Exchange. Product order blanks are now available in the narthex. Get together with your friends, co-workers, Sunday school class, UMW or other group, as we will now be taking orders throughout the month for case lots. Please turn in your order including payment to Cheri or the church office. We will place an order the first of each month. We will continue to keep some items in stock at the church office. Special gift catalogs are now available for online shopping. You can also go directly online to purchase items at: www.equalexchange.coop/umcor. Feel free to browse our display and take information or order forms. Please consider purchasing these products for your church and family to make a difference for small family farmers.

Program Committees Christmas Wish List Thank you to those who have already made our wish list shorter. You are a generous people! If you would like to donate monies to help us purchase something on our wish list, please indicate this on your gift or contact Cheri for more information.

- New set of Rhythm Instruments (\$75-100)
- New Classroom Bibles (\$15 each)
- New Classroom Chairs for Youth (\$25 each)
- Large 4 x 8 bulletin boards (gently used or new at \$185 each)
- Rotary cutting boards for office and resource room (\$50-75 each)
- Three sturdy stepstools for classroom use (\$25-40 each)
- 24-27" flat screen monitor (\$150-175)

Help us with Care Packages for College/Military Students!

One of the projects that I would like to do the first of the year is to send our college and military students a care package from the church. I believe that it is important to stay in touch with these young members while they are finding their way in the adult world. If you have a student, and would be willing to share their mailing address, we would like to include them.

** We will also need items for the care packages that can be included in a flat envelope: Scrip cards for fast foods, microwave popcorn, tea/coffee bags, pens/pencils, gum, hot chocolate packets, Hershey's miniature candy bars, and hand-written 'thinking of you' cards from our church members. Money for postage would also be helpful!

*** If you are interested in helping with our college ministry, please let me know. It would be nice to have a team of 2-3 persons involved in this project!

Thanks, Cheri

NEWS AND INFORMATION

Name Tags

Please call the church office at 402-371-2785 if you would like a name tag. You could also write it on the yellow sheets during any of the worship services. Thanks!

Thank You

The **Stephen Ministry** thanks all of you for your prayers and support. Wishing you all the Hope, Peace, Joy and Love of the Christmas Season.

The Faith 5!

Looking for a valuable, but quick, way to have a devotional time with your family? Start the new year right with the *Faith 5*! The *Faith 5* uses the concepts of sharing with each other, reading Scripture, talking, praying, and blessing one another in about 5-15 minutes depending on the size of your family.

More information about the *Faith 5* is located across from the Gathering time room in the 1st floor hallway. Feel free to take a copy of the literature and a magnet for your refrigerator to remind you to do the Faith 5 with your family each day.

****Due to limited space Memorials will be put in next issue.**

“Warmth, Peace and Pajamas”

We do not need to go any further than our own city limits to find children in need. The Salvation Army this Christmas season, along with their usual “Toy and Food Drive” is again collecting pajamas for their program called “Warmth, Peace and Pajamas”. The goal is to put a warm pair of pajamas on every child in Norfolk who may otherwise go to bed, COLD. Help us to warm the hearts and bodies of these precious children. Please consider making either a monetary donation or actually buying a new pair of pajamas so that all of Norfolk’s children can *sleep in warmth* this winter season. Checks mad payable to: **The Norfolk Salvation Army Pajama Project** can be dropped off at the Salvation Army office or sent to The Salvation Army 112 N. 7th St., Norfolk, NE 68701, 402-379-4663. Pajamas can be dropped off at the office of the Salvation Army. **Deadline for money or pajamas: Friday, December 16, 2011.** Thank you very much, Pam Sears (402-371-7148) and The Salvation Army (402-379-4663)



The submission deadline for the January 2012 newsletter is Fri. December 16th by 5:00 p.m. The January 2012 newsletter will be mailed out on Fri. December 23rd. Bulletin information must be submitted by Tuesday at 5:00 p.m. of each week. Thanks!

**December 4th ~ All-Church Potluck Honoring our Volunteers*
Hosted by the GEMS/ROCK Youth and Sponsors
Main Dish will be Sloppy Joes
Please bring a side dish to share!**

*NOTE: Please accept a special invitation to our Sunday school teachers and Youth leaders from the Children’s Ministry Team. There will be a special Christmas tree in Wesley Hall with gifts for you! If you have helped with these programs this year, please accept one of these gifts as a small token representing our huge thanks!

Check us out on Facebook at:

Norfolk First United Methodist Church or Norfolk FUMC Youth. Please add these fan pages to your ‘likes’ and ‘links’ to help us promote them.

If you would like to add pictures, please email them to Cheri at cherik@norfolkumc.org with pertinent information.

Also our web address is www.norfolkumc.org.

A Message from Cheri Kneifel Organizer of Program Ministries

At this time of Thanksgiving, I want to share my gratitude for those of you who take your hospitality and evangelistic gifts seriously. You have been taking the United Methodist Church mission statement "Making Disciples of Jesus Christ..." to heart. We know everyone should have a church home, but more importantly, everyone needs to know the love of God and the saving grace of Jesus Christ our Lord.

By offering invitations, listening to co-workers and friends, sharing positive things about our church and its programs, bringing guests, and volunteering your time, we have 34 new members so far this year. Please continue to nurture and care for all of these new folks who are now members, and continue to share what we have to offer here at FUMC with those around you.

On another note- boy have we been busy! Along with all of our regular church activities and programs, we have had wonderful participation in the new Pictorial Church Directory, the Ministry Celebration, our Reunion Event, the Living Our Vision Capital Campaign, our Annual Church Conference and Hanging of the Greenery! We are now preparing for our Christmas program and other Advent activities. Our church staff and ALL of our faithful volunteers have been working very hard! Thank You!

Now it is time to get ready for one of the most special times in the life of the church...Christmas! To prepare for this wonderful celebration of the coming of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, please remember to worship, give, share and celebrate! May you have a Blessed Advent and Christmas Season! Cheri

Confirmation

Along with their weekly studies, the Confirmation students and their mentors are actively involved in church life. They are acolytes at our services and they put up the sanctuary tree during Hanging of the Greenery. They will be participating in the Christmas program by reading the narration and singing carols. Your donations are also important. The class is still collecting travel size personal items such as soaps and shampoos. They are also working toward their goal of 1 million pop tabs. They are at about 45,000...just a little way to go yet! J

Youth Group

Join the fun of GEMS/ROCK!! All youth 7-12th grade are welcome. Watch the mini news each week for updates of activities as sometimes the items listed on calendar will be subject to change. Contact Sarah Harrod, Brian Larson, or Stephanie Zane for more information.

DECEMBER

- 4 Host Monthly Potluck - Thanks to Church Volunteer (9:00-1:00 p.m.) NO evening meeting
- 11 Bible Story Night -The Christmas Story, 6:30-8:30
- 18 Christmas Party/White Elephant Gift Exchange & Games, Bring munchies to share, 6:30-8:30
- 25 Merry Christmas! No Meeting

SNDY

SNDY (Sorry, Not Done Yet) is our Sr. High class that meets at 9:45 pm Sundays. On November 20th, they hosted a Confirmation Class Reunion and attended church together as a group. They will be having a Christmas brunch at 9:30 on December 11th and will be participating in the Christmas program by playing some of the key parts and singing carols. If you are a 9th-12th grader, you are welcome anytime. Contact Eric Hansen or Deb Beutler for more information.



HAVE YOU MET.....

Waylon & Michela Strom

Parker, Piper, Paleigh



Waylon transferred from the United Methodist Church in Lynch NE. He works at Vulcraft and enjoys fishing, boating, golfing and hunting in his spare time.

Michela transferred from the Presbyterian Church in Niobrara NE. She works as a grant writer for Northeast Community College. She has been involved in vacation bible school and Sunday school at First Church.

Waylon and Michela have three children, son Parker (5), and daughters, Piper (3), and Paleigh (10 months, who was recently baptized when Waylon and Michela joined as members of our church).

HAVE YOU MET.....

Jason & Kim Strand

Makenna and Nolan



Jason is a sales representative for Sterling Computers. He enjoys kids sports, dance and music.

Kim teaches at Norfolk Middle School. In her spare time she likes to exercise (Jazzercise and walking); watch movies, spend time with family and friends, and enjoy her favorite restaurants.

They have two children; daughter Makenna (a 7th grader at Norfolk Junior High, and son Nolan who is in 4th grade at Bel Air Elementary.

Jason and Kim joined First Church in September 2011, transferring from St Paul's Lutheran Church in Norfolk.

*For surely I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord...
To give you a future with hope.
Jeremiah 29:11*

Church Office
406 W. Phillip Ave
Norfolk, NE 68701
(402)371-2785
(402)371-2783

~ First United Methodist
Church ~

*Open Hearts,
Open Minds,
Open Doors*



1ST SUNDAY LUNCHEON
THE MONTHLY DINNER WILL BE HELD ON **DECEMBER 4TH**
AFTER THE 11:00 SERVICE. THE G.E.M.S. AND R.O.C.K.S.
WILL BE HOSTING AND SERVING SLOPPY JOE'S. PLEASE BRING
A DISH TO SHARE AND JOIN IN THE FELLOWSHIP.

Nebraska 68701-5298
Postmaster: Send Address Correction to:
First United Methodist Church
406 W. Phillip Ave.,
Norfolk, NE 68701
Published Monthly

Periodicals Paid at Norfolk
Norfolk, NE 68701
USPS 619-860
November 28, 2011