



St. Peter's United Church of Christ

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CONNECTIONS

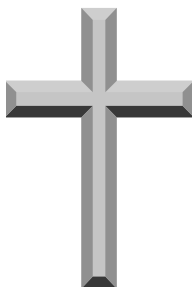
January 2006



From the Study

In November, I received a newsletter from Zion U.C.C. in Marion with an article by the pastor, Rev. Ken Kramer, Jr. entitled: "Discerning God's Call". "Call" is a term that is not understood in the church as it once was, and this is most unfortunate. I share some of the good thoughts from Pastor Kramer's article to remind us that "Call" is a good understanding of God's intentions for us.

"As Christians, through our baptisms we are all called to follow, serve and most of all love God. This call is sealed by the Holy Spirit and is unlike belonging to any other organization. Our belonging to the church means we are part of the living body of Christ. And our membership is sealed first by the blood of Jesus Christ on the cross and secondly by the forgiveness of sins in the baptismal waters. My call as Pastor is to be set aside (not above) to lead in these spiritual matters and to help discern God's will for our life together as a Church. As a called people we are not the Lion's Club, the Chamber of Commerce or the Rotary. Although these are fine organizations, joining them does not require promising to give our whole heart and lives to their service. The church is not a social organization; it is a living, breathing entity. And to be called is a serious commitment to allow the spirit of Christ to both fill us and flow through us, as it wills. As Jesus said, 'Not my will, but thine.'



"As we find in the story of Jonah and the whale, to disobey God's call to follow and serve as he would have us do, may bring dire consequences. Therefore it must not be entered into unadvisedly or lightly.

"However, the temptation in the church today is to treat Christ's body as if it is a business and to run it as if it were a business which means to apply the 'bottom line' as our measure of our success rather than the movement of the Holy Spirit, or to consider

(Biblically) what God would have us do! Under this (business) model, the added temptation is to see the pastor as merely a hired hand to do bidding and the wishes of the corporation. And in doing this, then we measure the success of a pastorate by that same 'bottom line' or whether or not the 'employee' follows the rules. This forgets that the called pastor works for and in the church on behalf of God, the One who in turn truly calls the shots. The church is not a business!"

Pastor Kramer then continued with a specific understanding of being called to the Zion United Church of Christ in Marion, Illinois. His dilemma is similar to every pastor in our denomination and every pastor in any denomination. However, it is important that every baptized person in our churches wrestle with the call that God gives them. The church is not a business because the teachings of Christ are quite different than most business models. However, some persons still try to treat the church as a business model and are very frustrated and unhappy when the church does not flourish with a business model. Too often those who take Christ's teachings and call seriously are considered naïve. However, I find it naïve to believe that one believes they can have success in the church without a focus on the call that Christ gives us. As Rev. Kramer, Jr. said at the end of his article: "May God be with us and may we be with God!" See you Sunday!

In Christ's Love and Service,
Pastor Glenn

Holiday Office Schedule

The St. Peter's Church Office will be closed from Monday, December 26, 2005 through Monday, January 2, 2006 in observance of Christmas and the New Year. The office will reopen at 9:00 a.m. on Tuesday, January 3.





In the Spotlight this month —
Fellowship Time Sign Up
 Please check the bulletin board in the south hallway for the 2006 Fellowship Time sign up sheet. We need volunteers to make coffee each Sunday. Volunteers are also needed to make or purchase a snack for Fellowship Time. Volunteers may sign up for coffee, snack or both. If you have any questions, please call the Church Office.

Consistory Highlights

Editor's Note: The following notes from the December meeting are for your information only. Minutes and actions of this meeting will not be approved until the January meeting.



The Consistory members voted to present the revised Bylaws to the congregation for acceptance.

The new Consistory officers recommended for installation on January 8 are as follows:

- President: Geoff Dahl
- Vice President: Jeff Hallett
- Secretary: Cheryl Lehmann
- Treasurer: Shirley Records
- Assistant Treasurer/Financial Secretary:
Phyllis Jones
- Trustees: Jim Acheson
Linda McCarthy
Lloyd Phipps

Members at large:

- Barb Kobel
- Bill Malone
- Rhonda Shoudel
- Stuart Yoos

The Church and Ministry Committee reminds all committees and groups that annual reports are due in January.

The choir cantata will be on December 18 and the March to the Manger will be on December 24.

There has been a problem with locking up of the church building. The last person in the church after worship or after meetings in the evening is responsible for checking all doors, etc. to make sure all are locked.

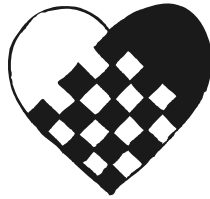
The Treasurer reported the deficit at the end of November is \$14,576.72.

It's That Time Again – Annual Reports Are Due!

- Who:** All chairpersons, church officers and group leaders
- What:** 2005 Annual Reports
- Where:** Return to Ann Swearingen or the Church Office
- When:** By January 15, 2006

With Heartfelt Gratitude

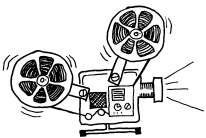
The St. Peter's Staff would like to thank the members of the congregation for your generous contributions toward the staff Christmas gifts. We are grateful for your thoughtfulness in showing your appreciation to us. It is truly a joy to work at such a wonderful place!



January Fun Begins with WINN

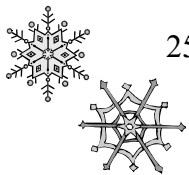
Jump into January with winter fun on Wednesday nights at WINN. Check out the schedule listed below. If you have any questions regarding WINN, please call Rhonda Shoudel at 352-3353 or Kitty Hallett at 355-9316.

January 4 Cheer for the New Year! – featuring appetizers



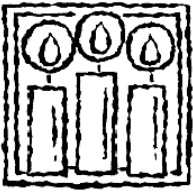
It's the Reel Thing – PJ & Movie in the Lounge Night – featuring breakfast

18 International Night – featuring lasagna, French bread and strudel



25 Winter Wonderland – featuring corn dogs, tater tots and snow cones during the carnival



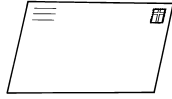


Acolytes and Liturgists Needed

If you'd like to serve as an acolyte or liturgist for Sunday worship, please sign up on the bulletin board across from the Pastor's office.

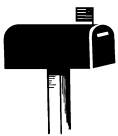
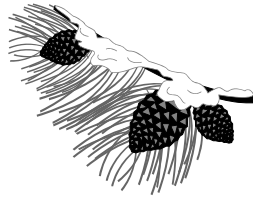
2006 Offering Envelopes Available

Numbered offering envelopes for 2006 are still available. If you do not currently have an envelope number and would like a set of pre-numbered envelopes, please contact Bonnie in the Church Office. Assigned offering envelopes are available to be picked up in the Narthex.



Newsletter Deadline

The deadline for the February issue of *Connections* is Monday, January 16. Please submit your articles to the Church Office or leave them in the Office Manager's mailbox. Please include your name and phone number. Thank you!



New Address

Kathryn "Kay" Gravlin

1802 S. Cottage Grove Avenue, #204
Urbana, IL 61801



Gifts from the Heart

No plans for New Year's Eve? Spend the evening with The Chorale at the 15th annual "C-U at the Virginia". This year's New Year's Eve celebration features love letters and songs of the heart as well as songs and stories by world-renowned Scottish folk singer, Jean Redpath. And of course, Dan Perrino will lead the sing-along accompanied by Warren York on the Mighty Wurlitzer. You won't want to miss a fun evening filled with great music – New Year's Eve, 7:00 p.m. at the Virginia Theatre. (Tickets available at the theatre box office.) Take a good look at the members of The Chorale and you might spot a familiar face! ☺

January Ushers

Jim Acheson
Bernice Benn
Omer Benn

Mildred Luther
Al Shoudel
Cal Twenhafel



January Anniversaries

29 James and Dorothy Woller
(1960)

30 Paul and Gladys Hemp (1954)

January Birthdays

- 1 Roy Colson
Heinrich Schmidt
- 2 Judy Moller Vaiden
- 4 Celeste Honn
- 6 Jeff Hallett
- 7 Shirley Records
- 8 Doris Hershberger
- 9 Lloyd Phipps
- 11 William Limp
- 12 Crystal Vowels
Cassidy Marcum
- 13 Henry Voigtlander
Roth Vowels
- 14 Blake Lehmann
- 15 Doth Sysouvanh
- 21 Ted Eichhorst
- 22 Jama Fager
Paul Marcum
- 24 Aileen Schindler
Jennifer Crone
- 26 Sally Martinie
Jeff Jewett
- 27 Clayton Lehmann
- 31 Julius Demlow



Editor's Note: We apologize for omissions or errors. Information for the newsletter mailing list, birthday list and anniversary list is taken from Church records.

Please report changes in writing to the Church Office (weekdays 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.). You may mail changes, place notes in the Office Manager's mailbox or send an email to trost@net66.com. *Thanks for your help!*





Church Mailbag

On behalf of all the families, their children, youth and adults who make up our Restoration Urban Ministries community, thank you for your gift to the annual Restoration Fund. Your generous gift is appreciated by all of us and is a blessing.

Your unrestricted contribution enables Restoration to provide housing for homeless families and to implement all of the ministries that serve these families and provide outreach ministries to the community. But most importantly, your gift enables Restoration to change lives! Be assured, your gift is used directly to create nurturing services, develop self-sufficiency, restore lives and build the Kingdom of God through our urban ministries.



. . . We are pleased that the work God has done through us has led to some true accomplishments, and we remain enthusiastic about the vision for the next decade. There are incredible changes and blessings occurring in

people's lives because of Restoration and because of generous gifts or time, talents and resources. Every day brings new developments in the lives of these families seeking to restore their lives and to break the cycle of poverty in our community. We want to share as much of that experience as we can.

Thank you again for your support.

Ervin T. Williams
Executive Director
Restoration Urban Ministries

On behalf of the Times Center and the Mental Health Center of Champaign County, it is our pleasure to thank you for your kind donation to the Times Center. Your generosity and charitable giving reflects your commitment to the homeless of our community.

As part of a community based not-for-profit organization, the Times Center is committed to helping the homeless of our community by providing them with a safe shelter.

Through your generous contribution, you play an important role by helping to ensure the ongoing

success of the Times Center. Thank you again for your generosity.

Sheila Ferguson
Chief Executive Officer
Mental Health Center of Champaign County

On behalf of A Woman's Fund, we would like to thank you for your generous gift. Your commitment to helping us in our fight to eliminate violence against women and children in our community is sincerely appreciated.

Each year A Woman's Fund continues to advance its mission of providing safety and support to survivors of violence as they take control of their own lives through education. We provided education and services to over 10,000 people from across Champaign, Ford, Piatt, and Douglas counties. All of our services are free of charge, which would not be possible without your support.

Thank you again for your ongoing commitment to ending domestic and sexual violence. If you ever have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact me.

Crystal Goodbrake
Director of Fund Development
A Woman's Fund

Thank you for your generous gift to Habitat for Humanity of Champaign. Your thoughtful support – together with that of other friends and supporters – ensures that our mission and ministry of eliminating poverty housing in Champaign County continues.

. . . In 15 years, we have helped house 39 families and we have recently broken ground on our 40th home, which will be complete before the end of 2005. Your gift helps make this progress possible.



. . . Together with your support, we are giving area families a hand up, not a hand out by working in partnership with them, not for them. Thank you very much for your generous gift.

Laura Huth
Executive Director
Habitat for Humanity