March U in February

Fourth Annual Variety Show
presented by the
Acts of Apostles Drama Team
Sunday, March 18
First United Church Family Center
Curtains rise at 6:00 p.m.
Free Admission
Refreshments will be served.

Dear Church Family,

“What does Brett actually do here, anyway?” Has that question ever crossed your mind? If I were to ask you what my role at First United was, or what I was doing here, or why I show up on Sunday mornings, what would you answer? I would guess that even those who work most closely with me at the church would provide different answers to the question. I can hear the varying answers that might be provided now – some may call me the youth pastor, some a youth director, or some simply a teacher. Others may call me the winningly handsome, strapping young man who gives the offering message on Sunday mornings. I wish that all of these titles were at least in small part true. But all jokes aside, it raises a good question. What do I do here, and why? I believe that I can divide my roles and responsibilities at First United into three categories – “Leading,” “Learning,” and “Looking.”

Leading
One of my main responsibilities at the church is to lead both the senior and junior high youth programs. We are blessed at First United to have two healthy, vibrant youth groups in our junior and senior high programs. I am sure that this is in large part due to the quality of individuals who volunteer their time to keep the programs running. We have many gifted and talented individuals leading our programs who are passionate to see our kids come to know and love Christ. Leadership in our youth programs is a team effort rather than a solo project. I do serve, however, to oversee the leadership in the youth programs and to equip them with what they need to lead our students well.

In addition to overseeing leaders, I also specifically oversee small group discipleship in our senior high youth program and lead a small group of my own. I also teach our senior high students during the Sunday school hour each week. My specific responsibilities in our junior high youth program include preaching and planning events and activities. Much of my responsibility in the youth programs is to oversee the day to day operations and “fill in the cracks,” as it were, to make sure they remain in good health, and remain thoroughly Christ-centered.

Learning
Another of my main responsibilities is to learn in formal education at seminary and informally from those in leadership over me at the church. I graduated last May from Illinois State with a degree in sociology and have been attending Urbana Theological Seminary in Champaign since then seeking a Master of Divinity degree. The opportunity presented to me to study at the seminary has been a dream of mine for years and my experience thus far has not been a disappointment. First United has blessed me in offering to pay my tuition for classes, making my experience not only fruitful but also affordable. I have found classes at Urbana to be thoroughly useful to me in personal ministry as I share what I’ve learned with the students in our youth programs and personally edifying as they have pushed me to know, love, and treasure God in Christ more.

Classes that I’m taking this semester include a study on the book of Micah, a class on the history of Christianity, and a theology class studying the nature and attributes of God. In addition to receiving a formal education, another responsibility that I have is to learn from those in positions of leadership over me. While this form of learning seems much more “organic” than objective, I take it very seriously. In particular I think of Andy and his mentorship over me since I started working at First United. While my formal education has allowed me to develop in my understanding of the scriptures and theology, this “informal education” has developed my character and growth as a man of God in ways that a formal education cannot. In 1 Corinthians 11 Paul exhorts his readers to imitate him as he imitates Christ. I seek to do much the same in my relationship to Andy. I also have been provided the opportunity to learn from

Our Sr. High Youth Group had a snowy blast at Ice Camp this year. The group lined up for a photo after our prayer send-off.

March Church Calendar

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Chili Cook-Off  11:30 am Family Center</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>4th Annual Variety Show  6 pm Family Center</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23-27</td>
<td>Joplin, MO Service Trip</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sunday Worship Services

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Morning</td>
<td>9 am - 10 am</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children’s</td>
<td>9 am - 10 am 1st &amp; 2nd Sunday</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School</td>
<td>10:30 am - 11:15 am</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Our Sr. High Youth Group meets on Wednesday evenings. The students hear a message every other week. Small groups meet on the alternate week. Thanks to Heidi Welsh for the Sr. High photos.

March 2012

Brett’s Letter • First United News • Spotlight on our Chili Cook-off! Milestones • Attendance • First U News • Church Calendar

First U News

Annie Huette, Sr. Pastor Brett Monge, Jr. High Youth Director 407 W Seventh Street, PO Box 280, Gridley, IL 61744 309-747-2299 www.1stu.org

cont’d inside on page 3
Enrollment is now open for the Little Lambs 2012-2013 school year. Classes are available for 3, 4, and 5 years old. Please contact Stacy Ludy at 747-2778 to put your child’s name on the enrollment list. Information is also available on our website: www.1stu.org.

The chili cook-off is a First United tradition that happens every other year (or so). It may be held irregularly, but it is always fun and well-attended. This year the Local Outreach team is coordinating the cook-off on March 11.

Sign-ups Sign up sheets are posted for chili and other food needed. Table service and drinks will be provided. If you bring chili, please bring your crockpot of (already hot) chili that Sunday morning, and plug it into an open outlet in the kitchen. We will also serve chicken noodle soup for those who don’t like chili.

Can you help? We need help with set-up and clean-up. Please see Jennifer Morrison if you can help.

Looking Another responsibility that I have is as Editor of First United is that of looking to the future. I am responsible, as Peter writes in 1 Peter 4, to be a good steward of the gifts God has given me and the things he is teaching me. I hope to continually grow and learn through doing ministry and education at First United, and I hope to use these things to continue to faithfully serve in our youth programs. I look forward to the challenges and opportunities that await us in the coming year, and I also look forward to God’s providence as he leads us where he desires us as a church.

May we walk faithfully, knowing that faithfulness is success in the eyes of God. It’s been a blessing to be a part of the First United family and to grow with all of you as a body. I look forward to continued growth and faithfulness as we continue in our Deep and Wide plan for 2012.

Peace, Brett


First United will send a team of 67 to Joplin in March. Fifty-three adults and families along with 14 Sr. High students have committed to the trip. While there, they will work under the direction of AmeriCorp, a non-profit organization that has been involved in the clean-up and restoration process since May. Some of our projects will include: planting trees, finish work on houses, and doing general clean-up.

First United is going with Grace Fellowship in El Paso. Grace has organized several work trips to Joplin since the tornado hit in May. Two Joplin families who are ready to move into their homes have registered at First United to take the trip this year.

Team Chairs & News

Christian Ed: chair not named yet Dave Zeller, CLC rep
Finance: Jimmy Bridgers, chair Matt Wenger, CLC rep
Local Outreach: Todd Morris, chair Dick Stannhouse, CLC rep
Worship: Mary Carls, chair Larry Hoyt, CLC rep
Little Lambs: Abby Huette, chair Steve Barnhart, CLC rep

Worship Team Opening: The Worship Team has one opening on their team. If you are interested in serving, please see Mary Carls.

Coffee Fellowship: We need volunteers to set up nine tables and chairs each week in the Family Center. If you can help, please see Mary Carls.

We also need families to help serve Coffee Fellowship. There is a sign-up sheet in the Family Center on Sundays during Coffee Fellowship. You can also see Alisa Ihlenfeldt if you are interested.

Planning for Easter

Good Friday Service Friday, April 6 at 7 pm
Easter Egg Hunt Saturday, April 7 from 9-11 am
Easter Services Two services: 9 a.m. and 11 a.m.
Bench served between services
No Sunday School on Easter Sunday

More details in March

Spotlight on... our Chili Cook-Off!

The chili cook-off is a First United tradition that happens every other year (or so). It may be held irregularly, but it is always fun and well-attended. This year the Local Outreach team is coordinating the cook-off on March 11.

Sign-ups Sign up sheets are posted for chili and other food needed. Table service and drinks will be provided. If you bring chili, please bring your crockpot of (already hot) chili that Sunday morning, and plug it into an open outlet in the kitchen. We will also serve chicken noodle soup for those who don’t like chili.

Can you help? We need help with set-up and clean-up. Please see Jennifer Morrison if you can help.

One more thing... There will be a team of highly-qualified judges for the chili. It is a cook-off after all!

RSVP Please RSVP on the Friendship Pad or to Keri in the church office.

One Another

Brett’s letter cont’d from cover page

Do we have your family’s birthdays and anniversaries? If not, please complete an Attendee Info form available on the cabinet at the front entry. Give the completed form to Keri Hany.

Do we have your family’s birthdays and anniversaries? If not, please complete an Attendee Info form available on the cabinet at the front entry. Give the completed form to Keri Hany.