The real focus is on Jesus Christ!

January 2011

Decisions, Decisions, Decisions...

Every day is filled with choices. Some decisions are minor. (What to eat, what to wear, and which route to drive.) Other decisions are more significant. (Where to live, who to marry, and what career to pursue.) All decisions, however, affect our future. In fact, our lives today are, to a large part, the sum total of all the decisions we have made throughout our lives. Isn’t it fair to say that making better decisions means having a better life?

What if each of us could make better decisions in 2011? What if we acquired some new tools to weigh the decisions we face and choose the paths that will lead to the abundant life that God wants for us?

We are starting the new year with a series of messages I call “The Right Track”. We will look at decision-making styles, explore the various consequences of our choices, and learn from the greatest decision-maker of all time.

One decision I hope each of us will make is to start the new year in worship each week with God’s family. I will see you at church as we learn to choose the right track.

Pastor Chris
Church Announcements

RED CROSS BLOOD DRIVE

The American Red Cross will be holding a blood drive on Thursday, January 6th from 12:00P to 6:00P at the South Campus building. You are eligible if you last donated on or before November 11, 2010. If you have any questions, please call the church office.

FIRST THURSDAY PRAYER SERVICE

Come join us as we lift our concerns and praises to God. The service will be held Thursday, January 6th at 7:00 P.M. in the Sanctuary. All are welcome as we spend time in prayer and adoration of our Lord.

This month’s focus: praying for the realization of the vision points Pastor Chris outlined on Vision Sunday.

Children’s Ministry Prayer Time: 6:00—6:45 P.M in the Prayer Chapel for all adults involved in any of our children’s ministries.

“UNDECKING THE HALLS” EVENT

The Creative Souls Decorating Team needs all hands—and some trucks—to help with the After Christmas Take Down. We will begin Saturday, January 8th at 8:30A by meeting in the church lobby to start removing lights, packing decorations, and dismantling Christmas trees.

We would love to have you join us! Also, if you have a truck, we would really appreciate your assistance in hauling everything back to the South Campus to be stored away until next November. We will see you on the 8th!

BEGINNINGS WORKSHOP

The Beginnings Workshop is the next step for those interested in membership at First United Methodist Church. This two-session workshop is designed to assist you in understanding the life and doctrine of the United Methodist Church as a whole and this local church in particular - its faith statements, how the church “works”, expectations of membership etc. The Beginnings Workshop, taught by Dave Joyce, is offered six times per year on two Saturdays from 9:00A to 12:00P in the church parlor.

The next Beginnings Workshop will be held on Saturday, January 8th and Saturday, January 22nd. To register please contact Christine Sullivan at c.sullivan@peopleneedjesus.org or Yvette Biddle at y.biddle@peopleneedjesus.org or call the church office at 944-2793.

MEN’S FELLOWSHIP DINNER

All men are invited to the January Men’s Fellowship Dinner to be held on Tuesday, January 11th at 6:00P at the South Campus. Contact Mark Bunce at (309) 502-9034 for more information, or to be added to the email distribution list for upcoming men’s events, email Mark at mobunce@yahoo.com.

UNITED METHODIST WOMEN EVENTS

Sewing Fellowship will meet on Monday, January 17th from 9:00A—3:00P. Come join the fun and fellowship.

The January 25th, 1:00P meeting of the United Methodist Women will feature a program by our local sculptor, Sheila Wigant. Sheila is the artist who produces the First Angel sculptures.

(Continued on page 3)
Church Announcements Cont’d.

2011 ALTAR FLOWER CALENDAR
The new 2011 Altar Flower Calendar is now available in the lobby, hanging on the wall between the Information Table and the Parlor. If you would like to donate a Sunday bouquet for our altar in memory or in honor of a loved one, please sign up on this calendar. A week prior to your donation Sunday, the church office will call you with a reminder and to ask you who the flowers are in memory or in honor of so we may post the information in the Sunday bulletin.

OFFERING ENVELOPES
If you ordered 2011 offering envelopes, they are now available at the Information Table. Order forms for 2011 offering envelopes are also available. If you have any questions regarding offering envelopes or your 2010 giving statements, please contact the our Financial Secretary, Cheryl Rankin, at the church office.

2011 Emmaus Information

Upcoming Walks in 2011:

Men’s Spring Walk # 87
April 28 – May 1, 2011

Women’s Spring Walk # 88
May 5—8, 2011

Upcoming Gathering
January 15, 2011 at St. John’s UMC in Davenport, Iowa. Potluck dinner at 6:00P; worship at 7:00P.

Application information:
The most recent version of the Walk to Emmaus applications are available from the QC Emmaus web site www.qcemmaus.org (home page). Please use these when sponsoring a candidate.

NEW CHURCH WEBSITE
Have you checked out our new website yet? All the information you need to know about First United Methodist Church along with a complete calendar of events is now available on our new website.

www.peopleneedjesus.org

RENEWED OFFERING ENVELOPES
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NEWSLETTER DEADLINE
If you would like to submit an article, a thank you note or a testimony for our monthly newsletter, the deadline for submissions is always on the 20th of each month. You may email your submissions to newsletter@geneseofirstumc.org or drop them by the church office.

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Thank You Notes

Many, many thanks to all who participated in the Christmas Choir, Christmas Eve Orchestra and the many soloists who made beautiful music throughout the Christmas season. There were many comments I received from those who attended the services that said we made them feel so “Christmassy”!

You are a blessing to our church and a blessing in my life as I lead you in the music ministry here at First United Methodist. I trust you all had a wonderful Christmas and I pray you blessings in the New Year.

Rehearsals start up again on Wednesday, January 5th. Come and make a joyful noise to the Lord in the new year!

Lindrew Johnson
Music Minister

Thank you very much for the use of your South Campus to distribute angel tree gifts to our clients on December 8th. We appreciate your generosity and hospitality.

Your friends at the Food Pantry,
Nancy Noord and Jolynn Kitterman

We thank you for the use of your facilities for our meeting each week. We appreciate your generosity.

Tops Women

Thanks all of you for the prayers, phone calls and cards. It meant so much to hear from you.

Maxine Ritch

Dear Members of First UMC:

Thanks to you, this year nearly forty area families are safely at home for the holidays! Your donation built wheelchair ramps, installed grab bars and handrails and replaced doors, windows and insulation for elderly widows, single mothers and people struggling with mobility.

Thank you again for helping these families through Rebuilding Together Geneseo/Cambridge. Your efforts are giving them a better Christmas.

Joni Conrad

Dear Bell Choir and friends:

This season’s bell choir has been fantastic. I appreciate everyone’s time spent practicing and playing as we ring to the Lord! Of course, we couldn’t do it without the help of all the many people who help us at setup and teardown and those that sub with us. Thank you to all of you. We couldn’t do it without you.

Thanks, Bell Choir for the gift certificate. I truly appreciate all you do, and I am grateful for your dedication to the choir and its ministry.

I’m looking forward to the Bell Choir’s rehearsals to start in February.

In Christ’s Love,
Sam Dalin

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Joni Conrad
The staff at First UMC would like to extend a huge and heartfelt thank you to all of you who participated in our Advent and Christmas activities and worship events.

So many of you helped with the events sponsored by our church during the Christmas Walk such as the Journey To Bethlehem, the Soup Supper and the Bell Choir concert. Those events were highly successful because of your efforts.

Thanks to all who helped out with our Advent activities.

From our church decorators, the Scripture readers and March To The Manger families, thanks for blessing us with your time. The Children and Adult Christmas choirs put on such wonderful performances that put us all in the Christmas spirit as we awaited the birth of our Savior.

To all who helped with our four Christmas worship services whether you were an usher, greeter, Scripture Reader, played in the orchestra, participated in the children’s program or were involved in supplying animals and helping out with the Nativity Petting Zoo at the South Campus, you can’t begin to know how much your generous hearts enriched our Christmas services. We are so very blessed with such a wonderful and generous church family of faith. May you all experience God’s love and grace in the coming year.

Thank You Notes (cont’d.)

LEADERSHIP EVENT
The next Leadership Summit, “Deepening Your Effectiveness”, will be held on Saturday, January 15th from 8:30A – 4:00P. THERE IS NO COST FOR THIS SUMMIT FOR THE PEOPLE OF FIRST UMC. The cost per person for persons in the community outside of First UMC is $20 before January 4th and $25 January 4th and after. Additional information can be found at the Information Table. Childcare will be available, but must be pre-arranged when you RSVP for the summit. If you would like to attend but have not yet turned in your RSVP, please contact Christine or Yvette in the church office.
Celebrations For The Month

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<th>Date</th>
<th>Name 1</th>
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<th>Name 3</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>1/6</td>
<td>Ethan Lawson</td>
<td>Barbara Leonard</td>
<td>Megan Melcher</td>
<td>Dennis Robertson</td>
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<td>1/7</td>
<td>Bryant Jeffrey</td>
<td>Ed Deener</td>
<td>Julie Robinson</td>
<td>Bryce Chamberlain</td>
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<td>1/8</td>
<td>Evelyn Hopkin</td>
<td>Linda Wolf</td>
<td>1/20</td>
<td>Bobby Adams</td>
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<td>1/9</td>
<td>Madison Flaherty</td>
<td>Victoria Rosales</td>
<td>Will Sammons</td>
<td>Juliun Coquit</td>
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<td>1/10</td>
<td>Darian Miller</td>
<td>Bryce Diehl</td>
<td>Amanda Lamb</td>
<td>Michael Kelly II</td>
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<td>1/11</td>
<td>Jan Franks</td>
<td>Bill Werner</td>
<td>Joe Witter</td>
<td>Lily Kluge</td>
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<td>1/12</td>
<td>Joe DeMay</td>
<td>Chris Gramling</td>
<td>Lyn Paris</td>
<td>Charles Dilenbeck</td>
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<td>1/13</td>
<td>Nathan Johnson</td>
<td>Abbigail Mcgee</td>
<td>Eilen Moore</td>
<td>Lou Schallow</td>
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<td>1/14</td>
<td>Kathy Linn</td>
<td>Mark Jeffrey</td>
<td>Joe Collins</td>
<td>Cameron Hodgson</td>
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<td>1/15</td>
<td>1/16</td>
<td>Beverly Fisher</td>
<td>Diana Franks</td>
<td>Kristi Diehl</td>
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<td>Wendy Gatter</td>
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<td>Gloria Dilenbeck</td>
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What is the Alpha course? It's an opportunity for anyone to explore the Christian faith. It’s relaxed, non-threatening, low-key, friendly and fun. The Alpha course consists of a series of talks looking at topics such as “Who is Jesus?” and “Why and how do I pray?” Our winter session which begins on January 9th is now full but we will be offering another course in the Spring. This ten-week session held on Sunday evenings from 6:30—8:30P at South Campus includes dinner served each evening. There is no cost to attend. Our next course will begin in April and we will have more detailed information in upcoming bulletins and newsletters. In the meantime, if you have any questions about the Alpha course, contact Yvette Biddle at 944-2793 or by email at y.biddle@peopleneedjesus.org.

The Alpha course is for everyone including new Christians, newcomers to the church, those wanting to learn more about Christianity or those just wanting to brush up on the basics. We would love to have you join us.

Alpha Course
February Men’s Retreat

"HEAR YE, HEAR YE"
ALL MEN AND WOMEN
OF "FIRST UNITED
METHODIST CHURCH"
GENESEO IL.
The 2011 Annual First
UMC Men’s "SPIRITUAL
GROWTH EVENT" titled,
"A MAN AND HIS GOD",
is in the advanced plan-
ning stages.
This is an event that
every man in our church
here at First UMC is not
going to want to miss.
There will be an abun-
dance of fun and wor-
ship consisting of a dy-
namic guest speaker
from Champaign IL
along with spirit-filled
music as Steve Schuler
from Orion shares his
God-anointed voice with
all those blessed to be
in attendance. There
will be fun and games as
well as FOOD, FOOD
AND MORE FOOD.
There will be a time of
fellowship and testimony
as we sit by the grand-
iose fireplace and enjoy
the soothing sounds and
aroma of the crackling
wood. We will break
bread with one another
in communion. This will
truly be a time for God
to not only speak to us
as the men of the
church but to also love
on us as the men of the
church in a way that
only God can do.
Men: If God is calling
you off the fence, if you
just want to grow
deeper in your relation-
ship with your Creator,
if you just want good
fellowship and fun, or if
you want to meet God
for the first time, then
this weekend is for you.
Please don’t let it slip
away. And did I men-
tion that there will be
plenty of
FOOOOOOOOOD?
Women: Are you look-
ing for God to take the
man in your life and
turn him into a spiritual
gift to you? Would it
excite you to see your
already godly man grow
even closer to God, our
Abba Father? Is the
man in your life so close
but just hasn’t yet taken
that step to ask God
into his life? Ladies, I
truly feel that this is a
time God has chosen to
move mightily on the
men of His church that
step out in faith to pur-
sue Him on this week-
end. So, put the man in
your life in a headlock if
you have to and get him
to this God-inspired
event!
When and Where?
February 4th 5:00P to
February 5th 5:00P at
Camp Milan in Milan IL.
Any questions? Contact
Bob Keller at (309) 721-
7049. A sign-up sheet
is now available in the
church lobby.
FIRST UMC ENDOWMENT COMMITTEE

We would like to introduce the Endowment Committee as approved by the First United Methodist Church of Geneseo charge conference on November 14, 2010. Each member has prayerfully accepted the call to develop and govern the endowment policies for this congregation. Members include Chairperson Steve Fiers, Secretary Kim Schwarzkopf, Steve Dellett, Bob Kuhns, Sami Piepenbrink, and Everett Swanson. The purpose of the endowment fund is to provide members an opportunity to invest in the long-range capabilities and ministries of this congregation and encourage Christian Stewardship above and beyond commitment to the church’s current operating budget. Over the next few months, the committee will continue to define how to best invest and manage these funds, keeping in mind the wishes of the donor, while providing financial strength to carry out this congregation’s ministries. They will continually communicate developments and plan to have a rollout event the Spring of 2011. In the meantime, please feel free to contact any member should you have questions concerning the Endowment Fund ministry of First United Methodist Church.

Endowment Committee Term of the Month: Planned Giving

A method of supporting charities that enables generous individuals to make larger gifts than they could make from their income. While some planned gifts provide a life-long income to the donor, others use estate and tax planning techniques to provide for charity and other heirs in ways that maximize the gift and/or minimize its impact on the donor’s estate.

Left to right: Steve Dellett, Everett Swanson, Steve Fiers, Kim Schwarzkopf, Sami Piepenbrink, Bob Kuhns
Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

We want to say Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to all of you. We are so thankful to the parents for allowing your student to come to our ministry. Our vision is to see students become disciples of Christ by teaching (in word and deed) the Gospel, growing them in the Gospel, and sending students out to share the love of Jesus. We thank all the youth leaders (who are the heart and soul of this ministry) and those who have donated time and resources to this ministry. We appreciate you all!

EVENTS

Middle School students are invited to come out with us to Iginition Middle School Conference Friday Jan 28 6pm-10pm and Saturday Jan 29 9am-4pm. It will be held at Christ UMC in East Moline. Registration is $35/student. http://www.harvestministriyteams.com/ignition/index.html

Middle and High School students don’t want to miss the largest Christian music tour in the country. Saturday January 22, we will be going to NIU Convention Center in DeKalb to WinterJam 2011. $10 at the door. http://www.hearitfirst.com/winterjam/

If you are interested in any of these events, contact Pastor Gerald.

Past, Present, and Future

In December, we studied the Trinity in Middle School and Jesus’ birth, life, and resurrection. In these studies, the students saw how desperately we need God in our lives. In January, we will go through a three week series in Middle School called “Better Together.” In High School, we will go through a series called “Building Wise Habits.” Our main goal in all our teaching series is to instill biblical wisdom in these students and process these ideas in their small groups so that they can live Christ centered lives through the week and God-willing until they pass from this life.

Don’t Be My Friend by Anonymous

"...I discovered through trial and error that if I tried to be best friends with students, I would have a ton of text messages in my Inbox, but I wouldn’t be an effective volunteer. If I had chosen to allow the girls to smoke in my car, they may have thought I was fun and cool, but their respect for me would be in question. Eventually, they would have succeeded in taking advantage of my leniency. The same is true as a parent. While teens are quick to tell their friends that they want more freedom and wished that they could do whatever they wanted, they desperately seek an environment linked to structure and regulation. Boundaries give teenagers security, although getting a teen to admit that would require large doses of truth serum backed by the threat of cell phone removal. Our responsibilities as leaders and parents are to give our children a sense of being loved unconditionally, to give them a sense of security, and to train them up in the way of God, which may require plastering a “Please no smoking” sign to your dash board.” Thoughts or comments: g.aloran@peopleneedjesus.org
Journey To Bethlehem

Children’s Christmas Play

March To The Manger

Christmas Cantata

Angel Tree Gifts

Watch for more Christmas photos next month!
Services of Worship

Sunday
8:00A, 9:00A
and 10:30A

Services of Worship

Wednesday

School Hourly 1-5P

NexGen Middle School Ministry 3:30P

The Rock
High School Ministry 6:30P