

# TOWER TOPICS

## First United Methodist Church Newsletter



Vol. 65 No. 12

First United Methodist Church, Huntington, WV

December, 2011

### Consecration Sunday is Coming December 18

Congregations that approach financial stewardship from a biblical perspective do not view the money Christians give to their church merely as a way to pay its bills. Rather, such congregations see financial contributions as a way to help people grow spiritually in their relationship with God by supporting their church's mission and ministry with a percentage of their incomes.

The Finance Committee is working on a new program for giving to the needs of our congregation and its mission to God, as we approach Consecration Sunday, December 18. This year we will need to ask ourselves "What is God calling me to do?" "What percentage of my income is God calling me to give?"

During morning worship on Consecration Sunday, we are asking our attendees and members to make their financial commitments to our church's missionary, benevolent, and educational ministries in this community and around the world.

Every attendee and member who completes an *Estimate of Giving Card* does so voluntarily by attending morning worship on Consecration Sunday. The procedure is done in such a way that no one will feel personal embarrassment if he or she chooses not to fill out a card.

Come on the 18<sup>th</sup> and make our Church come alive with excitement as we consecrate our gifts to God.

### Worship With Us Christmas Eve



First United Methodist Church will be celebrating with two Christmas Eve services. The first will begin at 6:30 p.m. and is family oriented. It will include a re-enactment of the nativity, songs, stories and the lighting of candles. Families are encouraged to attend and younger children may come in their pajamas.

The second service will begin at 11:00 p.m.. The worship is a traditional communion/candlelight service. In addition to communion and the lighting of the candles there will be special music and a live nativity.

### Special Christmas Program by "Day 3" Set for December 18

Day 3 is returning to First Church on Sunday December 18 at 4:00 to share their gift of the music of Christmas. We had many request for the trio to return after they were here on September 11. Plan now to attend this wonderful Christmas event and invite your friends.

A soup and chili supper sponsored by the United Methodist Men will follow in the Fellowship Hall.

### Christmas Day and New Year's Day Worship

This year both Christmas Day and New Year's Day are on a Sunday. We *will* be having worship on both days. We will, however, only be having one service each day at 10:45 a.m. On Christmas Day the service will be a relaxed traditional and on New Year's Day the service will be contemporary. Both worship experiences will take place in the main sanctuary.

### Come to the Children's Christmas Musical December 14, 6:00 p.m.



"*Arrest These Merry Gentlemen*" Think "Bethlehem meets Dragnet." What we have is a "caper" featuring a detective from the Bethlehem Police (Joe Sabbath, played by Caleb Morgan) investigating an alleged gang of joyfully-rowdy shepherds "disturbing the peace" with a crazy story about angels and a mysterious baby. Joe is determined to get to the bottom of this case! Of course, what he discovers is no simple "disturbing the peace" beef. It seems he's stumbled upon the caper that changed the world! Join the children at 6:00 on December 14 for another delightful musical.



## Advent at First Light

Have you ever awakened the day after Christmas feeling like you missed it? That with all the craziness you just didn't get the experience you had hoped for? This Advent season, join us in

First Light for a *Life-Giving Christmas* as we focus on the real, the authentic, the things that really matter and the true gift of the season. Hope, peace, joy, and love are not just candles to be lit around a wreath--they are facets of a living Christ to be ignited in our lives and our communities. Christmas can be that time of refueling for the new year ahead, if we carefully invest ourselves and engage life-giving principles. Join us this Advent season in First Light, Sunday mornings at 8:45.

## When God Came Down

By Pastor Paul

On Christmas, 1958 Pope John XXIII visited the Regina Coeli Queen of Heaven jail, and made a surprise visit to the prisoners, becoming the first pontiff in modern history to visit a jail. The 1500 prisoners, most of whom were permitted to look down at the Pope from the four floors of cells, cheered lustily. The supreme pontiff of the Roman Catholic Church made this statement to the prisoners: *"You could not come to see me, so it is right that I come to you."* Later it was announced that the Pope had given prison authorities several million lire to buy Christmas gifts for the inmates.

The visit of the Pope and the giving of the gifts caused one of the prisoners, with tears in his eyes, to reply, *"It has made today the most memorable day in my life."*

To this young man this was indeed an unforgettable event, but this incident can only stand in utter contrast to the day when God came down to earth. The birth of Christ in Bethlehem makes Christmas the most memorable day of all history. And at this Advent season we say with the Apostle Paul, *"Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift!"* (II Corinthians 9:15)

Our most memorable day!

## Shop with Heart!

Planning on shopping for the holidays? Most certainly. Shopping online? Probably. Here is another simple, painless way to help your church!

[GiveBack.org](http://GiveBack.org) is a great site that has partnered with over 400 merchants who offer a percentage of the shopper's dollars to donate back to your favorite cause (that would be FUMC!) Most range from 3-8% of your purchase total.

**Simple instructions:** Go to the following website, <https://www.giveback.org/cause/28707/FUMC-Shop-with-Heart.aspx>

I know it's long, but bookmark it or add to your favorites, and you won't have to enter again. On the right side it will say, Get Involved, Click on SHOP, Click on *Shop For This Cause*. It will take you to the directory of all the merchants you can shop with and tell you what percent will be donated back to FUMC from your shopping!

Some examples are Coldwater Creek, GapKids, Barnes&Noble, iTunes, DisneyStore, Macy's, Nordstrom, AnnTaylor and many more!

Happy Shopping, it is the season! Enjoy Black Friday from the comfort of your home, with online shopping.

We thank you.

Your Finance Committee

## Bishop to Take Early Retirement

Ernest S. Lyght, resident bishop of the West Virginia Conference (Region) of the United Methodist Church (UMC), announced October 27 that he will retire from the active episcopacy on December 31, 2011.

In a letter to more than 700 active and retired clergy in the region, the bishop acknowledged that he is asking for early retirement due to health issues he has struggled with since last February.

It has been an immense privilege and awesome opportunity for me to serve as a bishop in The United Methodist Church since 1996, said Bishop Lyght. I have thoroughly appreciated the years of service in the West Virginia Conference.

William Boyd Grove was selected November 3, 2011 by the Council of Bishops to serve as interim Bishop of the West Virginia Conference (Region) of the United Methodist Church (UMC). He will serve in this capacity from January 1, 2012 through August 31, 2012. Bishop Grove formerly served the Conference from 1980-1992.



Again this year we will be distributing advent devotionals that families can use to enrich their time of preparation for the Christ Child. They are perfect for lighting of the advent wreath. The devotional includes scripture, a brief devotion and prayer and an activity that the entire family can do. There are also line drawings done by our children. The devotional will also be available on our web site [www.firstunitedmethodist.com](http://www.firstunitedmethodist.com).

## An Open Letter to Santa



Dear Santa,

Do you ever need help with gift giving and ideas? Our church family would like to help out with some gifts for some folks in need. Here are some ways we can help you:

- **The Mitten Tree**- we will fill our magical tree with as many mittens, hats and gloves as it will hold and deliver them to Cridlin Food and Clothing Closet.
- **Gifts for Baby Jesus**- We will bring layette items for babies from now until Christmas and deliver them to Ebenezer Bassinet for needy moms.
- **Ebenezer Angels**- We will adopt students at Ebenezer Outreach and help fill their Wish Lists.
- **Christmas in Nicaragua**- Several of our members will be traveling to Nicaragua to deliver food, medicine and clothes to your children in Ciudad Sandino.
- **Habitat for Humanity**- We will help a family build a home of their own (hope it will have a chimney) in 2012. Some of us will pound nails; some will give gifts of money.
- **Cridlin Food and Clothing Closet**- We are hard at work filling the shelves with food. We are also shopping for blankets and coats.

And Santa there are so many other ways we could help-Heifer Project, City Mission, making sure our neighbors are not forgotten.

Love, The Mission Team

## First Church Dinner Theater means Mission

Plans are well underway for Dinner Theater 2012. The dates are set for February 10, 11, and 14. Bitsy, Boots, Ida and the whole bunch are packing for a tropical vacation. Jonathan Joy is finishing up Act 2 as we speak, so we are really excited to see what happens with our favorite dysfunctional family.

Why should you support this foolishness, you ask? Because this is how your Mission Team raises money for Mission. In 2011, the play proceeds amounted to \$4200. That money has been put to good use:

- \$1000 to help the Youth fill flood buckets this year and next
- \$1000 to help repair the boiler at the Campus Christian Center
- \$ 750 to purchase blankets and coats for Cridlin
- \$ 200 to help UM students at MU provide finals week snacks
- \$2000 to WV Mission thru C.O.M.E.

Make your Valentine plans now.

## United Methodist Women

Thank you for all your hard work this year. You have cooked, waited tables, taught Sunday School, visited the shut-ins, volunteered for many charities, studied, prayed and helped in a hundred different ways. And you have shopped for geraniums, mums, knives, pecans, pickles and cookies. (Of course, you need to bake some cookies for the Cookie Walk on December 11 in order to get more.) The women, children and youth helped our Pledge to Mission. Thank you for your loving care.

Jane Morse

## Fresh Pecans are Here

UMW has fresh pecans again this year. Prices are \$8 for halves and pieces and \$10 for the cinnamon, honey and pinwheels. These pecans are wonderful for baking, snacking or gift giving.

## Cookie Walk Coming December 11

It's time for the Annual Cookie Walk. Again this year, you will find delicious array of cookies in all sizes, shapes and flavors something for everyone. What better way to get your holiday baking done?



In order for the cookie walk to be successful, we need everyone to participate. If you haven't already signed up to bring cookies, candies or your favorite sweet treat, please do so. You can contact Leah Orroark, 304-525-2721 to sign up.

We know that everyone doesn't bake, but you can still support the cookie walk by attending and buying lots of goodies after church on December 11.

## Nicaragua Mission Update

Your giving and the fundraising events have reached almost \$8000! The Nicaragua Mission needs at least \$10,000. In December there will be some specialty gift baskets for silent auction and more cookies to buy! If you know of anyone who might be interested in donating to this mission, please tell/ask them to consider donating, OR tell Norma Denning and she will make contact. Remember, every little bit adds up! Thanks to all who have helped, including the Trustees of our church.

All donations to the Nicaragua Christmas Mission must be in to the church no later than December 19. If you want to donate cash you can wait until Christmas Day if you wish.

**Cridlin Food of the Month for December is 96 cans of spaghetti sauce or \$16.56/case of 24**

## In Our Thoughts and Prayers

Visit us Jesus Christ with the sharpness of your truths and pray for us Holy Spirit when we do not know what to pray. Together, let us pray...

### For those who are sick or homebound...

Barbara Allen, Myrtle Archer, Helen Bardall, Carol Bartram, Brady Blake, Maxine Blake, Eloise Bland, Faye Brangham, Mabel Brooks, Fred & Betty Bugg, Rod Burns, Clarissa Carson, Bob Cartmill, Sue Clay, Mel Cummings III, Jack & Bobby Jo Cundiff, Eddie Danford, Mary Jo Danford, Florence Davidson, Ella Dennison, Bernistine Gill, Kerry Hampton, Madeline Harmon, Ginny Lee Hastings, Cathy Hutchinson, John Knight, Gil Lester, Gloria Lester, Lula McCalla, Ray & Tiny Moser, Jane Mossman, Virginia Mulcahy, Geraldine Pigman, Luella Pinson, Nina Richardson, Jack & Pat Sale, Margaret Sydenstricker, Lonnie Thompson, Ted Vidal

### For those beginning a new life together...

Susann Apgar and Dennis Meurer who were married on November 5

### For those touched by the waters of baptism...

Sarah Haymes

Remember those in the military who are in harmø's way.

## In Our Mail

Thank you notes were received from Cridlin Food and Clothing Pantry and Habitat for Humanity for donations received.

Thank you very much for your thoughts, prayers and gifts during my time of recovery. It is reassuring to know that one has so many friends at First United Methodist Church. Carolyn and I want to thank you all for your love and support.

Mel Cummings

Thank you for the dinner and a very emotional evening! Cancer like most serious illnesses works on your mind long after you are healed. Thank all the cooksö the meal was wonderful.

Bless you all, Sandra Foster



## December Birthdays

12/1	Trinity Casto	12/12	Marge McInerney	12/22	Tom Pafford
12/3	Dick King		Wesley Tebbetts		Pam McCoy
	Rhonda Kueck		Samuel Archer		Mel Cummings
12/4	Jennifer Niemann	12/13	Jack Eblin		IV
12/5	Grace Gooding	12/15	Lauren Cundiff	12/23	Linda Eddins
12/7	Leah O'Rourke	12/17	Paige Cruz		Katherine Reid
	Elizabeth Sergent		Ryan Smith		Elise Hager
	Steven Powers		Tyler Cummings		August Cooke X
12/8	Joey Bacon	12/18	Molly Sergent	12/25	Donna Rhoten
12/9	Jack Cundiff		Brooks Anderson		Kevin Dillon
12/10	Missy Young	12/19	Derek Barker	12/26	Price Wiswell
	John Baker		Quentin	12/27	Geneva Shanholtzer
	Robert Phipps		Neighborgall		
	Robin Mankins	12/21	Marie Archambault	12/28	John Young
	Megan Kueck				Evan Orndorff
	Ben Chiles		Kristy Coleman-Burgess	12/30	Arianna Broce
	Allie Bright				Aiden Broce
12/11	Jonathan Bartram		Caleb Morgan		
12/12	Richard Drown		Conner Smith		

## Welcome New Members

Please welcome these new members who joined on November 13.

Ashley Brown  
1510 7th Ave., Apt. 15  
Huntington WV 25701

Sarah Haymes  
2004 Donald Ave.  
Huntington WV 25701

Jennifer Brown  
1510 7th Ave., Apt. 15  
Huntington WV 25701

Adam Nuckols  
1510 7th Ave., Apt. 15  
Huntington WV 25701

Dear Pastor Paul Russell

Thank you so much for your kind remembrance of my mother-in-law, Betty Nichols, on All Saints Day. First Church was so important to her and she served in so many leadership roles during her many years as an active member. She would be pleased with this last recognition of those years. May God continue to bless you and your ministry.

Jack & Sue Nichols

Dear Pastor Paul and Friends at FUMC;

I want to thank everyone for all the prayers, thoughts, flowers, cards, and visits. It meant so much to have Paul come and see me. I really looked forward to his visits and I especially want to thank him for being there for me.

Anne would tell me that many of you would ask about me. That was very kind and I really appreciated that thoughtfulness. Thank you also for your prayers and kindness that helped Anne through those 6 months and 11 days!

I hope to see you at Church on Sunday.

Respectfully,  
Cathy Hutchinson

# Youth Christmas Party

On Sunday, December 11 at 5:30, the youth of the church will have a Christmas party. All youth, come join us with a wrapped gift that costs less than \$5, and that is just silly enough to make us laugh. We will play Bingo and have a gift exchange. Also, bring \$5 for pizza. So we will see you on December 11 at 5:30 for our youth Christmas party!



# Notes from Debbie



Thanks to all the parents/grandparents who brought their children to the concert at Enslow Park Presbyterian Church on November 13. We appreciate your extra effort and the kids did really well. Special thanks to Cindy Legg for playing flute, Brooks Anderson for playing metallophone and Cassie Bacon for playing bongos.

Please take note of our upcoming schedule for December: we sing for church on December 11 and have our dress rehearsal for the Christmas musical that same day, from 1:00 -3:00 p.m. on the stage in fellowship hall. This is our only time to rehearse with microphones and lighting, so please make every effort to be there.

The program itself is Wednesday, December 14 at 6:00 p.m. and everyone is invited to *Arrest These Merry Gentlemen*. Get there early for a good seat!



## Vagabonds

The Vagabonds will have their Christmas meeting on Monday, December 12 at Noon. They will have a catered luncheon here at the church followed by entertainment by the Huntington High Choir. Watch the Sunday bulletin for more information.

## Family Game Night Coming Soon

Mark your calendars for Family Game Night at the church on Saturday January 28. More details in the January Tower Topics.

Is there an activity you would like to see us do? If so, call Pastor Steve and tell him about it.

## Menus and Helpers for December

**12/7 Finance Committee**  
Salad Bar, Lasagna, Garlic Bread, Dessert

**12/14 Seekers Class**  
Salad Bar, Pizza, Dessert

## Women's and Men's Retreats Scheduled

The Women's Retreat is January 20-22 at Asbury Woods. Plan now to join the Women of January for another great weekend. Watch for more information in the January issue of Tower Topics. Overnight and day retreaters are welcome.

The Men's Retreat will be March 2-4 also at Asbury Woods.

There has also been some interest expressed in a Family Camping Retreat. We will be looking at dates to try later in 2012.

## Special Events and Meetings for December

12/1	10:30	Love Bee Circle
12/7	6:00	Staff Parish Relations Committee
12/10	8:00	Men's Prayer Breakfast
12/11	Noon	Cookie Walk
	1:00	Children's Musical Rehearsal
12/12	Noon	Vagabonds Luncheon
12/13	6:00	Troop & Pack 7 Family Night Spaghetti Dinner
12/14	6:00	Children's Christmas Musical
	7:00	Trustees
12/18		Consecration Sunday
	4:00	Day 3 Concert and Chili Supper
12/24		Christmas Eve Services at 6:30 and 11:00
12/25	10:45	Christmas Day Service
12/26		Church Office Closed



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CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

**Senior Pastor**

Paul Russell

**Associate Pastor**

Stephen Hensley

**Director of Christian Education**

Tracie M. Long

**Sunday Worship Opportunities**

First Light	8:45 a.m.
Sunday School	9:30 a.m.
Morning Worship	10:45 a.m.
Korean Church	1:00 p.m.

**Next Tower Topics Deadline is December 28**



**Christmas Cards  
 for the Homebound**

Please remember our homebound church members this Christmas. We are helping you do this by placing greeting cards on the back table in the sanctuary to send to those who can no longer get out. The cards will be addressed, we just ask that you write a brief note, add a stamp, and mail the card. Let's share the love of Christmas with all our church family this Christmas.

**Wednesday Adult  
 Bible Study**

On December 7 we will conclude our study, *The Journey*. There will be no Bible study on December 14; everyone is encouraged to attend the Children's Christmas Program that evening. Our Wednesday evening study will begin again on January 4 at 6:00 in Room 208.

**Men's Breakfast**

All men of the church are encouraged to join us for breakfast on Saturday, December 10 at 8:00. This is a great time of devotion and fellowship. Our guest speaker will be David Michael, the Executive Director/CEO of Huntington Area Habitat for Humanity. And remember, you can always come early and help in the kitchen or just to fellowship. See you all on the 10<sup>th</sup> and bring a friend.

**Don't miss the Christmas concert by "Day 3" at 4:00 on December 18. This trio from Scioto County was well received when they were here in September and we're looking forward to their return.**

**There will be a chili/soup supper following the concert.  
 Invite your friends and neighbors.**