

HERALD

St. John's United Church of Christ

APRIL 2008

The Season of Easter

The Easter candy and trinkets were marked down 30% on Monday – time to move on to the next commercial window, Mother's day. For merchants, Easter is over and gone. For Christians, we have entered the Season of Easter, six more Sundays leading up to Pentecost on May 11. For us, Easter is not over at all. For us, Easter is a state of mind and spirit more than a single date on the calendar.

Easter testifies to the potential of the old giving way to the new. Easter says that what we thought would never happen, could never happen, can happen when it is part of God's prerogative. Easter helps us to not be bound by what we know now if God has surprises that are beyond our imaginations.

As we live in this world we are confined to time/space realities that we assume are set in stone. Even when we stand on tiptoes, we are limited by the knowledge of what those before us have told us and by what we have learned ourselves. Everything about us is trapped in finite realities, beginnings and endings, birth and death, the predictability of "the laws of nature" that seems to govern our lives. Easter prods us to say, "You haven't seen anything yet!" when we have no idea what this will mean.

So the Season of Easter for me is the season of surprise and wonder, of coming to believe that God offers us a glimpse of possibilities that our finite minds and tentative spirits can scarcely imagine. As Easter People, we are encouraged to see life possibilities everywhere, no closed doors, no preconceived and confining attitudes of what is still beyond our feeble ability to understand.

Stay with us in this Season of Easter as we explore more of the wondrous story of resurrection and new life. This story has huge implications for our last days on this earth and the promise of sharing Jesus' resurrection, but this story also has huge implications for every day. Where is the wonder about us as God opens our eyes to new miracles? How has God touched a cynical world with surprise and awe? Can we embody a stubborn hope that rests in our conviction that God is here with us, working new possibilities into every routine event? Happy Season of Easter. Peace. John Krueger

Youth Happenings

March has been busy time for our church youth, but very few events to show for the effort. During the weekend of March 7th through March 9th two of your senior youth members, Cara Ford and Emily Houston, went to the Spring Connection Retreat at the Merom Conference Center (Merom, IN). The theme for the weekend revolved around the idea of discipleship. Cara and Emily were able to educate themselves about Jesus's closest disciples, and how this is important for their lives. The retreat was a successful journey to Merom, our youth were able to meet other UCC youth, and break free from their everyday lives by focusing on Jesus Christ.

The most recent event was the annual St. John's UCC Easter Egg Hunt and Carnival. There were approximately 80 youth that attended the event, most of which were non-members of St. John's UCC. Nearly all of our youth (Pre-K- 12) participated or helped in the event. Many of the younger youth participated in the egg hunt, but most of our youth (mid-elementary through high school) helped by volunteering to work throughout the morning. It was quite impressive to see our youth so willingly sacrifice their time, thank you all.

Also, big thanks to the Board of Christian Education, church members, parents, family members, and friends that donated gifts, goods or their time for the event. This even would not have functioned without your help. Although, the date of the egg hunt has past, please pay attention to new faces that you may see on Sunday mornings. This is a great community event that we have going for us as St. John's UCC, and lets make sure meet those who are curious about us with open arms.

Kroger Gift Cards

The youth will be selling Kroger Gift Cards for \$20 the next few Sundays during Coffee Hour. You may purchase these gift cards by cash or check. Please make checks payable to: St. John's UCC. After you spend the first \$20 on the gift card you are to go to the customer service desk at Kroger and tell them, "I would

like to put more money on my gift card, please." The customer service representative will then ask you how much you would like to put on your card, and you will pay them that amount. Whatever amount money you place on your card at this time, 5% will go directly to our church youth when you make a purchase with your card. (Example: After purchasing the card if you put \$100 on your gift card, when you spend the \$100 at Kroger 5% (\$5) of this will go to our church youth.

Upcoming Events

During April at some point the senior high youth will be hosting a UCC youth group exchange. Youth from around the state will come to St. John's to have fellowship, food, and fun. The junior youth will be having a flag football game after church sometime during the month of April... if spring weather arrives.

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NEW CARPET

After much planning and thanks to your generous contributions, we are blessed with new carpet in the main hallways of the church building. What a difference in the first impressions of our facility? Offices and storage area were cleaned out and then put back to accommodate the special services of Holy Week. Still to be completed are the main entry area and the Pre-School room.

Thank you to those who contributed to this special project. Thank you to Shawn Seals, Mike Reed, Debby Beeson, Dave Hearrell, Louise Plummer, Carolyn Hayes, Rhoda Johnson and others who assisted in the planning and the decision-making. A few more areas are being considered for improvement as well, so we look forward to the continuing care of our building.

News from the Church Council....

Written by Carolyn Hayes, President

I would like to start this report by introducing you to the 2008 officers of the Church Council and what they will be doing this year for you.

President – Carolyn Hayes. I have begun my term by visiting the different groups within the church. This past month I attended the Women's Board meeting that is held the third Tuesday of every month. We discussed how we can get more members of the church involved in this group. On this board are representatives of the Genesis and Dorcas who work with the Women's Board to carry out many events in the church. The President, Maureen Reed, has utilized a bulletin board near the kitchen to communicate the various events within the church and the UCC sponsored by the women's groups. So check out the display. I will be visiting with other groups this spring.

Vice-President – Michael Reed. Michael works with the council committees to help coordinate their efforts. Michael has been involved with the carpet committee and is currently working with the Finance Committee and the By-Laws Revision Committee.

Secretary – Denise Jacobsen. Denise not only maintains the minutes for the Council but will be collecting information on all of the formal and informal groups within the church. For example, did you know that we have a group of members who dedicate their Monday mornings to count the offerings every week? Or did you know that there is a group who changes the linens for the altar, lectern and the pulpit? Once the compilation is completed it will be kept in the church office for reference.

Treasurer – Rosemary Thomas. Rosemary diligently maintains all of the financial records for the church. She takes care of payroll, payment of bills, monitors our budget, and oversees many of our investments along with the Legacy Committee. She works very closely with the Finance and Stewardship Committee using their guidance for the many issues she addresses.

There are three main committees within the Church Council.

Ed McClain leads **The Finance and Stewardship Committee**. Other members include: Matt Good, Sharon Martin, David Banta, Ernie Carlson, and Kathy Guignard. This group is currently reviewing new insurance proposals for the church as well as approving the invoices received by the church for payment.

This group also assesses what funds are available for different projects that are presented to the Council such as the carpeting. This committee and others will do the planning of the Stewardship Program in the congregation.

Dave Hearrell leads **The Property Care Committee**. Other members include: Deron Kelley, Leonard VanLue, Wayne Fields, and Jim Heidergott. This committee just recently presented a proposal from Koorsen to install three emergency lights within the church in case of a loss of electricity. The Council approved this proposal. This committee also helped the Pre-School acquire a new sign to help promote the Pre-School to the community. The Carpet Committee within this committee reported that the new carpet was going to be installed starting on Monday, March 19. As of this submission, the carpet is in and looks wonderful. It adds beauty to our hallways and front offices. A new committee with members from both the Council and the congregation was formed to study the possibility of purchasing a static electronic church sign.

Susan Smale leads **The Spiritual Life and Evangelism Committee**. Other members include: Dick Johnson, Jennifer Plummer, Gene Nix and Miriam Schulz. This group is responsible for recruiting readers and greeters for the church services and to provide servers for Communion. In addition, this committee is in the process of studying how to increase attendance at the 9:15 a.m. church service. They are working closely with the Sounds of Praise in this effort. A new effort to bring church members together in worship associated with this committee is the "Small Groups." Through the efforts of Miriam Schulz groups of 8 – 12 individuals are being organized who will meet monthly, if not more often, to focus on a scriptural lesson that has been provided. The Council is very supportive of this effort.

More Council News...

The Pre-School liaison is Luann Miner. She works with the Pre-School teachers to provide support and to relay questions back to the Council. Luann is very important in helping to keep the communication open between these two groups. The Pre-School is currently working on different ways (i.e. a new sign) to advertise their programs in order to increase their enrollment.

I cannot forget Pastors John and Don who attend Council meetings and provide support for our efforts. They report on our shut-ins and various UCC events as well as provide suggestions for the Council to consider. The leadership from our pastors is valued.

Future reports from the Church Council may not be so long but I believe that it is important that the members of St. John's understand how the Council is structured and the direction we are taking. Look for future announcements from the Council that will focus on Habitat for Humanity, Disaster Relief in Indiana and Kentucky, and other UCC happenings.

Church Women United 2008 Indiana State Assembly

'Tis a Gift to Be Simple
April 18-19, 2008

Allisonville Christian Church
7701 Allisonville Road
Indianapolis, IN 46250

Friday: Registration opens 1:00 pm
Opening session 2:00 pm
Dinner 5:45 pm
Philip Gulley 7:00 pm

Saturday: Registration opens 8:00 am
Opening worship 8:20 am
Readers' Theater 2:00 pm
Adjournment 3:00 pm

Cost: \$20.00 registration fee,
plus Friday dinner \$12.00;
Saturday lunch \$4.00

For more information on the 5 workshops, please call Rose Scheib 786-0233

SAVE THE DATE !

Thursday May 1, 2008

Spring Salad Luncheon

Thank you !

The Women's Board

THANK YOU!!

The BCE would like to thank everyone who helped with the Easter Egg Hunt. Many of you donated time, talent, money and in some cases all three. We couldn't have done it without you. Again many thanks!

The Board of Christian Education

Thank you to all who contributed to the Easter brunch. The food was delicious and hopefully a good time was had by all. A special thank you to Ed McClain for the scrumptious bagels.

Because of your generosity we collected almost \$200 for Greenwood's Relay for Life. Again thanks to all who participated.

Genesis Circle

Change of Address-

Susanne Smith
8413 Oak Park Drive Apt. A
Indianapolis, IN 46227

Memorials to St. John's UCC

Margaret Bohman

by: Gene Nix
Gay Hampton

Cody West

by: Gene Nix

Marlene Lowe

by: Dick & Pat Schneider

Helen Deutscher

by: Barry & Gay Hampton

Dorothy Tucker

by: Barry & Gay Hampton
Marty & Ron Brothers

ONE GREAT HOUR of SHARING—APRIL 6

Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have", says the writer of Hebrews to the community of faith. The call was personal, a reminder that our actions as Christians speak as loudly as our words and worship services. God desires our participation in the lives of others, an expectation made even more pointedly by Jesus when he tells his followers, "Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me." (Matthew 25:40, NRSV) Of course, the 'least of these' don't just live in our community. God's call to share what we have encompasses people everywhere. The people fleeing violence in Sudan, suffering from AIDS in sub-Saharan Africa, reeling from devastation in Indonesia, starving in poverty in India, and recovering from any number of disasters around the United States--we are called to make a difference in their lives. We can do this through our special offering, One Great Hour of Sharing. As each of us gives to One Great Hour of Sharing we help families and villages around the world to build lives and communities that are healthy, safe, and sustainable. Sharing our resources really changes lives in these ways:

- Create sustainable sources of income for rural villages
- Provide micro-credit to women to start poverty-escaping businesses
- Teach trades and job skills to people maimed by landmines
- Offer children a chance to survive past the age of 5 and go to school
- Help rebuild communities ravaged by natural disasters
- Resettle refugees into new lives, and much more!

On April 6, we will dedicate each person's offering during worship. Doing good and sharing what we have gladdens the heart of God, who promises that those who respond "shall be like a watered garden, like a spring of water, whose waters never fail." (Isaiah 58:11 NRSV)