



The Word

St. Thomas U M C

January, 2008

St. Thomas United Methodist Church

The Pastor's Pen...

Some years ago now, a movie about an old inventor and a curious young man (played by Michael Fox) became very popular and spun off several sequels. The movie was entitled "Back To The Future," and is still seen on television from time to time. A young man travels back through time to visit the town where he lives, going back to before he born. Interesting! Have you ever wondered how a person could go back to the future? Well, that might very well describe what a lot of us do starting the day after Christmas.

In a very practical way we begin to turn away from the Christmas preparations and festivities and back to the future. There are gifts that will need to be exchanged, living rooms that need to be cleaned-up, wrapping paper to throw away, and those after Christmas sales to take advantage of. For those who are really organized, the after Christmas sales are the best bargains for next Christmas!

Well, far be it from me to discourage any after Christmas bargain hunting but I do want to distract you just long enough to ask you to think with me beyond that. You see, in a season full of gifts (and I hope you received some truly wonderful ones), among the greatest gifts we receive is the gift of new beginnings. In the week between Christmas and the new year we have a chance to finish "old business," to "balance the books" on the year past and

prepare to be launched into a brand new year full of promise and potential. But just like any other gift, it must be received and unwrapped.

The star we have been following this season has led us to the Christ Child – the one who makes all things new. By the power of the Holy Spirit, Christmas has again breathed into us new life and some of that new life we are watching as it takes shape on the lawn right outside our building. Our architect, Hanno Webber, tells us that we are looking toward a completion and consecration date toward the end of March or beginning of April. Time to turn our thoughts "back to the future;" time to dream again. And we need each other to do so.

What do you want to see two years from now, or five? What ministry is God calling us to, now that our facilities have expanded to meet challenges? What goals will we set? How will we be faithful stewards of the vision and financial sacrifices of our congregation that have brought us to this point?

Are you willing to start dreaming again right now? God doesn't allow us any "down time." The gifts God gives are meant to be used. How will we do so? How would you complete the question, "What if we could..."? On our journey back to the future, let your dreams wander as far ahead as your mind's eye can see. Dream big

dreams; dream God-sized dreams and then join the Administrative Board members in a planning session February 23rd as we chart our next steps together, following that star that never leads us backwards, only forward.

May God bless you and yours with a wonderful new year and may God continue to guide and direct our ministry together in the new year.
--Pastor Diana

Who's Who & What's New

Looking Ahead in Mission...

- **Mission Trip to New Orleans,** sponsored by the First United Methodist Church of Glen Ellyn with invitations to all. This year the team will finally be doing construction instead of demolition. Trip dates are from January 5 – 11th. Yes! There still is time to signup. Martha Blumer, Juanita Brown and Pastor Mary are all going. Call Ruth Wright, 630-469-3942 to sign-up for this mission trip.
- **Midwest Distribution Center;** March 16 – 19. A team will leave for our annual Holy Week mission project at the Midwest Center in Chatham, Illinois. The center prepares and sends all kinds of supplies for disaster relief and educational needs throughout the U.S. and the world.
- **Trip to South Dakota,** Native American Mission – June 7 – 14 (See article elsewhere in this edition of The Word.)
- **February Trip to Israel** has been postponed. Schedule difficulties and health issues for some of the participants have made a February trip impossible. Those who have registered will receive their deposit and registration fee in full.

In Our Prayers:

- Pastor Leguizamón as he recovers from surgery on his shoulder
- Carol Johnston – going through unwelcomed changes during this holiday season
- Nancy Pearson – ongoing chemotherapy

- Mike and Pam Manske – on the death of Mike's father
- Lisa Rivers – on the passing of her grandmother. Leota Jacobs
- Rita Code – deteriorating eye-sight
- Jim Cody – for renewed strength and health
- Eleanor Foss – continued care at the Lexington in Lombard

Praise God !

- New members joined the St. Thomas congregation on Sunday, Dec. 23rd. Welcome home to:
 - Rev. Lana and Dr. Paul Sutton. Rev. Lana and Paul are retired and living in Naperville. They are the much loved parents of Chad and Claire Sutton and long time friends of Pastor Diana.
 - Rob Peterson and Julie Drey Peterson live in Glen Ellyn. Julie teaches at the College of DuPage and Rob is in business. Rob has already begun work with the trustees and Julie will be helping with our PADS ministry.
(If you are interested in becoming a member of the St. Thomas family, please talk with Pastor Diana or Nancy Calhoon for information.)
- Rick Bryant has a job! Lea Cizek has a job! Liz Whitney has a job! Now we are in prayer that Martha Blumer will soon find meaningful, satisfying employment. Please keep Martha in prayer; it's been about nine months with no job.
- Helen Lawler's eye surgery has gone well and she can see again to read music!
- Juanita Brown and Sally Grenzow both report great relief from pain and thank God and you all for the gift of prayers.
- Juliana Skarha had successful knee surgery and her family thanks you for your prayers on their behalf.

**HAPPY NEW YEAR**

Thank you!

- For gifts to the Aurora Day Care Center. Each gift tag on the tree was taken and each child has a lovely Christmas, thanks to your love and generosity.
- For the outpouring of love for the family that Sally and Will Hatcher sponsored for Christmas this year. Several hundreds of dollars and many gifts made a special Christmas for a special family.
- For those who provided our PADS ministry on December 26 – 27. A warm place to sleep, pizza and salad, and new warm clothes (thanks to you) were the Christmas gifts received by our PADS guests.
- The Missions committee, and outgoing chair Rick Calhoun, give thanks for the generosity and strong support of our congregation's mission work.

CrossPoint Jam Sessions January 19 and 26 at St. Thomas

Do you just love tickling the ivories? Are you constantly tapping pencils on the table keeping rhythm to your favorite Top 40 hit or gospel tune? Would Elvis or Jimi Hendrix just marvel at your dexterity in making your favorite stringed instrument *sing*? Is a microphone just calling to have your lilting tones magnified for the Glory of God? I thought so. Well, have we got a venue for you!!! Beginning in January, the St. Thomas' CrossPoint Team along with First UMC's Oasis Praise Team will be hosting Jam Sessions at St. Thomas for worship-musician want-a-be's. Well, even if you're not sure but think maybe, you need to join us. Believe me, we're talking lots of fun for all ages. Y'all come.

Our first Jam Session will be on Saturday morning, January 19, at 10:30 a.m. Now, pay careful attention to the time—10:30—you can get those weekend extra winks and still have time to roll out of bed and make it over to St. Thomas. Members of the Oasis Team will share some of their favorite tunes and let us try our hand at them as well. If you have instruments, bring them along.

Don't worry about skill level. WE WANT YOU!!!

The very next Saturday, January 26, at 10:30 a.m. once again, we will have our second Jam Session. This time we will show what we have learned and hopefully begin a new tradition at St. Thomas in preparing a variety of contemporary musical offerings for our Saturday CrossPoint Worship. This will be a very positive beginning as we further develop our musical talents for the Glory of God and to praise His name through St. Thomas' contemporary worship service.

If you have questions, please speak with any member of the CrossPoint Team.

We can't wait to see (and hear) you there!!!

--CrossPoint Team

UMW Cookie & Craft Sale

Many thanks to all who helped make our Cookie and Craft Sale a success! Thanks to the bakers (yummy cookies!), the crafty people (many hours of work!), the nuts & fruits sale (a new feature this year!), the advertising team (ads in the paper, flyers in several buildings and even on lots of windshields!), the helpers (including several enthusiastic Youth!), the building contractor (who installed a new walkway just in time!) and the buyers (you included!). The exact total of proceeds is not fully calculated, but we know that a little over \$2000 was raised to help support our missions! We are grateful for everybody's help.

--Margot Zwierlein

February 4 Blood Drive

NOTE: Our next blood drive will be held at St. Thomas on Monday, February 4 – which means the team that went to Honduras in January, 2007 will be eligible to donate this time. Watch for the sign up sheet in the Narthex around the middle of January. The drive will run from 3:30 – 7:30 p.m. and will be held in our sanctuary.

--Mission Outreach

United Methodist Women

Now that the holidays are over, we can start the new year refreshed and looking forward to an exciting new program for the UMW. I hope you all had a joyous Christmas.

Our January meeting will be held on Monday, January 14, at 7:30 p.m. It will be an "Evening with the Pastor" and will be held at Pastor Diana's home, 3 S 147 Mulberry Lane, Glen Ellyn. Hope to see you there.

Our Ladies Lunch Out will be announced at a later date.

--Dolores Koopman, UMW Secretary

MISSION TRIP PLANNED FOR ST. THOMAS UMC

June 7, 2008 to June 15, 2008 will be our date for a mission trip to support those outside our local communities. We will rent vans to travel to/from the Tree of Life Ministry located in the heart of **South Dakota**. Our focus is to provide help to the local communities, and might include VBS, construction, support of food/clothing distribution centers, etc. In short, much like our previous mission trips.

Tree of Life Ministry was begun in 1985 to establish a Christian presence on the Rosebud Reservation. Their vision was to improve on the deplorable condition of homes, and provide help to needy families. Small volunteer work groups were initially brought into this area, but have subsequently grown in numbers. They now have two year-round mission centers that host VIM missions and others who come from other denominations. Tree of Life Ministry is therefore a multi-denominational, cross-cultural mission that seeks to build a bridge of friendship and respect between the great Sioux Nation and the Church.

We will be educated on the American Indian way of life through our daily interactions, as well as special training events. Relax, it is

not all work, as there is time off on Wednesday to do such things as travel to the Black Hills, etc.

An information packet will be provided in January to help answer your questions.

At this point, mark your calendar, and look for the sign-up sheet to indicate interest. Or, call Rolland Grenzow directly at 630-653-3017.

--Adult Education & Mission Outreach

Book Buddies

Join us for our January Book Discussion. We are reading Three Cups of Tea by Greg Mortenson & David O. Relin. It's the story of how a mountain climber stranded in a remote area of Pakistan begins a quest to build schools there. We'll meet Friday, January 18, 7:30 pm, at the Zwierlein home. Juanita Brown will be the discussion leader. *Everyone* who likes to read is welcome!

Adult Education Plans

The Adult Education program will be taking a break during the month of January. Stay tuned for more information on our new class beginning in February.

Gift Tree for Aurora Child Development Center

Thank you to all who brought gifts for our Aurora Children's Center. The gifts around our tree looked beautiful. Every child (all 76 of them) will receive a gift because of your kindness

Special Thanks to Loni Burdi and Helen Schelli for helping "pack up" the gifts on Sunday after church. Big thank you to Bud Zwierlein for taking all the gifts to the Center. (He is our resident "Santa.")

God bless you everyone!

--Donna Tucker & Mary Kay Sheldon

A Word From Our Youth Pastor...

I want to first of all take this opportunity to thank the youth and their families who participated in leading Christmas Eve worship this year. Everyone dedicated significant time and preparation in order to make it a meaningful worship for all. It never surprises me, but always amazes me how spiritually ready our youth are to step up to the pulpit and lectern. Simply put, these youth love worship in all its forms and passionately desire to be a part of its creation and leadership. Another important spiritual development that I have been able to witness first hand is the compassion the youth have for others and I would like to share it with you.

This fall has been difficult for our family with the understanding that Chad's dad, Paul, has lymphoma and has been diagnosed as untreatable since last February. With this news Chad's mom, Lana, decided to retire and they began the process of moving to Naperville. That process proved difficult and paralyzing to them both as they paired down their things to move into their new 2 bedroom apartment.

The last weekend in October I recruited available members of St. Thomas to come to help at his parent's house. Two youth and their families along with several other people came to help us. I watched the youth that were with us treat Lana and Paul with such respect and care. I, of course, expect nothing less from the youth in general. However, it was the compassion that I witnessed from the youth that I found to be very poignant. Without much said, the youth seemed to understand how very painful the process was for all of us. And through that understanding, they reached-out to Lana, Paul and Chad and me. (Lana and Paul are new members of St. Thomas.)

We often underestimate our youth regarding the strength they possess and their ability to understand difficult situations. Things like depression, illness or mortality of family members and friends are often hidden from youth in an effort to protect them. As a

sophomore in high school my parents kept my grandmother's failing health from me. When she eventually passed it was sudden for me but not for them. I was stunned by the news for a short time and, to add insult to injury, I was not allowed to travel for the services they were having for my grandma in Phoenix. Even now, I struggle with the loss of my grandma Doe. I truly believe that if my parents had given me the opportunity to know the truth about her failing health I would have shown great strength in dealing with her passing rather than it being the struggle that it was.

With the new year well underway I offer this insight so that you might take a risk and confide in our youth when you are dealing with things you think might be too "grown up" of a situation. Tell them what you are going through and ask them to pray for you.

This is a greater gift than you know. It strengthens the bonds of Christian relationship between family members and sets an example for how youth can support others in time of need. I think we all would be surprised by our youth, as I often am.

-- Blessings, Stephanie Sutton

CHURCH SCHOOL CLASS SCHEDULE BEGINS JANUARY 6, 2008

Starting January 6, 2008 the new church schedule for the youth and children will begin as follows:

Post Confirmation Class- Youth grades 8 thru Senior High meet Sundays @ 9:00 a.m.
Teacher: Pastor Stephanie

Pre-Confirmation Class – Grades 4 -7 meet Sundays 9:00 a.m
Teachers: Nancy Leguizamon and David Flood

Children K-3rd grade will meet Sundays during Worship after Children's message
Teacher: Anne Flood w/ volunteer helper

SAFE SANCTUARY

Reducing the risk of abuse in the church

Have you wondered what Anne was talking about when she asks for volunteers for Sunday School just to be helpers, or what is happening when the front row empties when the children go down for Sunday School? Then, the answer is Safe Sanctuary.

Several years ago, the general conference of the United Methodist Church mandated that each congregation take steps to protect its children and prevent abuse; physical, emotional and sexual, as well as neglect. The process began by providing proper training.

Several members of St. Thomas took the training for Safe Sanctuary and began to develop a child protection policy. The child protection policy for St. Thomas United Methodist Church was adopted and the official copy of the policy is kept in the church office. Each person who works with children is required to read and be familiar with the child protection policy and if required, to submit to finger printing and a background check.

In order to effectuate the policy, among other things, a call device was installed in the nursery to be used in case of emergency, an account was set up with the Illinois State Police to do background checks on all employees and volunteers who work with children.

Now, we must evaluate our policy and see if it needs to be revised or modified for future effectiveness.

Thanks to all of you who work to keep our children safe.

--Juanita Brown, Child Advocate



Bible Readings *for the Month*

January 1, New Year's Day:

Ecclesiastes 3: 1 - 13
Psalm 8
Revelation 21: 1 - 6a
Matthew 25: 31 - 46

January 6; Epiphany of the Lord:

Isaiah 60: 1 - 6
Psalm 72: 1 - 7, 10 - 1
Ephesians 3: 1 - 12
Matthew 2: 1 - 12

January 13, 1st Sunday after the Epiphany:

Isaiah 42: 1 - 9
Psalm 29
Acts 10: 34 - 43
Matthew 3: 13 - 17

January 20, 2nd Sunday after the Epiphany:

Isaiah 49: 1 - 7
Psalm 40: 1 - 11
1 Corinthians 1: 1 - 9
John 1: 29 - 42

January 27, 3rd Sunday after the Epiphany:

Isaiah 9: 1 - 4
Psalm 27: 1, 4 - 9
1 Corinthians 1: 10 - 18
Matthew 4: 12 - 23

The Word

St. Thomas U M C

St. Thomas United Methodist Church

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"...they went on their way, and the star they had seen in the east went ahead of them until it stopped over the place where the child was. When they saw the star, they were overjoyed."

--Matthew 2: 9-10