



Elkhart Christian Church

December 2009

Pastoral Thoughts—Decembrrrr

Are you already tired of winter (which technically hasn't arrived yet), and celebrations? Some folks are.

We've had the worst snowstorm in 20 years or so, and the heaviest December snowfall in over a century. That was followed by freezing drizzle a few days later, with the inevitable glassy roads and various cancellations.

I'm amazed that we haven't canceled a Sunday service yet, as we had to do in the past couple of years.

But again, it's still Fall.

Perhaps it can remind us that we don't live in gentle times. But neither did our Savior. Even though we sing Christmas lullabies—and they're often our favorites—we also remember that Jesus came to a troubled world, in a troubled time. Somewhat like our own.

Christmastime can feel like tumult and pressure to some of us. OK, many of us. As we welcome the Prince of Peace into the world, let's also welcome God's Peace for ourselves and each other. Your family, friends, and neighbors need your support and your prayers in a time when many of us wonder why it's difficult to be cheerful.

As a friend of mine has said, "That's why we have community." So one can lift up another, and one can be hopeful in support of another, and one can share Peace with another.

Christmas Blessings,
Anne

Come and Worship

Chancel Choir: 8:00 am

Sunday School Gathering: 9:15 am-Sunday School Classes:9:30 am

Worship Service 10:30 am

Handchime Rehearsal: 4:00 pm

Men's Breakfast: 2nd Sunday September-April: 7:30 am

Fellowship: Immediately after worship

Worship Attendance and Offering

	Att.	Offering	S.S. Offering
11/22	53	\$ 952.00	\$ 16.92
11/29	50	\$2,476.64	No. S.S.
12/06	56	\$1,427.78	\$ 24.45
12/13	66		
Christmas Offering:		\$ 38.00	
Week of Compassion:		\$ 15.00	
Thanksgiving:		\$135.00	

Mission Statement

Elkhart Christian Church is a family of faithful Christians actively caring for the needs of others; sharing our faith through worship, education, and outreach; and providing fellowship that represents Christ's love and presence in our community and our world. Our mission is to nurture and prepare everyone God entrusts to us to become mature and dedicated Disciples for the glory of God.

If you have information for the weekly church bulletin or monthly newsletter, or if you would like to have your birthday printed and it is not already on the list, please place it in the secretary's mailbox, email it to eccsecretary@iowatelecom.net or contact Mary Jo at the church office. (515) 367-5125.

Peace on earth will come to stay, when we live Christmas every day.

- Helen Steiner Rice

One can give without loving, but one cannot love without giving.

- Amy Carmichael

Thank You from the Pastor

Dear Friends at Elkhart Christian Church,

Thank you for your gift during Pastoral Appreciation Month (October). It was very thoughtful.

None of us follows our calling—and we all have one—based on kudos or lack thereof. Still, support from the Body of Christ is always a blessing.

I appreciate you, and the chance to serve with you in Elkhart, and to learn more of God's work in you.

I value your kindness and support very much.

Blessings,

Anne

Transitions

New members: Christin Tam and William (Billy) Richmond, November 29th, 2009. Christin and Billy plan to be married at ECC in the coming year.

Free to Good Home

Have you ever gone to the pet store and purchased a pet or two? Have you ever been told that the pet you have purchased has either been a male or a female? (Depending on which you wanted) Only later to find out that the pet you thought was a male, turned out to be a female? And that female was going to be a mom? Well, this happened to a member of our church. She purchased two male pet hamsters (or at least she thought she did). Well, you guessed it, one of those male hamsters turned out to be a female. If you have ever been thinking about getting a hamster, now is the time. Peg Cross has lots of free hamsters. She has gone to the veterinarian and she has found out which ones are male and which ones are female. She has some that are 2 months old and she has some that are 4 months old. If now is the time for you to have a hamster, give her a call at 515-720-8432 and she will fix you up!

Sharon Payne, Our New Keyboardist Shares More of Her Bio

I grew up on a farm near Bondurant. My father was Oscar Bailey. I graduated from Bondurant-Farrar High School. I received my music degree from Drake University. I taught music for 33 years. The first year I taught K-12 music at United Community near Boone. I taught elementary music for 32 years at Southeast Polk, and retired from there in 2008. I served as the church organist at the Methodist Church in Mitchellville for many years. I have been married to my husband, Craig Payne, for 35 years. We have lived in Mitchellville since 1976. We have 2 children. Our son, Brandt, is finishing

his doctorate in music at Arizona State University this spring. He received his undergraduate degree from The University of Iowa. Prior to going back to school to get his doctorate he was the marching band director at The University of Hawaii for 3 years. Our daughter, Laura, is a pharmacist and lives in Michigan with her husband who is an assistant band director at Michigan State University. Laura graduated with a doctorate in pharmacy from The University of Iowa. I should also mention that we have a beagle named Jazz who is most definitely a member of our family.

Again, welcome to Elkhart Christian Church, Sharon!

More News from a Former Pastor and Old Friend

November 30, 2009

Greetings—

I read about your Website in the newsletter today. Being able to view the inside of the worship area is a blessing. Our daughter, Teresa (born in 1964) when we pastored Elkhart Christian send us pictures of the exterior of the worship area two years ago when her family traveled near Elkhart en route to Canada from Missouri. So now the interior provides "the rest of the story."

I pastored Elkhart Christian from 1962 to 1965 when the brick fellowship hall building was built. The Army Reserve called me to active duty in October 1965, so our pastorate was abruptly ended while I spent four years in Kansas, Vietnam and Texas with the Army.

God bless! Thanks for the Website.
Chaplain (Colonel) Wayne R. Ward
USAR retired

Note: Elkhart Christian Church has a Website:

<http://www.elkhart-christianchurch.com>

(Note: some web browsers don't need you to input the www.)

Week of Compassion Update:

Galveston Blitz Build a United Effort

Wednesday, December 9, 2009

We have many things to celebrate this week! Although here in the Midwest the snow is falling and the temperature is dropping, there is plenty to warm our hearts during this Advent season.

The Rev. Rebecca Hale, Week of Compassion Advisory Committee Chair, recently represented WoC at the Blitz Build in Galveston, TX. She sent us this dispatch:

Quadrennial Information:

An Invitation from the National Planning Team

"Awake! Awake!" This is the theme for the **2010 Quadrennial Assembly (QA)** to be held **June 23-27, 2010**. I hope you and several of your best friends are planning to join us in **Greensboro, North Carolina** when we gather for the 14th QA since 1957.

For more than 50 years, Disciples women have been gathering for worship, study, and mission. Along the way, we have become friends with women from all over the country and even the world. Through them and the QA experience, our relationship with God has grown deeper.

If you have never joined us before, we invite you to be with us. Come enlarge our circle of faithful women. You will enjoy outstanding speakers, powerful preachers, gifted teachers, and inspiring musicians. You will share the time of your life with thousands of women (and a few men) . . . and you will be missed if you aren't with us!

As the theme suggests, we will be challenged to be awakened to new ways of living out our Christian faith in these days and "for such a time as this."

We will be awakened to how our collective praise, our shared wisdom, and our joyful service make the Body of Christ a stronger witness in our troubled world.

Check out the Quadrennial Website: <http://www.quadrennial.org> for all the information you need to register and secure your place for this "not to be missed" experience planned just for you . . . a Disciples woman of ever-awakening faith.

The phone number for more information: 1-888-346-2613

"Jesus immediately reached out his hand and caught (Peter), saying to him, 'O man of little faith, why did you doubt?'"

MATTHEW 14:31

Why did you doubt?

We began our second term in Botswana with Global Ministries, and those words that Jesus spoke to Peter also spoke to me, as I sometimes found myself experiencing doubts. Am I doing what is in accordance to God's plan for me? Learning a new language at any time is never easy. Learning Setswana (one of the two official languages of the country) has been especially hard. Knowing Setswana has been made a necessity by the fact that I have recently been assigned a parish by the United Congregational Churches in Southern Africa. Worship services are in Setswana. I find myself struggling to read; build vocabulary and to be able to conduct a worship service (with some semblance that the people I have been called to serve might be able to understand). At times, it feels that for every three steps I take forward, I find myself taking two steps back.

Whatever clouds of uncertainty engulf me are lifted when I conduct a worship service in the village of Ramotswa, in a small room with 30 people in attendance; hear their praises to God through song, dance and prayer; and am made aware of their hopes and concerns in church meetings.

Although this congregation is small, they have tremendous hope anchored in God. Over a period of two years, they have built a new church building. Although they have been unable to roof it because of financial restraints, they have chosen, in the meantime, to start a new congregation in a village 15 kilometers away. They even have plans to erect a simple building as a place of worship there. Yes, I am reminded that our Jesus has a plan for each one of us, even when we ourselves are not certain.

In this season of hope and anticipation, we pray with the church in Botswana as we are reminded of their great faith which gives us strength in our faith which we share with others.

James & Jayanthi Wilson are missionaries with the Kgolugano Theological College in Gaborone, Botswana. Jim serves as an instructor at Kgolugano Theological College. Jayanthi serves as librarian.



JAMES & JAYANTHI WILSON



You make the difference . . .

The prayers and help you provide through your local congregations make possible the work and witness of GLOBAL MINISTRIES, which is supported by Disciples Mission Fund of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and Our Church's Wider Mission (OCWM) of the United Church of Christ.

WWW.GLOBALMINISTRIES.ORG

"In 2008, Hurricane Ike devastated many buildings and homes in Galveston, Texas. The substantial stone building of Central Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) escaped significant damage, and the members of that congregation rapidly mobilized to begin using their building as a central aid station for the area. As the congregation began opening its doors to offer compassion for its neighbors, along with other Texas congregations, Week of Compassion, Disciples Volunteering, the Southwest Region and the Coastal Plains Area of the Christian Church (Disciples) joined with them in efforts to provide relief in the forms of food, companionship, funds, clothing, and volunteer assistance.

"In those very early days, members of Central Christian Church realized that their nearest Disciples neighbor, Second Christian Church (just five blocks away!), was having a very different experience. Shortly after the storm, Carl Zerweck, Director of Disciples Volunteering, a ministry of Disciples Home Missions, heard about Second Christian Church and went to take a look.

"He described the damage as 'devastating.' The building was almost completely destroyed and was in the process of being condemned by the city of Galveston.

"Carl's visit started a journey that ended with the dedication of the newly rebuilt church building of Second Christian Church on November 22, 2009. Volunteers from Texas and Louisiana congregations worked to gut the majority of the building in the fall of 2008. Volunteers from across the country, working with Disciples Volunteering throughout the summer and fall, rebuilt the worship and fellowship space of this congregation. During the rebuilding, First Christian Church, Texas City, TX, and Central Christian Church, Galveston, opened their doors to house and feed volunteers with the help of congregations from across the Coastal Plains Area. During the dedication, prayers of joy were offered, songs with words like 'If you can't make it through the storm/how can you say that God's your captain?' took on an added significance, and tears fell in hope and gratitude.

"The new building looks beautiful. Second Christian has a wonderful new space in which to live out its mission and ministry for many years. Many people and organizations made this happen—WoC, Reconciliation Ministry, the Coastal Plains Area, Disciples Volunteering, the Southwest Region, and scores of volunteers from across the life of our church. Maybe the most significant partnership that emerged was the relationship between the neighboring congregations of Second Christian Church and Central. One refrain

echoed throughout the week: 'we had lost touch with each other as sister congregations and now we have found a relationship that has the potential to sustain us both and expand our ministries.'

"That was the spirit of the build: great joy at friends found and commitments made to stay in relationship with one another. There was also a deep sense of gratitude for the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and what can happen when we come together to care for those who are devastated by events far beyond their control.

"On another note, a woman came up to me to thank Week of Compassion. Immediately after the hurricane, she received some WoC funds through her pastor. She said without those funds she did not know what they would have done. Her house was flooded, and while insurance paid for most of the repairs, her husband could not work for four weeks and they would not have had money for food or basic needs during those early days. She said she was already planning on how she would be giving an increased amount to WoC so that others could experience the relief she experienced."

Note: Week of Compassion is a year-round ministry, and the needs are year-round. Any time you want to make a contribution, write your check to Elkhart Christian Church, and designate "Week of Compassion" in the note field.

-Pastor Anne

Someone Took Jesus

A couple of days after Christmas, the Nativity scene was still up in the chancel of a San Francisco church. Walking by it, the pastor noticed that the baby Jesus was missing from the manger.

Shortly afterward,, as the pastor walked outside the church, he saw a small boy pulling a new wagon. In the wagon bed was a doll that looked very much like the missing baby Jesus.

The pastor greeted the boy and asked him about the doll. "I got it in the church," the boy replied.

"Why did you take it from the church?"

"Well, " the boy answered. "I prayed for a new wagon and told the Lord Jesus that if I got one, I would give him a ride. I got the wagon, took him for a ride and now I'm bringing him back to the church."

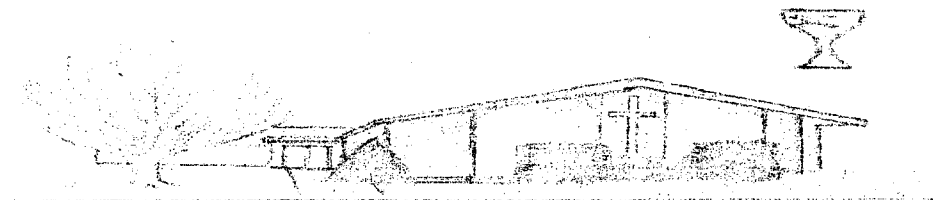
December Birthdays

- 02 Jerry Sorenson
- 03 Phyllis Cohee
- 04 Pam Oldham
- 06 Irline Capehart
- 07 Megan Albaugh
 - Michael
 - Kaltenheuser
- 08 Don Albaugh
 - Charles Campbell
 - Paul Sorenson
 - Mary Jo Ward
- 10 John Owen
 - Joyce Russell
 - Jarod Rodriguez
 - Jacob Rodriguez
- 11 Krista Long
 - Kelsey Olesen
- 12 Deb Olesen
- 13 Virginia McLean
 - Pam Fitzgerald
 - Barb Kalsem
 - Nick Owen
- 16 John Hall
- 18 Linda Bussanmas
- 20 Wayne Zimmer
 - Barb Lourens
- 21 Tom Brazelton
- 22 Samuel Hill
- 23 Tom Ward
 - Kevin Gaulke
- 25 Bill Spratt
- 26 Russ Franzen
- 27 Dennis Parmenter
 - Myrna Anderson Brayton
- 28 Karla Albaugh
- 29 Tom Spratt
 - Mary Campbell
- 30 Randall Albaugh

January Birthdays

- 01 Tyler Albaugh
 - Claude Chapman
 - Diane Stiles
- 03 Della Hudson
 - Julie Caswell
 - Jennifer Edler Ellison
- 06 Dodie Higginbottom
- 08 Doug Oldham
- 09 Perry Anderson
- 10 Shari McLean Merten
 - Vera Cory
- 11 Kayelee Owen
- 12 Viola Struthers
- 13 Sue Ann Foster
- 14 Dave Durrell
- 15 Jayma Sandquist
- 16 Carrie Hudson
 - Gassman
- 17 Randy Oxford
- 21 Cathy Handley
- 22 Sue Mathis
 - Fred Higginbottom
- 23 Lori Blair
- 25 Layne Mathis
 - Amber Carney
 - Sandra Gaulke
- 26 Jared Carney
- 27 Mary Smith
- 28 Mike Albaugh
 - Rhonda Elmore
- 29 Leland Cunningham
- 31 Sabrina Taylor

Elkhart Christian Church
(Disciples of Christ)
124 S. Washington
P.O. Box 97
Elkhart, IA 50073
(515) 367-5125



"Sharing Our Faith and God's Love"

Church Staff:
Ministers: The Congregation
Pastor: Rev. Anne E. Gregory
Board Chair: Tim Butler
Church Secretary: Mary Jo Ward
Pianists:
Brenda Dobson
Robin Luke
Vickie Swartout

"Address Service Requested"
Dated Material - Do Not Delay

NON-PROFIT ORG.
US POSTAGE PAID
PERMIT #1
ELKHART, IA 50073