

WORSHIP SERVICES
(9, 11 am)

HIGHER GROUNDS & SUNDAY SCHOOL
(10 am)

NOVEMBER SERMON SERIES
Live Like You Are Dying

SENSE GOD PERSONALLY
(pages 1-5)

SEEK GOD PASSIONATELY
(pages 6-7)

SERVE GOD PURPOSEFULLY
(pages 8-13)



open hearts
open minds
open doors



Tidings

Sharing the stories of life-changing ministries

Issue 721

November 2009

Compelling Generosity



The first Christians were a compelling people who shaped cities, carved out a counter-culture, and adversely impacted the Roman Empire. Compelling people are rarely people who live in conformity to the dominant culture. They are people who resist the prevailing characteristics of their own culture and live in stark contrast to it. Their lives are shocking and provocative because they live so counter to the main culture's way of life. Jesus did not just resist the status quo; he provided a shocking alternative to it so that people embraced outcasts and gave to those in need.

As we look at our community and its current culture, we

stances, comforts, and conveniences, even if we don't have the means to do so.

But, we are seeing signs and hearing rumblings within our culture that it actually is growing weary of accepting this lifestyle of luxury and excess as the ultimate purpose of life. This consumerism is rooted in self absorption because this excess always causes us to neglect our neighbor's needs; but the earliest Christians tenaciously resisted this economy of excess rooted in self-absorption.

In **Acts 4:32-37**, the kingdom of God revealed a different way of living. These Christians were liquidating and sharing, instead of acquiring

the same by becoming a community characterized by **compelling generosity**. We must offer an alternative to an economy of excess that breaks ranks with Wall Street by being a compelling people sharing compelling generosity over consumerism within a nurturing community.

Compelling people don't just sporadically exercise generosity; they steadily embody and personify generosity. It becomes the pattern to and for their lives, because they have seen Jesus' compelling generosity [2 Corinthians 8:9], and choose to do all they can to bring the Kingdom of God into their homes and relationships.

What will it take for you and me to touch the hearts of others with our hearts by embodying and personifying compelling generosity? (1) Desire (2) Knowledge (3) Follow-thru

"Compelling people...steadily embody and personify generosity."

find that we are living in a culture guided by the economy of excess — US consumer debt rose in March of this year to **2.56 trillion dollars**. What this debt reveals and exposes about us is our self-absorption in and our commitment to improving our own personal circum-

and consuming. Their vision of the Kingdom Jesus invited them to join was one where there would be no lacking for anything by anyone, and they focused on making that become a reality in their present world. As Apostles in the modern age, we must strive to do



sense God personally

~ Find the step that matches your current weekly giving
 ~ Prayerfully consider increasing your giving by one step

Annual Income	Weekly Income	15%	12%	10%	8%	7%	5%	3%	1%
5,200	100	15.00	12.00	10.00	8.00	7.00	5.00	3.00	1.00
6,500	125	18.75	15.00	12.50	10.00	8.75	6.25	3.75	1.25
7,800	150	22.50	18.00	15.00	12.00	10.50	7.50	4.50	1.50
9,100	175	26.25	21.00	17.50	14.00	12.25	8.75	5.25	1.75
10,400	200	30.00	24.00	20.00	16.00	14.00	10.00	6.00	2.00
11,700	225	33.75	27.00	22.50	18.00	15.75	11.25	6.75	2.25
13,000	250	37.50	30.00	25.00	20.00	17.50	12.50	7.50	2.50
14,300	275	41.25	33.00	27.50	22.00	19.25	13.75	8.25	2.75
15,600	300	45.00	36.00	30.00	24.00	21.00	15.00	9.00	3.00
18,200	350	52.50	42.00	35.00	28.00	24.50	17.50	10.50	3.50
20,800	400	60.00	48.00	40.00	32.00	28.00	20.00	12.00	4.00
23,400	450	67.50	54.00	45.00	36.00	31.50	22.50	13.50	4.50
26,000	500	75.00	60.00	50.00	40.00	35.00	25.00	15.00	5.00
28,600	550	82.50	66.00	55.00	44.00	38.50	27.50	16.50	5.50
31,200	600	90.00	72.00	60.00	48.00	42.00	30.00	18.00	6.00
36,400	700	105.00	84.00	70.00	56.00	49.00	35.00	21.00	7.00
41,600	800	120.00	96.00	80.00	64.00	56.00	40.00	24.00	8.00
46,800	900	135.00	108.00	90.00	72.00	63.00	45.00	27.00	9.00
52,000	1,000	150.00	120.00	100.00	80.00	70.00	50.00	30.00	10.00
65,000	1,250	187.50	150.00	125.00	100.00	87.50	62.50	37.50	12.50
78,000	1,500	225.00	180.00	150.00	120.00	105.00	75.00	45.00	15.00
91,000	1,750	262.50	210.00	175.00	140.00	122.50	87.50	52.50	17.50
104,000	2,000	300.00	240.00	200.00	160.00	140.00	100.00	60.00	20.00

 **\$150 to \$200**
 or increase by 1% 

\$100 to \$150



\$75 to \$99

\$50 to \$74



\$40 to \$49


\$10 to \$19



\$30 to \$39

\$20 to \$29





WHAT'S YOUR GQ?
 Weekly giving
 divided by
 Weekly income
GENEROSITY QUOTIENT
 (.10 = 10%)

Take One Step Toward COMPELLING GENEROSITY

sense God personally

November is a month for reflection and thanksgiving as we are mindful of all the blessings that God has bestowed on each of us. It is also a month for us to remember those who are struggling during these difficult times. During the last several years, the **HEARTS & HANDS MINISTRY** has helped those in need with the paying of various bills and the providing of clothing and other necessary items for adults and children. **THE NEED IS GROWING!** In July of 2008, eleven families received assistance; in July of this year, twenty-three families were being helped by this ministry along with an additional eight families which came that month seeking budget counseling.

Times are growing tougher, even for those people who have not had to deal with financial difficulties in the past. As Marina Webb points out, ***"If you have never stood in these folks' shoes before, if you have no idea what it is like not to have the bare essentials to live by, try it for one day.*** For one day, don't turn on your water; use what you need from a jug, or do without. Don't turn on any lights while realizing that the absence of electricity means your refrigerator will not keep your food cold, and you won't be able to cook or heat your home."

Most people never have to look their children in the eye and say, "I'm sorry, but there's no supper tonight." As Marina points out, "It might be easy for some to think that these people just need to work harder, but these people who come in for assistance are doing everything and anything they can to alleviate their situation."

God tells us in Matthew 25:40, *"...I tell you, whenever you did this for one of the least important of these brothers of mine, you did it for Me."* Please pray for those who are struggling, and please pick up a red bag and fill it with the needed and requested items. The Dollar Tree in Marietta will provide a tax exemption for items purchased to be placed in the red bags and donated to Hearts & Hands. Purchasing items like bleach, trash bags, and Q-Tips will help a family stretch its dollars in order to pay the rent and utility bills. This ministry's focus in December will be children's needs, especially coats and boots.

~ **HEARTS & HANDS** ~

"...we will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the Word." [Acts 6:4]

Once again, we will celebrate the birth of Emmanuel with the children during this year's Christmas program entitled "Away in the Manger" and written by Tonia Bohnen and Alisha Sexton on **December 13** at 10:15 am in the sanctuary. Children from preschoolers to sixth graders are invited to participate. October practices will occur during PALS and Kidz Praz. Three after-school practices will occur on **November 19, December 3, and December 10** and last until 5 pm. A snack will be served prior to each practice. The dress rehearsal will occur on **Saturday, December 12**, from 2-4



A TREASURE IN YEARS

The young waitress, pouring coffee for me, tarried at the table, talking about the church she attends, "We need more older people for guidance. Their experience and the knowledge they've acquired are priceless to young people."

After she left, I pondered her words. I began to perceive my years as something of a treasure. How many times have I looked back at my youth and thought, "If only I knew then what I know now!"

But, of course, such knowledge could not be mine, then; for I had not had the failures that would prove to me the strength of God's upholding arms. I had not experienced the deep grief and painful heartbreak through which I learned the never-failing comfort of Jesus Christ. I'd never tasted the bitterness of lonely hours, unbearable, except for the presence of the Holy Spirit.

A great satisfaction filled my heart as I realized that the years were a gift from my Lord, not only in their number but in their wealth of wisdom and experience. You, too, have the same wealth within you. Treasure and guard it, build on it, and share it. There are many young people who need us and look to us for guidance. — Drue Duke

"Praise be to God...the Father of compassion...Who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those ...with the comfort we ourselves have received from God." [2 Corinthians 1:3-4]

sense God personally



**SAY A PRAYER &
SEND A CARD**
*"I thank God upon every
remembrance of you."*

[Philippians 1:3]

WEEKLY ACTIVITIES

SUNDAY

Choir, 6 pm

IHS Youth, 6 pm

MONDAY-FRIDAY

Walking, 8:30 am

MONDAY-THURSDAY

Learning Center, 9 am

MONDAY

Girl Scouts, 3 pm

Boy Scouts, 6:30 pm

TUESDAY

Bells, 6:30 pm

Hasty Small Group, 5:30 pm

WEDNESDAY

Women's Bible Study, 9:30 am

NOVEMBER ACOLYTES

9 am Blended Service

November 1: Liz Sexton

November 8: Abby Stoveken

November 15: Kaylin Burge

November 22: Amanda Webb

November 29: Ellissa Erb

11 am Traditional Service

November 1: Allison & Emily Pickering

November 8: Andy Boley & Corey McClung

November 15: Bryce & Megan Sayre

November 22: Christopher Berman & Jillian Leo

November 29: Ben Demhlow & Joshua Erb

NOVEMBER USHERS

9 am BLENDED SERVICE

Brian & Fred Burge

Steve Bodnar

11 am TRADITIONAL SERVICE

November 1 & November 29

Wes Clarke, Gene Duncan, Edie Lindley,

Joe & Lori Webb, Karen Fenton (WA)

November 8

Rex Bush, Ken Cox, Chris Henderhan,

Jim Schmidt, Bob Woodford

November 15

Fred Dearman, Wayne King, Jeff & Pam

Middleton, Charles Pickens, Warren

Epperly (WA)

November 22

Rick Blauvelt, Larry & Marilyn Croucher,

Joe Hutchinson, Tim

Sayer

DATES TO REMEMBER

NOVEMBER 1: All Saint's Sunday

NOVEMBER 2: GS Troop 5527, 6 pm

Program Leadership Meeting, 7 pm

Trustees. 7 pm

NOVEMBER 5: Faithgirlz, 3 pm

NOVEMBER 9: Church Council, 7 pm

NOVEMBER 10: Children's Ministry Meeting, 5 pm

NOVEMBER 12: Girl Scouts RSU Meeting, 5:30 pm

NOVEMBER 14: GS Super Saturday Event, 9 am

NOVEMBER 15: Veterans' Recognition Sunday

NOVEMBER 16: GS Troop 5527, 6 pm

NOVEMBER 18: Blood Drive, 10 am

NOVEMBER 19: Mary Martha Circle, 1 pm

Esther Ruth Circle, 1:30 pm

Faithgirlz, 3 pm

NOVEMBER 21 & 28: Community Breakfast, 8 am

All-Day Youth Event

NOVEMBER 22: "Fill a Shoebox" Party, 12 pm

NOVEMBER 25: Sarah Circle, 7:45 pm

NOVEMBER 26: Hanging of the Greens

NOVEMBER 26, 27: Office closed

sense God personally



**SAY A PRAYER &
SEND A CARD**
*"I thank God upon every
remembrance of you."*
 [Philippians 1:3]

**"...out of the mouths and
thoughts of babes..."**

A CHILD'S FAITH

Have you ever wondered what the purpose of a children's ministry is? Why First Church has one? And what its definition is? From overseeing the Leap Ahead Learning Center to offering Vacation Bible School each year, the Children's Ministry Team partners with parents and the church family to lay a Bible-based foundation upon which children can develop and grow in their faith and knowledge of Jesus. How wonderful to receive a note like the following which affirms that what we are teaching, sharing with, and doing for the children is helping to "make them disciples" and "making a difference" in their lives.

I had to share this story with those of you who would appreciate it. Yesterday, Audrey brought home a book her kindergarten class created. Each child was to draw a picture and complete the sentence "I see..." Other children in her class drew pictures of dogs, bears, families, etc. Audrey's sentence read, "I see the Holy Spirit." She drew a picture of a glowing angel. It was precious. Our family is so blessed to be a part of FUMC where my children learn that when they are away from me, they can see the Holy Spirit all around them and know that they are safe.

God bless you all today, Jennifer Fenton

Thank you so much, Jennifer, for sharing that beautiful story with us. God is truly good and present all the time!

HOSPITALIZED

Sally Butler
 Joe Hutchinson
 Clay Lutz
 Pat Morris
 Grace Pool

BIRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARIES

- November 1:** Betty Erb
November 4: Chandler Kerns
November 5: Ryan Cutright
 Carlee Nelson
November 6: Tim Sayre
November 7: Natalie Chambers
 Dewanye Lowther
November 8: KC Cox
November 9: Jillian Leo
November 10: Joshua Chambers, Dani Gray,
 Bailee Nicewarner, Bryce Sayre
November 11: Dan Stephan
November 12: Dick Blauvelt
 Rex & Mary Belle Smith
November 13: Eula Hardman
 Mark & April Adkins
November 14: Tom & Judy Smith
November 15: Emily Flowers
 Betty Miracle
November 16: Nancy Kay Doak
November 17: Joanna Wells
November 18: Heather Gray
November 19: Jo Hune
November 21: Melissa Cieslewski
November 22: Eileen Cieslewski
 Tarrah Merrifield
November 24: Tammy Burge
 Megan Sayre
November 25: Matt Westfall
 Carnick & Marj Hamperian
November 27: Eric Fenton, Jacob Huggins,
 Roni Huggins
 Charles & Pat Pickens
November 29: Emma Berman
November 30: John Burge, Nick Meadows,
 Garrett Wilson

seek God passionately

"For everyone to whom much is given, from him much will be required." [Luke 12:48]

Together, let's "Give Christmas Away" *this year*



It's all about joyful giving! **Operation Christmas Child** shoebox collection has begun, and we are prayerfully asking each in the congregation to donate items to be given to impoverished boys and girls around the world who otherwise will not know the joy of receiving Christmas presents. Each filled shoebox costs \$7 to be shipped. If you wish to make a monetary donation, please make the check payable to FUMC and write the word **Shoeboxes** on the memo line and place your donation in the

offering plate. Boxes to hold your donated items will be provided by Children's Ministry. An **Operation Christmas Child "Fill a Shoebox" party/lunch** will be held on **Sunday, November 22, at noon.**



SHOEBOX ITEMS

TOYS: small cars, balls, dolls, stuffed animals, kazoos, harmonicas, yo-yos, jump ropes, small Etch-a-sketch, toys that light up or make a noise (with extra batteries), Slinky, etc.

SCHOOL SUPPLIES: pen, pencils and sharpener, crayons or markers, stamps, ink pad sets, writing pads or paper, solar calculators, coloring and picture books, etc.

HYGIENE ITEMS: toothbrush, toothpaste, mild bar soap (in a plastic bag), comb, washcloth, etc.

OTHER: hard candy, lollipops, (please double bag all candy) mints, gum, T-shirts, socks, ball caps, sunglasses, hair clips, toy jewelry, watches, flashlights (with extra batteries), etc.

PERSONAL NOTE: In a separate envelope, you may enclose a note to the child and a picture of yourself and/or your family. If you include your name and address, the child may write back.

DO NOT INCLUDE: used or damaged items, war-related items such as toy guns, knives, military figures, chocolate or food, out-of-date candy, liquids or lotions, medications, vitamins, breakable items such as snowglobes or glass containers, aerosol cans, etc.

CHILDREN: Select items per box for a boy or girl in the age groups of 2-4, 5-9, or 10-14

"every shoebox is a Gospel opportunity"
"making disciples ~ making a difference"

EMAIL UPDATE — *If you no longer, on Monday or Tuesday of each week, receive MONDAY MORNING DISCIPLE and PRAYERS OF THE SAINTS and you wish to, please resubmit your email address to Kianna in the church office so that you can be added to the server. You are an important part of our church family, and we want to continue sharing and talking with you!*

seek God passionately

“So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver.” [2 Corinthians 9:7]

The **HUG-A-BEAR** collection begins on **November 15**. Bring a cuddly, squishy, loveable teddy bear to church and place it a pew, so we can do like **Emma Jean Bernard**, the originator of the idea years ago suggested, “Hug them and fill them with lots of love before we deliver them” in December to area nursing homes and local shut-in residents.



We are throwing a **FILL-A-SHOEBOX PARTY** at noon on **Sunday, November 22**. Anyone who would like to help fill shoeboxes for Operation Christmas Child is invited to join us for lunch in the MPR. Following lunch, which will be provided by the Children’s Ministry team, everyone will go upstairs to the PALS area on the second floor and have, according to Kianna, “a blast ‘Giving Christmas Away’ to boys and girls who live across the ocean and need a Christmas hug.” Families are encouraged to participate together in the purchasing of items to fill the shoeboxes and then filling the boxes themselves as they use this opportunity to teach their children how wonderful “Joyful Giving” really is.

Come, enjoy a morning of fun and fellowship at the **ANGEL BREAKFAST ADVENT EVENT** on **December 5** at 8:30 am in the MPR when the children “Give Christmas Away.” After a hearty breakfast of pancakes and sausage, the children will visit different stations to put together gift bags and make ornaments to be given to local nursing home residents. As traditional, Pastor Steve will conclude the morning for the children and their parents with his reading of the Christmas Story. Please help us teach the children the wonderful gift of giving by bringing a 1) stocking cap, 2) scarf, or 3) mittens to be hung on our Mitten Tree. All those items collected will be given by Hearts and Hands to area families in need.



MARK YOUR CALENDARS

DECEMBER 8 (Tuesday) — Children’s Ministry Team Christmas Party

DECEMBER 11 (Friday, 5-9 pm) — Polar Express Pajama Party (Parent’s Night Out) — Pre-registration required; proceeds to benefit Leap Ahead Learning Center Tuition Assistance program

DECEMBER 20 (Sunday 4 pm) — Christmas Caroling — Singing and sharing the Hug-a-Bears with residents in area nursing homes

serve God purposefully

"Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith." [Galatians 6:10]

"...making a joyful noise unto the LORD..."

TRUSTEES: STEWARDS of the CHURCH

"Make a joyful noise unto the LORD, all ye lands; come, before the LORD with gladness." [Psalms 98, 100]

Most usually, "a joyful noise unto the LORD" is singing hymns accompanied by an organ or piano or the singing of praise songs accompanied by piano, guitar, and drums. For those men called the Trustees, however, their "joyful noise unto the LORD" is the pounding of hammers, the extension of metal ladders, and the uttering of directions and distances. For the Trustees, the tasks needing completion around the church is not what matters most to them. What matters most to each of them is working together as a team in fellowship and fun, caring for and helping each other as friends, and completing each job with the same joy they feel when they "come before the LORD with gladness" each Sunday morning.

Although eighteen men call themselves a trustee, Steve Bodnar, the team leader, thinks of these stewards of the church as a small group and, therefore, begins each meeting with devotional time and prayer. "From fixing a commode to mopping a floor," according to Steve, "all the times that we are together are positive, happy, fun-filled times when we find joy in doing God's work and are thankful that, by serving God as we do, we are 'making disciples and making a difference' in our own lives and the life of the church."

"Families take care of their own homes; we, as stewards of First Church," as Steve points out, "care for the building not just for the sake of the building but for the congregation so that its worship of God will be enhanced

and possible. We hope everyone will be good stewards of the church, taking care of what they can on their own; and we welcome any suggestions of what we can do to make the physical church more conducive to worship."

When activities such as VBS occur, many of the Trustees are present doing such things as helping to man the food table and building various items such as scenery; but according to Steve, "This is both so that we can serve God in whatever capacity we can, and so that we can see the workings of the church; and then decide, by seeing things first-hand, what, if anything, we need to do to help activities go as smoothly as possible."

This year, the Trustees had a comprehensive budget that, as in the past, "allowed very little room for error; and if some unexpected problem occurred, we had to come before the congregation and plead for additional monies; and it is amazing how we are always so blessed by the financial support from our church family. For 2010, we are proposing a budget that will allow us to be proactive and provide upkeep through maintenance rather than always having to make repairs when a problem occurs. One such situation we are planning on doing soon is joining together the two existing fire alarm systems to create one which will be better and safer."

As with each of the church's ministries, anyone and everyone, is invited to join the Trustees and would be welcomed as part of this small group which makes a "joyful noise unto the LORD" with hammers, screwdrivers, and tape measures.

GIFT of GENEROSITY

GENESIS 28:22 *"...and of all that You give me, I will surely give a tenth to You."*

SERVING through STEWARDSHIP

GALATINS 6:9 *"...let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart."*

MATTHEW 6:3 *"But when you do a charitable deed, do not let your right hand know what the left hand is doing."*

serve God purposefully

“Every man shall give as he is able, according to the blessing of the LORD your God which He has given you.” [Deuteronomy 16:17]

“Will a man rob God? Yet you rob me. But you ask, ‘How do we rob you?’ In tithes and offerings.... Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in My house. ‘Test Me in this,’ says the Lord Almighty, ‘and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that you will not have room enough for it.’” [Malachi 3:8-10]

When I think about tithing, my mind immediately travels back more than a decade in time. John and I had always been generous with our giving to the church but had never sat down and budgeted for an actual tithe. After we had taken a spiritual gifts class and learned that one of John’s gifts is in the area of finance, we decided that we wanted to *“honor the LORD with our wealth,”* [Exodus 36:3]; so we chose to make our tithe the first line-item in our budget.

Financially, everything was going smoothly until we had to decide whether to add a new expense to our budget: should Maeson be enrolled in preschool. Always a very academic-oriented child, Maeson could already read and write. We didn’t need to send him for academic reasons, but we felt he would develop better socially if he spent time with other children. We needed to reevaluate our budget. Could we fit the expense of a good preschool program in as another line item? Initially, it didn’t appear that we could.

“Now what?” we wondered as we prayed. It appeared that we had to make a choice. Do we choose not to send Maeson to preschool; or, and this was the toughest of the two questions, do we delete our tithe to the church? We had made a commitment — a commitment to God, and we determined to continue honoring that commitment and the Lord and not allow anything to stop us from tithing. We prayed constantly while remembering what it says in Deuteronomy 14:23, *“The purpose of tithing is to teach you to always put God first in your lives”* and in Malachi 3:10, *“‘Test Me in this,’ says the Lord Almighty, ‘and see if I will not...pour out so much blessing that you will not have room enough for it.’”* So, we prayed that if God felt it would be good for Maeson to go to preschool, the money would be there; and if he didn’t feel it was necessary, the money would not be. We chose to leave it all up to God.

Not too long after that, John’s yearly review occurred; and to our surprise, he received the biggest percentage raise he had ever been given. The bigger surprise, however, was that the raise was the *exact* amount of money we needed to pay for the preschool we had chosen for Maeson. We left it all up to God, and He blessed us for doing that, and we have never forgotten nor stopped thanking Him for His blessings and for His *“being mindful of us.”*

Since then, it seems that whenever we don’t place our tithe at the top of our budget, we encounter some kind of financial problem. We have learned first-hand that returning to God *HIS* money and all that He has given us is not only what He requires of us as good stewards but also a way of honoring and worshiping Him.

We hope that the sharing of our experience will encourage and bless you. If you do not currently include a tithe as the *first* line-item in your budget, please consider adding it. God will bless you more than you can imagine.

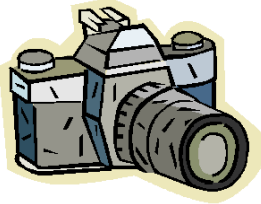
Go ahead...test Him.

Your sister in Christ,

Tithing: Compelling Generosity

Returning the Gift We Cannot Keep

serve God purposefully



focus on MUSIC MINISTRY

“MAKE A JOYFUL NOISE TO THE LORD!” [Psalm 100:1] At First Church, we are blessed with many musicians who have been gifted by the Spirit and, therefore, choose in stewardship, to share their gift by creating beautiful music to enhance the praise and worshiping of God. Current music ministries include Appealing Sounds (Bells), KiDz PrAz, Praise Band, and Voices of Worship (Choir); also, organ, piano, violin, and voice soloists share their talents by making a “joyful noise to the Lord” during one or both of the 9 and 11 am services.

APPEALING SOUNDS — “With bells purchased through memorial funds, the handbell choir, originally consisting of sixteen adult ringers, began in 1984 with its first performance on Easter Sunday,” according to Karen Fenton, director. That same year, children’s and youth handbell choirs were added. Dee and Jerry McCallister and Charlyn Schmidt have continued playing bells for twenty-five years. Over the years, some youth choir members have graduated to ring with the adults. Allison Gibbs is one ringer who began in the children’s group, advanced to the youth choir, and now rings with the adults. Appealing Sounds performs during church monthly and periodically at area nursing homes as well as during special services such as those during Lent, for Thanksgiving, and on Christmas Eve. New ringers are always welcomed. If interested, contact Karen Fenton either by phone at 304-375-3995 or on-line at gramrn@suddenlink.net.

KIDZ PRAZ — Stephanie Nelson directs the children in KiDz PrAz every week following Sunday school. On select Sunday mornings throughout the year, the KiDz share the songs they have learned with the congregation during one or both services. KiDz PrAz is a “special time just for the Kidz so they can become excited about worship.” All children are invited to participate.

PRAISE BAND — Leading the congregation in the singing of contemporary music during the 9 am blended worship service, the Praise Band, consisting of drums, guitar, keyboard, and piano, is one of the newest musical additions at First Church. Although the group has expanded during the last eighteen months, director Allen Sexton says, “We would love to see continued growth both in numbers and in the outreach of this ministry. Additional committed vocalists and musicians are always welcomed; so if you love to sing along with K-LOVE, this is the opportunity for you.” The band typically rehearses on Friday afternoon.

VOICES OF WORSHIP — “The choir,” according to Allen Sexton, director, “is a family that cares for each other, prays for and with each other, and enjoys glorifying God in song.” The choir, which rehearses at 6 pm on Sunday evenings in the sanctuary, sings a variety of songs ranging from the classics to modern selections. “Although the talent of singing is a benefit, the state of the heart is the most important qualification for being a member of this group,” says Allen. “We know that when the Holy Spirit is moving within the choir, God will take care of the finer details of our music. Everyone is encouraged to join us for a great time together as we praise God through singing.” Anyone wishing to join either or both the Praise Band and Voices of Worship is asked to contact Allen Sexton at 304-375-6350.

Music opportunities at First Church exist for people of all ages. Where do you fit?



We have a story to tell. We have a story to live. We are living a story to tell. It is a never-ending story; it is a work in progress; it began centuries before, and it will end centuries after; it is a plot within a plot; it is old and dated yet young and timely, universal and relevant; it is all about them; it is all about us; it is the past, the present, and the future; it is immortal in the memory and human in reality; it is death; it is life; it is *living in gratitude, leading with grace, learning through relationships, linking in community, and loving by serving*; it is hearing the message; it is living the heart; it is personifying the faith; it is discover-

ing the gift, opening the gift, giving away the gift only to receive to give away again; it is “making disciples ~ making a difference”; it is telling the Good News; it is living the Good News; it is inviting others to know and tell the Good News; it is living to tell the Good News through First Church and its ministries. Come, you are a puzzle piece that fits, you have a gift to share, hands to serve, hearts to care, and faithfulness full to believe and want to be a part, by living it, of telling of the “OLD, OLD STORY OF JESUS AND HIS LOVE” and the new story of our faith in action.

serve God purposefully

First Church is a doing church, a being church, a people church, an outreach church, a caring church, a welcoming church, a servant church...its ministries, its mission: "making disciples ~ making a difference."

ADULT MINISTRY.....Neil Parsons

~~ discussed the novel *The Shack* during a Sunday school class; ~~ offers Discovery Sunday school class as first Bible study class for adults and Journey Sunday school class currently studying Acts; ~~ offers Women's Bible study class currently studying Esther and Hasty Small Group currently studying Matthew.

CHILDREN'S MINISTRY.....Kianna Anderson

~~ oversees Lead Ahead Learning Center and facilitated Vacation Bible School during July; ~~ current activities are discussed elsewhere within *Tidings*.

CHURCH COUNCIL.....Joe Webb

~~ spent the first three quarters of 2009 building an empowering model of church leadership based on spiritual principals and disciplines; ~~ encouraged ministry and administrative teams to take initiative with council's role to lend resources and support; ~~ build in 2010 a focus on mission as the church's primary role, encourage deeper discipleship in the congregation by helping people discover and use their unique gifts and talents in response to God's call on their lives.

COMMUNICATIONS.....Cyndy Goldsworthy

~~ formed in September; ~~ uses slides, bulletin board, marquee, and *Tidings* to communicate church's activities and positive, welcoming attitude within and outside First Church; ~~ plans in January to create an Information Center for and within the church.

EVANGELISM.....Brian & Sandra Boley

~~ initiated in September; ~~ develop goals and strategies in October/November; ~~ anticipating training for those in the congregation who feel led to help "make disciples and make a difference" by sharing God's Word and heart with others; ~~ plans to create outreach activities and a video defining First Church and encouraging people to attend; ~~ explain in January the initiative for forming this ministry and offer a workshop one Saturday entitled Sharing the Gospel with Hurting Friends.

FINANCE.....Jon Demhlow

~~ established new procedures for handling and counting offering from both services; ~~ assessed accounts in order to better collate assets and expenditures; ~~ created new form for annual budget request; ~~ evaluating ministries' budget proposals for 2010 in order to provide appropriate amount of that which is requested.

HOSPITALITY.....Jennifer Fenton

~~ provided lunch and snacks for those attending the Stewardship seminar in August; ~~ organized fellowship meals throughout the year and helped with the annual

picnic; ~~ provide coffee and goodies for Higher Grounds; ~~ organize greeters for both services; ~~ distributing "It's a Boy" signs once again for Advent while planning a reception for Christmas Eve and a fellowship meal for Valentine's Day.

MISSIONS.....Chip Pickering

~~ installed in May three photovoltaic power systems and refrigeration units for the storage of children's vaccinations and immunizations at remote clinics in Bong County, Liberia; ~~ return with a team in 2010 to Phebe Hospital and Bong County to install additional PV power systems.

STAFF-PARISH.....Richard Barnard

~~ completed the annual evaluation for the pastor and developed a Personnel Policy Manual for the church staff; ~~ preparing 2010 budget for staff compensation.

TRUSTEES.....Steve Bodnar

~~ installed replacement furnace for sanctuary, replaced heat exchange in furnace for kitchen; installed acoustic treatment for and window treatment in MPR; ~~ working on comprehensive budget for 2010 to include HVAC repairs, floor covering replacement, and updating of fire alarm system; ~~ complete an evaluation of the stained-glass windows and their protective coverings.

VISITATION.....Marilyn Croucher

~~ ascertained a need to move a nursing home patient from The Inn to Glenwood with the help of several youth and leaders; ~~ enabled continuation of senior luncheon; ~~ celebrates and encourages God's elder children through such activities as sending cards, visiting hospitals and nursing homes, and serving communion once a month at The Inn.

WORSHIP.....Pastor Steve

~~ invite all people into an encounter with God that leads to a life change. Worship is not to entertain, amuse, or pacify, but to equip and empower God's people for spiritual growth; ~~ requests no altar flowers during December, poinsettias memorials are go to the Discretionary Fund; ~~ church calendars will be distributed on Christmas Eve (see pg. 4 for worship events).

YOUTH MINISTRY.....Joe Webb

~~ created a deep desire in the youth to become more mission-focused and involved in the lives of others because of Advent Conspiracy and 30-Hour Famine; ~~ youth are growing into their role as disciples; ~~ conducting short-term, sixteen-week Disciple Bible study class; ~~ will have Rethink Christmas activity in November and will lead church in Advent Conspiracy activities.

serve God purposefully

“Be strong and take heart, all you who hope in the LORD.” [Psalm 31:24]

When Sir Ernest Shackleton set out to sea in 1914, he did so with the ambitious goal of making the first land crossing of Antarctica. But his ship, the *Endurance*, never reached its base camp. It became stuck in the icy waters for months and eventually sank. Shackleton and his twenty-seven-member crew were stranded more than twelve hundred miles from civilization, drifting on ice flows in the terrifying cold with

KEEPING HOPE ALIVE

just three rickety lifeboats, a few tents, and limited provisions. Eventually, they reached a small island and waited while Shackleton and a handful of men took one of the lifeboats eight hundred miles over tumultuous seas to a whaling station. Shackleton returned with a rescue ship, and every man survived the eighteen-month ordeal.

How did he keep the hopes of his men from dying? First, he modeled optimism. Shackleton, who once described optimism as “true moral courage,” always believed he and his crew would survive, and his optimism was contagious. He communicated that optimism to everyone around him.

Second, he nurtured his men’s sense of significance. He kept everyone involved by seeking their opinions and by giving them tasks that made them feel like they were part of the solution. He also encouraged them with humor and promoted a lighthearted atmosphere. He recognized that under extreme pressure, the ability to lighten the mood neutralizes fear and enables a team to focus, reenergize and prevail over daunting obstacles. Shackleton was a prime example of how one person can keep hope alive. **If you know someone who is in the middle of a difficult trial, your words of kindness and love, your confidence in them, your ability to lighten their load can bring hope and encouragement to their lives.**

— John C. Maxwell

“an ounce of prevention...”

STEPS to MINIMIZE SPREAD of FLU

Flu season is upon us. While the Bible teaches that we should not live in fear, we can certainly take precautions as individuals and as a church family to minimize the risk of a flu outbreak, whether H1N1 or the seasonal flu by practicing the following:

1. **Avoid close contact with people who are sick.** When you are sick, keep your distance from others to protect them from getting sick, too.
2. **Stay home when you are sick.** Stay home, except to seek medical care. Keep sick children home, except to seek medical care. All with flu-like illness should remain at home until at least 24 hours after they are free of fever or signs of fever without the use of fever-reducing medications.
3. **Cover your mouth and nose.** Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue, sleeve, or elbow when coughing or sneezing. Throw the tissue in the trash after each use. Do not share cups or eating utensils.
4. **Wash your hands often.** Washing your hands and the hands of your children often will help protect you from germs. FUMC is providing hand sanitizer at each entrance to the building as well as soap and water in each bathroom.
5. **Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth.** Germs are often spread when a person touches something that is contaminated with germs and then touches his or her eyes, nose, or mouth.
6. **Practice other good health habits.** Get plenty of rest, be physically active, manage your stress, drink plenty of fluids, and eat nutritious food.

The Children’s Ministry will perform thorough sanitizing of the nurseries on a regular basis as well as sanitization of the Children’s Praise Bags used on Sunday mornings. Please be aware that the Children’s Praise Bags that have been used and placed in the “Used Basket” will not be sanitized between the two Sunday morning services but will be before the following Sunday. We will continue to monitor the situation; and, after prayer and consultation with medical personnel, we will make any changes to our church family gatherings we believe necessary in order to protect you. **For additional information, visit www.cdc.gov or www.flu.gov**

Echoes of “SMILE, WATCH THE BIRDIE!”

will be heard coming from the lounge every Sunday morning in November as pictures for the church directory are taken. Following a more cost-efficient format this year, there will be no pictures to buy. The cost of the directory, which will probably be available in January, will be approximately \$5 and will include a 3-ring binder with removable pages that can be updated as the congregation grows. Pictures will be taken each November Sunday from 8-8:50 am, 10-10:50 am, and 12-12:50 pm. Sign-up with Cathy Engle (740-373-7445 or ecengle@att.net)

sense God personally, seek God passionately, serve God purposefully

PRAYING WITHOUT CEASING

The biblical admonition to “Pray without ceasing” demands that listening be a major part of prayer. The only way to pray without ceasing is to understand prayer as an on-going two-way conversation. Prayer listening is often defined as some unusual and special technique or event. Praying without ceasing makes prayer normal when it includes a two-way conversation with the Lord. We, however, have made normal prayer a one-way communication.

Listening to God is not meditation or practicing the lifestyle of a monk or mulling things over in your mind. Jesus said, “Therefore, take heed how you hear” [Luke 18:8]. Prayer listening is not special revelation. Prayer listening should be as common as other parts of praying, as it is part of your communication with the Lord. So how do you learn to listen? For me it started with a need to hear from God. Good listening starts with the desire to learn. If you can handle life without Him, you will not hear from Him. It is not a matter of setting aside more time, albeit, that would be good. “Be silent...before the Lord” [Zech. 2:13] does not mean actual decibel silence, but silence in your mind. The world can be very loud around me, but I can still quiet my heart and mind whether in an airport or in the woods. Remaining silent before God does not mean that you will have no thoughts or reflections. It does mean you will stop telling God your needs, and say with Samuel, “Speak, Lord, for Your servant hears” [1 Sam. 3:9]. To pray without ceasing, it will be necessary to stop one-sided chatter. Prayer without ceasing is not meditation, special revelation, or receiving a prophetic word of knowledge. It is one’s normal communication with the Father.

— Cornell Haan

“There is one who scatters, yet increases more; and there is one who withholds more than is right, but it leads to poverty. The generous soul will be made rich, and he who waters will also be watered himself.” [Proverbs 11:24-25]

STEWARD

Stewardship, for Wesley, emerged out of a sense of indebtedness to God for all we have. Unlike God, we are limited; we must constantly rely on God for sustenance and saving grace. Wesley understood the moral command behind good stewardship as a quality of life that gives back to God, not for the sake of personal merit but out of responsibility and gratitude. Faithful stewardship extends beyond the use of money. Wesley expected the totality of the Christian life...to reflect the same careful consideration of the gifts that God gives to each person.

Welcoming strangers is a privilege and a blessing. When we open our lives and receive the stranger, we are changed. We experience the world through their eyes and see life anew; host and guest both experience blessing. But hospitality is not always easy. Hospitality can be inconvenient, disruptive, and even risky. John Wesley reminds us that God welcomes us first through “free, almighty grace.” Because God welcomes us, we can

CHRISTIAN HOSPITALITY

welcome others, especially strangers who are vulnerable and without resources. When we welcome “the lease of these,” we welcome Jesus [Matt 25:40]. We do not screen strangers to determine who is worthy of welcome because we know Jesus is present there. For Wesley, the life of a “genuine Christian” is infused with God’s love so that acts of mercy, such as welcoming the stranger, are at the heart of witness. God receives us with open arms. We receive others with open arms, and thereby receive the blessing of Christ with us.

Ministry Moment

CARING FOR NEIGHBOR

Caring for neighbor goes hand in hand with loving God. We don’t have to choose between feeding on scripture and feeding the hungry, between reaching out to God and reaching out to those in need. Who is our neighbor? According to Wesley, our neighbor is anyone who needs our help, not just the person already part of our group. Wesley was especially concerned that we care for those we might not initially think of as neighbors, those beyond our immediate neighborhood, people of different faiths or ethnic backgrounds. Most of all, caring for neighbor means not passing by the most needy and vulnerable, the hungry, injured, or hurting. Wesleyans believe God has bound together all people — no matter how different — by creating each of us in God’s image. God has already made us all neighbors, so we can expand our hearts to care for neighbors down the street and around the world.

SOURCE: Wesley Study Bible NRSV

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“Generosity is to
[consumerism] what
kryptonite is to Superman.”
- Lloyd Shadrach -

ONE 
SPIRIT
Varieties of gifts—
Varieties of service

“Giving is more than a
responsibility — it is a
privilege; more than an act
of obedience — it is
evidence of our faith.”
- William Arthur Ward -

SENSE GOD
PERSONALLY *through engaging*
WORSHIP and PRAYER

SEEK GOD
PASSIONATELY *through BIBLE*
STUDY and SMALL GROUP sharing

SERVE GOD
PURPOSEFULLY
through SPIRITUAL
GIFTS and faithful
STEWARDSHIP

