

First Connection



February (mailed January 26) Phone: 983.3929 - E-mail: office@sjfirstumc.org

Our Mission: "We are a community of committed followers of Jesus Christ..."

Dear Fellow Travelers with Christ,

What a joy it is to be here in your presence as we journey together on our mission with Christ.

As you have celebrated with your beloved pastor of so many years upon his retirement, you have at the same time provided a warm and gracious welcome to Jackie and me. We are excited and thankful to be here in St. Joseph. We have been struck by your love for your community, your love for your church and your love for God.

While we acknowledge up front that our journey together will be short, it is a journey we begin with great anticipation. While we celebrate together all that God is doing in our midst, we celebrate even more all that God has in store for St. Joseph First United Methodist Church in the months and years ahead. While these are days of transition, it is a transition we can have confidence in if we make it our aim together to be faithful to the mission of St. Joe First... "to be a community of committed followers of Jesus Christ," and the mission of the United Methodist Church... "to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world."

As we begin our journey together, I ask for your prayers. Please be in prayer for Wade and Patti, as they begin their well-deserved retirement; pray for Jackie and me that God will guide and direct our ministry here; and pray for Bishop Keaton, Rev. Neil Davis (our Kalamazoo District Superintendent) and our Staff-Parish Relations Committee as they seek God's guidance in the appointment process.

May our journey together be filled with joy as we seek God's will in fulfilling His mission.

With God's Blessings,

Terry A. Euper



**Valentine's
Dinner/Dance
Saturday,
February 11**

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MISSION STATEMENT

We are a community of committed followers of Jesus Christ who influence our world to imitate Christ through an intentional strategy of winning the lost, building the believer and equipping each person for effective ministry.

ATTENDANCE - OUR PRESENCE

December 18	8:30	185
	9:45	123
	11:00	233
	Total	541
December 25	10:00	319
January 1	10:00	149
January 8	8:30	79
	9:45	136
	11:00	121
	Total	336
January 15	8:30	59
	9:45	143
	11:00	110
	Total	312

Staff members

make daily visits to the hospital. If no

one stops by, it's because we don't know that you're

there! **Please call the church office** and let us know if you or a loved one is in the hospital.



*Have you
been in
the hospital?*

WEATHER-RELATED CHURCH CLOSURE ANNOUNCEMENT

You may learn of Sunday morning closures in the following locations:

Radio	WSJM (1400 AM) WAUS (90.7 FM)
Television	WNDU (Channel 16)
Internet	wsjm.com OR wndu.com
Phone	Church: 983-3929 (cancellation message or no answer)

Please cut out this box and post!

PARISH NOTES - OUR PRAYERS AND SERVICE

In the Hospital Recently:

Margie Pannell Bob Smith Dorothy Crow
Carol Dean

Sympathy: We extend our love and prayers to –

- The Iwan family on the death of Melissa's mother, Aubrey's grandmother, Nancy Campau.
- The Marvin family on the death of Lisa's father around Thanksgiving.
- Family and friends of Louise Huff, who died January 12.
- Family and friends of Jim Perry.
- The Kraus family on the death of Jim's cousin, Linda Jackson.

Thank You:

- To Bob Dyer, Ted Fleisher, Randy Kaeding, Barb Carlson, Edy Harding, Evan and Helen Hazelett and Shirley Johnson for collating the last newsletter.
- To Shirley Johnson and Kim Versaw for the donation of Christmas wrapping paper to be used to wrap the *Operation Christmas Child* shoeboxes in 2012. For the past few years, Shirley has generously made this donation and it is greatly appreciated. – Sue O'Neil
- To Ben and Nicole Rimes for donating a laptop to the Youth Ministries!
- To all who provided cookies and who helped set up, serve and cleanup for the gathering after the Christmas Eve "Eve" service. Special thank you to Dairy Queen for providing the delicious ice cream cakes. - Worship Design Team
- To all of our very faithful Monday Morning Counters - Gary Lockwood, Carmen Grandy, David Rutlin, Melissa Iwan, Miriam Pede, Judy Thompson, Liz & Terry Allen, Gloria Muth, Dawn Ankli, Barb Carlson, Dee Schrag, Bob Dyer, Kate Cravens, Sue O'Neil, and Carol Wick; and our substitutes Denise Foust and Annie Kaeding. Also a very special thank you to those who have "retired" since my taking this job including Betty Adams, Bob Smith, Jean Edwards, Susan Ratajik, Evan and Helen Hazelett and Margie Pannell. Your dedication and commitment to this very necessary service is very appreciated. - Lou Ann Stelter, Financial Secretary

Thank You Notes:

- We sincerely appreciate your prayers, cards, calls, e-mails, notes, and beautiful flowers, at this trying time. We will always remember your caring and thoughtfulness. God Bless You. – Raymond E. Myers Family
- Dearest Angels, Your kindness is special – and so are you! How touching, beautiful is the saying: "I have been touched by angels." Just took my breath away and tears of joy were shed, were shared with others. You will be my angels always! So special is your gift. From my heart to all of you.
- Love, Barb (Richmond)
- I would like to thank everyone for their prayers, calls, cards, personal comments, and to the Cancel Choir for their support during the past year when I had a number of health concerns. I'm in rehab now and hope to gain my strength back so I can participate in church activities again. It is wonderful to know that we have such a wonderful church family, THANK YOU all again. – Wes Arent

MORE PARISH NOTES

- Dear St. Joseph First UMC, Thank you so much for your donation of infant hats and mittens. We really appreciate your support. Happy and Holy Holidays! – Birthright of St. Joseph
- Thank you, anonymous church friend, for your gift. It is greatly appreciated. So, may God richly bless you now and in the years ahead.
– Rolene Gorske
- I want to thank Pastor Wade and Parish Nurse Julie Lester for coming to visit me while at Lakeland Hospital for my knee replacement surgery last week. Their presence and prayers were very welcomed and appreciated. I also wish to thank the ladies of *Sit & Stitch* for the wonderful shawl Julie delivered to me. I showed it to my daughters Bari & Buffi and they thought it was really beautiful and well done. I want to give special thanks to Julie again because she took absolute charge after I came home from the hospital and she learned I was in need of some equipment. She put her mind to work and in no time had what I needed. I want to thank the person who graciously loaned these out to me too and forgive me for not remembering your name. I understand these were "passed off" at the Christmas Eve service too! I am saddened, though, that I was not able to be in church for the Christmas services and can't wait to get back to my seat in the fourth row right side for Catch 9:45! Everyone in this congregation is a blessing and you touch lives you may not know. May God bless each and everyone of you.
– E. Lee Benson
- A big thank you to the angels who brought the beautiful fruit bowl (and extras) to us just before Christmas. Of course, the fruit and candy are all gone, but the beautiful bowl will always remind me of your gracious generosity. May you be blessed as you continue to be servants of our Lord. Thank you again.
– Rolene and Bill Gorske

VALENTINE'S DINNER AND DANCE SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 11, 7-10 PM

Come and enjoy an exciting evening with those special to you. Cost is \$10 for single, \$18 for couple, \$8 per person for groups of three or more.

Menu: Caesar Salad, Chicken Parmesan, and Chocolate Cake



All proceeds help the youth attend this year's mission trip to Georgia. Contact the church office or Will Flaherty (269-325-7057) for questions. Sign up at the Opportunities Desk or call the church office to RSVP.

TRUSTEES

Thanks to Bill Foust, Mark Richards, Russ Hahn, Lou Ann Stelter and Mike Dumke for their work in leasing the condo for Pastor Terry and Jackie Euper.

Thanks to Trustee Bob Husek for fixing the Sanctuary lights and several florescent fixtures.

Thanks to Fred Breikreuz and Dave Benson for their work in removing a sewer line blockage and cleaning the kitchen grease trap.

The address for the church has been changed to 2950 Lakeview Ave. from 3003 Leco Ct. We were the only address on Leco Ct. and Leco Ct. was not as easy to find as Lakeview Ave. The staff will be carrying out the tasks to make all the needed changes in the next few months.



FUNDRAISER

Sign up for the Meijer Community Reward Program and help support the church. Pick up a Meijer Community Reward application from Dan Colthorp or the church office. Fill it out and send it in. Simply swipe your card every time you make a purchase at Meijer, pay with your debit card or with cash and ½% of your purchase will be donated to the church; use your Meijer Credit Card, and 1% of your purchase will be donated. Those monies are divided equally between the church and FLAME Ministries.

YOUTH CENTER REMODELING PROJECT

The youth ministry here is growing and we need more space so that we can continue to grow and to benefit other programs that take place on the south side of the church. This new youth center will be used for youth group, teen small groups, college groups, opening times for Children's Sunday School and others.



The plan is to combine Rooms B, C, D & E into one big room. B & C will be used as a worship area with a stage and seating for 45-50. This area will include an audio/visual desk, surround sound speakers, and projection capabilities. The other part of the youth center will feature a snack bar, tables, couches, two flat screen TV's with video game systems and games, including pool, air hockey, foosball, and carpet ball.

We are trying hard to create a space that will enhance our ministries and appeal to children, teens, and young adults.

We would like to raise \$35,000 within the next few months so that Pearson Construction can begin the basic remodeling (removal of walls, reinforcing ceiling, and installing a snack counter). Completing the décor and upgrading equipment will be done as additional funds come available.

But we need the support of the congregation. We ask first for your prayers. We are applying for several grants, so pray that we may receive them. Also, consider donating to this project. You can use your regular offering envelope in the "For" section write "Youth Center Remodeling," or use an envelope in the pew. With your assistance we can begin remodeling this summer. Several people in the church have already volunteered to help with the construction of stage, sports cabinet, etc.

Watch for more information in bulletins. If you have any questions, please contact Dan Colthorp (983-3929, extension 14).

MYSTERY MEMBER

Grrrr. Grumble, grumble, can't open this blasted plastic bubble wrapper; ah, this is so great, those packaging engineers sure know how to keep a flat TV safe in shipping. These comments are often heard around Christmas time when the owner of a packaging major from the University of Michigan practiced his trade.

This month's member was born in Texas where his dad was an air force officer. He survived his frequent changes of school during which he applied his strength in wrestling and water polo. He found sailing in Greenville, Michigan to be to his liking. His attempt at playing the cornet convinced him that music was not for him. He had no ear for music. In spite of his moving around he was able to attain the rank of Eagle Scout in the Boy Scouts of America.

He got into sail boat racing when he was 9 years old so he wanted his family's next move to be near a big lake. After marriage he and his family finally arrived in St. Joseph where he settled in with his wife and three daughters. Here he could practice his second love, his first being his wife. He frequently crewed aboard a large sail boat in the yearly Mackinac boat races. Last year two crewmates on a competitor's boat were drowned when the ship sank. They were tethered below deck and couldn't escape when rough weather doomed their ship. His boat helped pick up the survivors. In spite of that, he loves the open sea and looks forward to the summer of 2012 when he can again challenge the waves and the competing seamen.

He has another interest which is not a money maker, but he does it for his own enjoyment. A friend has a ten acre farm and grows a variety of different grapes. They pick, blend and make some delicious flavors that, if they were to do it for money, would net them a good retirement fund. But they give it away to their friends while enjoying some of it for themselves. They make Pinot Grigio, Chardonnay, Pinot Noir, Chenin Blanc, Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot and others. (I couldn't write fast enough to get them all. But if you ask him, he will happily rattle them off to you.)

Soon he and his wife will be celebrating their 30th year of marriage. They have planned a cruise (naturally) to enjoy togetherness in the southern isles.

Their three college educated daughters are all doing well with one of them married and working in the Chicago area. He is no longer designing packaging for consumer products and commutes daily to Kalamazoo.

You know him as a frequent volunteer cutting the grass, shoveling the snow but most importantly the Chairman of the Finance Committee. We know him as John Rajewski, and now you know the rest of the story.

Robert Hatch
History Chairman

A notebook containing all past copies of Mystery Members can be found in the church office.

JOB JAR

If you are widowed, handicapped or over the age of 65 and need a minor repair or chore done in your home, the men of your church would like to help. The **request cards** are above the Opportunities Desk. Please fill in the blanks on the card and place it in the nearby **Job Jar**.

We will call you as soon as possible to let you know if the job or chore is one we can handle. If it is, we will schedule a time to come to your home and make the repair or perform the chore. The Job Jar's contents are reviewed weekly, so please plan on a week or two before you receive a reply. We are glad to have the opportunity to serve Christ by helping you in this way. No payment will be asked or expected for this service. If you have questions, please call Russ Hahn at 429-1452.

Hunger/Relief Fund is received the first Sunday of each month. The funds are divided among the Groves New Life Ministry (includes a banana farm and a ministry of community health education and evangelism); Haiti Hot Lunch Program; Midwest Mission Distribution Center; Benton Harbor Soup Kitchen and Mujila Falls Agricultural Project in Zambia.

Missionaries: The missionaries are grateful for your prayers and support. They would love to hear from you. (Addresses are on the prayer side of the calendar.)

The Nordstrom Prayer Group: Laurie and Robert are strengthened by the prayers of their friends. By the same token, the prayer time blesses and strengthens those who gather to pray.

In February we will meet on the 20th at 2:00 PM in the Library.

Emergency Pantry:

On January 2, eleven bags of groceries were delivered to the Emergency Shelter, with a variety of food remaining in our church cupboard for anyone in our church who has a need. Our monthly donations are alternated between the Emergency Shelter and the Benton Harbor Street Ministry. The grocery cart is in the Narthex the first and last Sundays of each month, but you may bring in donations any other time of the month and put them in the cupboard under the Opportunities Desk. Thank you to our congregation and Adventure/Crossings Club for your active interest in this mission and the variety of food items you donate, especially the pastas, jars of sauce, stews and soups which are easy to prepare and good winter meals. Many people are blessed by your generosity.

- Lynn and June Rayle



MISSION/CSRR NEWS



Soup Kitchen – From the Scripture we read: “I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.” John 10:10 - Do you have this abundant life? If so pass it on.

On January 9th those volunteering at the Soup Kitchen included Shirley Johnson, Earl Kugle, Randy Kaeding, Joyce Bliss, Julie Evans, Gloria Muth, Noreen Sonnenberg, Darci Humphreys. We served four adults and 13 children in daycare, 154 adults and two children in the dining room, for a total of 173. The cakes were provided by Barb Pullins, Julie Evans, Joyce Bliss, Sue O’Neil, Dawn Ankli, Dede Bittner, Shirley Pittman and Shirley Johnson. The milk was donated by Miriam Pede and Shirley Johnson and the juice by Marcia Bowers and Gloria Muth. Thank you, everyone, for all your good help and generosity of money and food. It all helps and we can put together an abundant meal for many hungry people. The next date is February 13th when Tosi’s will be providing their wonderful spaghetti and brownies the next three months. We provide the milk, juice and workers. So please sign up to help wherever you can.

- Rolene Gorske

Mujila Falls – Paul Webster, missionary at Mujila Falls Agricultural Center in Zambia, included the following story in a recent update. Paul visited our church in August and the Project is supported by the Hunger Fund. A recent success story is that of an infant named Raphael. In a neighboring village, our project had started a women’s banana grove and goat milking projects. Over the years the women have begun to learn that they can eat better and use the surplus funds to pay for the education of their children, provide better health care, and build better homes for their families. Then one of their neighbors had a health crisis. She contracted an infection in her breasts and could no longer nurse her infant son, Raphael. In the past, children like Raphael normally died as there was no substitute for mother’s milk. But this time Raphael’s mother was able to obtain goat’s milk from the women’s cooperative. Instead of having to search for an outside solution, village women were empowered to deal with the crisis on the local level. They have, in effect, become missionaries to their neighbors. The Holy Spirit has used them and Mujila Falls to reach a child with life-giving milk. We remember the words from Matthew 25: “I was hungry and you fed me.”

MORE MISSION/CSRR NEWS

Coat Box and Hat & Mitten Tree Update - This winter has been unseasonably mild, but there is still a need for warm clothing. Many in our community will be comfortable and warm in the cold and snow because of your generosity. Our coat box yielded 109 coats. In addition, 109 pairs of gloves/mittens and 119 hats were donated on the Hat and Mitten Tree. What a giving congregation! Scarves, sweaters, snow pants, socks and other warm weather items were also donated for a total of 441 items. They were distributed to the following agencies: Benton Harbor Senior Center, Benton Harbor Schools, Child & Family Services, Emergency Shelter, Birthright of St Joseph, Men's Shelter, Safe Shelter. Special thanks to Bob Dyer, who single-handedly coordinates, collects, stores and delivers all items for both the Coat Box and Hat and Mitten Tree.

CAMPING NEWS

Christian Camping - Winter has arrived in full force and it is time to think summer camp! And then sign up to attend one of the many West Michigan Conference United Methodist Christian camping opportunities for 2012!

Elementary Camps are available at Crystal Springs near Dowagiac, Wesley Woods near Hastings or Lake Michigan Camp near Pentwater. Most of our elementary campers attend a week long or a 1/2 week mini-camp at Crystal Springs Camp. There are many offerings this year including one for those who have *completed* grades 4-6 called Camp 9-1-1. Our own Rick Smiedendorf is one of the co-deans for that camp.

Middle School Camps are offered at Wesley Woods and Lake Michigan Camp. Many of our middle school youth attend one of the week long camps at Wesley Woods.

Senior High Camp at Lake Louise is July 8-14th. In the past, some of our congregation members have served as camp counselors. Lake Louise does offer Senior High Camps at other times as well and there are also camp opportunities that involve high adventure and athletics.

Please go to westmichiganconference.org/camping to find out about all the UMC camping opportunities or to sign up online. For information or to sign up for camps at Lake Louise go to LakeLouisecommunity.org. You can get a **\$50** rebate if you are a first time camper OR bring a friend who is a first time camper. Our church offers scholarships to help with the cost. Take time to check out the many Christian camping opportunities for 2012!



Sewing Ministry – Join us for a time of fun and mission on Saturday, February 18, 9:30-2:30. Dust off your sewing machines and come join the fun! Sue O'Neil and Kim Otte have cut out gowns, pajamas and school bags. The plan is to see if we can finish all that they've cut out! The gowns and pj's will go to Grace Christian Hospital in Haiti. The children are each given one when they're admitted to the hospital and allowed to keep it when they leave. The school bags, filled with supplies, are sent to Haiti and other countries around the world. If you can't come for the whole day, just come for a couple of hours. Bring a sack lunch, your sewing machines, sergers, pins, scissors, and enthusiasm. There will be jobs for everyone. Please sign up at the Opportunities Desk, so we'll have enough spaces ready. Questions? Contact Jean Edwards (408-0294) or Barb Petzke (983-3929).



St. Joseph High School Chamber Orchestra here Sunday, March 11,

4:00 PM - The Music Department of the St. Joseph First UMC will present the SJHS Chamber Orchestra in concert, March 11, as a fundraiser for the music department. This group is highly acclaimed at regional and statewide competitions and conferences. Under the direction of Burke Lokey, the orchestra will present music by Corelli, Grieg and others. They will be going to a national orchestra competition at the end of March. We hope you can come and not only support our church's music program but support this group and enjoy their fine playing. Several of our church's youth are significant players in the orchestra. Bring a friend and come enjoy.

Now is a great time to join the Chancel Choir! If you have thought about singing with us but have been waiting for the right time – the time is now! We would love to have you join us. We meet Wednesday nights for rehearsal 7:30-9:00 and sing weekly at the 11:00 AM service. If you have any questions, see Jim Kraus.

Young Singers Choir – come join us. We rehearse on alternate Wednesdays from Adventure/Crossings Clubs at 6:00 in the Chapel (Feb. 1, 15, 29; Mar. 14). If you are in 4th Grade through High School, you're invited to sing with us. See Will Flaherty or Jim Kraus with questions.

MUSIC AND WORSHIP

In one of the crowded sections of downtown London stands an old meeting house known as Whitfield's Tabernacle. This building was a meeting house for early Methodists bands led by George Whitfield and John Wesley. These bands or "small groups" were the backbone of the Methodist movement, which ultimately led to our own denomination. In the organ loft of the building there is this anonymous inscription: "Make a large place in your life for music and it will bring you a priceless reward.... In the hour of rest, music will lift up your spirit and give refreshment to every faculty of your being. In the hour of work, you will rejoice in the strength and energy which music has given you. In the hour of prayer, music will quicken the aspirations of your soul. In the hour of fellowship, music will blend your spirit with others in unity and understanding."

Many of us experience the joy of singing together in worship and appreciate the way music enhances our worship together. Earlier Church leaders were aware of this also. St. Francis said, "He who sings, prays twice." To me, St. Francis was saying when we sing, we pray with the words on our lips but we also pray in our spirit as we join in a melody using our very breath. The Early Church elevated Scripture and liturgy with song, considering that the music, the actual pitches, raised the natural words to a higher level.

Martin Luther considered music to be one of the most beautiful parts of God's creation. Involved in church music himself, Luther wrote many new hymns of the Reformation and encouraged his followers to "sing their faith." In fact, Luther is considered to be the originator of congregational singing. He felt that music was of God, not of man. And he was determined to restore congregational singing in the German language (the language of the people) to the Church. So strong were his beliefs about music and worship that he wrote these fiery words: "Next to the word of God, the noble art of music is the greatest treasure in the world. It controls our hearts, minds and spirits."

Both John and Charles Wesley considered music to be a significant part of worship, especially the singing of hymns. In John's directions for congregational singing he wrote, "See that you join with the congregation as frequently as you can. Let not a single degree of weakness or weariness hinder you. If it is a cross to you, take it up, and you will find it a blessing."

"Above all sing spiritually. Have an eye to God in every word you sing. Aim at pleasing him more than yourself, or any other creature. In order to do this attend strictly to the sense of what you sing, and see that your heart is not carried away with the sound, but offered to God continually...."

Our Christian worship is rooted in singing our faith. May we enjoy the opportunity we have each week to lift our voices together as we sing to God the Father, Jesus the Son and the Holy Spirit. May the music we hear or sing be a pleasing offering to the Lord, the author and finisher of our Faith.

See you in church
– Jim Kraus

EDUCATION NEWS

Get Flipt * Adventure Club/Crossings Club

Second through Fifth Graders are getting Flipt on Wednesday nights. Learn how knowing Jesus can flip your life, too. We meet in the Fellowship Hall where a freewill offering dinner begins at 5:30. Activities are 6:00-7:00. Each week we enjoy a game, weekly speak out, video and team time. Our mission project/offering is non-perishable food items that will be distributed locally. Invite your friends for an evening of fabulous food, great games, vivacious videos, tremendous team time and lots of laughs!



Adventure Club/Crossings Club Nights -

- **February 8**, 5:30 meal, 6:00-7:00 activities
- **February 22**, Ash Wednesday, **NO CLUB ACTIVITIES**



P3 is a group that is open to anyone who would like to join! Come once, once in a while, or every week! Just come anytime!

Topics:

February 1 - Why does Redemption really matter?

February 8 - Can one person change the world? Can that person be you?

February 15 - The Arts. How do you define Art? "Art is whatever the artist says it is." Do you agree?

February 22 - Ash Wednesday - NO P3 - Join us for the Ash Wednesday service at St. Joseph First UMC for a Sacrificial Dinner at 6:00pm and the service at 7:00pm.

February 29 - Education. Separation of Church and Education? What do you think?



Love Your Family Valentine's Party -

Those four-years old through 2nd grade and families, mark your calendar for our annual Valentine's Party. Please join us Sunday, Feb. 5, 2:00-3:15, for an afternoon of fun. Enjoy games, crafts, a snack, and time with your family. Friends are always welcome, so bring a few along! Please sign up at the Opportunities Desk or call Missy Emery (983-3929, ext. 21).



ADULT SUNDAY SCHOOL CLASSES

It is never too late to join a class!

The Best Question Ever led by Steve Sager - We've all done dumb stuff in our lives. We all have regrets. Yet none of us plans to mess up our lives. Why, then, does it keep happening? Life doesn't have to be that way. You can foolproof your life...as this book shows. God's promise and pattern is for something better.

In *The Best Question Ever*, Andy Stanley effectively teaches the practical and lasting value of simply asking this question about our actions in all of life's arenas: What is the wise thing for me to do, in light of my past experience, my present circumstances, and my future hopes and dreams? This book probes for honesty — it pushes us to open our eyes to reality and helps us expose the little (and big) self-deceptions we have. Join either group at 10:00 AM in F & G or 11:00 AM in the Parlor.



Upcoming Youth Events:

- High School Winter Retreat:
Feb. 3-5
- Middle School Winter Retreat:
Feb. 24-26
- High School Lock-In: March 23-24, 9:00 PM-7:00 AM
- Middle School Game Night:
Friday, April 20, 6-10 PM
- Spring Rummage Sale Fundraiser:
May 1-4
- Mission Trip to Georgia: June 10-16

There will be no Confirmation Class on the following Sundays

- February 26
- April 1 & 8

No High School FLAME: February 5 & 26, April 1, & April 8

No Middle School FLAME: April 4

YOUTH NEWS

Teen Winter Retreats

During February, we will take both youth groups and their friends to Miracle Camp for a spiritual retreat. There will be great Chapel services with a speaker and band.

There will be great outdoor activities like tobogganing, ice skating, football, and capture the flag. Indoor activities include dodge ball, volleyball, basketball, foosball, carpet ball, Ping-Pong, pool, and other great games. If you would like to go, please get your \$98 and your medical treatment permission form in one week before the retreat. Here are the dates:

- High School Winter Retreat - February 3-5
- Middle School Winter Retreat - February 24-26

High School FLAME will go bowling at Kelley's Sunday, February 26, 7:30-9:00 PM. Please bring friends and \$10-15.

Confirmation Class will meet at the church in Room B on Sunday, February 5, 4:30-6:00 PM. There will be no Confirmation class on February 26, because Middle School teens will be returning from a spiritual retreat.

Life Together Group Schedule:

- No Monday Life Together Group February 6, 20, & 27
- No High School & College Group February 6 & 27



Youth Winter Retreat

ASH WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 22



We begin the observance of Lent in the Christian community with a sacrificial supper (soup and sandwich) on Ash Wednesday, February 22, 6:00 PM. Please join us for worship in the Sanctuary at 7:00 PM which will include Holy Communion. Don't miss this opportunity to worship together on Ash Wednesday. If you plan to eat at the supper, please

sign up at the Opportunities Desk or call the church office. **If you would like to help with the preparation of the meal, please sign up!**

Please invite a friend or neighbor to attend with you, or encourage another church member to attend and sit with you. The service begins at 7:00 PM in the Sanctuary and is often observed by some to be one of the most significant services in the church year.

WARM WINTER EVENING

If you are still interested in attending this event, it's not too late to join us! Please see Shari Phillips or call the church office for more details!

Dove Award
Winner
Song of the year
for *Redeemer*



Speaker
and
Recording
Artist

CIRCLE NEWS

Esther Circle - This group will not meet in January or February. Next meeting will be March 22. They will be led on a tour of the church library and the collections we have there. Liz Allen will be leader.



Blood Pressure Screening –
February 12 is the date for the next blood pressure screening. If you need to have yours checked before then, please call Julie.

Also check out Julie's door for health-related programs, information and educational opportunities.



WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 15

All articles for the next newsletter need to be clearly written out and in the secretary's mailbox by **8:00 AM, Wednesday, February 15.** Or email them to office@sjfirstumc.org. Thank you.

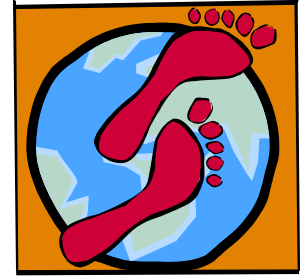
HEADED SOUTH?

Please call the church office with your change of address. This saves the church the charge (50 cents) when the post office forwards your third class mail. And you don't want to miss out on any of the news!



WALK TO JERUSALEM

You may remember that many of us symbolically walked to Jerusalem during Lent of 2006. On Ash Wednesday, February 22, we will once again begin the 47-day journey to Jerusalem. We will end our journey on Easter Sunday. Our goal will be to cumulatively walk from St. Joseph to Jerusalem, a total of 6,141 miles. Our trip will take us through Michigan, Ohio and Pennsylvania to New York City. From there we will travel to Algeria, Libya, Sudan and Egypt. After we cross the Red Sea, we will complete our journey to Jerusalem.



For this journey, the definition of 'walk' is an expanded one. 'Walking' can include any form of activity – walking, jogging, swimming or participating in any exercise class or sport counts. Approximately 20 minutes of activity will equal one mile. Children may include time in gym, dance class, gymnastics, sports practices or games. Be creative with your exercise program. If you are in physical therapy, that counts! Mention this program to your physical therapists- they'll love it!

PLUS, you are all invited to meet at 10 AM each Tuesday during Lent at the Orchards Mall to walk together. At 11 AM we will meet for coffee and devotions in the food court. This will be a good chance to get in some miles and also fellowship with one another.

Along with physical exercise, we also need to promote health in our mind and spirit. Walking can be a great time for prayer and meditation. There will be Scripture verses and reflections available to use during your journey. You are encouraged to decide on some form of prayer or spiritual reflection while you exercise. Kids playing sports are probably not reflecting on Scripture, but with encouragement, they can offer that activity and time up to God.

Packets for participants will be available Sundays, February 12 and 19, as well as at the Ash Wednesday supper. Each participant will receive 'footprints' that he/she will record his/her weekly miles on and turn in weekly. Progress will be charted on a map in Fellowship Hall. Please consider joining me on this journey to health and wholeness.

- Julie Lester, Parish Nurse

