

CHRONICLER

Cape Girardeau, Missouri

www.evangelicalucc-cape.org

DECEMBER 2007

Tis the Season

Between now and Christmas, if someone wishes you “happy holidays,” you might wish them a “blessed Advent” in return. December is truly a remarkable month, because it includes two seasons of the Church year: Advent and Christmas. We change from the cheerful green of “ordinary time,” first to the serious purple of advent and then to the joyful gold of Christmas. Unlike our secular holidays, which focus on individual days, the Church calendar divides the year into seasons, giving us time to think, pray, and reflect.

Advent has actually been one of my favorite seasons of the year since childhood thanks to that great invention, the “Advent calendar.” Our first Advent calendars had a wonderful new picture behind the door each day, leading up to a set of double doors revealing baby Jesus on Christmas day. I think it was while our family was stationed in Germany that I was introduced to the less educational version—the one with a chocolate candy behind every door. Nevertheless, the Advent calendar made this into a very special season for me. It is a season where everyday is important and where a sense of anticipation and excitement slowly builds towards Christmas and that glimpse of the Christ child (or that very special final candy!)

While our society wants the commercial holiday of Christmas to start earlier and earlier, with Christmas decorations up well before Thanksgiving, the Church asks us to slow down and spiritually prepare for Christ’s coming. Advent asks us not only to prepare for the birth of Christ (Christmas), but it also looks forward to the future reign of Christ. Advent is not Christmas and has its own traditions of liturgy and hymns. Advent hymns in our hymnal include “Of the Father’s Love Begotten,” “Arise, Shine,” “O Come, O Come Emmanuel,” and “Come Though Long Expected Jesus.”

Advent, like Lent, uses purple. Purple is associated with royalty and the coming of Christ our king. The darkness of purple is associated with penitence, the state of feeling or expressing humble or

regretful pain or sorrow for sins or offenses. Through this penitence, the Church readies itself for Christ’s arrival. A season of prayer and reflection better prepares us for Christmas than does a frenzy of shopping. This Advent, we might ask ourselves, “Am I truly ready for the arrival of Jesus Christ in my life?” Moreover, is the Church ready for the coming of Christ’s Kingdom? We might consider making “Advent resolutions,” listing the things we need to do to get ready for Christ, rather than New Year’s resolutions this year.

The Christmas celebration begins on Christmas Eve and continues for the next “twelve days of Christmas,” until the feast of Epiphany. Christmas celebrates the incarnation, the embodiment of God as a human being: “And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father’s only son, full of grace and truth (John 1:14).” The colors of the Christmas season are White or Gold, symbolizing joy in the light of day.

Epiphany, on January 6 commemorates the coming of the Magi (the three wise men) as the first manifestation of Christ to the Gentiles, while in the Eastern Orthodox Church it commemorates the baptism of Christ. This year, consider reviving some old Epiphany customs, such as the blessing of the lintels of the main doors of the home; the Epiphany cake or bread with the three hidden coins; and the distribution of spiritual ‘gifts’ to each family member and guest, usually done by someone dressed up in a costume that calls to mind the Three Kings.

This year, consider celebrating Christ for the entire Christmas season: Advent, Christmas and Epiphany. It might help you get ready for living with Christ in 2008. Have a prayerful, Advent, a joyful Christmas, and a plentiful Epiphany!

Your Friend In Christ,
—Pastor Dan

For more on the colors of the seasons of the Church go to <http://www.ucc.org/worship/liturgies/>

“Steeped in Tradition, Stirred by the Spirit, Sweetened with Love”

Christmas Fund 2007

The Christmas Fund Offering (formerly the Christmas Fund for the Veterans of the Cross), one of four Special Mission Offerings of the United Church of Christ (UCC), is an important way of sharing our joy at God's renewing and life-giving grace. The Offering, which is administered by the United Church Board for Ministerial Assistance of the Pension Boards on behalf of the UCC, is an expression of joy and gratitude to, and for, those who serve the church.

Gifts to the Christmas Fund help provide pension and health premium supplementation to low-income retirees, emergency assistance to the families of clergy and lay employees and Christmas Gift Checks to hundreds of annuitants.

Facts taken from a 1953 publication indicate that: "In 1902, a little money was collected and special Christmas gifts were sent to ten older ministers." The same article also reports that \$121,054 was received for the Christmas Fund in 1952.

A little more than 50 years later, in 2006 the Christmas Fund received \$1,438,000 and nearly 1,500 families were assisted. Our goal is to be able to provide at least \$1,500,000 in assistance from the 2007 appeal.

Your gifts are needed more than ever to help the growing number of retirees whose low income annuities make it difficult to meet increasing living costs. This is your opportunity to participate in God's promise of renewal by enabling this ministry of compassion and care.

On a fall day in 1994, Nancy Brooks waved goodbye to her kindergarten-aged twins as their school bus drove off, secured her two-year old daughter into a car seat, and set out on a 90-minute drive from her home in Jamestown, Illinois to St. Louis, Missouri, for her first day of school at Eden Theological Seminary.

From the time she was in third grade, Nancy had already experienced what she describes as **"God's nudging" her to ministry. In college, she pursued an under-graduate degree in education and worked as a teacher for several years before finally she responded to that divine nudge. After receiving her Master of Divinity degree from Eden, she accepted her first pastoral call to St. Peter's UCC in Inman, Kansas, where she served for**

six years before moving to her current pastorate at Union Congregational United Church of Christ in Buffalo, Wyoming.

A lifelong member of the United Church of Christ, Nancy remembers how her home church, United church of Christ in Highland, Illinois, supported the then-Veterans of the Cross Offering. **"As I gave over the years," she says, "I never dreamt I would be asking for assistance from the Fund as a pastor."**

As a youth, Nancy developed hip dysplasia, a congenital disease that affects about four out of every 1,000 persons. Her condition went undiagnosed until severe arthritis set in. **"I struggled for years with my hip pain until the doctor said there was no alternative but to have both hips replaced," explains Nancy. "Even though the United Church of Christ has excellent insurance, there were [expenses] not entirely covered by insurance."**

The Pension Board's Ministerial Assistance Program provided Nancy with Emergency Grant to help with her out-of-pocket medical costs. Emergency Grants, as well as other forms of Ministerial Assistance, are made possible by the generous contributions of UCC churches and individuals to the Christmas Fund Offering.

Nancy describes the financial assistance she received as **"truly a gift from God. It helped me to get back on my feet financially as well as physically."** Citing **I Corinthians 13:13**, she explains how the Christmas Fund blesses both recipient and giver. **"I believe that God through the Holy Spirit touches our hearts to help others. When we listen to the Holy Spirit, miracles happen not only for me, but for the people that give. The greatest miracle is God's love that we feel for one another."**

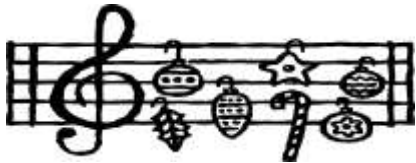
Included in this month's Chronicler is an offering envelope to be used for the 2007 Christmas Fund. Please give as your heart leads you. This special offering will take place on Sunday, December 23rd, 2007.



Spiritual Fellowship

ASAP

Everyone is invited to join the Always Say A Prayer group as they go Christmas Caroling on Sunday, December 9th. We will meet at the church at 2:30 PM with pizza to follow around **5:30 PM at Pop's Pizza.**



Friendship Circle

The annual Friendship Circle Cookie Walk will take place on Sunday, December 2nd directly after church services. Please bring your cookies to donate to the lower auditorium **before church. Everyone's help is greatly appreciated.**

Friendship Circle Cookie Walk



The Friendship Circle's next meeting will be Tuesday, December 11th at 7:00 PM. Maxine Hale will have devotions and the Entertainment Committee will have the evening's program. All members are asked to bring snacks to share.

Christmas Program & Santa's Visit

Please join us for the Sunday School Christmas Program at 6:30 PM on Sunday, December 16th. **Santa will put in a "surprise" visit during the reception.** The UCC group will be our hostess for



Mary Martha Circle

All the ladies of the church are invited to the Christmas luncheon on Thursday, December 6, 2007. The menu provided by some Circle ladies is: turkey, ham, sweet potatoes, slaw, cranberry salad and corn. Other Circle members may bring a vegetable, salad or dessert. Our usual suggestion applies: bring one large or two smaller dishes of food. Maxine Hale will present the program.

Mary Martha Circle has agreed to provide 100 packages of candy for the **foster children's Christmas Party** in Cape Girardeau County. The candy should all be of equal value, a dollar per package! This can be the packages of 6-8 small candy bars, bags of chocolate Santa's, bells, etc. and chocolate covered marshmallow Santa's, etc. **We do not want hard candy or candy canes.** These packages may be bought at **The Dollar Tree, Fred's, the Dollar Store, etc.** and will cost a dollar or a little more.

We need the candy at the luncheon because their party is Saturday, December 8th.



Union of Concerned Christians

We will be serving refreshments after the Sunday School Christmas Program on Sunday, December 16th. Anyone who would like to bring some cookies to share would be appreciated. The UCC will furnish the punch and coffee.

We would encourage all to go Christmas Caroling on Sunday, December 9th. Hope to see everyone at one or both events. If you have any questions call Velma or Bob Roloff at 335-3867. Have a Blessed Christmas.



Memorial Gifts



With Deepest Sympathy

Memorial Fund

In Memory of Lillian Kies
Hulshos Brothers Farm, Inc.
Gary & Clodine Metje
Fern Schlimme
Norma Blattner
Joyce Blattner
Albert Job
Charles Kies

In Loving Memory of
Clarence & Cora Oberbeck
Barbara Oberbeck

Memorial General Fund

In Memory of Lorene Horrell
Marvin & Verna Best, SR

In Memory of Lillian Kies
Marvin & Carolyn Best, JR
Marvin & Verna Best, SR
Ramona Brinkopf
S.G. & Grace Coy
Leonard & Lillian Graden
Helen Owens

In Memory of Walter Rungert
Marvin & Carolyn Best, JR
S.G. & Grace Coy

Council Financial Report

Distributions	October	\$6,984.30
Deposits	October	\$8,951.33
	Interest	\$.88
Total Deposits for October		\$8,952.21
A.G. Edwards Account {Memorial Fund}		
	Interest	\$37.56
Ending Balance	As of 10/31/07	\$10,230.82
Check Book		
Ending Balance	As of 11/19/07	\$25,905.39

Prayer List & Shut-Ins

Prayer List

In case of hospitalization or surgery please notify our church office. When being admitted to a hospital be sure to tell them that you are affiliated with this congregation. * indicates a new request.

Please note: after six months names will be removed from the prayer list, unless an update is made to the church office.

Leo Amelunke; 09-07
Loyd Bollinger
Tom Boston; 07-07
S.G. Coy
James Dickison; 10-07
Michael "Benji" Doerhoff [In Iraq]; 08-07
Ruby Doughty; 10-07
Joan Hope; 10-07
Frankie Hutson; 11-07
Ernest & Ida Mae Jordan
Robert Juergens; 08-07
Frank Maevers; 07-07
Kenny Mehrle
Betty Metcalfe; 07-07
Esther Nussbaum; 10-07
Helen Owens; 11-07
Tonya Pobst; 09-07
Paul Propst; 08-07
Kaylyn Sneathen; 08-07
Susan Spinks; 11-07
*Wesley, Kailey &
Kimberley Spinks; 11-07
Harold Stahlman
Karen Stephens; 05-07
Marjorie Thompson; 06-07
Andrea Truitt; 11-07
LaDonna Wells; 09-07

Shut-Ins

Ratliff Nursing Home
717 N. Sprigg Street
Cape Girardeau, MO 63701

Polly Wilmsmeyer

Fountainbleau Lodge
2001 N. Kingshighway
Cape Girardeau, MO 63701

Alta Proffer

Lutheran Home
2825 Bloomfield Road
Cape Girardeau, MO 63703

Dorothy Cole
Frank Maevers, Sr.
Leonard Moore
Andora Peetz

House Bound

Ruby Doughty
711 South Pacific Street
Cape Girardeau, MO 63703-7836

Esther Nussbaum
181 Gopher Lane
Gordonville, MO 63701-9506

Helen Owens
2237 West Cape Rock Drive
Cape Girardeau, MO 63701-2857

“With everlasting Love I will have compassion on you ...”
 Isaiah 54 : 8

Evangelical United Church of Christ
33 South Ellis Street
Cape Girardeau, Missouri 63703-6201

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Church e-mail: eucc-cape@sbcglobal.net
Church Web Site: evangelicalucc-cape.org

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ETC.



Meal-a-Month for FISH

Stuffing Mix
Cold or Hot Cereal
Canned Fruit Juice
Cranberry Sauce
Canned Yams
Canned Fruit
Canned Chicken or Beef

Thank You!

Cape County Park

We have been blessed again this year with having a group of volunteers assemble our Church Christmas display in Cape County Park North. Please take time this Christmas season to drive thru the park and admire all the hard work each group has put into their displays. This is truly a labor of love.

