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Boulevard News

Nov/Dec, 2011
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Holiday Meals

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Terry Dobbs and Patty Brockmeyer are hard at work coordinating our Thanksgiving meals which will be prepared and delivered on Thanksgiving Day. Plans are to serve about 230 seniors. As in past years, our list of seniors is being provided by Senior Services of central Illinois, the American Red Cross, and the two Springfield hospital's home health care services. Thanksgiving-eve preparations will begin with a meal served to volunteers at 5:30 pm. Cooks will be at work at 7:30 am on Thanksgiving Day with meal packaging starting at 10 am and deliveries beginning at 10:30 am. We are grateful for all of the food donations and very happy to have volunteers from Heartland MCC, the Gold-Wing Riders motorcycle club, and others who will join us in this special outreach on the holiday.

A similar schedule will be followed on Christmas Day. Coordinators for Christmas day deliveries will be shared soon.

Alternative Holiday Fair - 2011

"Bead for Life" is working to eradicate poverty "one bead at a time." They work with women in Uganda in providing programs and education. Visit them at www.beadforlife.org

First Church's annual *Alternative Holiday Fair* is scheduled for Friday evening (4 - 8 pm), December 2 and Saturday, December 3 (7:30 am - 1 pm). Fair trade gifts and products will be provided and sold for *SERRV*, *Ten Thousand Villages*, and a new fair trade partner called *Bead for Life*. In addition, Jodie Ruth will have a Scentsy table and several local peace and justice groups will be present to share literature and information about their work. An evening meal will be served on Friday. Lunch will be served on Saturday. Baked goods will be sold, as well.

Please help us get the word out about this event. Last year we had nearly \$4000 in sales of fair trade gifts. Workers and donations will be needed. Please look for sign-up lists on November 20.

Up-Coming Worship Opportunities

There will be a variety of worship opportunities in November and December. Most will occur at our regular Sunday morning time at 10:30 am. Several other worship experiences will be provided, as well. Here is the list of up-coming services. Please invite your friends and neighbors to join with us.

“Let us come into God’s presence with thanksgiving; and make a joyful noise to God with songs of praise!”
Psalm 95:2

November 20: Sunday before Thanksgiving

Our morning worship, 10:30 am, will explore the idea of *blessing*. The scripture readings for this service are Genesis 32: 22-31 and Matthew 14: 1-21.

Also, on this Sunday, you are invited to the new home of Roger Ruth for lunch followed by “*a service of home/house blessing*.” The lunch will be provided.

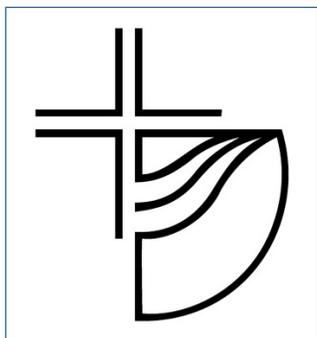
November 27: 1st Sunday of Advent

We begin this Advent season with the Gospel of Luke’s story of Mary’s visit to her cousin, Elizabeth. Please read Luke 1: 5-13 and Luke 1: 26-56. Then think a bit about what you do when something exciting happens to you!

December 4: 2nd Sunday of Advent

We turn to a poet in exile to consider the longing and promise for the day that God’s people are comforted. The poet’s words are found in Isaiah 40.

(Continued on page 4)



Serving the Homeless

The Springfield Overflow Shelter opened downtown on November 1st. There is space to house up to 50 homeless individuals on a nightly basis. First Church of the Brethren is signed up to prepare and serve a meal on the second Thursday of the month, November through March.

Our next meal is scheduled for December 8th. We need to prepare a main dish, side dish, dessert, and to arrange for drinks. If you can assist with this outreach, please sign-up at the church. The meal is delivered to the shelter at 6:30-6:45 pm and served around 7 pm.

News and Notes

Fletcher Farrar, new District Moderator, is inviting individuals and congregations to read and study the Old Testament Book of Daniel in preparation for the 2012 district conference.

A **District Potluck** will be held at the Peoria Church of the Brethren on April 28, 2012. There will be worship, workshops, fellowship and food. Participants are asked to bring a favorite potluck dish to enjoy with others from across the district. Registration will be \$5. More details about this event coming later.

On Earth Peace, our denominational agency that focuses on peacemaking, issued the following statement as a result of the events that happened at the 2011 Church of the Brethren Annual Conference: *"We are troubled by attitudes and actions in the church which exclude persons on the basis of gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, or any other aspect of human identity. We believe God calls the church to welcome all persons into full participation in the life of the faith community."* **Madalyn Metzger**, daughter of Van and Dennis, chairs the On Earth Peace board.

The **pastors of four Harvard Park Neighborhood churches** are meeting regularly for fellowship and discussion of possible shared activities on the first Thursday of each month.

2012 Youth Workcamp Announced

First Church of the Brethren will host one of seven national Church of the Brethren Junior High Work Camps in 2012. The workcamp theme is *"Ready to Listen."* The theme comes from 1 Samuel 3:10, which reads, "Then God came and stood before him, calling out, 'Samuel! Samuel!' Samuel answered, 'Speak, I'm your servant, ready to listen.'"

The workcamp is scheduled for July 11-15, immediately after Annual Conference. A total of about 35 youth and adults will do volunteer work in the community, study together and worship with us on Sunday morning. First Church will assist with connecting the workcampers with local agencies for volunteering and by arranging for recreational and shower opportunities.

Registration for all junior high, senior high, young adult and adult workcamps opens on January 9, 2012 at 7 pm CST.

The Church of the Brethren Workcamp Office will sponsor 25 workcamps in 2012.

*Up-Coming Worship
continued from page 2.*

December 11: 3rd Sunday of Advent

The season of Advent invites us to consider God's justice in the world around us. Read Isaiah 61: 1-4, 8-11 and read again the beginning of Jesus' ministry as told in Luke 4:14-30.

December 18: 4th Sunday of Advent: We will turn our attention to Matthew's version of the birth of Jesus. *Ready for a Surprise* is the title of the

message. The scripture reading is Matthew 1: 18-25.

December 21: "A Longest Night Service"

A cooperative ecumenical service with the churches of the Harvard Park neighborhood. The service will acknowledge the pain and sorrow that comes alive for so many during the joyous Christmas season. We will host at 7 pm.

December 25: worship time to be announced

Reflecting on the Advent Season

I have started thinking about the Advent season. I started, in part, because the Christian calendar tells me that Advent is just around the corner and I need to be planning for our Advent worship. But I am also thinking about my own personal preparations for Advent and for Christmas. What can I be doing to balance my inner and outer preparations? How do I make this a spiritual celebration and not a consumer-driven holiday?

One way I hope to create a balance is by being intentional in what I read. The scriptures are a good place to start. I plan on reading the the Gospel narratives describing Jesus' birth. I have also dusted off Nancy Twigg's 2002 book *Celebrate Simply: Your*

Guide to Simpler, More Meaningful Holidays and Special Occasions. I would be happy to loan this to anyone looking for simple, creative suggestions for the holiday.

I'm also thinking about the people I know who find this a difficult time of year. You have such people in your life: someone who has lost a loved one, someone out of work, and some of our elders and young people who need companionship. But thinking about them may not be enough. Maybe an invitation to coffee or lunch or just taking time to sit and visit would honor the one whose birth we celebrate.

Please share with me your ideas. What plans do you have for this Advent season?

-Pastor Kres



Church of the Brethren

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Community Conscious

A two-hour activity for children of the congregation and community will take place from 3-5 pm on November 20th at the church. Children will be decorating Thanksgiving cards to go to home-bound seniors in the community.