

Our Church News

February 2012

The Way of Discernment

Life is full of decisions whether what activities we should get involved with in school, if we should have surgery, or what we want to put in our will. How do you go about making decisions? Does your faith make a difference in the decisions you make? I recently read "The Way of Discernment, Spiritual Practices for Decision Making" by Elizabeth Liebert. She defines discernment as the Christian practice of seeking God's call in the midst of the decisions that mark one's life. Discernment may well be the single most important practice for Christians as we deal with contemporary dilemmas. Here is a quick outline of what she says we need to consider in making decisions:

Pray

Memory, future decisions sometimes come from past experience.

Intuition (hunches), information already within us, but about which we are not yet aware. Jonas Salk said, "It is always with excitement that I wake up in the morning wondering what my intuition will toss up to me, like gifts from the sea....Intuition will tell the thinking mind where to look next."

Body's Awareness, gut feelings, headaches, frowns, wringing of

hands, and posture can tell us much about which way to go.

Imagination, Jesus relied on our imagination every time he spoke a parable.

Reason, this is your typical pros and cons list.

Religious Affections and Feelings, as we consider a certain choice does it create within us a sense of increased faith/hope/

peace or lessened faith/hope/peace; a feeling of rightness and confidence or feelings of restlessness, discouragement, heaviness, and a sense of wrongness?

Nature's Perspective, spending time in nature observing, God is revealing God's self at every moment through creation.

Finally, give God time to confirm a discerned decision through review and evaluation



Last year of school at Dist. 29, 1967-68: From row: Susan Spitsler, Bruce Spitsler, Kathy Sunneberg Johnson. 2nd row: Deb Sunneberg Habegger, Dean deKoning, Kevin Spitsler. 3rd row: Denise Clark, Burt deKoning, Dan Sunneberg. Back row: Dennis Clark, Leon deKoning, Ed Sunneberg, Mark Sunneberg, Pat Sunneberg. Wilma Droge, teacher.

**A Publication of
Homestead Presbytery**

January 17, 2012 Issue

The Homesteader

A Partnership That Works!
By Rev. Jim McNeal

Small town and rural churches face some growing challenges. Not every situation is the same, but most watch as communities around them shrink and change.

Congregations become smaller and older. Many of their children and children's children go off to college or work, returning only for family visits.

The churches of Trinity Parish, Wymore and Mission Creek (Liberty), face those challenges as part of the longest running partnership in Homestead Presbytery. Through the years, Trinity's congregations have weathered storms typical of any relationship. Yet they continue to serve their local communities with compassion and grace.

There is a quality in those communities, and their "communities of faith," that balances the losses, not in numbers, but in the sharing of lives.

Difficult times and decisions are still ahead for many of Homestead Presbytery's smaller congregations. The parish model may be helpful to some. As partners, the congregations share a



Perhaps in a reverse process, congregations could again take on the ministry of compassion by helping smaller congregations remain vibrant and active in their own communities as long as possible. Ultimate, it is not about "survival" but about sharing in ministry as Homestead Presbytery.

Pastor Nichol, Tekamah First Presbyterian Church, finished the Christmas Season with a revival of the 3 kings played by 3 generations of the Sheets Family - Floyd Sheets, Clay Sheets and Dick Sheets.



Celebrating The Ministry of Homestead Presbytery Congregations

The Homesteader

**Dunbar Presbyterian Church
Celebrates!**

by Pastor Penny Schulz CLP

Our Christmas Eve service was a deeply touching event for all ages. We performed a skit (written by Penny) reliving that glorious night. The Inn Keeper stood outside the church and welcomed everyone in. The lights were out except the candles in the windows. Audience participation was included throughout the service as they witnessed the touching bond between Mary and Jesus. Hearts were moved as angles appeared and lifted up songs of reverence and holiness to the Christ child in his mother's arms. Shepherds graced us with their own shortcomings and humility.

As the skit continued a very moving narration was given, and communion was served first to those participating in the nativity. Congregants had the opportunity to come forward and as they received their communion to spend a moment in deep reflective thought at the vision of the manager scene. After candles were lit and songs sung the skit resumed along with the narration. The focus shifted from Jesus in the manger to Jesus' return and the parables reminding us to be ready because the bridegroom is coming.

As the clock bonged at midnight a breath taking visitor made an appearance. The Service ended with the reminder of Christ's humble beginning, his resurrection and anticipated return. As the music of the Hallelujah Chorus played everyone's spirit was lifted to a wonderful climax and much to think about as they left the church in anticipation for Christ's

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return! What a Glorious way to Celebrate the birth of our Lord!
New Year's Eve Service

We have had the privilege of having the New Year's Eve Party for the entire congregation at our home every year. This year was exceptionally special as people came at 6 and spent a wonderful night in fellowship and food. At 11:50pm the service was started, scripture read, short message and the first verse of *Let Us Break Bread Together*, was sung. At 11:57 the bread was broken together, passed and eaten. The Clock struck midnight. We sang the second verse - *Let us Drink Wine Together*. The wine portion of the sacrament was passed and drank at 12:02am. We saw 2011 go out with the Body of Christ joining together in one of the most sacred traditions, the new covenant between Christ and his church. The first thing in 2012 was together looking forward to the dawning of a new year being cleansed of our sins as we partook of the cup of Christ and the blood that was shed for all. It was a very moving experience and really brought our small congregation together in such a close way, it is hard to describe or put into words. But it is an experience that will NOT soon be forgotten!



Picture courtesy of Beatrice First Presbyterian Church. The congregation was highlighted in the local news paper in a feature called, *The True Meaning of Christmas*

Pawnee County Ministerial Association Lenten Lunch Schedule for 2012

February 22

At the Zion Lutheran Church, Pawnee City
With St. Peter's Lutheran Church
Pastor Bryan Gies leading

February 29

United Presbyterian Church
With Burchard United Methodist Church
Pastors John Henderson leading

March 7

First Christian Church, Pawnee City
Pastor Duane Westing leading

March 14

United Methodist Church, Pawnee City
With United Methodist Church, DuBois
Pastor Allan Gager leading

March 21

At the Steinauer Hall
St. Anthony's Catholic Church serving
Father Scott Courtney leading

March 28

At the Salem United Church of Christ
Pastor Kathy Rahorst leading

April 4

At the Friedens United Church of Christ
Pastor Kenneth Tubbesing leading

*Please remove John Gwinner from your mailing as
he passed away on November 1st, 2011.*

Thank you, Bernise Wallace, his Niece

Praise & Ponder

Many times it's hard to get into the right "mood" for prayer.

I remember when I first went to Sunday School the opening exercises were conducted by Alice Huston. We sang songs and maybe there was little meditation and then she prepared us for prayer before we went to our classes.

I remember one verse we sang went like this: "Thank You for the world so sweet; Thank You for the food we eat; Thank You for the birds that sing; Thank You, God for every thing."

Another was "Father we thank you for the night and for the blessed morning light, for rest and food and loving care and all that makes the day so fair"

Even though I was probably five, six or seven, I remember these because of the adage: "Learned in song, remembered long."

But it was the quiet pre-prayer we said that made me more receptive to listening to her prayer: "We fold our hands that we may be, from all our tasks and cares set free. We close our eyes that we may see, nothing to take our thoughts from thee, we bow our heads as we draw near, the King of Kings our Father dear". By then we were all in reverential silence and ready to listen.

Sometimes I still say that to help me get prepared, or in the mood for prayer.

Pray for the People of South Sudan; Mission Personnel are Safe

At least 150 people, mostly women and children, have been killed after fleeing attacks by fighters from a rival ethnic group over the past few days. Some 6,000 fighters from the Lou Nuer ethnic group have been pursuing members of the Murle community, Presbyterian World Mission and the Presbyterian Church of Sudan are coordinating actions for the safety of mission personnel in the region.

Noteworthy

February joint worship services, 10:00 AM, Presbyterian Church building
 Sunday School, 9:00 AM; Youth Group, Thursdays, 3:40 PM; Celebrate Jesus, Wednesdays, 7:00 PM (sometimes 7:15); Bible Study, Wednesdays, 9:30 AM, Pawnee Village
 February 1, 7:00 AM, Men's Prayer Breakfast, Presbyterian Church
 February 6, Presbyterian Church Pastor Meeting in Dunbar
 February 17, Christian Church Pastor Meeting in NE City
 February 18, Homestead Presbytery meeting, Heritage Presbyterian, Lincoln
 February 24, Catholic Social Services Food Give Away, VFW
 February 26, 2:00 PM, Christian Church Gathering in NE City
 Manor Worship Service, February 26, 3:30 PM, Volunteers needed to lead
 Youth lock in scheduled for March 2 at the Christian Church in Humboldt
 March 7, 7:00 AM, Men's Prayer Breakfast, First Christian Church
 February 5, Souper Bowl of Caring and Youth Soup Lunch after worship

TACKLE HUNGER WITH SOUPER BOWL OF CARING

Souper Bowl of Caring (SBoC) is a national movement of youth working to fight hunger and poverty in their own communities around the time of the Super Bowl football game. In the weeks leading up to or on Super Bowl Sunday, young people take up a collection (many use a soup pot), asking for one dollar or one item of food for people in need. They give 100% of their donation directly to the local hunger-relief charity of their choice. Last year **over 250 Disciples of Christ congregations** participated in Souper Bowl of Caring. That single act **contributed over \$100,000** to the fight against hunger. Nationally, more than 260,000 youth collected over **\$81 million** in dollars and food for local hunger-relief charities. What a tangible way to demonstrate Jesus' love and compassion to our fellow neighbor in need!

CHILD SAVING INSTITUTE HAS A NEW WEBSITE

Please take a moment to check out CSI's new and improved website www.childsaving.org

Thank you to all who attended and donated at the Christian Church Chicken Noodle Dinner

The **Pawnee County Art's Council** will hold it's annual meeting at the Presbyterian Church, Sunday, January 29 beginning at 2 p.m. Entertainment is the McClellan Singing Sisters.

Please remember the **Souper Bowl drive** against hunger with your donations of money or canned goods. Sunday, February 5. All items will go to the local food pantry at the Action Center. A kettle will be at the back of the church.

If you send something for the newsletter, please check the spelling of names. I do not know how to spell everyone's name and I do not proofread every item that is emailed to me. I simply copy and paste. So PLEASE check the spelling of names when you send an item. Thanks

CrossBridge is planning to go on rebuilding mission trips to Joplin, MO and Lake Charles, LA from March 10-17 (this mirrors Lincoln Public Schools spring break). If anyone would like to join us, let me know. Thanks! Vern

Brag Book...



Sierra Gwen Westing, born 17 days late on January 3, 2012 to Lance and Charlotte Westing. She returned to her Kotzebue, Alaska home where it was 36 degrees below zero. It is in the Arctic Circle North of Nome. This is Duane's only grandchild and he has been enjoying Skype like never before!

A SIMPLE AND PROFOUND POEM

Pastor David Bigley (Beatrice) included a poem called *Because One Child is Born* in a recent newsletter:

*More Light than we can learn,
More wealth than we can treasure,
More love than we can earn,
More peace than we can measure,
Because one Child is born.*

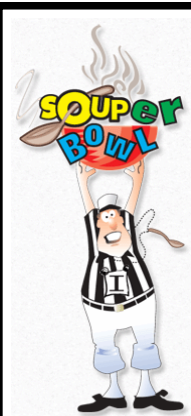


Teagan Michael Turnbull

February Birthdays & Anniversaries

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------|
| 1 Brian Miller | 10 Charlene Chittick |
| 4 Kay Laun | Jana Kramer |
| Zac Hanna | 11 Connor Sweeney |
| 5 Marnie Weddle | Betty Kimes |
| 6 Gerald & Joan Snyder | 13 Larry Spitzer |
| 7 Dan Weddle | 14 John Sweeney |
| 9 Kris Kubik | Leora Hofmann |
| Bill Sauser | 16 Rick Mach |
| Steve Turnbull | 17 Deb Niss |
| Diane Mort Garner | 18 Lynn Curtis |
| | 19 Roger Thiemann |
| | 20 Clifford Spitzer |
| | 22 Mitchell Turnbull |
| | 24 Kurt Benson |
| | 25 Luella Rogers |
| | 27 Joe Phelan |
| | Janice Snyder Potter |
| | 28 Robert Smith |
| | 29 Joan Packett |

*anniversaries in **red**



Super Bowl Soup Lunch

First Sunday in February

Please attend the Souper Bowl Soup lunch Sunday, February 5 in the church basement. Three kinds of soup, plus sandwiches, relish, and dessert. Free will donation. This has been a youth project, but the cooperation of the entire church is wonderful! We couldn't do it with out YOU!

Campfires, Bible Study, great food, Jesus, swimming, devotions, canoeing, prayer, horseback riding, fellowship, hiking, faith stories, Frisbee golf, awesome counselors, almost any sport, making new friends.....YES, it is time to think about getting out of the house this summer and going to one of our church Camps. The cost looks expensive and each child/family will need to pay part of the cost but there are scholarships available locally and from each camp, SO, if you want to go, we will help you find a way.

2012 Kamp Kaleo Schedule

March 2-4 Confirmation/Baptism Retreat

April 27-29 Work Weekend

June 3-8 JrHigh, 6-8 grades

June 10-15 SrHigh, 9-12 grades

June 17-22 Junior Camp, 4-6 grades

June 21-24 Canoe Quest, 7-12 grades

July 1-3 Primary, 2-3 grades, Parents are counselors

July 6-7 LittleKritters, ages 5-7, Parents are counselors

July 15-20 Faithand Fine Arts, 7-12 grades

(It can either be going into or coming out of the grades listed. Parent's choice.)

GLOBAL MISSIONS PRESENTATION

There was a recent story on CNN that raised questions about the excessive amounts of money some charitable organizations spend on fundraising. Some spend over 50% of what they raise on fundraising. I hope that all the members of our congregations are aware that gifts to the ministries of the Disciples of Christ are their best charitable investment. Global Ministries spends 8% of its budget on fund development. Every single dollar given to the Week of Compassion is used in mission. I'd be happy to come to a church Board Meeting, Outreach Committee meeting etc. and present a power point explaining how our church funds global missions.

MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. REMEMBERED

"There can be no deep disappointment where there is not deep love."

- "Take the first step in faith. You don't have to see the whole staircase, just take the first step."
 - "The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy."
 - "No, no, we are not satisfied, and we will not be satisfied until justice rolls down like waters and righteousness like a mighty stream."
- "Where there is injustice for one, there is injustice for all"

Thank you to everyone for all the calls, well wishes, and prayers while I was in the hospital. It is wonderful to live in such a caring community.

I would also like to thank you for all the birthday cards. It was awesome being remembered by so many.

Nadine Moser



2012 Summer Camp Schedule

Dates	Camp	Grades or Age	Event #
5/31/12-6/08/12	Staff Training	Paid Summer Staff	
6/2/12	Volunteer Counselor Training	Volunteer Counselors	
6/3/12-06/16/12	CSI (Camp Staff Intern)—2 Week Camp	Completed 9 th -12 th grades	CSI
WEEK ONE			
6/10/12-6/15/12	Middler Camp	Completed 3 rd -4 th	#12
6/10/12-6/16/12	Senior High Ranch Camp	Completed 9 th -12 th grades	#42R
WEEK TWO			
6/16/12-6/17/12	Family Camp	Intergenerational	52F
6/17/12-6/22/12	Junior Camp	Completed 4 th -6 th grades	#21
6/17/12-6/22/12	Junior Ranch Camp	Completed 4 th -6 th grades	#25R
6/17/12-6/22/12	Junior Mountain Biking Camp	Completed 4 th -6 th grades	#23MB
06/22/12-6/24/12	Explorers	Completed 1 st or 2 nd grade with a parent	#01
WEEK THREE			
6/24/12-6/29/12	Junior High Camp	Completed 6 th -8 th grades	#31
6/24/12-6/29/12	Junior High Ranch Camp	Completed 6 th -8 th grades	#35R
6/24/12-6/29/12	Junior High Adventure Camp	Completed 6 th -8 th grades	#33
WEEK FOUR			
7/1/12-7/7/12	Sr. High Work Camp	Completed 9 th -12 th	#41
WEEK FIVE			
7/8/12-7/13/12	Junior Camp	Completed 4 th -6 th grades	#22
7/8/12-7/13/12	Junior Ranch	Completed 4 th -6 th grades	#26R
7/8/12-7/13/12	Junior Outdoor Living Skills	Completed 4 th -6 th grades	#24
WEEK SIX			
7/15/12-7/18/12	Jr High Night Owls	Completed 6 th -8 th grades	#34NO
7/15/12-7/20/12	Junior High Camp	Completed 6 th -8 th grades	#32
7/15/12-7/20/12	Junior High Ranch Camp	Completed 6 th -8 th grades	#36R
7/15/12-7/20/12	Junior High Mountain Biking Camp	Completed 6 th -8 th grades	#38MB

Summer Camp Brochures will be sent to each church.

Discounts Available

- Early Bird Discount: \$50 off all registrations received by March 15.
- Three and Free Discount: Bring Three friends who have never been to Calvin Crest and you come for free.

Calvin Crest Camp, Conference and Retreat Center

2870 County Road 13

Fremont, NE 68025

(877) 795-7635

www.calvincrest.org



Boo and Jenni are home!

Thanks and Appreciation to:

1. whoever trimmed the bushes around the church
2. Those who decorate the church for the season. The Niss family for the beauty of the sanctuary and to Randy and Kent for putting up the outdoor nativity scene. (we ancient Mariners do especially enjoy it)
3. Duane for the inspirational messages he brings us-and for his visits to the ill or whoever needs a prayer.
4. Those of you contribute to this newsletter and to Sput for keeping it vital.

AND the good coffees on Sundays.

Wilma

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 DEADLINE 20TH OF EACH MONTH

This newsletter printed especially for: