

You are members of the household of God...
with Christ Jesus himself as the Cornerstone." – Ephesians 2.19-20

MARCH 2006

THE CORNERSTONE

USHERS FOR MARCH

Bill Korslin
Don Greenlee
Jeff Austin

COMMUNION PREPARER(S) FOR MARCH

Ann & Carl Almgren

LITURGISTS FOR MARCH

3/05.....Larry McEnaney
3/12.....Paul Rusky
3/19.....Kris Beach
3/26.....Karen Kolls

OPPORTUNITIES FOR...

GREETERS

March 19th

COFFEE HOUR FELLOWSHIP

March 26th
All of April

ALTER FLOWERS

March 5th
March 26th
April 16th

Signup sheets are in the
Narthex – Thanks!

Jottings...

What do Christians do when they are lonely, sorrowful, afraid, ashamed or grief-stricken? What do we do when it is hard to forgive, to love, to be hopeful? What do we do when God seems hidden and the storms of life are raging all around us?

Paul wrote to the Corinthians, "The message about the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing." but, "God's foolishness is wiser than human wisdom." (ICorinthians 1.18, 25)

Countless persons throughout history, who have paused long enough to think about the meaning of the cross, have found light for the dark places of life, hope for tomorrow, healing for their brokenness and strength for everyday.

Why is the cross central to the Christian faith? Because Jesus Christ loved us enough to go to the cross for us and thereby, showed us God's incredible love. In the vastness of the universe and the depth of our being, God's love will never let us go. It is in understanding the truth of the cross – it's suffering, pain and rejections – that we come to know love.

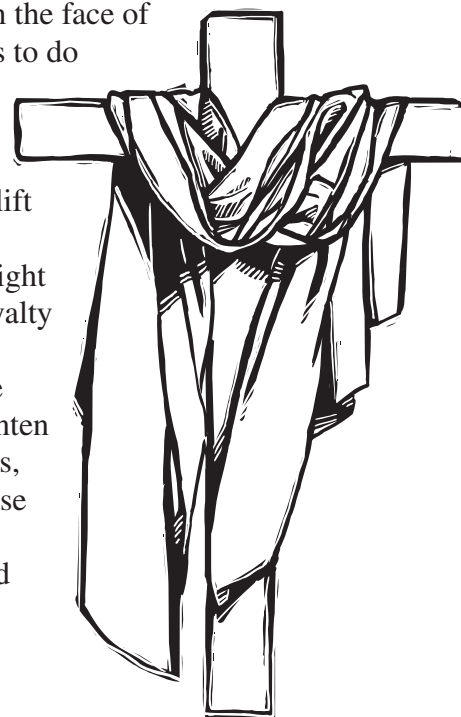
Christ died on the cross not just to inspire us, but to save us. He offered his life not only to move our hearts, but also to do the will of God, to redeem us. This is where the cross makes a difference in our lives and the world. We are able to lift high the cross and live as redeemed persons whose failures are overcome by love, whose sorrows are soothed by hope and whose fears are quieted by strength.

To lift high the cross is to choose the way of Christ in all things and remain faithful. It is to be faithful in the face of rejection or ridicule or sorrow or hardship. It is to do the Christlike thing. We need to lift high the cross in these and all circumstances as a reminder to do what Christ would do.

The true cross bearers, those who choose to lift high the cross in daily life, for they are true followers, they live out everyday life holding tight to Christ's love, faith, confidence, courage, loyalty and example.

I hope and pray that every one of you will be able to join the whole congregation for our Lenten Sermon series, "Lift High The Cross," Sundays, March 5 – April 9 and our drama series, "Whose Cross Is It Anyway?," March 12 – April 9 and Easter Sunrise service. Please invite family and friends and neighbors to join us!

Always,
Pastor Sharon



New Adult Bible Study Has Begun

Anyone is welcome to join! We meet on Sunday morning at **8:30AM**. The study is *The Power of a Praying Parent* by Stormy Ormartian.

Baptized into
the Faith



Kaylee Rose Fredrick

February 26

Daughter of Kim Casteel

The deadline for the April Newsletter is March 19th

Please turn your information in to the mailbox in the church office or E-mail to moonltww@earthlink.net

First United Methodist Church

"Building up the body of Christ for Ministry," Eph. 4:12

Rev. Sharon Bullmer

Church Office: 815-943-5422

Fax: 815-943-1646

E-mail: fumcharvard@sbcglobal.net

Residence: 815-943-6183

Web site: <http://www.gbgm-umc.org/harvardumc>

Office Hours:

9:00 AM - 3:00 PM

Monday - Thursday

Sunday Worship at 9:45 AM

Fellowship at 10:45 AM

Sunday School For All Ages:
8:30 AM

Serving our church and the community with a wide range of educational, worship and personal support activities!



WORSHIP SCHEDULE for LENT

Ash Wednesday March 1st – 7:00pm

Worship will be held at the Presbyterian Church with Rev. Sharon Bullmer giving the sermon. Our combined choir will sing. Communion and ashes will be offered and fellowship will follow the service.

Sunday, March 5

Sermon series *Lift High The Cross* – receive a different cross each week.
"In The Face of Temptation"

Sunday, March 12 • "Lift High The Cross"

Sunday, March 19 • "When You Feel Ashamed"

Sunday, March 26 • "When It Is Hard To Forgive"

Sunday, April 2 • "In The Face Of Death"

Sunday, April 9 • "When God Seems Silent"

Drama Series

"Whose Cross Is it Anyway?" will be presented during Sunday services
March 12 – April 9 and Easter Sunrise service.



Children's Choir Schedule:

Date	Practice	Sing
3-05-06	No Practice	–
3-12-06	8:15-8:45AM	Sing This Song
3-19-06	8:15-8:45AM	–
3-26-06	No Practice	–

Confirmation Schedule:

Date	All Sessions 5:45-7:00PM
March 1	No session due to 8th gr. trip
March 8	Session 6 Jewish Heritage
March 15	Session 7 Church History
March 22	Session 8 Our United Methodist Hymnal
March 29	Spring Break – No session
April 5	Session 9 Easter - Resurrection



Homeless Shelter Personal Care Items Needed

A specially marked basket in our church gathering place will be available to receive donations of personal care items for the homeless. Laundry soap is also needed.

Mary Henning distributes the supplies to those who need them. Thank you.



*We Are Still Saving
Aluminum Cans, Sentry
Receipts, Campbell's
Labels, Stamps and cards*

Save Those Ink Jet Cartridges

They are worth some Cash!
Those old ink jet cartridges (both black & color) from your printer are worth \$2.00 each to our church. Please don't toss them away. Instead, bring them to church and deposit them in a marked box in the Fellowship Hall or leave them in the church office. Each time they total 50 we can mail them in (free shipping) and receive a check made out to First United Methodist Church. Thanks so very much!! We have received several checks and the box is empty and waiting to be filled up again.

Thanks to all who contribute!!

Membership Class

Membership class for adults who wish to join our church, wish to be baptized, or are exploring either of these possibilities are invited to gather on **Sunday, March 12 at Noon** in the Pastor's office. We will meet until 2:30 or 3:00PM.

Please let Pastor Sharon know if you are interested or have questions.

Members are also invited to attend and learn about our church and get to know some new friends.

Food Pantry Donations

Please bring nonperishable food to be given to the Harvard Food Pantry on the first Sunday of every month. A basket is provided in our gathering place to receive your donations.

They are also in need of paper products, baby supplies and personal care items.

In February, our church donated 55 pounds of supplies. A thank you note from Pat Boltz is reprinted below.

Thank you so much for your support at the pantry. In 2005 we helped 4263 families, 13,861 people. We handled over 100,000 pounds of food. We were busy. On Tuesdays, we had 136 workers who spent a total of 3720 1/2 hours volunteering. It cost us over \$2500 a month to help those in need.

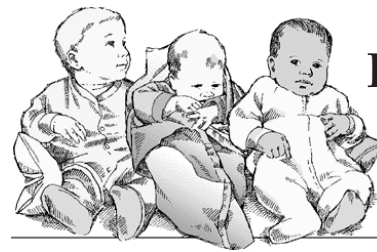
Without you – your prayers, your checks, we would have failed. Thank you for making us successful. What a great time to live in Harvard. We continue to help and the need is high. This week 1/31, we helped 101 families. Keep us in your prayers.

*Pat Boltz, Site Director,
Harvard Food Pantry*

Thank You From GBGM

We received a thank you letter from the General Board of Global Ministries for \$104 we sent to help transport supplies from the Sager-Brown Distribution Center in Louisiana to hurricane victims.

Thank you for your gifts – they make a world of difference!



Births

A new baby has arrived! **Mya Jean**, born **January 23**, is the first born to **Aaron & Kelly Crone**. She weighed 6 pounds and was 18 inches long.

Proud grandparents in our church are **Dick & Gail Crone**.

A Note From Your

Lay Leader



A beggar had been sitting by the side of the road for over 30 years. One day a stranger walked by. "Spare some change?" mumbled the beggar, mechanically holding out his old baseball cap. "I have nothing to give you," replied the stranger. The he asked, "What's that you are sitting on?" "Nothing," replied the beggar "just an old box. I have been sitting on it for as long as I can remember." "Look inside," said the stranger. "No, said the beggar, what is the point? There is nothing in there." "Have a look inside," insisted the stranger. The beggar managed to pry open the lid. With astonishment, disbelief and elation, he saw the box was filled with gold.

Now this story is about gold in the sense of money. What I see is a different gold. The gold each member of this church has inside their box in the form of talents, expertise, knowledge, listening, sharing, nurturing and being a family.

A thank you to all who have looked inside the box and shared your gold. Also, for those of you who are willing to look inside and share your gold. Our gold comes in many different forms.

Gil Whaples, Lay Leader

E A S T E R L I L I E S O R D E R F O R M



It's time to order beautiful lilies for the Sanctuary for Easter! You may order as many as you like in the memory of or honor of loved ones, friends or special occasions.

Please include payment with your order.

Given by _____

In Memory of _____

In Memory of _____

In Memory of _____

In Honor of _____

In Honor of _____

In Honor of _____

Number of Lilies Ordered _____

Amount enclosed _____

**Order
Deadline:
March 13, 2006**

\$8.00
per plant

Make checks payable to First United Methodist Church. Please turn in money and order form in to the church office.

"Consider the lilies, how they grow; they neither toil nor spin. Even Solomon in all his glory was not clothed like one of these. But if God so clothes the grass of the field – how much more will He clothe you."

–Luke 12:27&28

Applying Bible Principles

God uses money in a variety of ways in our lives. One of the most important ways God uses money is to show us the way. Money is one of the things God uses to make helps us make important decisions in life.

If God gives us clear direction which is confirmed by His Word, then God will provide whatever is needed to carry out that direction. God, then expects us to step out in faith even if we cannot know what is ahead.

Living that kind of life requires faith in God and God's promises. It requires taking God at His Word and basing how we live on His Word. It requires trusting Him, even when circumstances appear to be contrary. It requires seeking first His kingdom, and then being confident that He will provide what we need. It requires – as the writer of Hebrews observed – believing that God "...exists and that he rewards those who seek him."

Hudson Taylor, a missionary to China who lived in the 19th century, summed it up beautifully this way: "God's work, done God's way, will never lack God's supply." As it is said in 2 Corinthians 9.8, "God is able to provide you with every blessing in abundance, so that by always having enough of everything, you may share abundantly in every good work."

Be assured that God will not ask us to something that

God confirms by his Word if He does not intend to provide what is necessary for us to obey Him fully. But God looks to us to be willing to trust Him by taking the first step, and then another, and yet another.

What has God been saying to you lately? Has He confirmed that direction through His Word? If so, remember this: You can be confident that as God works in your life, He will use money to show you the way to live.

Thank You From Rev. Hiestand

The following note is from Rev. Ed Hiestand who served our church in 1997 until his retirement in 1999. The "cloud of witness" to which he refers is from Hebrews 12.1.

January 25, 2006

Dear Friends,

I want you to know how much I appreciated the prayers and concern which you offered to support me when I had my recent open heart surgery. I thank God that I came through and now am into the process of healing and gaining strength again.

I look at the card you sent – and see your names – and think "cloud of witness". How else could any of us ever go on without that.

Nancy and I were sustained during the critical moment and still are during healing.

Peace, Ed

Pastor's Note

If you have read the article from District Superintendent, Rev. Arlene Christopherson, I am glad to be able to let you know our church did have Christmas Eve and Christmas Day worship services posted on our lighted bulletin board along the highway, on our phone answering machine and in the paper.

Our congregation has been making efforts to be more outgoing towards newcomers – and each other! Please read Arlene's letter, it is very important. Keep improving your friendliness factor! Remember, to each person you are extending the love of Christ!

Dear Friends in Christ,

During my travels around the annual conference, I have heard a great deal of anxiety from laity and clergy concerned about Bishop Jung's image of "retention vs. recruitment". There is fear that the basic work of pastoral care in the congregation is being shortchanged for the broader goal of church growth.

I've come to believe that pastoral care is at the heart of the matter when it comes to the vitality and health of our congregations. There is a difference between a "retention" focus and the task of membership care.

Two personal experiences in the past three weeks speak clearly to me of our need to claim the priorities of a caring, hospitable church community.

First and foremost on my mind as I write this column is the unexpected death of my father just after the New Year. For the past eight years, my father was chronically ill with limited mobility. A bacterial infection settled in his lungs just after Christmas and he had little reserve left for recovery.

My parents have been members of Plainfield First UMC for 10 years now – transferring their membership from the church of their heritage when they relocated from Chicago to Plainfield in search of accessible housing. My mother reports that it took a little work to carve a place for themselves in this close-knit congregation with customs that were strange to these lifelong members of the Dutch Reformed Church, but in no time friendships were forged and the church community became their second family.

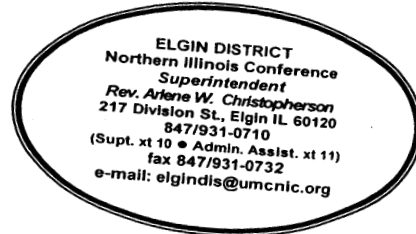
During my father's years of illness both my parents received the support of Stephen Ministers, contact with the pastors, special holiday remembrances, annual cards from the children's Sunday School Class, and just days before my father's death, a prayer shawl knitted by a group in the church that bathed their work in prayer.

As my parents were embraced by their church, they in turn shared their experience with others – inviting medical workers and neighbors to "come and see".

This is the type of recruitment that creates a dynamic, faith-filled community. It is the witness of those who have been touched by care and concern and deeply rooted belief.

On the flip side – just days before my father's hospitalization, on Christmas Eve, Gary and I agreed to take his mother to see family in Freeport. Since this was to be an afternoon visit, our plan was to attend an early evening United Methodist service in

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NEWS

February 2006

one of the many churches we would encounter while heading home.

Much to my embarrassment, an internet search, phone calls and even driving by several church sign boards failed to yield any Christmas Eve worship times. After checking a dozen sites and a local newspaper, we ended up taking our chances just driving past churches as we came through each town on our way home.

Finally we found people going into worship in one of the UM churches we passed. Joining the crowd as strangers sojourning through – we experienced the beauty of Christmas Eve but little warmth at the manger.

The pastor was never identified among the praise group leading worship, no invitation was extended to services the next day, no members greeted the three of us and welcomed us to the service – and while we lingered following worship the only person who talked with us were former parishioners who had recently moved to that community.

I'm proud of our Congregational Development Institute, our Redevelopment Program and the Natural Church Development work many churches are doing – but sometimes it isn't about the latest, greatest techniques – "retention vs. recruitment" is also about common sense, communication and hospitality.

On that note – the connection has offered me and my family wonderful support, prayers and an outpouring of greetings during this time of loss and I am deeply touched and grateful – thank you.

I know we have a heart to care for one another and for the world, I pray that God will grant us the wisdom to show our faith in action in ways that will welcome others.

Shalom.

Rev. Arlene W. Christopherson