



The United Parish

# ECHO



January 2006

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Growing Together in Christ

*“Come now, let us  
reason together,” says  
the Lord. “Though your  
sins are like scarlet, they  
shall be as white as  
snow;”* *Isaiah 1:18a*



← snow

## Pastor's Desktop

There were many people who thought United Parish would have closed by now. We have already had ten years as a unified congregation and are going into our 11<sup>th</sup> year. Yes, the anniversary date is actually sometime in the summer, but with a new calendar year there is typically a focus on looking backward and forward. Have you ever considered that doing so is not very biblical?

Not only is there the startling example of Lot's wife being turned into a pillar of salt because of looking back at the life left behind in Sodom, but there is also the example of Paul, 'forgetting what is behind and pressing on toward the goal.' As far as looking forward, time after time we are reminded that only the Lord knows what lies ahead. We make plans and guesses, but God knows and orders our footsteps. We are admonished in the New Testament, not to say 'we will', but 'if the Lord wills'. Obviously, we need to learn from the past and plan for the future. God expects us to use the rational mind given us and the Bible does give advice for learning, remembering, planning, and hoping. It is only the emphasis and focus on past and future that is discouraged.

So if we aren't to focus on what has been, and not to focus on what is yet to be, what are we supposed to do? As Jesus taught, focus on today. So many times you and I are prone to talk about doing a thing 'someday'. Well, there is no 'someday', only today. The place Christ meets us is today. The time we have to redeem is today. The only thing that we can change is today.

So as you are starting out your new year, and as we as United Parish go together into the new year, let us all focus on today.

Will you respond to God's call in your life today?

Will you support the work of Christ today?

Will you seek the Lord's presence today?

Will you obey God's prompting today?

Did you pray today?

Are you looking for God's activity in the mundane tasks of today?

Do you respond to God's love for the irritating person in front of you today?

How are you showing the gospel in your words and actions today?

Would anyone be able to prove you are following Christ today?

There is a lot to do today. Just like Jesus said, today has enough worries of its own, let tomorrow worry about tomorrow. Because if we simply do all we already

know today that we should – tomorrow will absolutely be a better day. If we seek God, pray, and follow the Lord today, then tomorrow will take care of itself.

God is with you today. Are you with God today?

In Christ's service,  
Pastor Daren

*“Dear God,  
did you mean for giraffes to look like that or was it an accident?  
Norma“ (from a list of 23 questions kids asked God)*

## **Parish Board Meeting**

Parish Board December 14, 2005

The Parish Board met on Dec 14, 2005 at 7pm in the church basement. Officers in attendance were Board president, Ed Timm, treasurer Dawn Boltjes, Financial Secretary Donna Magnus, Lay leader Bev Buller. Linda Kampmann was substituting for secretary LaRee Farnham. Others in attendance were Gert DeZeeuw, Carol Styf, Virginia Fixsen, Marsha Timm and Pastor Daren.

Pastor Daren opened the meeting with prayer. Linda read the November minutes and they were approved as read.

Dawn Boltjes gave the treasurers report and she was instructed to give the \$ 18.00 thanksgiving donation to the Ecumenical Fund. The Sunday offerings are not meeting the monthly expenses and we will have pastor and building insurance due before the first of the year. Donations to help with postages for the Echo have been very generous and this is very much appreciated.

Financial Secretary: We will probably be cashing in our last undesignated CD to help with monthly expenses. A \$9000.00 donation was received for the building fund. It will be put in the money market account.

Dawn presented the budget, it was in narrative form and that is how it will appear in the Annual report. A spread sheet form of the budget will be available for anyone wanting to have one. It was felt that a narrative budget really shows what

the money that is donated each week really provides for and how much work it really helps us accomplish. The budget was discussed and Dawn made a motion to accept the budget and Linda seconded it. The vote carried to present this budget for approval at the annual meeting.

#### Committee reports

PPR. They met and evaluated Pastor and recommend a 3% raise. The board complimented the committee for all their work as well as all the other workers and committees that serve the United Parish.

Trustees. The bottom rain gutters on the NE corner were removed because of problems with ice. There is concern with the east basement door sticking from the icy weather. It is recommended that it not be used in the winter. Also, discussion on putting fire exit signs by the west door so that everyone is aware of that exit.

Christian Ed. The Sunday school is busy practicing for the Christmas program and would be having a practice both Saturday and Sunday, the 17th and 18th of Dec. The program is Dec 18, 2005 at 7pm with the youth group sponsoring an ice cream social following the program.

Worship. The 2006 usher list is ready and will be printed in the January Echo. General discussion was that everyone really appreciated having the organist play and Gert DeZeeuw will be responsible for arranging for an organist each Sunday.

Mission: Linda K reported that the Angel Tree gifts had all been delivered. There were 13 children this year and HyVee gift cards for \$35.00 were purchased for the 5 families from the \$175.00 cash donated. The committee feels it was very successful.

UPW. The December meeting was the annual Christmas party and about 30 ladies enjoyed the wonderful potluck supper, played games, sang carols and exchanged gifts as well as donating many hats and mittens for the Mitten tree.

Building committee. They haven't met since the congregational meeting but they have been busy gathering information and doing research.

The congregational meeting is set for January 29, 2006. Sunday school and church will switch times with church at 10:30am and Sunday school at 9:30am for that Sunday only. Reports for the Annual meeting need to be turned into Linda

Kampmann by Jan15, 2006. It is recommended that a membership list be included in this report.

Christmas worship will be a Candlelight Service on Christmas Eve beginning at 7pm and on Christmas day there will be the regular Sunday worship consisting of mainly singing.

The next parish board meeting will be January 11, 2006 at 7pm. The meeting adjourned at 8:15 pm with those in attendance praying the Lord's Prayer,

Respectfully submitted by  
Linda Kampmann, Temporary Secretary.

### **UPW**

The UPW's annual Christmas potluck was held December 7<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 pm in the church dining room. 31 guests and members enjoyed a delicious meal.

This year invitations were sent to all the women of the church who don't normally attend to monthly meeting. It was so nice to have so many at the potluck and to have Karen-Marie back with us.

Following the meal there were several readings, singing of Christmas Carols and a game was played. The evening ended with a gift exchange.

Linda reminded us of the mitten tree at the Community Center. If you forgot to bring yours feel free to take them down to the center and help decorate the tree. These will be donated when the tree is taken down.

Hostesses: executive committee.

Our next meeting will be on January 4<sup>th</sup>.

Secretary, Bev Buller

*“Dear God,  
in bible times, did they really talk that fancy?  
Jennifer “*

### **2005 Prison Fellowship Angel Tree Report**

This year's Prison Fellowship Angel Tree project was a large success again. We had 13 children this year that we provided gifts and Bibles too. We also col-

lected enough money to purchase 5 \$ 35.00 gift cards at Hy Vee for the care givers. These gifts were delivered already and each family sent their warmest thanks for our caring and sharing of God's love for them in this way. Each care giver I spoke to on the phone ahead of time told me how esp. hard this year had been for them for various reasons. One of the children had been in a very serious accident in the summer and was still in a cast. Others had lost their jobs or were not paid for work they had done and times were just so hard right now. One 14 year boy just wanted a dress shirt to wear to church. No one was real specific on what the child would like, just clothes in general. When the gifts were being delivered one care giver invited me in to see a picture of her granddaughter who we had provided gifts for and she told me her daughter in law was in prison but that she was not a bad person, just very sick and she was dangerous when she was not on her medicine. Another women seemed so relieved when I explained that there was a small gift card in the Christmas card for HyVee. Our small efforts can really ease the burdens for these people. A small effort on our part can be a huge blessing to those receiving it. And providing for people that we don't know is a wonderful way to obey God's plans for us to care for each other and never tire of carrying each other burdens. The United Parish is a congregation full of caring people and this one project is a beautiful example of this. The mission committee thanks you for whatever you did to make this another caring year.

*“Dear God,  
is Reverend Coe a friend of yours, or do you just know him through the business?  
Donny”*

### **BUILDING COMMITTEE** **CONGREGATIONAL MEETING**

A congregational meeting was held Sunday, November 27, 2005. In addition to members of the congregation, committee members present were Ed Timm, Nancy Wiskur, Dennis Lundgren, Rufus DeZeeuw, Dawn Boltjes and Daren Junker.

Ed Timm called the meeting to order. Pastor Daren said a prayer.

Speaker Ed Timm explained that the Building Committee has been researching various possibilities. Nancy Wiskur (committee contact person) gave a synopsis of the the committees previous meetings.

1. Build on the Peace Church lot

2. Renovate the existing Church
3. Purchase land on the north end of town from John Knutson for \$31,000
4. Kurtz' land
5. City lot to the south of Tim Andersons

The committee, through research, was able to eliminate options 2, 3 and 4 and decided on option 5. The congregational meeting was needed due to costs involved in determining suitability of the land.

Denny informed the congregation that we need to rely on the Elkton residents for information on the land site. He said he knew that the ground was filled with gravel and cement chunks. He has spoken to Tim and Mark Anderson about the ground. They said it was once the city storm water collection site. Mark explained that the ground had been filled in for roughly 40 years. Mark also suggested for solid footings we would need to do a test drill.

Denny also talked to Jack Hegerfeld. Jack said that if anyone wanted to build on the land the ideal spot would be south end, east side, close to the alley. Most of this section is more dirt and gravel than cement.

Denny spoke with the City regarding the land. The City informed him that they would need to turn the land over to the Development Corp then that group could deal with it. The City had no idea of the worth of the land.

Denny then mentioned that we would need to bring in a lot of dirt to bring it up to grade.

Janii White asked why we couldn't use the Peace Lot. Rufus DeZeeuw explained that we have not given up on that option. The main reason for looking at the City lot was extra room for parking and possibly a playground.

Linda Kampmann brought up the possibility of asking the City to trade the Peace lot for the City lot. Patty DeZeeuw had an even better idea – trade the current church lot for the City lot.

Ed Timm brought up the idea of a purchase agreement with the City. His rationale was to protect our intentions should the test borings come up positive for building. He wouldn't want church funds to pay for the test then have someone else come in and offer more for the land.

Dick Buller said that when the community center was in the planning stages that the City wouldn't even consider letting them build on that site. They told him it would not be feasible.

Rufus then went back to the test borings and wanted all to know that the results could very well eliminate the City lot as a possible building site. That is the committee's current job – to eliminate possibilities thus leaving workable options.

Various congregational members voice concerns over the cost of the borings and problems making our regular monthly bills was brought up. It was suggested that the building committee think outside the box and consider economical use of space.

It was decided to hold off on any major decisions and to research further into the cost of the borings, whether the City would actually be interested in selling the land and other sites.

Meeting was adjourned.

**SUNDAY SCHOOL CHRISTMAS PROGRAM**  
**THANK YOU**

I want to take this opportunity to publicly thank Sherry Bauman and Melissa Bleeker and all the other Sunday School teachers for giving us a spectacular Christmas program.

I don't know how you did it. I was an actual witness to a couple of your early rehearsals and the final product was so much more than I could have imagined. You all did great! And I am not the only person who feels this way. There have been many, many comments regarding the wonderful program, too many to keep track of.

Thank you so much for all your hard work.

Dawn Boltjes

## Grape Vine

**ECHO.** The sponsoring of postage for the Echo is still going well. Jesus' love is shining through members and non-members alike. Here is a current list:

January: Don & Donna Magnus

February: Don & Norma Krogman, in celebration of their 45<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary on December 25, 2005.

March: Ray & Gen Sportel

April: Virginia Fixsen

May: Dick & Bev Buller

June: Gorden & Marlene Bruening

God bless all of you!! If you would like to sponsor the postage of the Echo you can contact Dawn Boltjes at 548-2051. If you have talked to her and your name isn't on the list (the original list got....eh....misplaced), please let her know.

Recognition needs to go to several people who worked very hard on the **Christmas program**. Thanks to Susan Sudtelgte and Melissa Bleeker for all the work with the music. It was great. Also to LaRee and Georgie for the help with the music cards, Bev Buller for the neat and clean shepherds outfits and Bonnie Junker for whipping up terrific new angel outfit complete with wings, and at the last minute too. And last but certainly not least, big thanks to Sherry Bauman for all the organizing and typing and putting the many many gift bags together for the kids. The list is endless but it is all appreciated. And a big thanks to all the kids who worked so hard and performed so well. What a treat that program was for all who watched it. And the youth provided a great ice cream social afterwards so thanks to them and their parents. Anonymous

**Hy Vee receipt update.** Remember to save your HyVee receipts and turn them into the church. There is a box in the foyer. Rudy has been busy tallying up the receipts and as of the end of December we have over \$9,859.00. Nearly \$10,000 in just a few short months. For every \$100,000.00 we turn in our church will get \$1,000.00, so I would say we are well on our way. Thanks to all who turn in the receipts and a huge thank you to Gert and Rudy DeZeeuw for keeping track of the totals. That is a big job.

Linda

## USHERS AND ACCOLYTES FOR 2006

January	Bud Janssen Jean Janssen	Jack Tolk
February	LeRoy Brown Kate Brown	Chris Bauman
March	Danny Brown Tal Farnham	Abbi Sudtelgte
April	Bruce Kinner Alice Kinner	Michael Junker
May	Nancy Wiskur Sherry Bauman	Nick Tolk
June	Ed Timm Marsha Timm	Trevan Farnham
July	Dennis Lundgren Deanna Lundgren	Justin Sudtelgte
August	Tim Andersons Karla Anderson	Shelby Kampmann
September	Beth Holm Bruce Holm	Taylor White
October	Rufus DeZeeuw Austin DeZeeuw	Johnny Boltjes
November	Kari Thompson Justin Thompson	Trevan Farnham
December	Linda Kampmann Thelma Brandt	Nick Tolk
Funerals	LeRoy Brown Verle Thompson	

