

The Church Crier

September 2008

“United in Christ to Show and Share the Love of God”

St. Peter - Trinity United Church of Christ

Rev. Paul "Chip" Jahn

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From the Pastor: “Flourishing Congregations”

This week a group of us from Trinity and St. Peter (Logan Leibering, Amanda Hockenberry, Katherine Brown, Kim Collignon and Chip) were given new tools to shape our ministry by The Center for Congregations in Evansville. Our churches were invited to one of the best workshops I’ve attended in a long time, “Flourishing Congregations”. It involved a variety of exercises helping churches explore their strengths, believing congregations are more likely to flourish when they focus on their gifts rather than their deficits.

The workshops lead us through a four-step process whose goal was for church representatives to plan a path to new, faithful and engaging ministry. The four steps are:

1. Discovery- What gives life to your congregation?
2. Dream- Imagine you congregation in the future.
3. Design- Identify the ideal future for your congregation.
4. Destiny- Develop strategies for sustaining the ideal into the future.

The day was interesting, inspirational and affirming. It validated many things our congregations have done over the years. We began with what was called an “Appreciative Interview”, which was a discussion of successful programs and events in the attending congregations. It challenged people to think outside of the box when assessing what worked in the past. Here are some things I thought about:

Sri Lanka Peace and Justice: Our congregations have become important leaders in a powerful ministry on the other side of the world because we aren’t the usual big players with their usual baggage, and because we have remained dedicated to the work over the long haul.

Classrooms for Christ: When we first started to dream about adding on the time wasn’t right, but we didn’t forget and give up. We waited until the time was right.

Hurricane Katrina Relief: Partnering first with Winkler Foods gave us the expertise needed to provide real timely help. Partnering with both Lincolnland and Spencer County congregations added needed resources to fill the trucks.

Niger Well and Hunger Relief: It was the personal contact with Angela and Albinawi that lead us into this satisfying and important work. Sending Elisa Peters helped strengthen the ministry at a critical time and allowed us to share our faith in Christ as well as our resources.

Trinity’s School Bags: Tapping local sources of free fabric and our congregations sewing skills has allowed 1000’s of children to attend school that might not have been able to without the simple gifts of paper, pencils, etc. Bags made by Trinity have been distributed to churches all over the I-K Conference to fill, initiating new Church World Service partnerships.

These are just a few of the successes over the years. It was exciting to imagine what the future might hold.



Congregational Concerns

Funerals:

Sunday, September 14 began with a call from Indianapolis informing us Hilda Foertsch has passed away. Hilda was living with her daughters there, but a piece of her heart was always with her friends and church in Lamar. Services were held for Hilda at St. Peter's Thursday, September 19.

During worship at St. Peter's on Sunday, September 14 we got a call from Dwane telling us Wanita Roos had died. We gathered Friday, September 20 at St. Peter's with Wanita's friends and family to celebrate her life of faith and service.

Ed Hopkey's mother, who lived in Iowa died last week. We ask that you keep Ed and his family in your prayers.

Services for Harold Ellis were held at St. Peter's Thursday, September 25. Harold was Brandon Ellis' grandfather. Brandon was a member of the youth programming when he lived in Lamar.

Hospital News:

Saturday, Sept. 6 Kenny Joe Beier and Caleb Perkins were in a car accident. Kenny Joe was admitted to Deaconess Hospital with a frontal brain injury. After almost two weeks in intensive care Kenny has now been transferred to Health South where he will receive therapy to continue his recovery. Please keep both Kenny Joe and his friend Caleb in your prayers.

Frieda Foertsch was taken to St. Mary's Hospital after suffering a couple falls at work and at home. It's thought she had a heart attack and has been moved to Angel River where she will be closer to her daughter as she recovers.



Billy Scheerle was taken to Tell City Hospital with high blood sugar. He is now better and back at home.

Please keep Thelma Hunter in your prayers. She has had a great deal of back pain and is scheduled to have back surgery early next month.

Thank yous:

I don't know if all those who help make the meals after the funeral services know how appreciated their ministries are to friends and family. I hear the thank yous, but you are the ones who deserve them.

The Brooklawn Boys' Holiday World Adventure:

A vanload of Brooklawn boys finally did make it to Holiday World Sunday, Sept. 21. They initially intended to spend the Sunday before (Sept. 14) at the park only to arrive to find people streaming out as the park closed on account of Hurricane Ike. Gayle thought they at least ought to get a meal out of the long trip so arranged to meet them at the Iron Chief in Dale just as the electricity went out. They were served a rapidly cooling buffet by flashlight. After eating they headed back to Louisville only to get stuck on the I-64 bridge over the Ohio for an hour as they waited for a truck that had blown over to be cleared.

We assume the visit to Holiday World on the 21st went without incident.

Thanks to everyone who donated tickets making both adventures possible.

A Wonderful Opportunity in a Global Investment:

As Wall Street institutions are tittering on the edge of financial collapse you maybe wondering where a safe sound investment might be found. Well, we've got a deal for you. After sending off 9 boxes of school supplies to Iraq we began to look into another request forwarded to us from Major Darin Collignon. He said the soldiers would like to hand out soccer balls. We found that we can buy and send a deflated soccer ball to Iraq for \$6.50!!! Take into consideration that it can last up to ten years (that's just about a childhood). Consider that one soccer ball can entertain up to 22 kids a game, that enthuses may play, say 5 times a week. That means there are 57,200 kid play days in each soccer ball. Where are you going to get more for you money than that? The youth group decided they are going to invite the congregations to a chili supper November 9 and take up a freewill offering for soccer balls. Our soccer players are wearing buttons (like the one above) and are taking donations at their games. We are hoping to send hundreds. Soccer balls are hot. Invest now!



Lincolnland Association News:

The Fall Meeting of the Lincolnland Association will be held Sunday, Oct. 19 at 2:30 pm and will be held in Mel and Janice Menke's green barn. The address is 3406 W. 1000 South, Huntingburg, located east off Highway 231 4 miles south of Huntingburg.

The event will include worship, a business meeting to vote on the Continuing Education requirement for authorized ministers (more below) and to celebrate the Foods Resource Bank Harvest. Crops have been planted by member churches in both Spencer and Dubois Counties whose proceeds will be used for hunger relief programs around the world.

Following the meeting, all are invited to the pig roast/carry-in. Drinks and table service will be provided. We are asked to bring a covered dish to share and a lawn chair.

Continuing Education for Authorized Ministers:

Most professionals now days are required by their employers to continue their educations to stay current in their fields. The Lincolnland Committee on Ministry is recommending to the Association and its congregations that we formalize the requirement for ministers as well.

They are recommending every pastor employed by a church get a minimum of three units of continuing education a year. A unit would be a morning, afternoon or evening program.

I believe this is a good idea. We will be voting on this at our Fall Meeting Sunday, Oct. 19. If passed the Committee on Ministry will try to hold pastors accountable, but in the United Church of Christ it is the congregation that has the power to hold ministers accountable. The congregation may want to consider making this a part of our contractual relationship.

Sunday School Kickoff:



St. Peter's Sunday School began its new season of programs with a picnic after worship Sunday, Sept. 7. The young adults cooked hot dogs and hamburgers. The youth group stirred up a game of volleyball. Several of the mothers packed school supplies into boxes, which were sent off to Iraq.

Youth group started Sunday, Sept. 21 with a pizza party. We will be moving to our regular night and time next week, Wednesdays beginning Oct. 1 at 6:30.

Confirmation will also begin Oct. 1 with Dinner at 5:00 and program

at 6:00.

Addresses: Kenny Joe Beier
Health South Rehabilitation Center
4100 Covert Ave.
Evansville, IN 47716

Freida Foertsch
Angel River
5233 Rosebud Ave.
Evansville, IN 47630