

The Keys

St. Peter's United Church of Christ
Grant Park, Illinois



www.stpetersgp.org

Volume 47

December 2011/January 2012

Number 12/1

Our Mission

*We are a family of faith that seeks to walk in the footsteps of Christ.
We seek to know God's will and purpose in our lives.
Our doors are open to all who wish to join our journey.*



.....Never Place a Period where God has placed a Comma.

Gracie Allen; 20th century American comedian

PASTOR'S NOTE

As we approach Christmas, I like to take time to remind myself what the Advent season and Christmas are about. If we listen to the advertisements on the TV and radio, the season is about buying, buying, buying. Black Friday, sales, being told about the products we simply can't live without. Is that what this time of year is about; consumerism? Or, is it about something more?

In the life of the church, the Season of Advent is the beginning of the Christian year. We celebrate Advent during the four Sundays preceding Christmas. Advent means *coming* or *arrival*, a time in which we prepare for the coming of the Christ child. How different this is from the consumerism that surrounds us.

Many of us are familiar with the story of the birth of Christ. We've heard and read the accounts given in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke. But, do we really know the story as told in the Bible? Or, have we heard and seen so much from the secular world that the story of Christ's birth gets diluted by other stories, songs, and movies?

In this season of anticipation, waiting to celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ, the Light of the World, may we take time to reflect on what this season means to us and increase our knowledge and faith.

I pray that you will find peace and meaning in this season of Advent and Christmas.

Merry Christmas!

PASTOR DOUG

BLUE CHRISTMAS SERVICE – SUNDAY, DEC 11TH AT 3:00 PM

As Christmas approaches, we realize that because of life experiences, not all of us are in a festive mood. The Blue Christmas Service is designed especially for those who might be feeling more "blue" than joyful during the holiday season due to the loss of a loved one, illness, divorce, family members who have been deployed, or other experiences. Anyone in such a place is welcome to attend this quiet service of worship and encouragement. Light refreshments will be served after the service in the Conference room.

ANNUAL MEETING – SUNDAY JANUARY 29, 2012

The annual meeting of St. Peter's United Church of Christ will be held Sunday, January 29, 2012 immediately following the worship service. We encourage all church members to attend as we make decisions and vote on issues that will impact the coming year and years in the life of our church.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

- **Sunday, Dec 4th**
Youth Christmas Program – 3:00 pm
- **Sunday, Dec 11th**
Blue Christmas service – 3:00 pm
- **Saturday, Dec 24th**
Christmas Eve services at 7:00 and 10:00 pm. Communion will be celebrated at both services
- **Sunday, Dec 25th**
No Sunday school or worship service today
- **Sunday, Jan 1st**
Sunday school at 9:00 am. Worship at 10:30 am
- **Sunday, Jan 8th**
Taking down the Christmas decorations during worship
- **Sunday, Jan 22nd**
Rev. Dr. Melbalenia D. Evans' Acting Associate Conference Minister for Stewardship and Church Vitality (ACM-SCV), will join us for worship and share her message.
- **Sunday, Jan 29th**
St. Peter's United Church of Christ Annual Meeting

FREE CHRISTMAS DAY DINNER FOR YOU AND YOURS

When: Sunday, Dec 25th, 11:00 am – 1:00 pm
Where: 8 locations including the Community Center, 209 W Dixie Highway, Grant Park. (See flyer on bulletin board for additional locations or call 815 295-1610 (toll free) for additional information
Reservations: Required. Call 815 295-1610 to make a reservation
Menu Turkey, Ham, Stuffing, Mashed Potatoes and Gravy, Cranberry Sauce, Salad, Vegetables, and Pumpkin Pie; catered by LaVilletta Restaurant
Other Info Santa will visit! Entertainment and prizes will be provided
Dine in only. No carry-outs.

FARMERS AND FRIENDS

Farmers and Friends, a support group for men whose spouses have died, will meet at the USA Restaurant in Grant Park at 12:30 pm on:
Wednesday, Dec 21st and Wednesday, Jan 18th

SUB SANDWICH ORDERS

Our Youth Group is having a fund raising event on Sunday, February 5th. They will be selling sub sandwiches. You might want to get a few before the big NFL football game that is being played that day. Due to copyright restrictions, the name of the game can't be printed (it rhymes with "Hooper Mole"). Order forms are enclosed and available in the church office. Orders are due by January 29th.

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION BOARD FUNDRAISING EVENT – 'LIL CAESARS

The Christian Education Board is having the annual 'Lil Caesars fund raising event. Order forms will be available in the near future. Delivery of your order will be Thursday, Feb 16th. Watch for details about when order forms are due and details about picking up your orders on the 16th.

CHARLIE BROWN CHRISTMAS OFFERING & THANKSGIVING FOOD BASKET OFFERING

Donations totaling \$751.00 were received for the Charlie Brown Christmas Offering and the Thanksgiving Food Baskets. Through these donations we were able to provide food baskets for 6 families and gift cards to help parents be able to purchase gifts for 9 children. Thank you!

DECEMBER/JANUARY MISSION GIVING

Our Churches Wider Mission (OCWM) –

Also known as Basic Support, our contributions support God's mission in the Illinois Conference, nationally, and globally. 71% of our contribution stays in Illinois to carry out the mission of the Illinois Conference. Part of that mission is the support of local church pastors and the local churches, helping local churches during the search and call process, and providing intervention teams to help local churches work through times of challenge.

December - Pension Board of the United Church of Christ Christmas Fund

The generous gifts of UCC congregations and individuals to the Christmas Fund enables the Pension Boards' Ministerial Assistance program to provide the following gifts:

- Ministerial Assistance will be provided to approximately 1,600 persons.
- Christmas Gift checks will be sent to approximately 900 persons.
- Monthly pension supplementation is provided to about 450 persons.
- Quarterly health premium supplementation is provided to about 300 families.
- Emergency Grants have been provided to many individuals and families.

January - Elmhurst College

Elmhurst is a college of the United Church of Christ. Simply put, that means that our values and our vision are in line with those of the United Church of Christ. It means that the College is open and welcoming to people of all faiths—and of none. It means that the College encourages students to examine their values and confront moral questions. In short, it means that the College affirms the spiritual basis for living a meaningful and purposeful life. All students take a course in religion and theology, ensuring that they learn about religious traditions and examine their own values.

Elmhurst is one of 19 colleges and universities that have chosen to be listed with the church as a "full member" institution of higher learning. Throughout its history, the UCC has sought to overcome the limitations of denominationalism and parochialism in pursuit of Christ's vision that "they may all be one." The church stands for social justice and religious freedom; values debate and free inquiry; and honors the integrity of the individual conscience. As such, it is a fitting partner for a 21st century liberal arts college.

A FOOD PANTRY OPPORTUNITY

Our food pantry was closed due to lack of people asking for help. Other food pantry options for us to participate in were investigated, but nothing was found that helped local families.

Recently, we learned that our sister churches in Beecher; St. Luke UCC and St. John UCC sponsor a food pantry at St. Luke church. The Community Church in Beecher has started helping with the pantry.

The pantry is open the second Saturday of the month from 9:00 – 11:00 am and currently serves about 35 families from Beecher and Peotone. This pantry is open to all communities, including Grant Park.

The Mission Committee voted at their meeting this past Tuesday, to participate in this food pantry. We will now collect food items for the pantry. In addition, we will accept monetary donations, which are used to purchase fresh items. At this time, please place monetary donations in an envelope, designate it for the food pantry, and place it in the offering plate or on Marcia's desk in the church office. Checks should be made payable to St. Peter's UCC. We look forward, in the future, to helping staff the pantry on the second Saturday of the month. Watch for further announcements.

Items needed for the pantry:

Macaroni & cheese, Pasta, Spaghetti Sauce, Canned pasta, Canned meat, Soup, Tomato Sauce, Stewed Tomatoes, Canned fruit, Beets, Carrots, Canned potatoes, Pork & beans, Jelly/Jam, Cereal, Creamy Peanut butter, Oatmeal, Cookies, Crackers, Pancake mix, Syrup, Sugar free Pudding, Coffee, Tea, Sugar free Jell-O, Boxed Potatoes, Flour, Sugar,

Brown Sugar, Apple Juice, Toilet Paper, Paper Towels, Kleenex, Dish Detergent, Toothpaste, Shampoo, Deodorant, Bar Soap, Ketchup, Mustard, Barbecue Sauce, Pickles, Olives, Mayo, Laundry Detergent, Hamburger Helper type of mixes, and Applesauce **NO** Rice, Peas, Green Beans, Corn or Chicken Noodle Soup.

Monetary donations are always appreciated also. The cash is used to buy perishables. Please make checks payable to St. Peter's UCC

The Food Pantry is open the 2nd Saturday of each month from 9:00 - 11:00 am at St. Luke in Beecher. Anyone is welcome to stop by if they are in need.

THE FUTURE OF THE KEYS, OUR CHURCH NEWSLETTER, IS CHANGING

Many of you enjoy reading the *Keys*, our church newsletter. The newsletter updates you on the news and happenings around church. As with much of printed material, the cost of producing and mailing the newsletter has increased. The annual cost of production and mailing the *Keys* (about 275 copies a month) is about \$2,000, not including Marcia's time for printing, folding, and mailing.

With the advances in communication through the internet and email, we continue to look for ways of being good stewards and reduce our costs. To save money, paper, and time, the Church Council voted to stop the bulk mailing of the *Keys*, beginning with the February 2012 issue. There are several ways to receive the *Keys*. Many people are already receiving the *Keys* via email. The *Keys* can also be viewed on our website, www.stpetersgp.org. We will have copies of the *Keys* available at the church if you would like to pick up a copy. For those people who don't have computer access and can't pick up a copy of the *Keys* at church, a copy will be mailed to them, **upon their request**.

The new avenues of communication and reduced finances have caused many businesses, schools, and people to change how things are done. We also must make changes. The cost of office supplies has increased. Giving to the church continues to be down from last year, currently down about \$12,000 from last year. Sending the *Keys* electronically and posting it on the website has very little cost. Some may like this, others may not, but this is the wave of the future.

If you don't currently receive the *Keys* by email and would like to, please send an email request to stpetersgp@sbcglobal.net. If you don't have computer access and can't pick up a copy of the *Keys* at church, please call the church office (815 465-6191) and request a copy be sent to you. We thank you for your help in saving the church money and creating less waste for the environment through electronic communication.

POINSETTIAS

This year the Worship Committee will be selling poinsettias wrapped in foil to add beauty to our sanctuary for the Christmas season at a special price of **\$8.00**. All proceeds will be donated to the Good Samaritan Fund.

The flowers will be delivered to church and you are free to take your plant home with you following the Christmas Eve Services. Orders for poinsettias will be taken in the Sunday School entry November 27th through December 11th. You can call the church office with your order or mail your order to the church office.

I would like to order _____ poinsettias.

In honor of _____

In memory of _____

Presented by _____

December Birthday List

These birthdays are compiled from church membership records. *Please call to our attention any omissions or corrections*

Bob Dennis	1	Joyce Segert	10	Ron Bleyle	19
Justin Schriefer	1	Ronald Rundquist	11	Holly Anderson	20
Clifford Zimmerman	1	Hollie Dulin	12	Sue Anderson	21
Issac Hamann	2	Michael Reaman	13	Erik Neidlinger	23
John Wolfe	3	Margaret Lietz	14	Noah Hamann	23
Kaleb Frahm	3	Judy Martens	14	Ed Bush	24
Owen Reynolds	3	Scott Bettenhausen	14	Jerry Eckhoff	24
Benson Lamore	4	Luke Hamann	14	Alex Fugate	24
Jason Schneider	4	Wesley Schneider	15	Connie Granger	25
Sue Dillman	5	Michael Wimberly	15	Erin Hamann	25
Michelle Rayburn	5	Viola Langhorst	16	Velma Stanbro	26
Brittany Buttle	5	MaryLou Raymond	16	Douglas Cousin	28
Josie Boicken	8	Peggy Weybright	17	Colleen Schroeder	28
Jim Overbeek	9	Russell Reynolds	17	Clayton McKinstry	30
Brian McKinstry	9	Audrey Lehnert	18	Lori Burrell	31

January Birthday List

These birthdays are compiled from church membership records. *Please call to our attention any omissions or corrections*

Julie Schneider	1	Kelly Lorenz	11	Bonita Heldt	24
Karen Ekhoﬀ	2	Vicki Gawlinski	13	Stanley Schneider Jr.	28
William Loitz	3	Nathan Raloff	14	Steven Jacobson	29
Andrew Bakhaus	3	Donald Claussen	15	Jade Gore	29
Reyna Hammerlund	6	James Thompson	15	Mildred Katz	30
Shirley Koehn	8	James Segert	16	Jeannine Overbeek	30
Kevin Langlois	8	Ian Hamann	16	Laurie Bakhaus	30
Donald Mulderink	8	Lisa Bergmann	17	Dianna Claussen	31
Jennifer Thompson	8	Leroy Buchmeier	18	Branden Lacer	31
Tyler Schroeder	8	Colleen Menke	18		
Karla McMahan	9	Kathy Buttle	18		
Bob Chesterfield	11	Rhonda McKinstry	20		

CHURCH COUNCIL MINUTES – NOVEMBER 22, 2011

The council members of St. Peter's United Church of Christ met on Tuesday, November 22, 2011 at 7:00pm.

Motions were made seconded to accept the secretary's minutes and treasurer's report of October 25, 2011; motions carried.

Unfinished Business

Annual meeting committee reports for the annual meeting are due by Monday, January 2, 2012.

New Business

- A new member is needed to fill a vacancy on the Memorial Committee. Linda Neidlinger has agreed to call possible candidates.
- The Illinois Conference of the UCC is encouraging congregations to enroll in the IGS Energy plan. Their hope is for a greater savings if more congregations enroll. We would currently benefit from an 11% gas savings and a 15% electric savings. After much discussion, a motion was made by Larry Ohm and seconded by Larry Voigt to enroll in the IGS Energy Plan; motion carried.
- The annual meeting will be held on Sunday, January 29th following worship.
- It was agreed to drop the bulk postage rate which expires at the end of December. Newsletters will be sent via email unless members notify the office that they wish to continue receiving them via mail.

Pastor's Report

Pastor Doug submitted a written report for the month of October. He informed us that on December 11th at 3:00 pm he will be holding a "Blue Christmas" service.

Committee Reports

- Christian Education: Little Cesar's fundraiser will be held after the first of the year;
- I-Tune gift cards were sent to college students in lieu of care packages.
- Mission: Food baskets were delivered to six local families.
- Worship: Hanging of the Greens is scheduled for 11-27-11.

The next council meeting is scheduled for December 27, 2011 at 7:00 pm.

The meeting was closed with the Lord's Prayer.

Respectfully Submitted, Michelle Claussen

MISSION BOARD MINUTES – NOVEMBER 8, 2011

Items of Discussion:

■ **Salvation Army Dates for Next Year**

The dates for serving lunch at the Salvation Army next year will be:

January 21, 2012

March 17, 2012

May 19, 2012

July 21, 2012

September 15, 2012

November 17, 2012

■ **Thanksgiving Baskets**

- Kim Lorenz would like her children to participate in this activity as a community service project. They will be bringing fruit for the baskets.
- We will be packing six baskets for families plus one for an individual
- Each child will receive a \$50.00 gift card from Target. There are 11 children.
- Each basket will have a \$25.00 gift card from Berkots to purchase meat.
- Pam Lawrence and Audrey Lehnert will shop for groceries for the food baskets on November 18.
- Baskets will be packed on November 19 at 9:00am.

■ **Beecher Food Pantry**

St. Luke United Church of Christ has a food pantry. It is open on the second Saturday of the month from 9:00-11:00am. People from Grant Park are welcome to use this food pantry. We will include that information with our Thanksgiving baskets. We will also start to collect food for the pantry and check into other ways to help – such as providing people power and cash donations.

■ **Budget**

The missions committee reviewed the budget and made suggested changes for next year. The total missions spending will stay the same for next year with some slight changes in a few areas.

Respectfully submitted,
LaDonna Swanson

TURKEY SUPPER 2011

This year's turkey supper was another great success. We served in the neighborhood of 800 people and made \$4,669.94, including the basket money. Thank you for your help and support. A number of people have asked for St. Peter's sweet potato recipe. Here it is!

St. Peter's UCC Turkey Supper Sweet Potatoes/Recipe from the collection of Kay Hamann

Sweet Potato Casserole

Beat together:

6 cups cooked sweet potatoes

½ cup milk

3 eggs

½ cup butter

½ cup sugar

1 tsp. vanilla

Pour into greased baking dish.

Combine:

1 ½ cups firmly packed brown sugar

½ cup flour

½ cup butter

Spread evenly over sweet potato mixture.

Bake uncovered in 350 oven for 35-40 minutes.

Thank You

Pilgrim Park thanks St. Peter's for the \$149.50 donation toward their pool replacement project.

Thank you for the study Bible given to me at my confirmation. I will use it for my years to come.

Kyle Jacobson

We would like to thank you for your many cards, your kind words, your generous gifts and support during Wendell's illness and passing. We have been truly blessed by you.

Ann Smith and Family

**Committee reports for the annual meeting are due by Monday,
January 2, 2012.**

God has told you, O mortal, what is good: and what does God require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?

–Micah 6:8

Prayer Concerns

Bob Hamann, Kevin Leitz, Jeff Jones, Byron Heldt, Jen De Young (Cousin of Charlie Moore and Colleen Martin), Ben Worsham (3 year old friend of Natalie Lacer), Kevin Buhr (son of Donald and Beulah Buhr), Nate Ekhoﬀ (nephew of Mark Ekhoﬀ), Bob Smith (cousin of Karen Ekhoﬀ), Arlene Armstrong (sister of Judy Lange), Terri Jensen (sister of Tom Barrera),

Arloa Hammerlund, (mother of Michael Hammelund), and all of God’s children seeking comfort, support, peace, and love.

Joys

- Congratulations on another successful turkey supper.

Concerns

- The family and friends of Wendell Smith who passed away on November 1st.

PLEASE LET US KNOW IF YOU’RE IN THE HOSPITAL OR FACING OTHER CHALLENGES

At times, **you** learn news about members and friends of our congregation and our wider church family that Pastor Doug and the church office are not aware of. Please do not hesitate to notify us about this information. We aren’t always notified when church members are in the hospital, even if you ask hospital staff to contact us. Thank you!

CHRISTMAS MAIL BOX

Our Confirmation Class invites you to bring the Christmas Cards you send to your friends at St. Peter’s and ‘mail’ them here. The young people will sort them alphabetically in the slotted box in the Sunday School entry. All we ask is that you donate an amount equal to your normal postage costs. The money will go to the confirmation class.

2012 ENVELOPES

Envelopes for 2012 are available in the Sunday School entry on December 4th. Please speak with Bev Junker if you do not find a set with your name.

ST. PETER'S UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

Staff

Rev. Doug Zimmerman, Pastor

Marcia Langlois, Office Administrator

Ann Smith, Sr. Choir Director

Beverly Junker, Financial Secretary

Kathy Ekhoﬀ, Jr. Choir Director

Marge Myers, Custodian

Judy Schneider, Organist

Delores Caton, Organist

Dornita Hamann, Youth Advisor

Church Council

Larry Hamann, President

Linda Neidlinger, Vice President

Rhonda McKinstry

Michelle Claussen, Secretary

Stanley Schneider

Larry Voigt, Treasurer

LaDonna Swanson

Larry Ohm, Assistant Treasurer

John Wolfe

Pastoral Relations Committee

Judy Lange

Audrey Lehnert

Heather Ohm

Mardele Engleking

Eric Frahm



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Gracie Allen; 20th century American comedian

**St. Peter's United Church of Christ
310 North Meadow Street
Grant Park, Illinois 60940**

Church/Parsonage – (815) 465-6191

Pastor's Cell – (815) 342-8927

E-Mail: stpetersgp@sbcglobal.net

Website: www.stpetersgp.org

Facebook: St. Peter's UCC Grant Park

Sunday School – 9:00 am

Adult Sunday School 9:05 am

Worship Service – 10:30 am

The Rev. Doug Zimmerman

Pastor

Marcia Langlois, Editor and

Office Administrator