

E-CHIMES

NEWSLETTER OF THE DIXBORO UNITED METHODIST CHURCH JANUARY 2009

“FINDING THE RIGHT CHURCH”

An Open Letter from Rev. John Park

Dixboro Church is the right church for me. Driving up Short Street in the spring of 2006, I saw our church for the first time and Madeline said, out loud, if ever there was ‘John Park’ church, this is it!” She was right.

So, having said the obvious, I remind you that “I didn’t choose Dixboro – Bishop Keaton made the choice for me,” and I affirm its goodness every day. Still, for over 35 years this preacher has been involved with helping hundreds of new people decide to join a new-to-them church, including more than 40 at Dixboro.

I began to list a few steps I would recommend in looking for the right church - steps beyond just visiting the worship service.

- Tour the building. See if everything is functional. Look for signs of caring. Look for signs of life and usage of the facility. Check for attractive bulletin boards and maintained equipment. Some churches are preserved like museums, but you are looking for regular use of the facility by people who care. Observe the general condition of the building and grounds.
- Attend at least six regular worship services. Any one or two services can be “uppers” or “downers.” Special services (like Christmas or choir programs) don’t count. What is the “normal” service like? Feel the general tone. Listen to see if the personality of the congregation is likable, fits, and still leaves room for growth.
- Set up some time to talk to the pastor. Don’t wait for the pastor to call you; some do this well, some don’t. Take charge and ask questions. Be active in talking about “Where is God at work?”
- Look for clues to the long term questions like “Is this a place I’ll want to be in twenty years?” “Are the people here going to be my ‘brothers and sisters’ in Christ?”
- Introduce yourself to people (on Sunday) in the hallways and fellowship hall. Find out what you want to know, rather than waiting for others to coincidentally think to tell you. Take charge in finding your answers.
- Seek out people your age and ask why they attend the church, what they are doing in ministry, and how you can join in.
- Get a copy of the budget and look it over. Money signals priorities. Our tithes and offerings go to God’s work – look for how we do it.
- What is the outreach program of the church? Is the congregation ingrown, self-centered, narrow visioned? Are we broadening the circle of God’s love?

- Observe how children are treated by adults in the services and in the hallways. Kids are the key! Are they made to feel welcome today? They are not “the church of tomorrow.” Children are what Jesus asked us all to be – God’s children.
- Try it on for size, are you comfortable and still challenged? You’ll know when the mix is right! It’s like buying a new pair of shoes: You want them and us to feel good but also able to take you someplace with and for God.

JOHN PARK ON VACATION

By John Park, Preacher

I will be on vacation from January 13 through January 29, 2009. I will be checking my cell phone messages once a day, so please call this number in an emergency.

Our church and worship services will be covered by Rev. Cathy Freeman, our Pastoral Assistant and Deacon, while I am away. Please feel free to contact her at any time. The church office is open Monday-Friday from 9:00 to noon at 665-5632.

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION REPORT

By Stephanie Cloutier, Christian Education Director

We have been busy in Sunday School this Fall.... our Junior High class has been busy making fleece blankets to help comfort children during emergencies, our younger kids were busy preparing for welcoming Jesus during Advent and all the kids worked really hard preparing to sing for the Bishop!! Wasn't it nice to hear them all sing together!?! I hope you all enjoyed the Christmas Pageant during the 5pm Family Service Christmas Eve...

This winter we have fun activities planned for our kids and youth...a trip to Spring Hill, Pennies for Peace (Inspired by the book Three Cups of Tea) and preparing for the Sunrise Service on Easter.

On that note... I'm looking for some individuals who are interested in helping to make our Christian Education experience more meaningful for our kids, youth, and adults too! I'm working on forming a Christian Education Committee made up of our teachers and congregation members... I have asked some of you to participate and am hoping more will step forward... please see me if you have questions or want to be a part of this exciting ministry. I will continue asking and hope you say Yes!!

I'm also starting to prepare for a mission trip for you high schoolers this summer... Mt. T.O.P. or somewhere else and need some adult volunteers to participate. This trip is only possible if we have enough adults to go, so please consider spending some quality time with our youth this summer.

We are still collecting used cell phones and empty laser and ink jet cartridges!!! Please leave them in the education mailbox or on the table in the office. Thanks!! This is an easy fundraiser for us and we appreciate any donations!

MISSIONS REPORT

By Roberta King, Missions Chair

Thank you. Due to your generosity, 217 pounds of food were given to the Food Gatherers so far this month.

Thank you again. An entire truckload of gifts went to the Methodist Children's Village in Redford. How awesome is the generosity of Dixboro.

The Imagine Missions fund has sent support to a family of ten in Mali. We have sent \$1,000 to Haiti and \$1,000 to our partner church in Liberia for the purchase of a generator. And this year isn't over yet.

The Missions Committee has endorsed a new project for 2009-2010. The project is the building, equipment and operation of the Prince A. Taylor Vocational School in Liberia. This school will retrain the child soldiers and given them a useful skill. The project has a cost of \$150,000. It involves many churches over a period of at least two years. The Rev. Nelly Wright of the Liberian Methodist Church is directing the project.

Dixboro Church will have a fund-raiser for this school. The fund-raiser will be January 26, 2009 at Bob Evans Restaurant on Carpenter from 5-7 pm. Bob Evans will donate 15% of your bill to this fund.

The Dixboro UMC Imagines great things for 2009. Please let us know what you can imagine for the year ahead.

NEWS AND NOTES FROM THE NURTURE COMMITTEE

By Madeline Kingston-Park, Nurture Chair

Our thanks to Marilyn Pobanz who organized our bowling night and to all who came on November 15 to make our outing such a fun success. We had a ball (pun intended). Of course, we had to eat afterward and we thank the Freemans for their hospitality and the bakers who rovided the goodies after all that "exercise". Having so much fun, there will be, by popular demand, another night of bowling at Colonial Lanes. Mark your calendars now for Saturday, March 21. Randy (Mr. 300) and Patty Burns will make the arrangements for us.

We have also decided to give a small gift from the church to new members upon joining. In order to fund this project, we will sponsor a used book sale during the coffee hour on February 9, 2009. If you would like to help us out, you may bring gently used books, CDs, DVDs and record albums to Room 4 as soon as you read this article. (No textbooks please.)

Thank you so much for your support. It is our pleasure to work together to provide ways of nurturing our congregation. We meet the third Wednesday of each month at 6:30 pm. See you next time on January 21.

COMMUNICATIONS TEAM

By Cathy Freeman

The Communications Task Force has completed its work. This group brainstormed ways to improve internal and external communications and then prioritized the ideas. The top four priorities are:

1. Create a "new member" packet of information
2. Use common software for finances, members, giving, communications, birthdays, committees, etc.
3. Create an informational pamphlet – groups defined, history, people, rental costs etc. (updated regularly)

4. Create an annual schedule for events for the church sign and guidelines about what kind of information should be advertised on the sign

The Task Force decided that a permanent Communications Committee should be established to oversee the implementation of these and other priorities. This group should meet quarterly or as needed. I will be contacting people to join for this committee.

The Task Force also recommended that the work for each of the priorities should be done by Task Forces – groups that are set up to work specifically on a task and then disband. The Nurture Committee has already agreed to take on the new member packet and the informational pamphlet.

I will be recruiting people for a Task Force to take a closer look at our current Membership Plus software to see if it can be used in more ways to streamline our work and communications. We may also elect to look at other options to meet the needs of the church.

The Task Force also decided that the Communications Team should discuss how to approach the use of the church sign and establish a Task Force as part of its first duties.

WOMEN OF DIXBORO

By Phylis Brandon, Co-Chair

Thank you to all the women who helped provide Thanksgiving dinners for two families nominated by the Salvation Army. We collected all the fixings so these two families could prepare a traditional Thanksgiving meal.

The January meeting of the Women of Dixboro will be Thursday, January 8 at 7:00 pm. Please plan to attend as we plan activities for 2009. We would like to have a good mixture of mission projects, social activities, and educational events so we need your ideas.

ARDITH KING'S BOOK

By Susan Engle

Ardith A. King's new book of the history of Dixboro Church, 1857-2006, is currently in my hands. That is, I have the digital version that Elaine Sanford typed for computer and a copy of Ardith's original typewritten pages. I have taken on the task of proofreading, formatting, and minimally editing the book, with Ardith's blessing. It is a very detailed historical record which probably will be about 400 pages, sized about 8.5 x 11 inches. The first part was written by former pastor Rev. Ronald A. Brunger who served until 1940. Ardith King's part continues from 1940 through the term of Rev. John Clair Ferris in 2006, written in much the same style begun by Rev. Brunger.

I am thoroughly "hooked" by what I am reading and doing, and I look forward to the final result! I am naturally very thorough with details, so it will be in good shape when the digital copy is ready for publication. My part will be finished sooner rather than later, hopefully well before summer weather returns. If anyone has suggestions for a publisher, please talk with Ardith and me. One local publisher said he would do a minimum of 100 books, but Ardith does not have a price. I am investigating possible publication by "www.Lulu.com" which will produce a single copy (or thousands) at what seems a very reasonable rate per book, with either a soft cover or hard cover. (I am following Lulu's suggestions for font and page formatting as well as referring to various sources for punctuation, capitalization, and abbreviations.) Wish us well in finishing this monumental, labor-of-love project, of which at least three of us have been a part (Ardith, Elaine, and myself).

AN ALTERNATIVE SPRING BREAK

From Newscope, December 2008

“The phenomenon of “alternative spring break” has had students in recent years trading beach towels for hammers, paintbrushes and a servant’s spirit. The idea is to spend the week doing volunteer work instead of vacationing. The result is a much more fulfilling week and an experience that stays with them for the rest of their lives.

With this growing trend in mind, the Society of St. Andrew’s mission outreach program, Harvest of Hope, is offering the opportunity for college students to use their time off to learn about hunger and actually do something about it as well. The Society of St. Andrew (UM Advance #801600) feeds our nation’s hungry with excess produce gleaned by volunteers from fields and orchards and distributed to critical feeding agencies. When they are not lending their hands to gleaning food for the hungry, participants will be studying about hunger and poverty issues in their neighborhoods, this country and the world. A more in-depth conversation about hunger issues can be expected and fueled through these socially conscious students.

“I love the idea,” said Zach Baker, a former Harvest of Hope summer intern who has already signed up for the Harvest of Hope Alternative Spring Break. “This gives college kids, especially kids like me who aren’t big fans of the party scene, a chance to do something for spring break that’s fun and a good way to worship God.” Brandon Robbins, who will be the worship leader for the event and is the youth leader at Chester UMC in Virginia, said he hopes that as a result of this experience the participants will “have a more deeply embedded passion to end hunger; understanding how God is working through this (SoSA) ministry and how it’s affecting the lives of people.”

The Harvest of Hope Alternative Spring Break will be held Mar. 8-14 in Jacksonville, Fla. The Urban Mission Experience, whose goal is to make a positive impact on the lives of the homeless and low-income in Jacksonville, will host the spring breakers, providing dorm-style facilities and some meals. This beautiful location is also conveniently situated close to three popular beaches, which students will have the opportunity to take advantage of at the end of the week. Participants will be responsible for their own travel to the facility. The deadline for applying and making a deposit to reserve a spot is Jan. 30. However, space will be limited so applications should be sent as soon as possible. Tuition is \$150 and scholarships are available as needed. For more information, visit http://www.endhunger.org/harvest_of_hope or contact Sarah Nagy at sosahoh@endhunger.org or by calling 800-333-4597.”

ELE’S PLACE

A Healing Center for Grieving Children

Ele’s Place is a healing center for grieving children that was launched in Ann Arbor in May 2007. For over 17 years, we have been providing grief support to children and families throughout Mid-Michigan who have experienced the death of a family member or close friend.

Our primary program is ongoing, peer support groups for grieving children ages 3–18 and their parent(s) or guardian(s). These weekly groups provide creative activities that help children to share their feelings and memories with others their age who have experienced a similar loss, helping them learn to cope and begin to heal. There is no charge to families for our services.

Once a month we have a *Tour of the Heart*, an opportunity to learn more about our programs and the impact we make on grieving children. If you have questions or are interested in participating in our program, please call us at (734) 929-6640.

FINANCIAL INFORMATION

By Ingrid Sheldon, Treasurer

	November	YTD 2008	Budget	Difference	YTD Actual as % of Budget	YTD 2007
REVENUE						
General Giving	17,778.74	169,115.54	227,600.00	-58,484.46	0.74	161,033.95
Special Collections, Designations, Other	3,787.82	52,524.37				31,773.30
TOTAL REVENUE	21,566.56	221,639.91	227,600.00			192,807.25
EXPENSE:						
Conference/District Related Apportionments	4,238.20	38,911.80	42,700.00	3,788.20	91.13%	38,751.70
Church Related						
Missions including special collections	1,265.00	5,359.00	2,000.00	0.00		4,926.25
Payroll	3,836.22	38,433.92	45,200.00	6,766.08	85.03%	32,439.13
General church operations	3,088.59	40,408.32	48,297.00	7,888.68	83.67%	36,672.12
Committee	133.54	5,179.38	6,000.00	820.62	86.32%	4,504.06
Scholarship, PHP	0.00	2,759.46	0.00	0.00		3,519.87
Special Project:	2,183.64	38,739.38	0.00	0.00		16,083.57
Total Pastor related expense	6,046.00	67,009.49	77,400.00	10,390.51	86.58%	64,028.06
Total Parsonage Related	192.96	3,714.33	6,225.00	2,510.67	59.67%	3,256.20
Total Schoolhouse expense	0.00	505.03	1,975.00	1,469.97	25.57%	1,441.78
TOTAL EXPENSE:	20,984.15	241,020.11	229,797.00	33,634.73	104.88%	205,622.74
CHURCH RELATED INCOME (LOSS)	582.41	-19,380.20	-2,197.00			-12,815.49

2009 STEWARDSHIP CAMPAIGN

By Tom Little, Finance Committee Chair

Blessed Be the Lord God (Luke 1:68)

Thank you once again to our Dixboro family for your attention to our Stewardship Campaign. As of December 15, we received 58 pledges for a total commitment of \$131,755. This meets 65% of our goal of 90 pledges and 75% of our goal of \$175,275.

The average pledge is \$2272 – an amazing display of generosity.

If you have not yet made a pledge, there is still time. We will have a commitment time in January so please get your pledge in soon!

UPCOMING EVENTS

	Jan 13-29		John Park on Vacation
Wed	Jan 7	6:30 pm	Worship Committee
Thursday	Jan 8	7:00 pm	Women of Dixboro
Saturday	Jan 10	8:00 am	Men's Breakfast in Fellowship Hall
Saturday	Jan 10	1:00 pm	Fellowship Hall rented until 5pm
Sunday	Jan 11	12:00	Shelter Meal Ministry
			CHIMES Deadline for February Issue
Monday	Jan 12	6:30 pm	Lay Leadership Committee
Tuesday	Jan 13	7:00 pm	Missions Committee
Wed	Jan 14	7:30 pm	Trustees Committee
Monday	Jan 19	1:00 pm	United Methodist Women
Tuesday	Jan 20	6:30 pm	Staff Parish Relations Committee
Wed	Jan 21	6:30 pm	Nurture Committee
Tuesday	Jan 26	5:00 pm	Missions Fund-Raiser at Bob Evans (5-7pm)

RECURRING EVENTS

Mondays	10:00 am	Northeast Seniors Exercise Class
Tuesdays	4:30 pm	Dance Class in Fellowship Hall
Tuesdays	7:30 pm	Joyful Noise Band Practice
Wednesdays	10:00 am	Northeast Seniors Exercise Class
Wednesdays	7:30 pm	Chancel Choir Practice
Thursdays	7:00 am	Men's Breakfast at Flim Flam Restaurant
Thursdays	10:00 am	Bible Study in Small Conference Room
Fridays	10:00 am	Northeast Seniors Exercise Class
Saturdays	8:30 am	Prayer/Meditation Group
Sundays	8:00 am	Service of Word and Table Worship Service
Sundays	9:00 am	Contemporary Worship Service
Sundays	10:00 am	Sunday School Classes
Sundays	11:00 am	Traditional Worship Service
First Sunday		Holy Communion celebrated
Second Sunday		Shelter Meal Ministry
Second Sunday		Chimes articles due for next issue
Third Sunday		Bring canned goods to worship
Third Monday	1:00 pm	United Methodist Women
Second Tuesday	7:00 pm	Missions Committee
Third Tuesday	6:30 pm	Staff/Parish Relations Committee
Second Wednesday	7:30 pm	Trustees Committee
Third Wednesday	6:30 pm	Nurture Committee
Second Thursday	7:00 pm	Women of Dixboro
Third Thursday	7:00 pm	Finance Committee
Second Saturday	8:00 am	Men's Club in Fellowship Hall

JANUARY LECTIONARY READINGS

Sunday, January 4 Epiphany	Isaiah 60:1-6 Psalm 72:1-7, 10-14 Ephesians 3:1-12 Matthew 2:1-12	Sunday, January 11 Baptism of the Lord	Genesis 1:1-5 Psalm 29 Acts 19:1-7 Mark 1:4-11
Sunday, January 18 Human Relations Day	1 Samuel 3:1-10 Psalm 138:1-6, 13-18 1 Corinthians 6:12-20 John 1:43-51	Sunday, January 25 Ecumenical Sunday	Jonah 3:1-5, 10 Psalm 62:5-12 1 Corinthians 7:29-31 Mark 1:14-20

The belief in Prayer Angels is very real to me. I want to thank all of you who sent prayers, cards, letters, and well wishes to me while I was suffering from my cancer and going through treatment. I have sent prayers to you everyday during this process.

I have received the best medical care available both in Las Vegas, NV, and Ann Arbor, MI, at the UM Cancer Center. I am among the very lucky ones who have gone into remission due to the treatment. I credit my great doctors and my Prayer Angels to these miraculous results.

Many thanks to all of you. You will be in my daily prayers forever.

Peace, Joy, Happiness, and Alleluias

Faith Schweiss