

December 5-6, 2009

WELCOME

Welcome to St. Peter's United Church of Christ. If you have no church home, we hope you will consider St. Peter's UCC as that place. Whether guest or member, please make your presence known by signing the Friendship Register in the pews and greet those near you.

Our prayer chapel is open following this service and daily from 9-4 for personal meditation and communion. It is located off the second floor elevator. Sunday school for children ages 4 to Grade 6 begins after the Children's moment. A class for youth grades 7-12 begins at 10:00 underneath the sanctuary. Adult Sunday school is 9 AM on Sundays. Child care is offered during the 10 AM service.

- Sunday 9:00 Adult Bible study (lectionary-based) in atrium meeting room
9:15-9:45 Rainbow Bell practice in 3rd floor Sun. school classroom (ages 3-grade 2)
10:00 Worship & Sunday school (pre-K–grade 6 after children's time, Grades 7-12 under sanctuary at 10)
11:15-1:00 Confirmation

12:00-6:00 St. Peter's Family of Trees
2:00 & 4:00 **Civic Chorus Concerts in Sanctuary.** All are invited.
3:00-6:00 Home Tour arriving at church
4:30 Carpool leaves for Sullivan Christian Church program
Aluminum & Food Pantry Drives
Monday 9:00 Retired Men's Breakfast at Cowan's (spouses and lady friends invited)
6:00 AA
6:30 Quilting
Tuesday 10:30 Staff Meeting
1:30 Stewardship Committee at Pat Hartzell's
5:30 Mariners
6:30 Council Planning
7:00-8:00 The Evangelical Church Society of the West program by Rev. Dr. Schwab at Washington Historical Society
Wednesday 9:00 Quilting
12:00 Bible study
6:15 Chapel Bell Choir
6:00 AA
7:30 Chancel Choir
Thursday 10:00 Women's Fellowship
5:30-9:30 TEMCO Banquet – dining room
6:00 AA
6:00 Christmas Caroling Party – auditorium
7:00 Mental Illness Support Group
Friday 5:00-8:00 St. Peter's Family of Trees
4:00 Bake Sale setup
Saturday 8:30-11:30 Bake Sale – dining room
8:30 Rainbow Bells practice in sanctuary (ages 3-grade 2)
9:00-10:00 Children's Christmas Program rehearsal in sanctuary
9:00-11:30 Scout Meeting – atrium meeting room

2:00-5:00 St. Peter's Family of Trees
 5:00 Worship
 Sunday 9:00 Adult Bible study (lectionary-based) in atrium meeting room
 10:00 Worship (Family Sunday) – Children's Christmas program
 11:15-1:00 Confirmation with mentors
 12:00-3:00 St. Peter's Family of Trees
 5:00-8:00 Youth Group Progressive Dinner (meet at church, pick-up from Koch's)

The **Women's Fellowship Bake Sale** will be held Dec. 12, 8:30-Noon. Please bring baked items on the 11th before 6 PM. Trays and bags are available in the dining room. If there are any special ingredients in the items, please mark it on the package. If someone would like to bake for diabetics, it would be appreciated.

The Washington Historical Society will host a program presented by Bill Schwab on **The Evangelical Church Society of the West**, the root of our present day congregations. It will take place at the Washington Historical Society Building, 4th and Market Sts., Dec. 8, 7- 8 PM. It is free and open to everyone.

Practice for the Sunday school Christmas program will be held Sat. Dec. 1, 9-10 AM. (Ages 3-grade 2 Rainbow Bells gather at 8:30) The program will be performed during the Dec. 13th 10 AM service. Children are requested to meet in the auditorium at 10:00 on the 13th. Sunday dress is appropriate.

Grades 7-12: Join us for a Progressive Dinner Party! On Sunday, Dec. 13, we'll gather at the church at 5 PM and travel to three different church family members' homes: one for appetizers, one for a main course and one for dessert. Along the way we'll play a fun gift exchange game (please bring either a "white elephant" or \$2 or less gift, wrapped), share laughter and hear many stories of Christmas. In order to make sure we have enough food and drivers, please sign up by Fri., Dec. 11th (either on the youth bulletin board in Market St. hallway or by contacting Pastor Leah.

Please help make **Christmas merrier for the residents of the Emmaus Homes** by choosing a resident to help this Christmas. The Christmas giving tree is located in the atrium. Please do not wrap the gifts, and return them to the church by Dec. 17.

Veterans of the Cross (now known as The Christmas Fund) offering: Sat. & Sun, Dec. 19-20. While most retired UCC ministers and their spouses have adequate income through an annuity program and Social Security, there are several hundred who do not. In most instances, these are the very oldest. The Christmas Fund is a national offering of the United Church of Christ which makes possible "a supplement" at Christmas-time to several hundred lower income retirees who are generally 90 years of age or older. It also makes possible an Emergency Fund, which offers assistance to those who serve the church today who suddenly find themselves in dire need due to unexpected circumstances of health, disaster or loss. The Christmas Fund is one of five special UCC offerings that St. Peter's collects throughout the year as we seek to be faithful servants to the wider church outside our doors. An offering envelope was included in your December newsletter. Your generous support is appreciated!

Conference Minister, Rev. Jeff Whitman to join us in worship, Sat., Dec. 19th and Sun., Dec. 20th. St. Peter's is very happy to welcome Rev. Jeff Whitman, the Missouri Mid-South Conference Minister for the United Church of Christ, as he joins us for the fourth Sunday of our Advent journey. Rev. Whitman joined our conference's staff in late 2007 and has been hard at work building connections with local churches like St. Peter's. In the short time Jeff has served with us, his insights, vision and spiritual guidance have been invaluable in helping our conference to navigate the tough financial situation in which we find ourselves as the Missouri Mid-South Conference (due to decreased giving to "Our Church's Wider Mission"/OCWM by many local churches) while also guiding us as a conference in a restructuring process that we pray will better help us utilize the strengths of volunteers and churches and better realize God's spirit which binds us all together for the glory of Christ's ongoing work in the world. This is Jeff's first visit to worship at St. Peter's (although you may have met him in the halls as he's come and gone for various meetings). In addition to his many other gifts, Jeff is a wonderful preacher, and it is our pleasure to have him bring the message on the 19th & 20th.

Congratulations to our St. Peter's Lawn Chair Brigade and Float. We took second place at this year's Downtown Washington Holiday Parade. Thanks to all who marched, handed out candy and fliers and especially to the Wood Family for their spear-heading efforts.

Reaching beyond our pockets to share gifts with our church: So far, the church office has received only 26 Time and Talent surveys from our church family. Please pick up a green survey near the sanctuary exits and prayerfully consider how your own efforts to be a faithful steward for God might cross paths/meet with the needs of your church. Thank you!

A Christmas Gift Suggestion: (made by an attendee of one of the capital campaign meetings) If you are looking for a gift suggestion for a loved one this year, make a contribution to the Atrium fund in their honor as a gift to them and to the church.

Information regarding end of year contributions: Please be advised that if you want to receive credit for any contribution for 2009, the church office must be in receipt of it by December 31, 2009. The only exception to this is that if you mail your contribution, your check must be dated no later than December 31, 2009 **AND** the postmark **MUST BE** dated no later than December 31, 2009. On another note, please do not use tape on your offering envelopes.

"Wherever you are in your journey of life, come journey with us." The St. Peter's Sunday Adult Bible class is meeting every Sunday morning from 9 to 9:45 AM in the lower level atrium room. We are traveling through the Bible with the same Bible passages used in our Sunday worship. We are informal and open to lots of discussion. We invite you to become travel partners with us whenever you can come.

The St. Peter's Festival of Trees begins today! Take a few minutes to stroll through the church and observe the winter wonderland that so many individuals' creative gifts have shared in bringing to life throughout our church home! Take note of your favorites and bring non-perishable food items to help your favorite trees win our friendly competition. All canned goods go to support the St. Peter's

food pantry and other local food pantries that serve many families in need in our community. Scavenger hunt sheets are available in the atrium to add to the fun for the young and young at heart. A big thank you to the Stewardship Committee, Cecil Blankenship, Pat Hartzell and Dave Butler for making this vision a reality and bringing much joy to the faces that enter this space!

Why Do We Use An Advent Wreath?

Advent is the beginning of the church year for most churches in the western tradition. Advent means “coming” or “arrival.” The emphasis of the Advent season is on hope, anticipation and preparation. During Advent, we prepare our hearts to celebrate the birth of Jesus, the Christ in his First Advent, and the anticipation of Christ the King in his Second Advent. The use of the Advent wreath has a rich history in the worship of the church. The purpose of the wreath is to provide a visual symbol in helping to tell the meaning of this season. The circle of the wreath reminds us of God, God’s eternity and endless mercy, which has no beginning or end. The green of the wreath speaks of the hope we have in God, the hope of newness, of renewal, of eternal life. The candles symbolize the light of God coming into the world through the birth of Jesus. The four outer candles represent a period of waiting, between the last prophet Malachi and the birth of Christ. The light of the candles reminds us that Jesus is the light of the world, who comes into the darkness of our lives to bring hope and joy. The four candles represent hope, peace, joy (pink candle) and love. The flame of each newly lit candle reminds the worshippers that something is happening, and that more is yet to come. The center candle is white and is the Christ candle. It is lit on Christmas Eve to mark the birth of Christ and the start of the Christmas season for Christians. The center location of the Christ candle reminds us that the birth of Jesus, God with us, gives light to the world and is central to our lives and our daily work as Christians.

CHRISTMAS MEMORIALS

I wish to donate a POINSETTIA in memory of:

The cost of each poinsettia is \$10; the deadline is December 10.

I wish to donate a CHRISTMAS MEMORIAL in memory of:

Enclosed find \$_____ for the Memorial Fund \$_____ for the Atrium Fund

The deadline for memorials is December 21.

Signed: _____