

FIRST UNITED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
FROM THE PASTOR'S PEN
HOLIDAY EDITION
November 2012

MOVING FORWARD

Do you ever feel like your life is stuck in neutral, or perhaps even moving in reverse?
Do you feel anxious or uneasy when this is the case?

Nowadays, with the pace of change moving so quickly in our world, we can be doing a lot, and balancing many demands in life, and still feel as though we aren't keeping up. Most families are less financially secure than they were a generation or two ago, and of course this increases unease and anxiety too. Expectations (financial and otherwise) that were set in previous decades can be hard to adjust, especially if the adjustment is downward. As some of you know, the post-World War II period saw unprecedented growth for this country; and, as a by-product, saw an unprecedented sustained rise in the standard of living, and a concomitant rise in expectations for the future.

Not a bad trend on the surface, but one by-product has been a rise in careerism and materialism and me-ism. As I mentioned this week in our Christian Education class in Pinckneyville, any "-ism" placed before our faith commitment, and our trust in God, is a problem.

Well, what is our expectation for the next 10 years?? I just graduated from seminary a decade ago, and I have seen tremendous changes in society, and for churches, within that time frame. Actually, these changes were set in motion long before the last decade, but they have become especially evident in the last decade or so.

With total membership within nearly all churches and denominations in this country having declined over the past few decades (less than 7% of churches nationally are growing in size), so many churches are less well-positioned to handle the changes at hand.

As I mentioned at our Officer Training event last week, many theologians believe that we are living in a time of a new Reformation in the life of the Church. Some say that today's Reformation is every bit as significant as the one 500 years ago. New and exciting ways of sharing and re-presenting the ageless Gospel are being birthed. Thanks be to God!

However, if we are focused on keeping the same old structures of post-World War II Christianity, or if we are focused on the pain of new birth, we will miss the excitement of this new Reformation. We will also miss out on the opportunities to touch people with the Gospel. Let us pray that that will not be the case with us; and, as we turn our attention to the great Hope of the world at this time of the year (Advent and Christmas), may we receive new hope in our hearts. May this hope be the same Hope that has always led God's people away from discouragement and despair: Jesus.

To God be the Glory!

Pastor Charles

BOOKCLUB-The club will meet Thursday, December 6 at 7 pm at the church. They are currently reading "Defending Jacob" by William Landay. If you need a copy of the book or additional information, please contact pat Perkins 357-5458 or Cheryl Schneider 357-9091. Bring a friend and enjoy an evening of fellowship

November 2012

Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
4	5 Scouts	6 Election	7	1 Book Club 7 pm	2	3 Girl Scouts
				8 Girl Scout Leaders 6 pm	9	10 Girl Scouts
11 Veteran's Day	12 Scouts	13	14 Christian Ed Class 6:30 Session 7:30	15	16	17 Girl Scouts
18	19 Scouts Deacons 6pm	20	21 Christian Ed Class 6:30	22 Thanksgiving	23	24 Girl Scouts
25 Toys for Caring Tree	26 American Legion 7pm	27	28 Christian Ed Class 6:30	29	30	1

HIGHLIGHTS OF NOVEMBER 14, 2012 SESSION MEETING

- **Installation of new church officers 1-13-13 9am services**
- **Annual Congregational Meeting 1-27-13 8am prior to service**
- **Approved Relay for Life Kick off event 1-10-13 Fellowship hall**
- **Collection of Christmas Joy offering approved**
- **McDaniel's installation of carpeting in Manse scheduled for spring per renters' request**
- **Church By-law update: 24 hour adequate notice for special Session meetings via email or phone call as necessary**

December 2012

Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
2 1 st Sunday of Advent Toys for Caring Tree	3 Scouts	4	5 Christian Ed Class 6:30pm	6 Book Club 7pm Defending Jacob	7	8 Girl Scouts
9 2 nd Sunday of Advent Food for Caring Tree	10 Scouts	11	12 Christian Ed Class 6:30pm Session 7:30pm	13 Girl Scout Leaders 6pm	14	15 Girl Scouts
16 3 rd Sunday of Advent Clothes for Needy Kids	17 Scouts	18	19 Christian Ed Class 6:30pm	20	21	22 Girl Scouts
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
4 th Sunday of Advent	Christmas Eve Service 6pm	Christmas Pastor Charles on vacation	-----	-----	-----	-----
30	31					