

The Vision

The monthly newsletter of the First Presbyterian Church of Dearborn

December 2005

Phone: 313-274-1313

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We glorify Christ by making disciples who share God's love, seek His truth, and serve His World.



Sunday, December 4 - Second Sunday of Advent

Hanging of the Greens, 4pm (Dinner at 6pm)

Wednesday, December 7 - FISH Get-Together for All Ages! 6-8pm, Dinner & ornament-making for Home Friends and our homes

Sunday, December 11 - Third Sunday of Advent

Touch of Hope gift collection at both worship services

Wednesday, December 15 - Caroling

6-8:30pm, All-church dinner, caroling and cocoa

Saturday, December 17 - In Bethlehem Inn

6-9pm, Dinner Theater in Mitchell Hall

Sunday, December 18 - Fourth Sunday of Advent

Christmas Joy Offering, Touch of Hope Food Collection, Born a King Choral Concert (during education hour)

Saturday, December 24 - Christmas Eve

6:30pm, Christmas Eve Service, *Carols and Tableau* with Children's Choir 11pm, Christmas Eve Candlelight Service

Sunday, December 25 - Christmas Day

11am, Christmas Morning Worship Service (no education)

Sunday, January 1 - New Year's Day

11am, Morning Worship Service (no education)

600 N. Brady ~ Dearborn, MI 48124 World Wide Web: www.firstpresdearborn.org



All of the coffee you now drink at the church has been purchased through the **Presbyterian Coffee Project**, and **you can purchase coffee**, **tea and cocoa for home use through the Project as well**. By using fair trade coffee in our congregations, offices and homes, Presbyterians help guarantee that farmers will earn the income they need to feed their families, educate their children and improve their communities. Fair trade is a simple solution that means the difference — quite literally — between surviving and not surviving for small-scale coffee farmers. You can make your purchase by filling out an order form (found on the information table outside the sanctuary or in Mitchell Hall) and placing it, with your payment, in Angie Saylor's mail box in the main church office. **Orders will be placed the first of** *each* **month**. You will be notified when your coffee, tea or cocoa arrives.



Our Senior Pastor Continues to Faithfully Serve

In spite of his recent diagnosis of pancreatic cancer, Dr. Doug Barranger has informed the Session of his desire to continue as our Senior Pastor for as long as he is able to do so, and the Session has unanimously approved his request. Should the time come when he is no longer able to continue in that role, the church will continue his salary and benefits during the 90-day waiting period before he would be eligible to collect disability benefits through the Board of Pensions of the Presbyterian Church, USA.

Because of the uncertainty of what lies ahead for Doug, we realize that there may be times when he will not be able to carry out all of his pastoral duties as he has done with so much devotion over the past eight years. Accordingly, the Session has requested the Committee On Ministry of the Presbytery of Detroit to provide a Temporary Stated Supply Minister who will assist Doug, and be able to stand in for him on those occasions where an ordained minister is required and Doug is unable to act. Dr. Al Timm, our Executive Presbyter, has suggested some candidates for Doug to interview and for us to consider.

It was eight years ago last month that Doug accepted the call of this congregation to be its Senior Pastor, and I know you all will join us in thanking Doug and in celebrating his able and tireless leadership. The strength of his convictions, his determination to further the Church's mission, his pastoral care and concern for all of us, and his strong faith have inspired us all, and never more than during these past weeks.

We are honored and grateful that, in spite of all Doug has to deal with, he has chosen to give his time and his energy to us. Following his example, we place our trust in God, and we promise to keep Doug, Donna and Nathan constantly in our prayers, and to support them in whatever ways we can, as we continue, together, to share His love, seek His truth, and serve His world.

The Session - Elders: Bunny Barr, Mike Hoffman, Mark Dearth, Amy Bruhn, Angie Saylor, Dave Hall, Janet Witkowski, Jim Shearer, Bud Cashwell, Ina Behrens, and Nancy Slanec

Book of the Every Other Month Club



The Book of the Every Other Month Club (BEOMC) next meets on Saturday, January 28, at 10 am in Room 16, upstairs. Our discussions are led by Wanda Moon. We enjoy coffee, tea, donuts, fellowship and stimulating conversation.

You will have no difficulty locating a copy of the book we'll be discussing, as it is the subject of a current movie and much media attention: *The Lion*, *the Witch, and the Wardrobe* by C. S. Lewis. Multiple paperback editions are available. If you've never read this ageless tale of wonder, you are in for a treat. If you have read it in the past, you may wish to revisit the land of Narnia -- you may discover something new or awaken forgotten memories.

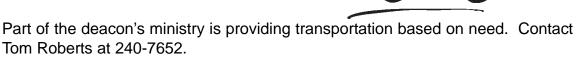
We hope you will join us. Questions? Call Paul Ytterock at 274-1313, Ext. 12.



Elders are available to pray for those who need healing prayer. If you would like the elders to arrange a convenient time and place to pray for you, just contact the Prayer Contact Elder for the month of December: Bunny Barr. You may contact her at 359-1673.

Do you need transportation?

To church on Sunday? Doctor's appointments? Grocery shopping?



Come to the Bethlehem Inn

Saturday
December 17th
6 pm
Mitchell Hall

~Dinner Theater~ Festive music provided by Suzuki Violins, Carolers, Our Church Youth, and a Recorder Consort.

Dinner provided by Rebekah Circle.

Cost: \$15
Tickets available Sunday mornings at the church



The Meaning of Advent

By Charles Moore

Though Advent (literally "arrival") has been observed for centuries as a time to contemplate Christ's birth, most people today acknowledge it only with a blank look. For the vast majority of us, December flies by in a flurry of activities, and what is called "the holiday season" turns out to be the most stressful time of the year.

"Light your candles quietly, such candles as you possess, wherever you are."

~Alfred Delp

It is also a time of contrasting emotions. We are eager, yet frazzled; sentimental, yet indifferent. One minute we glow at the thought of getting together with our family and friends; the next we feel utterly lonely. Our hope is mingled with dread, our anticipation with despair. We sense the deeper meanings of the season but grasp at them in vain; and in the end, all the bustle leaves us frustrated and drained.

Even we who do not experience such tensions - who genuinely love Christmas - often miss its point. Content with candles and carols and good food, we bask in the warmth of familiar traditions, in reciprocated acts of kindness, and in feelings of general goodwill. How many of us remember the harsh realities of Christ's first coming: the dank stable, the cold night, the closed door of the inn? How many of us share the longing of the ancient prophets, who awaited the Messiah with such aching intensity that they foresaw his arrival thousands of years before he was born?

Mother Teresa once noted that the first person to welcome Christ was John the Baptist, who leaped for joy on recognizing him, though both of them were still within their mothers' wombs. We, in stark contrast, are often so dulled by superficial distractions that we are incapable of hearing any voice within, let alone listening to it. Consequently, the feeling we know as Christmas cheer lacks any real connection to the vital spirit that radiated from the manger.

We miss the essence of Christmas unless we become, in the words of Eberhard Arnold, "mindful of how Christ's birth took place." Once we do, we will sense immediately that Advent marks something momentous: God's coming into our midst. That coming is not just something that happened in the past. It is a recurring possibility here and now. And thus Advent is not merely a commemorative event or an anniversary, but a yearly opportunity for us to consider the future, second Advent - the promised coming of God's kingdom on earth.

(continued on next page)

The Meaning of Advent, continued

Such an understanding of Christmas is possible only insofar as we let go of the false props of convention and seek to unlock its central paradox. That paradox, to paraphrase the modern martyr Dietrich Bonhoeffer, is the fact that God's coming is not only a matter of glad tidings but, first of all, "frightening news for everyone who has a conscience."

The love that descended to Bethlehem is not the easy sympathy of an avuncular God, but a burning fire whose light chases away every shadow, floods every corner, and turns midnight into noon. This love reveals sin and overcomes it. It conquers darkness with such forcefulness and intensity that it scatters the proud, humbles the mighty, feeds the hungry, and sends the rich away empty-handed (Luke 1:51-53).

Because a transformation of this scale can never be achieved by human means, but only by divine intervention, Advent (to quote Bonhoeffer again) might be compared to a prison cell "in which one waits and hopes and does various unessential things... but is completely dependent on the fact that the door of freedom has to be opened from the outside." It is a fitting metaphor. But dependency does not release us from responsibility. If the essence of Advent is expectancy, it is also readiness for action: watchfulness for every opening, and willingness to risk everything for freedom and a new beginning.

That is why the imagery of nativity scenes is not sufficient to explain the Christmas message. Yes, God came into the feeding trough of an animal. But it was not only as a baby that he lay there. This child was the same man who was crucified on Golgotha, and who rose again. Within the manger lies the cross - and the hope of redemption and resurrection.

To recognize this requires reverence and humility. It requires faith. We might ask, "What grounds are there for such hope?" Or we might seek to become like children, and believe. Mary did. So did the shepherds and the wise men of the East. So can each of us, wherever we are.

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Session News

From the special meeting of Session held November 20, 2005:

- Session met with Rev. Allen Timm, Executive Presbyter of the Presbytery
 of Detroit, to discuss our options for the immediate future. Rev. Timm
 met with Dr. Barranger prior to the meeting and was asked to convey
 his wishes to Session.
- Dr. Barranger requested to continue to serve as our Senior Pastor to the best of his ability, with the understanding that his current health situation may limit his ability to perform his pastoral duties. Session accepted this request and also agreed to support Dr. Barranger financially during the 90-day waiting period should it become necessary for him to go on long-term disability.
- Session also asked the Committee on Ministry (COM) of the Detroit Presbytery to assist us in securing a Temporary Stated Supply to assist Doug with performing his pastoral duties as necessary. Candidates recommended by Presbytery will be interviewed by both Dr. Barranger and the Session prior to being offered the position.
- Session also directed the Associate Pastor Nominating Committee (APNC) to suspend the search process until further notice from Session.

From the **November 22, 2005** meeting of Session:

- Joel DeHamer provided the Treasurer's Report to Session. As of October 31 we have a deficit of \$92,000. A deficit of \$75,000 is projected at year-end.
- Deacon Dave Smith provided Session with the Deacon's updated lists of visitation and prayer concerns. The Session will be having their annual joint meeting with the Deacons on December 13.

Amy Bruhn, Elder Session Communication Secretary



Reflections on The Word

A monthly, scripture-based devotional by John Holden

Be joyful always; pray continually; give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus. 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

First, note the universals – always... continually...in all circumstances. We are called to always live by faith, even during hard times, trusting God no matter what.

Second, note the interrelationships: We are to be joyful and thankful always because God is sovereign over every part of our lives, and prayer is one way to express that joy and gratitude.

Joy is the righteous delight of the mind resulting from our new life with the indwelling Holy Spirit, our faith strengthened by trials, and our sins forgiven by Christ (Gal. 5:22, 23; James 1:2-4; Psalms 32:1-5). Christian joy is indestructible and overcomes life's miseries because it is based on our indestructible relationship with God (Phil. 1:3, 18, 24, 25; 2:18). Rejoice in the Lord always (Phil. 4:4)! Live totally by faith and be blessed (Matt. 5:3-12; 7:24, 26; Luke 9:24, 25).

Prayer is to be an ongoing conversation with the Lord about everything. It is a conscious response to His presence at all times and His interest in all issues. God uses prayer to work through us and to bless us (Matt. 9:38; 7:7-11; John 15:7; Heb. 4:16).

Thanksgiving shows that we love God more than His gifts, and that we do not covet. We can thank God for His presence in all circumstances because we know that whatever happens to us, even in tragedy, is being put to good use (Eph. 5:20; Rom. 8:28-30). Lack of thanksgiving separates us from God and leads to idolatry (Rom. 1:21). Do not worry, but pray with thanksgiving, and the peace of God will guard you in Christ Jesus (Mat. 6:34; Phil. 4:6, 7).

All of this is God's will, for as we live this way, we will enjoy God, find God's purpose for our lives, and become more Christ-like. Even in our sufferings, rejoice and give thanks because God's hand is always upon us, and we are known and loved by Him evermore (Psalms 23; 100).



All Church Fall Clean Up

November 12th

~Photos by Ted Daykin~



Bert Ebi raked leaves.



Bert Ebi, Brian Mayer and Chris Mayer hauled leaves.



Mike Barr, Drew Mayer and Bert Ebi raked more leaves.



David and Bob Carlson enjoyed the tractor.

13th Annual Cookie Walk November 20th





Many thanks to all the cookie bakers and buyers! A total of \$1046.00 was raised through this event for Presbyterian Women's

2006 Mission Budget.





December



- 2 Marillyn Pringnitz Susan Williams Steve Light
- 4 William J. Currie
- 5 Cita Meyer Kara Lamkin Evelyn Schloff
- 6 Suzanne Edick
- 7 Noreen Macdonald Kaitlin Fink Gregory Fink
- 8 W. Robert Buell Margaret Richards Marcia Scott Paul Ytterock
- 9 Maxine Bobbish Pauline Fink Bobby Miller
- 10 David Monroe Andrew Abramouski
- 11 Thomas Kopke
 Edward Beers
 Betsy Saylor
 Eric Jones

- 13 Jim Oliver Jim Jones
- 14 Burt Middlemis
 Bert Ebi
 David Cobb
 Carol McFadden
 George Hyma
 Sara Kilgore Nagy
 Caroline Bork
- 15 Bob Brinton
- 16 Robert Putnam David Williams
- 17 Stella Jean Doverspike Mildred Palm
- 18 Adele Meyer Vivian Foster David Lambie Danny Strayer
- 19 Emily Schloff
- 20 Francesca Iori Karen Lindsay
- 21 Sarah Smith

- 23 Duane Schmatz Tim Halstead Jessica Romeo
- 26 Joan Cahow Marilyn Joachim David Setterlun
- 27 Katie Joachim Mary Ellen Mitchell
- 31 Jared Hoffman

Belated Birthday Wishes

Jean Clarkson celebrated her 90th birthday on Sunday, October 30th!

^{*}If we missed a birthday in error, please put a note in the Vision box in the office.





Angelo Cerritto Muriel Stephens

Elmer Sakes (Chris Megregian's grandfather)

December Prayer Focus

This month, please keep the following in your prayers:

Doug, Donna, and Nathan Barranger Our Session Our upcoming Alpha Course Our Home Friends

Celebrations!

Virginia Beaudette has a new great grand-daughter, Evelyn Anne Beaudette, born October 28, 2005 in Waynesboro, TN.

The deadline for the January edition of *The Vision* is December 15, 2005. Place any submissions in the VI-SION box in the church office or email them to Angela Saylor at AJN37@aol.com.



We are sincerely grateful to all of you at First Presbyterian Church of Dearborn who have kept us in your thoughts and prayers during my son, Bill's, recent illness and passing. Your many phone calls, cards, thoughts and prayers are a great help in easing the pain. Having the support of friends and family (especially my church family) is essential to the healing process.

Thanks so much and God Bless!
Virginia Beaudette & family

Thank you so much for all of your sympathy, support and prayers at the time of my husband's passing. I never realized I had so many friends in church. You were so great and so supportive with all your cards and notes. I thank you with all my heart.

Catherine Hults

Thank you so much for your many prayers during my recent "repair" job and recuperation. One can only feel the thoughtfulness and strength coming from such a loving congregation.

Bud Apesche

I just want to thank all the members of our church for all your prayers, cards and good wishes during my recent illness. It means a lot to know others are praying for you and wishing you well. I am very grateful for your concern and your sincere pleasure at seeing me in church again.

Fran Baker



Dear Church Family,

One of the Deacon ministries is providing meals for our brothers and sisters who are in need of a little assistance due to illness, death in the family, return from the hospital, etc. In the past, many of you responded when we asked for volunteers to assist us in this ministry. It has been several years since our last list was compiled and we are putting out the call for fresh volunteers. We would like to make up four groups of three to four people each so that meals can be rotated and no single group would be called on more than three times per year. If you would like to participate, please call

Olimpia Todor at 336-2772 or give your name to Denise in the office. Many thanks to those of you who have participated, and yes, you can sign on again.

Olimpia Todor Board of Deacons Meals Coordinator

New Hours for our Bookkeeper - Nancy Setterlun's new office hours are Monday mornings from 9:30am - 12:30pm and Thursday evenings from 6:30 - 9:30pm. She may be reached at the church on phone extension 15 or at home, if necessary.

Christmas Joy Offering 2005



For almost seventy years, the Christmas Joy Offering has been a Presbyterian tradition. It is a way to provide financial assistance to active and retired Presbyterian ministers and missionaries and Presbyterian related schools and colleges. The donations are divided evenly between these two groups.

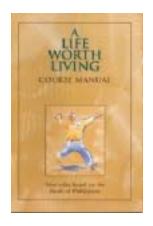
The Christmas Joy Offering will be collected on Sunday, December 18th. You may use either your regular donation envelope or a separate Christmas envelope. If using your regular envelope, please indicate how much of your offering you wish to go to Christmas Joy on the back of the envelope in the Christmas Joy space. If you use a Christmas envelope, please put your regular envelope number on it.

This is an opportunity to directly assist Presbyterians or institutions who are dedicated to Christ's work.
~ Outreach & Mission Committee

I nvitation to All Treasure Chest Rummage Sale Volunteers

All of the volunteers that were so gracious in lending their help to our rummage sale are invited to attend a pot luck luncheon. It will be held on **December 7th at noon** on the lower level of the church. We all thank you and hope that you will attend.

~ The Treasure Chest



A Life Worth Living

A Bible Study/Discussion Group for Alpha graduates

Wednesday Evenings
January 11 - March 8, 2006
Dinner 6pm; Class 7-8:30pm

Based on Paul's letter to the Philippians, A Life Worth Living is a nine-week Bible study examining the changed life of a Christian. Chapters include: New Heart; New Purpose; New Attitude; New Responsibilities; New Friendships; New Confidence; New Ambitions; New Resources; and New Generosity.

There will be a video talk by Nicky Gumbel, followed by Bible study and discussion. Bob Szczechura and Dan Saylor will lead the study and discussion. Space in this course is limited and will be filled on a first come basis, so if you would like to register please call (388-6966) or email (ajn37@aol.com) Angie Saylor.

Focus on Folks: Jeni Cole

Length Of Time at FPC: Almost a year

Background information: I am 34 years old and married to my wonderful husband, Stephen, who is originally from Sydney, Australia. We have an amazing "Ameristralian" (as daddy calls him) son, Christian, who turned 3 in October. In 2003 I was diagnosed with Multiple Sclerosis and day-by-day I have been learning to adjust to life with the disease.

How/When I became a Christian: I am working on this! I am still exploring the Christian faith, but I know in my heart that it is the path to follow. For a long time I have felt that I needed Christ in my life but wasn't really sure how to surrender myself to Him, or to admit to myself that this would truly make a difference in my life. Slowly, I am learning that becoming a Christian is truly an awesome thing and I am excited to see what the future may bring.

Activities/Ministries at FPC: I have been involved in ALPHA since I started attending FPC. I was looking for a class to help me learn and understand the feelings I was having and the journey I was preparing to take. I was also looking for a church where I felt comfortable and not judged for where I stood in my Christian beliefs. I did research on FPC's website and learned of the Contemporary service and also the ALPHA course. I came to my first service and the warmth of the church was incredible. ALPHA started the following Wednesday, and the rest is in the history books. I was also honored to participate in the ChristNet project, which I cannot say enough good things about. I am very proud to be involved with people who care so much about others who aren't as fortunate, and who need a shoulder to rest on and an ear to listen to them. The list of the ministries that we provide to help others is overwhelming. It is great that FPC continues to help and give to our community.

My favorite leisure activities: My favorite leisure activity is to spend quality time with my husband and son. I enjoy watching Christian grow and blossom into a little man. I love to sit back and watch the wonderful things the world has to offer to us and dream about what the future will bring.

(continued on next page)

Focus on Folks: Jeni Cole, continued

Favorite Book: There isn't a book I can single out, but I enjoy reading short stories and anything to help improve my surroundings and my life.

Favorite Movie: Pay it Forward, because I believe that the message this movie expresses could truly make the world a better place.

My Favorite Foods: Anything!! I love to cook and bake, so there really isn't much I don't like. If I had to choose, I would say ICE CREAM!!

Favorite Music: I love any kind of music that has meaning and soul. Hard to say what my favorite kind of music is; although I love listening to Christmas music while watching the Christmas tree lights twinkle. It brings me to a very restful and relaxing place within myself.

Favorite TV program: Amazing Race – I haven't traveled much, so it is great to travel vicariously through the show.

My favorite place: Feeling my son in my arms and my grandma's house

What makes me laugh: When Christian will come out with a crazy sentence that has a lot of big words, but really doesn't fit with what he is trying to say.

My favorite Bible passage: Gosh, can you ask me when I have a little more knowledge? I don't think I could truthfully answer this question; if anyone wants to share some of theirs, please feel free to send them my way!!

The person I would like most to meet and why: I would like to meet my brother-in-law, Roger, who passed away at the tender age of 16 after a long and powerful battle with cancer. It would be a great thing to be able to talk to him and give him a hug, and tell him how I am so proud of what a strong young man he was.

The thing that might surprise people about me: I was a radio disc jockey on my high school radio station during grades 10 through 12. Also I LOVE to sing!!



Alpha Update

A fabulous Celebration Dinner concluded our sixth Alpha course on November 30th. Many, many people have helped to keep this ministry a vital and exciting part of the evangelism and discipling efforts of this church. Our small group leaders and helpers for this course were Bob Szczechura, Sue Ingram, Matt Holt, Charlotte (Charlie) Aronson, Dan Saylor, Ann Phillips, and Jeni Cole. A huge "thank you" to all of these people!

We are also grateful for the help of many others who have worked to make this course a ministry that truly transforms lives. John Holden, with the help and support of his wife, Marilyn, conducted the training of small group leaders and helpers. Dave Young was our Special Dinner Coordinator; he planned and prepared Alpha's Kick-Off and Celebration Dinners, as well as preparing other dinners for FISH and Alpha. Linda Hall assisted with so many of the "tasks" that need ready hands on the Alpha course — such as set up, clean up and help with preparation of meals; helping with guest registration, name tags and the publications table; and other important jobs. Linda graciously performed all of these tasks, week in and week out. Dave Hall kindly continued to serve as our "master of ceremonies" and stand-up comic. Dan Saylor served as Worship Leader for Alpha, leading the group in singing every Wednesday. And then, of course, there were the many generous people who made all of those fabulous meals. Paul Ytterock is Alpha's staff liaison. Again, thank you all for the gift of your time and your talents.

We begin our next Alpha course on January 11, 2006. The class meets on Wednesday evenings, from 6-8:45pm through March 15th and includes dinner, a DVD presentation, and small group discussion. There is no charge for Alpha. We hope that you will invite friends, neighbors, relatives and co-workers to try the Alpha course. It's as easy as inviting a friend over for dinner or coffee, and as anyone who has attended Alpha will assure you, if nothing else, your guests will love the food! Join Us! Find answers to *your* questions and help your friends and family find answers to *their* questions about the Christian faith.

Brochures with the full schedule for the upcoming course and more information about Alpha are available outside the sanctuary and in Mitchell Hall. Pick up a few and help us get the word out about this life-changing ministry. A registration form can also be found on the next page.

If you have any questions about Alpha, please call (313-388-6966) or email (ajn37@aol.com) me.

Angie Saylor, Alpha Coordinator

Another Alpha Course Begins!

Alpha is a practical introduction to the Christian faith. It is an opportunity to explore the important questions of life in relaxed, friendly surroundings. Sessions begin on **January 11, 2006** and continue on the following Wednesday evenings from 6-8:45 pm. Each evening includes dinner, a DVD presentation, and small group discussion. There is no charge for Alpha. ANYONE is welcome.

Schedule January 11 Who is Jesus? January 18 Why did Jesus die? January 25 How can I be sure of my faith? February 1 Why and how should I read the Bible? Why and how should I pray? February 8 February 15 How does God guide us? **ALPHA SATURDAY** February 18 Who is the Holy Spirit? What does the Holy Spirit do? How can I be filled with the Holy Spirit? How can I make the most of the rest of my life? February 22 How can I resist evil? Why and how should we tell others? March 1 Does God heal today? March 8 March 15 What about the church? **ALPHA Celebration Dinner Party** March 22

Alpha Registration
Name(s):
Full Mailing Address:
Phone Number and E-mail address:
Phone Number and E-mail address:

Please mail or take your completed form in to the church office, or place it in the offering plate on Sunday.

Newsletter of The First Presbyterian Church of Dearborn 600 North Brady Road Dearborn, MI 48124

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The Vision

Senior Pastor Director of Christian Ed.: Rev. Douglas Barranger, Ph.D. Paul Ytterock

Director of Music/Evangelism: Marshall Dicks

Parish Nurse: Chris Mayer, RN