

AT THE CROSS

First United Methodist Church — Hartford, WI

July 2007

MISSION STATEMENT: We're God's people striving to become committed disciples of Jesus Christ. By nurturing our diverse gifts we desire to learn, care, support, pray and serve so that we may become a dynamic force of love in the world. †

Take a look...
Read about several topics in this month's newsletter. Get involved and make our church the best it can be.

Lori's Notes

1. Thank you to all who supported First UMC's Relay for Life Team - Spirit Driven with your prayers, your presence at Relay for Life June 22-23, and your gifts. Relay for Life is a celebration of survivorship as well as a method to raise money to help the American Cancer Society in its mission to save lives, help those who have been touched by cancer, and empower individuals to fight back. Also, much appreciation to the Endowment Board for providing the registration fee and to those who joined the Team:

Lisa Bohovsky
Becky Cleland
Jane Hoffmann
Cheryl Malko
Delynn McDermott
Kirsten Pfothenauer
Janie Schaefer
Lynn Stephenson
Elizabeth Sterman
Tiffany Tetrick
Kathy Triick
Bill Vander Pas
Lori Vander Pas
Nathan Vander Pas

2. The Christian Education Committee is now reviewing what First UMC wants for its youth regarding Confirmation preparation and expectations. The Committee met with a few parents in June and will meet on July 9 at 7 p.m. in the adult Sunday School classroom to continue this review process. All church members are invited to the meeting.

3. For Free - The Faith Explorer computer game story in July is The First Christians Shared; Acts 2:42-47. Each game has three different skills setting for grades Kindergarten through 6th Grade. You can download the game at www.ThirdDayGames.com/faithExplorer/game.asp using this access code: d3k-a5m-o6j. The access code is in the following format: letter number letter - letter number letter - letter number letter. You will download all the games for the year with this download. The software will unlock a new game each month. Share this with your family, friends, and neighbors.

4. United Methodist Family Day at Noah's Ark is July 13. The admission fee includes fun at

the water park, an all-you-can-eat picnic supper, and a private soda fountain. The participants of Water Walkers 2007 Middle School Camp will lead everyone in worship at the end of the day. The fee for ages 13 thru Adult is \$27 and ages 3 thru 12 is \$25. You can see Lori to order the tickets, order them on your own at www.noahsarkwaterpark.com, call 608-254-6351, or use the order form posted on the Camping display in Fellowship Hall..

5. Acolyte training will be the third Sunday this month, July 15 at 9:05 a.m. in the Sanctuary. The training is for any youth entering 4th grade or older or any adult who is interested in being an acolyte. This is an important way to serve your church.

6. UM Camping Camperships - please let Lori know when you are registered for a camp so that she can allocate a First UMC Campership for you. The following amounts will be reimbursed in September:
Week long camp - \$80
3-Day camp - \$35
Family camp weekend - \$50

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7. Summer Sunday School for children ages 5 to 9 takes place in the Gathering Room after the Children's Sermon of second service. The themes are as follows:

July 01: Rack, Shack, and Benny - A lesson in Handling Peer Pressure
July 08: The Ministry of Paul - a dramatic story of adventure, faith, and endurance.
July 15: God wants me to forgive them!?!
July 22: Church - the cool place to overcome envy.
July 29: For our Blessings... We give thanks.

Thank you the volunteers who have been helping and to the children who have been attending. We are having a fun time seeing and hearing Pastor Brian's sermon themes at this 5-9 year age level.

8. Based on studies and on feedback from visitors and members who have young

CONTACT

First United Methodist Church
738 West Monroe Avenue
Hartford, 53027
262.673.3290

Pastor
Brian Kunding
bkpastor@fumchartford.com

Director of Children's Ministries
Lori Vander Pas
lori@fumchartford.com

Office Manager
Heidi Gottfried
office@fumchartford.com

District Superintendent
Jorge Mayorga-Solis

Our Missionary
Paul Webster

Little Lambs Preschool Director/Teacher
Doreen VanMinsel
vanfam5@charter.net

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WHAT'S HAPPENING

Join in with exciting opportunities

MARRIAGE ENCOUNTER

Rediscover the one you love on a Marriage Encounter Weekend.

Marriage Encounter is 44 hours where married couples can get away from jobs, kids, chores and phones and focus on each other. If you would like greater depth, growth and enrichment in your relationship you will like the difference a Marriage Encounter United Methodist weekend can make! For more information about Marriage Encounter, visit the National Website www.encounter.org or please contact Susan and Rich Batchelder at 414-963-0944 or rsbatch@sbcglobal.net.

* The divorce rate for couples attending a Marriage Encounter Weekend is just 2% versus the 50% rate as a national average.

* Less than 15% of the couples rated their marriage as "excellent" before the Weekend but, nearly 65% did so after the weekend.

* Couples returning to their church after the weekend experience often have a renewed image of themselves, a renewed

commitment to God, and a renewed vision of the Church as it reaches out to the community.

* One measurable benefit is the increased number of spouses who begin to participate more actively in the life of their church.

Upcoming Marriage Encounter Weekends

October 5 - 7
at the Bishop Sharon Zimmerman Retreat Center in Pine Lake

February 22-24
at a site to be determined

ENGAGED ENCOUNTER

A Wedding is a Day...a Marriage is a Lifetime! Do you want a little insurance for your marriage? An Engaged Encounter United Methodist weekend can help keep the glow of the wedding day bright. An Engaged Encounter weekend can help couples lay the foundation for a lifelong, meaningful marriage relationship. Contact John and Rosie Mitchell at 920-894-7177 or jdmitche@verizon.net or visit www.encounter.org.

Marriage Encounter has been in existence for over 25 years, helping

couples to enhance their communication and strengthen their couple-relationship.

Upcoming Engaged Encounter Weekend

October 5 - 7th
at Byron Center

CHURCH PICNIC/ MISSION TRIP SENDOFF

Friday night July 27. There will be a potluck dinner in Fellowship Hall at 5:30pm (no bugs!). Bring a dish to pass. Drinks, plates, utensils, and the main part of the meal will be provided. There will be games inside. Some games will be outside, weather permitting. PLEASE watch for a sign up sheet starting in July. Any questions contact Elizabeth Sterman at 306-9307 or bizsterman@sbcglobal.net.

A THURSDAY MORNING DISCUSSION GROUP

"Hallowing our Diminishments without Nightfall on the Spirit."

August 2, 9, 23, 30
10:30 AM – 11:45 AM
Leader: Theonia Amenda

Ecclesiastes tells us "There is a time for everything

under the sun," and aging, as one of those times, is very much a part of our lives. The question is

"How can we age gracefully?"

How can we honor our diminishments without nightfall (depression) on our Spirits?

How can we discover the gifts of that time in our lives?"

Two little booklets have been very helpful to me, and I would like to lead a group in exploring this part of our lives.

Interested? Call Theo Amenda 644-8385 or the church office by the 22nd of July so the booklets can be ordered. Cost is \$8.00 for the booklets.

YOU ARE VERY IMPORTANT TO THIS CHURCH

For those of you who don't know yet, I have taken on the duties of Membership Secretary. As Membership Secretary I am responsible for all church records related to you, the Members. As I am working with the records I have realized that we are missing a lot of important information about our Members. Why do you need this information? You might ask. So far I have come up with 2 good reasons although as time goes on I know I will find more. The most important reason is to serve the Members better. The information that we get from you be it birth date, phone number, address, email address, talents that you have, things you enjoy, and things you would like to have in your church are all valuable pieces of information to set up programs and run our church. Pastor Brian also uses this information in caring for the Members of our congregation.

The second reason is that the records that we keep are considered historical documents. People call looking for past records for many different reasons. And the Historical Society also uses our records.

Another piece of information that is crucial to planning and caring for Members is attendance reports. It is very important to keep track of how many people attend our services and other events in order to be prepared and plan in the future. The church makes many decisions based on the number of people who attend the services and if the number that is used isn't accurate then the decisions won't be for the best interest of the church. So please take the time to fill out the attendance forms on Sundays. This brings me to an important change that will be taking place in the near future. We are working on changing the attendance forms in order to better keep track of our visitors. In order for us to be a more inviting church we need to be able to get in contact with the people who visit as soon as possible. The sheets that we will be using may seem excessive to you as a member but our goal is to keep track of attendance and get information from the visitors. Please keep an open mind as this is all a work in progress. Your input is always appreciated.

One of the great features of the computer program that our church uses is the section for gifts and talents. If you let us know what kinds of things you like to do and what kinds of things you are good at, we can put you in our data base and then whenever we need someone to do that particular thing we can just pull up a list of people who can do it. This way we can match what you like to do with what our church needs done. It is a wonderful way for members to give of themselves and their talents. The more people we have on these lists, the less often each will be asked to help. That way nobody gets overworked or burned out and everything gets done. Sounds ideal, doesn't it?!

So what I am asking is that you would please fill out the Information Sheet and Interests and Talents Survey that is included with this Newsletter and either send it to church or put it in the collection plate on Sunday, bring it into the office, bring it to my house, or you could call me and I will even pick it up.

These are a few small thing that you can do to help make life easier for the staff and committee members of your church. They are some of the recommendations that Dick Jones made in his report and they are all meant to improve our church. Thank you so much for your cooperation.

Patti Bertling
Membership Sec.
670-9963

JULY THEMES

Worship, Study, Prayer and Mission

Sunday, July 1, 2007

2 Kings 2:1-2, 6-14; Psalms 77:1-2, 11-20; Galatians 5:1, 13-25; Luke 9:51-62

We all want to be free. Freedom is in our blood as Americans, but we can be slaves without knowing it. We can be slaves to bad religion. We can be slaves to sin. But it need not be. Christ has come to set us free.

Sunday, July 8, 2007

2 Kings 5:1-14; Psalms 30; Galatians 6:(1-6) 7-16; Luke 10:1-11, 16-20

We live in a culture that glorifies success! The disciples glory in the power they've been give by Jesus as they are sent out to make disciples. But the question to consider is not how successful we are; the question is, are we faithful in our service to Christ? "Do not rejoice that the spirits submit to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven."

Sunday July 15, 2007

Amos 7:7-17; Psalm 82; Colossians 1:1-14; Luke 10:25-37

What makes us a real neighbor if it is not forgiveness. If we who have been touched by the hand of Jesus Christ cannot practice forgiveness and love, then there is not much hope for the rest of the world. This is true on a personal level, and it is true on a corporate level. Are you able to practice forgiveness and love in your daily life?

Sunday, July 22, 2007

Amos 8:1-12; Psalm 82; Colossians 1:15-28; Luke 10:38-42

Only one thing is needed. How do you keep the main thing the main thing? It's easy to do, to be so busy that you forget the one thing you were supposed to do. Keeping our focus on Christ is the challenge of the Christian life. Christ is that one thing that is needed. Christianity at its heart is the recognition that Jesus Christ is the lord of life.

Sunday, July 29, 2007

Hosea 1:2-10; Psalm 85; Colossians 2:6-15 (16-19); Luke 11:1-13

Lay Speaker, Administrative Council Chair, Alan Jordan Leads worship.

When we speak to God, we speak to One who hears all and listens to all. The prayer in Luke 11 is what we call "The Lord's Prayer." Most of us know it by heart. Our lesson from Luke for the day contains one version of the prayer. The version we are accustomed to praying in church has been honed and polished over the years, but it is essentially the same prayer Jesus taught his disciples long ago. How would you say it is "the perfect prayer?"

MILESTONES

ANNIVERSARIES

- 07/02/0000** **KLABECHEK**, Angela & John
07/04/1982 **BROWN**, Terry & Pam
07/05/1952 **HOLTMAN**, Edward & Deloris
07/05/1953 **MCLEAN**, Robert & Marilyn
07/05/1986 **PFOTENHAUER**, Joseph & Robin
07/06/1979 **WIETING**, Wayne & Elizabeth
07/08/1995 **LANE**, Michael & Dina
07/11/1987 **KOLINSKI**, Scott & Terri
07/12/2003 **LANG**, Jonathan & Deanna
07/17/1976 **KIENAST**, James & Doris
07/19/1997 **NICOLAUS**, Curt & Janelle
07/20/1957 **AKIN**, Roy & Donna
07/21/1984 **JAHN**, William & Kelly
07/22/1950 **LEPIEN**, Gene & Orlean
07/24/1976 **KISSEL**, Douglas & Sheila
07/24/1999 **STAUS**, Jeffrey & Kari
07/26/1947 **ROEMER**, Wilbert & Anita
07/26/1980 **BERTLING**, Mike & Patti
07/26/2003 **LEWEK**, Abby & Matt
07/27/0000 **STERMAN**, Scott & Elizabeth
07/28/1951 **UEBELE**, Gerald Sr. & Ruth
07/28/2001 **SECORD**, John & Nina

BIRTHDAYS

- | | |
|---|--|
| July 01 Boyd , Jennifer | July 20 Heder , Kenneth |
| July 01 Peck , Christian | July 20 Lubbert , Marcia |
| July 02 Olson , Jarod | July 21 Reed , Kenneth |
| July 02 Sterman , Xander | July 21 Jensen , Gregory |
| July 04 Kissel , Brian | July 21 Bissett , Benjamin |
| July 05 Baumgartner , Mason | July 21 Jordan , Corina |
| July 05 Grandinetti , Austin | July 22 Kennedy , Bessie |
| July 06 Lang , Deanna | July 22 Schmidt , Lukas |
| July 06 Utz , Breanna | July 23 Klockow , Barbara |
| July 10 DeWees , Anthony | July 23 Retzlaff , Lisa |
| July 10 Lane , Britney | July 24 McCambridge , Amanda |
| July 10 Staus , Kyle | July 25 Carroll , Elizabeth |
| July 11 Schroeder , Violet | July 27 Weltin , Kelly |
| July 11 Lepien , Jennie | July 27 Dalton , Emily |
| July 11 Retzlaff , Derrike | July 28 Koeppler , Marie |
| July 12 Brandt , Ryan | July 28 Andereck , Tony |
| July 13 Beine , Jane | July 28 Collett , Adam |
| July 14 Winebrenner , Ralph | July 29 Akin , Roy |
| July 15 Schlotthauer , Denise | July 29 Winkler , Mary |
| July 15 Morris , Kaitlin | July 29 Lane , Matthew |
| July 16 Paquette , Robert | July 30 Guntly , Thomas |
| July 16 Dalton , Steven | July 30 Hanke , Richard |
| July 17 Secord , Nina | July 31 Gundrum , Kay |
| July 19 Grandinetti , Tony | July 31 Lepien , Alexander |
| July 19 Kaminski , Emma | |

Little Lambs Preschool

First United Methodist Church
Hartford, WI



Little Lambs Preschool is still open for enrollment this Fall. If you or anyone you know is interested, Please call Doreen at (920)

209-5823 or e-mail vanfam5@charter.net. Thank you!

Mission Trip Update

Thank you to everyone who has supported the mission trip team this year with prayers and financial support. There are 50 of us going to New Castle, PA from July 28-August 5 to serve and praise God by doing home repairs and sharing God's love. The cost is \$419 per person which pays for food and lodging (at a local school), high quality worship services each day, and materials for home repairs. Here is how we raised our money this year: We received gifts of \$200 from United Methodist Women, \$1,500 from the Endowment Board, and \$200 from the Hartford Rotary Club. Our fundraisers included \$233.30 from Sentry receipts; \$1,079.39 from 3 separate brat fries; \$248.90 from 2 aluminum can drives; \$5,500 from working the Hartford Jaycees Haunted House; \$1,167.50 from the pie auction; \$850 from flamingo flocking; \$1,668 from candy bar sale; \$423.63 from the penny challenge; \$1,287.48 from the Pampered Chef party; \$416 from Hahn True Value Plant Card sale; \$550 from various raking jobs; \$1,214.01 from coffee hours; and \$2,053.19 so far from the first 3 Brewers games. Plus we have profited over \$10,000 since Denise Schlotthauer started the Scrip program for us 2 years ago. Thank you to Becki Swenson, Lisa DuPont, and Kelly Jahn for continuing this program. Thanks also to the many people who have worked and supported these fundraisers!

Sincerely,
Carla Kramoris
Mission trip treasurer

MAY BIRTHDAYS

The following birthdays were inadvertently left out of the May Newsletter. Our apologies.

- May 29** **Diaz**, Alexander
May 30 **Zeller**, Georgina
May 30 **Arveson**, Arv
May 30 **Boyd**, Chelsea
May 31 **Kundinger**, Brian
May 31 **Pfotenhauer**, Joseph
May 31 **Retzlaff**, Danial

From the desk of Pastor Brian



Annual
Conference '07

"Wholeness to
Holiness: Reaching
for Higher Ground"

I pulled into
the Conference
Parking lot at the

Middleton Marriott and saw the huge trailer there with volunteers busy loading flood buckets and blankets into the body of the truck. In a few minutes three men took the 45 washed buckets that FUMC Hartford had to share and loaded them too. There were others right behind me with their loads of goods. On the last day of Annual Conference they reported the net worth of contributions at \$62,897 plus about \$10,000 for shipping.

I was told previously that their had been some flooding in Iowa and a lot of flood buckets had been used up. The supply needed to be replenished. UMCOR can always use five gallon flood buckets packed with: souring pads, sponges, brush, towels, detergent, bleach, household cleaner, clothes pins and line, latex and work gloves, heavy trash bags, insect repellent, air freshener and a \$5.00 donation for shipping. All this goes to restore families to wholeness after a disaster.

Much was said about health and a new initiative of awareness was noted, "On the Move. Walking with Jesus." Apparently, our United Methodist clergy are in the lowest percentile in personal health. Pastors taking a Sabbath rest and time off was emphasized by the Bishop.

Counselor, Judy Lyons, spoke of the dangers of stress in all our lives in a message entitled "Breathe and Think." She said that stress has an enormous effect on the way we think and produces flight, fight and freeze reactions from the brain. The brain's emotional balancing mechanism becomes dysfunctional causing us to over react or under react. Stress causes the production of cortisol which blocks

normal connections in the brain. Our brains can learn to stay in the stress mode and decrease our ability to think clearly and act purposefully.

Dr. Lyons remind us that in Genesis 2:7 God is pictured as breathing life into the clay, giving life and in John 20:22 Jesus breathes on the frightened disciples saying how forgiveness works through them for the sake of the world. "Peace to you." Jesus said.

Breathe. Dr. Lyons offered a strategy telling us to breathe from the diaphragm asking everyone to place their hand on their stomach and feel the diaphragm drop as the lungs are filled with air. Breathing deeply and slowly is proven to contribute to relaxation, reducing stress.

Think. Dr. Lyons said that we need to think differently about how we see the world. "Twisted thinking" latches on to the fears and guilt of life. Examine your thinking patterns, she counseled. Are they founded on fears? Can you forgive and let go of the personal affronts and hurts you have suffered? Can you see yourself forgiving yourself and others as an act of divine Love? "Think differently," she said.

There is much more to say about this Annual WI Conference and the preparation for General Conference '08. I thought the health emphasis might benefit us all. "Breathe. Think. Walk with Jesus."

I thank Bill and Shirley Dow for letting me sit at their table and helping their church out as Oosterhuis' were not able to go to Conference this year.

Prayer & Praise

We will be discontinuing the Prayer and Praise worship services due to lack of participation. The last one was June 17th. We pray that everyone who has been touched by these services has been uplifted. The leadership team asks for your prayers as we hope to find a way to morph into a small-group Bible study that will feed us all.

WANTED

WANTED one or more high school graduates (any age) that are willing to be on a SUBSTITUTE Teacher List for LITTLE LAMBS PRESCHOOL. This is an on-call, PAID position, which you would have to be orientated for. You, of course MUST love children, hours are 8am-11:30am during school session only. If interested, please contact Doreen VanMinsel at (920) 209-5823 or vanfam5@charter.

Mission Committee

Northcott Neighborhood House has served the north side of Milwaukee since 1961 and was originated by the Wisconsin Annual Conference of the General Board of Global Ministries. This community organization strives to maintain family stability, lessen neighborhood tensions, combat community deterioration and provide a variety of programs and services to area residents. Approximately 10,000 residents are served annually through such programs as teen and pre-teen after-school programs, tutoring, Head Start, health screenings, emergency food supplies, home ownership counseling and much, MUCH more! For additional information, check out the website at www.wisconsinumc.org/missions/Northcott.html.

Northcott Neighborhood House will be the recipient of all proceeds collected by the Mission Committee during the months of July, August and September. Donations to this project can be made as loose offerings during the second Sundays of the afore mentioned months, during the Mission Committee sponsored coffee hours between services on the same Sundays or through a specially marked donation via the offer-tory envelopes.

New District Superintendent

Effective July 1, 2007 Jorge Mayorga-Solis, from Nicolet & Winnebago District Superintendent to Metro North & Metro South District Superintendent

Summertime Giving

With the warmer weather comes vacations and family fun, and we hope everyone has a great time. Please try not to forget the needs of the church, even if you are unable to attend regularly during the summer months.

Finance Committee

IRA Transfers for 2007

The IRS has made a special concession good only for 2007 tax year regarding transferring money from an IRA to a Qualified Charity. Details are below.

The following is intended to inform and provide clarity to taxpayers regarding IRS Notice 2007-7 which allows for a tax free transfer from IRAs to Qualified Charities for the 2007 tax year. The following is for informational purposes only and all questions should be directed to a tax consultant. Details of the law are outlined below:

- The provision applies to the 2007 tax year and is only designated for IRA owners or beneficiaries who have reached the age of 70 ½.
- Applies to IRAs as well as inactive SEP and SIMPLE IRAs. 401(k) and other employer plans do not apply.
- Direct transfers must be made directly from the IRA to the charitable organization.

- The maximum exempt amount of the transfer is \$100,000 and the transfer can satisfy the RMD (Required Minimum Distribution).
- The contributed amount can NOT be taken for a charitable deduction as it is NOT taxable.
- The distribution can satisfy any outstanding pledge to the organization without causing a prohibit transaction.

In summation, IRA owners who are over the age of 70 ½ are allowed, for 2007 only, to make their RMD (and more, up to \$100,000) directly payable to a charity with no tax consequences. In other words, the 2007 RMD will be satisfied in the form of a direct transfer and thus the funds will not contribute to the individual's taxable income. Please note that all of these contributions must be made by December 31, 2007 to qualify.

Help ReStore

Habitat for Humanity's ReStore is now open! The store is located at 325 Chestnut St., in West Bend. The hours are Thursday 10am-6pm, Friday 10am-6pm and Saturday 8am-4pm. (Donations are accepted during business hours)

Selling new and gently used building materials: doors, windows, plumbing, cabinets, hardware, molding, toilets, sinks, lighting fixtures, paint, ceramic tile, and flooring...

"A Second Chance for Building Materials"

Fun Stuff

- To know the strength of the anchor, you need to feel the storm.
- Going to church doesn't make you a Christian any more than going to McDonald's makes you a hamburger.
- Happiness without reason is the ultimate freedom.
- Worry is the darkroom in which negatives are developed.
- Jesus built a bridge with two boards and three nails.
- Even Jesus had a fish story.
- People we like the least need our love the most.
- Jesus can turn your E-F-I-L around.
- Eternity is a long time to think about what you should have done.
- The Ten Commandments are not multiple choice.
- Be nice to your kids. They'll be choosing your nursing home.

Song Lyrics

Me and God

By: Josh Turner

There ain't nothing that can't be done By
me and God
Ain't nobody gonna come in between me
and God
One day we'll live together Where the
angels trod
Me and God
Early in the morning talking it over Me and
God
Late at night talking it over Me and God
You could say we're like two peas in a pod
Me and God

Chorus:

He's my Father
He's my friend
The beginning
And the end
He rules the world
With a staff and rod
We're a team
Me and God

I am weak and he is strong Me and God
He forgives me when I'm wrong Me and
God
He's the one I lean on When life gets hard
Me and God

Lori's Notes

Continued from page 1

children, consistent and quality childcare is a must for a current church. Knowing this as well as knowing the difficulty we have providing volunteer nursery care for both services during the summer months, the SPRC agreed to apply a small amount of the budgeted Director of Childcare Nursery funds toward hiring two to four individuals to work in the nursery each Sunday from July 03 through September 02, 2007. Melissa Richards, our Nursery Coordinator, has worked hard to make this idea into a reality. So, be sure to check out Noah's Ark Kid's Club Nursery and to give Melissa and me your feedback on this new development in our outreach to families with young children.

9. Be sure to attend the church picnic the evening of July 27 at church. It'll be a fun time and an opportunity to send our Mission Trip Team off with prayer and fellowship.

10. The Christmas Program and Easter Program for the Sunday School will be decided during a July 15, 9:45 a.m. meeting. Please join Pam Brown, Dawn Lynch, Veronica Tetrick and Lori Vander Pas in this important decision.

Thank You

Thank You to Perry & Barb Hahn of Hahn's True Value for donations of flowers for the cross flower bed.

Fair Trade

Traveling this summer? Need a special hostess gift? Consider a 'Fair Trade' purchase from the Mission Committee's self-service display located in Fellowship Hall near the coffee pots. A variety of regular and decaf coffee, tea, hot chocolate and candy bars are available for purchase. All proceeds go toward various missions FUMC Committee Members elect to promote. Thank you for your support and ENJOY!

a visit to UNITED METHODIST CHILDREN SERVICES

Shelly Olson

As we look around the church, most of us have the support we need in life. We have the church, family and friends. Unfortunately, not everyone can have the support we have and often take for granted. United Methodist Children's Services is an organization that plans to make a difference in the lives of women, children, and their families.

UMCS is in Milwaukee, in an area that may cause some of us to feel uncomfortable. Driving to UMCS, seeing its building/transitional housing/day care, reality set in. But, like the saying goes, "a book should not be judged by its cover." No matter what the area may look like, it is what UMCS does that's important.

Upon arriving at UMCS, after an interesting parallel parking experience with myself driving, Pastor Brian, Lori Vander Pas, and Doug Maschmann, from Colgate UMC and I were greeted and welcomed by Rev. Jack Stubbs. We were then escorted into a "crammed" classroom adapted for a presentation. Rev. Cindy Thompson called "Miracles Happen Here." A retired Milwaukee police detective talked about his experience of effectively closing down drug houses near the UMCS building. Perry Huyck, the UMCS Director told us of the partnerships with Washington Park Association and other area organizations to transform the area to an

increasingly positive place to live and raise families.

UMCS has been serving women, children and their families for 45 years. Jessica Laven, UMCS Social Worker, told us about her work with transition living. It is UMCS goal to help women and their families to become organized, find their footing and stay on track. Transitional living programs are set up to provide safe, affordable housing and on-site social services with childcare. The programs are designed for single parents and low-income families. The women who are in the program agree to set and work on specific goals. Goals are those that relate to education, employment, finance and personal issues.

Volunteers are always graciously welcomed. Food and clothing are always a need. UMCS has a family resource center distributing food and clothing to low-income families and individuals. UMCS has the largest food pantry in Milwaukee County serving 27,000 people per year. In the future, the food pantry hopes to keep reaching out to many people in need. The program is also working on building more transitional housing.