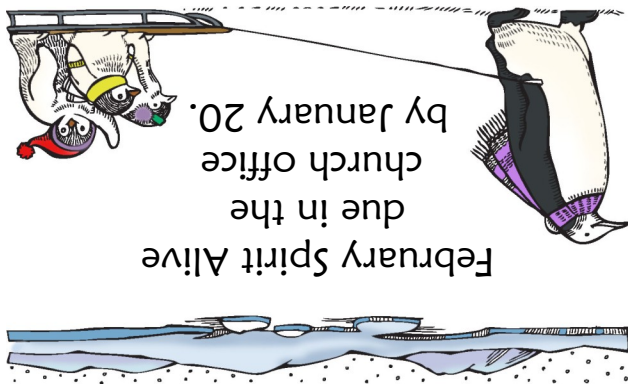


**NO CHURCH COUNCIL MEETING IN  
JANUARY. The first Church Council  
meeting of 2012 will be Thursday,  
February 2 at 7:00 pm.**



February Spirit Alive  
due in the  
church office  
by January 20.

League starts sometime in January. Games are played at First Christian  
Church on Tuesdays. Please sign up if you are interested in playing. Sign  
up is on bulletin board. Any questions, contact Terry Klepp.

## Church League Volleyball



First United Methodist Church  
118 West Jackson Street  
Morris, IL 60450  
815-942-0809

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# Spirit Alive

## January 2012

## Staff

### Pastors

Scott McClellan

Scott@morrisumc.com

Deborah Percell

Deb@morrisumc.com

### Financial Secretary

Judy Burns

Judy@morrisumc.com

### Church Secretary

Julie Pierce

Julie@morrisumc.com

### Choir Director

Mary MacAdams

### Organist

Cheryle Larson

### Custodian

Don Kundert

### Preschool Director

Lori Woodard

preschool@morrisumc.com

### Sunday School

### Superintendent

sundayschool@morrisumc.com

### Children's Choir

### Director

Leann Hill

### Hand Bell Choir Director

Millie Dyer

### *A Note From Your Pastor . . .*

Dear Friends:

Martin Thielen, a United Methodist pastor from Tennessee, tells the story of a man named Danny. When they first met Danny said to him, "Preacher, you need to know I am an atheist. I don't believe the Bible. I don't like organized religion. And I can't stand self-righteous, judgmental Christians." Over the next several months Danny and Martin had several conversations and became good friends. One day, after a long conversation about God, religion and faith, Danny announced, "I decided to upgrade from an atheist to an agnostic." A few weeks later he said, "I've had an epiphany. I realize that I don't reject Christianity. Instead, I reject the way that intolerant Christians *package* Christianity." A few weeks after that conversation, Danny said, "Martin, you've just about convinced me on this religion stuff. So I want to know—what's the least I can believe and still be a Christian?"

That question lead Martin Thielen to write a book with that title: *What's the Least I Can Believe and Still Be a Christian?* That book is going to be the basis for a seven-week sermon series which Pastor Deb and I will be preaching beginning on Jan. 7 & 8.

John Wesley liked to use a quote which is usually attributed to St. Augustine: "In essentials, UNITY; in non-essentials, LIBERTY; and in all things, CHARITY." The question then becomes: what are the essentials of the Christian Faith? It seems that different churches and individuals have their own understanding of what a "good" Christian needs to believe, and how a "good" Christian should act. This series will hopefully give some insights into what is most important in our faith.

During this series we will look at several things that Christians don't need to believe. For example, we don't need to believe that good Christians don't doubt or that it's OK for Christians to be judgmental and obnoxious.

However, we will spend most of the time looking at what Christians do need to believe. In short, Christians need to believe in Jesus—his life, teachings, example, death, and resurrection. A great benefit of these beliefs is that they provide promising answers to life's most profound questions, including, What matters most? Am I accepted? Where is God? What brings fulfillment? What about suffering? Is there Hope?

Please plan to join us for this series at either our Saturday evening or Sunday morning services. Hopefully this will be a time for us all to celebrate and strengthen our faith together.

Peace,  
Pastor Scott

# News of the flock

## *Hospitalized . . .*

Bud Male

Bessie Hexdall

Lila Dite

George Dare

## *The beginning of life in faith . . .*

Baptized in December was Brennan Perrine, son of Shannon Perrine.

## *The beginning of life eternal . . .*

Remember the following as they deal with the loss of a loved one:

~ Bob & Marge Olson on the death of his sister, Norma White

~ Steve Holtan & family on the passing of his father, Stanford Holtan



## *St. Vincent's Table*

I thank everyone who has helped prepare, serve and donate to St. Vincent's Table during this past year. We will be serving 4 meals for the needy again in 2012. There will be more updates and dates later. I truly appreciate everyone's help with this project.

Millie Dyer

## *Bell Choir*



The FUMC hand bell choir has enjoyed performing during the holiday season. We are on break until January 4. Practices are held Wednesdays in fellowship hall at 5:00 pm. Come join us. If you have questions, please call Millie Dyer (815-942-5068).



Thanks to all who made beautiful crafts and homemade goodies for the UMW Annual Mini-Craft Bazaar and Bake Sale. Also, thanks to all who purchased our crafts. We made \$1,395 to be used towards mission.

*Thank You Notes*

Dear Friends at First United Methodist Church,

Thank you for your donation of food and coordinating the food drive for We Care of Grundy County, Inc. We appreciate your thoughtfulness and this very welcome addition to our food pantry.

In these economic times, many families are struggling just to make ends meet, and are unsure of where to turn for help. In 2010 we have served 5,064 families and 2,586 of those families have been served at our food pantry. Thank you for supporting us and in turn giving hope and help to the community.

Sincerely,

Denise Gaska, Executive Director

To the Christmas carolers:

Thank you all! You made my holidays complete! Your thoughtfulness at the holidays was greatly appreciated.

Millie Williamson

Thank you to our Morris Methodist Family,

When we are praying for someone else, or something, I often wonder just how effective I am. But I am here to tell you, your thoughts and prayers made a very warm glow around our hearts when Gerry was going through the cancer diagnosis and treatments. And when the biopsies came back "benign" the warmth we felt from your prayers was more special than ever. The Prayer Shawl was a very thoughtful gift during a difficult time in our lives. Our thank you goes out to each and everyone of you. God Bless you all.

Jan & Gerry White

CHRISTMAS CANTATA:

The Memorials Committee would like to thank the family of Dorothy Brady for the gift used to purchase our cantata music this year.



# Word from Finance

With the holidays behind us we start a new calendar year full of hope and thankfulness. We still have some time to finish our pledges to end our financial year for the church. In the coming weeks you will also be hearing about the upcoming stewardship campaign. We hope that you will thoughtfully consider your continued stewardship to our church and all it encompasses. Hoping for a happy and healthy 2012 for you all.

Lorraine Heffner



# COMMUNICATIONS DIRECTOR

Our Lay Leadership Committee is looking for a volunteer for the position of Communications Director. This person will help our church enhance and expand communications of church activities to our members and the larger community. They will solicit information from groups and committees in the church and then promote the activities through our bulletin and newsletter, website and Facebook, newspaper and radio, etc. If you have an interest in helping our congregation through this important new position please speak to Pastor Scott.

UMW Circle News

- ~ Executive Board is Tuesday, January 3 at 6:30 pm at the church
- ~ God's Girls is Thursday, January 19 at 7:00 pm at the church.
- ~ Martha Circle is Thursday, January 19 at 9:00 am at the church
- ~ Rebekah Circle is Thursday, January 19 at 7:15 pm at Saratoga Towers
- ~ Monday Circle is Monday, January 16 at 12:30 pm at the church
- ~ Wednesday Circle is Wednesday, January 18 at 12:30 pm at Letty Mae's Tea Room

## January Birthdays

1 Jeff VanPelt	15 Mary MacAdams	23 Carol Martin
3 Samantha Connery	Meadow Miskell	24 Jennifer Higgins
Laura Lyle	Merri Jo Welsh	Mark Trusheim
Cindy Tallman	16 Tiffany Welsh	25 Alaina Close
4 Cassandra Jones	17 James Hausman	James Gutzman
Cody Weist	Sydney Larson	Ryan Wilkinson
5 Monica Brehm	Nathanael Sampson	26 Madonna Anderson
Mackenzie Messina	18 Joy Hartshorn	Kaitlyn Ehrler
7 Nancy Enervold	Kurt Maubach	27 Stephanie Olson
Brooke Jacobs	19 Thomas Connor	28 Shirley Moore
Candace Larson	David Dix	29 Renee Garmon
8 Robert Miskell	Jessica Frederick	Doug Sklut
9 Hannah Carson	20 Jessica Murphy	30 Mark Fahey
Lila Dite	Brett Sager	Melvin Fight
Amy Doyle	Ryan Spole	Michelle Murphy
Laura Jager	21 Bill Burns	Doug Read
Riley Krueger	Nathan Diaz	Nell West
Michael Perry	William Ringer	31 Marie Taylor
11 James Bumgarner	22 Bill Eason	Peg Sjostrom
Tim Kindelspire	Lorna Hardman	
13 Lloyd Jones	Sandra Wols	
Ron McDaniel	Tony Xydakis	
14 Gene Gang	23 Margaret Bates	
Terry Steinbach	Mark Conley	
Laurie Wantland	Gwen Johnson	





# Upcoming Events

<b>Jr. High</b>	January 8	4:30—6:00 pm At the church	Gathering
	January 22	4:30—6:00 pm At the church	Gathering

<b>Sr. High</b>	January 8	7:00—8:30 pm At the church	Evening Gathering
	January 15—16	Ski Trip	Just for Fun
	January 29	9:00 am Worship Service	Pack the Pews
	January 29	7:00—9:00 pm Training Session #1	ASP Night



**Church Photo Directory**

**New Pictorial Directory Coming**

Save these dates—Life Touch will be here to take family photographs for a new church directory on March 7—10 and 20—21. More information will be forthcoming.

### VISION TEAM OPENINGS

We have openings on two of our Vision Teams. The Fellowship Vision Team plans social events for the members of our congregation. Examples are: Turkey Supper, Deck the Halls, Lenten Suppers, Just Desserts. The Celebration Vision Team helps to put together our weekly worship services as well as plans special services such as Ash Wednesday, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, etc. If you would be interested in serving on one of these Teams, please speak to Pastor Scott.

### SEVEN TIMELY LESSONS FOR TODAY'S PARENTS!

- The 10 Best Gifts You'll Ever Give Your Kids**  
*It's Never too Late to Become a Better Parent*
- How to Listen So Kids Will Talk & How to Talk So Kids Will Listen**  
*Staying Tuned In So They Don't Tune You Out*
- Discipline Isn't Spelled P-U-N-I-S-H-M-E-N-T**  
*Why Teaching and Learning Are Better than Punishment and Penalties*
- 10 Ways to Improve Your child's Self-Confidence**  
*A Step-by-Step Plan that Works Wonders*
- Caution: Anger Ahead!**  
*Observing the Warning Signs before Tempers Flare*
- Birth Order—And What You Need to Know About It**  
*Recognize Your Children's Differences and Turn them into Advantages*
- Standing Up to the New Goliath**  
*Helping Kids Overcome the Negative Influence of the Internet, the Media and Technology*

Starting Sunday, January 8, 2012 during Sunday School hour.