

May, 2015

The Observer



First United Methodist Church

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An E-pistle ...

from Bishop Mike

"Making a difference in Indiana ... and around the world."



Recently, the left rear tire on my car starting losing air. My car has a warning light to let me know when a tire is low on air pressure, so each time the warning light came on I would stop at a gas

station and put some more air into the tire. With modern tires it is almost impossible to tell a tire is low just by looking at it, so I was grateful for the warning light. When it got to the point that I had to add air nearly every day, I took my car in for a tire repair. Unfortunately they discovered a nail in the sidewall of my tire, so the tire is ruined, and I had to get a new one.

That slow leak has become, for me, a parable of what can go wrong with our spiritual life, with our life as a church, and with our ministry as lay or clergy leaders. We can get a "slow leak" and lose energy, passion, drive, commitment, or direction. It can happen so slowly that we don't notice. The decline can be indiscernible to others, and it can deceive us as well.

Finally the "warning light" goes on – and our church statistics look bad, our worship becomes dull, our work ethic declines, or our trust in God's grace diminishes so much that we become exhausted from doing ministry on our strength, skill, insight, and desire.

I have gone through times when my own ministry seemed to have a "slow leak" – haven't you? I have seen churches which have lost

"I am remembering what one rancher told me about his herd of sheep. He said, "Sheep nibble their way into being lost." It's that way with our ministry, our spiritual life, and our church focus. We don't set out with a plan or desire to get lost, we just "nibble our way into being lost" as we make hundreds of little decisions without a clear focus upon God's will for our lives.



their focus and direction – haven't you? It happens slowly. It happens without any planning or intentionality. Churches don't vote and say, "Let's slowly decline over the next 20 years." Pastors don't plan to lose their way. Lay leaders don't choose to get discouraged. It happens slowly.

To change the metaphor from leaking tires, I am remembering what one rancher told me about his herd of sheep. He said, "Sheep nibble their way into being lost." It's that way with our ministry, our spiritual life, and our church focus. We don't set out with a plan or desire to get lost, we just "nibble our way into being lost" as we make hundreds of little decisions without a clear focus upon God's will for our lives. Each of those hundreds of little decisions can seem inconsequential on their own, but they add up – they add up to a "flat tire" without enough Spirit, and they add up to nibbling our way to being lost.

Do you have a "slow leak" in your spiritual life? The Good News is that you can be re-inflated by the Spirit of the Living Christ who stands ready to energize you. So, watch for the warning signs, don't get comfortable with "good enough" or mediocrity, and don't nibble your way into being lost. Receive a fresh dose of the Spirit to re-inflate your life and ministry.

Thanks! ***Family Work Day a Success***

Lots of help cleaning up the church!

Sandee Frey said the turn out for the Family Work Day on Sunday, April 26, after church was tremendous! Two Sunday school rooms and the nursery got a thorough going over! Tom and Sandee fixed lunch for the willing workers, which they all enjoyed.

More Projects to Do!



It may sound strange, but it's really fun to clean with a group! Just ask the ones who helped on the Family Work Day or the ones who helped clean up and straighten the library!

Just so you know, Tom and Sandee Frey are going to be doing more cleaning and painting. The library, where Tom patched the walls, still needs to be painted. Sandee is also planning to clean an upstairs Sunday school room. Dates haven't been set yet, but they'll be available soon.

See Sandee if you would like to help! The more, the merrier



At left, one of the girls' bedrooms after renovation. Some of the houses on the property had to be demolished, while others could be restored.

Gary & Lou Ann Andis Help Out!

Recently, Gary and Lou Ann Andis spent time in Jackson, Mississippi volunteering with a group from Indianapolis at the Methodist Children's Home .

Lou Ann writes:

The place we worked at is the Methodist Children's Home of Mississippi. The place is 160 acres. It was once owned by the Baptist Conference then was not in use for over five years. The Methodist Conference bought it and is in the process of bringing it

back to life. Last year, Gary worked on one of the houses and we were able to see it. It now has ten girls living in it. It was wonderful, bright, clean and a great home for the girls. This year they worked on another house hoping to have it ready for more girls by mid-July. The group we work with has been together for over ten years, they all work together like a well-oiled machine. They still have trouble seeing Gary's visions! (Don't we all!!) It was a great week of serving.

More on Methodist Children's Homes

Who does the Methodist Children's Homes serve?

The majority of our children living on campus are those that came to us through the Department of Human Services after they were removed from abusive or neglectful homes. A few of our children are placed privately because of authority issues.

How many children live on campus?

Right now, 53 children live on campus, and the maximum is 56. This total changes weekly as new children arrive and others have the opportunity to be reunified with their parents, move to independent living or are placed with foster families.

What are the ages and genders of the children?

We have both girl cottages and boy cottages on our campus with ages ranging between 10-21 years old. Our foster care families can minister to both boys and girls ranging from 0-18 years old.



**Reservation
Deadline
Monday,
May 25**

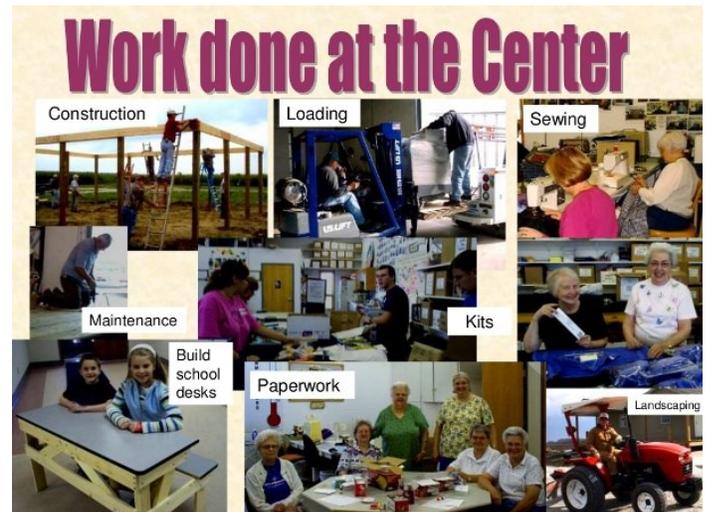
Volunteers Needed!

Springfield, Illinois, July 19-23

Kellie Mayes from Salem United Methodist is heading up this mission trip. There is space for 32 people all sharing living quarters on the property. The cost is \$130 per person from ages 11 to 111! All youth fees will be paid by our Wabash Valley Cluster*83!! Kellie needs reservations and 1/2 the money by May 25.

Highlights of the 2014 trip:

- 508 personal dignity kits completed**
- Mowed grass**
- 75 flood buckets prepared**
- Repaired bikes**
- 80 boxes of 560 layette kits completed**



Kits are assembled and packed.



For more information, call Kellie at 812-239-4779 or 765-3647 or read the brochure on the table in the gathering area. You may sign up on the sheet prepared in the gathering area also. Checks should be made out to Midwest Distribution Center and given to Kellie Mayes.



It's Summer Theatre Time! ***The Rainmaker***

Thursday, July 16, 7:30 pm
\$15 per person
Eat out before the play!
(More details to follow.)



If you would like to go to the play, *The Rainmaker*, at Indiana State, please contact either Peggy Strobel, peggy.strobel@gmail.com or Karen Carlson, carlsonsl966@gmail.com

“In the drought-stricken West during the Great Depression, the Curry family ranch is about as dry as daughter Lizzie’s chances of finding a husband. Out of the blue pops Starbuck, who promises to make it rain for \$100. Enlisting this charmer’s professed charms brings more than what HC Curry and his sons bargained for—it opens the love floodgates as well.”

Prayer Team Forming! Thursdays at 1:00pm



All are welcome! Please contact Pastor Tom if you are interested. There will be a time of prayer for those on the Prayer List and others needing intercessory prayer.

If another day would work better for you, let him know.

-----A second Prayer Team could be established!



Esther Circle **Plans Dinner**

Next meeting:

Tues., May 19, 7:00 pm

@Phyllis Marsolf's

Kathy Davis was hostess for the Esther Circle. The April 21 meeting was held at the church and Davis opened the meeting by sharing a devotion, “Miracle of Friendship.”

Members attending were Karen Hartman, Lou Ann Andis, Ruth Hollingsworth, Mary Ten Have, Martha Rutan, Margie Lapworth and Phyllis Marsolf. The minutes were read and approved, and the treasurer’s report was given.

Plans were finalized for the luncheon to be

served to the Parke/Vermillion Retired Teachers Association on May 11. Also, Phyllis Marsolf will host the May 19 circle meeting and Margie will have the lesson.

Margie’s lesson for the evening was from a devotional, *365 Moments to Cherish*, “Even God Can’t Get In” and “Clergymen.”

The meeting closed with a prayer circle, refreshments were served by the hostess and a time of fellowship was enjoyed.

Congratulations to All the Graduates!



Graduation Sunday is June 14th!



Info & pic about YOUR grad is requested!

Please turn in by May 15

Is someone in your family graduating from high school or college?

If there is, we would like some information from you so we can honor them on Graduation Sunday, June 14, during church services. We, also, would like a photo (5x7 or smaller) to place on our bulletin board during the month of May and June (you will get it back). We need some pertinent information to go along with the photo. Please send some information about

the student—from where will he/she graduate? What is his/her major field of study? What does he/she plan to do upon graduation? What are some of his/her future plans, hopes and dreams?

Please type this onto a plain, white sheet of paper and place it into Lou Ann Andis' or Sandee Frey's mailbox at church by May 15. This gives us some time to prepare the bulletin board for display.

Thank you so much for taking the time to help us honor your loved one!



Attention High School Seniors!

Clinton First United Methodist Church has a **scholarship** for you if you will be attending college or doing university level study in the fall of this year.

Do you qualify? Please check out the criteria on the table in the gathering area or on our website at <http://clintonfirst.org/fumc/resources/scholarships> under "Resources" and see if you qualify to receive this one-time monetary award of \$250 to help defray the costs of higher learning.

We, at Clinton First, are proud of our senior high school students and wish to see them succeed in their future endeavors. Jeremiah 29:11 says, "For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future." Good luck and may God bless you all the days of your life! ----

The Graduating High School Senior Scholarship Committee.

Sunrise Service Plus!!!

Remember Easter Sunday? Remember how chilly it was on April 5th? If you attended the Sunrise service that day, you had to dress warmly because part of it was outside. Pastor Tom had a fire ring with a fire blazing, which labored vainly to take the chill off. However, the weather didn't matter because the message and the fellowship warmed our hearts! A great breakfast, prepared by the men, followed, which also warmed us, not to forget the beautiful Easter worship service after that. It was a wonderful, inspiring Easter at Clinton First!



Karen Hartman stokes the fire as Kathy and Tom Davis look on.

Picture below-Praise Band performs at Sunrise Service L to R Freida Rutan, Karen Hartman & Deanna James. Gary Andis and Hannah Hoover are in background. Seated, Milton and Mary Ten Have



Picnic Time



curve right (south) onto 360 E. Continue 4
behind the chain link

GAMES!

fenc-

FUN!



ing.

FELLOWSHIP

More details to come!



Emmaus Gathering at our church

Friday, June 19 at 6:15 pm

**Joyce Harvey recently completed the Walk to Emmaus--
May it continue to be a joy and a blessing in her life!**

Our church is host!--CFUMC is hosting the El Shaddai Emmaus Community gathering. Even if you haven't attended a Walk, you're welcome to come and fellowship and worship with us and be updated with the latest news in the community. We begin with finger foods at 6:15 and 7:00 is worship. Please come and meet your local community. Contact Brian Hutchinson. Read the following to better understand what it's all about.

About the Walk to Emmaus

The Walk to Emmaus is an experience of Christian spiritual renewal and formation that begins with a three-day short course in Christianity. It is an opportunity to meet Jesus Christ in a new way as God's grace and love is revealed to you through other believers. The Walk to Emmaus experience begins with the prayerful discernment and invitation from a sponsor. After one accepts this invitation they complete an application. The Emmaus leaders prayerfully consider each applicant and in God's time, the person is invited to attend a three-day experience of New Testament Christianity as a lifestyle.

Following the three-day experience, participants are joined in small groups to support each other in their ongoing walk with Christ.

Who should go to Emmaus?

Emmaus is open to members of any Christian denomination. Emmaus is for the development of Christian leaders who:

- >Are members of a local church
- >Have a desire to strengthen their spiritual lives
- >May have unanswered questions about their faith
- >Understand that being a Christian involves responsibility
- >Are willing to dedicate their everyday lives to God in an ongoing manner.

What happens on the Emmaus Weekend?

You will enjoy three days of singing, learning, laughing, worshipping, reflecting, praying and participating in small groups. Discussions center around fifteen talks given by laity and clergy. These talks present the theme of God's grace, how that grace comes alive in the Christian community and how it is expressed in the world. You'll also discover how grace is real in your life, how you live a life of grace, and how you bring that grace to others.

You will have the opportunity to participate in the daily celebration of Holy Communion and to understand more fully the body of Christ. You will experience God's grace through the prayers and acts of anonymous service offered by the Emmaus community. You will leave with an experience of Christian love in action that will equip you for new levels of grace-filled service and leadership.

What Happens After Emmaus Weekend?

You are invited to have a closer walk with Christ for the rest of your life; this is called the Fourth Day. Those who attend a Walk to Emmaus are encouraged to: 1. Expand their own spiritual lives through worship, study and active participation in their local church. 2. Become more active disciples of Christ in service to the world. To nurture this process of discipleship, the Emmaus movement offers specific opportunities. First, groups of four to six people meet weekly to reflect on their spiritual journey and encourage one another. Second, there are monthly community gatherings where Emmaus participants meet for fellowship, worship and instruction. Third, community members are regularly informed of the support needs of upcoming Walk to Emmaus weekends, and other opportunities for servant leadership

Spring

2015 CALENDAR

MAY

| | | | |
|-------------|-----------|----------|---|
| Monday | May 11 | 12:00pm | Esther Circle serves luncheon for Parke/Vermillion Retired Teachers Association |
| Thursday | May 14 | 6:00 pm | Radical Hospitality & Intentional Faith Development meeting |
| Friday | May 15 | ----- | Submission info on graduates due for (p 6) |
| Tuesday | May 19 | 7:00 pm | Esther Circle meets at Phyllis Marsolf's (p.5) |
| Monday | May 25 | ----- | Deadline-Midwest Mission Distribution Center fees (p4) |
| Weds. | May 28-30 | ----- | Indiana Annual Conference of the UMC |
| Sunday | May 31 | 9:30 am | Pastor Terry Jeffers from Wayside UMC will preach |
| JUNE | | | |
| Sunday | June 14 | 9:30 am | Graduation Sunday  |
| Tuesday | June 16 | 7:00 pm | Esther Circle Meeting at Margie Lapworth's |
| Friday | June 19 | 6:15 pm | Emmaus Gathering at our church (p.) |
| Friday | June 26 | ----- | Submission deadline for Clinton First scholarship (p) |
| Sunday | June 28 | After SS | Church picnic at Inland Container Park (p) |

Regular Events Calendar



Sunday 9:15 am Worship service
 Communion 1st Sunday
 First Sunday Donations go to
 Food Pantry, Hillcrest or CAMA

11:00 am Sunday school for all ages
 Tues. 7:00 pm Worship at Chateau
 Thurs. 1:00 pm Prayer Team meeting
 Thurs. 2:00 pm Pack for Backpack Ministry



Prayer Concerns

*Telecare Prayer Chain: If you have a prayer request or concern, email at clintonfirst@gmail.com



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Clinton First United Methodist Church

Join the Prayer Team!
Meets on Thursdays at 1:00 pm



Graduation Sunday, June 14!