

The Messenger

Central United Methodist Church

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300 Mary Street
Evansville, Indiana 47710-1292
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A HOT-BUTTON ISSUE THAT NEEDS COOLER HEADS AND BALANCED RESPONSE

If I lived in California I do not know how I would have voted on Proposition 8. That is partly because I do not know the exact wording of the initiative. (When we talk about legal policy, specific words do make a difference.) More importantly, I say this because I see good points on both sides of the issue—and fallacies on both sides. Seeing both sides of a divisive social issue like “same-sex marriage” is a good way to make people on both sides of the issue mad at you. Still, I take that risk in sharing my thoughts, because I see an issue here that needs to be settled, for the good of all, so we can move on.

On the one hand, I am bothered by what seems to be an attempt to redefine the word “marriage” by the proponents of “same-sex marriage.” This word has a long history. Like other concepts, ideas about marriage have changed over the years (e.g. the vows in services today are equal and do not include “obey”) and vary even now among societies (e.g. some accept polygamy), but it has not previously been used to describe a relationship between two people of the same sex. Furthermore, it is a concept with strong religious connotations. Christianity (and every faith I know of) views marriage as “sacred” and recognizes this with a religious ritual. Governments can recognize whatever relationships they want, but to use “marriage” for these challenges both linguistics and religion, which I think is unwise.

On the other hand, I am bothered by what often comes across from “gay marriage” opponents as a denial of worth of some human beings and of freely chosen commitments between people. I follow both Jesus and Jefferson in believing in the sacred worth of every person, whether or not I agree with them or approve of their behavior. Every person deserves to be treated with dignity and should not be denied certain basic human rights without due process and just cause. Christians believe that people should use their sexuality consistently with God’s purpose for this part of our nature, while we may disagree about whether same-sex behavior is always wrong or should be judged by the same standards as heterosexual expressions (within committed, monogamous, non-coercive relationships). We should also recognize that sexual orientation and behavior are only a small part of people’s identity and life.

I think we are missing an important issue when the debate is focused on either “what is marriage?” or “what is moral?” The real issue has to do with the legal rights that government confirms on its citizens. As a nation, we already recognize that people are not to be discriminated against on the basis of race, religion or gender in employment, housing, accommodations, voting or legal-system

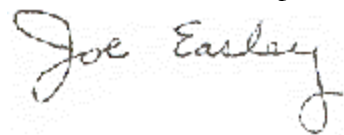
access. Many would add “sexual-orientation” to the list of factors on the basis of which people should not be denied their basic civil rights and legal protection. A few years ago, I wrote about why I believe that and shared how the social position of the United Methodist Church supports “Equal Rights Regardless of Sexual Orientation” (§162.J of The Book of Discipline, UMC 2008), even while it “does not condone the practice of homosexuality” (§161.F).

Federal and state governments recognize the family as a basic unit of society, deserving certain rights (e.g. hospital visitation), and family members are granted certain privileges (couples filing joint tax returns). I believe people in committed relationships should have equal access to these government-conferred rights, whether they are married or same-sex domestic partners. This is the legal issue at stake. Protecting equal legal rights is a responsibility of government, but neither defining morality nor redefining words are. We may disagree on morality and “marriage,” but a legal consensus is possible.

I don’t think the issue is going to go away, until we come up with some solution with broad support. That is not possible as long as we look at it in the terms of either extreme. It is bound to remain a very divisive issue that generates a lot of unnecessary anger and pain, until we find a way to move away from emotion-laden interpretations. I believe we need a process whereby two people in a committed “domestic partnerships” can have their relationship legally recognized and be given similar rights with their partner that married spouses have. I am sure I have not foreseen all the issues, but they can be addressed in the legal framework, which is the sphere of government, while churches address morality.

This is where I come out on “same-sex” marriage and why I invite dialogue and your prayers on this.

Your pastor,



REV. EASLEY ON VACATION JANUARY 19-25

Rev. Easley is taking a week of vacation January 19-25. He and Patti will be out of town most of that week. Call the church office for pastoral needs. The church staff and parish nurses will handle needs during this time, with the assistance of a pastor-on-call. New Director of Outreach Ministries **Mike Warneke** will be preaching that Sunday.

IN WORSHIP THIS MONTH

Our regular Sunday Schedule returns January 4:

8:30 Contemporary Worship
9:30 Sunday School
10:30 Traditional Worship

Jan. 4 Epiphany Sunday Communion
Scriptures: Matthew 2:1-12 and Psalm 72:1-7
Sermon: "A Leader with God's Justice"

Jan. 11 The Baptism of the Lord
Recognition of Officers, Committees and Teams
Scriptures: Genesis 1:1-5, Acts 19:1-7 and Mark 4:4-11
Sermon: "God's Spirit Brings Life"

Jan. 18 Human Relations Sunday
Scripture: Acts 10:1-8, 25-36
Sermon: "Can You See God's Vision?"

Jan. 25 **Michael Warneke** preaching

MIKE, ABBY AND GIDEON WARNEKE ARRIVE JANUARY 2 OR 3

Michael, Abby and Gideon Warneke are in the process of moving the week of New Years. They expect to bring in one load early that week and bring everything else the second time on Friday or Saturday. They will join us for worship on January 4, and Mike's first official day as our new Director of Outreach Ministries will be Monday, January 5. On the following Sunday evening, January 11 we will have a reception for him and his family as part of our Chili Cook-Off. You will want to be sure to sign up for that by January 4, whether or not you want to bring some of your own chili for the judging. Return the form elsewhere in this Messenger or in Sunday's bulletin or call the church office to do so. Mike will also have his first opportunity to preach at Central on January 25, when Rev. Easley is gone.

ROOF REPLACEMENT AND FLC WORK UNDERWAY

Work continues to replace the roof on the original church and Finke Hall. Lots of rain and some bitter cold meant Midwest Roofing only got in 2 full days of work in on it before Christmas. Pray for better weather so they can finish by mid January. Also, installation of the fire doors between the FLC and church building to complete required work for the FLC was slowed by having to order a different door jam to accommodate the required double layers of drywall, but we hope that will be also be done soon. It is still possible either project could cause minor short-term problems for going in or out of the building.



WELCOME WEDNESDAYS RESUME FEB. 4

Planning is underway for the studies, activities and suppers to be offered for next Welcome Wednesday series. It will be three weeks before Lent and three week during Lent: February 4, 11 and 18 and March 4, 11 and 18. Some things that will be offered throughout the six sessions: a study of the Gospel of John, Children's Choir and crafts, and Youth Fellowship. We are also planning some shorter 3-week series: a discussion study of The Shack, another pottery class, and something led by **Mike Warneke**. Watch shortly for details. In the middle of these meetings Lent begins on Ash Wednesday, February 25, when we will have a special worship service and may have a light meal preceding, as on the Welcome Wednesday nights.

Welcome Wednesdays

NEW OFFICERS AND MINISTRY TEAMS BEGIN

New church officers begin their term of service January 1, as do new ministry teams. Each of the teams will be meeting soon. If you have volunteered for one (or more) of these, watch for the announcement of the first meeting. If you have not, you still can "Join a Team." On January 11, we will recognize the new officers and those serving on the Church Council and its various committees, boards, teams, and task forces. 2009 Ministry Team leaders will have a short training meeting at 5:00 p.m. Monday, January 12, immediately before the Church Council at 6:00 p.m.

CENTRAL PRAYER TEAM

Our new prayer team is just getting started. We are praying for Nancy's ministries, Kids Club and Power, our new Outreach Ministry and the Director, that the roof gets replaced before bad weather and that God opens our hearts and minds as we worship together.

We appreciate your requests for prayers. Call **Carol Crabtree**, 402-1809, **Linda Harris**, 897-3179, or **Bennett and Doris Mullens**, 423-9251 and we will pass the request on to the rest of the team.

Early in January, we will have boxes in the church office, sanctuary and Child Care for requests to be dropped in.

Carol Crabtree, Prayer Team Leader

CHRISTIAN YOUNG ADULT SUMMER WORK OPPORTUNITY

Harvest Ministry Team, in the Illinois Great Rivers Conference, is accepting applications for the **2009 Harvest Summer Teams**. Now in its fourteenth year, Harvest, led by Tim Price, will be assembling a team of young adults to travel for eight weeks during the summer of 2009 as short term missionaries. The team will provide music / leadership for camps, churches, youth retreat and other events all over Illinois, Indiana, Missouri and the Midwest. To be on a Harvest Ministry Team you must be at least 18 years of age and must have completed the 12th grade. For more information about applying for a team please visit: http://www.harvestministryteams.com/about/summer_teams2009/index.html.

PAVERS AND GRANITE STONES

The Fun Fund Raising Committee is taking orders for pavers and granite stones that are to be placed under the FLC canopy. If you are interested, please contact **Gloria Millay** at 476-9988.



METHODIST TEMPLE OFFERS POVERTY STUDY

The Methodist Temple Church & Society Committee invites members of other churches to join them in a group study of how poverty is impacting people in our community. Some issues that they will look at are: employment opportunities, the availability of health care, affordable housing, and the emotional impact of poverty. We will begin by studying the book Bridges Out of Poverty by Ruby Payne, Phillip Devol and Terie Smith. We will also have a variety of guest speakers. The group will meet the second Monday of each month at 7 pm beginning in January. You are invited to share your experiences and insight with other concerned citizens! For more information call Methodist Temple at 812-476-1306



OUR SYMPATHY is extended to **Don Schwitz** and his family on the death of his wife **Lavern**. She died Thursday, November 27. The funeral was Monday, December 1 at Alexander North Chapel with burial at Alexander Memorial Park....and to **David Miller** and his family on the death of his mother, **Cleo Miller** who died December 13. Her funeral was December 16 at Ziemer Funeral Home East....and to the family and friends of Steve Hacker who died Monday, December 22. Steve had been the bass player for the Praise Band in the past.

CRIME FOLLOWS GAMBLING, CASINOS

Economists David B. Mustard of the University of Georgia and Earl L. Grinols of Baylor University examined crime data from each county in the United States between 1977 and 1996, comparing statistics from those counties which had casinos and those that did not. FBI figures for seven crime categories were surveyed: aggravated assault, rape, robbery, murder, larceny, burglary and auto theft. So what did the numbers suggest? "Crime rates were stable prior to opening [a casino], were slightly lower in the year of casino introduction, returned to approximately average levels for the next two or three years, and increased thereafter," Grinols and Mustard said. The most dramatic rise, for example, came in the category of robberies. By the fifth year of a casino's existence, the economists said, the number of robberies in a county with a casino had risen 136 percent.

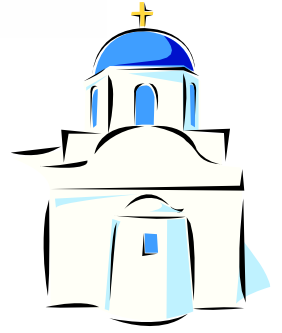


United Methodist Women

USED CELL PHONES

Do you have a cell phone you no longer use? Donate it to the UMKY Mt. Mission. They are able to turn these cell phones into funds for the UMKY Mt. Mission in Jackson, Kentucky through a program called the Cell-Fund Program. These will be mailed to the mission by the coordinator of this program. Each month two trucks come to the Evansville area for three days to pick up items from about 35 churches. We are not on the monthly schedule. However, items from the 'Rack Shack' that have not sold after several months are given to this mission for their Opportunity Stores.

Mary Ellen Hasenmyer



Child Care is very pleased to announce it is the recipient of a Capital Projects Grant from Berry Plastics. The Grant is in the amount of \$20,000, and will be used for various improvements to the Center, including new tables and chairs, carpeting, painting in nearly all classrooms, upgrades to lighting and other general repairs. The entire Board wishes to express our sincere appreciation to Berry Plastics for its continuing support of Child Care. Berry Plastics also contributed \$18,000 towards our outdoor playground a few years ago. With this donation, it brings the total financial support to \$38,000!

Need a New Year's Resolution? — Child Care could use volunteers to answer the phone or work in a classroom through lunch hours of 11:00 - 2:30 or nap time hours of 12:30 - 2:30. They could also use people that would be willing to fill in when they have teacher absences. All volunteers can work up to 8 hours a month without having to go through all of the checks required for Center personnel. If interested, please call Penny Staples, director 424-9461.

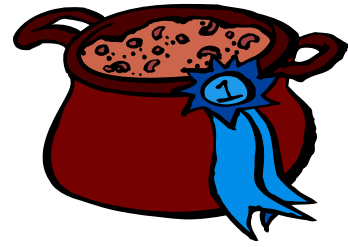
The center would like to thank **Dave Henzman** for all of his work as trustee chair. He has always been so gracious when called with issues at the center. Thank you!

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE 2010 CENSUS

Representatives of the U.S. Census Bureau are testing local applicants in preparations for the 2010 census. Both part-time and full-time positions will be needed from March 2009 through mid-2010. Positions include both field and office staff. Those applying must meet several standards—including U.S. citizenship, be 18 or older, have two forms of I.D.—military veterans can receive extra credit. For more information go to www.census.gov, or call 1-866-861-2010.

JANUARY BIRTHDAYS

- 1 Michael Miller
- 2 Kelsey Crow
John Schwartz
- 3 Rick Bonenberger
- 4 Jake Lowey
- 5 Joanna Moore
- 7 Gloria Millay
Chester Rycroft III
Andrew David Wilson
- 8 Ned Conder
Betty Martin
- 9 Reed Dugan
- 10 Kala Schu
Tammy Woodburn
- 11 Lexi Reid
Margaret Whicker
David Williams
- 12 Donna Davis
- 13 Christian Aki
- 14 Larry Meritt
Luke Muller
- 17 Thomas Lynch
- 18 Leon Upton
- 19 Charles Boberg
Twain Moore
- 20 David Adams
Colton Pugh
Jonell Walker
- 21 Jane A. Schmitt
- 22 Caroline Barron
Madison Meyerholtz
- 23 Jamie Jones
Dawson Rodgers
Doris Shoultz
- 24 Debra Schnakenburg
Linda Wambach
Lynn Yonts
- 25 Amaya Johnson
William Robinson
- 26 Tyler Brown
Rick Pittman
- 28 Karen Jones
Jon Renner
Judy West
- 29 Sandy Long
Jackson O'Bryan
- 31 Jessica Boberg



**It's Time for our 2nd Annual
CHILI COOK-OFF
JANUARY 11**

This is also your chance to meet and welcome our new Outreach Director, Mike Warneke and his family. January 11 is his first official Sunday in the job, so we would like to give them a warm (and spicy) reception.

***Sign up now for the Chili Cook-Off
And Welcoming Reception
at 5:30 p.m. Sunday, January 11
in the Family Life Center.***

Wanted: YOUR homemade chili for a church-wide tasting contest. (Crackers, chili pepper, shredded cheese and other common additives will be provided.) You will have a chance to vote for your favorite chili.

If you don't make chili, sign up to come anyway for dinner, the reception and the "Mystery Person" game! All ages welcome.

Complete and return the form below **to-day**—or call the church office (424-3574) with your reservations by Monday, January 5.

_____ Yes, I'll bring chili – You may share your recipe if you want.

_____ No chili, but I'll attend.

Name: _____

Number attending _____

Phone# _____

Children attending _____
(peanut butter sandwiches provided)




CALENDARS AVAILABLE



2009 Central UMC Calendars, provided by Boone Funeral Home, are available in the office and on tables in the Sanctuary and Parlor. Two designs are available.

ITEMS LEFT IN OFFICE

There are several items in the church office to be picked up: 2 brass vases, 3 white bud vases, and a stack of choir music. If there is anything that has been left in the church office workroom that you have been meaning to pick up please do. The items that are not claimed will go to the Rack Shack.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<h1>January 2009</h1>						
Services Every Sunday: 8:30 A. M. Contemporary Service 9:30 A.M. Sunday School 10:30 A.M. Traditional Service						
				1 Happy New Year! Church Office Closed	2 Staff Dress Down Day	3 <u>NO</u> Indoor Playground 12:00 N. A Meeting - Library
4 Communion	5 9:30 Food Pantry 10:00 Rack Shack 6:00 Trustee Mtg. - Ch -O	6 9:00 Church Staff Mtg. 10:00 Martha Elizabeth Cir. - Library 6:00 Staff-Parish - Library 6:30 Emmaus Prayer Group	7 11:00 Wednesday Friends - Trinity Room 5:30 Youth Group – Youth Rm 6:15 Choir 7:15 Bridge Team Mtg. - ChO 7:30 Bell Choir	8 7:30 JACC Mtg. - Library 9:00 Quilting 9:30-11:30 Food Pantry 10:00-1:00 Rack Shack 2:00 Mary-Barb Brooks Cir. -Library 6:00 Worship Committee – Library	9 3:00 Child Care Mtg. – Lib.	10 9:00-12:00 Indoor Playground 12:00 N. A Meeting - Library
11 5:30 Chili Cook-Off - FLC	12 9:30-11:30 Food Pantry 10:00-1:00 Rack Shack 5:00 Ministry Team Leader Meeting – Trinity Room 6:00 Church Council - Trinity	13 9:00 Church Staff Mtg. 2:00 Small Accountability 3:30 Tutoring 5:15 Shalom Mtg. - Trinity 6:30 Emmaus Prayer Group	14 11:45 JNIA Mtg. – Trinity Rm 4:00 Power 5:30 Youth – Youth Room 6:15 Choir 7:30 Bell Choir	15 9:00 Quilting 9:30-11:30 Food Pantry 10:00-1:00 Rack Shack 3:30 Tutoring	16	17 9:00-12:00 Indoor Playground 12:00 N. A Meeting - Library
18 Human Relations Day	19 9:30-11:30 Food Pantry 10:00-1:00 Rack Shack 7:00 Bea Conder Circle – Hostess: Gloria Millay	20 9:00 Full Church Staff Mtg. 12:00 Messenger Deadline 5:45 Outreach/Nurture - Ch-O 6:30 Emmaus Prayer Group	21 11:00 Wednesday Friends - Trinity Room 5:30 Youth – Youth Room 6:15 Choir 7:30 Bell Choir	22 9:00 Quilting 9:30-11:30 Food Pantry 10:00-1:00 Rack Shack	23	24 9:00-12:00 Indoor Playground 12:00 N. A Meeting - Library
25 5:00 Shalom Neighborhood Dinner - FLC	26 6:30 CAJE Team Mtg. – Lib.	27 9:00 Church Staff Mtg. 6:30 Emmaus Prayer Group	28 5:30 Youth – Youth Room 6:00 Worship Com. Mtg. - Lib 6:15 Choir 7:30 – Bell Choir	29 9:00 Quilting 9:30-11:30 Food Pantry 10:00-1:00 Rack Shack	30	31 9:00-12:00 Indoor Playground 12:00 N. A Meeting - Library