

# A Look Ahead

- November 7: **United Methodist Men Meeting**, 8:00 a.m., Wesley
- November 8: **Cluster Charge Conference**, Faith UMC, 2:00 p.m.
- November 22-24: **Church Christmas Decorating** (see p7 for full time listing information.)
- December 5, **Cookie Walk**: 9:00-10:30 a.m.

Articles to be included in the November 11 *Spire* are due in the Church Office by November 4. You may also e-mail them to [spire@fumcstcharles.org](mailto:spire@fumcstcharles.org). Please put the word *Spire* in the subject line.

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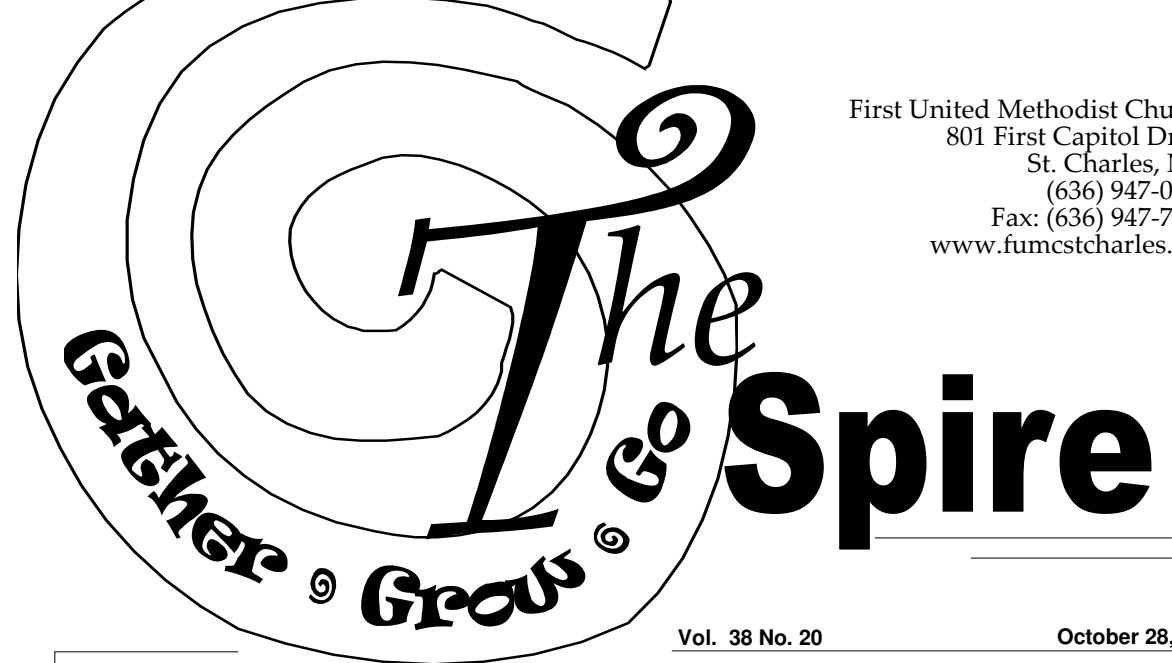
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THE SPIRE  
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Open Hearts. Open Minds. Open Doors.  
The people of The United Methodist Church.



## What Does the UMC Think?

By Reverend Robin Roderick

What is the United Methodist Church (UMC) doing to speak justice and mercy into situations such as health care reform, nuclear proliferation, war, economic

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hardship, mortgage crises, politics, reform, and the issues outside the church walls?

LOTS. Lobbying, position papers, direct appeals to Washington. Aid, letters, appeals to churches and local churches become active in the dialogue; information dissemination. The United Methodist Church also promotes what we would call "holy conversation"-- the ability to be in dialogue with strongly opposing ideas and ideologies without demonizing the other.

**TAKE A LOOK:** Go to [www.umc.org](http://www.umc.org) to read all kinds of activities from the General Boards and agencies of the United Methodist Church to papers from the College of Bishops. (If you didn't know our church structure is similar to the government of the U.S. with legislative,

judicial and executive branches.)

Get a copy of the Book of Resolutions, position statements on everything from abortion to unions, to slavery past and present to the environment. These are positions held by our General Conference to be in line with the UM theology and doctrine. While not church law, they

are influential and guiding for churches and laity in general. Read the Social Principles.

**ACT OR IGNORE.** Yes you saw that right. The UMC says we are to be a thinking people. That is why you can disagree or even go against the Book of Resolutions or Social Principles and not be stripped of your membership in the UMC. You will not agree with all the issues. Only you can say whether anyone is a 'deal breaker' for you. But the UMC is a 'political' church, because we have never felt that the poor, the widow, the orphan were not issues of societal justice.

As thinking folk, we have no need to be uninformed. Take a look, see where you'd like to become active, act or ignore--but the UMC is out there, refusing to shy away from the difficult issues even if they aren't preached every Sunday.

## FISH Food Pantry Update

Sometimes we never hear a personal story about the effects of a "good deed" that we have done. I am delighted to share a story with you, which involves our food outreach to the local community.

I was visiting with my sisters, and she shared this story with me about a friend of hers who was going through a difficult time. "Sarah" is a divorced mother with two teenaged children. Although her full time job was outsourced, she found employment with two part-time jobs. Her daughter is employed as well, but their combined income is not enough to cover expenses.

The weekend was drawing near, and her paychecks and her daughter's would pay the utilities, but there

would be nothing left to purchase groceries --- and their cupboard was bare.

I gave my sister information about FISH, and suggested that Sarah go there to apply. Sarah went to FISH. She completed the needed paperwork and was approved. What a difference YOU made for Sarah. She went home with enough food to feed her family for one month.

We may never know how our reaching out to others affects them.

I can tell you it was overwhelming for this family. Yes, they are still struggling. No, Sarah does not have a full time job yet. But, for one brief period of time, a local family realized that strangers they may never meet cared enough to provide for their family.

Sarah is looking forward to the opportunity to someday be taking food for FISH. Thank you, First Church. Your generosity is overwhelming.

- Mary Sheets,  
missions team

Instead of monetary dividends paid by a corporation, our members instead receive intangible dividends- the love of God, a warm feeling from being part of an interactive church community and the promise of an everlasting life. These benefits far outweigh cash dividends paid by a corporation to its shareholders.

This is the time of the year where the church's stewardship campaign occurs. Before you roll your eyes, please take a moment to think about what this church means to you. The church is so much more than a

building and a pastor. YOUR church can be so much more if you open your heart to the possibilities.

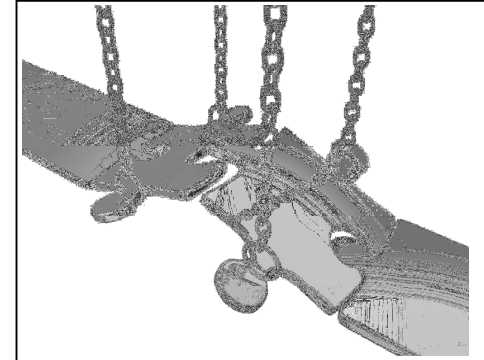
My week starts off on the right note when I attend church- something seems missing when I am unable to attend church. Please consider that your monetary tithes and donations of your time and talents mean so much to our members and non-members. There is a world in need . . . and who better to tackle these than the loving, hard working community of people at FUMC? Please take a moment to prayerfully consider what you can give back to this church.

## Christmas Decorating

'Tis the Season for Decorating. It's almost that time of year. Thanksgiving is late this year, and the first Sunday of Advent is November 29. In order to have the church decked out in time for the start of Advent, the Worship team will be decorating BEFORE Thanksgiving.

Decorating sessions will be held on: Sunday,

November 22 from 3:00 to 7:00 p.m.; Monday, November 23 from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.; and if necessary, Tuesday, November 24 from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. This is a BIG job, so lots of helping hands are needed! Please join us in the Atrium as we prepare to celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ.



## STAYING connected



### United Methodist Men Meeting

The monthly meeting of the United Methodist Men will be in Wesley Hall on Saturday, November 7, at 8:00 a.m. Breakfast will be served. (Note: This is on the first Saturday of the month instead of the normal second Saturday.) All men are considered members of UMM and are cordially invited to attend.

*Our deepest sympathies are extended to the families of those who have died recently.*

\* Holly Hickman, wife of Robert Hickman and a member of our congregation, who died on October 18, 2009.

\* Millie Jewell, a member of our congregation, died on October 14, 2009.

# Stewardship Campaign—by Kara McDaniel

I grew up in a small Methodist church in a rural community outside of Columbia, Missouri (Hallsville). It is a farming community where everyone knows everyone. When someone in the church needed help, word got out and assistance was provided . . . no questions asked.

You could depend on your fellow Methodists to visit you in the hospital, provide meals for those sick, assist with yard work or repair jobs for those not able to manage on their own and be available when you just needed support.

I have fond memories of my time in Hallsville and the values that my parents, pastors, teachers, coaches and friends instilled in me. I still receive a newsletter from my hometown church, and it

pleases me to know that their congregation continues to grow as the community has grown.

Perhaps my memories have faded, but I just realized that not only did fellow church members help other members, they assisted non-members as well. It was common to deliver meals to the home-bound, visit nursing homes to sing hymns and carols, and offer assistance to the unchurched and members of other congregations in our small town.

When I moved to the St. Louis area, it was difficult for me to realize that a large congregation, such as FUMC, can provide me with the same sense of 'belonging' as my church back home. FUMC may be a large church with a large budget, but it reaches out to its members and

non-members in the community just like a small church.

There are endless opportunities for fellowship and stewardship. All of these efforts take time and money. We all lead busy lifestyles where it is sometimes difficult to devote the small amount of free time we have to church initiatives.

I challenge each of you to find at least one volunteer opportunity within our church. It may be running the church sound system a few times per year . . . it may be donating one can of food per month for the food pantry . . . perhaps you can act as a substitute Sunday school teacher . . . or you can answer the phone in the atrium one day per month. The opportunities are limitless.

The big step is

making the call or speaking to someone in the church office about volunteer ideas they have available. I guarantee that the time you spend helping the church help others will put a smile on your face.

I make my living by being an accountant, and I deal with large dollar amounts every week. Sometimes, I get numb by the magnitude of the numbers I analyze each day. When you step back and look at it, a church is similar to a corporation. It must operate in a fiscally responsible manner. It has obligations it must meet (mortgage, utilities, salaries, etc) and it requires money inflows to support these obligations as well as an active staff (paid and volunteer).

# Help Needed to Feed Homeless During Christmas Holidays

As most of you know FUMC has been providing shower facilities to the homeless for over two years. This program has grown and provides a vital service to those who have no other resources. This year another need has come to our attention that impacts these individuals greatly. The Salvation Army Facility in St. Charles which feeds the indigent and homeless will close its soup kitchen from December 23 – January 4<sup>th</sup> for an in-depth clean up. During this time, those who normally find a hot meal there will have no place to go unless others in the community step up to help. **We at FUMC can be that help!**

If we can gather a group of volunteers who are willing to cook and/or serve a meal during the soup kitchen closing we can fill this great need in our community. The church kitchen will be available for those who volunteer to cook the meals and clean up along with Wesley Hall for the meal service. All meal service is planned for noon, no evening meals are proposed. The dates scheduled for this mission project are December 23<sup>rd</sup> during Christmas week and December 28<sup>th</sup> through the 30<sup>th</sup> of the following week. This would be an awesome project for Sunday School classes to consider as a special gift of Christmas.

If you are not able to cook or serve during this time, food donations for the meals are a great way to be involved. While this may seem early to consider, it is necessary to plan now so the details of this project can be developed. If you or your Sunday School class are interested in helping or have additional questions, please contact Martha Caldwell through the church office or indicate your interest on the form below. Your completed form may be dropped off in the office or with your offering during Sunday services.

I/We \_\_\_\_\_ volunteer to provide the following service for the homeless Christmas Food Program:

**Cook and/or Serve a Meal**  
**Clean Up The Kitchen**  
**Donate Food Requested by Meal Planners**

Date(s) I/we will be available for the above service:

December 23 \_\_\_\_\_  
December 28 \_\_\_\_\_  
December 29 \_\_\_\_\_  
December 30 \_\_\_\_\_

# Bread for the World

by Norma Stahlhuth



**breadfortheworld**  
HAVE FAITH. END HUNGER.

Bread for the World is a collective Christian voice urging our nation's decision makers to end hunger at home and abroad. Bread for the World Sunday is an opportunity for churches to renew their commitment to overcoming hunger and poverty in God's world.

As we celebrate

Bread for the World Sunday in our church on November 8, let us be inspired to be God's agents of love and compassion in the world. We rejoice that we can be great by serving others, especially those who live in poverty and hunger. Bread for the World has helped pass legislation that provides assistance

and resources to people in our own country and around the world. Our prayers and gifts can help continue this mission. On November 8, there will be a Bread for the World insert and envelope in the worship bulletin. This special request is for contributions above

and beyond your regular tithes and offerings. We thank you for your ongoing support and prayers for our church's programs and ministries.

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## Poinsettias



Each year, members and friends of First Church are invited to donate poinsettias to brighten our church at Christmas and contribute to this festive season. The flowers will be placed in the church for services on December 20. A list of donors will be published in the worship bulletin.

The cost of each flower is \$11.00. A portion of the proceeds from the sale of the flowers will go to funding

Mother's Day Out and FUMC Preschool.

In the pews, starting November 8, there will be a sign-up card for poinsettias located in the pew rack. Please return this sign-up card along with your check made out to First United Methodist Church by December 6, 2009.

You may place this in the collection plate or drop it off during the week at the Church Office.