

January 2008

Glimpses of Faith Newsletter

Faith UCC
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New Braunfels, TX 78130

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Rev. Scott B. Martin



Faith and Politics

There has been a great deal of talk about faith and politics in the run up to the presidential election in November. On one level there has been too much talk of religion by the candidates. God and religion is in danger of being co-opted by both sides to earn votes. Not that this would be a first!

On the other hand I believe it is quite legitimate to ask a candidate how his or her religious views will affect their public policy goals. After all, it is fair game to ask how their domestic/foreign policy views and economic views affect their vision for the future.

Personally, I would have no problem voting for an atheist if they had the right policy goals. I wouldn't hesitate for a minute voting for an atheist with the public policy goals I favor over a Christian with public policy goals I do not support. There should be no religious test to hold public office and Christians do not have a monopoly in doing what is just for everyone.

There are some views held by certain segments of the Christian religious spectrum that would give me serious pause in voting for someone that held them. I might well claim them as a

brother or sister in Christ at the communion table and still not want them to hold certain public offices where they could put their religious views into practice.

Let me give just two examples. I would have some serious questions for a Christian who did not believe in evolution and favored teaching Intelligent Design in our schools. I would have to be convinced they would NOT pursue these goals as a public servant, whether it was as a local school board candidate or as president.

I also would have some serious questions for anyone who held strong apocalyptic views of the book of Revelation. If they think the battle of Armageddon is a good thing and it doesn't matter that the earth is destroyed because God's saints will be raptured from this earth, I really don't want that person in a position to have their finger on the button that controls our nuclear weapons. If they support Israel right or wrong because they think the bible says they should I would be deeply troubled.

These are just two important issues. We haven't even touched on stem cell research, freedom of choice regarding abortion, global warming, and poverty.

Kiva Micro Lending Mission Project Update



We have now made a second loan to a young man in Kirkuk, Iraq in the amount of \$200. Other Kiva partners have chipped in \$1,000. This loan will be paid back over a 12 month period of time. He is 35 years old and has 4 children, all studying in local schools. One of his children has asthma. He has a spare parts shop in Kirkuk and he has applied to get \$1200 to purchase new spare parts and make new shelves, paint the shop and renovate it in order to increase his income and develop himself.

Since this business is located in Iraq it is a riskier loan than most in the Kiva program, but we thought given the situation in Iraq and our mission as a church, this would be a very appropriate loan to make.

Our first loan to a group of women in Ixtapa, Mexico is being repaid on time. It will soon be totally repaid so this money can then be loaned to someone else.

If you have a computer at home you can track the progress of these loans on our church website. Simply click on the Kiva icon and it will take you straight to it. You can also see who else, beyond our church, has helped with this loan. You can also learn more about Kiva and the organizations it works with.

We currently have \$900 in the Faith Church Kiva Micro-Lending Mission

Fund. If you would like to add to this fund you may do so by writing a check to the church and making a note on the memo line that it is for the Kiva Project.

Consider a Special Gift to Slumber Falls Camp

Slumber Falls is looking forward to a wonderful year this year. They are celebrating their 50th anniversary!!! More on the anniversary later.

As the camp looks forward to the summer camping season they need a number of items to enhance the camping experience for children, youth and adults. Here is a list of items they could use and projected costs for them:

1. 2 large speaker stands-(\$50 ea)
2. Canoes and equipment - (\$5000)
3. Snow cone machine - (\$1060)
4. Archery equipment - (\$1500 - \$3000)
5. Commercial Slicer for the kitchen - (\$1250)
6. Pool Lounge Chair Furniture - (\$105 ea - minimum 6)
7. Hot Tub for the pool area - \$2000 - \$3000

If you would like to help with any of these check with Charles Stark.

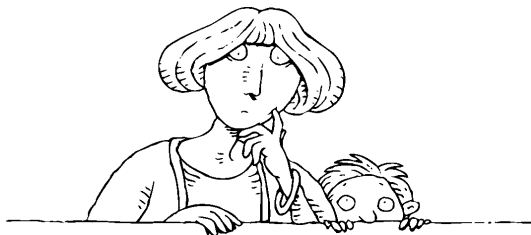
Thank You

I would like to _____ ch for the gift card. It is very much appreciated. Have a

**THE RENEWAL AND
VITALITY ENDEAVOR
TASK FORCE**

Our committee met on November 29, 2007 to continue our work on putting vitality back into our church. Our goal is to plan one special worship service each month; we hope you enjoyed the Hanging of the Greens service that began our Advent season.

We also established a Music Committee to work on selecting hymns for the worship services and planning special music. Members include: Steve Foster, Nicolle Perry-Clark, Mikki & Joe Ward and Ken Triesch. We plan to put some old favorites back into our worship services, as well as learn some new ones. We hope that you have noticed that the church choir is gathering around the piano to perform, in an attempt to better project their voices.



Don't Be Bashful...
JOIN US!

We also plan to start a social event night on the fourth Friday of each month, to be held at the church or in a private home, as well as other special programs, movies or field trips. The delightful Christmas Party at the Dennino's home made us realize how much fun these social events can be. **Mark you calendar now for Friday,**

January 25, 2008 @ 7:30 p.m. for a Games Night at Faith Church. Bring a game that you like to play and an appetizer, snack or dessert to share.

Our task force will be planning a time for our whole congregation to meet (perhaps on the same day as our upcoming congregational meeting). We want input from everyone on ways that we can put vitality back into our church. We want volunteers to join our effort to try new styles of worship, new music and new activities. We want Faith Church to be a place that we can gather to worship with joy and find renewed enjoyment in our church family.

**Church Potluck
Sunday January 13th**

You may have noticed by now that we are endeavoring to have a church potluck the second Sunday of each month. This month's will be on January 13th.

A program on Bethany UCC's mission trip to New Orleans last October will be given after the potluck. Bethany UCC has already reserved November 3-7th 2008 for another mission trip. They are looking for people to go.

Thanks from Pastor Scott

I would like to thank everybody for making
my _____ uring her

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**It's Not About Jesus
It's What Jesus Is About**

**Sunday Mornings 9:30
January 12 – February 16**

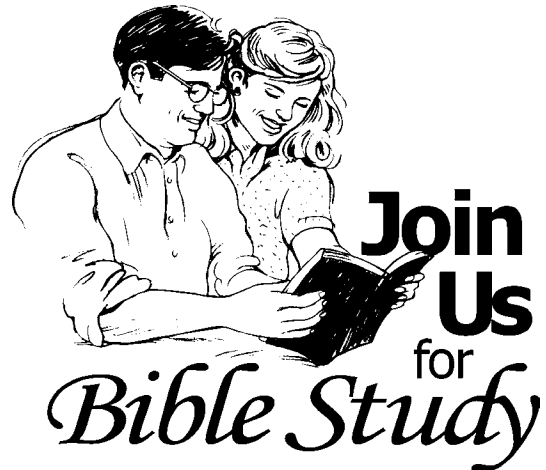
**A Bible Study for the
Inquisitive Adult
Led by Rev. Peter Olson**

Jesus' teachings are not more meaningless platitudes meant to sooth the anxious soul. What Jesus teaches matters and they demand explicit implications. Most of his teachings raise more questions than they answer. The ultimate concern of the student of Jesus' teachings must be "What difference do they make?"

The purpose of this series of bible studies is to discover connections between the teachings of Jesus and the specific issues and relationships that shape human life. It is a bible study with a very specific purpose – to direct the inquisitive, discerning adult learner to focus on what Jesus is about, not just about Jesus.

Issues and relationships related to the teachings of Jesus in this series include, but are not limited to the following:

- The middle ground between broken principles and mended relationship
- Christian attitudes toward violence in the family
- Telling tales
- Hiding and seeking
- The anatomy of an excuse
- The high risk of altruism
- Living assisted lives
- Saying what we mean and meaning what we say



- Generosity is never easy
- Christian attitudes toward power
- Spiritual heart attacks

This bible study series will be led by Rev. Peter Christian Olson. It is limited to 15 adults. Sign up in the church foyer on the kiosk. The class will be cancelled if less than 8 sign up.

January Birthdays

Januray 16 Bill Brown
Januray 19 Julia Allison
Januray 19 Lois Swander
January 21 Bruce Ridgley
January 21 Sharon Zillmann
January 21 David Pena
January 22 Bonnie Stark
January 25 Emma Deninno
January 26 Anna May Pape
January 26 Darlene Stephens
January 26 Bennie Harst
January 26 Arlon Meckel
January 29 Kelcey Kramm



Ushers:

- 1-6** Bennie Harst; Richard Hitz;
Evelyn Krueger; Sheri Haynes
- 1-13** Kathy Hoffmann; JoAnn Brown;
Sol Fuss; Bruce Ridgley
- 1-20** Ray & Emma Lou Bizer;
Michele Gilbreth; Curt Leonhardt
- 1-27** Tim & Jennifer Marlow;
Jan Hunley; Don Green

Liturgist:

- 1-6** Mikki Ward
- 1-13** Jennifer Marlow
- 1-20** Nicolle Perry-Clark
- 1-27** Nancy Foster

Council Reps

- 1-6** Michele Gilbreth
- 1-13** Jim Gossett
- 1-20** Bennie Harst
- 1-27** Tim Marlow

Greeters

- 1-6** Evelyn Krueger
- 1-13** Sol Fuss
- 1-20** Ray & Emma Lou Bizer
- 1-27** Tim Marlow

Communion Assistants

- 1-6** Richard Hitz & Bennie Harst

Acolytes

- 1-6** Brady Storms
- 1-13** Don Green
- 1-20** Curt Leonhardt
- 1-26** Steve Foster

Kiva Newsletter Update

Happy Holidays! We hope this finds you well.

Thank you for believing and participating in the Kiva.org movement to *connect people through lending to alleviate poverty.*

Because of your support, 2007 has been an amazing year for Kiva: over 170,000 [lenders like you](#) have funded 25,000 [entrepreneurs](#) to date. That's more than \$16 million in loans across 37 countries - and at this time last year, we had just crossed the \$1 million mark! This explosive growth hasn't gone unnoticed - Bill Clinton, Oprah Winfrey and [others](#) have caught the Kiva bug, and enthusiasm continues to spread around the world.

Faith UCC is Paying Down the Mortgage on the Sanctuary

Did you know that Faith UCC is currently paying \$1,000 a month on the mortgage for the church sanctuary? As of the end of October we still owed \$43,655 on the mortgage. At our current rate we will have the mortgage paid in full in 3 ½ years.

A number of you have made it a special mission project to make special contributions to the church to help us meet the monthly mortgage. This was a commitment that you made when the building was first built some ten years ago. We want to thank you for your continued special support. You have done this in addition to your regular Sunday offerings and it has made it possible for the church to make its monthly payments without dipping into our regular Sunday offerings to do so. As a church we owe you all a **BIG THANK YOU!!!**



Some of you who are new, or who did not make this commitment ten years ago might consider doing so. What a wonderful thing it would be if we could pay off our church mortgage ahead of schedule! We are in striking distance of this now!

This conceivably could free up money for such things as needed maintenance on the building and grounds and expanding our church mission in creative new ways!

If you have an annual report, please turn it into the church office no later than Sunday January 6th. We need time to print them up and distribute them prior to the **Annual Meeting on Sunday January 27th**. The meeting will take place immediately following the church service.



Texas Lutheran University will have a Martin Luther King Concert on Sunday evening January 20th at 7 p.m in the auditorium. This event is free and open to all. If you would like to go, meet in the church parking lot at 6:15 and we will carpool over there.



2008 Offering Envelopes

We are currently working on getting the 2008 envelopes ready. When they are ready we will place them in the narthex/entry way to be picked up. These may not be ready for the first Sunday of 2008 but we will get them out as fast as we can.



October Financial Report

General Fund Balance	9-30	(\$1,163.53)
Income & Deposits for	October	8,293.00
Disbursements for	October	6,736.32
Balance as of	10-31	393.15
Building Fund	Balance 9-30	3,082.98
Income & Deposits	October	1,049.00
Disbursements	October	1,000.09
Building Fund Balance	10-31	3,131.89
Memorial Fund	Balance 9-30	1,214.00
Income for October		20.00
Disbursements for October		0
Memorial Fund Balance as of	10-31	1,234.00
Savings Account Balance	9-30	7,551.88
Deposit Sign Rental Income		208.33
Interest		0
Savings Account Balance	10-31	\$7,760.21
Loan Balance as of 10-31		\$43,655.46

Respectfully submitted,
Terri Armstrong
Financial Secretary



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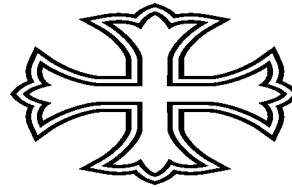


New Members

We are pleased to welcome two new members to the Faith UCC church family. Jan Hunley and Don Green joined the church on Sunday December 30th. You will want to write their addresses in your church directory.

Jan Hunley
206 Parkview
New Braunfels, TX 78130
830-620-5499

Don Green
30 J Eden Dr.
New Braunfels, TX 78130
830-624-7564



Thoughts and Prayers

Our thoughts and prayers are with Lucile and the whole Marburger family upon the death of Tony Marburger. The funeral was held at the church on Saturday December 29, 2007.

Elmo Fischer is currently in the Eden Nursing home for two weeks of physical therapy.

Nic Kapellas is currently recovering at home after a lengthy hospitalization.