

# The Visitor

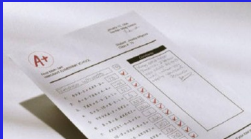
Of Independence First United Methodist Church

“Living Christ’s love by  
Connecting Faith to Life  
through

Passionate worship,  
Genuine fellowship,  
And tangible outreach”

[indepmo-fumc.org](http://indepmo-fumc.org)

FEBRUARY 21, 2012



“Suppose one of you wants to build a tower. Won’t you first sit down and estimate the cost to see if you have enough money to complete it?” Luke 14:28

Honest assessment is a good thing. Clarity protects us from both and tepidness folly. Jesus asked his would-be disciples to do a bit of assessment before they signed up to follow his way. “Are you thinking straight? Do you know where your strengths lie?” From time to time we need to step back from our emotions and do some simple, honest assessment. Lent is a good time for that discipline.

As your pastor I’ve been on a subtle, but persistent campaign over the last year encouraging us to do three things for the sake of our future; be clear about our past, understand our present state, and to dream big.

**Assessing our past** can be difficult because we tend to look back with a kind of attachment, forgetting the struggles we endured, remembering only the best. Does anyone really want to relive high-school again? We’ve had many good people and good times to celebrate as a part of our church history. But among those good memories we need to face the fact that our congregation had been in steady decline for over 20 years. From 2007-2009 we did zero baptisms...zero. Worship attendance and membership were steadily sliding, we reported no measurable mission outreach beyond local initiatives, and we hadn’t made our already unbalanced budget in years. We’d all like to forget those facts. This is precisely the reason our doctor doesn’t simply ask us “how we feel” when we visit. She keeps a record of our vitals, our weight, and our medical history. We may “feel” just dandy, but our data may tell a different story.

I’m acutely aware that some of us do not “feel good” about some of the recent changes we’ve endured and don’t care for the prescriptions we’ve been given for our future. But **understanding our present state** may help. In the last two years alone we have 26 new members to give God thanks for (The vast majority are 30 or 40-somethings with children.) Our church has celebrated 20 baptisms from 2010 to date...20! Our worship attendance is growing with new people and for the first time in 20+ years we aren’t declining, but slowly growing. By next month we will have taken four mission trips beyond our community (two to Iowa, two to Joplin.) Our financials continue to be a hurdle, but fewer givers are giving more generously, and we’re doing more with less; balance is on the horizon.

Add to this good news the exponentially growing numbers of kids in Sunday school and children’s church, the ladies attending Women of Faith, the not-yet members regularly attending our second service, and the improvements we’ve made to our facility (handicapped accessibility, the gathering area, the children’s chapel). *None of this is to congratulate ourselves*, this is for God’s glory alone.

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But it's just as important to acknowledge our successes as our challenges, because "feelings" about transition, good or bad, can be deceptive, and we don't want to short-circuit God's work among us.

Knowing where we are and where we came from leads us to a place where we're called to **dream BIG**. Every fiber of my being believes that God wants to be made known through our witness of ministry, and that means putting ourselves in a place where *we cannot accomplish the task before us*. If that sounds like a contradiction to Jesus' wisdom in Luke 14, it's not. This is part of what makes the church different from any other gathering of good folk. God wants to do through us a God-sized work *that only God can do*... part of our assessing is to understand that God is *here* and that God is *able*. This Lent I'm inviting you to join me in prayer and study that we might dream BIG dreams together. And as dreams become vision, and as faith becomes sight, I believe we'll be able to better assess who we really are, the power we truly have access to, and the unfathomable potential of God's greatness among us.

Living Faith! -Pastor Mitch

## Valentine Banquet. . .

A crowd of 90-plus gave standing ovations to Rick Latta and Jeff and Ann Porter for top honors at the annual Valentine Banquet on Tuesday evening, February 7.

Latta was recognized as Man of the Year, and the Porters received the Family of the Year award at the dress-up event sponsored by the Men's Club. Steve Woolf and Virgil Bybee presented the respective awards.

The entertainment was provided by Gary Tannen, a singer/guitar player, who was joining by his wife, Karen, on his final song. They were introduced by Fritz Kreisler.

Dave Sage, president of the Men's Club, gave the welcome, and Pastor Mitch Jarvis gave the invocation and benediction.

The meal of brisket, chicken breasts, green beans almandine, one-fourth red potatoes, tossed salad, rolls and butter, cherry and apple pie, iced tea and coffee was catered by Ann Falkenberg.



## Sharing in Sorrow. . .

Since our last newsletter, we have learned of the loss of the following family members, loved ones and friends related to members of our Family of Faith. We share our sympathy, love and prayers with them.

George Fithen on January 25, 2012  
(Gail Smith's father)

Lois Duggins on January 27, 2012  
(Betty Buck's sister)

Mary Clark on February 3, 2012

## Welcome new members. . .

On Sunday, February 5, 2012, we welcomed two new families into our Community of Faith. Please add their information to your directory.



### The Thurman Family

Sarah, Thomas, Mark  
and Charlotte

11716 E. 60th Terr.  
Kansas City, MO 64133  
913-634-7502



### The Bacon Family

Chris, Lisa and  
Charlotte

10506 E. Lake Dr.  
Indep., MO 64053  
616-856-6884

# Financial Update thru 1/31/12...

## GENERAL BUDGET

Staff payroll	13,030.79
Property/Utilities/Insurance, etc.	3,136.89
Apportionments	1,878.00
All other expenses	1,424.03
Total Expenses	\$19,469.71
Net income	\$ 1,239.59

## HALLWAY REMODEL

Hallway yet unfunded	746.62
Furniture yet unfunded	2,479.92

## 2012 Pledge update

	2012 to date	2011 pledges
Number of pledges	67	78
Amount pledged	\$156,444.00	\$188,790.28



Pictured above is our new gathering area. Appreciation goes out to all who made this 25-year dream a reality. It has given us a very welcoming area in which to greet one another weekly, and for special times i.e. funerals, etc.

Many of our talented folks did a lot of the work. Don Rohr, Jack Hall, and Jack Hill painted. Adele Rohr, Nylene Sage, and Anita Woolf worked on selecting the furnishings.

Special thanks to Judy Latta for painting our mission statement on the wall. Adele and Dylan Rohr are to be thanked also for working long and hard to get the words positioned just perfectly for her to trace and paint.

Genuine  
Fellowship  
Sunday,  
Jan 29th

## Chili and Pie Cook-Off. . .

Our Chili Cook off and Pie Contest on January 29th was a great success! We had over 100 in attendance and lots of wonderful food.

The winners were Kerry Cornett for the chili and Betty Buck for the pie contests.



## Souper Sunday's Success. . .

As of the writing of this article, we have collected \$230.42 in cash from your generosity of giving through the children's collection of change/cash for 3 Sundays.

Also, as you can see from the picture, we have a lot of soup to take to our neighbors at Thomas Hart Benton for them to share with families within the school (about 150 items).



## United Methodist Women's news. . .

Our next general meeting will be Sunday, March 11 at 4:00 p.m. Our program will be "March into Missions - a report from Joplin." Six of our own UMW members will be sharing about their trip to Joplin. A salad supper will follow the meeting. Check the UMW bulletin board for more upcoming dates.

### **Walking in the Spirit with the United Methodist Women: Acts 3:6-8**

The healing of the crippled man. When he was healed, he rose, and walked and, jumped and danced around. Walking with Christ is like making your soul brand new.

## Notes of Appreciation. . .

~ Thank you to Bob Burnup for fixing the church van multiple times.

~ Thanks to everyone who sent donations to the church in my mom's name. She would be proud so many people remembered her. Thank you also for all the nice cards and calls of condolence. *Lavonne Vaughan*

~ *Jeff and Ann Porter* wish to thank the Men's Club for honoring them as the "Family of the Year" at the annual Valentine Banquet, February 7th. What a wonderful surprise and honor!

~ *Wayne and Pam Henderson* would like to thank everyone who donated to Meals on Wheels. It is a good program, and as all other charities, it can only be as good as those who donate. Our church is such a giving church, we give thanks again and again.

~ Thank you to Jack Hall and Don Rohr for all of their painting recently. We are so grateful for your time and talent.

~ Thank you to the Men's Club for awarding me "Man of the Year" at the Valentine banquet. It was a wonderful night. *Rick Latta*

~ Many thanks for the prayers, cards, food and memorial gifts our family received at the loss of Sarah's mother last December. Being vitally linked to a caring church family is a very real blessing in times of such trial.

*the Jarvis Family*

~ *Dorothy Morrison* wishes to express her appreciation to the UMW for the card and to the young person who sent her the picture. It is so nice to be remembered.

## Men's Club news. . .

The next meeting of the Men's Club will be at 7:30 a.m. Saturday, March 3. All men in the church are invited to attend. Breakfast will be served. There are no dues. A collection is taken to cover the cost of the food. David Sage is the president. No program has been confirmed at the time of this printing.

Don't Forget  
These  
Genuine  
Fellowship/  
Tangible  
Outreach  
Opportunities

> **Ash Wednesday.** . . Three downtown Independence churches will combine their Ash Wednesday worship at 7:00 p.m., Feb. 22nd at the First Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), 125 South Pleasant. Also participating are First Presbyterian and First United Methodist.

> **Free Parenting Classes.** . . "Have a New Kid by Friday" by Kevin Leman is being offered for 6 weeks beginning Monday, Feb. 20th, and through March 19 from 7:00 - 8:00 p.m. in Fellowship Hall. Kim Oyler, Starshine Preschool Director, will be teaching. Childcare will be provided. RSVP is appreciated, but not required. For questions or to RSVP call or email Sarah Thurman, Children's Ministries Coordinator at (913) 634-7502 or kids,fumc@gmail.com.

> **Spaghetti Dinner** . . . Meal includes salad, breadsticks and drink. This endeavor is being presented by the young adult group to purchase furniture for their classroom. The dinner is a free will offering. Pies and Cakes will be auctioned to raise additional funds.

> **Volunteers In Mission** trip to Joplin, MO - **March 27** (evening) through **March 31** (return in morning). See or contact Sarah Jarvis (816) 898-8430 for details.

> **Women of Faith** - 10 tickets remain for the Nov. 2 & 3 event in Kansas City. Visit [www.womenoffaith.com](http://www.womenoffaith.com) for more details or contact Sarah Jarvis.

## St. Patrick's Spud Bar

**Friday, March 2, 2012 - 12 noon**



Baked Potatoes

Salad

Dessert

Cost - \$3.00 per person

**National Frontier Trails**

**Museum Guided Tour**

**1:30 p.m. - Cost \$5.00/Seniors**

Sign-up sheets are available for this monthly Sunsetters' activity to be held in the church's Fellowship Hall. Please sign up, so we can get enough spuds!

# Mighty Warriors News...

Greetings everyone!

It was so nice to dust off my sermonizing skills for you all Sunday. I hope you enjoyed the message, and I encourage you to seek out silent practices to add to your faith lives during the upcoming Lenten season. They truly have the potential to energize and encourage some deep introspection in the weeks ahead. I am also happy to say that you will be seeing a lot more of me in the pulpit in the coming weeks. Pastor Jarvis is allowing me to get additional preaching experience under my belt because there is always a chance that I will end up as the sole pastor of a church when I leave here in a few months. With my luck, it will be a rural church deep within the Utah frontier, but I will go wherever I am sent. Realistically though, my conference is still debating about where I am going to end up, and it will be a few weeks before I hear anything. Regardless, I am going to need all the preaching help I can get, and I am thankful for the opportunity.

In other news, there seems a lot of interest in this year's Missouri Conference Camping schedule. Many people have already talked to me, and there are many others who could be interested. For those who are unaware, our Conference (which consists of all the Methodist Churches in Missouri) runs four different camps throughout the state and runs a full schedule of camps during the summer. There are many different themes for many different ages, so if you have kids from preschool to high school, there might be a camp for them. If you are interested, please check out <http://www.moumethodist.org/pages/detail/744> to see this year's camp book. Moreover, our church also does its best to make sure that children and youth who are interested in camps can go for free. Every year, the Men's Club, Children's Ministry and the Youth Group join together contribute funds to send all campers out on a scholarship. So far, the Youth Group and Children's Ministry have agreed to help this year, and the men are meeting on March 3<sup>rd</sup> to determine if they will as well. From talking with some of the men, it looks likely that they will. Therefore, with this in mind, we have set a payment voucher code from the Conference Camping office. With this code, you can register your camper at no charge to yourself and the bill is sent to the church. However, know before you register that not everything is set in stone yet and there might be complications down the line. The heavily discounted rate (or early-bird deadline) lasts until May 15<sup>th</sup> this year, so there is a lot of time to work with. If you have any questions, or want the code, please feel free to call Karen Anderson or me at the church office.

Have a good month! *Bryson*

