

HILLTOP NEWS - FEBRUARY 2012

St. Thomas United Church of Christ

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“Crazy Little Thing Called Love”

*“This thing called love I just can't handle it;
this thing called love I must get round to it;
I ain't ready; Crazy little thing called love.” -Queen*

So February is the month of love! Christians are supposed to love everyone all the time – not just in February. Sometimes it's really hard and ‘I just ain't ready!’

If you're like me, you are so fed up with politics today that you don't have a whole lot of love in your heart for either party. I don't want to see any more commercials from candidates or their PACs, no more debates, no more TV interviews and certainly no more talking heads. It seems as though everything that needs to be said and a whole lot more that didn't, has been said...by those with deep pockets!

Personally, it makes me crazy – but not with love!

In the middle of all the slander and dirt being thrown about it is sometimes hard to comprehend that the church has just marked the annual celebration of the birth of the Christ child. All the political animosity juxtaposed with Christmas - the birth of love into the world - is difficult to understand and hard to hear.

It's crazy!

But the church year is moving on and now is the time when we typically follow the life of Jesus as he walked the Holy Land - the presence of Immanuel - God with us. We do this because as Christians we profess to follow Jesus and want to understand him more clearly; however, this requires more than words, it



takes action - to have compassion and concern for the weak and the hungry – and yes, even the crazies.

Even more than that we are called to give up on no one no matter what color or ethnicity, no matter how poor or different – not even politicians - not because everyone is loveable, but because we were first loved, not because we are loveable, but we become loveable because God loves us with a love that will not let us go. We are loved with a love that says: “You are precious and special to me and there is nothing you can do to make me love you any more or less because I love you perfectly.”

Could it be that those we find it hardest to love are the very ones we need to love...would they then become loveable because they are loved...?

It sounds crazy, but that's how it is...a crazy little thing called love.

*Peace,
Margaret*

FEBRUARY MISSION OF THE MONTH - EMMAUS HOMES

Emmaus was founded in 1893 as a mission of the German Evangelical Church. Early founders wanted to provide a caring home to individuals with developmental disabilities and give them opportunities to be productive members of their community. This tradition continues today as Emmaus helps clients live as independently as possible, while providing them with the physical, emotional and spiritual support to achieve their goals.



Emmaus Homes is a faith-based mission of families, staff and volunteers, working together to provide compassionate care to adults with developmental disabilities in the St. Louis metropolitan area. Emmaus provides safe, comfortable homes for 250 residents at its campuses in St. Charles and Marthasville, Mo., as well as in homes in surrounding communities.

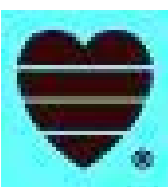
Emmaus is a not-for-profit organization registered under Section 501(c)3 of the Internal Revenue Code. About 88% of the cost of care for residents is funded through the Missouri Department of Mental Health (DMH) and Senate Bill 40 Boards. **“However, to provide the quality of life we desire for our residents, Emmaus also depends on the generous support of individuals, organizations, businesses and the faith community.”** Through the financial contributions and volunteer services of these partners in mission, Emmaus gives men and women with developmental disabilities the opportunity to learn, share and enjoy life. This month, our special collections will go to Emmaus Homes. (If you would prefer to purchase something for them, they can use always use bathroom and kitchen towels.)

E-Scip Program (Schnucks stores)

Are you a Schnucks shopper? You can give to Emmaus every time you buy groceries simply by becoming a part of the E-Scip program. Ask Emmaus for your E-Scip card, do your shopping and swipe the card at checkout...It's that easy. Schnucks will donate up to 3% of your monthly purchases to support the residents of Emmaus Homes. To request your E-Scip card, call 636.534.5218 or e-mail adamsc@emmaushomes.org.

From our adopted family at Christmas...

Thank you so much for all the wonderful gifts for my family. Christmas wouldn't have been the same without your help. Hope you all have a blessed year.
Savannah Allen



HOSPICE VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Hospice is a special kind of care designed to provide sensitivity and support for people in the final phase of a terminal illness. Heartland Hospice's goal is to provide palliative and supportive services to meet physical, psychological, social and spiritual needs of patients and their families in the home, health care facilities or other residential settings. Volunteers are the heart of the Hospice Team. We depend on our Hospice volunteers to help us provide the extra love and care our clients and their families need at this time in their life. Heartland volunteers offer support, companionship and practical, caring help to this special group of people. Whether it is making cheerful crafts, running errands, staying with the patient so family members can take a break, reading to patients, or holding their hand, the help and support our volunteers give is returned to them in countless ways. We also welcome volunteers to assist in the hospice office with filing, photocopying, data entry, etc. You can donate as little or as much of your time as you desire. Please contact Christine (314.413.6442) if you would like to bring something special into someone's life.

From Michael P. Brennan, Executive Director of EVERY CHILD'S HOPE...

“Thank you for helping the children of ECH Every Child's Hope find a place to call home...a place to feel safe...a place to heal and grow...this holiday season Your donation of items for the Christmas store will allow us to continue offering a safe haven for the youngsters who need it most.”





February Ushers

- 5 Greg & Leah Schnatmeier
- 12 Leroy & Debbie Brune
- 19 Ron Peters & Gloria Pettijohn
- 22 Gus & Betty Lindauer
- 26 Rich Brueggeman & Neil Glaser

What: Ladies Guild
Date: February 1
Time: 11:30 am
Where: St. Thomas

What: Bible Study/Prayer Group
Date: February 1, 8, 15
Time: 7:00 pm
Where: St. Thomas

What: Church Council Meeting
Date: February 7
Time: 7:00 pm

What: Election Day - Presidential Primary
Date: February 7
St. Thomas will be a polling place on this day.

What: Congregational Meeting
Date: February 12
Time: following Worship

What: Ash Wednesday Service
Date: February 22
Time: 7:00 pm

What: Emmaus Homes Bell Choir performs
Date: February 26
Time: 10:00 am
Where: St. Thomas
Details: Potluck following Worship

What: Lenten Service
Date: February 29
Time: 7:00 pm
Details: Light Supper at 6:00 pm

Ushers for each Sunday are asked to bring the goodies for coffee hour. Thanks for your contributions!



February Nursery Attendants

- 5 Leah Winkel
- 12 Leah Schnatmeier
- 19 Cindy Crosby
- 22 Zach Vaughan
- 26 Terry Gelhot

ALTAR FLOWERS

A Flower Calendar is posted in the Narthex. We invite everyone who wishes, to sign up to bring flowers for a Sunday Worship. The flowers can honor a birthday, anniversary, or commemorate a loved one's death and beautify the Sanctuary at the same time!

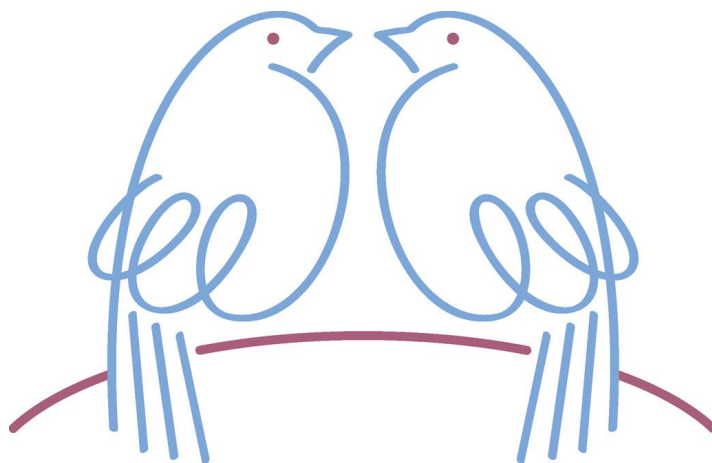
Flowers can be purchased or brought from your own gardens. If you bring cut flowers, we have some vases available for use. And finally, if you need help arranging the flowers, we can help with too.



**AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORY MONTH -
NOTABLE AFRICAN-AMERICAN PROFILES
MAJOR ROBERT HENRY LAWRENCE
Astronaut & Spy, 1935-1967**

Astronaut Guion Bluford, may have been the first African American to fly in space as a member of a Space Shuttle mission in 1983, but the title of the first African-American astronaut goes to United States Air Force Major Robert Henry Lawrence Jr. A graduate of Ohio State University, Major Lawrence was an exceptional Air Force test pilot. In 1967, he was among the first to be chosen to fly on what was believed to be a secret spy mission aboard the USAF Manned Orbiting Laboratory (MOL), the country's first space station. The MOL was a precursor to today's successful NASA space shuttle program. It was never placed into orbit and nobody ever flew on the mission. The project was canceled due to cost overruns, and was replaced with unmanned spy satellites. Lawrence continued to conduct test flights and worked on ways to glide an aircraft back to earth from orbit — unpowered. His work was ultimately used in the development of the Space Shuttle. But Lawrence's history as an astronaut was a short one -- he never made it into space. Just months after his selection for the MOL, Lawrence died when his F-104 Starfighter jet crashed at Edwards Air Force Base in California. He was a passenger during the training flight. In 1997, exactly 30 years after his tragic death, his name was the 17th added to The Astronauts Memorial Foundation Space Mirror at the Kennedy Space Center. The mirror honors all U.S. astronauts who have lost their lives on space missions or in training for missions.

For more on this profile or to see more profiles, visit <http://www.ucc.org/black-history/>



BE A LOVEBIRD

Many stories about the origin of Valentine's Day have come down through the centuries. There's no definitive story, but most revolve around the imprisonment of Valentinus (St. Valentine) for his disregard of Roman laws.

Many legends are also associated with Valentine's Day. For example, because birds seemed to arrive and mate in some countries in mid-February, human couples came to be called "love birds."

In 1667, the first recorded Valentine card was printed. Today, people will give their sweethearts countless millions of cards and acres of heart-shaped boxes filled with candy. But why wait for Valentine's Day to share love with others? Remember Jesus' words in John 13:34 (NRSV): "I give you a new commandment, that you love one another."

CIRCLE OF CONCERN SEEKING INTERNS

If you would like to gain experience working with a nonprofit, consider an internship at Circle! Internships can be molded to a variety of focus areas, including communications, public relations, human resource (volunteer management), special events & fundraising, and program/services management. Our internships are flexible and can begin/end nearly anytime during the year.

If interested, please contact Emily at Emily@circleofconcern.org.
Current pantry needs are:

- JELLY**
- DRY DINNERS**
- TOMATO PRODUCTS**
- CHILI & BEEF STEW**
- CANNED FRUIT**
- MUFFIN MIX**
- JELL-O/ PUDDING**





JOB OPENING!

Communications Specialist Needed at Conference Office

Job Description:

The MMS UCC is currently seeking a skilled individual to serve as part-time Communications Specialist in our office. The position will require a 15-hour work week, with a flexible schedule and paid vacation. The Communications Specialist reports to the Conference Minister. For more information, visit

<http://www.theromegroup.com/Default.aspx?tabid=105&jobid=1872>

Job Opening at St. Johns Evangelical-Mehlville

Applications are now being accepted for the position of Office Manager at St. Johns Evangelical U.C.C. Mehlville. This is a part time position; hours are Monday-Thursday 8:30am. to 4:30pm. Excellent communication, organizational and computer skills, including use of Church Windows (preferred) and Microsoft Publisher, are needed for the job. Responsibilities include church publications and correspondence, coordination of office volunteer work, scheduling events and building use, and receptionist duties. Resumes may be emailed to contact@stjucc.org before Feb. 1, 2012.

NEED A HANDYMAN?

Ron Coffman has been doing a lot of work at the church and the parsonage and we'd like to recommend him. Ron can be reached at 636-328-7325.



We also recommend Rob's Tree Service—636-226-8834.

Mission Statement

We are St. Thomas UCC, a caring faith community welcoming all to share with us. You will find us supportive, nurturing, and encouraging. Our worship is traditional yet contemporary applying scripture and Christ's teachings to everyday life. Accepting all who come as family, we are St. Thomas UCC.

Value Statement

We are a close knit welcoming community. We cherish and honor the traditions of our 100 years past. With respect and compassion we work together. We strive to grow in our faith by serving the community. We embrace and celebrate our youth and the promise of each new generation of God's children. We seek God's blessings and wisdom in the joys and challenges of our daily lives. We grow in our understanding of Christ's teachings while being respectful of our differences.

Vision Statement

We seek to :

- Invite others to join in our faith journey
- Explore worship opportunities
- Enhance our fellowship and service outreach
- Expand our use of technology
- Increase our community involvement

Comfort Boxes for Families

Not all new parents leave the hospital with a healthy newborn. Some babies are stillborn, and others enter the world so disabled that they die within hours or days. Such was the case with Becky Norris' daughter DeLanee, who was born with a congenital brain malformation and lived only three hours.

During that time, hospital personnel photographed each family member holding DeLanee. The hospital then gave Norris a box holding all the baby's belongings, including the photos, to take home. That meant so much to Norris that she was inspired to prepare memory boxes for other families who have lost a newborn. Now she and her friends fill boxes with helpful gifts for mourning families.

Each box has a metal-plated tiny foot on the lid. Inside are a disposable camera, a necklace with tiny footprints, a CD with comforting music, a packet of forget-me-not flower seeds, a journal and pen, candy, a small photo album and tissues. The women making the boxes hold pancake breakfasts to meet expenses. Five hundred people have joined a Facebook page called Lanee's Legacy.



St. Thomas United Church of Christ Council Minutes

January 3, 2012

Present – Karen Bellville, Terry Gelhot (just to close out Dec.), Janet Moehsmer, Neil Glaser,
Dale Konneman, and Cindy Crosby

Karen called the meeting to order and we had a silent prayer.

The minutes from the last meeting were approved.

Terry Gelhot gave her final General Fund report.

Social security and taxes were paid early.

Insurance and pension had been paid.

Church maintenances was also higher this month because the Ruppels had sent a bill and Ron was paid.

Terry is waiting on the bank statement to come in and then will turn everything over to Janet.

As a matter of better internal control, the Council will adopt a new process of requiring dual signatures on checks of \$100 or more. Dale Konneman made the motion to accept the new policy and Neil Glaser seconded it. The motion was unanimously accepted by the Council. There will be a few present and past members of the Council that will have check-signing capabilities. New checks, with a dual signature line, will be ordered from the bank.

Bill Fyock was out of town, but e-mailed the Building Fund report.

Nothing unusual to report.

Dale Konneman had nothing to report for the Building and Ground's.

Rev. Philips was out of town, but e-mailed Karen.

There is a Disaster Preparedness workshop on Feb. 2 that Rev. Philip would like to attend.

Old business:

A huge THANK YOU to June Jones for all her work on our wonderful Christmas program.

Installation Sunday is Jan. 15, 2012.

Congregational Meeting is Feb. 12, 2012. The annual reports are due Jan. 29, 2012. Thank- you in advance to Leroy Brune and Terry Schott who will be auditing them.

New business:

The website is not working as it should, so Janet Moehsmer has volunteered to take a look at it.

Our church sign needs to be kept up-to-date. We'd like to ask a few people to help change the sign as needed on Sundays after church.

Our mission for January will be collecting items for the Humane Society. They need items such as old towels, dog/cat beds, newspapers, paper towels, any size blankets, dog/cat toys, and fabric softener dryer sheets.

Next Council meeting is Tuesday, Feb. 7, 2012.

Respectfully submitted,

Cindy Crosby, Council Secretary

The Council is asking for your suggestions for a Monthly Featured Ministry. Do you have a non-profit organization or cause that you feel we should highlight? Please let a Council member know.

Ladies Guild News



ST. THOMAS UCC LADIES GUILD MEETING MINUTES - Jan . 3, 2012

President - June Jones
Secretary - JoAnn Barton
Treasurer - Betty Lindauer

Present: Mable Sappington, Dottie Coleman, Millie Jaeger, JoAnn Barton, Virginia Glaser, June Jones, Gail Schneider & Betty Lindauer.

Treasury balance - \$2052.77

Dec. minutes accepted.

Cards will be sent to Ethel Rombach and Neva Dohrman (birthday)

After the meeting, we moved to the Sanctuary for the "Service of Lessons & Carols" PowerPoint and musical presentation from Christmas Day worship. Thanks to Gail for her hours of work and to June for the music CD.

OLD BUSINESS:

The Thanksgiving food donations were very good. The items were delivered to St. John's UCC for the Circle of Concern Holiday food baskets. Two deliveries of food items were left outside the church. The sign is a good presentation of what we are doing.

We used \$50 from our funds to purchase items for the ECH Christmas Store. Pastor delivered all donated items to the home.

Thanks to all for the many gifts for our "adopted family".

Our December Potluck Luncheon for members and guests was attended by 20 people. June Jones had the devotion program of the history of "The 12 Days of Christmas". The food was delicious and we had a great time playing "Rob Your Neighbor". Donations were combined with some of our funds to send \$100 to Neighborhood Houses. We also sent \$50 for the Daily Bread booklets.

After the Christmas Program on Dec. 18, we made 11 "Friendship Plates" of cookies and fruit for the following: Joyce Ponce (with no-sugar cookies), Faye Albrecht, Neva Dohrman, the Mertz brothers, Nor & Mil Glaser, Ron Coffman & family, Irma Partlow, Edythe Harper, Pauline Lail, Pastor Margaret, Gail Schneider.

A Thank-You note from Gail Schneider was read.

NEW BUSINESS:

The date for the Annual Chili Lunch and Trivia is Jan. 29, following morning worship. Bring your friends. Come and eat and be on a team. Sign-up sheet in the Narthex. Basket offering to benefit Circle of Concern.

The next meeting is the 1st day of February with a Pizza Lunch. Sign-up sheet in Narthex. February is also the Emmaus Home donation.

We need ideas for an activity in March.
THE SPRING LUNCHEON is in April.