



# The Tidings

February 2014

## Ministerial Moments

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"You May be in the Driver's Seat but God holds the Map." This is from a church sign calendar which Janice Schmidt gave me for Christmas. It is on the office wall. I may use these little sayings from time to time as a jumping off point.

Sometimes I wonder if I am in the driver's seat at all. During last Sunday's annual meeting, I felt more like I was on "Space Mountain," going up, down, and around in the dark. It's hard to know whether the map God is holding is a local street map, or the lost continent of Atlantis. Right now, I feel I am traveling to Atlantis.

Some of you like me, and some of you don't. There's at least one person that I feel blames me for every person who has left the church since I've been here--including a few who died. This morning I was ready to resign. Several people have talked to me today who say that this would be a disappointment to them. I guess it all comes down to the contract meeting tomorrow (Jan. 22 evening). I can say, however, that offering to take a \$6000 cut in pay and being told that it should be \$9000 is a bit like offering to buy someone a hamburger and having them tell you they want a T-Bone steak. 2/3 of the congregation voted against the proposed 3/4 budget. I am very hesitant to work on a contract to have the congregation vote it down because it doesn't solve all the financial problems of the church. A close friend has pointed out to me that "no" might also have meant they didn't want to vote without adequate information or that the voter would prefer I stay full-time.

Last week, one member asked me if Friedens could grow. I had to honestly say I don't know. I do know that not to try is to wait for a slow certain death, if not financially then by the numbers in the pews.

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## Funds and Fellowship Road Trip - February 9th

WHEN: Sunday, February 9th, 12:00 Noon

WHERE: At The Original Springs Hotel, Okawville, IL

\$9.45 will get you a family style meal of fried chicken, beef or pork, mashed potatoes, mashed potatoes, slaw, vegetable and a drink

Come out and enjoy the fun!

# February



## Birthdays

Emma Schmierbach	15
Lori Selman	16
Julie Imes	18
LaJune Fulton	19
Bryan Childers	20

## Anniversaries

Dennis & Cindy Galle 21

## Greeters and Ushers for February

### FEBRUARY

Feb. 3 & 10 - Bob & Imogene Lehman, Gary & Susie Stewart

Feb. 17 - Fed & Marilyn Lewis, David Keim

Feb. 24 - Kay Trotter, Mike Trotter, Carol Reinhardt

### MARCH

Look for new Usher and Greeter List in March's Tidings

## Next Wurstmarkt - Saturday March 15th 3 pm to 7 pm

Funds and Fellowship is always in need of helpers to set up Fellowship hall, tear down and of course the need of pies. They start at 8:00 am with peeling of potatoes and cooking. Tear down is around 7:00 pm. There will be a work schedule and pie sign up in the entrance at the church. So come on out and help Funds & Fellowship with the Wurstmarkt if your free.

## Comments from the Church Mouse



I'm so glad I live in Friedens UCC. This winter there have been some mild days, but it is often bitterly cold outside. We've had more than our share of ice and snow, too. I'm thankful for my snug hidey holes and the store of food I've gathered.

Monday, January 13<sup>th</sup> was a blood drive here and I was able to get some nice tidbits for my stash. There was a decent turnout for the blood drive, but quite a few prospective donors were unable to give due to low iron.

Then the dart ball players have been practicing and they sometimes have snacks and crumbs for me. They are nice people. Last Friday was their first game and it included more food for me to stockpile.

The Annual meeting on the 19<sup>th</sup> had at least 38 members of the congregation attending and a few guests. Since I enjoy knowing what is going on, I listened from one of my hidey holes in Fellowship Hall. The information was useful, but, oh, the food! Such a variety of veggies, salads, and desserts!

It grieved me to know how tight money is. I think it is admirable that Pastor Gail offered to go to 3/4<sup>th</sup> time, but I don't know what that would entail. I'll have to keep my big ears open for further developments. I know the "new" council members, Crystal Cathcart, Kay Trotter, John Barrett, and Bobbi Duffie and feel that I couldn't have picked better if they had let me. Hey, a mouse can see what goes on. I've watched Crystal at the Wusrtmarkts and she's a ball of fire. Kay makes those lovely banners beside the altar, she's taught Sunday School, and she's been on council before. I could listen to John all day with his mellow singing and speaking voice. And Bobbi – well, she's one of my favorites. She's a lovely replica of her mother, Ruby Lehman, and she's a choir member, on the nominating committee, and a vital part of Funds and Fellowship.

Living at Friedens is a blessing. The congregation members are caring and want to do what's right for the church and the community. I just pray this money problem can be handled without people getting their feelings hurt or spirits crushed. We are members of God's family, even a little church mouse. Let's work it out together.

## Ministerial Moments (Continued )



The first year I was here, the pews were full. Then summer and the 9:00 AM worship started, and attendance dropped off. It never really grew back, and the following year--2008--Larry Hanna pointed out several times that giving was off \$6000. From my Interim training I wanted to see if there was a pattern. I went back to the year-end reports of Pastor Clara's first two years. Yep, same pattern. Heavy attendance the first year then lighter attendance the second with a large drop in giving. Of course that was back around 2000 and 2001, including 9/11 when a lot of people who hadn't been going to church came back to church.

Overall, of course, the church was larger then, everyone was younger then, and a number of youth went off to college and didn't come back. In Interim training, we learn that churches tend to follow patterns. I haven't done a full historical study of the church, but one of the studies we do as interim is to have the church make a time line from the time the church was founded to present day. On the time line are all ministers and events in the church. The second line is events in the local history, like when the mines closed, and then a third line showing the world history for that time period. With the long history of our church, we could fill all the walls of Fellowship Hall. I know there is a written history that was done for the 100th anniversary of the church but this would be more complete. This sort of project might be interesting if you have never done it. Of course, trying to figure out the late 1800s and early 1900s before every one was born may be tough, or maybe there is information somewhere. Some of you may have done this before, if the information is still around it might be good to take it out and revisit it. This could be included as part of one of those Sundays Marlene spoke of at the annual meeting. People who wanted to do the time-line could stay and others could eat and leave. It's a place to start. Find out who we were, before we begin to decide who we are and who we want to be.

In addition, we should look into the demographics of the area. There are free websites that can help with this. Because we have 5 UCC churches within the 10 miles to the north, I think we would start with a demographic of the school district and then figure out what other areas we might want to include. The demographic will tell us what kind of people live in the area as well as religions and ethnicity. The last time I checked, there were a lot of Catholics in spite of the fact the town doesn't have a Catholic church, but the other thing to consider is whether these are active Catholics or people who still identify with the church but don't go. What percentage of "nones" (those who don't identify with any denomination or church) live in the area. What are their ages. These are all marketing tools. While there is something that rubs me the wrong way about marketing a church, that is what a lot of churches are doing, especially the mega-churches. Finally, if I remember correctly the site helps us identify some kind of mission which might be successful at drawing people into the church.

The UCC has a Church Development/Revitalization Committee and there are grants available to start a new mission. What we want to do would determine the amount of the grant. There are restrictions on the grant and how much they expect us to give to OCWM, however. It may not be something the church would care to do. It may be that in the process of looking at what we want we will find we don't need a grant. I do not know how long this all takes. I have spent 3 years just trying to get people to listen to me about the possibilities. Sometimes I don't explain myself very well, especially under pressure. I hope this gives you a clearer picture of where I would like to see the church go if we can come to some sort of agreement. If things are the same as I remember them, the grants are awarded twice a year, so if we decided to apply, next Fall would be a target date.



## Ministerial Moments (Continued )

As I said Sunday, we are supposed to be working as partners in a team. No pastor can grow the church alone. Look at the Crystal Cathedral. It grew around the charisma of Robert Schuller from a drive in theater Sunday morning worship to a huge glass building, a gigantic campus, and a television show. Ron and I went once, first for a tour and then for a service. Some of the stuff, like simultaneous translations into several languages using headphones and the organ were fantastic. I did not care for seeing the bookstore/souvenir stand open during Sunday services. The thing is, when Schuller retired, he tried to have his son take over. He fired his own son because his son was different from him. Their denomination does not ordain women, so his daughter could not be minister but she became the administrator. In the end, a very short time after Shuller's retirement, the Crystal Cathedral went bankrupt, and the buildings now belong to the Archdiocese of Orange County. This is what happens to a great many mega-churches built on the charisma of one person. Gradual growth, knowing who you are, and reaching out to the community around you provides longer-lasting positive results. I could come up with all sorts of ideas, but if the congregation is not interested in them and "own" them they will fall flat. Everyone is important. We all have a part. We are all called to be ministers of the church, just in different ways.

Blessings, Pastor Gail

## Anonymous Note . . .

This was e-mailed to the church by a source who wishes to be anonymous.....

-- What I would say (to the church) is: The church--any church--must differentiate itself from an enterprise. A church is indeed an enterprise, but we are called to be much more! A church must balance itself--not just its "books." A church must consider Christ's instructions about mission. The church has a high purpose; it is Christ's presence in a world that is often lacking in such things as love, kindness, sympathy, empathy, generosity, and hope. No individual in the community of faith is unimportant! All members of the body of Christ are important and to be cared for by the whole body. But equally important, no individual should consider him or herself more important than the whole body. If this church--or any church for that matter, fails financially that is one kind of failure. However, if the church fails as a loving and caring community, it is a much more serious matter. If the body of Christ loses a limb or an eye, or the ability to hear, that is a major trauma. But if it loses its heart--its compassion, its love for its members--that is death of not just the body but of the spirit. A minister is a resource--a minister is provided by a church to do the tasks for which others are not prepared: counseling those who mourn, who are consumed with fear, who have burdens that are too great to bear alone. If I arrive at Sunday service with a grief that is tearing me to ribbons, and am greeted by an usher or a friend who says, "Good morning! How are you?" I will answer, "Fine! And how are you?" That is what people do! But the minister is the one who gets the honest answers! "I have a child (or spouse or neighbor or sibling) who is making my life totally miserable, and sometimes I have such mean thoughts about him or her." The minister is the communal dumpster--all the bad things in our lives can be put into the dumpster. It's a dirty job, but somebody has to do it.

## Misc. Items

- Many thanks to Susie, Lorrie and Ruby for taking down the vast majority of indoor Christmas decorations. Thank you to the men who stayed after church to take down the wreath from the Rose window and put the nativity back in the garage.
- Thank you to Daughters for accommodating the Blood Drive when thanks to a snow storm January 6 we wound up with the Blood Drive and Daughters New Year's pot luck on the same date.
- Thank you to Ron Geisel for once more shoveling all the driveways and sidewalks around the church. This last snow storm he even had to shovel a driveway from the church garage to Bilderbeck so we could get out of the parking lot and others could get in. Most women do not like to get out of the car and step into 15" deep snow drifts. Thanks to Duane Waeltz for getting his tractor here to clear the parking lot most of the way by Wednesday. Unfortunately choir got canceled because of a second storm which sent 3 inches. (We could get out over that.)
- Thank you to everyone who brought food for the Annual meeting potluck and to Lori Selman for all the extra work she went through to put the Reports together and then get out corrected financial reports.
- Dale Reese has begun the stem cell transplant. He is staying at Hope Lodge at 4215 Lindell Blvd. in St. Louis. This is just down the street from the St. Louis Cathedral and next to a shopping center with a Schnucks, and several fast food restaurants. He will be there approximately 3 months.
- In case you did not hear, Dorothy Dressel is back home

The picture was taken for the St. Louis University Hospital website, because the donors aren't always there with the patient. Dale's Sister, Victoria Reinkoester, is on the right. She is the one who donated the stem cells.



# FEBRUARY 2014

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
February 9th—Funds and fellowship Outing to the Original Springs Hotel in Oakville. Leave at Noon March 1st—Pre-Lenten Breakfast 8:30 ; Day of Discipleship @ St. Paul's Belleville. March 15th - Wurstmart						
2	3 Evangelical Daughters Mtg 6:30 pm	4 8:30 am Quilters	5 Choir 7:00 pm	6	7	8
9 Funds and Fellowship Outing	10	11 8:30 am Quilters Council Mtg. 7 pm	12	13	14	15
16	17 President's Day	18 8:30 am Quilters	19	20	21	22
23	24	25 8:30 am Quilters	26	27	28	



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*"Through the Spirit we are  
a Church on the Move: Wel-  
coming, Caring,  
Sharing."*



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