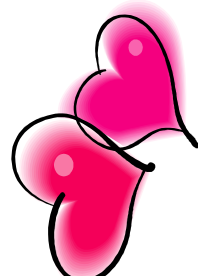
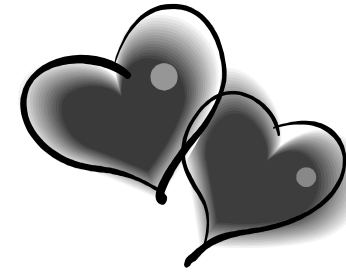


**F E B R U A R Y**

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
 6pm Confirmation	7 5:30 p.m. Fermata Practice 6:30 p.m. Choir Practice	1 	2 10am Bible Study 12:30 Swedish Weaving 4pm CRASH 7pm Trustees Meeting	3 2pm ME Meeting 4pm YOYOs 7pm Sweet Adelines	4 	5 
6 2pm Bortz Worship Service 6pm Confirmation	7 5:30 p.m. Fermata Practice 6:30 p.m. Choir Practice	8 	9 10am Bible Study 12:30 Swedish Weaving 4pm CRASH	10 4pm YOYOs 7pm Sweet Adelines	11 UMM Retreat	12 
13 7am Men's Breakfast 5pm J.A.M.	14 6:30 p.m. Choir Practice 7pm Kids Great Start	15 	16 10am Bible Study 12:30 Swedish Weaving 4pm CRASH 6:30pm Game Night	17 1pm Worship Meeting 4pm YOYOs 7pm Sweet Adelines	18 NEWSLETTER DEADLINE	19 10am-4pm Sweet Adelines
20 6pm Confirmation	21 6:30 p.m. Choir Practice	22 	23 10am Bible Study 12:30 Swedish Weaving 4pm CRASH	24 4pm YOYOs 7pm Sweet Adelines	25 	26 5pm Goodtimers Dinner Party at the Innmans
27 6pm Confirmation	28 6:30 p.m. Choir Practice					



February 2011  
Steeplenotes

NON-PROFIT ORG.  
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FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH  
2490 West State Road  
West Branch, Michigan 48661

Address Service Requested

(989) 345-0210  
Rev. Lisa Cook, Pastor  
Email: wbfumc@sbcglobal.net  
Web site: [westbranchfumc.org](http://westbranchfumc.org)  
Sunday Worship 8:30 & 11:00 AM  
11:00 AM Sunday Service  
on WKJC 104.7 FM

Special points of interest:

Lisa's Message.....Pg. 2  
 Birthdays.....Pg. 4  
 Anniversaries.....Pg. 4  
 "Thanks" .....Pg. 4  
 Youth page.....Pg. 5  
 Sunday School News.....Pg. 8  
 Prayer Concerns.....Pg. 10  
 Serving.....Pg. 11  
 Calendar.....Pg. 12

**MARCH NEWSLETTER DEADLINE FEBRUARY 18TH**

# Church Time

Our church calendar is a bit like a time capsule. It helps us to see what happened when in our biblical history. Our Christian Church calendar always starts with the season of Advent, 4 weeks before Christmas. Just as anxious parents await the birth of their child, so we wait and prepare for Jesus to be born into our world. This time of awaiting the birth of Jesus is portrayed by blue cloths on our altar, pulpit, lectern and my stole. We happily come into the celebration of Christmas Eve and Christmas Day and visually show that by changing the cloths to bright white ones with gold trim. The purity of these celebrations are shown in these beautiful colors. Twelve days after Christmas we acknowledge Epiphany Sunday, as close to January 6<sup>th</sup> as possible, with white cloths again, when we celebrate the Wise Men coming to worship Jesus.



After that, our church calendar moves to Ordinary Time, not ordinary in the sense of it only being regular, but it is a time of counting the Sundays after Epiphany through ordinals, or numbering the Sundays. This season is shown by the color green used throughout the cloths in the church. It is a "green" season in our church life also as we grow in our knowledge of the life of Jesus. The scriptures chosen through the Lectionary, tell about the life and ministry of Jesus and his disciples in more detail. I am a lectionary preacher and enjoy seeing which scriptures will be

highlighted during this green season in our church's life and helping see how we can grow in our faith through the hearing of these Ordinary Time scriptures. This green season, Ordinary Time, goes right up to Ash Wednesday when we begin our Lenten season. This year Ash Wednesday will be on March 9, 2011. We will hold our worship service at 7 pm on that evening and our worship committee will use grey or black cloths to penitentially prepare ourselves for the six weeks of Lent.

This church calendar is moving us toward the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross and the celebration of his resurrection to eternal life. This Lenten season is a time for us to contemplate the work, mission, impact and teachings of Jesus more fully. I urge you to take time during Lent to contemplate all that Jesus means to us, as Christ followers, and all that we can do in his name for the world.

This time capsule, the church calendar, encourages us to bring our faith into our everyday life and follow the Son of God as he calls us closer. Watch the color changes in the sanctuary as they show us the changing nature of our church year. Be prepared for the Lenten season as we follow Jesus to the cross and beyond.

Blessings on the journey,  
*Rev. Lisa Cook*

February 2011	6	13	20	27
<b>Greeters 8:30</b>	Linda Vincent	George and Sandy Fuess	Malcolm and Evelyn Smith	Karen Brewer
<b>Greeters 11:00</b>	Jackie Lewis	Jim and Caroline Warren	Naomi Bunting Eve Chambers	Ray and Betty McClintic
<b>Coffee Hour 8:30</b>	The Zaske Family and The Orr Family	Ron and Joanne Trombley		
<b>Coffee Hour 11:00</b>	John Carroll and Jeanne Stoppels	The Pughs	The Coons	The Snider Family
<b>Nursery 8:30</b>	Clara Clark	Kerry Zaske	Beth Orr	Rose White
<b>Nursery 11:00</b>	Liz Steinhurst	Betty McClintic	Sharron Ibbotson Mary Louise Parker	Sue Smith
<b>Ushers 8:30</b>	Cindy and Tom Heitmuller			
<b>Ushers 11:00</b>	Richard Inman			
<b>Altar Flowers</b>	The Kartes Family The Orr Family	The Weisend Family Dave & Colleen Wandoff	Vern and Marcia Smith Ivan and Jackie Lewis	The Osterlands
<b>Radio</b>		Ron and Joanne Trombley		
<b>Lay Reader 8:30</b>	Zach Manier	Maggie Robinson	Christopher Nolan and Elizabeth Clark	Chris Janisch
<b>Lay Reader 11:00</b>	Jordan Kartes	Jordan Kartes	Jordan Kartes	Jordan Kartes

If you wish to sponsor a radio broadcast (\$65) or altar flowers (\$7.50/vase) please notify church office (345-0210) or place your name on sign-up sheet on entry bulletin board. You may take your flowers home following 11:00 service. Leave the white liners at church by using one of the large plastic cups found in the sacristy (hallway off front of sanctuary) and use white gloves to handle vases. *If you want 2 vases, please note this so others will know.* When you pay for them, please make notation on check or envelope that it is for flowers or radio; place in offering plate, mail or bring to the church office.

Steeplenotes is published monthly by the First United Methodist Church of West Branch. Items being submitted for publication must be received in the church office by the 20th of the current month for publication in the next issue of Steeplenotes. Edited and published this month by Peggy Hosfelt.

John Snyder a former member of our church, passed away November 28, 2010. John had relocated to New Orleans in 1997 to live with his younger daughter. John named our church as a beneficiary and we received a gift for our Endowment of \$1000.

*Make a Commitment to Comfort Others*



**1-800-HOSPICE**  
[www.hospiceadvantage.com](http://www.hospiceadvantage.com)

*You can make a difference!*

No matter who you are, you've got something to offer hospice patients. Typically, the needs are simple-companionship, emotional support, someone to hold a hand or just listen. The small things that you can provide make an enormous difference in someone's life.

For more information about the Hospice Advantage Volunteer Program please contact Nikki Biermann at (989) 343-2470 or email [nbiermann@hospiceadvantage.com](mailto:nbiermann@hospiceadvantage.com)

*Your gift is your presence.*

**DEADLINE FOR MARCH STEEPLENOTES FEBRUARY 18TH**

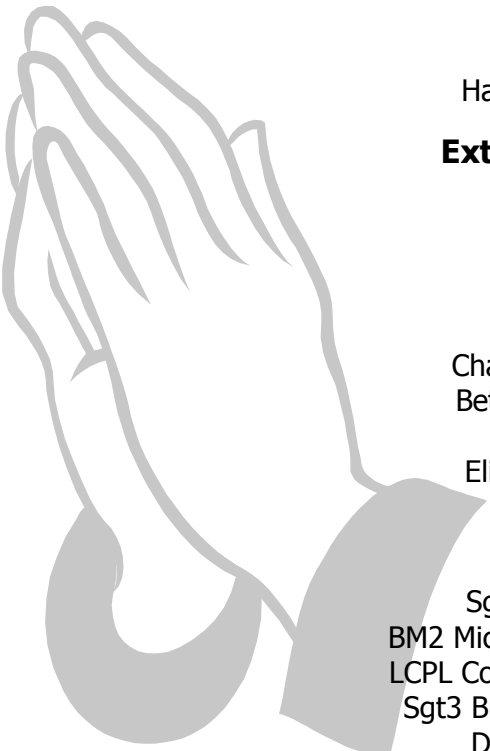


## PRAYER CONCERNS

When a prayer concern is received, our secretary will note the following information: date, contact person, their telephone number, and the person for whom we are praying. If after two weeks there has been no contact, we will call the contact person to see if they wish to continue on the list or are to be taken off. If you are listed below, and wish to continue on the prayer concern list, please call, email or drop a note at the office.

*Membership Care Committee*

- Barbara Bartkowiak
- Stuart Bedell
- Kay Belanger
- Pat Clayton
- Kent Davison
- Rev. Bruce Denton
- Jim Evans
- Maxine Gehl
- Patrick Gehl
- Richard Gehl Jr.
- Brad Gillespie
- Melinda Goldie
- Evie Heim
- Ilah Hickman
- Ashleigh Kauffman
- Erma Krumm
- Karen Leonard
- Dottie Macintyre
- Karrie Martis
- Heather Merrow
- Phyllis Morris
- Lewis Mounts
- Sarah Oliver
- Becky Parks
- Michael Reiterman
- Jim Routson
- Kevin and Joelle Schumaker
- Malcolm Smith



- Doug Trout
- Mary Vines
- Tracy White
- Harold Stephens

### Extended Care

- Tracy Boks
- Helen Bullen
- Barb Brasseur
- Marie Dunn
- Irene Miller
- Charlotte Perdew
- Betty Richardson
- Ruth Saari
- Elizabeth Wilcox

### Military

- Sgt Rick K Glass
- BM2 Michael Kirchhoff
- LCPL Cooper S. Morse
- Sgt3 Brendan Pizzala
- David Trombley
- In Iraq:*
- SSG Jay Hale
- 1Lt Hector Carrion
- Afghanistan:*
- Sgt. William Klemmer

**SIGN UP NOW FOR OUR SAGINAW BAY DISTRICT'S BISHOP'S DAY VIRAL CHRISTIANITY MARCH 12, 2011 AT MIDLAND FIRST UMC**  
**9AM-3PM \$16 REGISTRATION INCLUDES LUNCH**  
**KEYNOTE SPEAKER MINNESOTA BISHOP SALLY DYCK**  
**5 AFTERNOON WORKSHOPS TO CHOOSE**  
**CALL THE CHURCH OFFICE TO REGISTER OR FOR MORE INFO**



**United Methodist Women**

Mission Team Meeting  
6:45pm  
Tuesday February 1

UMW meeting at the church, Wednesday February 9th at 7:00pm  
Patti DeMatio will be presenting a "Safe Cosmetic Party"  
Attending members are asked to bring their cosmetic bags. We will be looking at products from Revlon, Cover Girl and Maybelline.  
Shirley will be our Hostess and Sherrie will do Devotions



*Create a legacy of an Endowment Gift*

The income from endowments are used for special Church projects. The principle of the gift is never spent and continues indefinitely. This gift is a testimony to your faith and the confidence you have in the ministry of the Church.

## RED WIGGLER TOUR



Bill Warnecke will be taking a group to Saginaw Valley State University on Friday, February 18th. We will be learning about red wiggler worms, aquaculture, alternative energy, and alternative uses for plant materials. We will tour the greenhouse area and the the alternative use area and than we will have lunch before returning home. He took groups for tours 3 times last year and every time he learned something new. Several other people went on more than one tour. There is no cost for the tour but each person buys their own lunch at the school cafeteria. We meet at the church and car pool to the university. If you have questions or want to go on the tour call Bill Warnecke.

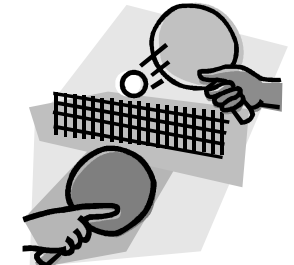
## Who Won Game Night?

The Food Pantry! We had 39 participants, over 20 games, and \$69 going to the Food Pantry. There were snacks and drinks. Some played the same game all night, others played different games. On average most played at least 3 games.

From the comments everyone had a great time. Some comments were "Great time", "Wouldn't change a thing", "It was perfect", "Great fun". There were some great suggestions too. We will now add fruit and popcorn to our snacks. We will still have two teams (White Knights and Coon's Cavalry) with a couple of changes. Everyone will play individually and each participant will donate \$2 towards the Food Pantry. Also coming to next Game Night is the Wii games.

We will have Game Night in February and March. The next game night is Wednesday, February 16th. Sign up soon to play in February!!!!

**P·I·N·G · P·O·N·G**



If anyone is in possession of used Ping Pong table in good condition, that they would like to donate to the church, please contact Phil Shaw. Ping Pong paddles are also desired.

# February Birthdays



- 1 Riley Griffin
  - 3 Alexandria McFarland  
Jacob Rhine
  - 5 Samantha Kartes  
Phyllis Morris
  - 6 Cheryl McFarland
  - 9 Doug Hughey  
Phil Matthews
  - 10 Elizabeth Morris
  - 11 Leon Gillespie  
Cassidy Orr
  - 12 Charlotte Greig  
Jean Rose
  - 14 Ed Breadon
  - 15 Garry Crawford  
Mary Hintz
  - 16 Mary Bruckner
  - 17 Ron Cook  
MacKenzie Weisend
  - 18 Ken Hughey
  - 19 Clara Clark  
William Hufstedler  
Amber VanGoethem
  - 21 Irene Miller
  - 22 Allie Dunaj
  - 28 Brenda Hughey  
Carly McPherson
- If you don't find your name in the list of birthdays and/or anniversaries, Let the office know!*

Thank you for all your cards and prayers for my sister Karen...she is cancer free!!!!  
Cindy Heitmuller

## February Anniversaries



- 2 Doug and Sheryl Hubbell
- 14 Ron and Joanne Trombley
- 15 Ron and Lisa Cook

I want to thank everyone for their prayers and lovely cards of encouragement during the tough times of chemo. God is with me to give me peace. My family and friends have kept us with food. Burt is thankful for that also. I am on the closing end of chemo and back to the road of recovery. A Healthy, Happy New Year to you all.  
Phyllis Morris

*Dear Church Family,  
Jim and I feel very blessed to have your prayers and positive messages of hope and encouragement during this worrisome time. I am continuing to make progress with my physical and occupational therapy, and Jim, of course, is a blessing and an outstanding caregiver. We still have a ways to go with regards to the strokes occurring but with God's help and guidance and your prayers, we know all things are possible.  
Much Love,  
Dottie Macintyre*

*We would like to thank everyone for all the support we received during our mother's illness and death. Many thanks to Lisa Cook for her visitation and for the wonderful memorial service. Thank you to Carol Kerby and Ron Cook for their help at the service. Thank you to the United Methodist Women (and helpers) for the wonderful dinner. Thank you to all who sent cards, prayed for us, and sent meals. We felt so fully supported we were fully able to concentrate on mom and her care. You are all a wonderful church family and we are so thankful for each and every one of you.*

Gina Rosebrugh Molly Tschirhart  
Gail Curtis Liz Steinhurst



I would like to thank everyone who has helped with the Christmas food boxes. To all of you who collected boxes, bought food, kept the leaves on the wreath, inventoried food, picked up turkeys and helped pack the boxes....THANK YOU!!! We provided a food box with all the fixings for a nice Christmas meal to 51 families.

I would also like to thank everyone who has helped with J.A.M. (Jesus and a Meal). We have been blessed with some wonderful food and many different programs. Many people now look forward to the second Sunday of the month for great food and fellowship. It is nice to know we are feeding people not only physically, but spiritually as well. If you are interested in helping with J.A.M., please contact Melanie Nolan. We have been asking a different group to prepare the meal each month, but if you haven't been asked yet, you do not have to wait to be asked....you can volunteer!!! We always need help and it is fun to boot!

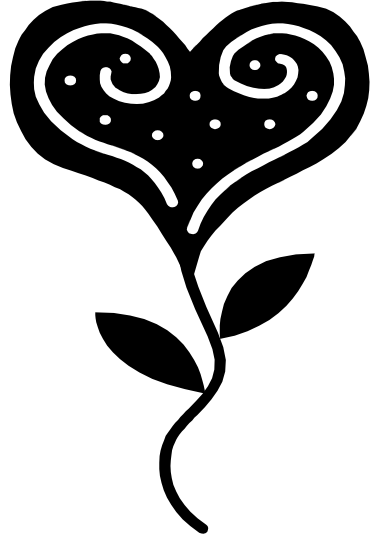
I am so proud to be a part of such a wonderful, caring church family. Together, we can touch so many hearts for Christ. Remember, WE are Jesus' hands and feet!  
Sweet blessings, Melanie Nolan

# Flower Gram Order Form!

Flower grams vary in prices depending on what you order. A single flower is \$1 and for multiple flower orders it will be \$1 per flower. Please fill out the form below to place your order. One order form is needed for each person you would like to send a flower gram to. Flower grams will be delivered February 13th. There will be someone taking orders during coffee hour for the next 3 weeks. All proceeds will go to youth activities such as lock-ins, field trips, and mission trips. Thank you for your support!

**How many flowers would you like?**  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Single flower  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Multiple flowers \_\_\_\_\_ How many?

**What color(s) would you like the Flowers to be?**  
 \_\_\_\_\_ White \_\_\_\_\_ Purple \_\_\_\_\_ Red  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Peach \_\_\_\_\_ Yellow \_\_\_\_\_ Pink



*For order takers use*  
 Paid \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
 Card filled out and attached

**Who is it to and from?**  
 To: \_\_\_\_\_  
 From: \_\_\_\_\_

**Cards that will be attached to the flower(s) are available to fill out when you place your order.**  
 Check this box if you would like to remain anonymous and one of the youth can fill out a card for you without your name on it.

### ***Leadership Training comes to West Branch***

In the past the district has held leadership training events where all new leaders and committee members have learned what their committee is all about and what they can do to help their committee. These leadership training events have gone on the road to bring the training right to our churches. We will host the leadership training road show on Sat. Feb. 26 from 9-noon in our Fellowship Hall. This will be for all United Methodist Churches in our area who wish to send people to this training event.

We will begin with the best practices of running a church meeting and showing leadership in our committees. After a break, this will be followed by specific actions that can be used in three committees: Finance, Trustees and Staff Parish Relations Committee and a special session for our secretaries in the area, led by our District Secretary, Teri Meyer. I encourage all of us to attend the first part of the morning: Registration at 9 am, session one from 9:30- 10:15 am, as it covers best practices of running a church meeting so we can all hear the same information and gain knowledge and insight on our church meetings. The following session, from 10:15-noon will be specifically for Church Secretaries, Finance, Trustees and Staff Parish Relations Committee leaders and members as they learn more about their specific area of interest.

Please call the church office to let us know that you will be attending this event and let us know which area or areas you are interested in learning more about: Secretarial, Finance, Trustees, Staff Parish Relations Committee or general church leadership practices.

**NEW MEMBERSHIP CLASSES**  
We will be having new membership classes in April  
Please contact Lisa if you are interested in joining our church family



Sunday School is now back in regular session, following all the Christmas festivities. Parents and children are reminded that they must be in the sanctuary no later than 9:45 to take part in the prize drawings every week. Please make an effort to be on time.

Thanks go out to all teachers and parents who helped pull off the Sunday School Christmas musical again this year. We all had a lot of fun and hope everyone enjoyed our efforts. We have a very talented bunch of young kids.

Now that we have a little more time, we'd like to spend some time with the children's bell choir and the cherub choir. Watch bulletins for coming rehearsals and performances.

Sunday School classes will be conducting a fundraiser on February 13. They will be selling Flower Grams for delivery on February 13. The flowers can be purchased for \$1 and will be accompanied by a note from the giver or an anonymous note prepared by one of the youth. We need donations of silk flowers (in good condition), ribbons, greenery, and floral tape to be used for the project. We also need parent participation to help youth during coffee hour for both services on Feb 6th to take orders. We also need parents who can drive children from school to church on Friday Feb 4 and Monday Feb 7, and who are willing to help supervise the preparing of the orders. Please let Theresa know when and where you'd like to help. Flower grams will be delivered on February 13—youth will be needed during coffee hours on this day to help deliver. Please support our youth in this service. All proceeds will be used for various youth events such as lock-ins, field trips and mission trips.

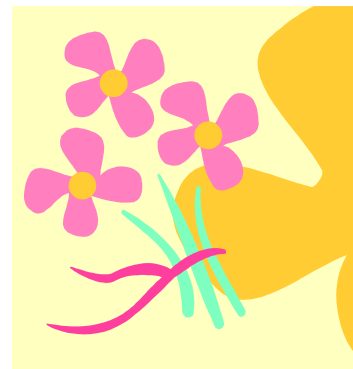


### **Youth News February 2011**

**Theresa Snider**  
Director of Youth  
& New Church  
Programs  
989-345-0210  
tsnider@westbranchfumc.org

### **Fundraising, fundraising, fundraising!**

We certainly have a lot going on right now with fundraising efforts for youth ministries! Be sure to check out the order form on page 9 and send one of your church friends a flower gram. Flower grams will be made up of various types of silk flowers with a card attached to it. The flower grams will be delivered by our youth on February 13th before services and during each coffee hour. Don't miss out on this great opportunity to show God's love to your brothers and sisters in Christ.



In addition to the ink jet cartridge recycling we have been doing for some time we have some new recycling fundraisers. We are now accepting cell phones, and various other types of consumer electronic and also old gold, silver or platinum jewelry. A complete list of items that we are accepting for these fundraisers can be found on the collection boxes near the Christian education office. These items do not have to be in working order for us to recycle them. As always if you have any questions feel free to give me a call at the church, email me or catch me on Sunday!

Thank you for all of your support!



### **What is all this fundraising for???**

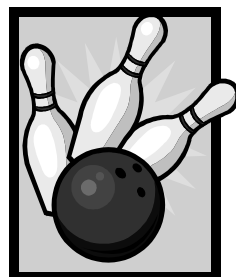
We would like to get some activities planned for our youth. The Sr. High mission trip is certainly high on our list but we are doing fundraising for all youth and we would like to do things like a water park trip, a sledding trip, mini mission trips for Jr. High, lock-ins, and Christian music concerts just to name a few. The youth also sponsor a child thru Compassion International and some of the funds we raise will go to her. In the near future we will have Sr. High mission trip specific fundraising going on and we hope that you join us in making a difference.

### **A mission project has been chosen!**

Last year our Sr. High group worked at the Old Town Christian Outreach in Saginaw. We took a look at a couple of different options for missions. We really enjoyed the work and help that we were able to provide at Old Town Christian Outreach so we are heading back there for a second time. We will be working in the soup kitchen, helping out in the baby pantry and possibly helping to beautify the properties this year as we did last year.

### **Permission Slips Due!**

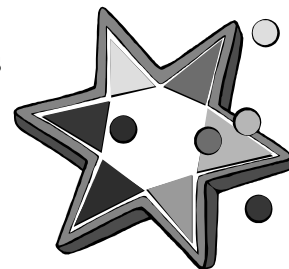
If you want your child(ren) to be able to participate in all this fun, please be sure to turn in their general permission slip for the 2010-2011 Sunday School year. You can pick a blank one up outside my office on the cork board. Thank you and God Bless, Theresa



## DO YOU LIKE TO PLAY GAMES?

Do you like to eat and not have to worry about doing the cooking and clean-up afterward? Then you will want to mark February 13th on your calendar.

J.A.M. on February 13th is game night. Bring your favorite game to play. We will meet at 5:00 for a free dinner sponsored by the finance committee and then we will play games. You won't want to miss this.....besides board games and cards we now have a Wii. We can now bowl and play many other interactive games. We can play on teams and have all sorts of tournaments. Come to J.A.M. and be one of the first to try out the church's new Wii. Great food, great fun and great fellowship! Bring your family, friends and neighbors!!!



## Goodtimers

Saturday February 26th—Potluck Dinner Party  
5:00 At the Inmans  
Hosted by the Inmans RSVP 345-7191

### A BIG THANK YOU

to the member who purchased and donated to our church a Wii with several games and an extra controller. Also, a **BIG THANK YOU** to our youth, who purchased 2 additional controllers for the Wii. The Wii and games is an addition that many have been longing for our church to have.

Believe it or not, as many adults as youth have requested that we have a Wii and thanks to a very generous donor, we now have one! We ALL have access to use it while at the church. So, if your group is planning an event at the church and want to have some fun and maybe get a little exercise too, get out the Wii and **GET YOUR GAME ON!!!!** If anyone has any Wii games that they no longer use, and they are church appropriate, why not consider donating them to the church.

## UNITED METHODIST MEN

### UPCOMING EVENTS FEBRUARY 11 AND 12TH

(Friday and Saturday)

Men's Retreat at the Woodlands  
Conference Center on Sage Lake Road

We will have many fun activities and use a study series from Tony Dungy—a Super Bowl winning coach—Please note the posters around the church and ask UM Men about it.

### FEBRUARY 13TH

7:00 AM Men's Breakfast

### SATURDAY MARCH 19TH

We will do a Salisbury Steak Dinner, a Silent Auction and the Music in the Lounge by our talented singers and musicians. More information will be coming.

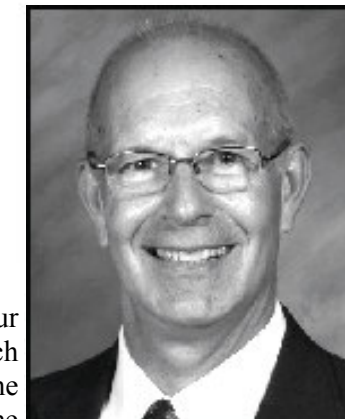
DO YOU HAVE SOMETHING YOU WOULD LIKE TO DONATE FOR THE AUCTION? GIVE PHIL SHAW OR RAY McCLINTIC A CALL.

### New Tax Law Extends Charitable IRA Rollover!

President Obama just signed the Tax Relief Unemployment Insurance Reauthorization, and Job Creation Act of 2010 into law. A significant and long-awaited portion of the law extended the opportunity for donors age 70+ to make a tax-free transfer from their IRA accounts to a qualified charity. This is an option for United Methodists who qualify to meet their Required Minimum Distributions (RMD) from their IRAs while supporting the church in a tax-efficient manner. This provision extends through December 2011. Contact Maggie Robinson, Finance Chair, if you have questions about this opportunity.

*"Now it is required that those who have been given a trust must prove faithful."*  
1Corinthians 4:2 (NIV)

## eVIEWS from the DS



**The New Year began with an acute case of bronchitis for my wife, Jan.** We thought it was a common cold but after a week it was clear something worse was the problem. When her doctor diagnosed the condition, she came home carrying a sack full of medications: an antibiotic, an inhalation aerosol, tablets for chest congestion, and cough medicine. Like a good patient she took her medicine with the hope that her health would soon return. (As I write she's getting better but is not 100% yet.)

I share this story as a way of introducing my vision for the Saginaw Bay District. My vision is a network of healthy, vital churches that make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. This may seem obvious but the vision has two implications: first, making clear that the goal has to do with being "healthy, vital churches;" and second, defining what is meant by "healthy, vital churches."

First, one word could be substituted for "healthy" and "vital" – faithful. Whether we are talking about an individual or a church or a network of churches, faithfulness is a godly goal. It is our goal. This means we are going to look at numbers but not because we are an organization trying to survive or strengthen itself by getting more members and more influence. The goal is faithfulness, and like Jan's health or lack thereof, there are certain markers that one looks for in assessing the situation. The goal, however, is not simply to get her to stop coughing (which would be a good thing!) but to improve her overall

health. For our purposes (church or district) the desired outcome is faithfulness, not simply addressing one benchmark like church membership.

This leads to the second part of the vision – defining "healthy, vital churches." There are many ways to approach this subject but I have chosen to use Bishop Robert Schnase's *Five Practices of Fruitful Congregations*:\* radical hospitality, passionate worship, intentional faith development, risk-taking mission and service, and extravagant generosity. As you can see, it's more than just putting butts in the pew or bucks in the plate - we are striving for faithfulness which is reflected in these areas of ministry. Stay tuned for more information on how these aspects of ministry will be measured. (If you have suggestions, please send them to me.)

For now, my hope is to cast my vision and invite you to join the ongoing conversation of how we as the Saginaw Bay District can be used by God for eternal purposes. We can take courage from remembering that our desire to please God does in fact please God and, I believe, God will bless our efforts.

Following Jesus with you,

*Jeff*

Rev. Dr. Jeff Maxwell, D.S.



\*See: <http://fivepractices.org/> -available from Cokesbury for \$18.00 or Amazon for \$12.00 and less!