

The Church Spire

Volume 16, Issue 10

December 2, 2011



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And much more!

Christmas Bazaar is December 3

**Come to the Christmas Bazaar
Saturday, December 3
Fellowship Hall
9 a.m. to 1 p.m.**

The Coffee Shop is open from **9 a.m. to 11 a.m.** featuring coffee cake, pie and sandwiches.

The Luncheon is served from **11 a.m. to 1 p.m.** featuring **soup, rolls and pie!**



Everyone is invited to attend – bring your family, friends, neighbors! Enjoy the fellowship, the food and the shopping (jewelry, plants, baked goods, crafts, fair trade goods and much more) and know that you are helping support our United Methodist Women and

Christmas Eve at Athens First 4:30 p.m. Family Service in the Chapel



7:30 Traditional Service of Lessons and Carols with the lighting of candles
(Children attending this service will worship in the Sanctuary with their families)



Christmas Morning

10:30 a.m. Simple Christmas Worship of Song and Story in the Sanctuary

(Worship will *not* be held at 8:45 a.m.)

New Year Morning

8:45 Worship in the Chapel

10:30 a.m. Worship in the Sanctuary

Free parking will be available in the City Parking Garage for these services.

For details on these services, please visit page 4



A Word from Wendy

Journey

As I write, I am days (hours, really) away from leaving for Honduras with our mission team. We will be gone for a week, working side by side with persons who live in a small village in the hills of Honduras, teaching and playing with the children, experiencing a new culture and different way of living, and meeting Christ along the way. We will be gone for a week, while Christmas waits to be decorated, and presents wait to be bought, and end-of-year work piles up, and the holidays throttle up to high gear.

As part of making the journey to Honduras, there have been several important steps of preparation:

First, I needed to decide that I was going to make the journey. That was relatively easy – I’ve been wanting to serve on an international mission trip for several years, and roadblocks kept blocking the way. Having decided “yes!, I’m going,” then the hard part began – the implications of being gone for a week in December. To summarize that as extra work to be done before leaving and trip preparations on top of the extra work, does not do justice to the magnitude it seems.

And so, I also needed to realize that I needed to say “no” to some things. In general, I am not good at saying “no”. And, for some things, “no” is not an option. In which case, it became how can this be done differently, creatively, resourcefully, with the help of others.

Of course, this is not a journey I want to take alone. The mission team has been meeting to learn both the expectations from our host organization and the practical wisdom from those who have taken this journey before us. We’ve been meeting to plan our participation in the service we will share. We’ve been meeting to get to know one another and support each other.

And, by the time you are reading this, we will be on the journey – step by step, putting one foot in front of the other. We will be following our itinerary and side-stepping when detours enter our path. We will be going uphill and down - quite literally, as I understand the ride to our destination, and emotionally and physically as the trip wears on. There will be bumps along the way, and times when the road is smooth.

And when the mission trip is complete and we have all returned “home,” we will find that the journey is not complete. And, in many ways, the journey we will have taken will be the preparation for the journey that now lies ahead.

As I’ve prepared for this journey to Honduras, I have also been reflecting on the journey to Bethlehem that is captured in Scripture and we know as the Christmas story. When visited by the angel, Mary said “yes.” Learning of Mary’s child and having his own angel visit, Joseph said “no” to the tradition of the day and kept Mary as his wife. Mary enlisted the help and support of her relative Elizabeth. And when the time came, Joseph and Mary set out for Bethlehem. And that’s how the story begins – as shepherds go tell the good news that the Messiah is born!

I pray this Advent, as you prepare your heart to welcome the Christ child on Christmas morn, that you embark on your own journey to Bethlehem: encountering God’s love and grace and invitation to discipleship, finding persons to journey in faith with you, relishing each step of the journey.

Blessings,

Wendy





Journey to Bethlehem: Advent Worship &

The season of Advent begins four Sundays before Christmas Day. It is a time of reflection and preparation to greet the new-born Savior on Christmas Day.

During Advent this year, we have embarked on “A Journey to Bethlehem”, following the Biblical texts leading up to the birth of Jesus.

Each week in worship we meet the people and visit the places along this journey. We will also explore the metaphor of “journey” and how these stories inform our life journey today.

Nov 27: Mary of Nazareth: Saying “Yes” to God

Dec 4: Joseph, son of David - Laura Dalton, preaching

Dec 11: Mary visits Elizabeth: Don't Try This Alone

Dec 18: From Nazareth to Bethlehem: Put One Foot In Front of The Other

Advent Bible Study

This Advent, join one of the small groups that is meeting to discuss the Christmas story as it is told in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke, and to view a video and commentary filmed in the Holy Land in the places where these occurred.

Pastor Wendy is leading discussion groups on Wednesdays at noon and Wednesdays at 6 pm. Kim Mather is leading a group on Thursdays at noon; and Sharon Stoltzfus on Sundays at 9:30 a.m. Our Men's Prayer Group on Thursdays at 7 a.m. and Trinity Class Sundays at 9:30 a.m. are also participating in this study. Join at any time during Advent (study sheets are available in the office).

Stewardship Update Thank you. Thank You! THANK YOU!! Do you remember all the way back in October? As a church we spent time reflecting on “enough”; we talked about how we might “discover joy through simplicity and generosity.” We studied and worshipped . . . and we have responded!

As of late November, we have received more than 100 personal commitments for the coming year. If you have not yet returned your Estimate of Giving card, please return that to the church office or put it in the offering collection plate.

Thank you for prayerfully considering what offering you will make to God through our church in the coming year. Your gifts are an act of worship and an investment in opportunities for God to work through us. Our prayer is that you will find greater contentment and simplicity in your life as you put God first in your giving and your living. May we all experience the joy that comes from knowing that our gifts honor God and change lives!

Reaching Out to Others Through the Giving Tree Project

As we continue to receive more requests to help our neighbors in need this season, you will notice that our Giving Trees continue to blossom with more tags.

In this season of giving, please consider taking one or more tags off of the trees. Your effort will bring some comfort to a fellow community member struggling with extreme challenges this season.

Giving Trees are located in the Narthex and the chapel area. **Monday December 12 is our deadline**, in order that all gifts can be sorted and distributed in time for Christmas. Please help us pick the trees bare!



Christmas Eve, Christmas and New Years Worship Details

Christmas Eve



First UMC will offer two times and two separate services to celebrate the birth of the Jesus, the Messiah on Saturday, December 24, 2011.

At 4:30 pm, there will be a Family Christmas Eve service in the Chapel, which will include an opportunity for the children to participate in the telling of the Christmas Story. We will sing the songs of Christmas, tell the story of Christmas, and come to the manger to give our “gifts” to baby Jesus and receive the gift of Holy Communion.

At 7:30 pm, there will be a Service of Lessons and Carols celebrated in the Sanctuary. Our Journey to Bethlehem concludes as we arrive at a manger to find a baby. The verses of the Christmas carol “What Child is This?” will guide our service as we turn to Scripture and carols to answer the questions “Who is this child?” and “Why lies he in such low estate?”, and make the proclamation “Let loving hearts enthrone him!” The service will conclude with the lighting of candles.

Christmas Day and New Years Day Worship Times

2011 is a year when Christmas Day (and New Years Day) coincide with Sunday!

On **Sunday, December 25, 2011**, we will hold **one worship service at 10:30 a.m.** in the Sanctuary. We will share a Simply Christmas worship of song and story.

On **Sunday, January 1, 2012** we will worship at 8:45 a.m. in the Chapel and at 10:30 a.m. in the Sanctuary. On this day we will celebrate Epiphany and the sacrament of Holy Communion.

There will **NOT** be Sunday School for children or youth on either December 25 or January 1.

Fair Trade Fair Christ Lutheran Church (69 Mill Street) will hold a Fair Trade Fair on Sunday December 4 from 9:00 to 9:45 and from 11:00 to 1:00 in the Fellowship Hall.

There will be fair trade handcrafts, provided by SERRV, which support artisans and farmers from across the globe and Zienzele baskets which support orphans in Zimbabwe.

Make a world of difference with a purchase that affirms dignity and gives hope to those in need around the world!

Please note that they can accept only checks and cash. Parking is available in the University parking lot behind the church.

Calling All Vocalists and Bell Ringers Interested in a Short-Term Commitment

Many of those who participate in the Chancel and Handbell Choirs leave Athens during the OU break between Fall and Winter Quarters.

That’s just the time when we have an opportunity to sing and play that wonderful music we enjoy at this special time of the year. Won’t you consider joining these choirs during these next few weeks? It’s a great way to celebrate the season! Rehearsals are held Wednesday evenings: the Bell Choir from 6 to 7 p.m. in the music room on the 2nd floor and the Chancel Choir from 7 to 8:30 p.m. in Room 6. Child care is provided (note: if you need child care during the bell rehearsals, please contact Cathy Bigger in advance – 593-3977 ext 14 or bigger@firstumcathens.org)



CHRISTMAS AT MONDAY LUNCH; A Very Special Celebration

Several years ago, we stopped serving a traditional holiday meal at Monday Lunch and began hosting the Monday Lunch Christmas Party.

We did this for many reasons: many of our guests have a low income, so they cannot afford to go out to eat, invite friends over, or travel back home. They have a disability, so it is not easy to get out. They are retired, so they are on a fixed income. They are from other countries and cannot travel back home. So, in many cases, this will be the only chance they have to celebrate Christmas with friends.

Monday Lunch's Christmas Party is truly a celebration of the Christmas Spirit because of all of your support over the years. I've felt, seen, smelled, tasted, and heard what you have given from your heart to our guests. This is why Monday Lunch has come to be their home away from home and the family they don't have.

Please try to be a part of this year's celebration on Monday, December 19th!

Thanks for all of your support!
—Allene Kilgore

P.S.

There are MANY ways to help:

- Volunteer any time between 9-1:30pm on December 19
 - Volunteer between 10:30-12noon on the 20th to pick up donations of hot food at 4 or 5 area restaurants
 - Join in the Music! From 11-noon, it's time for caroling with guitars, etc. and small group caroling. From noon-1pm, David Maze plays the piano; others join in with brass and other instruments, while others gather around to make up the chorus.
- Donate some party food for 15 to people

This year especially, we need your help to make sure we have enough food. Please bring any food to the Fellowship Hall kitchen by 11AM Monday, Dec. 19, or drop it off when you come to church. See the next page for suggestions. Thank you!

We are also in need of more volunteers and carolers. Please call Allene at 592.2122 if you have questions.

Athens County Food Pantry Update Fall 2011 The Athens County Food Pantry has been working hard to find new ways to help feed our county residents. We are still packing food boxes and bags for distribution at Job and Family Services and Amesville Presbyterian Church but now allow recipients to receive them every 45 days instead of every 60. We are adding ground beef when possible and include infant vouchers for formula and other necessities as appropriate.

We have also added *Snacks in My Backpack* at Chauncey Elementary for every student (appr 150) and for 15 kindergartners at The Plains Elementary. These "snacks" are sent home every Friday and include peanut butter, fruit cups, milk, juice, granola bars and other items to feed the kids over the weekend. ACFP worked with the Peanut Butter and Jelly Project over the summer and donated snack bags to the Nelsonville Public Library for a special summer program. In addition, we donated additional snack bags throughout the summer for children in need.

Please Help Monday Lunch Celebrate Christmas! December 19

Just a Few of Many Ideas.....



Chips & dip
 Relish plates
 Any kind of crackers
 Cheese platters
 Deli meat
 Swedish meatballs
 Chicken wings
 Pasta or rice casseroles
 Any kind of salads
 Egg, Ham, Chicken or
 Pimento Cheese salad
 Deviled Eggs
 Cookies, cakes, pies, special desserts
 2 – 1 gallon size sherbet (no green)
 Several 2 liter bottles of ginger ale and red punch
 “Party-size” sandwich buns
 Any “festive food” that you might serve at a party
 We also need you to come and help celebrate with Monday Lunch
 Monday Lunch
 Celebrates Christmas
 December 19
 11AM to 1 PM
 Come Join Us!



Office Schedule December 2-9 The Office will be closed on Friday, December 2, Monday, December 5, Thursday, December 8 and Friday, December 9. Remember, you can always leave a voicemail message if staff are not in their offices: Pastor Wendy (15), Leisa (10), Sharon (11), and Cathy (14).

The Sympathy of the congregation is extended to Jessie Essex and family on the death of her husband, Richard, October 28.

Hand Sanitizers Added throughout the Building The black, hand sanitizer dispensers are located in all the restrooms and in areas where food is served. The sanitizer is foam, alcohol-free and waterless.

Sermons Broadcast Live on WATH Remember, if for some reason you can't be in worship on Sunday, tune in to WATH (970) at 11 a.m. and hear that portion of our service broadcast live on the radio. Sometimes they begin the broadcast at 10:30 a.m., so be sure to tune in a little early.

Parking on Sunday Mornings Parking in the Municipal Parking Garage is free on Sundays and elevators are available. Be sure to park in one of the metered spaces. If you have an OU Parking hang tag, either faculty/staff or retired, you may park in OU Lot 39 (the lot in front of the School of Music and Seigfred).

The Next *Spire* Deadline is December 22 If you have news for the January issue, please be sure to get it to the church by Thursday, December 22nd.

Prayer Chain If you have prayer requests, please call 593-7471 or 593-6853 to have your request placed on the church's Prayer Chain.

Copies of Newsletter Available at the Church A few copies are printed each month and are in the literature racks in the Narthex and by the Chapel entrance. It is always available to read from our web site.

No Children or Youth Sunday School Classes on December 25 or January 1

Nursery Volunteers Needed There are many ways to show God's love at FUMC, and I can't think of a better one than becoming part of the volunteer nursery corps. Whether you're rocking a baby, playing peek-a-boo with a toddler, building a block tower with a preschooler or reading a story to a kindergartener, the time commitment is brief and the blessings are great. Contact Cathy Bigger for more information or to volunteer (593-3977, ext 14 or bigger@firstumcathens.org)

Episcopal Church Presents Annual Advent Music Event The choir of the Episcopal Church of the Good Shepherd presents the Festival of Lessons and Music for the season of Advent on Sunday, December 4 at 4:00 p.m. The choir, directed by Marsha Reilly, will be assisted by Janice Robison, organ and a brass quartet. The event is free and open to the public. A free will offering will be collected to support the June Black Music fund of the church. A reception and Holiday House sale of seasonal items will follow. For more information contact the church at 740-593-6877 (gsrector@gmail.com) or Marsha Reilly at 740-592-2596 (mareilly1@columbus.rr.com).



November 20 was our second Mission and Munchies Sunday of this school year. Our youngsters enjoyed learning about this year's upcoming Honduras mission trip. They helped to share God's love through creating special gift bags for our mission team to take to the children in the village where they will be working. God speed and many blessings to the Honduras mission team!

We approach the Advent Season with a spirit of anticipation and joy, as we look forward to sharing the stories of several key characters on the journey to Bethlehem. The Council on Children's Ministries and the Children's Sunday school hope that all our kids from pre-school through 4th grade will join us in Fellowship Hall on Sunday mornings (12/4, 12/11, 12/18) at 9:30 AM for this special 3-week series. We hope to see you there! Remember, there will be no children's Sunday school on Christmas Day or New Year's Day.

Many thanks once again to the teachers and helpers from our "Time and Money" unit that spanned late October and the first half of November. Our leaders included Lynda Berman, Lara Pickett, Matthew Dalton, Sean Ostermann, Chris Hitchcock, and Kristin Kerwin. Thank you all so much. We couldn't do it without you!

On a personal note, I want to thank the teachers and helpers who've been of assistance in so many ways while my broken toe has healed! It just wasn't possible to climb all the stairs for a couple of weeks there, and so I am grateful for the help in gathering attendance records, etc.

May the joy of the Christ child's birth fill your hearts with wonder and peace during this Holy Season.

Sincerely,

Laura Dalton,
Sunday School Superintendent.

Snow Closing Information In certain weather conditions it may become necessary to cancel worship services and other events. These are *always* cancelled if a state of emergency has been declared for Athens County. At other times it is done at the discretion of the leadership involved. In any event, cancellation information will be provided to WATH (970), WXTQ (105.5) and WOUB-FM (91.3) radio stations and will be posted on our answering system, at extension 3 or 15 and when possible, on our Web Site at this address: <http://www.firstumcathens.org/calendar>





December is here and the excitement is building at Growing Tree! This month we will:

KNOW GOD by gathering each morning to share our joy and thanks for this special time of year;

GROW in GOD by exploring the many facets of the holiday season, both sacred and secular, in small group activities geared to further social, emotional, cognitive, physical and spiritual development;

SHOW GOD'S LOVE by leaving Growing Tree each day with the wonder of the holiday season in our hearts and sharing our joy and excitement with our families and friends.

See below for weekly themes and special calendar dates.

DATES	THEME	LETTER of the WEEK
November 28-December 2	Author Jan Brett	"Ww", as in winter
December 5-December 9	Symbols of the Season, secular	"Rr" as in Rudolph
December 12-December 16	Symbols of the Season, sacred	"Mm" as in Mary
December 7-- December 16--	Ohio Brass Performance-Sanctuary, 10:00am Growing Tree Annual Christmas Program--Sanctuary--7:00pm	

Our last day of school prior to Christmas Break will be Friday, Decmeber 16. Class will resume on Tuesday, January 3, 2012.



Growing Tree will once again this year be showing God's love by participating in the Giving Tree Project. We are grateful to have the opportunity to offer our families a hand-on way of helping their children understand the concept of the blessedness of sharing and giving at this time of year.

ENROLLMENT UPDATE January is a great time to begin classes at Growing Tree. If you or a family you know is looking for a quality early educational program, rooted in a Christian atmosphere, please send them our way. We'd love to speak with them. We currently have openings in the T/TH class, only. Contact Cathy Bigger at 593-3977, ext.14 or bigger@firstumcathens.org for more information. Thanks!

THANK YOU, THANK YOU! Special thanks to the Holm/Huwe family for their generous donation of our beautiful new play kitchen set! The children of FUMC and Growing Tree are enjoying the new kitchen already and will continue to do so for many years to come. Again, many thanks to Janice, Bob, Daryl and Allie.

On behalf of the children and families of Growing Tree, may you experience this holiday season with the joy and wonder of a young child in your hearts. Thank you for your continuing support, encouragement and , most of all, your prayers for Growing Tree Preschool.



SAVIOR ORNAMENT

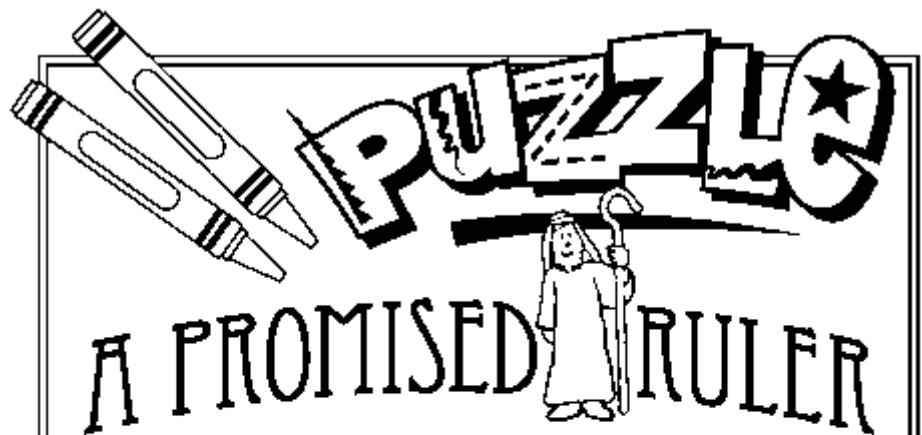
This Christmas, celebrate Jesus' birthday by making this keepsake ornament.

What you need:

- Wooden clothespin with round end
- Black permanent marker
- White cloth or felt
- Small wooden star (available at craft stores)
- Yellow paint
- Paintbrush
- Gold glitter (optional)
- Glue gun (and an adult)
- Straw-colored raffia
- Palm-size wicker wreath (available at craft stores)
- Ribbon

What you do:

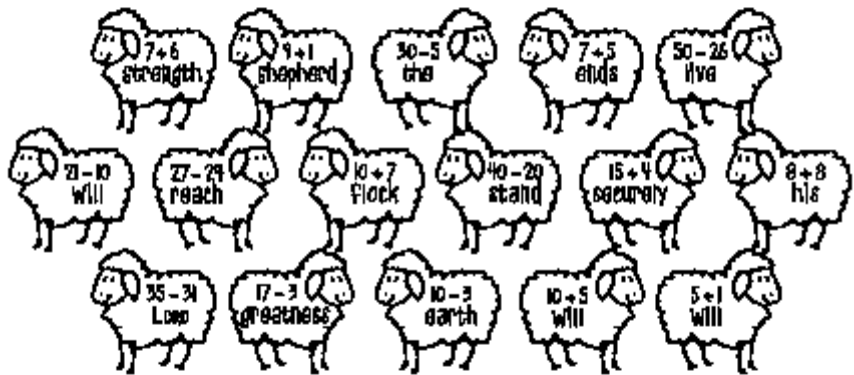
1. On the clothespin's round knob, draw two dots for eyes.
2. Wrap the white cloth around the clothespin, like a swaddled baby.
3. Paint the star yellow; add glitter, if desired.
4. With the glue gun and adult supervision, glue the raffia to the bottom inside of the wreath. Then glue the swaddled clothespin atop the raffia and glue the gold star atop the wreath.
5. Tie a ribbon around the top, near the star.
6. Hang the ornament on your Christmas tree or tie it on a gift.



A PROMISED RULER

Prophets told of Jesus' birth hundreds of years before it happened. Never had a baby's arrival come with such a promise.

Directions: To read what one prophet (Micah 5:4, NIV) said about Jesus, complete the math problems below. Then fill in the words, using the math solutions as your guide.



"He _____ and _____ his _____

15 20 10 17

in the _____ of the _____ And they _____

13 4 11 24

_____, for then _____

18 16 14 6

_____ to the _____ of _____."

3 12 26 7

MICAH 5:4, NIV

Answers: "He will stand and shepherd his flock in the strength of the Lord ... And they will live securely, for their greatness will reach to the ends of the earth." (Micah 5:4, NIV)

Youth News

www.firstumcathens.org/youth

December Youth Group Activities

December 4th - Shopping trip for Giving Tree

We will meet at the grocery side entrance to Walmart. Please have dinner before you arrive so we can spend all of our time shopping. Please have parents pick you up at 7:30 at the same entrance.

You should bring with you all of the donations or money earned that you want to contribute to the shopping trip. We will be buying gifts for 20 youths.

December 11th - Wrap and bake for our adopted youth.

We will meet in fellowship hall for our weekly dinner and then work on wrapping the gifts we bought and then doing some holiday baking for Bassett House. We will need lots of hands so bring a friend or two to share in the Christmas cheer.

December 18th - Christmas Party

Join us for a night of caroling and rejoicing on December 18th. Party will be held at Daryl and Ally's house (55 Elmwood Place) from 6:00 – 7:30. We will go caroling so be sure to wear something warm. After caroling we will gather for treats and a present exchange. So here is what you need to remember:

Dress warmly for caroling

Bring a \$10 present to exchange. This year the present must start with the letter **M** (for Merry or Mary)

If you would like, bring a plate of Christmas treats to share

Invite a friend or two. The more voices the better.

CHRISTMAS DAY – no youth group

SEE YOU IN JANUARY FOR MORE FUN!

Mission Kits on Their Way to Those in Need

Matt Stevens, regional director for Church World Service, reports that First Church's school, health, and baby kits were transported, along with others from Ohio, from Otterbein University on October 1 to the CWS Center in New Windsor, Maryland. This year's truck weighed in at a remarkable 35,400 plus pounds and thus continued the tradition of Ohio being one of the states with the most number of kits. Our thanks to the generous folks from First Church who prepared school, health and baby kits this year. prepared 50 school, 7 health, and 6 baby kits.

In addition to the tremendous kit collection Otterbein University men and women students from Religious Life and the Habitat chapter constructed a storage shed for a Habitat House in Nelsonville that was destroyed in the tornado last year.

We are grateful to United Methodist related Otterbein University that again provided their student center, security, and buildings and grounds personnel at no charge to the Festival. Especially

helpful were the members of campus fraternities, Phi Delta Theta, Sigma Delta Phi, who worked tirelessly both Friday and Saturday in the unloading of cars, vans and trucks and the systematic stacking of all the boxes in the semi-trailer.

On an ecumenical note this year's collection included congregations from United Church of Christ, Presbyterian, Disciples of Christ and Church of the Brethren.

All of these heart warming results come about through the year round work of the FOS Committee under the leadership of David and Bonita Maze. Note - next year's event is already set for Saturday, September 29 at Otterbein. We know that the people of First Church will once again be an active participant.

—Bonita & David Maze



\$ 25,362.23 Operating Income for November
 24,925.04 Operating Expenses November

437.19 Net gain for the month
 13,615.24 Net gain for the year

Thank you for your faithful support of the ministries of Athens First United Methodist Church! In order to determine how we will do ministry in the coming year, our Budget Sub-committee is in the process of formulating an

Operating Budget for 2012. The Pledge Cards play a key role in that process and are a tremendous help as we calculate our income. If you plan to pledge but haven't yet submitted your card, please get that to us ASAP. Thanks!

Second Mile Giving Fund Totals reported through November 30:**

Food Pantry –received \$2,446
 Habitat for Humanity –received \$630
 Hope and Possibilities –received \$604.54
 PET Project — received \$13

This year a portion of our **Christmas Offering** will be used to complete our church's financial work and a portion will benefit the **Faith Build Coalition of Habitat for Humanity**, so please keep that in mind when you receive our Christmas letter this year.

Honduras Contributions as of November 29 total \$-----5,654.94 Because of your generous support, people from this congregation will have the financial support needed to participate in this exciting mission trip. Of that amount, **\$432.12** was raised by the **Breakfast** and **\$240.02** from the **Noisy Bucket Offering**. Thank you, First Church Family, for your generous responses to this mission! Our Missioners are in Honduras from December 1 to 8. Please keep them in your prayers.

What You Need To Know As Our Financial Year Comes To A Close The church's **financial books** will close **Friday, January 6, 2012**. Any contribution received after that date will be credited to your 2012 giving record. If a contribution is mailed, it must be **postmarked no later than December 31** to count as a 2011 gift. The postmark is the determining factor and not the date on your check.

There was an occasion once when we received a check on January 14 after the books were closed. The envelope was postmarked December 30, and the check was of the same date. Sometimes things get delayed in the mail, so if you don't want to risk it and can't get out, let us know and we'll make arrangements to stop by and pick it up for you.

Beginning December 11, **offering envelopes** will be available for pick up in the Narthex (College Street main entrance). Address labels on the boxes will be arranged in alphabetical order by the recipient's last name. If you do not find a box and want one, Sharon will be delighted to prepare one for you. **Please wait until January to use your 2012 envelopes. Thanks!!**

**In addition to the above figures, which reflect what has been contributed specifically to them, \$47.25 will be added to each thanks to your response to the Easter Offering appeal.

**West Ohio Conference of the United Methodist Church
Our Connection to the World**

This comes to us through “News.Net” an email publication by the West Ohio Conference Communications Division:

Waiting for kairos in Japan

TOKYO (UMNS) — The Rev. Paul Shew from the West Ohio Annual (regional) Conference has been planting seeds of hope and promise for more than 10 years in Japan. “I cannot imagine a place with more opportunity for student ministry than in Japan,” he said. While less than 1 percent of Japan's population is Christian, 10 percent of students in Japan are educated at Christian schools. [More](#)

Christmas Joy CD We are very excited to announce a CD by our own **Scott Ewing** of his piano arrangements of familiar Advent/Christmas Hymns. For those that don't recognize Scott's name, you will surely recognize his playing as the very talented piano accompanist to our Chancel Choir. CD's will be available for purchase at the Christmas Bazaar and from the church office. All proceeds from this venture will go towards our Christmas offering. The cost is \$8 for one CD and \$5 for each additional copy. Please make checks payable to FUMC.

Communiversy Band to Present Holiday Concert December 11 Under the direction of Dr. Andrew Trachsel, you'll hear holiday favorites performed by the band as well as members of the Athens Children's Chorus under the direction of Melanie Horne. Santa and Mrs. Clause also plan to make an appearance.

The rehearsal will be held in Templeton-Blackburn Alumni Memorial Auditorium from 1 to 3 p.m. with the concert following at 4 p.m.

The band is open to adults and high school juniors and seniors. The concert is open to all.



Poinsettias to Beautify the Sanctuary are \$8.50 each. In keeping with the altar-scape theme this year, we are hoping to have a combination of both traditional red flowers and also white flowers to help convey the idea of Christ's light coming to the world. If you would like to help beautify our chancel area this Christmas season, please indicate your desire to give one or more poinsettias below and place the request in the offering plate, mail it to the church office, or call Leisa Ostermann at the church office (593-3977). Checks should be made to *First United Methodist Church* and the Altar Guild will place your order. **Please have your order in by December 8th.** *You are welcomed to take your poinsettia home after the Christmas Eve Service.*

Poinsettias for Christmas

I/We will give (indicate how many): _____ **RED** poinsettias, and/or _____ **WHITE** poinsettias

Optional: I/We want to give the poinsettias in memory of _____

in honor of _____,

or for the following reason _____.

Name(s) _____ Phone _____

Please have your order in by December 8.

THE CHURCH SPIRE

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Athens, Ohio 45701

www.firstumcathens.org

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The Church Spire is the newsletter of the First United Methodist Church of Athens, Ohio. It is published monthly August—May with a combined issue for June/July.

Editor: Sharon Stoltzfus

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Worship Schedule

Sunday Morning Worship 8:45 and 10:30

Sunday School Classes, 9:30 a.m.

Worship Broadcast on WATH Sundays 11-11:30 a.m.

Child Care Provided During 10:30 Service

Free Parking in the City Parking Garage on Sundays