

The Messenger



Pastor's Pondering

Well, we find ourselves in the middle of the 2011 Lenten Season. As you know, Lent is a time during the Christian year set aside for self-examination and reflection. It is a time of preparation for the upcoming Easter Season.

A lot of folks give up something for Lent. Several have shared what they are 'giving up' this year. Some are giving up chocolate. Others are giving up sweets in general. Some are avoiding caffeine. And others are giving up a particular television show they enjoy watching. I have a friend who last year gave up FaceBook. Since he has no recent posts, I suspect he has done so again this year.

Self-denial is part and parcel to the Christian faith. In all three of the synoptic gospels (*Matthen, Mark, & Luke*) Jesus says, "*If anyone wants to be My follower, he must deny himself, take up his cross, and follow Me.*" But Lent isn't the only time of the year that we talk about self-denial. In the introduction to 'Wesley's Covenant Service' (*in which we participate at the start of each year*), we find the following: ". . . Christ has many services to be done. Some are more easy and honorable, others are more difficult and disgraceful. Some are suitable to our inclinations and interests, others are contrary to both. In some we may please Christ and please ourselves. But then there are other works where we cannot please Christ except by denying ourselves."

I still recall hearing a leader in a sister denomination say, "The Church is the only organization that exists for non-members." This is why the leadership at Sullivan First UMC continues to be diligent in being 'Purpose-Centered' rather than 'Preference-Driven.' Preference-driven churches are in-grown and self-centered; while purpose-centered congregations are outward-focused as they practice self-denial.

While we haven't fully arrived and God is continually perfecting us in love; I want to take this opportunity to share how proud I am of our congregation. We are growing spiritually. We are learning to lay down our preferences in order to pick up and be a part of God's purpose! I hear our speech changing; and the questions being asked are improving! A new passion and greater love for our neighbors is growing in and amongst us!

I am proud to be United Methodist. I am proud to be a part of Sullivan First UMC. I am excited, thrilled, and humbled to be your pastor and to have the privilege of journeying with you as we continue to deny ourselves, pick up our crosses (*that is our respective ministries*), and follow wherever Jesus is leading. Amen.

--Pastor Renner



United Methodist Women

EASTER is fast approaching and as usual, it is time for Easter Eggs. Posters have been placed around the community and we are ready to take orders. We need orders by April 12th and Eggs need to be picked up by April 15th. You will find an order form below. We need volunteers to help make, shape, trim and decorate the eggs. If you have not already signed up call 728-7774, 728-4697, 1-217-797-6442 or church office.

There will be no Circle Meetings or a General Meeting this month due to the Easter Egg project. Some of us will be attending the Cunningham Quilt Show April 8& 9 which starts at 10 o'clock. If you are interested in attending, call Linda Grose at 728-4697.

Mark your calendars for the Mothers and Daughters Banquet on Saturday May 7, at 6:30.

HOMEMADE CANDY EASTER EGGS

The Sullivan United Methodist Women are making delicious chocolate covered vanilla and peanut butter Easter Eggs. The monies collected from this fund-raiser are used for a variety of Mission Projects.

LARGE EGGS CAN BE PERSONALIZED WITH NAMES

Orders can be left in the posters or at the United Methodist Church office 216 W. Jefferson Street, Sullivan

DEADLINE FOR ORDERS IS APRIL 12, 2011

Please pick up your orders at the church between 8:00a.m and 5:00 pm. (after you are called)

ALL ORDERS NEED TO BE PICKED UP BEFORE

5:00P.M. APRIL 15, 2011

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!

NAME _____ PHONE _____

SMALL PLAIN EGGS NO NAMES OR DECORATION

Vanilla _____ @ \$2.00 Each Peanut Butter _____ @ \$2.00Each

Vanilla _____ @ \$2.50Each Peanut Butter _____ @ \$2.50 Each

SMALL DECORATED EGGS NO NAMES

Vanilla _____ @ \$3.00 Each Peanut Butter _____ @ \$3.00 Each

LARGE PLAIN EGGS NO NAMES OR DECORATIONS

Vanilla _____ @ #3.00 Each Peanut Butter _____ @ \$3.00 Each

LARGE DECORATED EGGS WITH NAMES @ \$3.50 EACH

Please Print Names Under Flavor Desired

VANILLA Total _____ PEANUT BUTTER Total _____

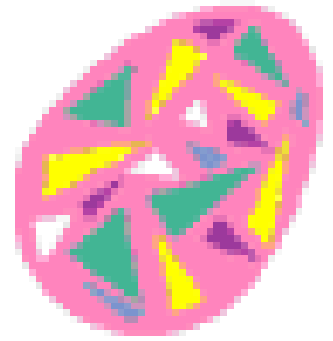
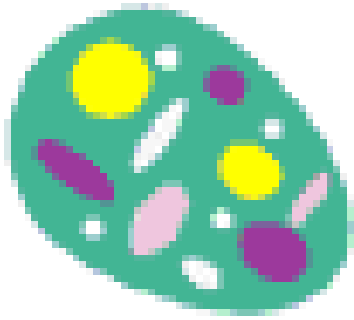


New Members Class

On Wednesdays, April 6 & 13, Pastor Renner will be offering a 'new member' class. If you'd like to learn more about the United Methodist Church (in general) or Sullivan First (specifically), then feel free to come to the 5:30 meal and then class will be 6-7. Plenty of time will be given for participants questions as well! Feel free to call the church office or just show up on Wednesdays, April 6 & 13.



The Nurture committee is inviting anyone who would like to participate in the church's prayer chain to let the church office or a member of the committee know. You may sign up to be on the phone tree during the day or the evening, or you can be part of the email chain. It requires only minutes of your time but is an important way to show concern for your church family. Also, if you know someone who is away at college or in the military, we would like to have current addresses in order to contact them and let them know their church family is thinking about them. Thanks for your help and participation, Laura Elder, Virginia Darnell, Delores Weishaupt, Beth White, Gail Craycroft, Valee Selby, and Ann Wheeler.

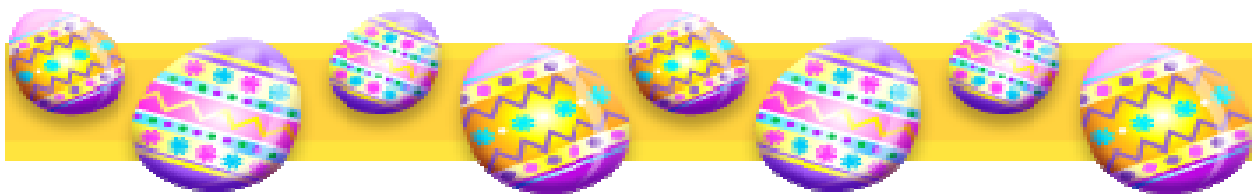


Children's Easter Extravaganza!

Invite a friend and join us for...

*Dinner, Sweet treats,
Easter Story time,
and an Easter Egg Hunt*

**Wednesday, April 13th
5:30 – 7:00 p.m.**

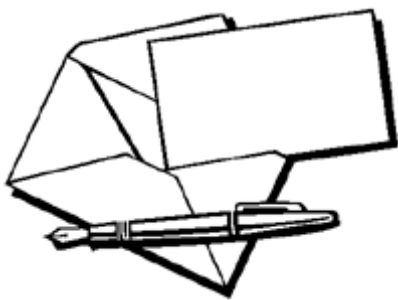




The Bruce family thanks the United Methodist Women for the wonderful meal. We thank you for all the cards and prayers for Gary. Gary truly loved his church. He talked about getting back to church.

To Pastor Renner, the services were very appropriate of Gary; for coming to the hospital and coming the morning of Gary's passing. It meant a lot to us. Thank you God Bless our church family.

Thank you for allowing us to use your church hall for the preschool screening. It is a nice facility for the screening. Your staff is always kind and helpful. Thanks again! God's blessings, Janice Althoff



Thank you to my Methodist friends for all you've done for me since my surgery. I greatly appreciated the prayers, cards, visits, good food and taxi service. God bless you. Shirley Park

Thank you to all who have made memorial donations to the UMW in honor of Aliese Paschall, Rosemary Wood and Mary Naughtin. Your donations were greatly appreciated.



A big thank you to the Methodist Church ladies for the wonderful lunch prepared for our family & friends.

And a thank you to all our church family for all the acts of kindness, we have the best church family ever!

A special thanks to Pastor Renner for coming to the house & the beautiful service given about our beloved Denny. His life was portrayed perfect and we couldn't have been more touched.

Love to all, the family of Dennis Ray Carnes



The Yellow Bucket for April will go to Church Camp Scholarships. Some of which will be used for Youth 2011. Youth 2011 is a once every four years gathering of United Methodist Youth from around the world.

Church Finances

Needed each month to meet budget: \$23,304

February receipts: \$18,994

February Disbursements: \$17,795

Campus Balance: \$2,691

Mortgage Balance: \$113,625.89

“Our help is in the name of the Lord who made heaven and earth” (Psalm 124:8)

May the Lord’s comfort and blessings be with the family and friends who mourn the death of Gary Bruce.



The deadline for the May Newsletter is Friday, April 15.



First United Methodist Church

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Office Hours
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**Visit us on the web:
www.sullivanfirstumc.com**