

St Luke United Methodist Church
 Website: www.StLukeNewton.org
 Pastor Audrey Young
 501 E. 19th Street N.
 Newton, IA 50208

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Let Us Not Forget 9/11

At 8 & 10:30 am Worship
 Jean Cleere will tell her story of God's Walk with her since the loss of her husband on **9/11**. We'll receive an offering to give daily devotions to military folk.



ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

St Luke UMC
 501 E. 19th Street N.
 Newton, IA 50208
 641-792-5736
www.StLukeNewton.org
September 2011



Sunday, September 11: 10th Anniversary of 9/11



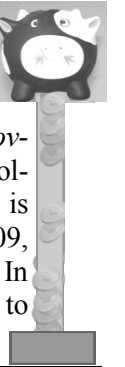
Jean Cleere speaks about her faith journey since the loss of her husband on 9/11.

UMMen invite us to thank our military troops/personnel by donating to a special *Strength for Service* offering which provides daily devotional books that are specifically written for those in the service of others, those who protect our freedom daily.

Strength for Service has inspired 1.4 million soldiers & their families

Heifer Moolah Report!

Until a \$3 million goal is met, every quarter down the tube for *China Earthquake Recovery* will be matched dollar for dollar. As of Aug 22, \$315,889 is remaining of the goal. In 2009, we sent \$477; in 2010 \$420. In 2011 we have sent \$262.60 to help earthquake victims.



2011 UMYF Work Trip By Erin Stonner

This summer, July 27-31, St. Luke's very own youth group got the opportunity to travel to Indianapolis, Indiana. Thursday and Friday morning of the trip we worked at an organization called *SAWs* which stands for servants at work. They build wheelchair ramps for deserving people who are in a situation of need. The group's motto is verse Isaiah 42:6 which says: "I, the Lord, have called you in righteousness...to free captives from prison and to release from the dungeon those who sit in darkness."



It's their belief that by building these ramps they really do free people from being trapped in personal prisons, their homes, since they were unable to leave easily before. The UMYF sawed and screwed wood together to assemble the ramp over the course of two days.

For several of us construction was a slightly foreign subject, so it was really an amazing experience on Friday to see the finished ramp that our hands actually helped build. It was a real blessing how enthusiastic the men of *SAWs* were in teaching us how to build the ramp. It's their hope that we'll bring this idea back to our community to help free more people

(Continued on page 2)

Ingathering Kit Time

St Luke has a long history of making Kits and giving generously to Ingathering on the first Saturday of November.

We're collecting Health Kits in September: Each kit, valued at \$12, needs these items inside a sealed one-gallon plastic bag.

- 1 hand towel (15"x25" up to 17"x27", no kitchen towels)
- 1 washcloth. 1 comb (large-sturdy, not pocket-sized)
- 1 nail file or fingernail clippers (no emery boards or toenail clippers)
- 1 bath-size bar of soap (3 oz. and up)
- 1 toothbrush (single brushes only in original wrapper, no child-size)
- 6 adhesive plastic strip sterile bandages (band-aids)
- \$1.00-UMCOR purchases toothpaste in bulk to add to health kits before shipping to ensure the product does not expire before sent.

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**Share the Warmth
 Share the Love Sunday
 September 18, 2011**



Most of us have the warm clothing that we, our children and grandchildren need. There are many, however, who struggle to keep their family warm. We can help. This year we will be collecting winter jackets, sweaters, and sweatshirts to donate to Trinity UMC & Bidwell Riverside in DM.

Please look in your closets, drawers and out-of-season clothing for warm outer-wear you no longer need or wear. (Please be sure they are in good shape.)

Then bring those items to church with you on Sunday, September 18th for our **Share the Warmth/ Share the Love offering**. Let's send hugs to those in need through warm clothing for the fall and winter ahead. N.O.W. Team – Missions



**After School Club
 Wednesdays, Sept 21-Nov 9**

Director, Joyce Stonehocker and the After School Club staff have chosen

**"Shake It Up Café
 Where Kids Carry Out God's Recipe"**

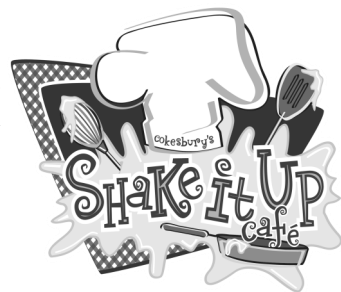
curriculum for the first session of After School Club, which meets for eight Wednesdays from 2:00-5:30 pm beginning September 21 through November 9.

Each week includes a **free meal** for students, their families and the After School staff.

Children in grades K-6th grade are welcome. There will be snacks, games, stories, crafts, worship and music.

For registration forms, go to www.StLukeNewton.org; check the "box" by sign at church; call the church at 641-792-5736.

Volunteers are needed. If you would like to join in the fun of spending time with children and helping nurture their spiritual growth, here are some opportunities: Crafts, Music, Recreation. It may not be necessary for you to be here 2-5:30. Contact Joyce if you are interested.





Dear St Luke Family,

Over the line? My son works in a factory where language is a little more “colorful” than Mark and I, many of us, would use in our homes.

When we were helping him do some work around his home, he would begin to say a “colorful” word and then apologize.

It’s too bad he hasn’t made the decision to not use language less *over-the-line* all the time. That’s not for me to judge; he’s an adult.

I’m thinking that sometimes, *we go over the line* in church...because there are so many different *lines* that are drawn. Perhaps something is said or done in worship or at a meeting, that someone else thinks is inappropriate.

We are from so many different opinions, backgrounds and traditions, that it would be easy to offend some people while others are very open to nearly any form of language or actions.

I hope these differences have not caused too much anxiety. Sometimes we don’t realize it; others times it’s already expressed and too late!

Hopefully everyone is aware these things happen on occasion and will be kind and generous in forgiveness when your personal *line is crossed* and you are offended.

Like the Scripture I quoted and preached from, on my first Sunday here, just four years ago:

Live a life worthy of the calling you have received. Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing one another in love.

Make every effort to keep the unity of the spirit through the bond of peace. Ephesians 4: 1f



With our 50th Anniversary in 2012, we are beginning to think about how to celebrate. I would encourage us to celebrate with activities and events throughout the year.

St Luke didn’t “begin” in just one day or weekend, so why reduce a celebration to one day or weekend?

So I’m asking these questions in regard to our 50th:

- What have we done that you would like repeated?
- What traditions would you like to bring back?
- What is something new you’d like to see us try?
- What are your ideas for celebration events?

I will always pray for you and ask for your prayers for me.

Pastor Audrey

Monday, Sept 12: Angel Food Orders Due

Distribution volunteers are always needed at 12:30-2 pm, Sat, Sept 24. Donations of any amount can be given for recipient to choose their own boxes & donated orders are needed and appreciated. To help, talk with Tamara Lloyd on Sunday mornings.

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from their prisons and to spread this wonderful source of support.

An interesting thing about this trip was that we got to work at two separate places that operated so differently. The first place, *SAWs*, was incredibly organized and surrounded by retired engineers and men who were very knowledgeable in construction.

The second place we worked at was a women’s shelter, *Third Phase*, that does many good things: they take in women that have nowhere to go and give them free room and board, put them to work in the store and food area, provide them with several Bible studies a day, eventually help them to find jobs, and to save enough money until they can afford to rent an apartment somewhere for six months when they can start out on their own again.



Even though so many good things come out of the place, the hectic atmosphere was a little overwhelming at first. The place was bursting with volunteers trying to fit objects into nooks and crannies to sell in the store and people moving packages of meals through narrow hallways in the food center area while trying to avoid bumping into other helpers.

While at first the work at the women’s shelter was frustrating, we realized that this place was in need of our help more than most places we visit on these trips. With all of the positive impacts they make, in our minds and with hearts ready to work, we organized that place like nobody’s business!

Each night we did something fun during our time off from working. On Thursday night we went to an indoor water park where we had tons of fun going down slides and swimming. The next night we went to a “fun world” which had go-karts, mini-golf, laser tag, and an arcade. I think I can speak for everyone when I say that the go-karts were the highlight of the night!

On Saturday, since we only worked in the morning, we went to the Children’s Museum in the afternoon which had exhibits ranging from Barbie’s and Dinosaurs to the history of Anne Frank and Ruby Bridges. In the evening that day we went shopping at the downtown Indianapolis mall. On Sunday morning we attended St. Luke’s, the church we stayed at, for worship and embarked on the eight hour journey back home with an accomplished work trip behind us.

UMYF Youth Sunday is October 23. Youth will lead worship & give the message.




Adult Projectionists Needed

St Luke needs adults willing to click a key on cue for projection. Will train. Talk with Brenda Lee.



Worship Volunteers

Sept 4	8:00 am Communion	10:30 am Communion
Ushers	Larry/Darlyne Howard	Dennis/Pam Smith
Greeters	Bruce Maach/Dave Miller	Scott/Linda Greene
Readers	Lisa Pageler	Leslie Boyce
Acolyte		Austin Stoullil
Nursery	(Communion—Betty Skaggs)	Lisa/Hannah Marston
Keyboard	Laurel Gustafson	Laurel Gustafson
Special Music		
Projectionist	Peg Ehler	Peg Ehler
Coffee Time	Tamara Lloyd	Katie Jones
Counters		Pat Patty/Deb Stoullil
Weed/Water		Jean Schnell
Sept 11	10th Anniversary 9/11	Jean Cleere guest speaker
Ushers	Tamara Lloyd/Shari Boertje	Marianne Spaur/Lori Leix
Greeters	Jean Schnell/Peg Ehler	Joe/Stefanie Squire
Readers	Pastor Audrey	Pastor Audrey
Acolyte		Alex Osborn
Nursery		Carol Stonner
Keyboard	Bev Thomas	Laurel Gustafson
Special Music	Tyler Fletcher	Chancel Choir—Women
Projectionist	Brenda Lee/Pam Andrews	Brenda Lee/Carolyn Cook
Coffee Time	Kelly Lange	Bruce Maach/Leslie Boyce
Counters		Brad Patty/Eric Forsberg
Weed/Water		Leslie Boyce
Sept 18	Christian Education Offering	
Ushers	Bruce Maach/Dave Miller	Dean/Doris Diamond
Greeters	Jeff/Kris McKibben	Bill/Barb Ponder
Readers	Barb Kaldenberg	Dennis Smith
Acolytes		Patrick Murphy
Nursery		Shari Boertje
Keyboard	Bev Thomas	Janice Lewis
Special Music	Chancel Choir	Praise Team
Projectionist	Brad Patty	Brad Patty
Coffee Time	Becky Wennihan	Shirley Guillaume
Counters		Rose Evans/Russ Leix
Weed/Water		Shirley Guillaume
Sept 25		
Ushers	Rose Evans/Jean Schnell	Jeff/Amy Murphy
Greeters	Rose Hartschen/Tamara Lloyd	Brad/Jenni Patty
Readers	Janice Lewis	Shirley Guillaume
Acolytes		Grant Osborn
Nursery		Kris/Savannah Reicks
Keyboard	Laurel Gustafson	Rose South
Special Music	Ray Barr	Ray Barr
Projectionist	Ray Barr	Ray Barr
Coffee Time	Mike/Barb Kaldenberg	C.J./Pam Osborn
Counters		Barb Kaldenberg/C.J. Osborn
Weed/Water		Jenni Patty
 Sat, Sept 10: Living Proof Simulcast of Beth Moore & Travis Cottrell at Ankeny UMC Christian Life Center, 710 NE 26th St Doors open at 8:15 am 9:15 am—4:15 pm \$15.00 with light breakfast and lunch included. Register and pay @ www.ankenfumc.org .		

Where to Find Us

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Website: www.StLukeNewton.org

St Luke News

Blessings to Darin and Sharon Swarts, Kael and Ella, on the birth of their son and brother, Kyler Lee, on August 2.

Our sympathies are with Katie Jones on the death of her brother-in-law, Don Jones. And with Francis Birkenholtz on death of his brother-in-law, David Aldridge.

Keep track of Sam Clark’s progress at www.CaringBridges.org, use *samclark1*.

Thank you to Jeff Murphy for painting those huge signs to publicize public events!

Thank you to Drew Lamb for helping with VBS. Sorry we missed his name last month.

Thanks. Jerry and Winonah McGee want to thank the St Luke family for the kind wishes and cards regarding our 50th Wedding Anniversary. Thank you also for sharing our anniversary with us by sharing our cake and coffee last Sunday morning. You are indeed family.

Thank you, St Luke, for ALL your support of the Ice Cream Social and BIG SALE!

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Important Kit Assembly Information All items included in kits must be NEW items. All emergency kits are carefully planned to make them usable in the greatest number of situations. Since strict rules often govern product entry into international countries, it is important that kits contain only the requested items—nothing more.

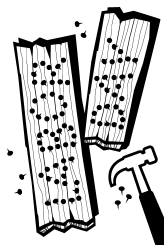
No religious, political or patriotic notes or emblems. Do NOT include personal notes, money or additional materials in the kits. These things must be painstakingly removed and will delay the shipment. Do give \$2 per kit in separate envelope marked clearly for its use.

Items for all kits are always welcome anytime. Thank you. Sewing Kits will be collected in October and Birthing Kits in Advent.

Emails: Pastor sends out a weekly email and often uses email to communicate with St Luke folk, including teens and kids. If she doesn’t have your email, please send your email address to her at pastorayoung@gmail.com.



September 2011

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
4 COMMUNION 8:00 & 10:30 am Worship 9:15 am Sunday School 9:00 & 11:30 am Fellowship	5 Bday - Carol Stonner 	6 Carla in the Office	7 Carla in the Office 6:30 - 7:15 pm Praise Team 7:15 - 8:00 pm Women Choir 7:30 - 8:00 pm All Choir	8 6:30 pm Building Committee meet with architect 6:45 pm Trustee Meeting	9 Bday - Jacqueline Boggess	10 Bday - Rusty Umbarger Suicide Prevention Walk/Event
11 Bday - Allison Sheets ANGEL FOOD ORDERS DUE SS Rally Sunday/9/11 Anniversary 8:00 & 10:30 am Worship 9:15 am Sunday School 9:00 & 11:30 am Fellowship 5:30 pm Sandwich Bunch with	12 6:00 pm SPRC Meeting	13 Carla in the Office	14 Carla in the Office 9:15 am Women's Fellowship 6:30 - 7:15 pm Praise Team 7:15 - 8:00 pm Choir	15 7:00 pm Finance Meeting	16 Youth Day at Adventureland	17 Youth Day at Adventureland 5:30 pm Movie Night
18 Bday - Tommy Miller, Allison Thomas SHARE THE WARMTH-SHARE THE LOVE 8:00 & 10:30 am Worship 9:15 am Sunday School 9:00 & 11:30 am Fellowship 6:00 pm Prison Ministry	19 Bday - Janet Jansma, Debra Stoull, Janice Thongvanh Carla in the Office 9:30 am NAMA at St Luke 7:00 pm NOW	20 Bday - Janet Jansma, Debra Stoull, Janice Thongvanh Carla in the Office 9:30 am NAMA at St Luke 7:00 pm NOW	21 6:15 am Men's Breakfast/Study Carla in the Office 2:00 - 5:30 pm First After School Club 6:45 pm UMW 6:30 - 7:15 pm Praise Team 7:15 - 8:00 pm Choir	22 Bday - Debra Miller	23 Bday - Jason Reynolds	24 Bday - Esther Fifer 12:30 - 2:00 pm Angel Food Distribution at FUMC UMW Central District Meeting FUMC, DM
25 Bday - Angie Thongvanh Christian Education Offering 8:00 & 10:30 am Worship 9:15 am Sunday School 9:00 & 11:30 am Fellowship 6:00 - 7:30 pm UMYF	26 Bday - Margaret Gullett, James Plumb	27 Carla in the Office 6:00 pm Special Church Council meeting to work on Church Conf. Reports	28 Bday - Ron Lisk, David Spiker Carla in the Office 2:00 - 5:30 pm After School Club 6:30 pm Men's Fellowship 6:30 pm - 7:15 pm Praise Team 7:15 - 8:00 pm Choir	29 Pastor's Professional Interview with D.S.	30 Bday - Helen Schwarz	



Sunday, Sept 11 Rally Day for Sunday School

Classes are offered at 9:15 am for all ages. Sept 18: Incoming third graders receive Bibles in Worship.

Thank you to all the teachers who volunteered to lead the summer's *One Room Sunday School* class which will continue for Pre-k-5th graders through the school year. 6th-12th meet together.

An Adult SS class continues in ed unit studying *Seasons of the Spirit* based on Lectionary Scripture.

2nd Adult class continues in room off narthex to study *Five Practices of Fruitful Living*.

Sept-Dec Offering on 2nd-5th Sundays goes to *Iowa Disaster Recovery*

First Sunday Offering supports our St Luke Sunday School.



Come to Sunday School

September is National Preparedness Month

A Time to Remember. A Time to Prepare encourages Americans to take simple steps to prepare for emergencies. Go to <http://community.fema.gov/connect.ti/READYNPM> to become a Coalition member again this year or for the first time.

As a National Coalition Month member, private sector entities take steps, large and small, to increase preparedness of businesses, employees, customers or communities.

Once registered, you have access to resources, i.e. website, social media, newsletter and publication content; public service announcements; presentations; brochures; & material, such as Make a Family Emergency Plan and Emergency Supply Kit. You will be able to contribute/access the NPM events calendar, share success stories and participate in discussion forums.

Trish Burket, Iowa UMConference Disaster Response Coordinator



UMYF: Youth Fellowship

YF is open to anyone grades 6th-12th. Leaders are Jeff & Amy Murphy and Dan & Lisa Marston.

Sunday, Sept 11: 5:30 YF meets with Sandwich Bunch for BBQ and to share about Work Trip.

Sunday, Sept 25: Meet at St Luke with Red team leading Discussion & Worship; Green team leading the Activity.

PLAN for a Special Council meeting on Sept 27 at 6 pm Officers/Leaders of the Church:

Church Conference is Thursday, October 20 at 7-8:30 pm.

D.S. David Weesner writes: To encourage broader participation by all members of your church, the Charge Conference will be convened as a Church Conference, thus extending the vote to all local church members present at the meeting (¶ 248, 2008 Book of Discipline). Please put it on your calendar to attend at Colfax UMC. We have the usual reports to complete. We are asked to have all reports in place for approval by **Sept 27 Council mtg.** Please go to <http://www.iaumc.org/forms/> to download forms.

Sun, 9/11 Sandwich Bunch

At 5:30 pm in Fellowship hall, Sandwich Bunch will enjoy a BBQ catered by HyVee.

The UMYF will be our guests that evening and will share their experiences from their work trip.

College Students and Parents of College Students

Please give us your students' mailing & e-address so we can send them the Newsletter. Help us let them know St Luke cares. Email pastorayoung@gmail.com or leave a written note in church office.

Sat., Sept 17 UM Youth Day at Adventureland

Youth Rally at 11:30 am. Anyone can use admission discount coupons. Contact deedee.sobotka@iaumc.org. Part of cost goes to UMYouth Service Fund.

Men's Breakfast & Bible Study

All men are invited to breakfast and share discussion about a book based on the Bible at 6:15 am on Wednesdays beginning in Sept. Date to be announced. See C.J. Osborn for information.

Labor Day, Monday, Sept 5: Suicide Awareness Walk

Agnes Patterson Park, Newton. Thursday, Sept 8: Suicide Awareness Forum, DMACC

Christian Education Offering

Sunday, Sept 25
To support projects in Iowa



Produce Table for St Andrews

Donations received from our Produce Table are again being given to the Society of St Andrews - Produce Project. St Andrews sends volunteers into the fields and orchards after commercial producers have left, to glean what is left behind. This produce is then given to food pantries, homeless shelters and missions in all 50 states. As St Luke members share produce with each other, the donations we give, when we take that produce home, will be given to help the Society of St Andrews feed people all across the United States. As always, you are welcome to give to St Andrews at any time.



St Luke needs adults willing to click a key on cue for projection. Will train. Talk with Brenda Lee.



My Story

Humpback whales have an Alaskan mission in the summer...to eat as much as they can before it is time to head back to Hawaiian waters. Normally they do this alone or possibly with their calf. Sometimes, however, they work together to herd & eat large numbers of fish at once.

My friend Becky and I were on a whale watching tour outside of Juneau, Alaska. On that day we were able to witness bubble-net feeding. There was a group of 15 or 16 humpback whales swimming under water in ever tightening circles. Within that circle there was a school of herring that were becoming more and more frenzied as a bubble built around them. Suddenly the lead whale signaled the others with a loud noise and the entire group pushed up toward the surface and broke through with their mouths wide open. They repeated this process over and over as they ate thousands of fish.

We too move through life as single beings. However, when we work or gather with others, we are capable of so much more than when we are alone. This is especially true when we put God into the mix.

“For where two or more are gathered in my name, there I am in the midst of them.”

Matthew 18:20

When we work together, our souls are fed. Corinne Kleppe, Editor



Family Movie Night

Saturday, Sept 17

5:30 pm-Donkey Ollie

6:30 pm-The Perfect Game

We'll order pizza; make popcorn.

“The Perfect Game” is the story of the poor boys from Monterrey, MX, who won the World Series Little League Championship with faith in each other and God, back in the 50's. You'll recognize it from Pastor Audrey's sermon series of last summer. Contact Brenda Lee for details.

Library News

St Luke library is a treasure in the corner of our narthex. If you haven't ventured in lately, how about a little introduction? Once you are in the library you will be faced with a tall bookcase holding a shelf of our latest books as well as a shelf of Max Lucado books for both adults and children. The very top shelf has a newly donated collection of Karen Kingsbury novels geared toward the female reader. This bookcase also contains a shelf of adult fiction books.



The remaining adult collection is found to the right in the largest bookcase. The shelves are marked for your convenience. The children's books are on the low shelves to the left and books for the teen, along with our audio/visual collection are along the wall behind the chairs. A small collection of toys is also in the library, so if a child needs a short break during worship feel free to take a respite in the library.

Our check out procedure is simple and honesty prevails! Simply take the card out of the book, write your name and the date on the card and drop it in the blue card box. When you bring your book back, drop it in the basket on the lower shelf and I will put it away. Our library is here for you! We try to offer books to assist you in your faith walk and books to enrich your life. See me if you have suggestions for the library or books you would like added to our library and please, feel free to use this wonderful resource!

~Karen Clark, your librarian

Healthy and growing churches pay close attention to the flow of new people to the church, new people for God's Kingdom. They are aware of five significant facts about first-time guests looking for a church home.



1. Visitors make up their minds regarding a new church in the first ten minutes of their visit.



Welcome!

Before a first-time guest has sung a song, watched a drama, viewed a video or heard a message, they have made up their mind whether or not to return. The church's ability to connect with first-time guests is dependent on every church-family-member and the first lines of people who represent your church. Here are some sample questions to ask yourselves:

- Is the front entrance easy to find? Do we help guests in the parking lot?
- Is there appropriate signage outside and inside?
- Are ushers and greeters friendly while accomplishing their “work”?
- Is the environment we take for granted user-friendly and accepting?

2. Most church members aren't friendly.

Churches claim to be friendly; but the truth is: Most church members are friendly to the people they already know, but not to guests.

• Observe to see if we greet guests with the same intensity & concern before and after worship. A lack of friendliness before & after worship sends a mixed, (& hypocritical) message to new people.

• The six most important minutes of a worship, in a visitor's eyes, are the three minutes before the service and the three minutes after the service, when church-family-members introduce themselves, seeking genuinely to get to know the visitors (not just obtain personal information like the market research data collectors at a mall), offer to answer any questions, introduce them to others who may have a connection (perhaps they live in the same neighborhood, are from the same hometown or state, or their children attend

UMWomen



So we have known and believe the love that God has for us. God is love, and those who abide in love abide in God and God abides in them.

1 John 4:16 NRSV

Wednesday, Sept 21, all women are invited to UMWomen in St Luke Fellowship Hall. The program is a Pledge Service: “Finding, Giving and Living Peace” by Katie Jones. Hostesses are Tamara & Edith Lloyd. September Kitchen cleaner: Betty Rhone.

Saturday, Sept 24 is the Central District Annual Meeting at FUMC, DM, with worship, education and inspiration.

Mission Education Event Friday-Sunday, Oct 28-30

MEE is a scaled-down event like the School of Christian Mission Pastor Audrey attended in July. You've heard about Haiti & her enjoyment of the event. Now, you can attend too. There's also TEEN Class!

Registration forms and info are on the narthex bulletin board.

Women's Retreat-Wesley Woods, Indianola

Fri, Oct 21– Sat, Oct 22: Enjoy a relaxing weekend with an inspirational speaker, energizing worship, good food and great fellowship. Deke Rider, Director, Wesley Woods UMCamp & Retreat Center.

Are There Women interested in a Women's Bible Study and Fellowship

Let's meet for Women's Fellowship on the 2nd Wed, September 14 at 9:15 am at St. Luke &/or talk with Marianne Spaur.



September Salvation Army Food Pantry Request

Paper Products and Diapers

(Continued from page 4)

the same school), or any number of ways to demonstrate to the visitors that they as a church-family-member care.

• A church would be wise to have designated parking-lot greeters, door greeters at all doors, ushers, and informational booth personnel.

• Don't make promises the church can't keep. It is possible for a guest to attend worship but no one speak to them before the service and, worse yet, when they sought information from a church-family-member they were treated by the member as a bother. Mixed messages and unfulfilled promises do great harm in a church's effectiveness.

3. Church guests are highly consumer-oriented.



Capitalism has taught us that if we don't find what we want, someone else down the street or at another web site will have it. If our church building is too hard for newcomers to navigate, if “we” are un-accepting or unfriendly, another church down the street may have what they're looking for. Or worse, they may decide attending church is not worth the effort and give up their search altogether.

• Church-family-members need to look regularly at our church through the eyes of a first-time guest.

4. The church is in the hospitality business.

Though our ultimate purpose is spiritual, one of our first steps in the Kingdom business is attention to hospitality. Imagine the service that would be given to you in a first-class hotel or a five-star restaurant by paid employees. The church has *Eternal Salvation with God through Jesus Christ* to offer. Should the church offer anything less to those who have made an effort to be our guests?

• Hospitality in the church ought to be similar to the hospitality we would offer to our guests in our homes.

• Church-family-members can extend hospitality to guests by offering to sit with them during worship, giving them a tour of the church facilities, inviting them to lunch after service, or connecting with them during the week.

5. You only have one chance to make a good first impression.

First impressions are lasting ones. First-time guests have some simple desires and basic needs. They decide very quickly if you can meet those criteria.

The decision to return for a second visit is often made before guests reach your front door the first time.

• Are we consciously working to remove barriers that make it difficult for guests to find their way around and to feel at home among us?

• Do newcomers have all the information they need without having to ask any embarrassing questions?

• Are your greeters and ushers on the job, attending to details and anticipating needs before they are expressed?

• Does anything about your guests' first experience make them say, “Wow!” and want to return?

(St Luke) *may* have the most skilled preacher and our church *may* have excellent small groups or *the* best children's ministry in the city. Our first-time guests will never know unless they make a second and third visit.

Will they come back? It all depends on the impression we're making. Every church-family-member is important in helping make the best impression the first time.

Adapted from Rick Ezell, Lewis Center for Church Leadership @2006

