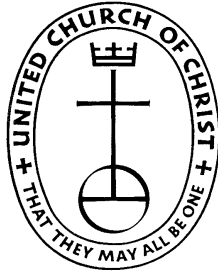


Forward in Faith February 2010



**The Newsletter for
St. John's United Church of Christ**
11100 Second Street, Mokena, Illinois 60448
(708) 479-5123
e-mail: stjohismokena@att.net
Website: stjohismokena.org

Rev. David Alfeld-Johnson, Pastor
Karalyn Schroeder & Kerri Gorecki, Co- Directors of
Children's Ministries
Dawn Funk, Director of Older Youth Ministries

Annual Gathering

As we approach our annual meeting on January 31st, I hope we can approach it less as a business meeting, and more as a celebration and evaluation of the ministry in which we participated in together over the last year, and a look ahead to ministry that God has for us in the coming year. It's a time to remember and review the mission trips we took and the mission agencies we supported. We should remember the kids we confirmed, the VBS week we hosted, and the ongoing programs intended to grow our faith. It's a time to give thanks for worship experiences, fellowship gatherings, and service opportunities. Perhaps we should call it our annual worship, or annual goal-setting, or annual congregational gathering.

Our annual gathering is a time to look forward. In recent months we have been re-inspired by our strategic vision, and have begun brainstorming and prioritizing mission goals for the coming years. The board of missions has numerous opportunities for hands-on service we can do in the name of Christ. It's a time to reflect on the many hands that are needed to make sure our worship happens, and to nurture the faith of our children, and then to consider getting involved. Events, like the earthquake in Haiti, challenge us to make sacrifices in order to alleviate such great human suffering.

Our annual meeting is a time for us to pray for God's direction together as a community of faith, and then to commit ourselves to the work of Christ. It is a time for us to bring our many passions and concerns together and figure out how to use them in God's name. It's a time for us to recognize that our time and talent and money are limited, and to make sure we use them in a manner consistent with our stated mission.

Our annual meeting is a business meeting. We will hear reports and vote to accept them. We will make motions and have them seconded, we will accept a budget for the coming year. But our annual meeting isn't only a business meeting. At heart it is worship—a time when we commit our way to be God's way. At heart it's the nuts and bolts of ministry—a time when we chart a course for the year ahead. At heart it's the fellowship of faith—a time when we bring our different desires and callings together and work out what it means to be a family of faith.

I hope you will mark January 31st on your calendar and join our annual worship, gathering, goal-setting, priority-making, meeting.

Pastor Dave

REMINDER:

The Ash Wednesday Service with the imposition of ashes is on February 17th at 7:00 p.m.



Director of Children's Ministries Report

Karalyn Schroeder and Kerri Gorecki

Attention All Kids (3 years old-8th grade)

We continue to have LOTS of fun on Wednesday nights. JAM Time meets each Wednesday night (with the exception of a few holidays). Come join us and bring a friend. Here is what is happening on Wednesday nights at St. John's...

5:30-6:00 choirs for all kids (preschool - jr. high)
6:00-6:30 dinner (\$2 per person)
6:30-8:00 classroom time and gym time (preschool - jr. high)

The kids are divided by during classroom time: preschool, kdg/1st grade, 2nd/3rd grade, 4th/5th grade, 6th/7th grade, and 8th grade confirmation class.

Wednesday Night JAM Time Dinner Menu

January 27 - pizza
February 3 - French toast/sausage
February 10 - chicken nuggets
February 17 - No JAM Time - Ash Wednesday
February 24 - soft shell tacos
March 3 - pizza
March 10 - hot dogs/chili dogs
March 17 - waffles/sausage
March 24 - chicken nuggets/mac - n- cheese
March 31 - pizza

Bunny Breakfast

Saturday, March 13th
8:00am-11:00a.m. in the CCC



St. John's will be hosting the Fourth Annual Easter Bunny Breakfast. Please join us for delicious food, kids' games, a visit from the Easter Bunny, and lots of fun! All proceeds will benefit the Hands and Feet Project (a children's village in Haiti supporting orphans).

Pancakes, sausage, hash browns, milk, juice, and coffee will be served.

Prices are as follows:

Adults	\$7
Kids ages 6-10	\$5
Kids ages 3-5	\$3
Kids 2 and under	Free

All Church Family Swim Party

Friday, March 19th

6:00-8:00 at Lincoln Way East
\$5 per child or \$10 per family



*All children 12 and under must be accompanied by an adult.

If you have any questions or would to sign your family up, please see Dawn, Karalyn, or Kerri.

Don't Forget to Mark Your Calendar!

February 17, Wednesday - Ash Wednesday (No JAM Time)

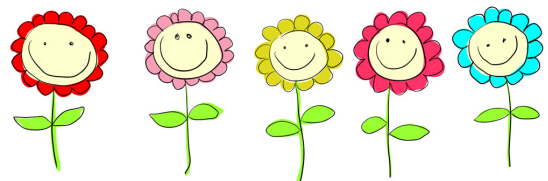
March 13, Saturday - Easter Bunny Breakfast to benefit "Hands and Feet Project" in Haiti

March 19, Friday (6:30-8:30p.m.) - All Church Family Swim Party at LW East

April 7, Wednesday - Easter Break (No JAM Time)

May 19, Wednesday - Last JAM Time for the year

May 26, Wednesday - Pump It Up Party



Sunday Morning Childcare

Each Sunday morning during the 9:30am service two classrooms are available for childcare. The Nursery is for children preschool age and younger and the Kids' Club is for children in kindergarten through 3rd grade. We have a rotating list of volunteers that help out on Sunday mornings. We are always looking for more people to add to this list. If you are interested... contact Kerri, Karalyn, or call the church office. Below is the schedule for the upcoming weeks...

January 24 - Nursery

Luann Seiler 708-479-6269

Meg Seiler 708-479-6269

January 24 - Kids' Club

Steve Gignac 708-479-3981

Tim Hoblin 708-479-1167

January 31 - Nursery

Amanda Mead 708-479-2902

Debra Raimondi 815-469-6052

January 31 - Kids' Club

Stafford Hipp 815-464-1449

Pam Schonwise 708-479-9500

February 7 - Nursery

Tara McKenna 815-463-8298

Donna Scanlin 708-479-5431

February 7 - Kids' Club

Maura Ciszek 708-479-4767

Jen Seiler 708-479-6269

February 14 - Nursery

Donna Peters 815-462-0361

Jessica Peters 815-462-0361

February 14 - Kids' Club

Franklin Mead 708-479-2902

Pam Mead 708-479-2902

February 21 - Nursery

Alicia Funk 815-485-1045

Shelley Maves 708-478-5126

February 21 - Kids' Club

Ryan Kertson 815-485-4546

Marianne Voss 815-464-1488

February 28 - Nursery

Dawn Bush 708-479-1731

Hannah Gorecki 815-463-9849

February 28 - Kids' Club

Lisa Golden 708-479-1183

Cathy Prokop 708-326-4835

Director of Older Youth Ministries Report

CYF NEWS: The next junior high dance sponsored by the high school youth will be held on Friday January 29th. The dance will be from 6:30 p.m.—9:00 p.m. The high school youth will sell pizza, pop & water, mardi gras beads, and glow-in-the-dark necklaces. The cost for admittance into the dance will be \$5.00 per person with a school I.D. We are in great need of adult chaperones for these dances. Please help out by volunteering your time. If you are interested in chaperoning, please contact Dawn Funk @ 708-497-5804.



The CYF **winter retreat** was held on January 15-17th, 2010!!!! It was an amazing experience for the twelve high school youth that attended. At 5:30 p.m. Friday, the sixteen of us packed into the three vehicles and headed up to the Sky Lodge Christian Camp in Montello, WI. The retreat was titled **ROAD TRIP!!!!** There were four sessions throughout the weekend with discussions on the following:



Driving Lessons—before someone learns to drive, he or she needs to know some basic rules of the road and how to handle a car. In the Christian life, there are also some “basics” to know and understand. **Love is what drives Christians.**

Destination—Heaven is our final destination, but where do we want to go on the way there? How do we act, make decisions, live the life we have here on earth? **Our destination as Christians makes a difference in the journey.**

Following the Signs—what are some of the signs we follow as Christians? How do we know which way to go? **When we are open to God's leading the signs are there.**

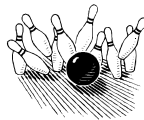
Sharing the Road—Just as drivers must get along with other motorists, Christians live in community with other believers. What does it mean to share the road and the journey of faith? **The Christ road leads to harmony; we are witnesses inviting other to travel this road.**

Other activities during the weekend included: sledding/tubing, horseback riding, broomball, ice skating, lots of laughter and bonding with one another, playing games, hiking, movies, relaxing, basketball, and volleyball. It was a wonderful weekend. Lots of new memories were made during the trip. A huge thank you goes out to Jeremy Kinder, Amy Alexander, and Pastor Dave for being part of this retreat. Your support during the weekend was greatly appreciated.

The annual CYF bake sale will be held on Sunday, February 7th. The funds collected at the sale will go towards the cost of the winter retreat.



Discussion about having a bowl-a-thon will be happening this month. The youth would like to do a bowl-a-thon and then donate the monies to a charity. More information will be forthcoming.



The 30 hour famine is scheduled for February 27th and 28th. Donations will be accepted starting Sunday, January 31st after 9:30 church service. We are hoping to take in more than last year. The goal for donations this year will be \$2,000. Please help us out by donating to an extremely worthy cause. You may contact any of the high school youth members from CYF or you may contact myself to make a donation.

Sunday, March 21st the CYF members will be heading downtown to a Chicago Wolves game at the Allstate Arena in Rosemont. The game starts at 3 p.m. and tickets are \$20 per person.



Other events being planned for the upcoming year include: Easter sunrise service with breakfast in April, paintball, movies, a trip to the Indiana dunes in June, serving a meal at a food shelter, horseback riding, bowl-a-thon, and much, much more!

“JUST 4 GIRLS” NEWS: The girls of this group were collecting mittens and hats for their second annual **hat and mitten drive**. The donation boxes were extremely full. The collection was overwhelming. Thank you so much to all who donated. There were 99 pairs of mittens/gloves, 17 scarves, and 64 hats/ear muffs collected. These items went to the needy at the Lamb’s Fold organization in Joliet who were extremely grateful.



During the next two months the “Just 4 Girls” group will be making fleece blankets that will be donated to Project Linus at the end of February.

Some of the things planned for the “Just 4 Girls” group include: painting pottery, scrap booking, going to a play, getting henna tattoos, and much more.

JUNIOR HIGH JAM TIME NEWS: On Sunday, January 24th the junior high JAM time will be going to **see the movie, TOOTH FAIRY** starring Dwayne Johnson. We will go see an early show that day however; the time will be announced the week the movie releases.



Friday, January 29th the CYF will be having a **junior high dance** in the CCC building. The dance will be from 6:30-9 p.m. and will be for all 6th, 7th, and 8th grade youth. The cost will be \$5 per person. Pizza, pop, water, and glow necklaces will be available as well.

Sunday, February 21st the junior high youth will be going bowling.

On Friday, March 19th the junior high JAM time youth members are invited to an **ALL CHURCH FAMILY SWIM EVENT** from 6-8 p.m. at Lincoln Way East High School in Frankfort. The cost for this event is \$5 per person or \$10 per family. This event is open to all ages and all church members. Any questions, please contact Dawn Funk at 708-497-5804.



Respectfully Submitted,
Dawn Funk

CALLING ALL KIDS - Music is being planned for the 9:30 a.m. Easter service on April 4, 2010. ALL KIDS...if you would like to play an instrument, please call the church office or sign up on the bulletin board outside the lounge. Let us know your name, grade and what instrument you play. Rehearsals will begin in March.

All singers, please come to choir practice on Wednesday nights. Please come and sing for Easter, even if you have not been in a choir before. All kids are welcome. Any questions, please call Doris Carlin, Music Director at 479-3707.



Women's Circle

Women's Circle will be serving the potluck dinner after the Annual Congregational Meeting on Sunday, January 31st. We will be sending Easter cards to all of the shut-ins. The Annual Garage Sale will be held on May 13th, 14th, and 15th.

More information will be available in the forthcoming issues of the FORWARD.

Helen Warning, Secretary

Preschool Registration



The Preschool is still registering for the 2010-2011 school year. If you are interested, or know someone who might be interested, please call the preschool at (708) 479-1119 or the church office at 708-479-5123. Registrations forms are available at the preschool and in the church office.

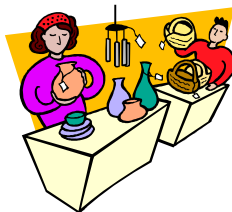
The fees for the next school year are:

- 2 day (T-TH) a.m. or p.m. \$105/month
- 3 day (MWF) a.m. or p.m. \$120/month
- 5 day (M-F) a.m. or p.m. \$200/month

There is also a \$55 registration fee and a copy of your child's birth certificate is required.

Preschool Craft Fair Fundraiser

Our annual preschool fundraiser will be held on Saturday, March 6th from 10a.m.-1p.m. in the Christian Community Center of St. John's United Church of Christ. The community center is located next door to the church at 11046 Second Street in Mokena. We will be hosting approximately 20 vendors/crafters and be having a raffle featuring donations from our vendors as well as many local businesses.



Biloxi in May

Our 3rd Annual Biloxi Mission Trip is back ON!! Due to another group cancelling we will be able to return in 2010.

When: May 16th – 22nd

Transportation: van, cars, or fly

Lodging: Methodist Camp (where we stayed before). Bunk house or Motel style rooms.

Meals are provided for \$6.00 per meal. Work Camp Experience: Rehab houses that were damaged by Katrina. Work involves painting light carpentry to skilled labor. You name it, there is a place for you on our Back Bay Mission trip.



Check your calendar and sign up on the Mission bulletin board in church.

Mission Outreach Team

Reaching out

In a recent edition of "Context," a newsletter on religion and culture that comes from Martin Marty at the University of Chicago, I found this note about growing churches. On the topic of sharing our faith, Marty quoted research by Martha Grace Reese who identified three important points. First, the heart of reaching out to new people is: "being in love with God, being a part of a church you love, and caring about people who do not live with this faith." Second, people in churches who share their faith "can tell you what difference being a Christian makes in their lives." And third, key leaders in growing churches of every kind "keep a laser-like focus on (a) church members growing relationship with Christ, and (b) sharing their faith with others." Marty's article concluded "If you have a relationship with God that makes a difference in your life, if your church supports you in that relationship and encourages and teaches you how to share that relationship with others, then your church doesn't have to close."

(from "Closing remarks," in Context, Vol. 41, Num. 12, Part B, pg. 4)

Frankfort/Mokena Cancer Relay

The American Cancer Society Relay for Life will be held June 11-12 at Lincolnway East. Due to family conflicts, neither Kim Gignac or Steve Hoblin will be able to participate this year. Therefore, we are looking for one or two persons to be our relay team captain for 2010. If you are interested please contact Carol Beebe or Juanita Cooper.



Mission Outreach

Mission Outreach Collection for Trinity Services

Mission Outreach will be collecting Personal products during the month of February.

A wide variety of needs include:

- Toothpaste
- Combs
- Hair brushes
- Lotion (unscented)
- Baby wipes
- "Depends" (Pull – ups – variety of sizes)
- Men's socks
- Men's briefs

Tub is located downstairs by the church office.

Have a heart. Thank you in advance.

Mission Outreach

Totally Awesome 80's Prom



Totally Awesome 80's Prom to benefit St. Jude Children's Research Hospital will take place on Saturday, February

13th at Georgio's Banquets in Orland Park.

Doors will open at 7:30pm. Tickets are only \$55 per couple and all ticket proceeds will go to St. Jude.

Dress in your favorite awesome 80's attire. Hor d'oeuvres, a dessert bar, and a cash bar will be provided.

Tickets must be purchased in advance through this website: www.80spromnite.webs.com

Thank You

A great big Thank You to my St. John's friends. I was so surprised to get so many birthday cards and telephone calls on my birthday.

Thanks Again,
LaVerne Rechkemer

I would like to thank Pastor for his calls and his visits during my recuperation from my fall. I would also like to thank everyone for the cards and for your prayers for Sheree and myself during this time. I hope to be back in church soon. God bless you all.

Richard E. Kinder

.....

I would like to thank everyone for my birthday cards and wishes. Nice to be in a "special" group.

Thank you,
Shirley Guending

Agatha Lewandowski would like to thank everyone for the many, many beautiful birthday cards. What a blessing to have so many caring, thoughtful people at St. John's who took the time to remember her birthday!

A HUGE heartfelt thanks to everyone who helped with the Christmas program this year. Kids - thank YOU for working so hard to memorize the songs and your lines. Teens - I appreciate your time and energy and support for the younger youth in our church, you are wonderful role models to them! A big thank you to all of the parents for driving the kids back and forth to rehearsals, listening to the same songs over and over again as well as gathering costumes and props for your child. Everyone who helped with costumes, sets, lighting, sound, learning songs, directing, cooking, singing... it truly takes a village, well in this case a congregation, to pull it all together. I thank you from the bottom of my heart for all of your help! And to our congregation - THANK YOU for coming out to support the youth of our church and for being so enthusiastic about seeing them share the story of Jesus! While the production was simple, the message was strong! It is truly a blessing to be a part of St. John's!

From the Church Records

BIRTHDAYS:

Bob Brueser will be celebrating his 83rd birthday on February 9th. His address is: 20107 Scott Street., Mokena, IL 60448.

Virginia Erickson will be celebrating her 91st birthday on February 12th. Her address is: 208 East Ririe Place, Flanagan, IL 61740.

Elda Mae Gougar will be celebrating her 83rd birthday on February 16th. Her address is: 21341 S. Gougar Road, Joliet, IL 60433.

Evelyn Kimzey will be celebrating her 87th birthday on February 15th. Her address is: Sunny Hill Nursing Home, 421 Doris Ave., Joliet, IL 60433.

ATTENDANCE:



December 24, 2009

6:00 p.m. - 230

11:00 p.m. - 130

December 27, 2009

8:00 a.m. - 18

9:30 a.m. - 101

January 3, 2010

8:00 a.m. - 21

9:30 a.m. - 138

January 10, 2010

8:00 a.m. - 26

9:30 a.m. - 127

January 17, 2010

8:00 a.m. - 32

9:30 a.m. - 100

BAPTISM:



Teague Aage Young received the sacrament of baptism on December 27, 2009. His parents are Craig and Kirsten Young. His big brother is Odin Young. His sponsors are Craig Werner and James Bogner.

MEMORIALS:

A donation was made to the Memorial Fund in memory of Pearl Baker.



FINANCE

YTD FINANCIAL STATUS, December, 2009

<u>Operating, Income (1)</u>	\$275,877.77
(1) Amount to match YTD budget	312,526

Operating Expenditures

Worship Ministry	16,325.82
Christian Education Ministry	40,031.09
Discipleship (not incl. Missions)	5,435.08
Office Operations	46,200.87
Building Operations	67,043.18
Pastoral, Administrative	109,753.01
TOTAL	\$284,789.05

<u>Gain/(loss) - this year</u>	-8,911.28
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<u>Balance, previous year end</u>	-33,045.91
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<u>Present Operating Fund balance</u>	-41,957.19
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<u>Mission Income (2)</u>	27,241.00
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(2) Amount to match YTD Budget	28,000
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Mission Fund Expenditures

O.C.W.M. Basic Support	17,000.00
Local Mission and Direct Support	10,825.00
TOTAL	27,825.00

<u>IL Conference Capital Campaign(3)</u>	5,204.00
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(3) amount to match YTD budget	10,000.00
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<u>Building Fund/Project 150 Income</u>	43,318.50
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CCC Profit/Loss Statement - Year To Date 2009

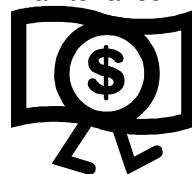
<u>Rental Income</u>	8,688
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Expense:

Custodian	3,709
Gas	4,918
Electricity	5,114
Water/Sewer	1,163
Maintenance	3,443

Total	18,347
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Net	(9,659)
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St John's United Church of Christ Minutes from Council Meeting January 14, 2010

Members present – Marc Schonwise, Steve Gignac, Jill Weitendorf, Bernetta Pruiam, Sheree Kinder, Brian Burkett, Terry Ciszek, Scott Campbell, DeAnna Kertson, Pastor David Alfeld-Johnson

Members absent – none

Meeting called to order at 7:00 PM by president Marc Schonwise. Terry Ciszek shared devotions.

Officer's Reports -

- **Secretary's Report** – December 2009 meeting minutes reviewed. Motion was made by DeAnna Kertson and seconded by Jill Weitendorf to approve the minutes as written. Motion carried.
- **Financial Reports** – The financial secretary's and treasurer's reports were reviewed and discussed. The year ended \$9,000 in the red which is some improvement over recent years. Giving to the current fund was up 9% over pledges but was down 1% for missions and the building fund. Discussion was held as to what would be the best way to keep the congregation informed of our financial status. Motion was made by Scott Campbell and seconded by Bernetta Pruiam to accept the Financial Secretary's report. Motion carried. The Financial Secretary's Annual report was reviewed and discussed. Motion was made by Steve Gignac and seconded by Terry Ciszek to accept the Financial Secretary's annual report. Motion carried. It was noted expenses for 2009 finished under budget. The 2010 budget was reviewed and discussed. Discussion was held regarding how the budget should be formulated after review of the goals and plans of the various committees. Pledges received for 2010 were down significantly. Congregation will be reminded at next Sunday's services to be sure to turn in any outstanding pledges as soon as possible. Motion was made by Brian Burkett and seconded by Steve Gignac to accept the Treasurer's report as presented. Motion carried.

Pete Laue was present to discuss the current financial status and to answer any questions. It was noted that it is still necessary to borrow from other funds to meet our current expenses. The remaining balances on notes for the CCC have been paid. Pete Laue will be available to discuss the church's financial status at the annual congregational meeting.

- **President's Report** – Marc Schonwise thanked Council members for their service over the past year.

Staff Reports -

Pastor's Report – Written report submitted re: pastoral activities for last month.

1. A letter was received regarding a Mokena chapter of the Jaycees that will be starting. It was agreed to post information regarding this on the hallway bulletin board.
2. Pastor will be taking vacation time in February.
3. The office copier contract was discussed and will be renewed as it is currently written. It was noted efforts need to be made to keep copying to a minimum and to format reports in a manner to reduce pages needed.
4. The temporary lighting used recently in the sanctuary has been removed. Research continues into costs and types of lighting to be used to enhance the worship experience.

Youth Ministries/CYF – written reports submitted.

Church Board Reports -

- **Preschool Board** – no report.
- **Board of Christian Education** –Easter program planning is underway. Fundamental changes to the current programming are being discussed.
- **Personnel Board** – no meeting.
- **Facilities Board** - Jeremy Kinder is stepping down as chair of the Facilities Board. It has been decided to continue at present without a chair person. Future projects under consideration are - repairs to the leaky bell tower, updating the fire alarm system,

reviewing the phone system, and repairing or replacing the air conditioning units and furnace in the CCC. The need for a new technical person remains an issue.

- **Cemetery Board** – no report.
- **Music and Worship** - Sanctuary lighting was discussed. Plans for future services were discussed. James Hamilton will provide music at both services on 01/24/10. The combined service at 9:30 a.m. on 01/31/10 will be a traditional service. Plans for updating the red songbook were discussed.
- **Membership Committee** – no report.

New Business -

- The Annual Congregational meeting will be 01/31/10. Motion was made by Bernetta Pruim and seconded by Sheree Kinder to accept the nomination of the following persons for presentation to the congregation for election to church council - -Richard Cantwell, Abby Bicksler and Chris Maluta. Motion carried. A meeting will be held with new and current council members immediately following the congregational meeting.

Old Business -

- The planning committee for the 150th Anniversary will begin meeting in January.

Other reports – Church committees:

- **Stewardship** – no report.
- **Evangelism** - no report.
- **Mission Outreach** – 161 boxes were received for Operation Christmas child. A mission trip to Biloxi is being planned for May 16-22, 2010. Other sites for future mission trips are being discussed (Emmaus Home, Tower Hill)
- **Strategic planning oversight committee** – no report

Council members were given an opportunity for an open forum to make comments or identify concerns. All council members thanked the three council members completing their terms for their hard work and devotion over the last three years.

Next council meeting date/time will be decided at the special meeting of the new council to be held 01/31/10. Steve Gignac will provide devotions for February.

Meeting was closed with prayer.

Meeting adjourned at 9:44 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sheree Kinder
Church Council Secretary

Biloxi Meeting 2010

Once again we came back inspired and energized by our mission trip to Biloxi last winter, and have committed to return to the Gulf Region again this year to continue with the rebuilding efforts. The dates for this year's trip are May 16th – 22nd. If you are interested in participating in this wonderful mission opportunity or have questions, we have an informational meeting scheduled after church on February 21st. Contact Judie Beshansky with questions.

