

Church Council Update

A Monthly Newsletter for the Church Council of Baker Memorial United Methodist Church

October 2005

From Mark's Desk . . .

"For on this day atonement shall be made for you, to cleanse you; from all your sins you shall be clean before the LORD."
—Leviticus 16:30

As I write this, it is the close of *Yom Kippur*, the Day of Atonement for our Jewish brothers and sisters. In the Jewish tradition, it is a solemn day where past sins are remembered, and repentance is made. When I was a kid, our version of Yom Kippur came whenever Mom or Dad found out about our "sins" and we had our own version of "atonement", often involving our backsides. But punishment aside, my parents always stressed that no sin was a total mistake, if I could learn from it.

Recently, I was asked to think of a time when something happened at church that I regretted. I immediately thought of a church meeting when a big issue was discussed. One person took a position on one side of an issue, while most of those present (including me) had another opinion. The person leading that meeting dismissed that member's comments, and suggested that the member's views were not worth further discussion. While I was of another opinion on the issue at hand, I thought the member ought to be allowed to speak; but I said nothing, and neither did anyone else. Today, that member no longer attends our church. I have regretted that moment ever since. I didn't speak up, and I was wrong to fail to do so. I not only let that person down, but I let Jesus down as well. (*"Truly I tell you, just as you did not do it to the least of these, you did not do it to me."*—Matthew 25:45).

**Our next meeting will be
Monday, October 17,
2005 at 7:00 p.m., in
Wiley Hall.**

But I have resolved to learn from that sin and to not let it happen again. Whether I am leading the Church Council or some other group, I try to make sure to provide an environment where people are comfortable expressing different opinions. And not just out of fairness to those involved; I believe that such an atmosphere leads to a better decision-making process.

Let me offer an example. For the last few years, Rob Murphy and I have served together on the St. Charles Plan Commission. As might be expected in such situations, we sometimes find ourselves developing different opinions on how we should vote on a specific zoning petition. Rob always explains the way he votes, and sometimes he persuades me to change my vote to the position he supports. The atmosphere at Plan Commission meetings is one where members feel free to express their opinions, without fear of being ridiculed for them.

I think that like the Plan Commission, the Church Council benefits from an atmosphere where issues can be freely discussed, debated, and decided. Your thoughts and comments are always welcome.

Welcome to Recording Steward Beth Patten-Nawara

The Committee on Lay Leadership has nominated Beth Patten-Nawara to serve the remainder of the term of Marsha Byers, who retired from the office of Recording Steward in order to undertake more volunteer work in the field of literacy. Beth is a life-long United Methodist and a member of our parish since 1992. She and her husband, Dave Nawara, live in South Elgin with their two children, Sarah and Emma. Her nomination must be confirmed by a majority vote of the Council, which is scheduled for October meeting.

September Meeting Summary

We have several items of old business on the agenda, including the report of *The Adoption Ministry Task Force*. A report from the *Task Force* has been distributed separately. Please read it before the meeting, and be prepared to discuss and take action on the recommendations. Also, two other items held over from last month's discussion:

- Senior Pastor Ronni Verboom is requesting the formal establishment of something that already exists on an informal basis: a *Pastor's Discretionary Fund*, which would permit the disbursement of funds at the discretion of the ministerial staff primarily to assist church member and constituents in need—for essentials of life, as well as for counseling assistance.
- Frank W. Bresemann is a Clinical Professional Counselor who is licensed by the State of Illinois. He is currently given space in the church to counsel Lazarus House clients for eight hours per week. Pastor Ronni and Pastor Rich recommend expanding the time to 16 hours per week, and also make his services available to church members at a sliding fee scale.

Ministry and Committee Reports for the November Meeting

If you have a written report for the November meeting, or have a major proposal to be decided at our November meeting, please get it to me in writing by noon on Sunday, November 13. You can leave it in the church council mailbox by the stairs to Pastor Ronni's office, or you can e-mail it to me at mdarmstrong@smartgate.com. I will distribute it to the council ahead of time.

Church Conference set for December 12

The Church Conference is the governing body of our parish. It meets at least once a year to elect officers for the coming year, establish clergy salaries, and set a budget. This year's Church Conference is set for Monday, December 12, 2005 at 7:00 p.m. in Wiley Hall. Each Ministry Area, Committee, and other group of the church must submit a written report prior to the meeting. You can submit these to the Church office, or by e-mail to Jan McPeak at info@bakermemorialchurch.org.