



the

CHIMES



**HAPPY
New Year!**

VOLUME 20, No. 1
January 2008

*"To help persons
find, experience
and share
God's love."*

THE MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH • PUNTA GORDA, FL

Sunday Worship

8:00 am Celebration Service
9:15 am Contemporary Celebration
11:00 am Celebration Service

Church Staff:

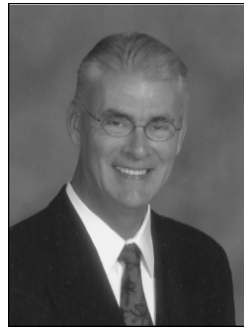
Rev. John A. Bryant, Senior Pastor

Brenda Allen.....Kitchen Coordinator
Heather Buck.....Minister of Children
Tim Buck.....Minister of Youth
Pastor Robert (Bob) Carlson Minister
of Education
John Cooper Grounds & Maintenance
Danielle Crawfis Administrative
Assistant
Pastor William (Bill) Grant Minister
of Teaching
Brenda Hartman Custodian
Harpo Marx.....Custodian
Edith Nelson Minister of
Children's Music
Joe Pariseau Minister of
Contemporary Music
Kim Richards Financial Assistant
Bill Robson Minister of Music
Gail Sexton Secretary
Ruth Shaffer Office Assistant
Kenny Sparks Custodian
Marty Voss Business Administrator

The CHIMES is published monthly.

Articles and submissions are due the 6th of the month
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space and/or content.

First United Methodist Church
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Punta Gorda, FL 33950
(941) 639-3842
www.puntagordamethodist.com



NOW IS THE TIME....2008

*"And do this, understanding the present time. the hour has
come for you to wake up from your slumber, because our
salvation is nearer now than when we first believed. Rather,
clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ, and do not think
about how to gratify the desires of the sinful nature."*

Paul, in this scripture, is advising us to open our minds and hearts to the "NEW" of 2008. God is always giving us the "NEW," though so often we fail to recognize it. As believers we are promised by God that all things are becoming "NEW."

Barb and I extend our heartfelt thanks to each of you for your many expressions of love. We join with you to give God another year of ourselves for building His Kingdom. This translates into discipling and spreading the good news to those who are perishing.

I am more confident and excited than ever to begin 2008 with a people-centered campaign for Jesus Christ. This is called "JUST WALK ACROSS THE ROOM." Melody Austin, Small Group Coordinator, is spearheading efforts to involve all of First Church members and friends to actively bring persons to faith in Jesus Christ.

I am convinced that many will come to Christ if we are faithful to 'get on board!' Mark your calendar for February 17th thru March 16th. Check out the following page for all the details.

We should be 'Refreshed, Revived and Ready' to go forward with this as we celebrate the yearly "Festival of Lights" on January 13th at which time we dedicate our prayer cards with the names of those we pray for throughout the year; and on January 20, 21, 22 Rev. Tom Atkins will be preaching special renewal services. (See more information inside).



NOW IS THE TIME....2008

**Have Faith, Love God, Enjoy Life
and see what God will do through you in 2008,
Joyfully serving with you,
Pastor John A. Bryant**

John A. Bryant
Pastor John

What if twenty steps across a room could change your friends lives forever?

Join Us

in a four week experience that will refresh your appreciation for the Holy Spirit's mysterious ways, rekindle your passion for people, and revive your belief that the single greatest gift you can give to your friends and family members is an introduction to the God who:

Created them

Loves them

Has a purpose for their every day

Just Walk Across The Room

During these four weeks, **February 17th to March 16th**, we will learn together, in Small Groups and Sunday worship, how to approach our sin-scarred world with a relevant, appropriate message of truth -- a message that is conveyed on the heels of a simple "walk across a room."

Here is how you can participate:

- (1) Experience this yourself,
- (2) Make sure your Small Group or Sunday School is "on board,"
- (3) Welcome new people into your Small Group or Sunday School for these four weeks. Maybe they'll stay!
- (4) Ask your group members and others if they would be a "Host Home" for another small group (6-12 people)
(all that is involved is showing a DVD - if you don't have a DVD player, we will loan you one).

Clear the Decks and get ready for the most exciting Spirit filled Lenten experience ever as we all '*Just Walk across the Room.*'

Let us know what part you will have in this great experience

Call Melodie Austin at 639-4402 or e-mail her at: melharryaustin@yahoo.com.
You may also call the Church Office @ 639-3842.

Clear your calendar and join us. It will be a great experience!



In Sympathy

Sympathy is extended to the families of Larry Laishley who died November 17th and Terry Branscome who died November 21st.



Dear Church Family,

You have been a blessing to us in so many ways. Your phone calls, cards and kind words gave me encouragement. Losing Larry after a long battle with cancer is a painful experience, but we know he is in a better place and praise God for that.

God Bless you all.

The Family of Larry Laishley

A NOTE OF



Thank you from Tim and Heather Buck

To everyone who has helped in any way, thank you so much for your time, meals, books, childcare, a phone call at just the right time, prayers, encouragement, love, help, care, and the list goes on! We are so thankful to God for bringing us to such a loving part of His family. We couldn't do this without HIM, or you!



With Abundant Gratitude

Our appreciation and thanks to each of you for your expressions of love. May the God whom we love and serve continue to bless you abundantly.

Pastor John and Barb

A Word from the Worship Committee

On behalf of all of the FUMC Worship Committee members from the past few years, please join us in a big round of applause, and a thousand "thank you's" to Marion Wester for her years of service and leadership as Worship Committee chairperson.

She has been a wonderful mentor/teacher who is always willing to share her knowledge of details and procedures that help make our worship services beautiful. Not only a good chairperson, Marion is always ready to help with the varied and many jobs this entails, including training the ushers and communion stewards, as well as help with altar flowers, candles and placement, making sure all supplies have been ordered.

Marion would be the first to say that she could not have done this job without many special committee members, who have helped her faithfully. As we learn in 1 Corinthians 12:4-6, "There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit. There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. There are different kinds of working, but the same God works all of them in all men." So again we all say "thank you Marion" for showing us how to each use the spiritual gifts we've been given to work together in unity to serve our church community, and our Lord and Savior.

With love and gratitude,

Rosie Young, Worship Chairperson

Thank You and Congratulations

Thanks to all who helped make the First Church Christmas Float the best! What a witness to the community. (At the time of this printing, an announcement of the winners and trophies were not yet available).

Christmas Card Lane - First Church Enters Two Cards!

We are pleased to announce that two Christmas card paintings were submitted for the Kiwanis Christmas Card Lane and the First Church Art Group (Nancy Briechele, Anna Mae Loughman, Jim Rousseau and Rosalie Wilford) achieved a Red Ribbon in the Amateur Art category and one of our Small Groups, the Voyagers, achieved a Blue Ribbon in the Religious category.

For all those who worked on the Float and the Christmas Cards, Thank you and God Bless each of you for using your talents.

SHORTCUTS

Pastor Bob Carlson, Minister of Education



Everybody's looking for a shortcut. Sometimes it can save considerable time, but not always. We have learned from experience and by observing the failed attempts of others that taking the shortcut may lead to disaster.

I'll confess one of my blunders. It was 40-years-ago this month. I had just transferred to a college north of New York City, had been hired as an orderly at the local hospital, and needed help.

The nursing director told me in the interview that I must wear a white shirt and white trousers to work. The shirt was no problem, as I was accustomed to wearing a white dress shirt every Sunday. But the only place I could find white trousers was at a uniform store, and they weren't hemmed. I was 150 miles from home, so I couldn't ask my mother to do it for me. I didn't have a girlfriend, or even know a coed who could hem those pants.

Then I had a brilliant idea. And it proved to meet my need – for a while. In a hurry to get to the hospital for my first day on the job, I turned the cuffs under and stapled them, as I would paper. The silver-colored staples weren't even noticeable. I felt pretty good about my ingenious method of hemming those pants.

But it caught up with me a few weeks later. By that time I had washed my only pair of white work trousers several times. In case you haven't guessed, staples are not rustproof. Now my cuffs had streaks of orange rust.

If only I could tell you that the incident with white pants was the first and last time I took a shortcut that proved to be less than favorable. When will I learn?

If you plan to make New Years resolutions, I recommend that you make the determination you will avoid self-defeating shortcuts.

New Years Resolution # 1:

Spend more time getting to know God

Spiritual Growth cannot be realized by taking shortcuts. I remember at the end of a speed-reading course I took in college, the professor asked us to share the benefits we had realized. Back then I was somewhat of a wise guy, so I chirped, "I have been able to reduce my devotional time with God down to five-minutes?"

In the gym we like to say "No Pain, No Gain." It's a valid principle. And it is applicable when it comes to our walk with God. Without the pain of giving up pleasurable activities to pursue a more intimate relationship with the God who loves to be with us, we cannot expect anything more than a superficial acquaintance. If you love someone, you don't look for shortcuts, but savor every moment in their presence.

cont. on page 5

cont. from page 4

New Years Resolution # 2: Satisfy legitimate needs by legitimate means

Most of our desires are basic, God-given, legitimate yearnings. However, we harm others and ourselves, not to mention offending God, when we seek what we want in ways that are wrongful shortcuts and ourselves.

An obvious example would be theft. There is nothing wrong with wanting to improve your standard of living. But the biblical way is by working, earning what we get, not by stealing. As I said, that's an obvious one.

But it has become socially acceptable to go after what we want, "as long as we don't hurt anyone." The thinking today is very much as it was in the '60s: "If it feels good, do it."

Certainly one example is overspending. Our current mortgage crisis is commonly blamed on the slow housing market. But we all know that such slumps in real estate sales are cyclical, and always have been. What makes this one different is the kind of loans many homebuyers are locked into. Families wanted more than what they could afford, so they found a way to enjoy instant gratification, without regard for future disaster. They took a shortcut, one that has hurt all of us.

There is nothing wrong with sexual desire. It is one of those legitimate, God-given needs. But when it drives us to actions outside of God's plan, the result is catastrophic.

The sociologists have shown from study after study that those who engage in sexual activity before the wedding, taking the shortcut to intimacy that should be reserved for marriage, cause themselves and others irreparable damage – emotional, spiritual and social. The studies have also revealed, without question, that cohabitation, a shortcut to companionship that is intended by God to be enjoyed within the bonds of marriage, does great harm. It destroys the probability of a lasting marriage. It greatly increases the probability of abusive behavior – toward one another and the children. It even lowers the probability of financial success. Nevertheless, so many couples think it is the short-term solution that will satisfy their immediate need.

Many other examples could be cited. Please think about the shortcuts you are tempted to take. Then consider the consequences.

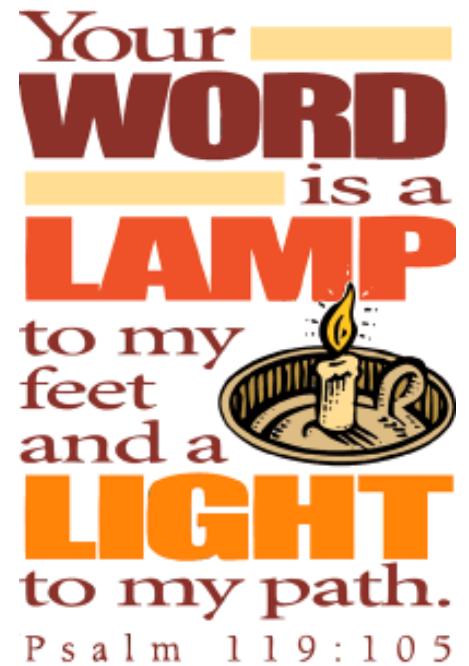
Here are a few Bible verses that will direct us to a path that is safe and most enjoyable:

"There is a way that seems right to a man, but in the end it leads to death." Proverbs 14:12

"Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and he will make your paths straight." Proverbs 3:5-6

"Be very careful, then, how you live—not as unwise but as wise, making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord's will is."
Ephesians 5:15-17

"Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path." Psalm 119:105



United Christian Women

Marilyn Gregory, correspondent



Anne Simpson, UCW President; Ana Romillo, Charlotte County Homeless coalition Director; and Marian Bandler, Past UCW President and honoree.

The November Ladies Gathering held on November 13th in Lenox Hall was highlighted with the presentation of \$5,000 to the Genesis Chara House in Punta Gorda,. The monies raised fulfilled a commitment made by United Christian Women to adopt a room at the facility in honor of UCW founder Marian Bandler. It has long been a belief of Marian's that the women of First United Methodist Church could best serve women in our community by supporting the Chara House- an effort dedicated to providing interim assistance to homeless mothers and their children. Accepting on behalf of Chara House was Ana Romillo, Charlotte County Homeless Coalition. Ms Romillo gave a wonderful testament of how the Genesis Chara House has benefitted so many people in our community and provided a preview of projects to come under the direction of the Charlotte County Homeless Coalition.

The funds were raised over a two year time frame through Game Days, Commemorative Plate Sales and other fund raising projects organized by the group. Thanks to all who supported our projects!! The Thank Offering, a yearly collection of UCW was also dedicated to the Genesis Chara House.

UPCOMING DATES TO REMEMBER:

GAME DAY: Saturday, February 2nd - 1:00 - 4:00 p.m. Tickets will be available at the Welcome Station between services during the month of January or you may call Marilyn Gregory @ 637-4983.

FEBRUARY LADIES GATHERING scheduled for Tuesday, February 12th.

This is a wonderful opportunity for the ladies of the church to gather for fellowship, worship, inspiring programs and, of course, wonderful food.

And don't forget, the Circles of UCW will continue to feature lunches throughout the Wednesday Lenten Luncheon series beginning in February.

Lots to do!!! Come out and join us. If you are interested in joining one of the Circles, please contact Anne Simpson at 639-4333 or Marilyn Gregory - 637-4983.

Women's Circles

Circle Name

Freddie Rigell Circle
Julie McCartney Circle

Guthrie Circle**

Sally Jordan Circle

Meeting Time

3rd Monday 10:00 am
4th Monday 11:30 am

3rd Wednesday 7:00 pm

2nd Thursday 9:30 am

Contact

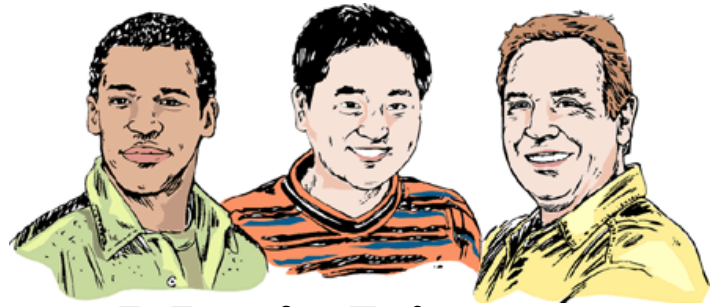
Patty Brake @575.1403
Gail LaGro @613.1745
Mavis English @639.3268
Susan Postle @ 639-9785
Kendall Clotfelter @ 505-0856
Gail Ouimet @ 575-1918

** Meets in homes - All other Circles meet on the Church Campus (Room 9)

United Methodist Men

Peter Gillen, President

The mission of the General Commission on United Methodist Men is to assist men to know Jesus Christ, to serve him, to grow spiritually and seek daily to do his will.



Men's Dinner

January 14th
6:00 pm

Guest Speaker:
Dr. David Doupe

"Medical Ministering in Africa"

Dr. Doupe will speak and give a slide presentation on medical ministering in Africa. We certainly look forward to his timely and informative presentation. So start the New Year right and attend our dinner.

Note Date Change:

The United Methodist Men have scheduled their dinner a week early to accommodate the Church Wide Evangelism event featuring Evangelist Tom Atkins, who will be presenting the second night of a 3-night engagement at First Church. We thank the Men's group for adjusting their schedule this month.



Pancake Breakfast

January 12
8am - 10am

Our next pancake breakfast will be on Saturday, January 5th from 8:00-10AM at the Life Center. We fed over 270 at last month's so we must be doing it right!! After the holidays you need a break, so come and have a relaxing breakfast with us. Remember the proceeds from the breakfast help support our missions.

A Special Thank You

Over the past few months, Linda and I have been between Connecticut and Punta Gorda due to her father's illness and subsequent death on December 5th. During my absence, Jack Hall - Methodist Men's Vice President has assumed many of my duties. Especially those involving the last two pancake breakfasts and mens dinners. My thanks goes out to Jack for all he has done and to his wife Gert for her able assistance.

Mortgage Update

Jim Koinis, Finance Committee Chairperson

Rusty Lee, our Treasurer, has advised that the mortgage balance, which reflects our regular monthly payments, was \$673,560 at the end of November. I am also pleased to announce that the "Paver Program" is being well received, having sold over 250 pavers from inception, with a net resulting principal of over \$21,000. Space around the Welcome Station is filling up quickly, so you need to buy your pavers soon. Designated gifts to eradicate this debt continue to be most pleasing and I pray you will keep this important need in mind for the future. At the current debt level, and assuming normal principal reductions occur monthly during 2008, our interest expense will be \$130 per dy during next year.

DOLLAR\$&CENTS

**It Was a
Good Year!**

2008



Missions

Gail Ouimet, Mission Correspondent

“Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.” Matthew 28:19

Prayers for Ruthe Howell

I hope that all of you were able to hear Ruthe Howell speak on November 25. What work the Lord is doing thru and with Ruthe in China. Let us all keep her in our prayers and pray that the Lord will make it possible for her to return to China this coming year.

Ruthe was so very appreciative of the support that is provided by the FUMC family. As Ruthe has found out just recently, because of new tax laws her church will not be able to support her in the way that they did before. If they did, they would have to report to the IRS and Ruthe would have to pay taxes on the monies that they provided her. Please pray that they find a way to continue to support her. Praise God for the work that she is doing in China.



ECHO (Educational Concerns for Hunger Organization)

is a non-profit, inter-denominational Christian organization located on a demonstration farm in North Fort Myers, FL. ECHO has been assisting a global network of missionaries and development workers since 1981 and is currently serving agricultural workers in 180 countries.

ECHO exists for one major reason, to help those working internationally with the poor be more effective, especially in the area of agriculture! We are a technical support organization helping community development organizations and workers do what they do . . . better!

E.C.H.O.

Appreciates our Support

ECHO says “Thank You” for your support of their ministry. They serve over 180 countries with specialized solutions that were both affordable and realistic to those who need them most.

Some of those ways are:

Helping small-scale farmers throughout the world grow their own food using sustainable solutions that are both practical and affordable. During the 2006-2007 fiscal year ECHO responded to over 4,500 requests for help from 167 different countries.

ECHO manages an information website that provides thousands of individuals with help to their particular dilemma. The website provides immediate answers for those who have internet access. With our support, we have helped to upgrade this site and began a project to translate the website and educational material from English to both Spanish and French. Since this project started downloads have increased from 60,000 to 290,000 in one year.

They have expanded their intern program and have helped interns create opportunities for interns in Mozambique, Madagascar, Thailand, Senegal, Tanzania and many other locations.

This is just a sample of what God is doing with our mission dollars thru His gift of ECHO and their people.

Watch next month for information on the “Faith Promise” campaign and how we did this past year.

Keep praying for all our Missionaries and their work.

January Birthdays:

01 Issa Baroudi	12 Missy Russell
01 Barb Cobb	12 Anne Simpson
01 Phyllis Frazee	13 Art Bruning
01 Carol Hicks	13 Racquel McDonough
01 Ted Johnson	14 Kathy Paoella
02 Gussie Baker	14 Amy Rupert
02 Guy Bowen	15 Alison Denight
02 Sally Kemp	15 Fred Grimm
02 Allen Snipes	15 Gary Knowlton
02 Dorothy Strunk	16 Dan Langone
03 Cheryl Brown	16 Bonnie Lezark
03 Marjorie Bruns	16 Sue Mitchell
03 Judy Cassani	16 Emily Moenning
03 Donna Rensland	17 Pete Lowe
03 Don Sempstrote	17 Joan Martin
03 Howard Zillmer	18 Debbie Reith
04 Jackie Day	18 Lisa Robinson
05 Dorothy Berson	19 John Cooper
05 Jack Darland	19 Joseph Maggiore
05 Jack Ewell	19 Leo Wotitzky
05 Dennis Ewing	20 M.J. Baxter
05 Phil Huddleston	20 Lois Bowers
05 Barbara Laishley	20 Lorraine Collins
05 Morgan McAtee	20 Thomas Hayward
05 Sonja Singmaster	20 Susan Janz
06 James Gilbreath	20 Beverly Kueny
06 Carolyn Honour	20 Marion Martin
06 Kendall Lombard	20 Karen Mundy
06 Melvin White	20 Dick Robarts
07 Carol Bassett	20 Kaitlyn Schaub
07 Mildred Holbrook	20 Margaret Whittaker
07 Gene Roaf	20 Racheal Yerger
07 Chloe Schaub	21 Bettianne Jones
07 Michael Strunk	21 Effie Lehmbeck
07 Pat Ward	22 Bill Brazill
08 Bob Caho	22 Orlando Francisco
08 Walter Haught	22 H.D. Hood
09 Julie Crosland	22 Charles McAtee
09 Megan Crosland	22 Paul Polk
09 Taylor Crosland	22 Rosalie Wilford
09 Barbara Flint	24 Alberta Norton
09 Fred Schmidt	24 Mindy Stroup
09 Juanita Tuck	25 Jake Guarino
10 Ada Calladine	26 Ashley Cook
10 Judee Fish	26 Lorraine Geiser
10 Barbara Foskey	26 Haley Hendrix
10 Judy Sempstrote	26 Alex MacDonald
10 Louise Yaklin	26 Bonnie Maughan
11 Della Cook	26 William Reynolds
11 Rusty Lee	27 Diane Buckingham
12 Sherry Goulding	27 John Edwards
12 Elizabeth Oakley	27 Robert Horton

27 Beatrice Manos	29 Marjorie Roseborough
27 Edith Nelson	29 Kay Tanner
27 Marion Tuck	29 John Ward
28 Gwen Marx	30 Jacquelyn Leavell
28 Jacki Moore	30 Alex Leonard
28 Amanda Nease	30 Quentin Reed
28 Kerri Smith	30 Sandra Schafer
28 Aaron Smith	30 Frank Stelzer
29 Kira Rose Ferner	31 Sophia Koinis
29 George Gulgin	31 Denise Leonard



January Anniversaries:

01 Lindsay & Debbie Harrington
01 Kenton & Margaret Haymans
02 Russell & Marion Boyd
04 Richard & Betty Kingsbury
04 Bill & Mickey Steinhagen
06 Dale & Vi O'Brien
08 Jim & Becky Douglas
08 Calvin & Carol Evans
08 Don & Lori Galloway
11 Jerry & Jan Larson
13 Rusty & Vivian Lee
15 Bob & Beatrice Manos
15 John & Pat Ward
19 Shelvin & Gladys Syverson
20 William & Nancy Haines
20 Dave & Joan Phillips
21 James & Eleanor Rousseau
23 Norm & Ruth Ann Whipple
28 Jerry & Pat DePetro
31 Robert & Melody Barnhart

Happy Birthday! Anniversary Wishes! Happy Birthday! Anniversary Wishes!

SPECIAL EVENTS

Danielle Crawfis, Special Event Coordinator

Every year I complain about being “so busy” during the holidays....but you know what? I wouldn't have it any other way! In January, it takes extra effort for me to stay positive when the Christmas cards stop coming and the social schedule starts to wane. So...If you're like me, and need an After-Christmas-pick-me-up, why not invite family and friends to the exciting events offered at First Church in January.



January 18 Dinner & A Movie 5:30 pm

Pork Chops, Sweet Potatoes, Green Beans,
Rolls, Salad and dessert

Feature Movie is “**Secondhand Lions**” starring
Michael Cane and Robert Duvall.

\$8 Adults
\$3 Children (4-12)
No Charge for children under 4

First on the lineup is “Dinner and a Movie” on January 18th. From 5:30 - 6:45pm a delicious meal will be offered in the Life Center, and at 7:00pm the movie will begin in Lenox Hall. The menu for January is Pork Chops, Sweet Potatoes, Green Beans, Rolls, Salad and dessert for only \$8 (adults), \$3 (Children 4-12). There is no charge for children under 4 years old.

The Feature Movie is “Secondhand Lions” starring Michael Cane and Robert Duvall. When the introverted young Walter (academy award winner Haley Joel Osment) is forced to spend the summer with a pair of eccentric great-uncles, he's understandably unnerved. They're old, cranky, and total strangers - and worst of all, they weren't expecting him. These gruff-talking, shotgun-toting uncles also don't care to take care of any boy, let alone an unusual commodity like Walter. Secondhand Lions is a heartwarming comedy about adventures, discoveries, growth and trust. Bring a comfortable chair (and blanket) if you like. Popcorn and soda is available. There is no charge for the movie, but we accept donations (a donation bucket is visible) to offset the cost of the DVD, sodas and popcorn.

Living Truth II Returns January 27th

On January 27th, Elroy and Tammie Koters (“Living Truth II”) will bring their musical talents

to us again for an evening of entertainment you don't want to miss. Combined, this duo can play many antique and contemporary instruments, including acoustic guitar, Appalachian dulcimer, bass guitar, guitar-zither, bell chimes, djembe drum, keyboards, mandolin-guitar, marxophone, melodica, soprano saxophone and wooden flute. They travel throughout Michigan presenting their ministry of music and occasional drama sketch in combination with their testimonies of a vital, growing relationship with Jesus Christ. We are privileged to have them at FUMC while they are traveling through Florida.

There is no charge for admittance (a Love Offering will be taken for their ministry and to help defray expenses). CD and tapes will be on display and for sale following the performance.

Festival of Lights

January 13

During each worship service on January 13th you will have the opportunity to bring your 2008 Prayer Card forward with the names of persons you want prayed for in 2008. As candles glow throughout the church, recognize yourself as a potent light in the world; acknowledge Jesus as the source of your inner light; seek knowledge of the light of Christ.

Jesus said, "You are the light of the world....let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven." *Matthew 5:14*

You may be the one God chooses to lead another to faith in Jesus. You may just have to "Walk across the Room!?"



The Evangelism Committee Welcomes Special Guest Speaker Evangelist TOM ATKINS

It is with excitement and great anticipation for what God is going to do that we look forward to Tom Atkins returning to First Church Punta Gorda.

Reverend Atkins, General Evangelist to the North Georgia Conference of the United Methodist Church since 1994, represents a new generation of evangelists by seeking to bring the timeless truths and experiences of the Gospel to our contemporary culture.

After many years of struggling with a call into full time evangelism, Tom pastored United Methodist churches in North Georgia for 23 years before being appointed as a General Evangelist. Since then, he has preached in 19 Annual Conferences.

Tom has always had a love for preaching the Gospel of Jesus Christ. As he received numerous invitations to preach across the nation, he sensed God calling him from the pastoral ministry into full-time evangelism.

Tom grew up in Decatur, Georgia, and attended Pattillo Memorial United Methodist Church. He is a graduate of Asbury College and Asbury Theological Seminary. He and his wife, Susan, have two married sons and are proud grandparents. Tom and Susan reside in Monroe, Georgia, where she teaches second grade.



Sunday, January 20th - 8:00, 9:15, 11:00 am

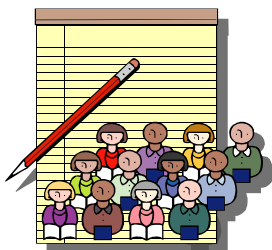
Sunday, January 20th - 7:00 pm

Monday, January 21st - 7:00 pm

Tuesday, January 22nd - 7:00 pm

In The Sanctuary

New Member Orientation Classes Scheduled for February



**Membership
Class**

If you have been thinking about church membership at First Church Punta Gorda, now is the time to sign up for the upcoming class. These classes are informative and you will have an opportunity to meet the church staff and church leaders.

Two Orientation classes and 5 Small Group sessions make up the format of New Member Orientation. You may sign up for this class by marking "Wish to Join" on the worship attendance sheet or you may call the Church Office @ 639-3842.

The first Orientation Class will be held February 3rd at 2:00 pm.