



The Visitor

Vicksburg United Methodist Church

Volume 18, Issue 11

November 2011

Giving Thanks for All Things

It's easy to list the blessings in life: good health, family, a satisfying career, a comfortable home. We might even be thankful for things others take for granted, such as freedom, clean drinking water, reliable transportation and food enough to eat. Then there are the little things, such as gardens, sunrises, pets and coffee.

What about life's storms or unanswered prayers? Should we be thankful for these? Loss and hardship remind us of our dependence on God. He uses trials to draw us closer to him, to show us that he is our rock and refuge. In misfortune and grief, we discover God's comfort and strength. Should we not, then, be thankful for the storms, too?



-The Newsletter Newsletter, November 2012

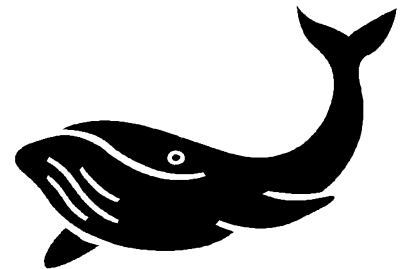
Gestures of Gratitude

In 2005, a female humpback whale became entangled in a web of crab traps and lines just east of the Farallon Islands, off the San Francisco coast. Hundreds of yards of line rope were wrapped around her body, tail, torso and mouth, weighing her down so much that she struggled to stay afloat.

A fisherman spotted the whale and radioed for help. Rescuers determined that the only way to save the creature was to dive in and untangle her. This was a dangerous proposition, as one slap of the tail could be deadly.

Rescuers worked for hours with curved knives and eventually freed the whale. What she did next surprised the divers: She swam in what seemed like joyous circles, coming back to each person, one at a time, nudging them gently, in what rescuers assumed was a beautiful gesture of thanks.

May you and those you love be surrounded by people who help you get untangled from whatever is binding you and may you always know the joy of giving and receiving gratitude.



-The Newsletter Newsletter, November 2011

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Youth Director

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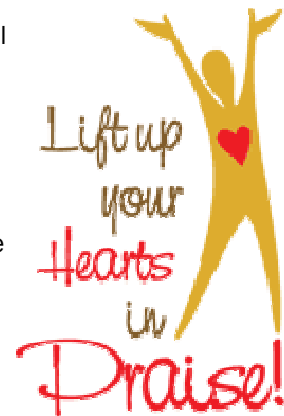
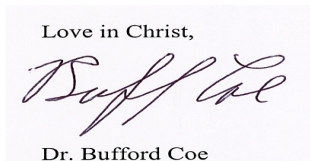
From the Pastor's Pen

Once in a great while, something comes along and unexpectedly captures our minds and hearts. That has been my experience in planning for our special church-wide emphasis called *Extravagant Generosity: The Heart of Giving*. You will not want to miss one of the four Sundays planned, as we explore and celebrate matters of our hearts. This will be a very meaningful time for our congregation.

When you arrive for worship on Sunday, October 30, you will be given a special card called a Heart Card. On this card, write down what you love most about our church. Space is limited, so give it some thought. Maybe it is your Bible study, worship, fellowship times, Sunday school class, or the welcoming spirit of the church; it might be a particular ministry or program.

Write your "love notes" on your Heart Card. We will gather and display Heart Cards at special places throughout the church, so we can share and celebrate what we love about our church.

What do you love most about our church?



The pastor's emergency fund is depleted! This is the funding source the pastor uses to help families in the community with critical emergency needs such as utility payments, rent or mortgage payments, transportation, or household items like diapers or cleaning supplies. Because of the difficult economic times we are experiencing, the demand on the emergency fund has been greater than usual. If you would like to replenish this fund, simply indicate on your check or your offering envelope that you want to designate your contribution to the pastor's emergency fund.



Our 2011 Church Conference will take place on Tuesday, November 1 at 7:00 p.m. The Church Conference is our annual congregational meeting. Our Kalamazoo District Superintendent, the Reverend Neil Davis, will preside. The agenda includes electing officers for 2012, setting pastoral compensation for 2012, reviewing our membership records, and recommending persons as lay speakers. The district superintendent will meet with our Pastor-Parish Relations Committee at 6:30. All professing members of Vicksburg United Methodist Church have the right to speak and to vote on all matters under consideration at the Church Conference.

The Vicksburg Ministry Alliance will sponsor a Community Thanksgiving Service at Chapman Memorial Church of the Nazarene, 7520 East U Avenue, on Sunday, November 20 at 6:00 p.m. Pastor Ed Schmidt of Lakeland Reformed Church will be the preacher at this year's service. The churches that make up the Ministry Alliance are Chapman Memorial Church of the Nazarene, Lakeland Reformed Church, Lord of Life Lutheran Church, Saint Martin's Catholic Church, Vicksburg Assembly of God, and Vicksburg United Methodist Church.



Power of Prayer

I got up early one morning and rushed into the day;
I had so much to accomplish that I didn't have time to pray.

Problems just tumbled about me, and heavier came each task
"Why doesn't God help me?" I wondered. He answered, "You didn't ask."

I wanted to see joy and beauty, but the day toiled on, gray and bleak
I wondered why God didn't show me. He said, "But you didn't seek."

I tried to come into God's presence; I used all my keys at the lock.
God gently and lovingly chided, "My child, you didn't knock."

I woke up early this morning, and paused before entering the day;
I had so much to accomplish that I had to take time to pray.

---Author Unknown



BEFORE you head out the door each morning, BEFORE you go to school or to work, GO to God...

START YOUR DAY WITH PRAYER!

November 18th, Blood Drive

Our church hosts and provides workers and food for the Blood Drives in September and November. Thus, the plea is out again for food and workers for the drive which is **Friday, November 18, 11am-4:45pm**. Unfortunately, we did not make our goal in September, close but not quite, so hopefully this will not happen in November. Please mark your calendar and bring a friend. Enjoy June's great canteen, even if you do not give blood and sit a spell for a visit!

To volunteer for any of the following, please call, June 649-3374, Rexalee 327-6332 or contact the church 649-2343.

____ Set up 9:00 about 45 minutes. This does not involve muscles.

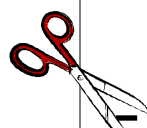
____ Tear down about 45 minutes. This does not involve muscles.

____ Shift #1, 10:45 - 2:00

____ Shift #2, 1:45 - 5:00

Food: 100% juice, cheese, crackers, breads, fruit, veggies, cookies or sweets. Let us know what you would like to donate. _____

Name: _____ Phone: _____



Mission Message

Happy Thanksgiving?

How is it possible that Thanksgiving and the “most wonderful time of the year” is just around the corner?

Have you begun to count your blessings yet? I know that even though the economy is definitely not great yet, we here in the center of the universe are certainly blessed. We have roofs overhead, food on the table, free schools for our children, medical care available, clean water to drink, and even if you aren't thrilled with it, we have a government that is changeable. When you stop to think about it, life here in Vicksburg is really pretty awesome,

Unfortunately, many around the state, nation, and world are not nearly as fortunate. Even though dictatorial governments are falling all over, many of the world's more precious resources, our children, are starving, orphaned, or even forced into slavery or military service. We here at VUMC are trying to make things just a little better for them in many ways. The Haiti Hot Lunch program is still going on. Spare change in the offering plate helps to ensure a hot meal at least once a day for those kids. Operation Christmas Child is gearing up in UMW...see the flyers at the Welcome Center to get involved. Heifer International is again offering really cool alternative Christmas gifts this year. See me to look at the catalogue or go to their website. South County Community Services will again be offering the “Angel Tree” to help locally so that more of our struggling have a good Christmas. Lots of opportunities are out there, if you know of something you think we should be involved in....LET ME KNOW!



On a lighter note, THANK YOU FROM THE BOTTOM OF MY HEART for all the work to make Sing-Out a success again this year. Over \$15,000 was raised bringing our grand total to over \$433,000.00. I have a feeling that Blaine and Terri are grinning big time over those numbers.

Keep up the good work, church family,

God Bless,
Diana

Dear Vicksburg UMC,

I am writing on behalf of Portage Prairie U.M.C. in Niles. I am sorry that we were unable to attend the Sing-Out for UMCOR this year as no one from our church was able to go.

I wish to give you a little history about the money we are sending. We as a church have a “Penny Sunday” on the last Sunday of each month throughout the year in which the children of the church collect “pennies” (this is not just pennies but any currency that anyone wants to give). This collection is put into a savings account and saved from one sing-out to the next. This was started several years ago by a past pastor, Rev. Meg (Peterson) Wilson, and has continued since. I believe this is the first year since we started that we have not been able to attend.

I am proud to send this check from our church for \$1,007.50, which was collected through the year on Penny Sunday. We know it will be put to good use through UMCOR.

Sincerely,
Helen Lichtenbarger
Church Treasurer, Mission Committee Member



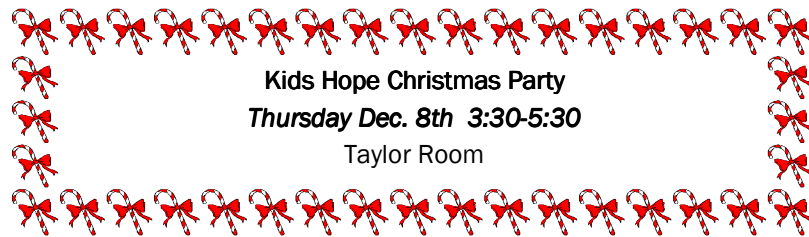
Kids Hope USA



Friday November 18

KIDS HOPE USA NATIONAL DAY OF PRAYER

Please join people across the country as we pray for this ministry.



A Kids Hope story...

Every week Sarah's teacher asked me the same question after our Kids Hope session. "How was your hour with Sarah today?"

"I hear Sarah giggling, laughing and saying funny things" I said the last few weeks.

"That surprises me", said the teacher. "You see, Sarah cries a lot during school because of her unhappy home life."

One child. One hour. One church. One school.

The story above is true. Like many of the stories I share in the newsletter it is related by a mentor in another school system. Sometimes I share incidents and comments from our own VUMC volunteers, but out of respect for students we work with it seems best to highlight an experience that is not so close to home. The thing is, all of the stories could have happened in our own program. The funny ones, the happy ones and the sad ones like the one above. Can you imagine how raw that little girl's pain must be to just sit and cry in front of her peers and teacher? And it wasn't a bag of candy, a fistful of money, or new toys that gave her relief. It was one person from a church that came to see her for one hour a week. That hour gave her joy and let her know that she was important. It gave her something good to remember and it gave her something good to look forward to. There are more children like this in our community than you may think. Sometimes they cry, but sometimes they are silent, or angry, or fearful. Whatever the circumstances are that brought them to our program, they all have one thing in common. They are very very glad to have someone care enough to show up week after week to spend an hour with them. We need more mentors this fall to meet with children like Sarah at Tobey Elementary. Would you join us in loving these students and making a positive difference in their lives? Do you think that being a Kids Hope volunteer is something that God is moving you to do? Would you like to sit down one-on-one and learn more about this program? Please contact the church office or call me personally and I will be glad to talk with you.

Do something real.

Barb Bladt
Kids Hope USA Director
649.2275

Sunday School Happenings

We are off and running having an awesome fall. Our Preschool and Kindergarten/First grade classes have joined together which makes for more teachable moments with a few more kids in the groups. That gives us 3 teachers ~ so they can rotate and also affords us more substitutes.

The kids did an awesome job when they sang during the traditional service October 9th. They have been working hard on new songs to sing with a stewardship theme for November as we will be in the middle of the stewardship campaign. We have talked and will continue to talk about what being a good steward can look like both ecology wise and money wise.

This year's Youth Christmas Program has arrived! *"The Not-So-Silent Night"*. We will have parts for middle school age students through preschool. We will hold our rehearsals during SS singing time as in the past two years beginning the week before Thanksgiving. Our date of presentation will be the second Sunday of December for both services.

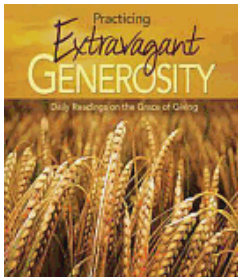
Blessings, Lisa



A Note from Finance

2 Corinthians 9:10 Now He who supplies seed to the sower and bread for the food will supply and multiply your seed for sowing and increase the harvest of your righteousness.

Thanks to all who helped and came to the Church's birthday dinner. We raised a grand total of \$1657 for the building fund loan. We could not have done it without you! What a great church family we have.



We are starting a New Stewardship Campaign called "Extravagant Generosity". Please pray for the Lord's guidance on what He would like you to do.

We have only paid 3 out of 12 Ministry Shares for the year 2011. This is our tithe that helps support the Conference and all of our excellent ministries. If you have a good fund raising idea and can help please contact the Church Staff. Or if you would like just to give to ministry shares, mark the amount on an envelope. It is very important to pay **All** our ministry shares and it will take fund raising projects to do this.

We do have a few ongoing fund raisers. One is the recycling project. Check out the Church's web site to see what can be recycled. A bin is located by the Missions table and if you have something that is too big to fit in the recycling bin, contact Trish VanTichelt. Another is ScripCents. There are over 100 gift cards that are usable NATIONWIDE available for you to choose from! An order form is included with this newsletter. Orders are placed every 1st and 15th of the month. Order cards now for those Holiday gifts you have to mail or for the people you don't know what to give!! Proceeds that we get back from the ScripCents go towards our MINISTRY SHARES!



To help the Building Fund, you can make a donation of \$50 or more to design a tile that will share your Love of God, an event, or a loved one. Our wall is slowly growing. We will paint only ONE MORE BATCH before Christmas, so if you'd like to present a tile for a Christmas present, get your orders in BY Wednesday, December 14th!! Order forms are located in the Narthex and on the Welcome Center AND on our website www.vicksburgumc.org.

As we get into winter weather why not sign up for electronic giving? It is a great way to make sure the Church gets your tithe, even if you cannot make it. *Please continue to give FAITHFULLY! It is very important for OUR CHURCH to continue to be an example of Christ's love for the community.*

God Bless: The Finance Committee

Youth Ministries

November looks to be an extremely busy month for the VUMC Youth Ministry. November 5th we are going to play paintball at Hole In The Wall Paintball in Bangor. This should be a great time for all involved. We are still looking for parents and adults to chaperone, so if you are interested please let us know! November 25th, the day after Thanksgiving we are heading over to WMU to see the Broncos take on the Akron Zips. Space is still available for this event.

If you have any questions about what's going on in your VUMC Youth Ministry please feel free to give Hank a call 269-475-5118 or email henrystamm3rd@yahoo.com. Here's a look at what's to come:

HELIX

Our Middle School ministry will be undertaking a series called Dangerous People. Jesus promises to give us a gift that surpasses anything we could ever dream or imagine. He promises to give us abundant life. He promises to give us eternal life. However, Jesus does not promise that our lives would always be easy or free of risks and dangers. A life wholly devoted to God is dangerous. A fully committed follower of Jesus must sometimes go against the ideas of the crowds and culture. This lifestyle isn't always popular or easy, but Jesus promises that ultimately it's the best lifestyle to pursue.

Middle School students face the issues of peer pressure and popularity on a daily basis. Social status is increasingly becoming more and more important in their lives. They usually know what's right and often desire to do it, but sometimes making that decision can be really scary. These three lessons introduce students to people who wholly gave their lives to God. These biblical characters faced tough, potentially dangerous situations, but in the end, they all experienced lives better than they ever could have imagined because of the amazing power of God.

WEEK 1: Daniel—Stand Up Against Peer Pressure (Daniel 1:3-21)

WEEK 2: Esther—Stand Up Against Injustice (Esther 4)

WEEK 3: Peter—Take a Step of Faith (Matthew 14:22-33)

SERIES OBJECTIVES: WHAT-God wants to give us a life that is better than we could ever imagine, but sometimes our steps of obedience will lead us into unpopular or risky areas **WHY**-When we live our lives wholly devoted to God, we can experience the amazing will of God and make a difference in the world around us. **HOW**-Your students will be encouraged to take steps of faith in their own lives that will bring them closer to God and reveal God's power to the world around them.

RAW

Our High School age ministry is talking about sex. It's one of the most challenging but important topics in youth ministry. Sometimes it's easy to just tell kids they should wait until marriage, without fully explaining the biblical foundation for sexual purity. God wants us to experience great sex—once we've made the marriage commitment. This three-week series, titled God's Plan for Great Sex, explores the foundation for the intimate relationship between a husband and a wife, the dangers of going outside the boundaries God has established, and the wonderful grace and forgiveness we can experience if we cross God's boundaries. This may not be the easiest topic for some leaders to facilitate, but it's definitely one that will interest your students—and it's an important one for explaining God's plan for our lives.

WEEK 1: Why God Created Sex (Genesis 2:18-25)

WEEK 2: The Risky Side of Sex (1 Corinthians 6:12-20)

WEEK 3: Forgiveness From God (Colossians 2:13-15)

SERIES OBJECTIVES: WHAT-God created sex as something to be enjoyed in a marriage relationship, but there are consequences if we choose to cross the boundaries God has established. Even then, he is always willing to respond when we seek forgiveness. **WHY**-Our students are going through a crucial stage of development and their often uninformed sexual decisions may impact them for the rest of their lives. **HOW**-Encourage teenagers to understand and pursue God's plan for their sex lives, and remind them of God's plan for forgiveness if they have been involved in some aspect of sexual immorality.

November United Methodist Women

- | | |
|-----------------|--|
| Nov. 3, 12:30pm | United Methodist Women—2011 Officer Installation |
| | District “Special Friend” & World Thank Offering |
| Nov. 4 | Church Women United—World Community Day |
| Nov. 10, 9am | Merry Martha Circle |
| Nov. 13 | Priscilla Circle Bake Sale |
| Nov. 17, 9:30am | Susanna Wesley Circle—Check Shoeboxes |
| Nov. 17, 7pm | Priscilla Circle at the home of Marilyn Schutter |
| Nov. 28, 9am | Susanna Wesley Christmas Shopping |



UMW 2011 PLEDGES:

It is not too late to pay your pledge to UMW for 2011. If you are not sure where you stand on your pledge. Call Penny Sult 649-1488. Thanks.



Please don't forget to fill your shoeboxes for our annual shoebox ministry. Anyone can fill a shoebox, so join in the fun for a good mission! More info and forms available at the welcome center.

All shoeboxes are due to the church by November 15th.

Questions? Please search out a member of Susanna Wesley circle.

Come and enjoy the annual UMW Christmas program...



Featuring the Prime Time Players

Wednesday, December 7 at 7pm

Lots of good music! Bring your friends!



Hey Readers,

It is NOT too early to begin reading for the 2011-2012 UMW Reading Program Year. Things have changed a little this year. To complete Level 1, you must now read just one book from each of the FIVE categories. New books should be arriving in the next couple weeks. If there is enough interest, we will consider purchasing some of the new material in e-reader format. Please see me if this is important to you.

Thanks, and happy reading, Diana



A look ahead: Susanna Wesley circle is searching for dollhouses, old and new, for the all-daughter banquet program. Please contact Tamara Young at 720-4173 or tamaray-oung1@comcast.net if you have one we may borrow in May.

VUMC Holiday Happenings....



Hanging of the Greens

Join us... Sunday, November 20, 12:30-2:30



The Annual Church Bazaar is coming Saturday December 3, 9 to 3.
It's a good fundraiser for the church and it helps you do your holiday shopping!
We will also be open on Sunday morn - see you there!



VUMC's 5th Annual Vendor Blender is around the corner!

WANTED: MORE VENDORS!

We are looking for crafters or vendors. We are expanding! The past 4 years we've had over 20 Vendors and almost 200 people walking through. We've raised around \$1300 every year for our Ministry Shares.



If you have a craft or sell something unique or know someone else who might be interested contact Trish VanTichelt 649-2343 ext. 103 or tvantich@vicksburgumc.org.

The event will be held on Friday, December 9th, 5:00-9:00pm.

So mark your calendars for some SUPER seasonal sales and unique gift ideas that you can't get anywhere else. PLUS our famous Cinnamon Rolls will be available, with all proceeds from Vendor's rental and food sales going towards our 2011 Ministry Shares.



SAVE SATURDAY - DECEMBER 10th for the Annual Progressive Dinner - our houses are all set and tickets are now on sale for \$7.50 per person.

- Appetizers at the Goeckers*
- Salads at the Zangs*
- Main Course at the Church*
- Desserts at the Walkers*

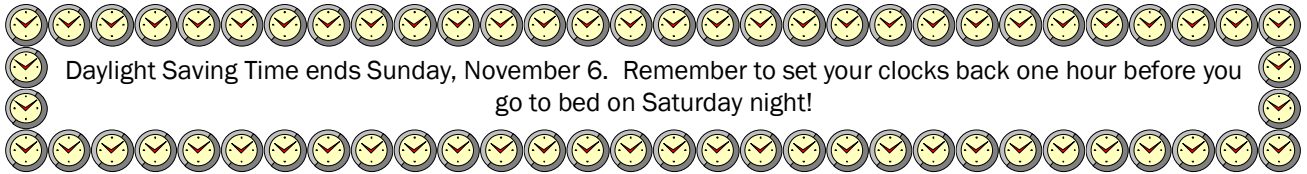
Call Betsy Myers at 679-4619 to make reservations. Reminder that space is limited so get your tickets **NOW!!!!** It's lots of fun, fellowship and great food.

Calling all cookie fans!

It will soon be that time of year again when holiday cookies are at a premium. Nellie Pierson is looking for all good cookie bakers **AND** all cookie eaters! See Nellie to participate in the Annual Cookie Tin Sale. Coming December 11th. All proceeds to help pay Ministry Shares (of which only 3 paid so far). Bring reusable tins to Nellie at the church or let her know if you are willing to help supply the cookies :)



Announcements



Remember when you were just starting a family, or just out of college, or had just moved to a new area and were looking for a warm and welcoming church?? Do you remember that first person who came to you at VUMC and welcomed you in for Worship? *You stayed!!*

Our Welcome Center is still in need of volunteers to spread that warm feeling. Sign up at the Welcome Center TODAY to be there during a Sunday morning and help welcome in new faces the way you were welcomed in!

Mail Bag

Dear VUMC Family,

Thanks so much for the scholarship. I'm so thankful for such a loving and giving church.

~Joel Smola

I wanted to say thank you to all those who made the scholarship fund possible. I am currently attending Oakland University with a Dance major and a Spanish minor. The generous funds and support from all of the amazing people at VUMC have helped to make my education possible. Whether I was purchasing gas or books or food or any number of other essential things, I thought of your gift to me. God has used you to make my dreams possible. So, thank you.

Sincerely,
Matt Wagner

Dear Church Family,

Thank you for your excellent support! I am so grateful for all your prayers and advice. Despite being in an urban neighborhood, I feel so safe while I'm with God.

I've learned so much about God already here in Philly. People worship so differently here, and I get to see characteristics of God that aren't as apparent at home. I also get the privilege of sharing my faith with my church family here, so they can also see different characteristics of God within my roommates and me.

Thank you for teaching me about how to love and for inspiring me to live my life for Jesus. You guys are the BEST!

Much Love, Katie H.

Dear VUMC, Once again, thank you so much for your continued support and generosity by granting me a 2011 VUMC college scholarship! These last few years have been fantastic both academically and spiritually. Thanks so much!

~Alan Smola

Church Family,

Thanks for the lovely flowers, many cards, thoughts and prayers during my mom's long illness. Shee passed on peacefully at 89 years of age.

Jolene, Ken, Nick & Stacy Cron

November Birthdays

- | | |
|---|--|
| 11/1 Susan Noble | 11/27 Eloise Emmert, Brian Pierson, Doug DeLong |
| 11/2 Nancy Harper, Jeffery Kudary, Michael Paylor | 11/28 Jack Buckallew, Joseph Gruber, Gwen Breece |
| 11/4 Megan Porter | 11/30 Lloyd Appell |
| 11/6 Suzanne Epley, Larry Kohler | |
| 11/7 Jennifer Polsinelli, Ross Vliek | |
| 11/8 Christopher Emmert | |
| 11/10 Molly Young, Scarlett Hosner | |
| 11/11 Margaret Haines | |
| 11/12 Patrick Hillenbrand | |
| 11/13 Janet Noel | |
| 11/14 Nila Nichols, Holly Fryling | |
| 11/16 Rick Bladt, JoDee Nelson | |
| 11/17 Joe Hayes Sr. | |
| 11/20 Mary Stenstrom | |
| 11/21 Donald Lohman, Chrissy Manuszak | |
| 11/22 Delano Forsythe, Fred Nelson, Caryn Zonyk | |
| 11/24 Brock Rance | |
| 11/25 Marilyn Schutter | |
| 11/26 Zane Breece, Henry Stamm | |



November Anniversaries



- | | |
|------------------------------------|-------------------|
| 11/2 Betty & Joseph Gruber | |
| 11/2 Amy & Mike Slancik | 20 Years!! |
| 11/4 Diana & Charles Girolami | |
| 11/6 Flossie & Elton Lang | |
| 11/7 Dawn & Paul Jones | |
| 11/12 Lois & Chuck Myers | |
| 11/14 Kathy & Stephen Phillips | |
| 11/14 Kim & Steven Oswald | |
| 11/19 Holly & Steve Fryling | |



Vicksburg United Methodist Church

Return Service Requested

217 S Main St
Vicksburg MI 49097
Phone: 269-649-2343
Fax: 269-649-2538
E-mail: reception@vicksburgumc.org

PRSR STD
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
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Sunday Worship:
8:50am Contemporary Service
10:00am Sunday School for all ages
11:10am Traditional Service

Alive in Christ, and it Shows!

WE'RE ON THE WEB!

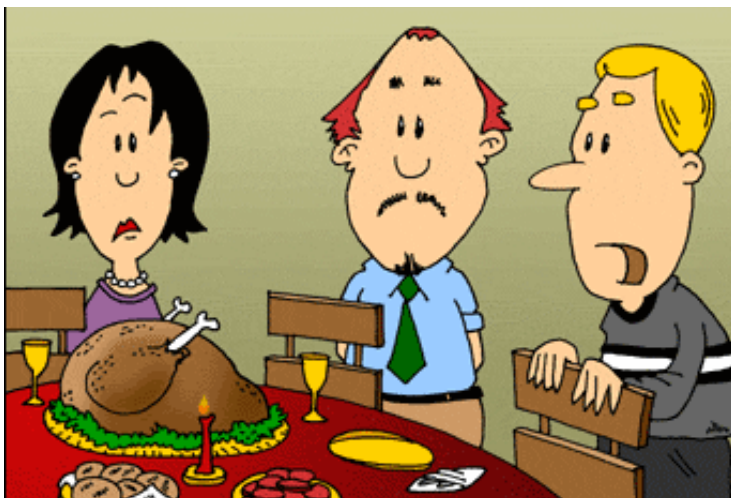
WWW.VICKSBURGUMC.ORG

The Visitor

Volume 18, Issue 11

November 2011

Cartoon Corner



(See Psalm 100)

11-28-11

HAS IT ALREADY BEEN A YEAR SINCE WE WERE THANKFUL?

Bible Quiz

Some churches observe National Bible Week in November. According to 2 Timothy, which of the following are ways that God intends for us to use Scripture?

- A. Teaching and training in righteousness
- B. Equipping God's children for good works
- C. Reproof and correction
- D. All of the above



Answer: D (See 16-17)