



### In This Issue

- 2** What Is God Doing?
- 3** Compassion Corner/  
Sympathies/Library Lines
- 4** Brethren Missions
- 5** Kids Against Hunger/  
Bible Reading Plan
- 6** "You Said ..."
- 7** Birthdays
- 8** Looking Ahead
- 9** Gratitude
- 10-11** Children's Ministry
- 12-13** Youth Ministry



## Empowered Servant Leadership

*In unity, we will serve others by assessing and using our Spiritual gifts in various ministry opportunities.*

### Go M.A.D. (Make A Difference)

**Want to make a blessing IMPACT?**

*Here are some ideas:*

**DONATE:** Fill the Van; Soles 4Souls;

**CREATE:** Crocheted/Knitted Scarves

**COOK/SERVE:** Community Suppers  
on Dec 13<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup>

**DELIVER:** REACH Christmas Boxes  
on Saturday, December 17

**GIVE:** Peru Missions Team  
(*Esperanza*); Kids Against Hunger

**SHOP:** Advent Conspiracy or  
"Advent in Action"

December 18 – Children's Christmas Program

6:30 p.m. "Live From Bethlehem"

December 24 – Christmas Eve Services

*An evening of Carols, Candles, and Communion*

6:30 p.m. and 9:00 p.m.

December 25 – Christmas Day at First Brethren

10:30 Service ONLY

*There will be No SS classes or LOFT*

January 1 – A New Year at First Brethren

*Usual Sunday Schedule*

8:00, 9:15, and 10:30 services



# What is God doing?"

By Pastor Kurt Stout

There is a part of the Thanksgiving story many people don't know or at least rarely talk about. Perhaps you've heard of Squanto, the Native American guide for the pilgrims, but do you know how he came to that position? Do you know who taught him English and how God orchestrated his life for this task?

But here is what many bios don't include. Sold into slavery to a financier in England, Squanto mastered the English language and was eventually permitted by his master to return to his homeland. Squanto's freedom lasted only a few weeks. He was recaptured and placed on a British merchant ship. This time when Squanto was trafficked to Spain, his freedom was bought by some monks. From them he learned of God's love and he eventually accepted their Christian faith. They assisted him to obtain transport to London where he secured passage back to the new world.

God used the horrific years of slavery, language learning, and disappointment to preserve his life from the devastating disease that plagued his people. God used his grasp of English to be a bridge between the Native Americans and the newcomers, seeking religious and political freedom. Without those difficult years, Squanto was not positioned to serve God in this unique and wonderful way.

*Without those difficult years, Squanto was not positioned to serve God in a unique and wonderful way.*

*God is working in your situation, even when it appears He is absent.*

*Our God is accomplishing something good in your story too.*

Sometimes life is so challenging and is seemingly headed in a direction completely opposite of what we had hoped. Sometimes our timetable is a lot slower than God's. Sometimes we wonder even if God sees or cares about our struggle, pain, displacement, or concern. We read verses like "In everything give thanks" (1

Thess 5:18) or "in all things God works for the good" (Romans 8:28), but still find it hard to actually believe it or see how God is going to use this segment of our journey for any kind of good. Take heart, my friend. God is weaving something you cannot see.

He is working in your situation, even when it appears He is absent. He reminds us, "As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways and My thoughts than your thoughts (Isaiah 55:9).

Squanto is just one of many in history who only later saw how God turned their circumstances into something remarkable. Remember Joseph's words to his brothers who had sold him into Egyptian slavery, "You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now

being done, the saving of many lives" (Genesis 50:20). Our God is accomplishing something good in your story too. Like Squanto and Joseph you may not see it now, but God is there and He will accomplish something remarkable in and with you.

**Bonus:** Take some time to listen to the lyrics of "Blessings" by Laura Story.



## BLOOD PRESSURE SCREENINGS

will be on the third Sunday this month (Dec. 18<sup>th</sup>) in Pastor Ron's office. They will be held after first and second services. Blood pressure cuffs are available for loan/check-out in the church office.

## THANK YOU!

*I would like to thank those of you who graciously volunteered your time to transport me to treatments in Fort Wayne, and to Suzanna Hicks, for coordinating these efforts. Your generosity and faithfulness has been a blessing to me. Thank you so much.*

*Jim Baker*

*A big thank you to Rita and Craig Haecker, Chris York, and Earl Grindle for their time and leadership with the Harvest Dinner. Thank you to the many others who volunteered their time.*

*Ministry of Nurture*

*Dear Church Friends,  
Thank you so much for the Thanksgiving feast you provided us. It was absolutely delicious and much appreciated! And a special thanks for all the thoughts and prayers for Penny's health. Our gratitude goes beyond words.*

*Sincerely, Mitch & Penny Schutz*



## Our Deepest Sympathy

*Our deepest sympathies to the family of Ralph Reiken, who passed away Wednesday, November 23<sup>rd</sup>. Services were held on Sunday, November, 27<sup>th</sup> at Timbercrest.*

*Our deepest sympathies to the family of Mamie Keim, who passed away Thursday, November 24<sup>th</sup>. Services were held on Wednesday, November 30<sup>th</sup> at McKee Mortuary.*



## Library Lines

Curl up with a cup of hot coffee or cocoa and enjoy something from the church library!

We have lots of great Christmas-focused items and other resources to help you grow this winter in our "Check Us Out" section. Visit the new Orphan ministry area for items and ideas on how you can help in this ministry.

## December Compassion Corner

### Sunday, December 4<sup>th</sup>

This Christmas, give a meaningful gift created by someone who was able to earn money to rise out of poverty or sustain themselves after a life of slavery.

Available are beautiful hand-made jewelry, bags, scarves, and much more. As usual fair trade chocolate and coffee will be available.

Come to the Market of Blessing in the Fellowship Hall on December 4<sup>th</sup> after each service.

## Prayer Cards in Pews

The green prayer cards in the pews are available for any prayer request. A group meets to pray each Wednesday at 6:30 a.m. You may place the card in the offering plate or leave it in the church office.

## Brethren Missions

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### Fill The Van

The Women's Missionary Society would like to thank everyone who helped fill the van with food and household items. Hopefully, you saw the van in the parking lot on Sunday, Nov. 27. We want to fill it up before delivering to CrossBars Ministry the first week in December. Your last chance to donate items will be Sunday, December 4<sup>th</sup>. All the donations will be divided with half staying here in the North Manchester community.

CrossBars Ministry is located in Mishawaka where there is much unemployment. This ministry, which is overseen by Larry and Cindy Hanson, consists of a thrift store and a food pantry. They rely solely on donations from churches and individuals. They often find their shelves bare of essential food items and things that most of us take for granted, but are much needed by the people that come to CrossBars seeking help – like toilet paper and dish soap.

If you haven't given, please consider it. If you have already given, maybe you could go the second mile and give again. May we truly be a blessing to people in need this holiday season, and may they know that God loves them because of us.

### Esperanza 2012

We will be taking a follow-up mission trip to Puerto Maldonado during the summer 2012. The team leaving on Dec. 26 will be gathering information about projects that we will continue next summer. Are you interested in serving the Lord and the Brethren Church in an international setting? This may be the mission for you.

Tentative dates for the trip are June 29 through July 10. We are hoping to take people who can do construction/painting, as we'd like to finish the second house at the orphanage. We are looking for people who can sew that will continue the work with the unwed mothers and the sewing co-op. We will be doing children's ministry with the orphans and school children in Puerto Maldonado and Lima. We are excited about all the different areas of ministry this team will do.

On Sunday, Dec. 18 at 5:00 p.m. we will have an informational meeting in the church library. If you are interested, please plan to attend before the children's Christmas program. We will provide more details at that time. If you cannot attend this meeting, but would like that information, please contact Linda Immel, 982-8238, or Sherry Searles, 260-901-9564. Prayerfully consider how God might use you abroad next summer.

## Kids Against Hunger

Kids from 1<sup>st</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grades have begun to raise money for the Kids Against Hunger event coming on January 14<sup>th</sup>. Each student received some fundraising materials on Sunday at church. These funds will be due on or before December 25<sup>th</sup>. Our goal is to pack 20,000 meals for starving children. Each meal costs 25 cents, which means we need to raise \$5,000. Please consider giving towards this cause. Make checks payable to First Brethren Church and write Kids Against Hunger in the memo.

Please be sure your child gets a chance to help package these meals on January 14<sup>th</sup>. There will be sign-up sheets posted starting on Sunday outside the church office. Children 5 years old and above may participate. Children between ages 5 and 10 will need an adult to sign up with them. There will also be a need for a few adults to help set up and tear down. See the sign-up sheet for details. We will be taking the first 100 volunteers. Choose a shift from 9:00-11:00 a.m. OR from 12:00-2:00 p.m.

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## Family Skate Night

All families with kids in 1<sup>st</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> grade are invited to skate night at the Huntington West Park Skate Center (at highways 9 and 24 intersection) on Wednesday, December 28<sup>th</sup> from 6:30-8:00 p.m. Cost is \$1 or \$3 with skate rental.

## First Brethren Church Learn From Me ... Matt. 11:29

### Reading Plan Bookmark 2011

#### December

5  15-16

6  17-18

7  19-20

8  21

9  22

#### Philippians

12  1-2

13  3-4

#### II Kings

14  1-2

15  3-4

16  5-6

19  7-8

20  9-10

21  11-12

22  13-14

23  15-16

26  17-18

27  19-20

28  21-22

29  23-24

30  25

## “You said...”

Children are not bashful about reminding parents of promises they have made to the children. How many times have parents heard the words, “You said...” when a child senses even a hint that a parent may not carry through with a promise. As children of God, it is helpful for us to remind our heavenly Father of promises He has made to us. For example, in the Sermon on the Mount Jesus says, *“Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it will be opened.”* (Matthew 7:7-8) James 1:5 says, *If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him.* Psalm 55:22 says, *Cast your cares on the LORD and He will sustain you; He will never let the righteous fall.* (NIV)

God's Word has many promises like these, and the reason God gives them to us (as well as everything else in the Bible) is to encourage us and help us be strong in faith. Romans 15:4 says, *For everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that through endurance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.* When a child reminds a parent of a promise, the child is demonstrating faith that the parent will carry through. If the child didn't have that hope, he wouldn't bother with the reminder. In the same way, it honors God when we remind Him of His promises because it shows that we believe He'll follow through. But if we give up in despair, it shows that we don't really think He'll do what He says. God gives specific encouragement to remind Him in Isaiah 62:6-7, *You who remind the LORD, take no rest for yourselves; and give Him no rest until He establishes and makes Jerusalem a praise in the earth.* (NAS)

When we remind God of His promises, we're also reminding ourselves, and that has the effect of providing fertile soil in which faith can grow. In one of the sessions in the *When God's People Pray* DVD study, Jim Cymbala described a time when he was faced with a seemingly insurmountable problem. He began to pray and say such biblical things to God as “Nothing is impossible for you,” and as he did so, he said that faith began to blossom, and God put in his mind a thought that led to a solution. Sometimes when I get tired and don't see how I can do what's before me, I say to myself, “He gives strength to the weary,” from Isaiah 40:29. That helps me focus on God and His promise rather than my fatigue, and God gives me the strength that I need.

As God's children, let's not be bashful about saying to God, “You said...” It pleases Him, and helps us.

Ron Burns, Discipleship Coordinator

(All Scripture references are ESV unless otherwise noted)

# December

## *Birthdays*

- 2 – Stephanie Ayres  
Andy Floor
- 3 – Jenny Moore
- 4 – Larry Carver  
Laurie Walters
- 5 – Jackie Ihnen
- 6 – Scott Stan  
Connor McLaughlin  
Ethan Cummins
- 7 – Mark McKee  
Cindy Bucher
- 8 – Phyllis Montel
- 9 – Timothy McIntyre  
Evelyn Garman
- 10 – Addie Haecker
- 11 – Joanna Eberly  
Mary Nichols
- 12 – Andy Ayres  
Todd Speicher  
Breckon Floor
- 13 – Darson Bradley  
Tim Bordeaux  
Nelda Witmer
- 14 – Tona Riggs  
Jackson Anguilm
- 16 – Ryan Niccum
- 17 – Sydney McLaughlin  
Kiera Stacy
- 18 – Susan Bushong
- 20 – Joyce Frantz  
Fatima Hofer
- 21 – Karen Eiler  
Ethan Davis
- 22 – Robin Johnson  
Katelyn Haegert
- 23 – Quentin Moore
- 25 – Jesus' Birthday  
Rachel Chapman

- 26 – Mark Hill
- 27 – Sherry Searles  
Colin Cummins
- 29 – Andy Eberly
- 30 – Mark Louvier
- 31 – Reilly Ruppert

## *Anniversaries*

- 10 – Rick & Dee Grindle '77
- 17 – Warren & Helen Garner '49
- 23 – Fred & Debbie Thompson '70  
Dennis & Jodi Egner '89
- 26 – Bob & Robin Shepherd '57
- 27 – Ralph & Joyce McBride '54
- 28 – Joe & Anne Frantz '74  
Carl & Toni Willmert '79
- 29 – Bud & Linda Lindzy '90
- 31 – Glenn & Tona Riggs '76

# LOOKING AHEAD JANUARY

**Kids Against Hunger**  
Saturday, January 14th

**Ministry Retreat**  
All New & Returning Members



**Love & Respect  
Conference**  
Friday & Saturday, February 10<sup>th</sup> & 11<sup>th</sup>

## *Orange Core Value #4: **GRATITUDE***

Gratitude is rooted in Contentment.

So how can we and our families be more content?

Avoid Advertising. Although this is very difficult to do in a media oriented society, which bombards us with thousands of ads and images every day, there are some ways to avoid advertising.

- Throw away the catalogs without thumbing through them
  - Watch less TV
  - Surf the internet less
- Stay away from stores
- Give presence rather than presents

## Gratitude

Gratitude is the expression of an emotion in response to a received or promised benefit. As children, most of us were taught to say “please” and “thank you” in appreciation for something received. But deep, heartfelt thanks come only from those shown kindness amidst sickness, struggle, loss and hardship. When my father died in March, I was so appreciative of relatives who attended his funeral. One cousin traveled close to 600 miles to be there. I was empty and she brought comfort along with her tears.

At times I impress upon clients the normalcy of being in need at times, whether that is financially, emotionally, physically, psychologically or spiritually. Though our America culture breeds independence and self-sufficiency, God describes our human condition differently. I Cor. 12:7 reminds us that God gifts us spiritually “for the common good.” He designed us to live in the Body of Christ and depend upon one another. So the next time you find yourself hurting; say yes to those who are offering to come alongside you. Get in touch with genuine gratitude.

The Holy Bible, NIV; Wikipedia



## Christmas Cookie & Gift Exchange Party

*ALL Ladies, Friends and Girls  
of the First Brethren Church*

**Monday, December 5<sup>th</sup>**

**7:00 – 8:30 p.m.**

**Fellowship Hall**

Bring 3 dozen cookies and a  
\$1.00 gift to exchange.

Enjoy an evening of fellowship and fun, special musical program and caroling, exchanges and refreshments.

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## K.F.C. Pizza Party & Skating

Wednesday, December 28<sup>th</sup> the K.F.C. kids will meet at the church @ 5:00 p.m. and travel to Huntington for pizza, then roller skating at West Park Skate Center from 6:30-8:00 p.m. Families are invited to join us to skate. Cost is \$1 if you bring your own skates or \$3 with skate rental. Please bring no more than \$5 for extra snacks and games.

*Orange Core Value #5:*

### **GRATITUDE**

*Interact with people less fortunate than you.*


- As a family volunteer at a community supper
- Discuss a family mission trip to KY next summer
- Deliver REACH Christmas boxes
- When you go to the city carry granola bars and water/juice with you to hand to the homeless
- Worship at a low income ministry
- Buy fewer gifts for your kids & together buy gifts for a family in need.





## Children's Ministry



**Garden 0-2's** Parents please make sure your child's bag, bottle, cup, etc... has your child's name on it before you leave the Garden. There are stickers available in the Garden if these items are not marked before you get there – Thanks!

 **Garden 3-K's** each week we will be learning about a different part of the Christmas story. Parents remember to look at the back of the take-home papers to help reinforce the ideas we are learning on Sunday.

 **Elementary Sunday School** Our elementary Sunday School reads the story from the Bible each week and works on how to apply the story to our everyday life with age appropriate activities. This Christmas, our Kindergarteners – 6<sup>th</sup> grade Sunday School classes will each pick gifts from Samaritan's Purse to purchase using our Sunday School Offering.

 **Loft (1<sup>st</sup> –6<sup>th</sup> graders)** This month in LOFT we will unwrap the present of God's greatest gift- Jesus! We'll focus on how we can welcome Jesus into our lives and let Him live in us. Our stories will include John the Baptist preparing the way for Jesus, God dwelling with us, and faithful people thanking God for Jesus. LOFT offerings this month will go toward the Esperanza trip to help the families in Peru. Join us each week as we celebrate Christmas!



KFC Kids for Christ! Our 5<sup>th</sup> & 6<sup>th</sup> graders will meet for pizza and roller skating over Christmas Vacation. Watch for the details.



Club De Niños Continues to meet every Wednesday for "Sunday School" biblical crafts and games. We continue to learn about and to love God more.



Camp Shishewana – SNOW CAMP is the next planned activity at the camp for ages 3<sup>rd</sup> –6<sup>th</sup> grade. Theme: Deeply Rooted: \$85.00/person January 20–22<sup>nd</sup>, 2012



Children's Christmas Program Join us Sunday, December 18<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 p.m. for a special Christmas



program featuring age 2–6<sup>th</sup> grade. All kids are asked to be in their classrooms by 6:15 p.m. If you are willing to help bake cookies to share afterward, please sign up by the LOFT or Garden areas. Invite your family and friends to this special night to celebrate Jesus together!

# FB C YOUTH MINISTRY

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## WEEKLY SCHEDULE

**CHAOS** (7<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> Grades) meets on Wednesday nights from 6:15-7:45pm at *La Casa*.

**Ekklesia** (9<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> Grades) meets on Sunday nights from 6 to 8pm at *Town Life Center*.

**Orange Parents** (Parents of Teens) meets on Sunday mornings at 10:30 east end of the Fellowship Hall.

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## Dessert Club

High School Students are invited to the home of Ruth and Andy Ayres one night a week (typically Wed or Thurs) for Dessert and Conversation. Check Facebook or give Ruth your cell number if you want to know when these are.

## and Dessert Club JV

Once a month on a Friday night, Junior High Students are invited to Bill and Carol Collett's for Desserts and Games.

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## Ugly Sweater Christmas Parties

**Ekklesia:** Sunday, Dec 11, 6:00-8:00pm

**CHAOS:** Wednesday, Dec 14, 6:15-7:45pm

Wear the ugliest sweater you own, bring a snack and a 'White Elephant' gift to giveaway...  
*but don't spend more than \$4.27 on it!*

## **Ekklesia (HS Youth Group)**

**We will not meet on December 18 or 25.**

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\*Students, if you are sticking around Manchester during Christmas Break, join us on **Wednesday, December 28 at the Town Life Center** from 7 to 10pm for finger rockets, pizza, games, and more games. You can even show off the new Christmas sweater you just got!

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## **2012 Summer Mission Trip**

We are going back to Sosua, Dominican Republic. Trip dates are June 21-28, 2012. Cost per person is \$1400. Applications, which include requirements to be upheld, are available outside Pastor Tim's office. We are planning on taking a group of 15-20 students and adults. We are purchasing our tickets mid-January, so the deadline to commit is the end of the year.

If you want to serve on this trip or just want to know more, there will be a brief informational meeting to discuss FAQ's and fundraising on Sunday, December 11 at 2 p.m. in the church library.

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## **The King's Story**

An imaginative retelling of the Story of God.

Find your place in God's Story. Go to <http://friendedbychrist.com/the-kings-story/> to begin the journey.

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