

The Westkirk Presbyterian Church

Shepherd

Volume 21 No. 12 December 2006

The Advent Event

ESV Luke 2:6 And while they were there, the time came for her to give birth.

That first Christmas morning ushered in the first advent – the birth of God’s Son, Jesus Christ. As special as they had been told this event would be, did they really know the significance? Did they realize that the world was changed that day? The changes? The celebration of the birth of Jesus still brings change. Change in routine, change in sentimentality, change in décor, change in attitude. Christmas in America is wild – and not just with anticipation of presents under the tree. As I was perusing the ‘calendar’ link on our website, www.westkirk.net, I was reminded of how much change we’ve experienced together. Wow! There is a lot of life here at Westkirk Presbyterian Church! Of course as Thanksgiving rolls into December, we too, are submersed in Christmas. As a church, we want to help you make the holidays more memorable, but not more busy. Between shopping, family and work parties, there is enough of that on its own!

Last year, our family enjoyed something new and the boys can’t wait to do it again. It’s called ‘The Advent Event’ and it is an easy, fun and enriching family project that helps focus our attention on the event of the birth of Jesus while discovering the big picture of God’s plan throughout the entire Bible. It’s like a family devotional for December, but not only is there the passage to read and the story to tell, the entire family learns a new motion and sound to go along with the significant event in Biblical history that is emphasized each day. Coloring and cutting out the visual reminder is like a little project to go along with it. I’ll never forget watching Nathanael in his highchair, doing the motions and saying something that resembled the sound or phrase of the day! Hilarious! There were days, of course, when we missed and had to catch up, but the time together was a treasure and we’re looking forward to doing it again.

That was our advent event last year. What has become your family tradition to celebrate the real story of Christmas? How do you handle the change that comes with the season? What do you do to reconnect with one another and your family during the holidays? Don’t allow the season to stress you out. Don’t become one of those Christmas casualties who ‘loses it’ in the check out line or the parking lot this year. Find a moment, or better yet, a daily time to sit, take a breath, and remember the coming of the Christ-child. The first advent reminds us that we are living in the Kingdom. And as we await the second advent and return of Christ, let us do well by not only reminding ourselves of the significance of God’s amazing and eternal gift of his Son, but let’s live it. Let’s quiet our hearts and our lives this year – expecting that God will be pleased to use us to advance his Kingdom in 2006 and beyond! What will it be? A quiet night at home reading the Christmas story? All 5 Sundays of Advent at Westkirk? The Christmas Eve service? A new commitment to ministry? Talk and pray about it. While you are here, the time will come to give birth to something new, wondrous, and Christ-centered. How will God change you?

Pastor Michael





The Session

Moderator - Michael Mudlaff

Class of 2006

- Scott Bland
- Barbara Robinson
- Barb Springer
- Lee Turnbull

Class of 2007

- Darrell Aldrich
- Bill Raisch
- Gary Robinson
- Jerry Tuinstra

Class of 2008

- Dick Cunitz
- George De Graaf
- Chuck Heitbrink
- Ron Long

Clerk of Session - Robin Riggins

Treasurer - Chris Brown

Assistant Treasurer - Ryan Glanzer

Commission ChairPersons

- Christian Education - Bill Raisch
- Evangelism and Fellowship - Dick Cunitz and Scott Bland
- House and Grounds - Lee Turnbull
- Missions - George De Graaf
- Stewardship - Gary Robinson
- Worship - Chuck Heitbrink

Board of Deacons

Class of 2006

- Benae Duff
- Somer Gillett
- Marilyn Long
- Marillyn McCulloch

Class of 2007

- Stacie Bland
- Kay Cunitz
- Ellen Harrison
- Jeannie Havnen
- Myra Verros

Class of 2008

- Dianne Glanzer
- Bette Jones
- Mary Millis
- Fran Nugteren
- Kris Thompson



- 1 Tammy Deviney
- 1 *Cora Springer
- 4 Evva Dawdy
- 4 Audrey Willcox
- 6 Marilyn Lanham
- 9 Barry Johnson
- 12 Elizabeth Becvar
- 15 Chuck Heitbrink
- 17 Casey Phipps
- 18 Nick Benson
- 18 *Cole Weir
- 19 *Kaitlin Mogle
- 20 *Andrew Ackeland
- 20 Wanita Oswalt
- 25 Tammy Walsh
- 27 Margaret Caster
- 28 *Natalie Hansen
- 28 Kevin Heer
- 28 Charlene North
- 29 Darlene Wilson
- 30 *Keely Dake
- 31 *Eric Brown
- *Youth Member



- 16 Harold & JoAnne Cook
- 18 Paul & Wendy Brisbois
- 19 Butch & Linda Campfield
- 20 Marty & Ellen Kinnaird
- 26 Dick & Irene Reed
- 26 Jerry & Sandy Tuinstra
- 26 Brent & Donna Willcox
- 30 Greg & Nancy Schmidt
- 31 Chris & Sarah Voggesser

Condolences . . .

Our condolences to **Golda and Bruce Beals** and family and friends of Mary Mardis, Golda's sister who died October 15 in Dallas, Texas.

We extend our deepest sympathy to **Darlene Wilson** and the family and friends of Dr. Bryce Wilson who died on October 21 in Des Moines, Iowa.

And sincere sympathy to **Paul and Donna Nelson** and the family of Grace Nelson, Paul's mother who died on October 24 in Larah, Washington.

Our condolences to **Hap and Juanita Finestead**. Hap's step-mother, Bessie Finestead of Pleasant Hill, died in Des Moines on October 31. The funeral services were held at the Delphi (Iowa) Baptist Church on November 3.

We extend heartfelt sympathy to **Vivian Spencer** and the family and friends of Ron Spencer who died November 20 in Des Moines. Funeral services were held at Westkirk on November 27 with Pastor Mudlaff officiating.

Note Church e-mail Address

If you have a message to e-mail to the church office, please use the address for Elaine Hurst which was published last month:

elainehurst@msn.com

Please make this change in your church directory today.

Change of Address

Please make the following change in your copy of the Church Directory:

Randall Klem

8610 E.P. True Parkway #14003
West Des Moines, IA 50266



The Bulletin Board

Emanuel--God with Us

Choir Dinner Concert
Saturday, December 2, 6:00 p.m.
Westkirk Great Hall

Cookie Walk

Westkirk Great Hall
Saturday, December 9

Birthday Party for Jesus

Wednesday, December 13
Great Hall, 5:45 p.m.

Given by WOW Kids
Everyone Invited

Dorcas Circle

Thursday, December 14, 1:00 p.m.
Hospitality Room

Program: *City of the Great King*
Leader: Gail De Graaf

Bagpipers Luncheon

(Senior Singles)

Tuesday, December 19, 1:00 p.m.

Okoboji Grill
8481 Birchwood Ct.
Johnston

Reservations: Sally Harrison, 276-0775

Highlanders Luncheon

Thursday, December 7, 11:45 a.m.

Urbandale Country Club
4000 Clive Road (86th Street)

Speaker

Pastor Michael Mudlaff

Note change of time.

Sunday Night at the Kirk

December 10, 6:30 p.m.

Monthly evening worship service
with contemporary music

New Member Class

Sunday, December 17, 10:30 a.m.

Luncheon for the last two classes
following the service.

Reservations due by December 13

Christmas Eve

December 24

Sunday School for all ages, 9:00 a.m.
Sunday Morning Worship, 10:30 a.m.
Candlelight Service, 5:30 p.m.



Christmas with the Highlanders

Highlanders will meet on **Thursday, December 7 at 11:45 a.m. (please note change of time) at the Urbandale Country Club, 4000 Clive Rd. (86th St.)**. We will be ordering off the menu, so we have allowed extra time for the meal. There will be a special of a bowl of soup and half a sandwich for \$7.02 for light eaters.

Pastor Michael will be our speaker for the day, so you will not want to miss this program.

... *Bette Jones*

New Members Day December 17

On the 17th we will have the opportunity to welcome the current class which has been meeting the past several Sunday mornings to prepare for membership. Please be sure to be at worship that day to welcome these new members.

The last two new member classes will be the guests of the Session at a Luncheon served immediately after the morning service. Please confirm your reservation with the church office no later than Wednesday, December 13.

Don't Forget the Cookie Walk

Be sure to bring your donations of Christmas cookies on Friday for the **Westkirk Cookie Walk**. The cookie sale will be held on **Saturday, December 9 from 9:00 a.m. until 1:00 p.m.** in the Great Hall. This will be our opportunity to buy a selection of cookies for holiday entertaining.

If you would like to bring 4-5 dozen of each kind of cookie you bake and have not yet signed up in the Hospitality Room and/or you would like to help on the day of the sale, please call **Nyleve Taylor (314-3252)** or **Becky Koebernick (278-0685)**

Dorcas Circle

At its last regular meeting in November, Dorcas Circle set aside \$530 to be donated to Freedom for Youth ministry. This represents the circle's mission gifts at each meeting during the past year and through November.

The next meeting will be **Thursday, December 14** in the Hospitality Room at 1:00 p.m. The program, *City of the Great King* will be presented by **Gail De Graaf**. Hostesses this month are **Mary and Martha Petty**. Moderator **Karen Admussen** reminds the ladies of the church that everyone is welcome to attend. The circle would be happy to have you come.

Sunday Night at the Kirk

The next evening worship service will be on **Sunday, December 10 at 6:30 p.m.** This service features a Bible-based message along with contemporary music. Plan on attending and bring a friend to share the worship service.



Poinsettias for the Sanctuary

The Altar Guild is taking orders for poinsettias for the Advent season. This year the poinsettias will be in the sanctuary on December 10, 17, and 24 (both morning and Christmas Eve services).

This year you will have a color selection:

Winter Rose Red (tightly clustered curly red rosettes), **Marble** (pink with cream edge), along with **Burgundy**. The cost per plant will be \$15. If you order a plant, you may take it home on Christmas Eve following the evening church service.

The plants are being purchased from Homestead at Pleasant Hill again this year. This is a group home for autistic men and women. This facility has its residents tend to the plants, make the plant covers and help package the plants for sale. The plant sales help this facility carry on projects for men and women with autism.

If you have any questions, please call Audrene Hansen (243-1679). The **deadline for ordering** your poinsettias this year will be **December 4**.

Please help us decorate the Lord's House for the Advent season.

. . . Audrene Hansen

Christmas Eve Service

Make plans now to bring your family to our traditional Christmas Eve candlelight service. Worship will begin at **5:30 p.m.** on December 24. Please note the change of time this year.

Come and celebrate the birth of our Lord Jesus with your Westkirk family. And bring your friends along, too!



During December morning worship, you will hear our choir singing favorite choruses and solos from the Christmas portion of Handel's *Messiah* (arr. by Larry Pugh), one of the most meaningful and exciting Christmas presentations ever.

December 3 *Comfort Yet My People*
Ryan Glanzer, Soloist
And the Glory of the Lord
The Choir
The Lord Whom Ye Seek
But Who May Abide
Chuck Heitbrink, Soloist

December 10 *Behold! A Virgin Shall Conceive*
Reading
O Thou That Tellest Good Tidings
to Zion
For Unto Us a Child Is Born
The Choir

December 17 *There Were Shepherds Abiding in*
the Fields
And Lo! The Angel of the Lord
Came Upon Them
And the Angel Said Unto Them
And Suddenly There Was With the
Angel
Reading
Glory to God
The Choir
Then Shall the Eyes of the Blind Be
Opened
He Shall Feed His Flock
Marsha Raisch &
Barb Robinson, Duet

December 24 *Hallelujah!*
The Choir

Vision and Values of Stephen Ministry, Westkirk Presbyterian Church

Our Vision: “To know Christ and make Him Known through Christ Centered Caring for others during their times of need.”

Westkirk’s History:

Our Book of Order provides guidance for our church government, discipline and worship. One of our core beliefs as stated in Ephesians 2:10 is “*For as we are His workmanship, created in Jesus Christ for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.*” Our church book of government recognizes the need for maintaining a fellowship within the church. The Stephen Ministry vision addressed this need. The Book of Worship also addresses this need in Chapter 7: Services to God, as it speaks of the giving of service to others. “In leisure time with friends and neighbors, the Christian is to seek to show love and compassion and to exhibit before the world what it means to belong to Jesus Christ.” “The Church shall emulate its Head by showing special concern for the sick, the sorrowing, the hungry and the poor.”

From our church history it appears self-evident that Stephen Ministry can become an essential part of actualizing the mission and vision of Westkirk.

Structure:

Stephen Leaders report to the minister (Pastor Michael Mudlaff)

Stephen Leaders are accountable to the minister and Session as well as the congregation and ultimately to God.

Stephen Leaders approach the minister and/or the Session with their needs and concerns

Funding is provided through the Session and ultimately by the congregation.

Stephen Ministry is structured to be an adjunct service provider at Westkirk, that works along side the commissions, educational programs, and care giving services now functioning in the church.

The Stephen Series System provides the organized structure to build this ministry. The Stephen Leader team has defined roles for each member, each with a special focus so all work together to implement the ministry. Following the 10 management steps and the Leaders Manual provides a system of accountability as we incorporate this ministry into our congregation. Careful planning is essential for the ministry to succeed.

. . . Elly Smith

(Ed Note: On Sunday, November 19 during Worship, the following individuals were commissioned as Stephen Leaders: **Karen Breeding, Pastor Michael Mudlaff and Eleanor Smith.** We look forward to their leadership in this ministry.)



New Staff Member

We are pleased to welcome a new member to our Westkirk staff. **Rick McCargar** has assumed the duties of church custodian. When you see Rick around the campus, be sure to introduce yourself to him. He is doing his best to put names to faces. Let's help!



Here is his home address information:

Rick McCargar
4915 E. Oakwood Drive
Pleasant Hills, IA 50327
Phone: 266-6208

Thanks from the Deacons

Once again you came through with well filled bags of groceries for the Food Pantry. We collected 514 non-perishable items and a total of \$427 in cash donations. That will help fill many empty tables. Thank you very much.

Stewardship Report

Here is the financial report for October and for the current 10 months.

	October:
Receipts	\$28,783.67
Expenditures	<u>27,933.68</u>
Surplus	\$ 849.99
	Year to Date:
Receipts	\$285,724.43
Expenditures	<u>269,152.67</u>
Surplus	\$ 16,571.76

... Chris Brown, Treasurer

Thank You Notes . . .

Dear Members of Westkirk,

Barbara and I want to thank all of our Westkirk family for the cards, gifts, visits, phone calls, and prayers during this summer and fall. Health problems are always difficult but we both were helped immensely by your support.

We are both doing very well and are most grateful to be a part of such a wonderful, loving group of Christians.

*With love,
Gary and Barbara Robinson*

Your thoughtfulness meant so much. Thank you for the lovely floral arrangement. The support and thoughtfulness from our church family is much appreciated.

Bruce and Golda Beals

Dear Westkirk Friends,

Thank you so much for your thoughtfulness. The basket you sent was beautiful and very much appreciated.

Michael, thank you for coming to the visitation and for your understanding.

The Wilson Family

Thank you for your prayers and thoughtfulness in the past months and through the passing of my father. We appreciate the beautiful flowering plant sent to the services from our church family.

We are comforted in the days ahead knowing our Father is by our side.

*Love,
Julie, Rus, Ashley & Eli Norem
and the McNees Family*

Merry Christmas!

What They're Saying about Sunday Night at the Kirk

"I just wanted to tell you that I really enjoyed the service last night. I like the sermon series — I don't think many people know about the basic reformed beliefs, so I'm glad that we are all learning more about them. The service was refreshing, and I thought it was very different from any other "contemporary" service I have been to. It was contemporary, traditional, and very "Westkirk." Most importantly, it was very worshipful. And, I'm so happy that so many people were there!" — member

"I thought that the SN@K service was awesome! I never would have imagined that many faces that I don't see on Sunday mornings. Praise God for allowing Westkirk to honor Him with such a service." — member

"Congratulations on the start of what I thought was a very successful first Sunday Night at the Kirk. On the way home my wife and I talked about how we could feel the Holy Spirit at work during the service. Thanks for inviting us." — guest

"I just want to drop you a quick note to let you know that I thought the service on Sunday night was great. Great blend of traditional and more contemporary elements. Night service, catechism teaching, and communion - all great "traditional" components of worship. Obviously, the entire point of worship is not to impress me - but I thought it all went great. We should do it every Sunday night." — member

"I thought last night was fantastic!! The Holy Spirit was certainly there in full force last night. It was great to see the whole range of ages there not to mention all of the new faces and those faces that we haven't seen for a long time. I'm still a traditional kind of guy but I think that offering this kind of service is what Westkirk needs to do to continue the outreach that we should be doing." — member

"...just wanted to say thanks again for inviting me to play last Sunday...I really appreciate it!!! I think the services are a really good idea!! ...looking forward to next month!!!" — musician

"AWESOME!!! People are going to talk about Sunday night. It was amazing, it really was. The Holy Spirit was so thick in the sanctuary. The music, the sermon, it was all for God's glory and I could feel it. Almost brought me to my knees. I am definitely going to ask friends to join us next month." — member

"Tonight's service at the Kirk was great! My daughter was shocked that we sung "Na Na Na" and left smiling and laughing. She was disappointed that there won't be another service until next month. We've been praying all week for the service. Praise God for a wonderful worship! Thank you for taking the risk to try something new!" — member

... *Pastor Michael*





The "Reason for the Season"

The Mission Commission wants to thank you the Westkirk Congregation for the response to all of the food and clothing drives as well as to the **Operation Christmas Child** shoebox ministry that we put before you the last several months. We sent over 450 articles of clothing to **Hope Ministries** to clothe the homeless and needy. Many bags of food were given to **Freedom for Youth** to feed young people (even toddlers and babies) who would otherwise have gone hungry.

We have collected 205 shoeboxes to be sent to Europe or other countries for needy children in orphanages, shelters and refugee camps. *"I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did it for me."* Matthew 25:40

You may have said that you had fun in wrapping the boxes or in finding the items to put inside the shoebox, but I know the child opening the box will have much more enjoyment in receiving the items. The clothes that may not have fit you any longer or that you may have wanted to get rid of, will definitely keep a person warm this winter. The food that you provided will keep an adult or a child healthy another day just maybe to hear the "Good News of Salvation." We generally do not know the results of what happens when people receive the items given, but God does. Sometimes you will get a response like Jonah Mudlaff did, when a boy in Zambia, Africa received the shoebox Jonah filled and put a note and his return address in it. It was neat to see a response. There are many good organizations providing assistance for needy people and we thank God for them, but when the giving is done "In the Name of Jesus," then we have found the "Reason for the Season." *"For God so loved the world, that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life."* John 3:16

Update News from the Field

Navigators: Heather Murken tells us that she is engaged and looking forward to a January wedding. She reports that they had 650 students turn out for the Fall Retreat and are rejoicing at the response. Please pray for this ministry at University of Northern Iowa.

Wycliffe: Jessica Duff is attending a couple of workshops and a technical conference in Nigeria. Pray for her as she is also trying to obtain her full support to allow her to get over to Africa. They need Computer Support personnel at the training center, so would like to have her there as soon as possible.

Greater Europe Mission, Ireland: Jonathan and Becky Schuster and family are in the midst of moving from their house which they were renting to another rented house then, hopefully, on to their own home for which they just obtained a mortgage. This is going to require a lot of patience, moving, and physical and emotional stamina. Please pray for this family during this time.

The Missions Commission thanks you for your support and if you have any questions please ask any one of the Commission members. They are: Rus & Julie Norem, Ryan Glanzer, Marv & Fran Nugteren, Wendy Reed,(who just joined us.) Jerry & Diane Skinner, Alvin & Lois Lundgren Stecker, Sherie Whitehead, and George & Gail De Graaf.

... George De Graaf, Mission Commission

House Kirk Update

There were 117 people who participated in Westkirk's *40 Days of Community* Small Group campaign. They did this through ten groups that either met in members homes or at the church. Eight groups are continuing to meet and are in the process of selecting follow-up material to study in their group.

For many people this was their first experience in a small group. If you did not have an opportunity to participate but now feel that you would like to visit a group to see what House Kirks are all about, we invite you to contact one of the House Kirk Hosts/Leaders listed below or call **Dick Cunitz at 224-0179** or **Pastor Michael at 253-0330** for more information. Some of the groups have not yet decided the time and frequency of their future meetings. If you are interested in a group that does not list this information please call the contact person.

Host/Leader—Day—Time—Phone Number

Lou Heitbrink, 2nd Tuesday of month, 1:00 p.m.,
254-9982.

Dick Cunitz, 2nd & 4th Tuesday, 7:00 p.m.,
224-0179.

Jerry Tuinstra, Tuesday every other week,
7:00 p.m., 256-0090.

Michael Mudlaff, 253-0330.

Jeannie Havnen, 440-6277.

Kevin Heer, 1st & 3rd Sunday, 6:00 p.m.,
727-5272.

Lee Turnbull, 253-9607.

Van Harden, 277-1267.



Some of the House Kirks decided to end the *40 days of Community* with a social event. Pictured above are 14 of the 16 members of one group that celebrated with a pot luck supper at the home of Kay and Dick Cunitz. This group grew out of the merger of two *40 Days of Purpose* groups and have been meeting for over a year. Now that *40 Days of Community* is over, this group will continue with their study on prayer.

. . . Dick Cunitz



A True Family Thanksgiving

Wonderful sounds, sights and smells filled the Great Hall when the Westkirk family and friends gathered on Thanksgiving Day. What a wonderful feast as we enjoyed the warm fellowship of our "family."

Sincere thanks to **Larry Kussatz and Chuck Heitbrink** for organizing and preparing this annual dinner for the *ninth* time and to their helpers **Terry and Kris Thompson, Ryan Glanzer, Barb Earles and Dean Teeter**. On hand to set tables the night before were **Gail and George De Graaf, Lou Heitbrink and Lenora Chamberlain**. It was a great Thanksgiving day!

Presenting . . .

Greg and Nancy Schmidt

When you enter Nancy and Greg's home, you immediately feel welcome and at home. Their hospitality is evident immediately when you see the beautiful cross-stitched wall hangings and pillows Nancy has crafted, and the offer of a cup of coffee makes you feel you would like to know this couple better. A third member of the family, Casey, a golden retriever, also loves company, and he is loveable!



Nancy was born in New York state near Dunkirk and attended schools in Brocton. After graduating from high school, she joined the Marine Corps and attended boot camp at Paris Island, SC. She was sent to weather school at the Naval base at Lakehurst, NJ. Here she met Greg, had a whirlwind romance and was married within a month. Within seven months she was pregnant and happily was released from service.

Greg was born in Wichita Falls, TX where his father had a life career in the Air Force. The family moved every three years, so he saw a lot of the country. By 1970 his dad had retired and settled in the Quad cities. Greg joined the Navy and served in the Viet Nam war on the aircraft carrier USS Kitty Hawk as a weatherman. In 1974 he returned to the Quad cities and worked at John Deere with computers. While there, he attended Scott Community College in Bettendorf, majoring in computer skills. During the next several years, Greg held computer jobs in NY, IA (Des Moines), CO, TX, and back to CO where the couple had five acres of land with lots of evergreen trees, which looked like the Black Forest in Germany. The Schmidts loved it there. Greg had always owned a motorcycle, and it was on the mountainous back roads that they really enjoyed the sport of biking.

Greg has continued his work with computers. He is a project manager for information technology, working from his home office, and is currently working with Wells Fargo. The Schmidts moved back to Urbandale in 1999 and bought their lovely home. They had been attending a Baptist church, but became unhappy there. Nancy's dad suggested they try a Presbyterian church as they were Bible oriented, too. Since Westkirk was close to their home, they gave it a try, liked it and became members. Nancy helps with Wednesday night classes for children with the Tuinstras and works with Fran Nugteren preparing the meal on the first Wednesday of the month. Greg helps with the church sound system and chairs the Westkirk Technology Committee.

Nancy loves her cross-stitching, yard work, interior decorating, photography and especially enjoys reading. When a child, she was taught speed reading in elementary school and she has maintained that skill, being able to read a normal book in about two hours with good comprehension. She loves cooking and homemaking skills. Greg has one interest—computers. When he has some spare time, he uses it to investigate new technology.

They have three children, Jennifer and twins David and Christa. Jennifer works in customer service and sales at a food ingredient company in the Iowa City area. She has a daughter, Hunter, age 8. David has a construction company and is married to Tracie. They have three children and live in the Kansas City area. Christa, his twin, is married to Chad who also owns a construction company. They have three children and live in the Walcott, IA area.

You will enjoy getting to know this couple a little better. Say "Hi" the next time you see them.

. . . *Bette Jones*

Youth & Children's Ministry

Youth Update

We had a good November, though it went by very quickly. We wrapped up our *40 Days of Community* and hopefully learned about the importance of our Christian community at Westkirk. We also took a tour of some radio stations, including WHO, with Van Harden. It was very interesting. Thank you, Van! Also, thank you to everyone who participated and helped with this fall's Parents' Night Out that took place on November 18.

Now, we have the Christmas season coming up on us. On December 2, the youth are helping with the choir concert at Westkirk. This is a fundraiser, so all youth should be there to help set up luminaries during the concert. The concert starts at 6 p.m. Also, please remember that we will be taking a few of our Wednesday evening meetings off. We will not be meeting on December 20, 27, and January 3. We will resume our regular WOW schedule on January 10.

Winter is coming, so we will soon be having our annual tubing trip to Sleepy Hollow. Jess will get the details out to the youth as soon as they are set in place. In the meantime, have a good Christmas and New Year!

... Jess Kanis

Recycle!

The Westkirk Youth encourage you to recycle your bottles and beverage cans. Let's help them with their fund raising project by placing our recyclables in the two plastic bins located in the entryway to the West Wing. Donations may be brought on Sundays, Wednesdays, or during regular church office hours.



Bible Recipients

Congratulations to the following first graders who received Bibles in Sunday School on October 29:

Collin Arndt	Natalie Hansen
Sarah Brady	Nicholas Hoepker
Olivia Brisbois	Luke Kinney
Eric Brown	Ross Wickemeyer
Nicole Duff	Ashton Willcox



Please pray that these children will use their new Bibles to learn God's word, hiding it in their heart forever, and that they will cherish God's word throughout their lives, letting it guide their steps.

You are Invited to a Birthday Party

Who: Jesus
Where: Westkirk Great Hall
When: December 13, 5:45 p.m.
Given by: WOW KIDS

You always take a gift to a birthday party! We will be giving all of your gifts to the infants at Ruth Harbor. Thank you for your contributions.

Children's Ministry

Children's Ministry Update

In November, the children finished their study of the *40 Days of Community*, worked on some mission projects, and learned the hidden meaning behind the song, *The Twelve Days of Christmas*. This month we look forward to the coming of our Savior and some fun and meaningful activities in anticipation of the birth of Jesus.

BLAST: On Saturday, November 11 a dozen members of BLAST and their families helped out at Kid's Against Hunger. For two hours they took turns filling bags with rice, dried vegetables, soy and vitamins, then weighed, sealed, and packed the bags in boxes for shipment to an orphanage in Nigeria. Each bag makes 6 meals when prepared, and altogether the volunteers assembled over 20,000 meals at Holmes GMC in Clive.

40 Days of Community: As part of "traveling along the road together" and serving others, the children tied four fleece blankets to give to Hope Ministries.

Tone Chimes: On Sunday, December 10 the tone chime choir will be playing in church. The group is made up of first through fourth graders and is directed by Pam Brown. Participants include Anastasia Admussen, Rachael Brady, Monica Brown, Meredith Heer, Nathan & Nicholas Hoepker, Micah Mudlaff, Nathan Vis, and Ross & Mallory Wickemeyer.

Dinner Theater: On Wednesday, December 13 children from preschool through fourth grade will present **A Birthday Party for Jesus** starting at 6 p.m. in the Great Hall. Everyone is welcome to eat dinner and enjoy the presentation. The children are reminded to come at 5:15 p.m. to eat and put on their costumes.

Christmas Caroling: Everyone is invited to carol at several nursing homes on Wednesday, December 20. In addition to caroling, the children will deliver cutout cookies that they decorated and present their **Birthday Party for Jesus** skit. We will leave the church at 5:45 p.m., so come for dinner at 5:15 p.m.

This Christmas season may your family receive the best gift of all—Jesus. One way that Christians long ago taught their children about their faith was through the song, *The Twelve Days of Christmas*. Each verse represents a basic belief that forms the foundation of our faith:

A partridge in a pear tree—Jesus Christ (The pear tree is symbolic of the cross)

Two turtle doves—The Old and New Testaments

Three French horns—Faith, hope, and love (1 Corinthians 13:13)

Four calling birds—The Gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke and John)

Five golden rings—The first five books of the Bible (Gen., Ex., Lev., Num., Deut.)

Six geese a laying—The six days of creation (Gen. 1:1-31)

Seven swans a swimming—The gifts of the Holy Spirit (Romans 12:6-8, 1 Cor. 12:7-11)

Eight maids a milking—The Beatitudes (Matthew 5:1-12)

Nine ladies dancing—The Fruit of the Holy Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23)

Ten lords a leaping—The Ten Commandments (Exodus 20:1-17)

Eleven pipers piping—The eleven faithful disciples (Matthew 6:14-16) not including Judas, the betrayer

Twelve drummers drumming—The beliefs listed in the Apostles Creed

Love, Joy and Peace to you this Christmas!

... Karen Admussen



The Shepherd

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