

The Westkirk Presbyterian Church

Shepherd

Volume 22 No. 12 December 2007

God's Controversial Good News!

Recently at Sunday Night at the Kirk, we explored the portion of the Apostles' Creed that affirms our belief in the virgin birth. You may recall the phrase, "*I believe... in Jesus Christ... who was conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary.*" That was back in October and we wanted to get a good head start on celebrating Christmas! Did you know that there are only three main texts that affirm the spiritual conception and virgin birth of Jesus? It is implied in others, of course, but only three are explicit. The first one comes from the book of Isaiah and was written about the coming Messiah, about 700 years before Jesus' birth. In prophesying about him, Isaiah writes, **Isaiah 7:14** "*Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.*"

I'm sure many of you recognize those words from the text of Handel's Messiah. In fact, all three of these texts are relatively well known. The other two come from the Gospel accounts of Jesus' birth in Matthew and Luke. Luke writes, ^{ESV} **Luke 1:35** "*And the angel answered her, 'The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy- the Son of God.'*"

And then in Matthew, Joseph has discovered that his fiancé (who in those days was already legally considered a wife) was pregnant. Joseph had the right not only to divorce her, but to have her put to death because of infidelity. Because he loved her, he decided to divorce her quietly. Matthew writes, ^{ESV} **Matthew 1:20** "*But as he considered these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, 'Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit...'*"

First, Mary finds herself pregnant, knowing that she had never been with a man. Explain that one! Then, the plot thickens. Once Joseph heard the words of the angel and decided to marry her despite her condition, everyone probably thought it was his baby and they had been intimate before marriage! Can you imagine the ridicule in that day? Did you realize how controversial the Christmas story really was? We don't talk about all this at Christmas do we? What would you do? To some it is a fairy tale, others are indifferent. Does it really matter? Well, Jesus' conception by the Holy Spirit and virgin birth affirm his identity as the Son of God, the Messiah, and our Savior. When Joseph was told that the baby Mary carried was conceived of the Holy Spirit, the angel then said, "*he will save his people from their sins.*" The miraculous conception and birth of Jesus lays the foundation for the work he would accomplish on the cross.

What will you do with it this year? Will you hide behind the politically correct, cultural wrapping of the holidays, or will you proudly and boldly proclaim, MERRY CHRISTMAS! I believe in the Son of God who was conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary! We know what Joseph decided, but the question is also for us today. Christmas is still controversial. Jesus is controversial – he's God's Good News for us all!

Pastor Michael





The Session

Moderator - Michael Mudlaff

Class of 2007

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

Class of 2008

- George De Graaf
- Chuck Heitbrink
- Ron Long
- Kevin Riggins

Class of 2009

- Kevin Heer
- Marv Nugteren
- Barb Springer
- Kirk Yentes

Clerk of Session - Robin Riggins

Treasurer - Chris Brown

Assistant Treasurer - Ryan Glanzer

Commission ChairPersons

- Christian Education - Bill Raisch
- Evangelism/Fellowship - Van Harden
- House and Grounds - Ron Long
- Missions - George De Graaf
- Stewardship - Gary Robinson
- Worship - Chuck Heitbrink

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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

Class of 2009

- Marilyn Long
- Marilyn McCulloch
- John Schwien
- Sandy Tuinstra



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

New Addresses

Please make a note of these changes in your Church Membership Directory.

Florence Mills

Emerson Point #244
1355 Shannon Drive
Iowa City, IA 52246
Phone: 319/358-9929

Arlene Hubbell

The Village at Legacy Pointe
1645 SE Holiday Crest Circle
Waukee, IA 50263

Condolences . . .

We extend our sincere sympathy to **Larry Kussatz** whose brother-in-law, Gene Cain, died November 22, 2007 in Waterloo.



- 16 Harold & JoAnne Cook
- 17 Mike & Karen Grimmus
- 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

Thank You Notes . . .

Pastor Michael & Friends,

Thank you for the lovely plant.

It was truly a surprise.

Sincerely,

Wiggs Lyman

Dear Westkirk Friends,

We want to give every one of you a great big THANK YOU for all your prayers and all of your wonderful help seeing that we get around okay with our walkers. We do so appreciate you all so much. We feel like we belong to a big loving family as every one is so kind and thoughtful. We thank Pastor Michael and Pastor Steve for all their very kind help

We are grateful, for everyone is so kind and courteous.

Mary Jean & Martha Jane Petty

Deacons Say Thanks

The Deacons appreciate your generosity in your response for Food Pantry Day. There were 374 items brought in and \$665 donated. This will brighten many needy homes in our community. Thank you to all who participated.



The Bulletin Board

December Activities. See related articles in this issue

- Saturday 12/1** **Cookie Walk**, begins at 9:00 a.m., Great Hall
Directory Pictures taken, 9:30 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.
Girls' Day Out, 1:00 p.m.
 * * * * *
- Sunday 12/2** **Sunday School**, 9:00 a.m.
Worship Service, 10:30 a.m.; **Advent begins**
- Monday 12/3** **Commissions/Deacons meeting**, 7:00 p.m.
- Tuesday 12/4** **Stephen Ministry meeting**, 6:30 p.m.
- Wednesday 12/5** **WOW activities** start with supper at 5:45 p.m.; **Bible classes** at 6:30 p.m.
Choir rehearsal, 7:30 p.m.
- Thursday 12/6** **Highlanders**, 11:30 a.m. at HyVee, West Des Moines
Prayer shawl ministry, 7:00 p.m.
- Saturday 12/8** **Choir dinner/concert**, 6:00 p.m.
 * * * * *
- Sunday 12/9** **Sunday School**, 9:00 a.m.
Communion celebrated at Advent Worship, 10:30 a.m.
Sunday Night at the Kirk, 6:30 p.m.
- Tuesday 12/11** **New Light meeting**, 6:30 p.m.
- Wednesday 12/12** **WOW**, supper at 5:45 p.m.; **Children's Christmas program**, 6:30 p.m.
Choir rehearsal, 7:30 p.m.
- Thursday 12/13** **Dorcas Circle**, 1:00 p.m., Hospitality Room
- Saturday 12/15** **Articles for January Shepherd due**
 * * * * *
- Sunday 12/16** **Sunday School**, 9:00 a.m.
Covenant Sunday Worship Service, 10:30 a.m. **Advent Sunday.**
- Monday 12/17** **Session Meeting**, 7:00 p.m.
- Tuesday 12/18** **Bagpipers luncheon**, 1:00 p.m., Okoboji Grill
No meeting of The Clan housekirk
- Wednesday 12/19** **WOW activities** start at 5:15 p.m.; **Caroling for all ages**, 6:00 p.m.
Choir rehearsal, 7:30 p.m.
 * * * * *
- Sunday 12/23** **Sunday School**, 9:00 a.m.
Advent Worship Service, 10:30 p.m.
- Monday 12/24** **Christmas Eve Candlelight Service**, 5:30 p.m.
- Tuesday 12/25** **Christmas Day**, Office closed
- Wednesday 12/26** **No WOW activities**
 * * * * *
- Sunday 12/30** **Sunday School**, 9:00 a.m.
Worship Service, 10:30 a.m.





Cookie Walk

On December 1, Westkirk will see the second annual Cookie Walk. Thank you to all who baked the hundreds of tasty cookies. Many boxes of munchies will go home to bring Christmas joy. Thanks to all who organized and worked to make this a happy occasion.

Highlanders Celebrate Christmas

Highlanders will meet at **11:30 a.m. Thursday, December 6 at HyVee Grocery**, Railroad and Grand, West Des Moines. All members and friends of Westkirk are invited to come to the monthly meetings of this group. No reservations are required.

Pastor Michael will present our Christmas program. This will be a special message and we hope many of you will be able to join the group. If you have any questions, please contact **Jack and Bette Jones, 334-9929**.

Covenant Sunday

A letter from Gary Robinson, Stewardship Commission Chairperson, is being sent to the congregation concerning your 2008 plans for giving to the Lord. Please prayerfully consider your offering for the Lord's work at Westkirk when filling out your 2008 Stewardship Pledge Card.

Sunday, December 16 is designated as **Covenant Sunday** when you are asked to return your pledge for dedication. The Pastor will invite you and your family to come forward and place your Stewardship Pledge Card in a basket so that all pledges may be dedicated together. If you are unable to join us on that Sunday, please return your Stewardship Pledge Card to the church office by the 16th. The envelope should be marked: *Attention Treasurer*.

Watch for Your 2008 Westkirk Pledge Letter, Pledge Card and Contribution Ideas

Each year the Stewardship Commission prepares and mails requests for pledges for the following calendar year, pledge cards for you and your family to fill out, and envelopes to mail your pledge cards back to Westkirk if you so wish.

One of the additional duties of the Stewardship Commission is to periodically remind our Westkirk friends and family of opportunities to more efficiently make gifts to the church or take advantage of legitimate income tax deductions so as to make your giving less burdensome. Those reminders will be enclosed with your request for pledges this year.

This year the reminders included:

1. How gifting "appreciated investments," like corporate stock, might result in a "win, win, win" opportunity for you and your family.
2. How setting up a "Charitable Remainder Trust" might benefit you and your heirs for income tax and estate planning purposes this year.
3. Why Westkirk family members—70 ½ years or older with Individual Retirement Accounts—might benefit by making their 2007 "required minimum distributions" directly to the church.

If you have any questions concerning the reminders, please feel free to contact **Gary Robinson**. You should also contact your personal financial advisor or tax preparer concerning any income tax or estate planning matter. We hope the three reminders will assist you in your gift planning.

On behalf of the Stewardship Commission
Gary Robinson, Chairperson

Christmas Eve Service

Please 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**. Come and celebrate the birth of our Savior Christ Jesus with your Westkirk family. And invite your friends to come along!!



Stephen Ministry Needs YOU!

Even if you are not a Stephen Leader or a Stephen Minister, you play an important role in our Stephen Ministry. Our Stephen Ministers need your prayerful support as they confidentially meet with their care receivers every week. Our Stephen Leaders also need your help in identifying people who might benefit from a Stephen Ministry relationship.

If you see a friend, co-worker, neighbor, relative, or someone else who could use some extra Christian care, tell that person about our Stephen Ministry and get permission to refer her/him to a Stephen Leader. Please see or call **Pastor Michael** at the church office, 253-0330, or **Karen Breeding**, 963-3954.

Depression Support Group Full of Laughter

New Light, Westkirk's new ministry for those with experience with depression, met for the second time on Tuesday, November 13... and had a BLAST! You might not expect a depression support group to be full of laughter, but the time was so encouraging to all who attended that we grew close to one another quickly and enjoyed our time together. Our topic of discussion was one that we could all identify with – the stigma of having depression. The holiday season is a rough time for those who are experiencing depression. Won't you consider joining us? We will meet again on **Tuesday evening, December 11 at 6:30 p.m.** in the church lounge.

New Members Received

On November 18 we welcomed the following friends into Westkirk membership:

Chuck and Sarah Brumfield
Nancy Brumfield
Mark and Joy Dauterive
Mike and Karen Grimmus
David and Deb Liljedahl
Dan Marvin
Linda Wilde

It is a pleasure to have you join our church family and we look forward to getting to know you better.

Christmas Music

During December Sunday morning worship services and on Christmas Eve you will hear our Choir singing the beautiful music of this Holy Season. Each service will include the lighting of the Advent candles.

December 2 *Light the Advent Candle*

December 9 *O Come, O Come Emmanuel
Prepare the Way of the Lord*

December 16 *Sing of Mary, Pure and Lowly*
Ryan Glanzer, soloist

December 23 *One Small Child*

December 24 *All Is Well*



Advent Decorations

As you are all aware, construction has begun at Westkirk. For this reason, the decorations for Advent will be modified this year. The Altar Guild has planned to decorate the sanctuary only and very simply this year, primarily because of the amount of dust from the construction project.

Therefore, Westkirk will use only silk poinsettias this year. The Altar Guild, with guidance from the Worship Committee, has decided that no live poinsettias will be used since the conditions are not beneficial for live plants. Live poinsettias will be available again next year when the church construction project has been completed. The Altar Guild would like to thank all members and guests who have donated plants in the past and look forward to your participation next Advent season.

If you would like to donate arrangements for a Sunday worship service, please contact **Audrene Hansen at 243-1679**. Live flower arrangements may be donated in honor of a birthday, memorial, wedding, birth, etc. The flowers are used for the church service and then placed in vases for the donor to take home or to share with shut-ins. Two arrangements are used each Sunday except for Communion Sunday when only one is used.

. . . *Audrene Hansen*





*Reformation Sunday
October 28, 2007*





Glory to God in the Highest!!

I cannot believe that December is here already. It is the middle of November as I write this, but seeing the way November is going so far, it will be December 1 before you know it. Maybe you are tired already of the holiday jingles at the stores and hear less and less of Christmas Carols. That seems to be the direction either the media or the marketing staff at the stores want it. But, I am pleased to report that in spite of all of the negative effects that are being presented, "GOD IS STILL ON THE THRONE." I can see that in

the reports from those whom we support in the mission field both locally and abroad. The reports and feedback show that He indeed is carrying out His plans. The monies in the Mission Budget that you approved are being used very effectively in carrying out that mission as well as ours, *To Know Christ and To Make Him Known...*

If you have had an opportunity to read some of the reports or e-mails from our missionaries, either on the bulletin boards or from their websites, you can see the blessings that they have experienced.

The Huffers in Mexico, the Hannemans in Boulder, Colorado, the Schusters in Ireland, the Lucacius in Romania, the Straits in Colorado Springs, Jessica Duff in Africa, the Schmeidels in Minnesota, Gary De Graaf in France, the Eggerts in Ames, as well as Ruth Harbor, Samaritan's Purse, Teen Challenge, Hope Ministries, Freedom for Youth, and ICM, all here in the Des Moines area.

When I see these e-mails and newsletters, I can report that it is a privilege to be a part in the support of each one of their ministries. These are dedicated individuals reaching out with the Gospel as well as having an impact on many lives along the way.

In October, we collected over 100 bags of clothing for Hope Ministries.....That's fantastic and the Mission Commission wants to thank you the Congregation for your support with this ministry...Many thanks to Jack and Bette Jones for alerting their neighbors at The Reserve to participate in the clothing drive.. Thanks to Alec Sheppard for sharing his desire to clothe the younger children who are homeless in Des Moines. Thanks to all who participated in serving food for Freedom for Youth throughout the year.. Thanks to Julie Norem, Lois Lungren Stecker and Cynthia Fisher for being Ambassadors to Hope Ministries; Sherie Whitehead as Representative for Freedom for Youth; to Diane Skinner as the Representative for Ruth Harbor; to Somer Gillett for her involvement in the Operation Christmas Child Shoebox ministry, and to all those on the Mission Commission who have helped in many ways (Ryan Glanzer, our Chief Chef, and everyone else pitching in for the Mission Sunday program as well as the individual missionary visits).

The New Year Is Coming!!!!

Thank You for your part in supporting all of these ministries. Should you have any questions regarding the missions that we support, please see any one of the Mission Commission. They are, George & Gail De Graaf, Cynthia Fisher, Somer Gillett, Ryan Glanzer, Rus & Julie Norem, Wendy Reed, Jerry & Diane Skinner, Stuart Smith, Alvin & Lois Lundgren Stecker, Larry & Sherie Whitehead.

... *George De Graaf, Chair, Mission Commission*

Construction Progress

The walls are up! The new wing has basement walls. The foundation has also been laid. The walls have been waterproofed. The basement floor will be laid soon. It has in-floor heat so if you're watching the progress you'll see utilities and the in-floor heating being laid before the concrete flooring is poured. Pray that the weather holds so that the wing can be framed and enclosed before more snows come.

The balcony has been shored up in order to handle the load for the balcony seating area. The stairwell is being re-designed and work on it should begin soon.

The parking lot has been graded and the lighting islands placed and wired. As soon as the new grease trap (pit) arrives and is located near the kitchen, the parking lot should be laid, lines painted and ready for parking. Concrete curbs will line the new parking lot and there should be plenty of parking spaces for all.

Look for next month's update from the Building Committee and the Interior Design Committee as we continue to report on the progress being made.

... *Bill F. Raisch*



Presenting . . .

Mary Jean and Martha Jane Petty

I'm sure many of you have seen two petite ladies at our church who look very much alike. They are Mary Jean and Martha Jane Petty, born and raised in Des Moines. It was in March of 2007 that Legacy Pointe Retirement Home in Waukee became their home. They attended Oak Park Elementary School, Washington Irving Jr. High School and North High School. Their employment was at Broadlawns Medical Center. Mary Jean worked in data processing and collections and Martha Jane worked in admissions.



Mary Jean and Martha Jane had two older sisters. The oldest is deceased and the other lives in Des Moines. They have seven nephews and twelve great-nieces and nephews. They have a close relationship with their sister and their nephews and families.

These ladies are real dog lovers. They had a white schnauzer (a little girl) named Katrinca, and Sami Joe (a little boy) who was half poodle and half schnauzer. The dogs were good friends and Sami Joe was their watchdog. Katrinca died before their move to Waukee, but Sami Joe needed a new home when they made their move. That was difficult for them.

An interesting fact about this set of twins is that they were born twenty minutes apart, but on different days. Mary Jean was the first born, arriving on her great-grandfather's birthday (on her father's side). Martha Jane was born on Father's Day, just twenty minutes later. In younger days they celebrated on both days, enjoying every minute of it.

Mary Jean and Martha Jane have been members of Westkirk since 1990. They attend Sunday school, church services, Highlanders, Bagpipers, The Clan, and Dorcas Circle. They like Westkirk and feel it is a big family. They are grateful for the people of Westkirk and certainly have appreciated their help.

If you have not met these ladies, put out your hand and introduce yourself. You now know them much better and they would like to know you.

. . . by Helen Main

Thanksgiving Day at Westkirk

Wonderful sounds, sights, and smells filled the Great Hall when 130 members of our Westkirk family and friends gathered for dinner on Thanksgiving Day. What a wonderful feast as we praised God for our many blessings and enjoyed the warm fellowship of our "family."

Sincere thanks to **Larry Kussatz and Chuck Heitbrink** for organizing and preparing this annual dinner for the *tenth* time. And, thanks to their helpers **Terry and Kris Thompson, Ryan Glanzer, Barb Earles, and Dean Teeter. Kevin, Rachel, Madeline, and Meredith Heer** served the guests. On hand to set tables on Thanksgiving eve were **Gail and George De Graaf, Lenora Chamberlain and Lou Heitbrink**. All this preparation made for a great Thanksgiving Day!

Decorating Committee Report

The Decorating Committee has met three times and reviewed the building plans for the educational wing and new church offices. They have measured all current office furniture and presented the measurements to the architect for his consideration for sizing in the various offices. The current emphasis of the Committee has been to see what furniture is available for use in the new offices.

Recently, the Committee toured The Bridge to look at their nursery design and furnishings. The current members of the Decorating Committee are Russ Harrison, Chair; Pastor Mudlaff; Rachel Heer; Jodi Piper; and Audrene Hansen. The group has been meeting at least monthly or as often as necessary to complete their assigned tasks.

. . . Audrene Hansen

Children's Ministry

"They (the Israelites) all ate the same spiritual food and drank the same spiritual drink; for they drank from the spiritual rock that accompanied them, and that rock was Christ." 1 Corinthians 10:3-4

December is a time of waiting. Children wait for a break from school, wait for snow to fall, wait to open presents, and wait for Christmas, a time of celebrating the birth of our Savior. December also is a time of preparing. We prepare for Christmas with parties, programs, presents and more. We pray that during this season of waiting and preparing you would be blessed with the joy, peace, hope, and love of Christ, sharing it with your family, friends and all you meet.

One way to prepare for the coming of our Savior is with the Advent Event. This family-friendly advent calendar has short daily scripture verses that tell the Christian story from the beginning of time to the birth of Jesus. Each day also includes an activity for the children to do and a hand motion that will help the children remember the Bible story. There are copies of this calendar as well as other Christmas books on the Children's Ministry bookshelf located across from the nursery.

In addition to studying on Sunday mornings, the Fourth & Fifth Grade Girls' Sunday School class, led by **Chris and Pam Brown**, have had fun getting together outside of church. In September they met at a roller skating rink and in October they enjoyed a Halloween Costume Party at the Brown's house, with a special visit by Merlyn the Wizard. On **Saturday, December 1 at 1:00 p.m.** the girls will meet at church for a Girls' Day Out to make necklaces with **Stephanie Randall**.

Do you know the legend of the Candy Cane? Do you want to know more about The Lord's Prayer?

* * * * *

"Discover the Love Of Your Life"

Gail and George De Graaf will be leading a marriage class based on Dr. Gary and Barb Rosberg's book "Divorce Proof Your Marriage." The class will start **Wednesday, January 2** and it will run for seven weeks, ending on the 20th of February. It will meet from 6:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. and the location will be announced later. Please sign up with George and Gail or on the clipboard in the Hospitality Room. See you there. . . . *George & Gail De Graaf*

Come to church **Wednesday, December 12** for the yearly Dinner Theatre presented by the children and BLAST. Dinner will be available in the Great Hall from 5:45-6:30 p.m. followed by a Christmas Program in the sanctuary. Afterward donuts and hot cider will be served in the Hospitality Room.

On **Wednesday, December 19** all ages are invited to eat a light supper at church from 5:15-6:00 p.m. followed by caroling at Luther Park Gardens from 6:30-7:15 p.m. There will be no classes that evening so everyone can participate in this annual tradition.

Wintersnobblastertainment is coming February 8-10 at Twin Lakes Christian Center. Sign up at www.twinlakescc.com before January 1 for this BLAST Winter Retreat and save money. Save even more money by bringing a friend who has never been to a winter camp before. Camp begins Friday at 7:00 p.m. and ends Sunday at 1:00 p.m.

A Women's Retreat Weekend called *Breathe, Resting in the Almighty*, sponsored by Meredith Drive Reformed Church, is scheduled for January 25-26 at the Hilton Garden Inn in Johnston. Moms, grandmas, and teens are welcome to relax, learn, worship, and be pampered at this conference. To register or to find out more information, check out their website at <http://www.meredithdrive.org/content/view/162/1/> or contact Sasha Mudlaff.

. . . *Karen Admussen*
Director of Children's Ministry

Dorcas Circle

On **Thursday, December 13**, the Dorcas Circle will meet at 1:00 p.m. in the Hospitality Room. The lesson for the day is titled "The Lord Is My Shepherd." **Lou Heitbrink** will lead this faith lesson from the Focus on the Family series about Prophets and Kings. **Bette Jones and Joan Thompson** will be the hostesses. All ladies of the church and their guests are invited for an afternoon of spiritual growth and fellowship.

The Shepherd

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Carolyn Eyerly, Lou Heitbrink, Irene Reed

Audrene Hansen - **Flower Chairperson**

First Ladies

Jan Geisler, Lou Heitbrink

Fran Nugteren, Joan Thompson



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