

*The Westkirk Presbyterian Church*

# Shepherd

*Volume 24 No. 1 January 2009*

## **What Will the New Year Bring?**

Now that our campus wide addition has been completed, one wonders for Westkirk, ‘what will the New Year bring?’ Interestingly, as 2009 takes off, your Session is committed to serving you more effectively by reforming the way we lead! For almost a year now, The Elders have been discussing the implementation of what we call--a leadership development initiative.

It all began at the annual Session Retreat in March of 2008, when Pastor Michael and the Ruling Elders gathered to discuss the increasing responsibilities of Elders in light of the growth we have experienced here at Westkirk Presbyterian Church. That growth has occurred, to God’s glory, in both the number of members and regular attendees, but also in the size of our campus. These are exciting developments, but they bring about challenges for leadership as the work of the Ruling Elder has increased for two primary reasons:

- Ruling Elders are responsible for too many of the regular activities associated with the ongoing ministry of the church; and
- Meetings of the Session are dominated by financial and programming issues, rather than the biblically established responsibilities of the Ruling Elder that are outlined in our Book of Order, namely joint (with the pastor) leadership, caregiving and spiritual oversight

In sum, the role of Ruling Elder is a visionary, spiritual oversight and leadership function. As Westkirk continues to grow, the practical and administrative role of the Elders has increased, leaving less time for the spiritual care assigned to Elders in the New Testament. All along, our goal was to find a solution to this common church leadership issue in our current Book of Order. In taking a fresh look there, we discovered that our governing document provides several measures for the polity of the church that could help us redefine the responsibilities of Ruling Elders and Deacons, as well as allow more members to be involved in leadership.

At a second retreat in November, the Session unanimously determined to: greatly reduce the administrative role of the Ruling Elders by requiring the Session to focus on spiritual leadership, caregiving, and ministry oversight. In order to accomplish this, we plan to create, beginning in February, a second Board of “Commission” Deacons who will lead and administer the commissions of the church. The significant role of our existing “Parish Deacons” will remain unchanged. These new positions will provide more leadership and serving opportunities for members of the congregation.

*(continued on page 5)*



Westkirk  
Presbyterian  
Church

**The Session**

**Moderator** - Michael Mudlaff

*Class of 2008*

George De Graaf  
Chuck Heitbrink  
Ron Long  
Kevin Riggins

*Class of 2009*

Kevin Heer  
Kirk Yentes

*Class of 2010*

Rick Eyerly  
Jerry Tuinstra  
Melinda Turnbull

**Clerk of Session** - Robin Riggins

**Treasurer** - Chris Brown

**Assistant Treasurer** - Aaron Pieper

**Commission ChairPersons**

Christian Education - Jerry Tuinstra  
Evangelism/Fellowship - Van Harden  
House and Grounds - Ron Long  
Missions - George De Graaf  
Stewardship - Chuck Heitbrink  
Worship - Kevin Riggins

**Board of Deacons**

*Class of 2008*

Barb Asman  
Dianne Glanzer  
Bette Jones  
Fran Nugteren  
Kris Thompson

*Class of 2009*

Marilyn Long  
Marilyn McCulloch  
John Schwien  
Sandy Tuinstra  
Sherie Whitehead

*Class of 2010*

Linda Aldrich  
Jeff Brady  
Kay Cunitz  
Cynthia Fisher  
Eric Wickemeyer



- 2 ..... Betty Reedquist
- 2 ..... Marj Wildrick
- 3 ..... Golda Beals
- 3 ..... \*Rachel Brady
- 3 ..... Karen Breeding
- 3 ..... Doug Phipps
- 3 ..... Kirk Sonnichsen
- 4 ..... Jeannie Havnen
- 5 ..... Butch Campfield
- 5 ..... \*B.J. Deviney
- 5 ..... Bob Schmidt
- 5 ..... \*Ben Thompson
- 6 ..... Kevin Davidson
- 6 ..... Dick Reed
- 7 ..... Jodi Pieper
- 11 ..... \*Elam Brisbois
- 11 ..... Brent Willcox
- 12 ..... Stan Thompson
- 12 ..... Carol Bahls
- 14 ..... Chad Carlson
- 16 ..... \*Jonah Mudlaff
- 20 ..... John Chenoweth
- 20 ..... Jerry Horpestad
- 20 ..... Marcia Kirkeby
- 21 ..... Jeff Harrison
- 21 ..... Sandy Tuinstra
- 23 .. Bette (Criswell) Burroughs
- 24 ..... \*Maya Pieper
- 24 ..... Kevin Riggins
- 25 ..... Ashlee Wilson
- 25 ..... Bev Olsen
- 27 ..... Joan Thompson
- 28 ..... \*Zeb Kanis
- 29 ..... Robert Buchanan
- 29 ..... Sasha Mudlaff
- 30 ..... Susan Oeffner
- 30 ..... Roberta Draper
- 31 ..... \*Olivia Brisbois
- 31 ..... JoAnne Cook

\*Youth member



- 1 ..... Kirk & Samona Yentes
- 19 ..... Kevin & Bev Olsen
- 25 ..... Jack & Bette Jones

**Condolences**

*Our sincere sympathy to the families and friends of the following:*

**Jerald F. "Jerry" Watts**, faithful member of Westkirk, who died December 1, 2008 in Urbandale.

**Lynn and Brian Dixon**. Lynn's father, Harold Curtis, died on December 13 in Jesup, Iowa.

**Barbara and Gary Robinson**. Barbara's father, LaVerne Stone, died December 15 in Manhattan, Kansas.

*Blessed be the memory of these loved ones.*





# The Bulletin Board

## January Activities – See related articles in this issue.

Thursday	1/1	<b>New Year's Day</b> , Office closed
Friday	1/2	<b>Removal of the Greens</b> , 1:00 p.m.
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Sunday	1/4	<b>Sunday School</b> , 9:00 a.m.; <b>Worship Service</b> , 10:30 a.m. <b>Informational Gathering</b> , 12 o'clock noon, Great Hall <i>New Life</i> , 6:30 p.m. <b>Informational Gathering</b> , 7:00 p.m., Hospitality Room
Monday	1/5	<b>Commissions meeting</b> , 7:00 p.m.
Tuesday	1/6	<b>Stephen Ministry</b> , 6:30 p.m.
Wednesday	1/7	<b>Informational Gathering</b> , 1:30 p.m., Hospitality Room <b>WOW</b> , supper 5:45 p.m.; <b>Choir</b> , 7:30 p.m.
Thursday	1/8	<b>Dorcas Circle</b> , 1:00 p.m. <b>Prayer Shawl Ministry</b> , 7:00 p.m.
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Sunday	1/11	<b>Sunday School</b> , 9:00 a.m. <b>Worship Service with Holy Communion</b> , 10:30 a.m. <i>New Life</i> , 6:30 p.m. <b>Sunday Night at the Kirk</b> , 6:30 p.m.
Monday	1/12	<b>Omega HouseKirk</b> , 6:30 p.m.
Tuesday	1/13	<b>New Light meeting</b> , 6:30 p.m. <b>Stephen Ministry</b> , 6:30 p.m.
Wednesday	1/14	<b>WOW</b> , supper 5:45 p.m.; <b>Choir</b> , 7:30 p.m.
Thursday	1/15	<b>February Shepherd articles due</b>
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Sunday	1/18	<b>Sunday School</b> , 9:00 a.m.; <b>Worship Service</b> , 10:30 a.m. <i>New Life</i> , 6:30 p.m.
Monday	1/19	<b>Session/Deacons Meeting</b> , 7:00 p.m.
Tuesday	1/20	<b>The Clan HouseKirk</b> , 1:00 p.m. <b>Stephen Ministry</b> , 6:30 p.m.
Wednesday	1/21	<b>WOW</b> , supper 5:45 p.m.; <b>Choir</b> , 7:30 p.m.
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Sunday	1/25	<b>Sunday School</b> , 9:00 a.m.; <b>Worship Service</b> , 10:30 a.m. <b>Annual Meeting of the Congregation</b> , Begins with potluck 5:00 p.m. <i>New Life</i> , 6:30 p.m.
Monday	1/26	<b>Omega HouseKirk</b> , 6:30 p.m.
Tuesday	1/27	<b>Bagpipers Luncheon</b> , 1:00 p.m., The Club Car <b>New Light meeting</b> , 6:30 p.m. <b>Stephen's Ministry</b> , 6:30 p.m.
Wednesday	1/28	<b>WOW</b> , supper 5:45 p.m.; <b>Choir</b> , 7:30 p.m.



### Dorcas Circle

Thursday, January 8 all ladies of the church and their guests are invited to come to Dorcas Circle at 1:00 p.m. in the Hospitality Room. **Mary Lu Younkin** will be leading us in a faith lesson called "Iron of Culture" from the DVD series Faith Lessons of the Promised Land: Crossroads of the World. Dessert and beverages will be provided by **Mary and Martha Petty**. Please join us for faith, food, and fellowship.

. . . *Karen Admussen, Moderator*

### Make a Resolution to Get Connected: Join a HouseKirk

HouseKirks (small groups) are at the heart of how our church carries out its mission of knowing Christ and making Him known and building a sense of community within our church family. There are



many opportunities to join a small group at Westkirk! It is in a small group that you will experience what the Christian journey is all about!

**What is a HouseKirk?** Simply put, it's a group of friends committed to living life together as they connect more deeply, grow in their relationship with God, and serve others whole heartedly.

**Want to know more?** Please contact a pastor or elder for more information about how you can get involved in a HouseKirk.

### Session Calls Annual Meeting

This is the official call by the Session for the Annual Meeting of the Congregation of Westkirk Presbyterian Church on **Sunday, January 25 at 6:00 p.m.**

The evening will begin with a **pot-luck supper in the Great Hall at 5:00 p.m.** Bring your favorite dish to share. Table service and beverages will be provided. You can be sure of lots of delicious food, for church folks are known to be great cooks. Come and enjoy this time of fellowship

The **business meeting of the congregation will follow at 6:00 p.m.** This will be an opportunity to review the events of 2008. The Nominating Committee will introduce the candidates for the offices of Elders and Deacons to be elected. The financial report will be reviewed and the 2009 budget will be presented for approval.

This is your opportunity to offer encouragement and helpful suggestions to your church leaders. This is a meeting every member should attend! Your presence and votes are very important to the life and health of Westkirk. **Reserve the evening of Sunday, January 25 on your calendar now!**

*(continued from page 1)*

We are excited about these reforms and hope you are as well! In order to provide you all the details you need to be informed, we have planned three informational gatherings to allow you to come and hear from us face to face and answer any questions you may have. More information is included inside this month's *Shepherd*, but if you have any questions, feel free to contact me, or any member of the Session, by phone or e-mail. Pray for us as we strive to serve the Lord and you most effectively.



## ***Pastor Michael***

### **The Leadership Development Initiative**

The Session has approved the following leadership reforms according to the guidelines provided in the Westkirk Presbyterian Church Book of Church Order:

1. Return and/or limit the Session to roles specified in the Book of Order:
  - Vision for and oversight of entire ministry, see Book of Order for definition
  - Active role in caregiving and discipline
  - Approval of Budget
  - Ruling Elders and Teaching (pastor) Elder share in spiritual leadership and service
2. Shift the leadership of the commissions (the entire ministry remains under the ultimate spiritual authority of the Session) to a new Board of “Commission” Deacons.
3. Nominate “Commission” Deacons in order to effectively administer the individual ministries of the church. “Parish” Deacons will continue their current caregiving role.
4. Remove term limits of all Deacons, seek congregational approval to amend the Book of Order and reduce the terms of service for all Deacons from 3 to 2 years.
  - Allows qualified and effective Deacons to continue to serve
  - Encourages more to accept nomination
  - Reduces burnout or ineffectiveness
5. Establish the monthly meeting of the Board of “Commission” Deacons as the primary meeting to discuss ministry administration.
6. Elevate the role of Moderator of both Deacon Boards.
7. Allow for the reduction of the number of Ruling Elders to a yet to be determined number.

### **How to Get Your Copy of The Book of Order**

A few copies of the section of the Book of Order called the Book of Government, will be available at each informational gathering. If you would like to reserve a copy in advance, you may contact the church office by phone or email. Since the entire Book of Order is 111 pages, we would prefer to limit the number of printed copies produced, but would be happy to send you an electronic copy via email. We are also working to put a .pdf file of the Book of Order online at [www.westkirk.org](http://www.westkirk.org).

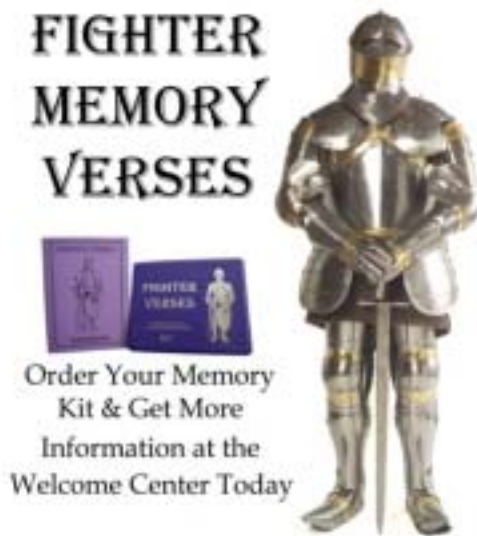
#### **Informational Gatherings to Answer Questions**

- Sunday, January 4, 12 o'clock noon in the Great Hall
- Sunday evening, January 4, 7:00 p.m. in the Hospitality Room
- Wednesday, January 7, 1:30 p.m. in the Hospitality Room

Pastor Michael and several of the Elders will be present at each informational gathering..

## Fighter Memory Verses Beginning January 4

Beginning in January we will begin a church-wide campaign focused on helping Westkirk “To Know Christ and Make Him Known” by utilizing the Fighter Verse Memory approach for memorizing scripture. Each week we will memorize a new passage of Scripture, which will be recited during the worship service. Prayerfully consider joining us as we begin this church-wide journey to memorize God’s Word. NIV **Fighter Verse Memory Packs**, with over 500 verses and a handbook with helpful hints for adults and children desiring to memorize Scripture, can be purchased for \$12 at the Welcome Center. In 2009 we will be memorizing Set A in the Fighter Memory Packs.



## Thanksgiving at Westkirk

Over 140 family members and friends of Westkirk joined the 11th Annual Thanksgiving Dinner. \$500 from the free-will offering will be sent to the Urbandale Food Pantry.

## Fighter Verses for January

**Deuteronomy 7:9** (to be recited January 4)  
*9 Know therefore that the LORD your God is God; he is the faithful God, keeping his covenant of love to a thousand generations of those who love him and keep his commands.*

**Deuteronomy 10:12-13** (to be recited January 11)  
*12 And now, O Israel, what does the LORD your God ask of you but to fear the LORD your God, to walk in all his ways, to love him, to serve the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, 13 and to observe the LORD’s commands and decrees that I am giving you today for your own good?*

**Romans 11:34-36** (to be recited January 18)  
*34 “Who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has been his counselor?” 35 “Who has ever given to God, that God should repay him?” 36 For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be the glory forever! Amen.*

**Romans 12:1-2** (to be recited January 25)  
*1 Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual act of worship. 2 Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.*

## Thank You Note . . .

Westkirk Church,

*We want to thank you for the beautiful plant. The entire family of Westkirk has been so nice. It was very helpful.*

*We are all glad Jerry & Eleanor found such a comfort with you and we know he is very happy in Heaven.*

*The family of Jerry Watts*

## From The Bible on Elders and Deacons

<sup>NIV</sup> **1 Timothy 3:1** Here is a trustworthy saying: If anyone sets his heart on being an overseer, he desires a noble task. <sup>2</sup> Now the overseer must be above reproach, the husband of but one wife, temperate, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, <sup>3</sup> not given to drunkenness, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money. <sup>4</sup> He must manage his own family well and see that his children obey him with proper respect. <sup>5</sup> (If anyone does not know how to manage his own family, how can he take care of God's church?) <sup>6</sup> He must not be a recent convert, or he may become conceited and fall under the same judgment as the devil. <sup>7</sup> He must also have a good reputation with outsiders, so that he will not fall into disgrace and into the devil's trap. <sup>8</sup> Deacons, likewise, are to be men worthy of respect, sincere, not indulging in much wine, and not pursuing dishonest gain. <sup>9</sup> They must keep hold of the deep truths of the faith with a clear conscience. <sup>10</sup> They must first be tested; and then if there is nothing against them, let them serve as deacons. <sup>11</sup> In the same way, their wives are to be women worthy of respect, not malicious talkers but temperate and trustworthy in everything. <sup>12</sup> A deacon must be the husband of but one wife and must manage his children and his household well. <sup>13</sup> Those who have served well gain an excellent standing and great assurance in their faith in Christ Jesus.

<sup>NIV</sup> **Titus 1:5** The reason I left you in Crete was that you might straighten out what was left unfinished and appoint elders in every town, as I directed you. <sup>6</sup> An elder must be blameless, the husband of but one wife, a man whose children believe and are not open to the charge of being wild and disobedient. <sup>7</sup> Since an overseer is entrusted with God's work, he must be blameless— not overbearing, not quick-tempered, not given to drunkenness, not violent, not pursuing dishonest gain. <sup>8</sup> Rather he must be hospitable, one who loves what is good, who is self-controlled, upright, holy and disciplined. <sup>9</sup> He must hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught, so that he can encourage others by sound doctrine and refute those who oppose it.

<sup>NIV</sup> **Acts 6:1** In those days when the number of disciples was increasing, the Grecian Jews among them complained against the Hebraic Jews because their widows were being overlooked in the daily distribution of food. <sup>2</sup> So the Twelve gathered all the disciples together and said, "It would not be right for us to neglect the ministry of the word of God in order to wait on tables. <sup>3</sup> Brothers, choose seven men from among you who are known to be full of the Spirit and wisdom. We will turn this responsibility over to them <sup>4</sup> and will give our attention to prayer and the ministry of the word." <sup>5</sup> This proposal pleased the whole group. They chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit; also Philip, Procorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolas from Antioch, a convert to Judaism. <sup>6</sup> They presented these men to the apostles, who prayed and laid their hands on them. <sup>7</sup> So the word of God spread. The number of disciples in Jerusalem increased rapidly, and a large number of priests became obedient to the faith.

## Avoiding Confusion with the Deacon's Fund

In order to avoid confusion, the Session has decided to change the name of the "Deacons" Fund' to the Benevolence Fund. The Benevolence Fund is administered by the church staff and the Treasurer, who use the gifts given by the members and friends of Westkirk Presbyterian Church for the express purpose of helping those in need, both from within and outside our congregation.

The Deacons' Administration budget line item is the portion of the annual budget designated to administer the ongoing costs of the Deacons ministry. This ministry would include reimbursing Deacons for personal expenses associated with caring for members in their parish, as well as the costs of Deacon ministries, such as: new baby gifts, college student care packages, etc.

## Cookie Walk & Christmas Store A Success!!

Thanks to all of you for your wonderful donations of cookies and Christmas items for our fund raisers for the Westkirk youth and the Benevolence Fund. The Cookie Walk proceeds were close to \$1000 and the Christmas Store sales yielded close to \$500. Thanks to all of you who assisted these two projects in any way— donating or working.



## The Story of Stephen Ministry, (Part 2)

What was the impact of the commissioning of the first nine Stephen Ministers on St. Stephen's Lutheran Church in St Louis, Missouri? The impact was immediate. People began receiving the focused Christian care they needed. Fewer people were slipping through the cracks, and Haugk found he had more time to perform his other pastoral duties. The Stephen Ministers were surprised by the spiritual growth they encountered as they saw God working through them to bring love and healing to others.

The story would have ended there had not two of the Stephen Ministers cornered Haugk on a hot May morning after worship services. "This is good stuff," they said to him. "We're not going to let you go until you promise to bring this ministry to other churches!" Still wearing his vestments and perspiring from the heat, Haugk gave in and agreed to find a way to bring Stephen Ministry to other churches.

In November 1975 Haugk and his wife Joan, founded the not-for-profit Stephen Ministries organization and began bringing Stephen Ministry to other congregations. It spread like wildfire. Today, Westkirk Presbyterian Church is one of more than 7,000 congregations from more than 90 denominations that has Stephen Ministry. Over a quarter million people have been trained as Stephen Ministers, a number that grows by tens of thousands each year. More than a million people across the United States, Canada, and the world have been touched by God's love through a Stephen Minister. And that is the mark of God's doing, because finally the story of Stephen Ministry is a million stories and more of caring ministry.

Here at Westkirk, Stephen Ministry is one of three ways we seek to provide care for our congregation. First, Pastor Michael and the Elders try to respond to each need as it arises. Second, our Parish Deacons seek to maintain constant contact with each member throughout the year. And lastly, our Stephen Ministers meet the needs of those in and outside our congregation who are experiencing a more lengthy time of trial. Please pray for our staff, Elders, Parish Deacons and Stephen Ministers as they serve the Lord together.

## Young Adult Sunday School Class

*And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near. Hebrew 10:24-25*

Have you heard about the new Sunday school class at Westkirk? Since October the new young adult class has been meeting and studying God's word in the hospitality room. This group has finished studying a video series titled: "Vintage Jesus, Timely Answers for Timeless Questions." In addition to serious study of God's word the group has quickly created an environment of fellowship and conversation that is both honoring God and blessing those who attend. The group is currently studying "Romans, The Letter that Changed the World" by Tommy Nelson. These scripturally based studies continue to produce thought provoking conversation in the group.

The group has already had the opportunity to fellowship outside of class, meeting at Mark and Erika Scheve's home for dinner and hopes to regularly meet outside of class to have fun and get to know each other. The class seeks to create a community of young adult Christians who can support and minister to each other as they seek to know God's truth.

There is only one thing missing from this group... YOU! If you are a "young adult" at Westkirk – you need to be in the hospitality room at 9:00 a.m. Sunday mornings! Stop by and check out the class, you will be blessed. If you have questions about the class, please contact Kevin Heer or Mark Scheve. Please be in prayer for this group that God would bless those who attend and that they would honor and glorify His wonderful name.



# Presenting . . .

## Kurt, Gloria and Ben Huyser

After a delicious dinner with the Huyser family we sat together at the dining room table and talked. One of the first interesting things learned was that Kurt and Gloria have known each other since the age of ten!

Kurt was raised in Urbandale. He has two older brothers, both living outside the state of Iowa; however his parents live in the Urbandale area. Kurt graduated from the Urbandale Schools. His next step was DMAAC, Ankeny Campus for two years after which he joined the Navy in 1995. He was in Japan (Atsugi Naval Air Station) for three years. Kurt was attached to a helicopter squadron assigned to the aircraft carrier USS Independence. Kurt's ship saw action during "Operation Desert Shield" in 1998 in the Persian Gulf. In 1998 he transferred to the Great Lakes Recruit Training Center near Chicago where he served until leaving the Navy in 2001 .



Gloria is the daughter of George and Gail De Graaf of our Westkirk family. She is the youngest of four children, having two brothers and one sister. She was born and raised in Illinois, near Chicago. The family moved to West Des Moines in 1980 where she attended the West Des Moines Schools, graduating from Valley High School. Kurt and Gloria had the roles of Joseph and Mary in a Christmas pageant for their church, the Des Moines Christian Reformed Church, while high school students. Gloria says Kurt pursued her from that time on!! Gloria went back to Illinois after high school, attending Wheaton College and majoring in Elementary Education. She then taught in the Wheaton Public Schools for eleven years.

After Kurt's transfer to the Recruit Training Center near Chicago, the two started dating seriously. They were married in 2000 after a bad winter snowstorm. "Kenworth," a miniature schnauzer joined Kurt and Gloria in 2000. He was named after the Kenworth trucks. However Ben, their real joy arrived in 2002. They were still living in Illinois and now their goal was to move nearer their parents and Ben's grandparents. Kurt received a surprise job transfer to Iowa in 2003. That was a gift from God. He now works for ChemStation of Iowa. Gloria first taught half-time at Merrill but now teaches full time at Findley Elementary in Des Moines. Ben attended Des Moines Christian Preschool for two years and is now in Kindergarten at Findley. He goes to school with his mom. After some years of saving, they bought their home in 2005.

Ben likes race cars, sings "The Pie Song," and is learning to read. He played soccer this summer and helped his mom with VBS. He loves to ride his bike and is yearning for the day that the training wheels will be removed.

Kurt and Gloria like NASCAR races. Kurt has an interest in trucks and is a beginning woodworker, while Gloria likes scrapbooking.

We found this family to be open in their visit with us. They know God is working in their lives. They renewed their marriage vows in the class taught by Gloria's parents and highly recommend all couples do this. As of now Gloria teaches "Kids of the Kingdom"—a worship service geared toward pre-kindergarten and kindergarten children during the morning worship service. Kurt is an usher, regularly serving on Sunday mornings. What an asset they are to our church!

. . . by Helen Main



Welcome to the New Year! This will be an exciting January for our Congregation of Westkirk Presbyterian Church.

### **Sunday January 11, 2009**

Those who were on the Mexico Mission Team are “chomping at the bit” to tell you all about their trip. December was just too busy for all of us and we wanted to be sure every one had an opportunity to hear all of the details of their trip. They were down there with Greg and Cathy Huffer who are the missionaries with Back2Back Ministries, which we support. Those who went on the trip were: Sasha Mudlaff and Jonah,

Steve Brown and Anna, Julie Norem and Ashley and Eli, Pam Brown and Monica and David Lanham. Also Holly Empey from Urban Heights Covenant Church.

Study up on where Monterey is in Mexico. Did they have snow for Christmas?? January 11 is the date set during the Sunday School hour (9:00-10:00 a.m.) It will be held in the sanctuary. I think there will be some videos and other pictures available, also.

### **Wednesday January 14, 2009** (5:45 p.m. for Soup. 6:30-7:30 p.m. for the presentation)

Dan Marvin will be sharing information from his trip to Hungary. Dan is with International Messengers who set up English Camps in the Eastern Bloc Countries, like Hungary, for Mission Teams to go and help teach English to the native people there. Is that something you might want to do? Check with Dan on how to get involved.

Where in the world is Hungary?? They probably speak Chinese there, so you might brush upon your Italian.. Dan has something special for those who come to the Wednesday night dinner specials. He is cooking up some Cold Fruit Soup for us to taste. I tasted a sample and, boy, is it good. Yum, Yum!! What is the capital of Hungary? What country is right next to it, where the Lucacius have a Medical Mission? Ask your family to see if they know. See you on Wednesday January 14, 5:45 p.m. if you want to taste the Cold Fruit Soup.

### **Mission Commission Opportunities**

Join the Mission Commission if you are interested in Missions. Do you have a heart for making sure the gospel is going out to all the world? Do you want to help people even here in Des Moines, Iowa to hear the gospel, and also make sure they have food to eat, a bed to sleep in, and warm clothing to wear? We support these types of ministries and you can help in that support. See one of the Mission Commission members.

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 members. They are: Gail De Graaf, Cynthia Fisher, Somer Gillett, Dan Marvin, Rus & Julie Norem, Wendy Reed, Bryan Sharp, Alvin & Lois Lundgren Stecker, Sherie Whitehead.

*... George DeGraaf, Mission Chair*

### **Navigators Visit Westkirk**



On December 21, Brett and Micki Strait, our Westkirk Commissioned Missionaries, along with Brian and Heather Hanneman, updated the Sunday School classes on the effectiveness of the Navigators with the college campus ministry.

## New Light for the New Year

The post-holiday season and cold months of winter can be very difficult for people suffering from depression or anxiety disorders. The goal of the **New Light Depression Support Group** is to bring light into these times of darkness.

New Light is not a “pity party.” Although we have become very good at listening to one another and giving comfort, we are also able to laugh and have fun during the process. Our focus is on hope—not despair—as we are reminded that God is in control of our lives and has a plan for us even when we can’t see the light at the end of the tunnel.

New Light meets on the second and fourth Tuesdays of each month from 6:30-7:30 p.m. in the Church Lounge. **On January 13, our guest leader will be Cal Meuzelaar, LISW and Clinic Manager at Pine Rest Christian Mental Health Services.** He will speak on a specific topic and then offer the opportunity to ask questions regarding your concerns.

If you are experiencing depression or anxiety, or if you are a caregiver to someone who is suffering, I hope you will consider making New Light a part of your New Year.

*. . . Dianne Glanzer, Facilitator*

\* \* \* \* \*

## WOW Christmas Program

The children did an excellent job in last month’s Christmas play, **The Messiah Triumphs**. It was awesome to hear them sing and, especially, to hear them recite Ephesians 6:10-18 from memory!

Congratulations and thank you to all the teachers, helpers, costume designers, AV, and accompanist: Jerry & Sandy Tuinstra, Lee & Melinda Turnbull, Nancy Schmidt, Jennie Meza, Erica Scheve, Sasha Mudlaff, Amanda Carlson, Chris Brown and Elaine Erickson.





This month at “The Gathering” (our weekly Sunday night program for senior high youth) we will be beginning a twelve week teaching series called *Vintage Jesus*, focused on providing timeless answers to twelve timely questions about the life and teachings of Jesus. Questions we will be studying in January include:

- January 4 Is Jesus the Only God?
- January 11 How Human Was Jesus?
- January 18 How Did People Know Jesus Was Coming?
- January 25 Why Did Jesus Come to Earth?



### Upcoming Youth Events

- 1/4 The Gathering, 6:30-8:00 p.m., Westkirk Youth Room
- 1/11 The Gathering, 6:30-8:00 p.m., Westkirk Youth Room
- 1/18 The Gathering, 6:30-8:00 p.m., Westkirk Youth Room
- 1/24 tobyMac Concert, Downtown Des Moines, \$10 at the door
- 1/25 The Gathering, 6:30-8:00 p.m., Westkirk Youth Room

### Youth House Kirks Are Coming!!

In September 2009, we will be beginning House Kirks for our senior high youth and we are praying now for the Lord to prepare and provide leaders for this important ministry to our young people. If you are interested in serving our young people in this by leading a Youth HouseKirk, please contact Pastor Steve.

### Youth House Kirk Leader Job Description

To participate in small groups that are designed to take students into a deeper walk with Christ. The groups are centered on Bible study, accountability, and fellowship. Small group leaders will build relationships with students who are in their group, modeling a love for God and His word. Each leader will go through a six-session training course that will equip them to lead or co-lead a small group. Meeting time: Varies. Time per week: 5 hours. Length of commitment: 1 Year

### Middle School Sunday School Teachers Needed

Beginning in August 2009 we will be in need of a middle school (7<sup>th</sup> & 8<sup>th</sup> graders) Sunday School team of teachers. Prayerfully consider investing in the lives of these students. If you are interested in learning more about what it means to be a middle school Sunday School teacher, please contact **Pastor Steve** or **Karen Admussen**.

### Middle School Sunday School Job Description

To plan and teach a section of one of our Sunday morning classes. You will work with a Sunday School team, which is present each week, to bring God’s Word before the students. Your involvement will be focused on the 20-30 minute teaching time during each Sunday morning class. Training is required for each first-time teacher. Meeting time: Sunday 9:00-10:00 a.m. Time per week: 5 hours. Length of commitment: 6-12 weeks.

# Children's Ministry

Parents, as the new year begins and as you reflect back over last year, can you say with confidence that you and your children have grown spiritually? We offer lots of programs and classes and activities for you and your children, and we pray that they are making a difference in your lives. This year the Christian Education Commission is taking a fresh look at all that we teach our children and youth to see that we have a scope and sequence which makes sense. Do we cover all the bases at the different age levels? Is anything missing? By the time your child reaches high school, will they have a solid foundation? If you are interested in being a part of this special committee or you would just like to give us some feedback, please contact one of the Christian Education members: Jerry & Sandy Tuinstra, Steve Randall, Amanda Carlson, Rachel Heer, or Karen Admussen.

One area that the CE Commission feels is lacking is parenting, so we will begin adding a parenting tip each month to the Shepherd and also begin offering monthly parenting sessions. The first meeting will be Saturday, January 24 from 10:00 a.m.-11:30 a.m.. At these sessions we would discuss various topics, share prayer requests and resources, and divide into different groups based on the ages of your children, from expecting parents to parents of high schoolers. Again, please let me know if there are any specific topics that you would like to discuss at these sessions. . . . *Karen Admussen, Director of Children's Ministry*

## Parenting Tip of the Month

**DON'T BE AN ELI!** Be their parent, not their friend. There are a lot of people who can be their friends, but you are the only one who can be their parent. A friend is a person who is attached to another by feelings of affection; a person who gives assistance; a supporter. A parent is all of this, but has the authority to put down guidelines and must exercise that authority. That can be somewhat threatening but is necessary for the child to reach their full potential!

*I Samuel 3:12-13 At that time I will carry out against Eli everything I spoke against his family—from beginning to end. For I told him that I would judge his family forever because of the sin he knew about; his sons made themselves contemptible, and he failed to restrain them.*

. . . *Jerry and Sandy Tuinstra*



## Kids Own Worship Provides the Anthem

On Sunday, December 21, Kids Own Worship provided the worship service anthem, singing *We Three Kings* and *Just Like You Promised*.

## ***The Shepherd***

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