



# The Messenger

Garfield Park United Church of Christ

Indianapolis

December 2009



## Pastor Tom to retire March 1

### In his own words

Q: Pastor Tom, you've just announced your retirement. What led you to that decision?

A: *I love the people of Garfield Park United Church of Christ, and more than that I love the important mission God has given us: To help God draw people closer to knowing God and loving God, especially in an area where there's particular need and in a time when people are struggling to know how to have loving relationships.*

#### A chat with Pastor Tom

*My sense is that this is God's time to begin a new chapter in the life of Garfield Park UCC.*  
-Pastor Tom

*Some pastors "hold on" to a church until it's convenient for themselves, i.e. age 65 or 66. I'll be 64 this spring, and I've always tried to be a good steward of my health. Susan and my sense is that this is God's time to begin a new chapter in the life of Garfield Park UCC.*

Q: Did the church's budget problems play into the timing of your decision?

A: *We had decided that we'd rather begin the emotion of a change in our leadership of Garfield Park UCC after the emotion of our daughter's wedding. The change was coming.*

*However, independently, on the Sunday prior to the annual meeting, we decided - and then thanked God for the unity we had - that we shouldn't "play games" when the following Sunday, not knowing of our plans, some budget issues might result in the severe cutting of the salaries of our great staff. The budget had to do with the timing, but not the sense this was God's time for a new chapter in the church's life.*

(Continued inside)

### Pastor Mark will be interim pastor; church to go to single minister

As Pastor Tom moves into retirement from GPUCC, Pastor Mark will take on the role of interim senior pastor and the church will transition to having just one minister.

Facing dropping attendance and financial woes, the congregation last month approved a \$222,000 budget that will fund one pastoral position starting March 1, the date of Pastor Tom's retirement.

The savings from the change enabled the congregation to approve a budget that is projected to be balanced — without any significant cuts in other areas.

However, the congregation also voted to transfer money out of the Wills & Bequests Fund to cover a budget gap for 2009. The precise amount will be determined once the final offerings for the year are balanced against spending, but the transfer could be as much as \$15,000.

Congregation President Terry Miller announced at last month's annual meeting that the church council will create a task force to consider the pastoral opening.

The group will consider whether to conduct a search for a new pastor — for which Pastor Mark would be a candidate — or to recommend Mark for the post.

OUR PURPOSE: By faithful lives in Jesus' community  
We strive to lead everyone to know and love God

## Pastor Tom continued from the cover

Q: Sometimes pastors give a church more notice. Why did you decide to give only three months notice of your retirement?

A: *Actually most pastors give a church three months notice, sometimes two. Several people among our leadership had asked me to give six or twelve months notice. My mentors unanimously said that it would be unloving to others as well as ourselves to drag out the emotions of this change from being your pastoral leader and friend to simply being your friend in Jesus' love.*

Q: Will you be leaving the church?

A: *Every church movement I know of recommends a period of separation of at least a year after a pastor leaves a church, so that the church can begin to bond with the new pastoral leader. Pastor Y at Immanuel stayed busy with several other churches in our area for a dozen years, occasionally being around Immanuel, before his return to full activity there about a year ago.*

*It would be too much for me to be in town and not be your friend, and I will be praying for this next chapter in the life of Garfield Park UCC to greatly honor God. I clearly desire all of the rest of us to stay committed to God's mission in and through Garfield Park UCC, in our time and place, and I will have to find my way to do so - you can pray for Susan and me too!*

*Calls for funerals,  
weddings, Baptisms,  
sicknesses, etc., must  
be to the new  
pastoral leadership!  
- Pastor Tom*

Q: Will you be leaving Indianapolis?

A: *God willing, Susan expects to continue her now twenty years career teaching kindergarten at Douglas MacArthur Elementary. She is more than five years my younger. Unless both our children are moved away, we may be here the rest of the years God gives us!*

Q: Can members still call you when they are in need of spiritual guidance, are in the hospital or have other needs?

A: *In order for the church to be allowed to bond with new leadership, such calls will put me in a very troubling bind. This will be difficult for many of us, including me! The church became loyal to my leadership after great years with The Reverend Schultz and with Pastor Schoen, and God can do that again. You should be calling your Pastor, whomever he or she is, just as you were calling me rather than Pastor Schoen if you were here twenty four years ago! Calls for funerals, weddings, Baptisms, sicknesses, etc., must be to the new pastoral leadership!*

*After my love-  
relationship with God,  
and with the family  
God gave me, this has  
been the greatest  
experience of my life!  
- Pastor Tom*

Q: Are you really "retiring?"

A: *I will begin taking my annuity (UCC pension) on March 1st. I am not going on social security yet. Like most of the Garfield Park UCC elders I know, God will probably find much for me to do after March 1st - some for remuneration possibly - but I have no idea what. Several of you have told me not to jump into other commitments too quickly.*

Q: What do you think you will take away from more than two decades of work at GPUCC?

A: *After my love-relationship with God, and with the family God gave me, this has been the greatest experience of my life! I thank everyone who's been a part of what God is doing! Maybe I'll know in five or ten years enough to better answer that question.*

*As Coaches Joe Paterno (Penn State football) or John Wooden (UCLA basketball) would say, "Leave it all on the field/floor!" I don't want to take anything away, and I'll depend on Jesus' Spirit to guide my next servanthood and give me the strength and love for it, day-by-day. I hope everyone else will too!*

*Meanwhile, it's the season of Advent, meditating on and celebrating the Great New Thing God was about to do!!! It's not about you - or me - it's about Jesus - and the righteousness, justice, love and hope, though faith, by Grace, that are Jesus' mission in the world!*

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THOUGHTS: Whatever the surprises of the future, Jesus will never be surpassed.

- Ernest Renan

# Teen's Team plans pizza, caroling & gift exchange

December activity: Sunday at 3 p.m., meet at the church at 2:30 p.m. - Incredible Pizza venture.

The cost will be \$13 per person, which includes buffet and game card for mini-golf, mini-bowling, bumper cars and go-karts. It should be a cool time together.

**Teen's Team for Christ** Then on Dec. 20, we will meet at the church at 4:30 p.m. for our annual Christmas caroling and party at the Grahn's.

We will have a gift exchange of \$10.00 or less dollars, wrapped three times.

Hope you will be joining us. *Love Don & Sandy Young*

p.s. Everyday think of something you are grateful for.

## New Teen's Team Officers

President - Alex Johnson  
Vice President - Chris Rhyneanson  
Secretary - Katelyn Corya  
Treasure - Tanner Schaller

## *Great new items at the library*

New items have been added to the Church Library. You will find the books on the Library Table in the Welcome Area during the month of December.



- Books for adults – Into the Wardrobe: C. S. Lewis and the Narnia Chronicles by David C. Downing, Mosaic: Pieces of My Life So Far by Amy Grant, Michal by Jill Eileen Smith, The Christmas Hope by Donna VanLiere, and The Unfinished Gift by Dan Walsh.
- Book for tweens/teens – Wildcats in the House by Steve Russo and Gabi Russo.
- Books for children – Ruth and Naomi by Jean Marzollo, and Dancing Drum: A Cherokee Legend by Terri Cohlene.
- CDs – Hero: The Rock Opera produced by Pete Stewart, and Peace On Earth by Casting Crowns.

To borrow a book from the Library Table, sign and date the card from the back of the book. Place the card in the sign pocket. Return the book in four weeks to the Library located downstairs in the Church lounge. The return box is on top of the filing cabinet.

## *Hints for the gift-giving season*

A new Consumer Reports survey offers helpful tips on what holiday gifts to buy and what to avoid. Gift cards are a common choice, and they still head the list of items people want (tied this year with electronics).

However, since 25 percent of last year's gift card recipients still haven't used the cards, the article suggested that it might not be the best gift.

**Good Sense** Clothing is another gift-giving staple, but it's also the gift most likely to disappoint. If you're going that route, people say they would prefer not to receive socks, shirts, sweaters, slippers, or ties. What would they like? Pajamas.

On a related note, Consumer Reports also found that 36 percent of us plan to do some regifting this year - up from 31 percent last year and 24 percent in 2007. If you're planning to give away something you previously received as a gift, here are some good ground rules .

It's very hard to resist the call of the mall this time of year, but keep in mind that the gifts people tend to remember and value the most are items made for them (it doesn't have to be expensive or time-consuming), the gift of time (know someone who wants to start a vegetable garden? Give them an inexpensive book on the subject and a homemade gift card good for two hours of digging time next spring), and gifts that bring back fond memories (an inexpensively framed photo of something you did together this past year will likely be a hit).

Of course, some other excellent choices include the gift of a guide to using money as an expression of one's life purpose or a roadmap out of financial trouble.

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**THOUGHTS: When you are going through hell, don't stop to take pictures.  
Keep moving. — Wally Amos**



# For Kids!

## STAINED-GLASS STAR COOKIES

These star cookies will remind you of the star that led the Magi, or wise men, to our Lord Jesus. Enjoy these treats for yourself or give them as gifts.

### What you need:

- An adult to help
- 3 cups flour
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1 cup sugar
- 1 cup (2 sticks) margarine or butter, softened
- 2 eggs
- 1 1/2 teaspoons vanilla extract
- Plastic wrap
- Hard candy such as Life Savers in assorted colors
- Zippered baggies
- Rolling pin
- 2 star cookie cutters, one much smaller than the other
- Aluminum foil



### What you do:

1. Mix the flour, baking powder and salt together.
2. Cream the sugar and butter. Add the eggs and vanilla.
3. Add the flour mixture and beat until well blended.
4. Divide the dough into four equal pieces. Wrap each piece in plastic wrap and refrigerate for about 30 minutes.
5. Separate candies by color and place each color in a sealed, zippered baggie. With a rolling pin, crush candy into small pieces (not a fine powder).
6. One at a time, roll out each chilled dough piece on a well-floured surface.
7. Use the large cookie cutter to make stars, and then place them on a foil-lined cookie sheet. Then press the small star cookie cutter into each large star and remove the small piece of star-shaped dough.
8. Place some crushed candy in each star-shaped hole.
9. Bake at 350 degrees for 10-12 minutes or until golden brown. (The candy will melt and be translucent when cooled, like a stained-glass window.)

# Looking back & ahead

I wish I could take credit for the idea of combining Vacation Bible School with Kids Club, but I'll have to thank the Board of Christian Education for that idea. It turned out to be a good one. We changed VBS into Vacation Bible Summer, doing one evening per week (the Kids Club format) instead of just five nights in one week. The outdoor games and bounce house time from Kids Club was a good combination

## Pastor Mark's Annual Report

with VBS. During the summer, we had a total of 39 adults helping or leading and 102 kids (17 of those kids served in leadership roles as well). I am very thankful to everyone who helped or brought kids. Our biggest challenge will continue to be: how can we better assimilate more of those kids into the year-round life of our church?

Starting this summer, I assumed a larger role in worship planning. One of my goals related to Sunday morning content is that, if your friends or neighbors asked you what we are "doing" on Sunday mornings at church at any time, you would find that question easy to answer. For the 8:15 and 10:30 services, this past winter and spring, such an answer would have sounded like, "We're learning how to handle suffering as we study the book of Job." Late spring and early summer, the answer would have been: "We're doing a series on prayer." From late summer until now, you hopefully would have been able to say, "We're working through the Ten Commandments." My own life has been challenged in each of these series.

We have been talking for months and even years about changing our Sunday morning schedule. In many churches, the two-way teaching, fellowship, and personal care of members that takes place through adult Sunday school also takes place through small groups and weekly ministries. We have those in our church, yet I am feeling an increasing pressure to turn Sunday morning into a "one-stop" experience, partly because our church is so spread out geographically. For this and other reasons, I believe the time is right to return to an adult Sunday school approach during the 9:15 hour, and to start integrating music from the existing Praise-Worship service into the 10:30 service.

Of course, we want to be sensitive to how members of all generations feel about such changes. But I've come to realize that the reason many churches don't have conflict over music is that they don't have multiple generations represented. We do, and age diversity is a good "problem" to have. I'm glad we don't have a church with no grey hair, where I would be considered one of the "older" adults (at age 35!). I'm glad we don't have a church with no young people. Someday, I pray that our church will have cultural diversity as well. But diversity always means compromise and mutual sacrifice in the name of unity. And I think God cares more about how we strive for unity in the midst of diversity than he cares about many things that are a big deal to us.

It has been six years since I first met Pastor Tom. During my interview process here, several friends were serving as associate pastors elsewhere and going through difficult relationships with their lead pastors. Some lost their jobs over it. This impressed upon me that, going into my role as associate pastor at Garfield Park UCC, my relationship with Pastor Tom would be crucial. But I had nothing to worry about. Pastor Tom is not the jealous, territorial, or controlling type. Instead, he has been a joy to work with, and it has been a pleasure to serve with him throughout the fourth quarter of his time here at GPUCC.

-Pastor Mark

**THE WORD: For God did not give us a spirit of timidity, but a spirit of power, of love and of self-discipline. — 2 Timothy 1:7 (NIV)**

**Attention:**  
All members with  
children and members  
who love children:



On Dec. 20 during the 10:30 a.m. worship service, there will be a special drama presented by the children of GPUCC.

It will be followed by a video montage of our children and their prayers for the season. Mark your calendars and allow the children to lift your spirits five days before Christmas!

Children who want to participate should wear a white shirt, if possible, and meet in the "cry" room at 10 a.m. on Dec. 20.

## December Birthdays!

Details are omitted from our online version for privacy

## Anniversaries!

Details are omitted from our online version for privacy

## Congregation notes

### Congrats to Dana

*And a thank you...*



A heartfelt "Thank you" to my church family for the beautiful gifts in recognition of my 25 years as secretary at Garfield Park UCC.

The snow globe with the 23rd Psalm playing "Amazing Grace" and the wooden picture box hold a special place on our mantel now.

Thanks to all, Dana

### You're invited

Sarah Wallsmith invites members of the congregation to witness her wedding vows on Jan. 2 at GPUCC.

Join the celebration as she weds Russ Hull Jr.



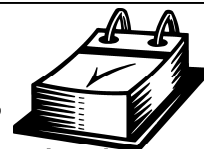
**Do you have someone to thank?** A note, event or sentiment you'd like to share with the congregation?

Let me know by emailing me at [lweidenbener@yahoo.com](mailto:lweidenbener@yahoo.com) or putting a note in The Messenger mailbox by the choir room.

### Beyond December

### Upcoming events

- Fish Fry 2010, June 25-26
- All-Church McCormick's Creek Retreat, Sept. 24-26



Check Your Calendar

Want to order a Christmas poinsettia to honor a loved one?

Call Dana at 784-8343 or watch your bulletin for more details!



THOUGHTS: The mystery of the humanity of Christ, that he sunk himself into our flesh, is beyond all human understanding. - Martin Luther

# Merry Christmas!



## *Holiday events & activities*

All-Church Happy Birthday Christmas Party, Dec. 5, 6:30-8:30 p.m.

Staff Christmas Dinner, Dec. 6, The Garrison, Fort Harrison State Park, 12:30 p.m.

Puppeteer Christmas Celebrations, 9:30 a.m., Dec. 13, Fellowship Hall

Wrap with Charlie, Dec. 13, after worship

Christmas Basket Preparation, Dec. 18, 6 p.m.

Children's Christmas Drama, Dec. 20, during the 3rd service

Junior Youth Caroling, Dec. 20

Teen's Team Christmas caroling & party, Dec. 20, meet at church at 4:30 pm

Christmas Eve Worship, Family Service, 7 p.m., Dec. 24

Christmas Eve Worship with Choir & Communion, 11 p.m. Dec. 24

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Secretary Dana Seitz 784-8343  
Editor Lesley Weidenbener

### Sunday Worship Services

8:15 a.m. Early Worship

9:15 a.m. Praise Worship

9:15 a.m. Morning Mission for kids

10:30 a.m. Traditional Worship

Church office hours 9 a.m. – 1 p.m. Mon-Fri

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# DECEMBER 2009

*Bible studies listed  
in italics. See below  
for information.*

**Sunday Worship Schedule**  
**8:15 a.m. Early Worship**  
**9:15 a.m. Praise Worship**  
**10:30 a.m. Traditional Worship**

**For KIDS on Sundays**  
**9:15 a.m. Morning Mission**  
**10:30 a.m. Jesus'sSpace.com**  
**(after Children's Message)**

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<b>Bible Study Information</b> Renew Bible Study, open to new members, call Susan 882-4016 Men's Accountability Group, closed, call Mark 783-1087 Men's Study, open to new members, call Terry 881-8807 Prayer Group, meets at agreed upon times, call Louella 972-6947 Ladies' Bible Study, open to new members, call Lisa at 882-7264		<b>1</b>  <i>6:30 pm Men's Study</i>	<b>2</b> 10:10 am Tutoring at School 34 6:30 pm NA meeting 7 pm Choir practice	<b>3</b>  <i>6:45 pm Ladies' Bible Study</i>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>  6:30-8:30 pm All-Church Happy Birthday Christmas Party
<b>6 Communion</b> 12:30 pm Staff Christmas Party at The Garrison, Ft Harrison State Park 2 pm Worship at the Altenheim 3 pm Teen's Team pizza outing 5 pm Head to the Heart	<b>7</b>  <i>7:30 pm Renew Bible Study</i>	<b>8</b>  <i>6:30 pm Men's                      Accountability Group</i>	<b>9</b> 10:10 am Tutoring at School 34 6:30 pm NA meeting 7 pm Choir practice	<b>10</b>  7 pm Church Council Call Terry 881-8807	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b> 1 pm Puppet setup  1 pm Praise Band rehearsal
<b>13</b> 9:15 am Puppeteer Christmas Celebration in Fellowship Hall Wrap with Charlie—after worship	<b>14</b> Noon - Young at Heart  <i>7:30 pm Renew Bible Study</i>	<b>15</b>  <i>6:30 pm Men's Study</i>	<b>16</b> 10:10 am Tutoring at School 34 6:30 pm NA meeting 7 pm Choir practice	<b>17</b> 2 pm Altenheim Christmas Pageant  <i>6:45 pm Ladies' Bible Study</i>	<b>18</b>  6 pm Christmas basket preparation	<b>19</b> Christmas Basket Pickup 10 am—noon 3 pm—5 pm 2 pm Conglomerates Christmas Party
<b>20</b> Christmas Program—3rd worship  Junior Youth caroling—after 3rd service  4:30 pm Teen's Team Christmas caroling and party at the Grahn's	<b>21</b>  <i>7:30 pm Renew Bible Study</i>	<b>22</b>  <i>6:30 pm Men's                      Accountability Group</i>	<b>23</b>  6:30 pm NA meeting 7 pm Choir practice	<b>24 Christmas Eve</b> 7 pm Family Service  11 pm Worship with Choir & Communion	<b>25 Christmas</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>27</b>	<b>28</b>  <i>7:30 pm Renew Bible Study</i>	<b>29</b>  <i>6:30 pm Men's Study</i>	<b>30</b> 10:10 am Tutoring at School 34 6:30 pm Life Together mtg 6:30 pm NA meeting 7 pm Choir practice	<b>31</b>	<b>January 1</b>  New Year's Day	<b>2</b>