



January 2009

SPIRIT IN THE PARK

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE MORGAN PARK UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Dear Friends...

We again greet a new year very perplexed wondering how the year 2008 flew away and what we have done with it. You may have had some times of great joy and some times of sorrow in your family in 2008. As a church we have had joyful moments, such as baptisms, the reception of new members and the consecration of memorial gifts. We also have had times of grieving when we were witnesses to the violence in our community and when our members lost loved ones.

When we enter into the new year I will try to visualize each one of your faces in my mind and pray for strength on your faith journey. The whole world has been on a roller coaster ride with wars, terrorist attacks, natural disasters, financial turmoil and political corruption. No one has been immune from the fear, stress and frustration that accompanied these scary incidents. But I pray for each of you that you know the privilege of being a child of God. God in Jesus Christ encourages us to dream of a new future and gives us the wisdom to be strong and faithful.

I have a dream for our country as we face this new year. I hope that we realize that we cannot manage the world, communities and our individual lives with deception, greed and ignorance. I hope that our nation produces more right-minded leaders and citizens.

I have a dream for our church as we face this new year. I hope that we cherish deeply that we are a diverse congregation. We are not just a bunch of people who have different skin colors and are from different cultures and backgrounds. We are the people who recognize that all people are God's people and made in God's image. We honor the differences among us and we build a stronger community of faith because of differences.

I have one more dream for our church as we face this new year. I hope that we have a steady worship attendance of one hundred persons each Sunday. I dream that you have the burden in your minds to pray and to invite your friends and neighbors to Christ. We are the witnesses to Christ through our deeds and words.

What are your dreams for the New Year? I want you to e-mail me (eunhyechoi@yahoo.com) and let me know your dreams. I will pray for you. I thank God for all of you who are companions of the faith journey.

Happy New Year!
Eun-Hye Choi, pastor



Martin Luther King Jr. Day

**Celebrating The
Life & Ministry
Of**

Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Sunday January 18, 2009

Special Music

Sermon Title:

"A Message to Our New President"

Pastor Eun-Hye Choi, preaching

Special Conference Offering
Human Relations Sunday



Way To Go!

The dictionary defines **GENEROUS** as "willing to share with others; unselfish; characterized by munificence, abundant, ample; full of spirit or strength; rich; openhanded". The MPUMC Outreach Team defines **GENEROUS** as "the people of Morgan Park United Methodist Church!"

Through your mission giving and your support of our money-raising projects MPUMC became a Rainbow Covenant church again in 2008. We supported the following:

BURGUNDY BAND-GLOBAL	\$900
Community Development Project – Cambodia Women in Rural Mission Honduras School Project Poverty Alleviation in Ghana	
RED BAND-UNITED STATES	\$901
Tree of Life Ministry – Pierre, South Dakota Nothing But Nets	
ORANGE BAND-UMCOR	\$735
Disaster Response International & National Heifer Project	
YELLOW BAND	\$200
Children's Fund	
GREEN BAND-CONFERENCE	\$500
Grace Halfway House Marcy Newberry Association Methodist Youth Services	
BLUE BAND-DISTRICT	\$500
Humboldt Park UMC Homeless Program AIDSCARE, Inc Evergreen Care & Counseling Ministry	
INDIGO BAND-MISSIONARY PERSONNEL	\$800
Clara Mridula Biswas	
PURPLE BAND-LOCAL	\$5,830.41
Maple/Morgan Park Community Food Pantry New Neighbors UNICEF CROP Walk Esmond School	

Shiva (Nepal Orphanage)
Watoto Choir Concert
(sponsored by Touched by Grace)
Blue Cap (by Youth Group)
Other local Mission Projects
*(Individuals from our congregation also donate directly to these local projects.)

WHITE BAND – SISTER CONNECTION **\$100**
Community Partners for the Common Good

SPECIAL SUNDAYS **\$1365**
Native American
Human Relations Day
One Great Hour of Sharing
Student Day
Peace with Justice Sunday
World Communion Sunday
Golden Cross Sunday
United Voices for Children
Camping Scholarships

GRAND TOTAL \$11,831.41!!!

In addition to these cash donations many items were given to disaster relief, Childserv, Marcy Newberry Association, Esmond School, Tree of Life Ministry and prison ministry.

Through your generosity the lives of many, many people across the globe have been touched. As God has blessed you, you have shared your blessings with others. **THANK YOU** and may you continue to share God's rich blessings with others.

Thank You!

THANK YOU – these words seem so simple when what we want to express is so-o-o huge. Your sharing during the Christmas season was so heart warming to experience. Your donations of gifts and money provided 30 children in the programs of ChildServ a wonderful Christmas. They helped enable Marcy Newberry give a gift to every person who participates in their programs (children and senior citizens alike). They provided many women in prison with a gift of toiletries, which let them know that they are not forgotten. They helped the Maple Morgan Park Community Food Pantry provide Christmas baskets for those in need, making their Christmas a more joyful one.

DON'T FORGET.....The deadline to submit articles for the February Newsletter is Saturday, January 15th.

JANUARY WORSHIP SCHEDULE

JANUARY 4, 2009

Holy Communion
"Search for the King"

Psalm 72:1-14 and Matthew 2:1-12

JANUARY 11, 2009

"The Baptism of the Holy Spirit"
Genesis 1:1-5 and Acts 19:1-7

JANUARY 18, 2009

Celebration of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King's
Life and Ministry

"A Message to Our New President"

1 Corinthians 6:12-20 and John 1:43-51

JANUARY 25, 2009

Youth Sunday

Youth pastor Michele Watkins will preach.
Jonah 3: 1-10 and Mark 1:14-20

"LFL"

Submitted by Pat Hawkins

In keeping with the younger generations use of text messaging, I thought these initials might catch their (and everyone else's) attention. Some of you are familiar with LOL (laughing out loud) or CTN (can't talk now) or b4n (bye for now) or dndc (don't know don't care), but I would be willing to bet, if I bet, that none of you are familiar with LFL. It means *looking for liturgists*.

The worship team has decided, with Pastor's support, to ask you to become dedicated liturgists. We would like to have a pool of between 12 and 16 dedicated liturgists. These liturgists would agree to serve as liturgist for 3 Sundays a month. We feel that this would enhance the flow and continuity of the worship service. The fourth Sunday is Youth Sunday and would be handled by the preparer for that service.

Many of you enjoy reading the scripture, the Call to Worship, doing the announcements and all of the tasks the liturgist does each week to ensure that the service flows as smoothly as possible. The only qualifications are that you are over 18, that you love to read aloud, that you are willing to commit to 3 Sundays a month, and that you are willing to meet with Pastor Eun-Hye and the other liturgists for a brief training session. Before you say, "What if an emergency arises, and I can't come on a scheduled Sunday?" We know that emergencies arise, and we have a contingency plan for those Sundays.

We know that there are people in the congregation who would like to be liturgist but have never been asked. Now is your chance. Please give your name to Pat Hawkins or Pastor Eun-Hye. Some of you may travel at the same

time each year, so if you want to request a certain month, let us know. We already have two volunteers, Yvonne Brown and Reverend Kermit Kreuger. We would like to start this practice as soon as possible, so please give this idea consideration and come on with those names.
BAL4MPUMC

"Talking with God"

Submitted by

We Are the Branches

The Prayer Ministry

"God's gift of community is a beautiful and purposeful design of interdependence – of helping and being helped. Since it is a gift, however, community will never happen unless we first reach out to receive it."

"Our enemies may not want our love, but they desperately need it. Hatred is deadly to the soul and is cured only with the antidote of reconciling love. When we extend this kind of love to our enemies, we not only purge our own heart of its poison, but we also offer hope to those who are slowly dying from the toxic effects of hatred."

Father in heaven, we came to the end of 2008 with many problems in our homes, our churches, our city, country and the world. Our nation is overwhelmed with a weak economy, loss of jobs, mortgage foreclosures, homelessness, hunger and oppression. We ended 2008 divided by racial, social, economic and religious bars.

Lord, God, thank you for another year to turn to You for spiritual guidance and hope. We pray and ask You, dear God, to enable us with the courage and strength to face our daily challenges.

Heavenly Father, enable each of us to help bring about change in our beautiful city and country. Tell us Heavenly Father what You want us to do. Lord, we want so much for all of us to be able to feed and provided for our families. Amen.

NEW MEMBERS' CLASS

A new members' class will be held following coffee hour on Sunday, January 11th and Sunday, January 18th in Room 110. Pastor Choi will lead the class.

Each session will last one and one half hours. We have five candidates for new membership: Ollie Brown, Eileen Fay, Keil Morek, Eddie Parker and Sarah Poriggs.

If you want to volunteer to be their shepherds (mentors) please see pastor Choi.

NEPAL ORPHANAGE

Submitted by Carolyn McPherson

Four years have gone by since Morgan Park United Methodist Church began supporting Shiva Raj Bandari, and they have been years of growth, development, and maturation for Shiva. He has blossomed under the care of the Umbrella Foundation, and he is truly grateful for the financial support and attention he receives from our congregation.

Shiva is now 15 years old. He has grown into a tall and handsome teenager. He is extremely polite and well mannered. He attends the Pragma Jyoti English School, and his grades are a mixture of average and above average marks. Basketball is his favorite sport, Social Studies is his favorite subject, and he also likes to sing and draw pictures. He says consistently that he would like to be a famous actor when he grows up!

At the Orphanage Shiva lives with a group of 45 boys, ranging in age from 13 to 18 years, in the Machapuchere House. The boys come from all over Nepal, and all were separated from their families during the Maoist insurrection. Now that the war is over, and a new government has been formed including the Communist Party in its representation there are efforts beginning in the country to reunite the children with their parents. This will doubtless be a long, difficult task, for many of the parents may have died during the war. In addition some of the children were so young when they were abandoned that they have no memories of their families. Thus far, nothing is known about Shiva's parents.

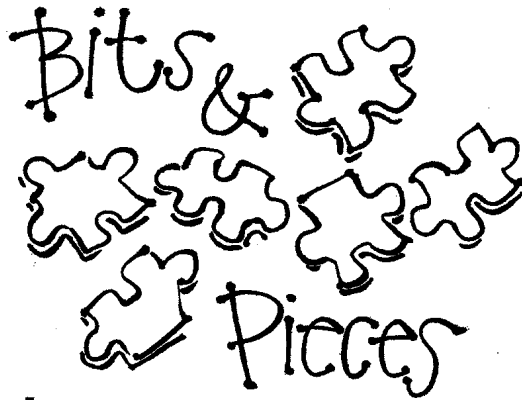
During January I will be asking the congregation to continue to support Shiva for another year. Our goal is to raise \$500, which will be used to pay for the expenses of his housing, food, and schooling. Please join in this humanitarian effort to assure one more year of care for this deserving young man. Thank you.

CONFIRMATION CLASS

A confirmation class will be held for 7th through 9th grade youth beginning in January with pastor Choi. We will have eight class sessions and two field trips to other religious organizations. The class will meet at the church Saturday mornings from 10:00 a.m. to noon and the dates are: January 17 & 24; February 7 & 21; March 7, 14, 21 & 28.

The Confirmation ceremony will be held on Palm Sunday during worship service unless there is a Southern District Confirmation ceremony, in which case we will join them.

If you have questions about the confirmation class please contact pastor Choi.



THE SOUTHERN DISTRICT LEADERSHIP TRAINING

will be held on January 24th at the Lansing United Methodist Church beginning at 9:00 a.m.

NURSERY HELPERS NEEDED: We need to schedule Nursery helpers on Sunday mornings for those Sundays when we have lots of kids in the Nursery. Please let Pat Bayer, Samantha Morek or Laura Parker know if you can help once every six weeks or so.

LENTEN SEASON COMING: Lenten Potluck Dinners and Services will be held on Thursdays during the Lenten season in February and March. Families are invited. We will be setting up a schedule for childcare during the Bible study portion of the evening. Please consider if you would be able to provide childcare for one Thursday evening between March 5th and April 9th.

A NURTURE TEAM BRUNCH will be held on Saturday, January 10th at 10:00 a.m. at the parsonage. Please mark your calendar and plan to attend. Pastor, Samantha, and Laura will make decisions about the food and the agenda. Please share any ideas you have. We'll get back to you with more details.

THE INTERNATIONAL FAMILY NIGHT will be held in Great Hall on February 21st. Bring international dishes, games, decorations, music, etc.

LAITY CONVOCATION

*"Transforming the world, pew by pew...
and we saved a seat for YOU!"*

JANUARY 10, 2009

8:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

216 East Highland

Elgin, IL

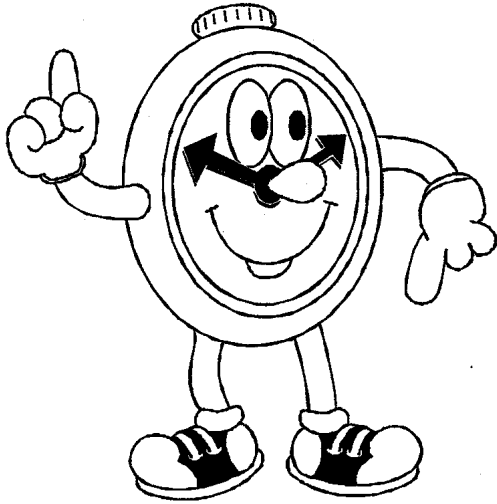
**THE BOARD OF LAITY
INVITES ALL LAITY & CLERGY**

TO

**A LAITY CELEBRATION
FOR NORTHERN ILLINOIS CONFERENCE
TRAINING – MOTIVATING – NETWORKING**

Check out umcnic.org for further information.
Pastor Choi has registration forms.

...IT'S TIME FOR THE...



**WINTER
RUMMAGE SALE**

**Friday & Saturday
February 6 & 7
Wesley Hall
9:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.**

WE REALLY NEED YOUR HELP!

- Please bring your gently-used, clean winter clothing, (nicer items on hangers please) household items, toys, knickknacks, etc. to the church.
- Please help carry the rummage from storage areas to Wesley Hall on Sunday February 1st.
- Please help with the set-up (sort, display and price): Monday, February 2nd through Thursday, February 5th.
- Please help sell on Friday and/or Saturday.
- Please help with clean up on Monday, February 9th.
- Please tell your neighbors, friends, relatives and co-workers about the sale.

Our Rummage Sales are known in the community for their quality of items and organization. Please do not bring clothing that is stained or torn. All donated appliances should be in working condition and should be marked with a note that says "working".

All-church events are always a time of great fun and fellowship. Please see Sue Delves and let her know how and when you can help. "Many hands make light work."

JANUARY WORSHIP ASSISTANTS

LITURGISTS

January 4... Rev. P. V. Chandy

January 11... Devlin Schoop

January 18... Breanna Radtke

January 25... Michel-Ange Desruisseaux

GREETERS

Jan. 4... Dorothy Wiggins and Chante Waters

Jan. 11... April Preyar and JeRome Brown

Jan. 18... Tommy Taylor and Owen Skelly

Jan. 25... Sylvia Robertson and Barbara Edmonson

ACOLYTES

Jan. 4... Christopher Parker and Will Zopp

Jan. 11... Sydney Cerrentano and Kaline Langley

Jan. 18... Carinne Parker and Denise Parker

Jan. 25... Pierre Parker and Antonio Sullivan

"FOOD" FOR THOUGHT

Submitted by Lucious Moore

A holy man was having a conversation with the Lord one day and said, "Lord, I would like to know what heaven and hell are like." The Lord led the man to two doors. He opened one of the doors and the holy man looked in. In the middle of the room was a large round table. In the middle of the table was a large pot of stew, which smelled delicious and made the holy man's mouth water. The people sitting around the table were thin and sickly. They appeared to be famished. They were holding spoons with very long handles that were strapped to their arms and each found it possible to reach into the pot of stew and take a spoonful. But because the handle was longer than their arms, they could not get the spoons back into their mouths.

The holy man shuddered at the sight of their misery and suffering. The Lord said, "You have seen hell."

They went to the next room and opened the door. It was exactly the same as the first one. There was the large round table with the large pot of stew, which made the holy man's mouth water. The people were equipped with the same long-handled spoons, but here the people were plump, laughing and talking. The holy man said, "I don't understand."

"It's simple," said the Lord. "It requires but one skill. You see, they have learned to feed each other. The greedy think only of themselves."