

# Downs UMC NEWSLETTER



February 2012  
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102 S. Seminary St. PO Box 49; Downs, IL 61736

Phone/Fax: 309-378-2651 Website: [www.downsumc.org](http://www.downsumc.org) Secretary: [secretary@downsumc.org](mailto:secretary@downsumc.org)

Pastor: [reverend@downsumc.org](mailto:reverend@downsumc.org)

## Follow Jesus Always

By Pastor Ron George

*"See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the desert and streams in the wasteland." Isaiah 43:18-19*

This month we begin our Lenten journey for 2012. It's a journey that ends with the glory of Easter. It's a journey that every Christian should take every year. It's a time of special focus when you listen to what God is saying through the story of the events leading to the Cross and how they are relevant to life issues you are experiencing right now. It's a time to take stock in how we have been living our lives and how we should live as we keep moving forward.

Christian poet M.S. Lowndes said,

*"Don't be afraid to keep moving on,  
For what was before, now has gone,  
And God wants to accomplish so much more,  
But we need to move forward in the Lord."*

In Sunday School, I remember hearing as a boy the story of the Children of Israel wandering in the wilderness. I thought, who would be so dumb as to do something like that? I wanted to get where I am going and I would never get lost like they did. But then life happened. I found out that I could get lost with the best of them. Growing into my teenage years and into adulthood my life took many twists and turns and I wasn't even attempting to follow the Lord most of that time.

Our family splintered. My brother and I went to live with my Grandmother and then not long after that we went out to live on our own. My step father and mother constantly were at odds. No help there. I longed for real and loving family relationship with them but it was not to be. So I joined the military and my life took many more turns until I met my wife Kathy and we decided we would go to church together.

The children of Israel finally made it to the promised land and would look back with gratefulness to God for His deliverance and leading that they finally sought. But they wandered a long time (40 years) before they did. I kind of know how they felt (and it wasn't 40 years for

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me). It is good to remember how far you've come – to look back and then up to God with gratefulness. Because when we do – we realize that He wants to lead us on to even better things from the place where we are now. God always wants to do new things in our lives that will benefit us and bring us closer to His will.

In the reading of that bible story, we are given the big picture of what happened and how God delivers and blesses. Lent helps us do that anew each year so that again we will not be afraid to move forward.

When we are living our own story we cannot see beyond the next curve of the road. We don't know how this chapter of our story will turn out and so often we are afraid. But we need to be reminded that the opposite of fear is love. 1 John 4: 18 says, *"Perfect love casts out fear."*

God loves us with perfect love and has said that we will never be given tests that are beyond our strength. We should take comfort in that. God prepares us for what's next? And God is always faithful to lead us where His grace will keep us. We can rest in the promise that we will have what we need when we need it even though your fears probably won't want to let go easily.

Dear Downs UMC family, as we look down the road before us, we can't see what's ahead but we can sense that God is leading us in a new direction. As we go where we are unsure, let us think of the Children of Israel where the whole story that leads to the Cross tells us that God is making a way. Then we can anticipate with excitement that something good is just ahead.

Following Jesus Always,

*Pastor Ron*

***Reflections on Evangelica 2012 by Brent Ward***

Evangelica was a tremendous success. It started as an idea that grew into an amazing experience for everyone involved. A huge thank you needs to be delivered to the United Methodist Women and Good Sams for covering the cost of the meal, as well as Ginger Campbell and the ladies of the Church that worked diligently to prepare the meal! The process of sharing and collaborating with one another created an open environment of communicating goals and concerns. Each table benefited in so many ways from those they sat with, from historical perspectives to new ideas, Downs United Methodist Church is experiencing a renewed energy towards growing in our faith and leading others to Christ!

For those that were unable to attend, the evening was set in our fellowship hall, but it seemed as though we were in an Italian bistro being served an elegant meal. We started with a “Wordle” by asking each table to identify 10 qualities of a successful church. As anticipated, keeping Christ at the center of our programs, missions, and leadership is clearly a strong value for our congregation. Youth, outreach, and discipleship were also clearly a priority. We were able to share many of our values and perspectives while coming to the realization that despite some occasional differences of opinion we are unified in our efforts and beliefs!

Next, we discussed what the Bible says about a healthy church. In 1 Corinthians Chapter 12, the Bible compares the health of the Church to the health of the human body by saying that if any one area of the body is viewed as sick, then the whole body is considered sick or “unhealthy.” So we came to the realization that the health of the Church can’t be assessed by attendance or giving independently, but all of the major components as a whole. The elements that compose a healthy church are intertwined. For example, a strong youth program will attract families, which increases attendance, and in theory would increase giving.

As the evening wound down, we asked each table to carefully consider what they believe to be the three greatest strengths and three greatest areas of concern in Downs United Methodist Church. We also asked that those concerns be accompanied by suggestions that would improve the situations surrounding those concerns. We received some tremendous feedback. It was great to see how much our congregation appreciates the United Methodist Women, Good Sam, Wednesday night programming and so much more.

It was obvious that there was some meaningful consideration given to the areas of concern. There were six total items that leapt from the page listing our strengths, weaknesses and suggestions. First, it was very obvious that the large majority of our congregation sees an immediate need for a Youth Minister, a paid member of our church staff responsible for coordination and oversight of all of our youth programming. Seven of the nine tables at Evangelica listed a Youth Minister as a top priority and we can assure you the Ad Board is researching every possible option to make this happen.

There were also several tables that expressed a desire to create a time for our elder members to meet and have Bible fellowship over a cup of coffee. We can make that happen. We are currently looking for someone to lead the group and get the program up and running!

Another area of concern was following-up on visitors and families that have had lapses in attendance to encourage and welcome them back to the church. The Nurture committee is already seeing how other churches are doing this and creating a plan to implement those strategies at Downs United Methodist Church.

A few tables also expressed the need to regularly communicate the finances of the church to the congregation. A point well-made and we’ll do our best to give updates. The year-end finances are better than a year ago, but still aren’t great. We have some positive cash flow and giving was up by about \$4,000 in 2011. The increase in giving is likely associated with the increased attendance we have been experiencing in recent weeks. It is also important to note that we raised over \$480,000 in our building campaign, paid \$237,000 in cash to own an awesome piece of property for a future church, we have about \$230,000 in our building fund, and we still have a goal to build a new church building!

Finally, we discussed the desire of the congregation to place a fellowship time between Sunday School and Sunday services. There isn’t an easy or convenient solution to this. Starting February 12<sup>th</sup>, we will move Sunday School to 8:15 a.m. in order to facilitate fellowship time from 9:00 to 9:30 prior to the start of our 9:30 a.m. church service. This decision wasn’t made hastily, but we are hoping the

inconvenience of holding Sunday School 15 minutes earlier will create an atmosphere where members can interact socially and build a stronger bond and sense of community.

Evangelica carried a theme throughout the evening, “Serve, grow and build.” *Serve* one another by seeking and sharing Christ, *grow* our programming and attendance, and *build* each other up through Bible studies and worship. Thank you to everyone that made Evangelica an evening to remember and draw knowledge from. 2012 will bring change to our church. We have to keep open hearts and open minds and embrace change. I was raised believing you are either working ahead or falling behind in any endeavor. There is no such thing as maintaining, because others will pass you by. Let’s embrace the challenges 2012 has for Downs United Methodist Church and constantly strive to Serve, Grow and Build!

### **SHOWER OF BLESSING ~ HANDICAP EQUIPPED BATHROOM NEEDED**

A family in our community is in need of a handicap equipped bathroom in their home. Several from our church with construction skills have agreed to take on the challenge. The next step is to raise the necessary funds and for that we are asking for your help. An early estimate is that it will take three to four thousand dollars to complete the project which will include widening the bathroom door and installing a handicap shower and sink with wheel chair access. Of course, this may also require some drywall, plumbing and floor replacement as well.

If you would like to help us with this outreach project your financial gifts are appreciated. Please make your checks payable to Downs UMC and indicate SHOWER OF BLESSING in the bottom left corner. As funds are raised and as we begin the work we will keep you informed of the progress. Above all, please keep this outreach project of our church in your prayers. Should you have questions, contact the church office.

**Mission Minutes by Ginger Campbell** Where does the time go?? Seems like it really goes by and the years just fly by. Can’t believe we are in 2012 already. Didn’t we just go into 2011? Anyway, hope you all had a wonderful Christmas Holiday and New Year. I think we are off to a great start here at DUMC with the dinner meeting we had!! What a great night it was. Thanks Brent for all of your hard work on “Evangelica”!

Since I did not get Mission Minutes done for the December Newsletter, I will include it with the January numbers. The buckets for December were \$179.74 and January, \$129.13. The buckets for December were for Tri-Valley families and January was the Timber-lee Trip.

Our other gifts for December and January were as follows:

Christmas Giving \$1,700; Financial Needs \$450; Missions \$200 for a Total of **\$2,350**

Once again, Outreach would like to thank you all for your generosity. These gifts would not be possible without you. Hebrews 13:16 “And do not forget to do good and to share with others, for with such sacrifices God is pleased.”

### **NEW CHURCH DIRECTORY**

We are taking photos for the new 2012 church directory. Jim Finch will take the photos, and Darla Lanchester will assemble the directory and have it printed. Photos will be taken during fellowship time or after church.

Dates for taking individual or family photos are:  
Feb 5, Feb 12, Feb 19 (if needed)

**Reserve a spot** now by calling, emailing or texting  
Darla (309.212.2663, darla@lanchester.net).

### **Souper Bowl Sunday—February 12<sup>th</sup>**

We are collecting cans of soup through Feb 12 to be given to Jesus House Exchange. As the cans are collected we will build a pyramid of cans in the sanctuary.

On Souper Bowl Sunday after worship we will host a “soup” potluck.

We are also planning to have a game day after the potluck. Mark your calendars!

*Nurture Committee*

**Thank you** to everyone who has served as greeters. What a great way to get to know our congregation and you don't have to do a thing except arrive at church fifteen minutes early. If there is anyone that would like to be a greeter, but I haven't contacted you, please give me a call and I will find a date on the calendar that fits your schedule. Sherry Reed - 309-663-2999

**→ Come check out your library: ←**

We have some new books added to the church library.

There is a series for kids by Jenkin called "Left Behind: the Kids" which can be found in the E section.

Several Gilbert Morris "House of Winslow" series in the F section

Some books of games (790 section) and crafts (745 section)

Thanks to all who have donated books to the library

**Dates to Know**

- 1 WWJF-Wednesday With Jesus & Friends
- 3 3:00pm Timber-lee Group Leaves
- 5 6:30pm Bible Study
- 6 6:00pm Boy Scouts in Annex
- 7 9-1pm HCE
- 8 WWJF-Wednesday With Jesus & Friends
- 12 7:30am UMW
- 8:15am Sunday School
- 9:00am Fellowship
- 9:30am Timber-lee Service
- 10:30am Soup Potluck and Games
- 1:00pm 4-H Meeting
- 6:30pm Bible Study
- 13 6:00pm Boy Scouts in Annex
- 6:30pm Trustee Meeting
- 15 WWJF-Wednesday With Jesus & Friends
- 19 6:30pm Bible Study
- 20 6:00pm Boy Scouts in Annex
- 22 WWJF-Wednesday With Jesus & Friends
- 26 9:30am Free2Praise
- 10:30am Worship Committee
- 6:30pm Bible Study
- 27 6:00pm Boy Scouts in Annex
- 29 WWJF-Wednesday With Jesus & Friends

**Stewardship report— Giving for 2011**

	January(5 Weeks)	YTD
Tithes & Offerings	15562.50	15562.50
Total Need	14945.00	14945.00
Difference	617.50	617.50
New Church Fund	293.00	229815.68
<b>Mission &amp; Special Project Giving</b>		
Good Sam	2579.13	2579.13

**2012 UMW Officers**

- President—Donna Clark
- Vice President—Kay Hull
- Secretary—Sheri Mushrush
- Treasurer—Leigh Hayes
- Social Concerns Chair—Ginger Campbell

All women of the church are encouraged and welcomed to be a part of this Mission Ministry. Their next meeting is February 12<sup>th</sup>. Hostesses are Donna Clark, Donna Kleinlein & Jessica Cuba

**February Birthdays**

- 5 Laura Bass
- 5 Miles Young
- 5 Margaret Nagreski
- 6 Betty Schenkel
- 8 Becky Connour
- 10 Gavin Walsh
- 13 Andy Whitted
- 14 Ron Terven
- 14 Janice Cuba
- 14 Amber Fisher
- 17 Tim Riley
- 20 Barbara Layten
- 22 Emily Kelly
- 23 Dave Cobstill
- 27 Leah Kelly

**MILESTONES**

This month the milestones are all birthdays with someone turning 10, 55, and 65. Congratulations and blessings to each of you.

**February Anniversaries**

- 15 Scott & Mary Romine
- 24 Larry & Peggy Stark
- 28 Bill & Suzanne Erlenbush



Trustee Meeting  
Monday, February 13th  
6:30pm~~ Please let Rick Hayes know if you are unable to attend.

## OPPORTUNITIES OF FELLOWSHIP & OUTREACH

### *Sunday Fellowship*

**Every Sunday at 8:00am Fellowship is held in the Fellowship Hall. Breakfast items are served. A freewill offering is taken to cover the cost of the food. Thank you for your support for this ministry, and to everyone that has volunteered to help with this ministry!**

**We are in need of people that can 'substitute' in this area. Please let the office know if you can be a part of this ministry. STARTING FEBRUARY 12<sup>TH</sup> FELLOWSHIP MOVES TO 9AM.**

# WWJF

Wednesdays  
With  
Jesus and  
Friends

5:30pm	Meal for Choir Members
6:00pm	Choir Practice
6:15pm	Meal for all others
6:30pm	Class time for all ages
7:00pm	Free2Praise Practice
7:30pm	Classes end.

**SUNDAY SCHOOL** Downs UMC has a class for ages 3 and up on Sunday Morning. PreK-3rd grade meet in the Sanctuary at 8:30 for music and then go to classrooms in the church. (4th-6th) meet in Education Wing. Jr-Sr. High (7<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup>) meets on the first floor of the annex, and the Adults are meeting in the Old Parsonage. Sunday School is coordinated by Leigh Hayes 378-3008 and Jamie Ward 378-4621.  
**SUNDAY SCHOOL TIME CHANGES TO 8:15 STARTING FEBRUARY 12<sup>TH</sup>.**

**ADULTS:** Coming February 5<sup>th</sup> "If You Want to Walk on Water You Have to Get Out of the Boat" by John Ortberg. There will be 6 sessions on trust and faith. Peter may have been the first one out of the boat, but Jesus' invitation to walk on water is for all of us!

Session 1: What's Water—Walking?

Session 2: The Tragedy of the Unopened Gift

Session 3: Find Your Calling and Get Your Feet Wet

Session 4: Facing Our Challenges, Conquering Our Fears

Session 5: Good News for Cave Dwellers

Session 6: Learning to Wait on Our Big God

**COURAGEOUS DADS CLASS** starts Sunday, February 12<sup>th</sup> at 8:15am. They will be meeting in the LOFT. Questions? Please contact Jon Nelson or Brent Ward. If you missed the viewing of the movie on January 29<sup>th</sup>, there is another opportunity to view it for free at LeRoy Princess Theater on Sunday February 12<sup>th</sup> at 6pm. LeRoy Methodist Men are sponsoring this.

**Sunday Night Bible Study for Adults:** This group meets in the Church Sanctuary starting at 6:30pm.

### February Volunteers~Thank you!

#### Power Point Operators

Feb	5	Ron Bass
	12	Laura Walters
	19	Tom Coulon
	26	Jean Riordan

#### NURSERY SCHEDULE

Feb	5	TBA
	12	Lori Rogers
	19	Sr. High
	26	Laura Bass

#### GREETERS

Feb	5	Betty Harvey, Madelyne Gelsthorpe, Karen Walters
	12	Dean & Janiece Stanger, Kay Hull
	19	Mabel Courtney, Barb Jones, Carrie Cobstill
	26	Andre & Debbie McNaught, Jean Riordan

#### Fellowship Coordinators

Feb	5	Peggy Stark
	12	UMW
	19	TBA
	26	Jean Riordan

NEWSLETTER ARTICLES ARE DUE TO THE OFFICE BY THE 20<sup>TH</sup> OF EACH MONTH. They can be faxed to 378-2651 or emailed to [officedumc@juno.com](mailto:officedumc@juno.com). Input is welcomed. It is your newsletter!

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Phone/Fax:  
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E-Mail:  
 Pastor Ron  
[reverend@downsumc.org](mailto:reverend@downsumc.org)  
 Secretary:  
[secretary@downsumc.org](mailto:secretary@downsumc.org)

**Tuesday 8-12pm**  
**Wednesday 8-12pm**  
**Thursday 8-12pm**

## 2012 Official Role (Positions being Served)

Ad Board Chairperson:	Brent Ward	<u>FINANCE:</u> Bill Erlenbush, Larry Stark, Brent Ward, Janice Cuba,
Recording Secretary:	Lyn Edwards	Lyn Edwards, Donna Kleinlein,
Finance Chairperson:	Bill Erlenbush	Cathy Finch, Rick Hayes, George Lewis
Sunday School Super:	Jamie Ward & Leigh Hayes	<u>TRUSTEES:</u> Rick Hayes, Dave Wysocki; Andre McNaught, Craig Solvie, Brad Weichman; Jeff Curtis, Andy Whitted; Emily Kelly
PPRC Chairperson:	George Lewis	<u>PPRC:</u> George Lewis, Kay Hull, Jon Nelson, Lyndall Cuba, Becky Connour, Jim Finch; Chris Mushrush; Rita Harsh; Darla Lanchester
Lay Leader:	Larry Stark	<u>NOMINATIONS:</u> Larry Stark, Kim Lewis; Sherry Reed; Rhonda Nalley; John Werner; Debbie McNaught; Rev. Ron George
Lay Member to Confer:	Cathy Finch	
Treasurer:	Janice Cuba	
Financial Secretary:	Lyn Edwards	
Nurture Chairperson:	Cathy Finch	
Outreach Chairperson:	Ginger Campbell	
Witness Chairperson:	Jamie Ward	
UMW President:	Donna Clark	
Youth Director:	TBA	
Sr. Hi Youth Group Leader	Michelle Forbes	
Camping Coordinator:	Carrie Cobstill	
Trustee Chairperson:	Rick Hayes	

*We're on the Web!*

*Visit us at:*

[www.downsumc.org](http://www.downsumc.org)

**@DownsUMC**

Follow us on Twitter!

Should you be receiving this newsletter and wish to be removed from the list, please contact Janice at 309-378-2651 or [secretary@downsumc.org](mailto:secretary@downsumc.org).



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