

# St. John's Herald

Volume 2 Issue 12

December 2011

## Rev's Ramblin's On Giving

As I sit at my desk this morning contemplating what would be an appropriate and timely message to “ramble” about, I’m struck by the themes of stewardship, Thanksgiving Day, and Advent which seem to be running into each other at this time in the life of St. John’s. Yesterday, our Finance Committee invited the entire congregation to come to lunch after worship so that your faithful stewardship this year could be acknowledged and gratefully thanked. Unfortunately, for all kinds of good reasons, only about 40 were present. I hope the rest of you will accept this article on their behalf as a way of saying, “Thank you for all you’ve done. Let us now finish well, what we began in January!”

Our response to all that God has given us, beyond speechless awe, needs to be extravagant gratitude! Or at least a heartfelt thankfulness that makes us generous, less as a duty than as the least we can do in response to all God does for us.

Our best response to all that God has done for us is not to lower the high expectations to a comfortable level, but to ask for God’s grace and guidance to help us grow. God’s biddings are God’s enablings: we’re never asked to do anything we’re not also enabled to do. The solution for those who feel they cannot give 10% (tithe) is to respect that as the standard and grow towards it by the grace and guidance of God. For some, this may mean starting at 2 or 3% as a first step and then committing to a yearly increase as God is graceful enough to enable.

Such empowerment is the force behind this ending of a Thanksgiving Story from “Chicken Soup for the Christian Soul”

“I can tell you. This morning I prayed that I could help someone today, and you walked through my live.” She reached under the counter for her purse and took out a \$20 bill. She paid for my groceries (turkey, yams, potatoes, and some juice for my sick kids) and then handed me the change. Once more I was moved to tears. The sweet cashier then said, “I am a Christian. Here is my phone number if you ever need anything.” She then took my head in her hands, kissed my cheek and said, “God bless you, honey.”

As I walked to my car, I was overwhelmed by this stranger’s love and by the realization that God loves my family too, and shows us God’s love through this stranger’s and my church’s kind deeds.

The children were supposed to have spent Thanksgiving with their father that year, but because of the flu they were home with me, for a very special Thanksgiving Day. They were feeling better, and we all ate the goodness of the Lord’s bounty—and our community’s love. Our hearts were truly filled with thanks.”

May your Thanksgiving, become Thanks—living!

*Pastor Ross*



You are invited to attend a celebration honoring 70 years of marriage for **John and Lolly Rieck**. They were married at St. John's on Nov. 29, 1941 by Rev. Piepenbrok. A reception will be held in the Library on **Sunday, November 27, from 2-4 p.m.** A special musical tribute will be given at 3 p.m. in the Sanctuary as the Riecks were instrumental in launching our handbell choir. As a memorial to family members, they donated the initial three octaves of bells, as well as other bells in the additional two octaves. Please join us on this day as we celebrate this remarkable couple!



**Elnora Chandler**  
945 Cloudy Wing Dr.  
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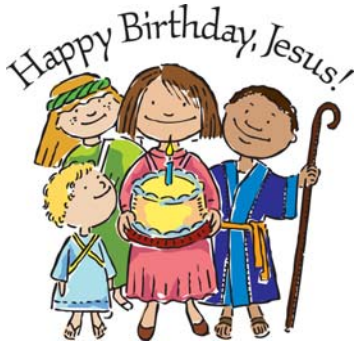
## PrimeTimers PrimeTimers

The PrimeTimers are going to the Christmas Concert at UIndy on Friday, December 9 @ 7:30 p.m. This event is open to anyone who would be interested in joining us. The cost is \$6.00 for seniors. If you would like to join us please see Joan Davidson or Kathy Harris a.s.a.p. so tickets can be purchased in advance.

### Special Dates for December:

Advent Dinner/Program 5:30 p.m.— December 4  
All Church Christmas Caroling 11:30 a.m.— December 11  
Blue Christmas Service 5:30 p.m.— December 17  
Music Sunday 10:30 a.m. —December 18  
Christmas Poinsettia's Delivered 9:30 a.m. — December 22  
Christmas Eve Service 5:30 p.m.— December 24  
Christmas Eve Service 11:00 p.m. — December 24  
Christmas Day Service 10:30 a.m.— December 25

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## December School News

What a joyous and exciting time at Preschool during the Christmas season. The children are so excited about Christmas! One of the greatest things about being a part of a Christian Preschool is the fact we can share Jesus with our students! Not only are our students excited about the gifts under the tree but they are excited about our Greatest Gift- the birth of our Savior, Jesus! It's such a blessing to watch the children get the real reason for the season! We will spend our time together this month to prepare ourselves for Jesus' Birthday! Are YOU excited for Jesus' birthday?

All of you are welcomed to attend our Preschool Christmas program on Thursday, December 15<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 in the church sanctuary. The children of the Preschool will be telling the story about the night Jesus was born through songs! This night will bring excitement into your Christmas holidays!

We will end our school month with a birthday party for Baby Jesus!

Our last day of school this month will be on Friday, December 16!

St. John's Preschool families will once again help out with the Angel Tree gift donations. The children love to find ways to help others and to show God's love to others!

Also during the month of December we will continue to learn about the letters I, J, and K. We will work on the shapes of rectangles, ovals, and diamonds. We will be acting out the story of "The Gingerbread Man" during one of our Lunch Bunches.

Our Preschool Giving Tree is still up in the church hallway by the sanctuary. There are plenty of items for you to choose from. What a nice gift to the Preschool during this holiday season! Just pull a leaf off and drop your donation to the church office or the "drop-off" box located down by the Preschool room. Thanks for all your support!

Please continue to save your old magazines, cardboard paper towel tubes, cardboard egg cartons, and metal juice can lids! We are also in the need for toilet paper tubes! We are still looking for tricycles, and other riding toys for our students to use. Many of our tricycles are getting old and are starting to fall apart! Plus, we have more students enrolled this year. The need for more riding toys has increased.

The Staff and the Preschoolers want to wish you and your family a Very Merry Christmas and a Blessed New Year!



St. John's United Church of Christ  
7031 S. East Street  
Indianapolis, IN 46227

Contact: Rev. Ross Tyler  
317- 881-2353



[St. John's United Church of Christ announces a Blue Christmas Service](#)  
[Dec. 17, 2011 @ 5:30 p.m.](#)

For most people, Christmas is a time of joy and anticipation, but for some in our community, it is a time of sadness, loneliness, grief and dread. Our Blue Christmas service acknowledges the concerns and griefs that they may be experiencing from personal loss, family issues, community concerns, or global conflicts. St. John's United Church of Christ is located at the corner of Southport Road and U.S. Hwy 31 South.

This service is open to anyone in our community, regardless of religious background, who seeks a welcoming sanctuary of care and compassion. Those who attend will have the opportunity to light a prayer candle for their particular concerns and receive a private, individual prayer and blessing.

Light refreshments will be provided after the service for those who wish to stay and visit. For more information, call the church office at 317-881-2353.



## 2011 Mission Trip Report

The adult mission group had a great week at the Shannondale Community Center in Salem, Missouri in October. Fourteen volunteers participated - Becky Allen, Don Good, Marcia Hauser, Dave and Joanne Hearrell, Jim Heidergott, Bob Kleeman, Mike Mansfield, Jeanne Reynolds, Phil and Ginnie Schairbaum, "Van" VanLue, John Boggess (Van's brother-in-law), and Karen Wallace (Van's sister). This was the first trip to Shannondale for Phil and Ginnie, who have been visiting our church for a few months now, and it's always a joy to introduce new people to this great location.

This was the 15<sup>th</sup> year for the mission trip, and our 11<sup>th</sup> year to work at Shannondale in the foothills of the Ozark Mountains. The Timber area there is twenty miles from a WalMart or a hardware store or a cell phone tower.

Our group completed several projects. We worked in groups of two or three or four.

Here are our projects:

- There is a stone building on the Community Center grounds called the "Goat House". Long ago, it housed goats (!), but for many years now has provided housing for youth groups and campers. Last year Pastor Jeff Fulk, the manager of Shannondale, started a project to dress that building up so that it can be used as a mini-lodge for small groups to stay and use as a small conference center. It's a two-story building, and the upstairs can be used as a dormitory. Last year, our workers insulated the downstairs walls, and paneled the downstairs with knotty pine. This year we installed a small kitchen downstairs, and built bunk beds for the dorm upstairs. We also made a contribution toward the purchase of mattresses for the beds, and Jeff went out and ordered the mattresses the day before we left.
- Pastor Jeff asked us to install knotty pine paneling on one of the church basement walls that had previously suffered some water damage. The new paneling really brightened that basement.
- Two years ago a tornado damaged a small storage building. Most of the building had been restored, and our group installed a tin roof on the building. Jeff anticipates having more youth camps next summer, and he will be using this building to store sports equipment. It's near the basketball court.
- The lodge where we stay gets plenty of use and wear. Our group repainted the front porch and the Adirondack chairs.
- Many of the people in the area heat their homes with wood. Some in our group cut and transported wood for the home of one of the church parishioners.

One of the joys we experience during the week at Shannondale is listening to the Current River Bluegrass group rehearse in our lodge. Their family and friends show up with them on Tuesday night and we all share dinner and listen to their music.

But our most unusual and unexpected thrill this year was to see the Northern Lights—that's right, the Northern Lights, in southern Missouri! We stepped outside to see the Milky Way, and in addition we saw the Northern Lights. What a surprise—beautiful!

Our mission trip budget was spent on the materials used for these projects, and the contribution for the new bunk bed mattresses. Many thanks to everyone in the congregation who contributed food, cash and Wal-Mart gift cards for the trip. You were very generous, and the assistance from the congregation makes the mission trip affordable for those who attend.

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## Stewardship Message

### Too Good To Be True Giving

*“By the tender mercy of our God, the dawn will break upon us.”*

*Luke 1:78*

These words come from the amazing poem known as the Benedictus, the blessing of Zechariah on his surprising gift-son, John (the Baptist). Zechariah is one of those minor characters in the birth narratives of Jesus, often lost in the shuffle of shepherds and magi that populate our Christmas pageants. Yet Zechariah gives us a great gift for Advent: the gift of the skeptic.

When an angel told Zechariah that his middle-aged wife Elizabeth would have a baby, he didn't believe it. All his life this man had been faithfully serving God; clearly he was a sincere believer. He held onto his faith through the years of their infertility and who knows how many other problems in their lives. But when an angel promises something “too good to be true,” the skeptic in Zechariah comes out and he rejects the God he has relied on when things have been truly bad.

This Christmas let us be about giving to the world in ways that are too good to be true. Let the skeptics see that love is more powerful than anyone expects it to be. Let us, in the image of God, give of ourselves in life-transforming ways beyond presents under the tree, just like Zechariah and Elizabeth and John. Nothing about God is ever too good to be true! Merry Christmas.

*Rochelle A. Stackhouse is the Senior Minister of The Church of the Redeemer, United Church of Christ, New Haven Connecticut.*

**December 2011**

God is still speaking,



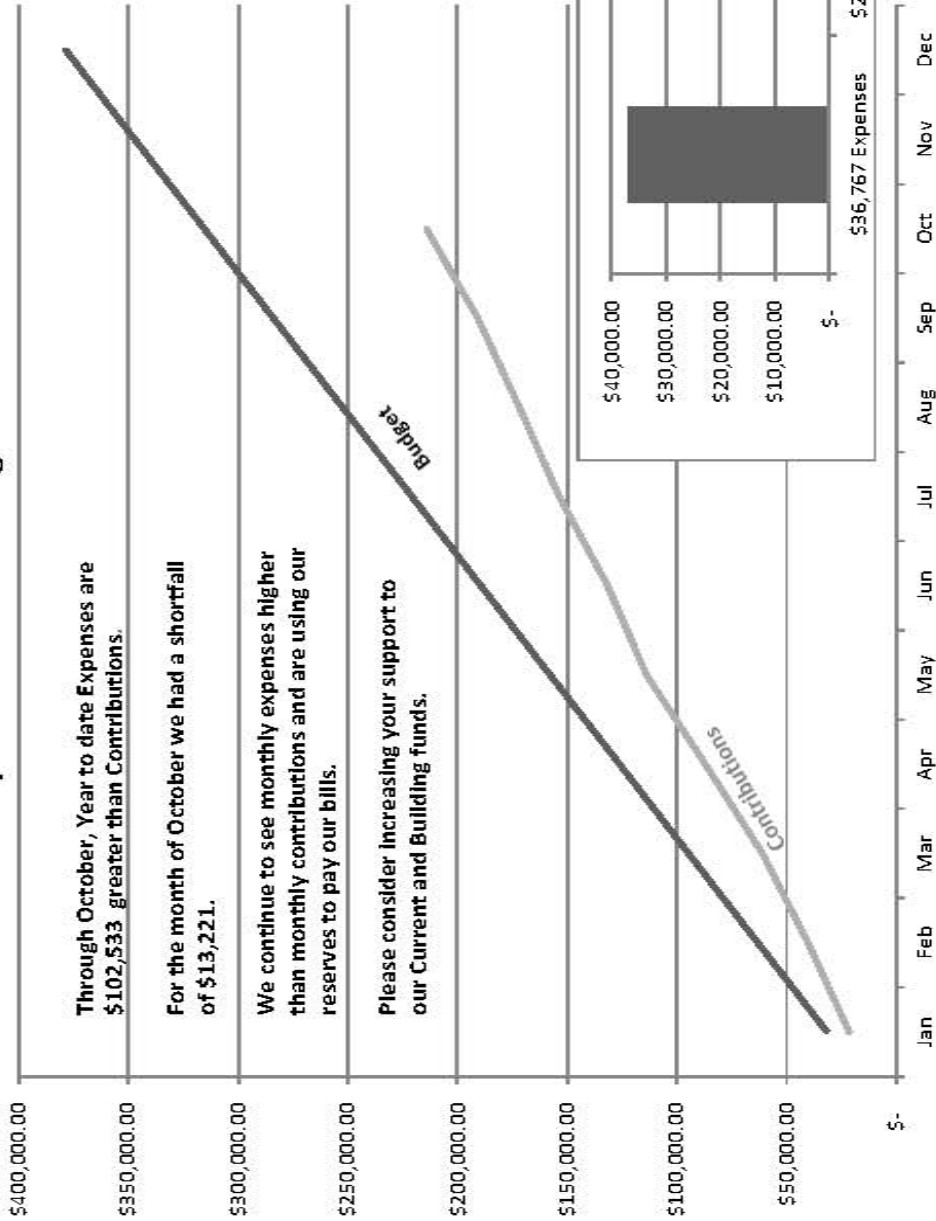
This resource is a free service and is made possible by your gifts to Our Church's Wider Mission.



**Community Movie Night Series at St. John's** – Get ready for a modern holiday classic as we kick off the Community Movie Night series at St. John's with the movie "Elf" on Saturday, December 10<sup>th</sup> at 6pm. At 6pm we will be mingling with the community and working on a movie related craft, with the movie starting around 6:30pm. Coming in January, we will be switching to a western theme and showing the John Wayne classic, "Rooster Cogburn," with the same mingling and craft time and show time of around 6:30pm. We want to make this a very successful event for both our St. John's family and the community around us. To create a warmer movie-like atmosphere, feel free to bring your favorite camp chair, lounge chair, bean bag or other comfortable option. Popcorn, candy and soda will be served during Community Movie Nights at St. John's; just like those "other" theaters. The Community Movie Night Planning Committee will handle the popcorn. However, to help make this a successful evening for all of us and our community, we would greatly appreciate donations of canned soda and fun-size candy. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to let us know. Thanks again...Peace...Shawn

**T** **St. John's Staying TRUE to the Gospel Update** – Once again, on behalf of the M&M and TRUE Task Force, I would like to thank everyone for their interest, guidance and support of our mission of staying TRUE to the gospel here at St. John's. You have helped us **T**each Christian principles by supporting Sunday school, our pre-school and various seminars. We continue to succeed at **R**eaching out through mission by directly and indirectly participating in our adult mission trips and youth mission trips, supporting our Angel Tree families and providing supplies for our food pantry. **U**niting as family continues to grow through wonderful worship services, fellowship programs such as St. John's Benefit Nights and various small group activities. Efforts focused on **E**ngaging our community are going to continue through our new outreach programs such as Community Movie Night and community seminars including topics such as self defense, tax and financial planning and healthy lifestyles. In addition, please keep your eyes open for new and exciting ways that St. John's will let everyone know how we are staying TRUE to the gospel. Finally, if you have a personal interest in leading an effort that shows how TRUE we are to the gospel at St. John's; don't hesitate to let us know! Thanks again...Peace...Shawn

## St. John's UCC    **October 2011** Contributions compared to Annual Budget



Through October, Year to date Expenses are \$102,533 greater than Contributions.

For the month of October we had a shortfall of \$13,221.

We continue to see monthly expenses higher than monthly contributions and are using our reserves to pay our bills.

Please consider increasing your support to our Current and Building funds.



# Youth & Family News

Volume 4, Issue 10

December 2011

Jenny Zotz

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881-2353

## Upcoming Dates:

- 11/20 All Youth meet  
11:30-3
- 11/24 Happy Thanksgiving!
- 11/27 FAMILY SUNDAY  
Children's Bells play  
in both services
- 12/2 Casual Fridays  
Christmas Party 6:30
- 12/3 YaYA mtg 10-3  
ALL YOUTH to Art-  
craft Theatre 6pm
- 12/4 Advent Dinner & Pro-  
gram 5:30pm
- 12/11 Church Christmas  
Caroling & All Youth  
Christmas Party  
11:30-5
- 12/12 Noodles & Company  
Benefit All Day
- 12/13 BCE Meeting/dinner  
6:30 @ Margarita's
- 12/18 Children's choir &  
bells participate in  
10:30 service  
All Youth meet  
11:30-4
- 12/24 Christmas Eve  
Family Service 5:30
- 12/25 Merry Christmas!  
Service at 10:30
- 1/1 Happy New Year!  
Service at 10:30

## Music Schedule

11/27—Bells play in both services  
12/4—Choir  
12/11—Bells  
12/18—both practice & play in  
10:30 service

Both groups meet in the knack  
room from 10-10:30 on Sunday  
mornings. All children ages Pre-K  
and up are invited to be a part of  
the children's choir. Anyone in  
Kindergarten and up are invited  
to be a part of the bells. If you  
have any questions about choir  
please contact Denise Jacobson  
or Bells contact Cheryl Carlson.

## Nursery Schedule

November 27—Martha Minks  
December 4—Joanne Hearrell  
December 11—Luann Miner  
December 18—Roxann Pattison  
December 25—Martha Minks  
January 1—Joanne Hearrell

## HAPPY BIRTHDAY!!

- \* Lauren Zotz
- \* Dillon Romig
- \* Kelsea Williams
- \* Alana Madison

## Jr Greeter Schedule

November 27  
9:00-Justice Hall 10:30-Caleb Plummer  
December 4  
9:00-Sean Simpson 10:30-Kayla Kendall  
December 11  
9:00-Taylor Hearrell 10:30-Alexis Hearrell  
December 18  
9:00-Davia Sowder 10:30-Douglas Seals  
December 25  
10:30-Mac Pattison & Abby Plummer  
January 1  
10:30-Tommy Zotz & Adam Sorley

## Acolyte Schedule

November 27  
David Seals & Sam Beasley  
December 4  
Lauren Zotz & Mac Pattison  
December 11  
Adam Sorley & Gabe Beasley  
December 18  
Troy Sowder & Justice Hall  
December 25  
Alexis Hearrell & Alex Carlson  
January 1  
Caleb Plummer & Sean Simpson

## Casual Fridays

We will have our Christmas Party on Friday the 2nd at the home of James & Kim Devine starting at 6:30 pm. Each person needs to bring a dessert and a gift for the exchange! There is a sign-up sheet on Jenny's bulletin board. PLEASE sign up with what dish you will be bringing.

## Youth and Young Adult Board

Want to meet youth from other UCC Churches? Get involved with the Youth & Young Adult board! The next meeting is Saturday, December 3rd from 10-2 at the IKC office. They will be preparing for Winter Retreat which will be at Merom January 13-15th. Forms for the retreat can be found on Jenny's Bulletin Board and are due December 18th. This year's Winter Retreat's theme is bullying and will include Bible Study, group time & worship.

## ALL CHURCH Christmas caroling

Everyone from 0-101 is invited to go Christmas Caroling to our home-bound members. This was such a good time last year and you won't want to miss it! So mark your calendars for Sunday, December 11th. We will meet in the fellowship hall after the second service for lunch and maybe practice a few songs before heading out. SIGN UP ON JENNY'S DOOR so that we can plan for lunch!



## Can good results

On October 30th ALL youth groups joined together to trick-or-treat for can goods in the neighborhood surrounding the church. All of the food will be used to help restock our food pantry here at St. John's and will help the church reach it's goal of 1,111 cans for the MISSION 1 project! We collected over 230 items. Thanks to all the youth for helping to fill a need here in Perry Township!

## Youth Party

This year all three youth groups (3rd-12th) will meet after the Christmas caroling (Sunday, December 11th) to have their party. We will have games, indoor snowball fight and our gift exchange. Please bring a gift under \$10 that could be for either a boy or a girl. Sign up on Jenny's bulletin board today!

## Christmas Eve

Once again this year we will have a family Christmas Eve service at 5:30. Pastor Ross is looking for youth helpers with the service. Youth are needed for speaking and non-speaking roles. Any school aged child/youth can be involved. If you will be attending this service and would like to help please sign up on Jenny's bulletin board!

## Angel tree

Once again we will help brighten Christmas for a few families on the south side with the Angel Tree. This year there will be two trees one in the back of the sanctuary and the other in the fellowship hall. We will continue to add names and items as they come in so continue to check the tree for new tags.

Last year we were able to help 29 children (each receiving approximately 10 gifts). That's close to 300 gifts! Plus we were able to give each family a Kroger food voucher and a bag of food from our food pantry! Please take a tag & return ONLY the gift listed. This will allow us to keep the presents equal between siblings. Please return wrapped presents with the

tag attached to the outside to the Pastors Conference room by Sunday, December 11th. This will allow us to get the gifts delivered! If you would like to help but don't want to fight the crowds, simply place a donation in the offering plate marked Angel Tree and we will do the shopping for you! Thank you for supporting this wonderful ministry!

## December Sunday School All-Star

The Sunday School All Star for December is Amy LaGrange! Last year Amy returned from college and helped with the Children's Bell Choir. This year along with bells she is also a teacher in the Experiencing God's Love class. This class uses the Godly Play stories and is attended by children in preschool through 2nd grade. Amy has

done an amazing job of creating activities that will reach the varied ages in her class. Not to mention all of the energy it takes to work with these young ones!

A few facts about Amy...

-She has been a part of St. John's her whole life.

-She also sings in Sounds of

Praise during the first service.

-Amy spent an entire summer working with youth from around the country at a Youthworks cite in Arkansas. (this is the organization that our youth go through for our mission trips)

We are so grateful to have Amy back from school and working with the young ones here at St. John's.

## Advent program

Everyone is invited to the Annual Advent Dinner hosted by BCE.

We will begin the evening at 5:30pm You can enjoy a nice cup of wassail while listening to a brass ensemble or take the little ones to visit Santa until 6:00pm.

Dinner will be served at 6:00. BCE will provide the main dish, bread, dessert & **table settings**. We are asking that you provide a side-dish to feed 10-12 people.

The program will begin following the meal and is sure to be a spe-

cial treat!

This is a great chance to visit with your church family and relax before the hustle and bustle of the season begins!

## St. John's has amazing youth!

Last month I included a few of our youth and a few of their accomplishments in the Herald. Here at St. John's our youth do such amazing things both in our church and outside of our church I need to share a few more with you!

-Caleb Plummer is also a part of the Youth and Young Adult Board and has helped plan many retreats. At school he is part of the Center Grove High School football team who will be playing Carmel Friday, November 18th for Semi-State.

-Kayla Kendall is a part of the Youth and Young Adult board with the Indiana Kentucky Conference and helped plan this year's fall assembly. Outside of church she volunteers with special needs children as a baseball coach.

-Abby Plummer came back from a broken femur last December to be a part of the Center Grove Cross Country team! A lover of music she participated in the Children's choir & Bells here at St. John's and is a member of Indianapolis Children's Choir.



Let Jenny know what your doing so you can be included in the next Herald!

## Benefit Days!

Once again the benefit days a huge success. There were many families who attended the City BBQ event in October which brought in a check of \$157.78! It was so wonderful to see so many of our church family enjoying some much needed fellowship time with each other. As this is being written we are preparing for the November event which is at Applebee's. Watch the bulletin and next month's Herald to see how we did. If you have not been able to attend a benefit night...what are you waiting for? It is a wonderful opportunity to visit with family and friends and you don't have to cook! Did I mention that a portion of your bill comes back to the church? Everyone wins! The December event will be held at Noodles and Company on Monday, December 12th. Watch the Sunday bulletin for flyers. Anyone can participate (even if they are not part of our congregation) as long as they show our flyer. Thanks for supporting these fun fellowship and fundraising events!

## Youth Mission Trip Meeting

Yes, I know it's only December but planning has already begun on the mission trip for Summer of 2012! There will be a meeting on Sunday, December 11th at the end of the youth Christmas party at 4:45. Anyone who is currently in 6th grade and up should plan on being there if they want to go on this year's trip along with a parent. If you will not be able to be at this meeting but want more information on the trip please contact Jenny ASAP.