

U.M.S.O. Usher

United Methodist Student Organization at South Dakota State University

Winter 2006

Number 2

“What's the Point of Giving?”

by: Angie Boersma

Last week I caught myself grumbling about the lines in the mall as I was waiting to check out of a typical, nameless department store. After an hour of being run over by rabid shoppers, screaming children, and impatient accomplices, I finally managed to drop my two items on the transaction counter and eventually walk out with my purchases.

On my way out, I couldn't help but wonder what the point was of all the Christmas sales and shopping, lines and returns, the never-ending cycle of buying a gift for someone and expecting something in return. Or how about the endless gift cards and certificates that are now so widely accepted so that we, as shoppers, don't really have to think about what other people would really want or need? In effect, it seems as if we are doing little more than trading money with them. What on earth was the point of that?

Of course, I'm exaggerating a little, but what is the point of our gifting obsession? Do we give only with the intent to get? I sincerely hope not! I'd like to suggest that the old adage, “It's better to give than to receive,” is not only true, but also a necessary reminder!

What's the point of giving if no one knows why we give? What's the point of giving if WE don't know why we give? Do you give out of gratitude for the good gifts God has given you? Do you give to reflect His love to others? It's a great question, and one we could all ask ourselves every day, not just around the holiday season.

That's all my space for now, so until next time, remember what the point of our faith is. Remember that it only has value if it is shared! Strive to give a lasting gift, in the spirit of the greatest Giver of all, and be a living testimony to the gift of your salvation!

Peace to all, Angie

We encourage you to duplicate our newsletters to incorporate into worship bulletins, newsletters or websites. Please pass our newsletters on to others who might enjoy hearing about the ministry here on the S.D.S.U. Campus!



“Christmas Shoe-Box Project”

by: Anne Henry

This semester at the U.M.S.C. has gone super fast and as this semester ends, the Christmas season is fast approaching. During the Christmas season many of us are blessed with gifts under the tree, but there are families who cannot afford to put gifts under the tree for their children.

The Christmas shoe-box program run by the Children of the Harvest ministry within the Dakotas Conference enables children to receive gifts at Christmas time. The students at U.M.S.C. started their contribution at the beginning of November this year by placing a collection box in the student center for donations. Half of each offering from our Wednesday night services during the months of November and December was designated for the shoeboxes (the other half went to a partnered effort with the local mosque for earthquake relief in Pakistan), as well as some other money the center set aside to aid in putting together the Christmas shoe-boxes.

Some of the items suggested to include in the shoe-boxes were: personal care items, school supplies, candy, toys, mittens, hats, and gloves. We sent thirty packed and wrapped shoe-boxes to be distributed to the children. I am sure the children were delighted to find a wrapped gift just for them. May God Bless you as we enter a new year!

You can help us save money in postage and printing by opting to receive our newsletter by email in pdf format. Send an email to ndnk8@brookings.net if you are interested.

“Studied Out Already?”

by: Uriah Hilman

More to study. Deeper. Still Deeper. Sitting in the Presence of the King of Kings. Sharing burdens. Understanding. Grace. Blazing trails on campus. Wow! This isn't Asia minor, but sometimes I wonder. The growth of God's love on campus has been as promised. The need is there, this generation has a desire to move forward and do something great with their lives, the expectations for a big change have never been higher. Our Bible study, “Invitation to the New Testament” by David A. deSilva and Emerson B. Powery leads us into the Bible this semester in leaps and bounds. This Bible study allows us to get an overview of the problems the apostles had reaching the Church, and how Christ's mission fits into our own lives, and how we fit into the body of Christ. Christ still unifies the Church today even as we discuss Him.

Bible studies mean that I have a chance to teach others what God has revealed to me. In Bible studies I value freedom of expression, and learning from others in Christian love. I feel Christ's love purify me when I get the chance to grow in the wealth of knowledge of God's marvelous treasure with fellow members of God's kingdom, while learning to take baby steps in new areas of my own understanding about God and His love. I confess, I sometimes feel uncomfortable in these group discussions, but I also know the people around me are seeking the will of God in their lives too, and in that I take comfort. Bible studies will always be close and dear to my heart.

Kristen Nelson has done a wonderful job leading the discussion and keeping us on track, it's a lot of work, but a learning experience to remember. Small group Bible studies become one of the essential building blocks of a college career. God prepares us through real world debate on all issues across the board as we focus on Christ. God shows me the many ways in which He impacts my life though Christ's vision and leadership in the Holy Spirit, and helps me to apply His strength and skills in my career, focus, and everyday college life.

United Methodist Student Center

Student Leaders:

Angie Boersma, President
Randi Beyerl, vice-President
Amanda Maffett, Secretary
Brian Beyerl, Peer Minister
Camber Carpenter, Peer Minister
Anne Henry, Peer Minister
Uriah Hilman, Peer Minister
Forjour Kyei, Peer Minister
Kristen Nelson, Peer Minister
Bridgett Perry, Peer Minister
Thomas Schreier, Peer Minister
Stacy Tellekson, Peer Minister

Prayer & Wish List

- Prayers for God to lead our Fiscal Task force to new and innovative funding solutions for this ministry.
- UM Hymnals and Faith We Sing pew editions
- Prayers for the daily struggles of college students across the Dakotas
- A new or used clavichord for worship

Open Hearts. Open Minds. Open Doors.

Local Campus Committee

Leo Spinar, Chair
Betsy Draper, Finance Chair
Matt Miller, Facilities Chair
Harvey Svec, Faculty Advisor
Angie Boersma, Student Rep.
Craig Carson
Gary Englund
Mary Helen Hopponen
Ope Niemeyer
Marlenna Walker
Jason Zimmerman
Peggy Eggers, Administrative Asst.
Andy Bartel, Director



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“Feeling Welcome”

By: Stacy Tellekson

Since arriving here at SDSU four years ago, the Brookings First UMC members have welcomed me as a student with open hearts. I have enjoyed the friendliness and kindness of the congregation. Last year I had the opportunity to take part in the church's “Guess who’s coming to Dinner?” program, giving me a chance to meet and share a meal with several members of the church in their homes. The program was enjoyable and I am participating again this year. I also have been encouraging other students to take part as well. I feel very blessed to have had the opportunity to get connected to the local church through the United Methodist Student Organization.

“More than just singing”

by: Randi Beyerl

The Wednesday evening worship “service” during finals week was a little different this year. Instead of gathering at the Center for a short devotional and fellowship, we went caroling to four of the residential facilities owned and operated by Advance. A non-profit organization, Advance serves people with disabilities in the Brookings community.

It was a memorable evening of visiting the houses and singing to the staff and people served by Advance. At each house we were greeted with welcoming smiles and were joined in singing carols. That simple night of singing Christmas songs reminded me that God can use the little things we do—like singing, or smiling—to bring joy to someone else. It was a rewarding end to a rewarding semester.

Director's Cut:

“And taking the five loaves and the two fish, he looked up to heaven, and blessed and broke them, and gave them to the disciples to set before the crowd. And all ate and were filled.” At our student staff meeting we all agreed that we were reminded of this passage from Luke 9:16-17 after our Thanksgiving meal on November 16. As a way to reach out to more students, and to thank our local Campus Committee members, the UMSO student leaders (with a little help from my wife Kate) prepared two turkeys, pounds of potatoes, stuffing, salad etc. What we didn't expect, is that over 70 people would take us up on our invitation, and come and share a meal with us at the Student Center. As the line for food continued to grow, we kept looking at each other with mixed excitement and nervousness. We were excited for the fantastic turnout, but would we have enough food? After all had taken their fill, and “All ate and were filled,” there was probably enough food to make two more plates of food. While this may not be quite twelve baskets full, it was a sure sign that our God is great, and that He is our constant provider and sustainer.

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The reminders of this are plentiful as we anticipate many changes in the ministry at the center. As many of you know, the student center facility was purchased by SDSU a few years ago. Our lease to continue using space in the building is up in May. We have been actively working to identify and purchase a new facility for the ministry, something a bit smaller, easier and less expensive to maintain. We have identified such a facility and are moving forward to gain support and approval from the Dakotas Conference to make the purchase. God again has provided with a fantastic location adjacent to campus. I have watched other campus ministries here struggle because they do not have a “home.” One of the hinge-pins of this ministry is our place to come together. We worship here, study here, & fellowship here. Without a facility, this ministry would struggle considerably. Having a place to “hang out” has brought new students into our midst. Having a building allows the students to know where they can always find Peggy or me. Having a building gives the students a sense of ownership and a homebase from where they can reach out to students across the campus. Having a place to call home is vital to the future of the ministry here at SDSU. In this aspect, I truly believe that God will continue to provide as we look forward to the next phase of our ministry here on campus. Thank you for your presence, prayers, gifts, and service in support of this ministry to the students of SDSU, our future church leadership.

Blessings,

~ajb