

United Religious Community
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If you wish to be removed from the TORCH mailing list, please call 574-282-2397 or email urc@urcsjc.org

QUICKSHEETS ARE NOW AVAILABLE!

WHO HELPS WITH WHAT?

Quicksheets, a Direct Aid Referral Guide to agencies and community services in St. Joseph County, is finished and available for sale. The cost is \$5.00 per copy.

To purchase your copy please contact the URC office at 282-2397 or mail a check to the URC at 501 N. Main, South Bend, Indiana 46601. We will mail a copy of Quicksheets back to you.

URC TO RENT OFFICE SPACE

The URC is looking for an organization in need of office space. We have three offices available for rent on the second floor of our building at 501 N. Main St. in downtown South Bend. If interested please call Joyce at 574-282-2397.

Many thanks to the twelve wonderful students from Bethel College who spent the morning of October 5th working in the yard at the URC office.

Our landscaping was in desperate need of trimming and cleaning up of overgrown plants. We are grateful for their very generous donation of time and hard work

Thank you, Jared, Joshua, Collin, Kyle, Austin, Jordan, Matthew, Joshua, Heather, Deidre, Stephen and Randall!

United Religious Community of St. Joseph County

URC TORCH

Volume 38, Issue 6

DECEMBER 2010

Dear Friends,

This year, like all years, has been a time of change in our world and in our lives. As we face the end of one calendar year and the beginning of a new one, it is natural to reflect upon the past twelve months and look forward to the possibilities of the future.

2010 has been a year of change and transition for the URC. We have begun a strategic planning process and have been making needed changes in our organization and mission to both live within our limited resources and to better reflect our future commitments to the community.

Among our accomplishments we published a new version of Quick Sheets and helped further the work of the newly formed MMSN (Michiana Military Support Network) and hosted the first Military Appreciation Game at Coveleski Stadium.

We conducted a successful tour of South Bend area churches and are very pleased to welcome the Sikhs among the faith traditions that participate in the URC. Please note the open house information on page six.

Internally, we successfully underwent our first fiscal audit in a number of years and also are beginning to work on our guiding documents as an organization. We have also streamlined our operations to reduce overhead expenses in order to continue to serve the needy as a referral source for congregations and other social service organizations.

What will 2011 bring? We're not sure what changes will happen in our community and world in the coming year. I can assure you of one thing that will not change. The URC will be here to both serve as a connection point for people of various faith traditions and to assist the needy in our community.

May God bless you during this holiday season!

Rev. Dr. William J. Wassner
Executive Director
United Religious Community of St. Joseph County



STAFF

Rev. Dr. William J. Wassner,
Executive Director

Joyce Williams,
Administrative Assistant

**2010-2011
BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

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ADVOCACY CENTERS NEWS

In October, the Board of Directors of the URC voted to eliminate the position of Advocacy Center Director. They felt this was necessary due to the dwindling contributions available for operating expenses of both the URC and the Advocacy Centers.



The Advocacy Centers of the United Religious Community continue to provide vital assistance to the less fortunate members of our community, but on a reduced basis until the end of 2010, when our financial status will be re-evaluated.

Until then, Rev. Dr. Carol Mayernick has graciously volunteered to staff the Advocacy Centers two days a week. The South Bend location will be open Tuesdays from 9:00 to 11:00 am and the Mishawaka location on Thursdays from 9:00 to 11:00 am.

On behalf of those we serve, the URC and the Advocacy Centers would like to thank all the individuals, organizations and congregations who support our mission and services! In these uncertain times, your donations are vital to those less fortunate.

We would especially like to thank Marchell Wesaw for her five years of dedicated service to the Advocacy Centers.

Widowed Women & Men Social Support

The Widow/Widower support program normally meets on the **2nd Tuesday of every month at 1:00 p.m. at St. Peter's United Church of Christ, 915 N. Ironwood Drive, South Bend.** December is their special Christmas program (see Page 3). If you know of someone who needs support through recent loss or just friendship, let them know. We invite you to keep this group strong and vital!

**URC is now on Facebook!**

Please join us for up-to-date news of events and announcements.

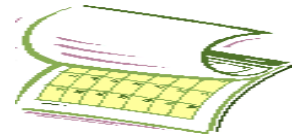
RECENT GIFTS RECEIVED

Baha'is of South Bend
Christ the King Lutheran
Karen Dwyer
Epworth Memorial United Methodist Church
Good Shepherd Evangelical Lutheran Church
Immanuel United Methodist Church
Islamic Society of Michiana
Vyrla K. Jackson
Jewish Federation
Barbara Ann Kraus
Memorial Presbyterian Church
North Liberty Church of the Brethren
Prince of Peace Church of the Brethren
Rising Timbers/PNC Bank
Sarah & Ajazuddin Shaikh Tee
Sinai Synagogue
South Bend Christian Reformed Church
Robert Stockman
St. Andrew's United Church of Christ
St. Joseph Church, South Bend
St. Patrick's Parish
St. Peter's United Church of Christ
Zion United Church of Christ

NOTE: Although there have never been any member fees to belong to the URC, we suggest an annual contribution of at least \$300 per faith community due to the increasing costs of operation and the growing needs of the less fortunate in our neighborhoods.

The URC and Advocacy Centers assist thousands of low-income people a year. While their needs are consistent our income is not. The URC depends on your generosity to make our work possible. Any and all donations are greatly appreciated.

THANKS FOR YOUR UNDERSTANDING AND SUPPORT!

**SOME DATES
TO REMEMBER**

December 2nd, 5:30 to 7:30 pm
Tour historic B'nai Synagogue

December 3rd and 4th
Bethel College Christmas Concert

December 4th, 9:00 am to 1:00 pm
Alternative Gift Fair
Prince of Peace Church of the Brethren

December 4th
Festival of Light celebration for the India Association of Michiana

December 4th, 9:00 am—Noon
Cookie Walk
East United Methodist, Church, Mishawaka

December 10th & 11th, 9:00 am to 2:00 pm
Help St. Vincent's deliver food boxes

December 11th, 5:30 to 7:00 pm
Sikh Reception at First English Lutheran Church

December 12th, 12:30 to 2:30 pm
Sikh Open House at Day Road Gurdwara

December 14th, 11:30 am
WWM Christmas Party, The Skillet Restaurant

CROP WALK UPDATE

On **Sunday, October 17th**, over 300 participants joined Lary Jackson from Church World Services for the annual CROP Walk for Hunger. The final numbers are not in yet, but they do know that over \$5,000 was given on-line. The URC served as a major sponsor again and Bill was a member of the Walk Team. Many thanks to everyone involved for their support!

TOUR OF HISTORIC SYNAGOGUE

Indiana Landmarks welcomes members and guests to the B'Nai Synagogue, 420 S. William St. in South Bend for refreshments, conversation, and holiday cheer on **Thursday, December 2nd** from **5:30 to 7:30 p.m.**

The Jewish Federation of St. Joseph Valley is co-sponsoring the event which occurs on the 2nd day of Chanukah.

For more information call 574-232-4534.



ASIST: Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training

To be held in February by the United Health Services Suicide Prevention Center. This workshop will be beneficial to all who attend: counselors, teachers, ministers, mental health practitioners, workers in health, welfare, or justice and community volunteers.

The two day training sessions will be from 8:30 am to 4:30 pm and include continental breakfast and lunch. Cost is \$150 per person and registration will be limited to the first 45 people. Exact dates and location available online at www.sjcsuicideprevention.com.



SUICIDE PREVENTION COUNCIL
of St. Joseph County and Surrounding Areas

For more information contact
United Health Services at
574-247-6047, ext. 120.

Bethel College Christmas Concert
December 3rd - 7:30 p.m.
December 4th - 2:00 p.m. and 7:30 p.m.
Everest-Rohrer Chapel/Fine Arts Center
\$8.00 adults, \$7.00 students
Call for more information - 574-257-7633

Broadway Christian Parish United Methodist Church needs donations for their Jubilee Christmas Store.

Toys and cash donations are needed to provide parents with the opportunity to choose gifts for their children. Parents select the gifts, wrap them, and receive items for Christmas dinner. The emphasis is placed on giving the parents as much control over their holiday celebration as possible. Volunteers are needed to set-up the store on **Friday, December 17th** and the Christmas Store will be open on **Saturday, December 18th**. All kinds of toys and games are needed, but especially gifts for teenage boys! For more information call Roberta in the church office at 574-289-0333.

Would your congregation like to help needy families for Christmas?

The URC has been gathering information to share with anyone who may be interested in helping to make the holiday season a little brighter for families in need. Most local agencies coordinate with each other so families cannot apply to more than one agency.

St. Vincent de Paul Society

Contact: Denise Blanche, 234-6000, ext. 12105

Denise.blanche@saintvincent-in.org

They have both families and single people and ask that sponsors provide a box of food, gift certificate for meat and gifts for children. Sponsors receive guidelines and information about the family, they call the family and make arrangements to deliver gifts in person.

If you'd like to help, but cannot sponsor a family St. Vincent's needs help delivering food boxes on **December 10th and 11th from 9:00 am to 2:00 pm**. Please call Denise for more information.

Catholic Charities

Contact: Barb Burlingham, 234-3111

bburlingham@ccfwsb.org

They try to focus on helping families with young children. Sponsors get an information sheet with gift preferences and clothes sizes. They are asked to provide a box of food in addition to presents. Catholic Charities asks that presents are not wrapped, but wrapping paper be provided, so parents can wrap them and see what their children will be receiving.

Sponsors make arrangements to drop off gifts at Catholic Charities and all families pick them up there.

If you'd like to help, but cannot sponsor a family Catholic Charities can always use gift cards in any amount at any local stores.

Salvation Army

Visit www.mykroc.org or call 574-233-9471 ext. 2207

KrocAdoptAFamily@gmail.com

You will be matched with a family and receive an e-mail with information and gift ideas. Sponsors are asked to provide food for holiday meal and several toys for each child. You will be asked to email the Salvation Army a list of gifts purchased, label every package and deliver to their distribution site on Grape Road on **Friday, December 17th**. The final day to ask for a family is **Wednesday, December 8th**.

Lutheran/Sikh "WALKS IN FAITH"

The United Religious Community of St. Joseph County is co-sponsoring an inter-faith activity which will literally walk participants through two faith traditions, Lutheran and Sikh. Leaders from First English Lutheran Church of Mishawaka and the Sikh Cultural Society of Indiana invite all to experience this two-fold event which encourages insight, fellowship, and peace.

- **Saturday, December 11th, 5:30 to 7:00 pm at First English Lutheran Church, 16495 Ireland Road in Mishawaka.**

Food and fellowship. Distribution of "Walk-Through Theology" booklets. Participation in liturgical multi-sensory environment of hearing, seeing, smelling, touching, and tasting. Questions and answers.

- **Sunday, December 12th, 12:30 to 2:30 pm at the Gurdwara, 12800 E. Day Road in Mishawaka.**

Light refreshments. Presentation on Sikh religion and distribution of handouts. Attend congregation at the Gurdwara. Have Langar (community meal). Questions and answers and tour of the Gurdwara.

Please make your reservations for this free event by **Monday, December 6th** by calling the URC office at 282-2397.

McDonald's Coupon Books to help Local Food Pantries!



People Gotta Eat, a United Way initiative, is selling coupon books with a \$30 value for only \$5.00

each. An anonymous donor will match all the money raised, so for every \$5.00 book sold a \$10 donation will be made to local food pantries.

If your church, school or business would like to sell the coupon books to help People Gotta Eat contact them at 574-232-8201, extension 226.

COMMUNITY GATHERING TO HEAL DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Led by Rita Tatum, a lay associate for the Sisters of Providence, and sponsored by the United Religious Community, a *Community Gathering to Heal Domestic Violence* was held in downtown South Bend on Sunday, **October 17th.**

Rita Tatum organized a moving program by looking for common threads that could be interwoven into an interfaith healing service. Members of several different faith traditions participated with prayers, music and a candle lighting ceremony.

Tatum asked the gatherers to recommit themselves to helping to stop domestic violence: "Domestic violence is an illness that affects the abuser, often spreading outward. Virtually all faiths can provide solace and avenues for healing."



South Bend Tribune photo

Above, URC Executive Director, Rev. Bill Wassner, lights a candle to recognize people affected by domestic violence.



On **September 21st**, for a moment in time, the lobby of our County-City Building became a gathering place for the members of a number of faith traditions to join hands and hearts in universal prayers for peace.

The theme this year was "*Putting Pieces Together for Peace*" and a large poster puzzle was put together to symbolize how local individual and organizational efforts became a worldwide whole.

The United Religious Community is grateful to Lois Clark for helping to organize the event and to all who participated: especially Dave Thomas, Imam Mohammad Sirajuddin, Reynaldo Hernandez, Greg Gehred, Tom Brown, Keith Witherspoon, Larry Dwyer, Greg Ballew, and Aimee Shelide.

Diwali and Holiday Celebration

The India Association of Michiana invites everyone to their Diwali (Festival of Lights) and Holiday Celebration on **December 4th from 5:30 to 11:00 pm** at Discovery Middle School in Granger.

The evening will begin with a children's cultural program, followed by an Indian dinner and other entertainment. Tickets will be on sale only until November 28th and may be purchased online at www.iamichiana.org.

Hospital Needs Protestant Minister

Our Lady of Peace Hospital in downtown Mishawaka is looking for a Protestant minister willing to visit with patients on a non-emergency, on-call basis.

Our Lady of Peace is a long term acute care hospital serving medically complex patients requiring a longer than usual stay in the hospital.

For more information please call Sue Morgan at 252-2005.



Many thanks to musicians: Allen DeSomer and Jacquee Dickey; and singers: Melaney Gabris, Judith Ellen Larson and Ryan Everett.



WWM Holiday Luncheon at The Skillet

The Widowed Women & Men's Social Support Group of the URC will hold its annual Holiday Luncheon on **Tuesday, December 14th**, instead of the regular meeting at St. Peter's. The cost is \$14.00 per person. A Polish Buffet will be served at **11:30 a.m.**

Reservations are needed no later than **December 8th**. Call the URC office at 282-2397 or Liz Dirst at 272-5316. Everyone is welcome!

