

FIRST PRESS

Inviting all to know Christ, grow in Christ, and share Christ's love.

200 E. BEARDSLEY AVENUE ELKHART IN 46514

April 19-May 16, 2009

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Opportunities for Service

See page 8 for opportunities to feed the hungry and give hope to the hurting.



New Love, New Mercy is the theme of our spring stewardship campaign, which begins April 19 and culminates with Consecration Sunday on May 17. See page 3 for details.

the life of the party

A Youth Musical by Tom Long and Allen Pote
Sunday, May 3



The stories of Mary and Martha in the gospels deal with issues that are instantly recognizable - family conflict, making Jesus a part of our everyday lives, and trusting God to be present for us when life gets tough. These themes are woven throughout this musical in song, drama, and dance. A long time ago, Jesus had a close circle of friends who came to believe that He was the "Resurrection and the Life." We are challenged to believe in the resurrection and the eternal life which has been promised to us.

The Melodia Choir, Jr. Chorale, and Westminster Choirs will present **The Life of the Party** at the 11:00 Sanctuary service on Sunday, May 3, 2009. Come and enjoy!

Worship Schedule

- 8:30 Chapel Service
- 9:15 1st Bridge Service (Lower Level)
- 11:00 Sanctuary Service
- 11:00 2nd Bridge Service (Lower Level)

Church School

- Adult Classes
- 9:45 a.m. Reception Room
- Children's Classes
- 10:00 a.m.
- Youth Class 10:00 a.m.

Exploring Membership... Interested in exploring membership in First Presbyterian? Our next membership class will be held on Thursday, May 14 from 1:00-4:00 p.m. and Sunday, May 17, 12:00 noon-3:00 p.m. Call the office for further information or if childcare is needed.



from the Pastor's desk

As I write, spring is in the air. The sun is shining, birds are singing, tulips are blooming, and buds are appearing on trees and bushes. Or, I should say, on some trees and bushes – when I examine the branches on some of the bushes and trees at our house, I don't see any buds. Such branches, I suspect, have died. I'm no botanist, but my understanding is that growth is a reliable sign of life.

"What is your growing edge?" I have a friend who sometimes asks that provocative question. It often makes me pause – I fall into ruts of just getting by, day-by-day, and don't even know if I *have* a growing edge. Other than my expanding waistline and growing bald spot, of course.

I ask that of you: what is your growing edge? Where do you sense growth in your mind, your spirit, your faith, your joy?

Growing edges are especially important in uncertain times. The wonderful writer Howard Thurman once wrote:

"Look well to the growing edge. All around us worlds are dying and new worlds are being born; all around us life is dying and life is being born. The fruit ripens on the tree, the roots are silently at work in the darkness of the earth against a time when there shall be new lives, fresh blossoms, green fruit. Such is the growing edge! It is the extra breath from the exhausted lung, the one more thing to try when all else has failed, the upward reach of life when weariness closes in upon all endeavor. This is the basis of hope in moments of despair, the incentive to carry on when times are out of joint and men have lost their reason, the source of confidence when worlds crash and dreams whiten into ash. The birth of the child — life's most dramatic answer to death — this is the growing edge incarnate. Look well to the growing edge!"

If our faith is alive, then it should have growing edges as well. As 2 Peter says, *But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.* For me, it has been the growing awareness of the centrality of the Kingdom of God in Jesus' life and teachings. What are the growing edges in your faith? If you can't readily name them, then perhaps you haven't been tending your faith, watering it with prayer and spiritual reading.

Growth is a sign of life in churches as well. What are our growing edges? Growth can be in numbers, and I am delighted that we have welcomed several new members this year and will be holding another membership class in May. But growth is not only in numbers; it can also be in spiritual depth, in mutual love and care, in service to the community, in joyful worship. I rejoice we have growing edges in all these areas as well.

In this Eastertide, this spring, may we continue to grow in grace, in faith, in caring for one another, and in serving our community.



In these days of economic uncertainty and, for some of us, financial hardship, it behooves us to remember the words of Lamentations 3:21-24:

*But this I call to mind, and therefore I have hope:
The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases,
God's mercies never come to an end;
they are new every morning;
great is Your faithfulness.
'The Lord is my portion,' says my soul,
'therefore I will hope in God.'*

We are starting the annual campaign for the ongoing financial support of our church. Our theme is "New Love, New Mercy," and we will focus on responding to — and extending — the love and mercy of God.

This annual campaign is different from our ongoing capital campaign, which goes to improvements to our building. In earlier years, the annual campaign has been done in the fall, but last year, our session decided to move it to this spring. Our campaign will be for the new 12-month fiscal year, June 1, 2009-May 31, 2010.

The campaign will begin on April 19, and will culminate on Consecration Sunday, May 17. In this period, you will hear various announcements and receive various mailings about the campaign.

Again this year, we will approach financial stewardship from a Biblical perspective: we don't view the money you give to our church merely as a way to pay our bills. Rather, we see financial contributions as a way to help people grow spiritually in their relationship with God by supporting our church's mission and ministry with a percentage of their income.

Our approach is based on the Biblical understanding of the need of the giver to give for his or her own spiritual development, rather than on the need of the church to receive. Instead of treating people like members of a social club who should pay dues, we will treat people like followers of Jesus Christ who want to give unselfishly as an act of discipleship. To this end, we will encourage people to commit to proportionate and systematic giving in response to the question, "*What percentage of my income is God calling me to give?*"

Consecration Sunday May 17

Consecration Sunday will be May 17. During worship at all services, we will ask everyone to make their financial commitments to our church's mission and ministry in this community and around the world. Please make every effort to attend worship that Sunday.

Please take time to give thanks to God for God's love and mercy, pray for our stewardship campaign, and plan to participate in campaign events, and join us for worship on May 17.

The Stewardship Team, Dick Griffen, leader

Children's Sunday School

The last day of Sunday School is May 17th. Please see the poster in the hall. There are still some teaching spots available.



Vacation Bible School

Some volunteers have already come forward to help with VBS, but we need more. If you think you can help, we would love to have you. The dates are: June 22-25. Please mark your calendars now, and please let Brigitte know if you can help. Thanks!

Fresh 180 Youth Fellowship

Youth News: Sexting?

Sexting - what is this new phenomena? What does it mean and entail? I recently saw a news article about the vast amount of teens doing this thing called Sexting. The news article was about a girl who committed suicide because of Sexting. This article is to inform parents and teens on Sexting. Sexting is defined as:

(a portmanteau of sex and texting) The act of sending sexually explicit messages or photos electronically, primarily between cell phones. (Wikipedia.com)

Sexting may start as innocent texting that leads to some provocative language and then eventually pictures. The effects can last a lifetime. The one picture could be passed around to a few people or to the entire school. The picture then can be transferred to the internet. The saying is once on the Net, a lifetime of regret. Future employers could Google your name and then that picture comes up. This could have dramatic affects on your social life and relationship between your parents, as well as affect your future employment opportunities.

Ways to prevent Sexting...

Teens:

1. Make it clear to your friends and associates that Sexting is NOT cool with you.
2. Upon receiving one, please inform your parents. Trust is huge in relationships with parents.
3. Be careful with your cell phone number. Everyone in the world doesn't need your number.

Parents:

1. Occasionally check your child's phone. You have a right to protect your teen's purity and innocence.
2. Ask your cell carrier if they can prevent pics from being sent to your teen's phone.

Youth Fellowship Schedule...Please watch weekly bulletins for updates on happening at Fresh 180. The youth will meet at 12:00 p.m. April 19 and 26 following the 11:00 worship services.

Sunday Morning Classes...

The Sunday morning Calvin class is being postponed. Instead, we will have four sessions on what is happening in the larger Presbyterian denomination, in our church, and in our presbytery. These classes will be held at 9:45 in the Reception Room, with Steve Braden leading.

April 26: Why are churches leaving our denomination? This class, re-scheduled from Palm Sunday, will explore why some Presbyterian churches, including First Presbyterian Churches of Nappanee, Kokomo, and Warsaw, have decided to leave the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) for other Presbyterian denominations.

May 3: What is happening with ordination standards? The 2008 General Assembly voted to amend our Book of Order's ordination standards. Amendment 08-B would replace the current language of G-6.0106b, with its focus on "fidelity and chastity," with broader, more faithful language emphasizing officers' discipleship to Jesus Christ. This amendment is now being voted on by presbyteries — it must be passed by a majority to become effective — and it is very much "in play" -- the vote as of April 4th is 65 Yes, 82 No, with 26 presbyteries (by my count) yet to vote. Our presbytery votes on this amendment on Tuesday, April 21.

May 10: How are things in our church? This will be an open forum to discuss our congregation — its plans, its progress, its challenges. Come and bring your questions and ideas.

May 17: How are things in our presbytery? Come and explore the impacts these events are having on our presbytery.

May 24: No class — Memorial Day weekend.



Men's Prayer Breakfast

Men are invited to join Steve Braden every Wednesday morning at 8:00 at the Baker's Nook (in Easy Shopping Place, across the parking lot from Hacienda) for fellowship, food, Bible study, and prayer. We are undertaking a study of Ephesians — bring your Bible and grow in faith!

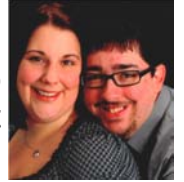
Lenten Small groups....Over 80 people participated in this year's Lenten small groups. Thanks to everyone who took part – especially the people who served as small group leaders. What a great way to study and pray together throughout that special holy season! If you were in a group and would like to continue with the next book in the series *Companions in Christ Vol. 2: Feeding on the Word*, or were unable to join a group during lent but would like to experience being part of a small group – just talk with Kathleen O'Connell.

The Women's Spring Retreat has been cancelled and will need to be rescheduled. Please watch for information about a new date in the future.

Welcome New Members!

Tom Campbell...Tom joined on October 26, 2008 by reaffirmation of faith. Tom lives on Indiana Avenue in Elkhart. He is an employee at Manchester. He has two grown children, Paul & Valerie.

Michael Gonzales & Tasha Sterling...Mike joined by baptism on October 26, 2008. Tasha by profession of faith. They live at Bercado Circle in Mishawaka. Mike works at Charlie's Gas Station and Tasha at Great Clips. They will be married here in July 2009.



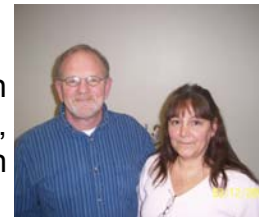
Teresa & Michael Swanson...Teresa joined by letter of transfer and Michael by baptism on October 26, 2008. They live at Twin Pines Pointe in Elkhart. Teresa works at Hach Company and Michael is a teacher at Elkhart Community Schools. They have three children: Joseph, 9th grade at Central, Steven, 7th grade at Northside, and Rachel 5th grade at Pinewood.

Holly Blessing & Patrick O'Connell...Holly & Pat joined by reaffirmation of faith on March 29, 2009. She works as a kindergarten teacher for the Elkhart Public School System. Holly and Patrick (no relation to Pastor Kathleen) will be getting married at the church on July 4.



Thomas William Kirk...Tom joined the church by reaffirmation of faith on March 29, 2009. Tom is employed by Mission Woodworking in Bristol. He has two grown sons.

Dennis & Carlene Klapp...Dennis & Carlene joined the church by Profession of Faith on March 29, 2009. They have six children, two living at home — Melissa and Jennifer Axsom — and four grown children. They both work for E.K. Blessing Company.



Daniel Zimmerman...Dan joined the church by baptism and Profession of Faith on March 29, 2009. He is retired from a career managing K-Mart stores, the last one in Elkhart. He has two children, Nancy Derosa and Kent Zimmerman.

Give a friendly welcome to these new members!



We welcome Kelli Davis, daughter of Patti and Jim, to the nursery staff, replacing Ashley Borders. Kelli is a senior at Memorial High School, and has recently been interviewed by MSNBC.



forward in faith together capital campaign



Through your generous giving, we have reached a turning point in our capital campaign. As of the end of the first quarter, 2009, we have received enough payments to cap our borrowing. We have drawn \$370,100 on our loan to pay for the \$830,000 replacement of our heating and cooling system. We have paid all but the final bill, and have sufficient funds on-hand to cover that bill. **Hence, we won't need to borrow any more, and campaign payments received from now on will be used to pay down our debt.** Once our debt is paid, we will use further campaign receipts for the next set of projects, including restroom renovation.

Thank you for your gifts and campaign pledge payments to date! We're not done however; the mission is not yet accomplished. Please keep your campaign payments coming, so that we can retire our mortgage loan and get on with the final projects.

Completion of the campaign and burning of the mortgage are scheduled to happen in 2010 — the 50th anniversary of our building. A group is forming to plan a major celebration of both events. If you would like to participate, or have ideas, please speak to Steve Braden.

Meanwhile, on the HVAC front, everything is done except for some final troubleshooting and tweaking of the computerized control mechanism. Once the controls are fully set up, we will begin enjoying greater flexibility and bigger savings from a more efficient system. Many thanks to Bob Huber and Doc Atkins and the good folks at Havel Bros., who have been a pleasure to work with.

Adopt-A-Spot...SPRING IS HERE!!! Spots are still available to those who are willing to maintain an area of the church grounds for the summer. See the Grounds diagram located on the wall outside the Sanctuary for sign-up or call Walt Wagner at 848-9429. Just keep the weeds out and the beds neat.

The Presbyterian Foundation...

The First Presbyterian Church Foundation exists to invest and manage endowment gifts for our church. It is not a separate legal entity, but is a committee of the church which meets quarterly to review investments (most of which are in Vanguard mutual funds) and grant requests. The Foundation has a number of specific funds, including: Christian Education, Building, Scholarship, Music, Memorial Garden, Presbyterian Women, the Sollitt-Scholtes Fund for Building and Grounds, the Kurtz Fund for Plants & Plantings, Harman Fund for Personnel, and the Ralph & Barbara Miller Endowment for Enrichment. *Have you considered naming the church in your will through the Foundation?*

The **Foundation Committee meets Monday, May 11, at 5:30 p.m.** Funding requests should be turned in to the church office by Wednesday, May 7. Request forms are available from the church office.

Sharing Christ's Love: Supporting our Church

Church Community Services



Sunday, April 26, 1:00 p.m.
907 Oakland Ave., Elkhart



campaign for
Church Community Services

Kick-off Rally

Church Community Services

is having an open house at its new building on **Sunday, April 26, at 1:00 p.m.** We hope to have enough people to surround the building with prayer. There will be tours, a light lunch, and a variety of activities.

This is also the kick-off of the public and church phase of their capital campaign. In addition to raising funds for the purchase and renovation of the new building (Phase 1), CCS hopes to expand the facility in Phase 2 to create more space for clients, for the computer lab, and for SOS food production. Please plan to attend the open house.

Peacemaking Scholarships

Thank you to everyone who donated to the Peacemaking Scholarships last October and throughout the winter.

During the month of May we will be attending the Senior Awards Night programs at Concord, Jimtown, Elkhart Central, and Elkhart Memorial High Schools to present a \$500 grant to a graduating senior at each school.

The students will be selected by their school counselors. They will have been chosen because of their ability to promote justice and reconciliation between people, to create opportunities for healing, or to exhibit fairness and the ability to work for peace and wholeness in their school. We will acknowledge appreciation to these winners at our Jazz Sunday worship service in June.

Thank you again, so very much, to everyone who has participated in this community mission opportunity.

Connie Minzey

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION
 OF LETTER CARRIERS

**Stamp
 Out
 Hunger**

FOOD DRIVE

Saturday, May 9, 2009
 Together We CAN
 Stamp Out Hunger

Letter Carriers' Food Drive May 9

The United Way and the Elkhart County Food Network encourage everyone to support the Food Drive on May 9. We will distribute grocery bags on May 3. They need prayer and volunteers on May 9.

Interested in helping with the 2009 National Association of Letter Carriers Food Drive on Saturday, May 9th?

Want to...

- Be a Bag Buddy?**
Drive around and help a Letter Carrier pick up the donated food.
- Help Sort & Stack?**
Work at the food pantry organizing and shelving the donated food as it comes in.
- Pray for the Success of the Drive?**
Attend the Community Prayer Event on Thursday May 7th, 2009.

Register today!

Go to www.unitedwayec.org
 click on the

"Volunteer for Stamp Out Hunger Food Drive"
 Registration deadline April 15.

Presbyterian Women Mission Projects

BIRTHDAY OFFERING: Begun in 1922, the Birthday Offering celebrates Presbyterian women's history of mission giving. It is collected in the spring of each year to celebrate the blessings in the lives of Presbyterian Women. The offering funds up to five projects that are not included in ongoing General Assembly mission support

The 2009 Birthday Offering recipients are:

1. LaMujer Obera, Centro Mayapan, El Paso, Texas. Centro Mayapan is a project that will support micro-enterprises by which Mexican immigrants women can make and sell their products.
2. His Kids, Too! Dzerzhinsk, Ukraine. This project seeks to provide a home for up to 30 orphaned children, aged 5-18, with special needs who have limited or no access to appropriate services.

The Birthday Offering will be collected Sunday, April 26, 2009. Look for the special envelopes at all services. Please be generous in your giving.



DISHTOWELS: Throughout the entire month of April PW will be collecting new dishtowels for Church Women United. They need to be 16"x28". There are special baskets located by the Sanctuary and downstairs in the Bridge area. Thank you for your support.

BABY CAPS: It's time to begin getting your needles clicking again! If you knit or crochet and you need directions for the baby caps, please contact Harriet Sloop. They will be collected in September for sending to the Brethren Service Center in New Windsor, Maryland.

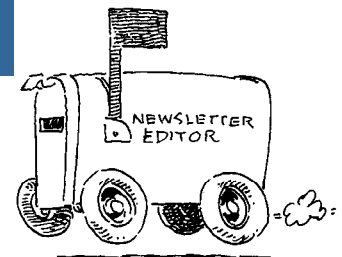


Kids' Clothing for Beardsley School...

If you're doing some spring cleaning in the kid's closets, Beardsley School needs your help. The school nurse has a need for used clothing – particularly sweat pants, jeans and short, in sizes 6-12. They appreciate any gently used children's tennis shoes. If you're getting rid of any of these items you can either drop them of at church in Kathleen's office, or bring them to Beardsley school. Thanks!

Newsletter Deadline

The next newsletter
will be inserted in the bulletin on May 17
and mailed the following week to those who are not in worship.
Please submit articles for that newsletter by May 8.





Helen S. Casper

January 8, 1918 April 6, 2009

The sympathy of the congregation is extended to:

- Bill & Debby Burton on the death of their son, Jonathon on March 31.
- Kip Lytle, on the death of his nephew, Herold "Hess" Sherrod, on April 6.
- Joan and family on the death of Eugene Rinehart, who died in Florida on March 28 and for whom a memorial service was held at our church on Saturday, April 18.

Congratulations to...

- Aaron & Nichole Slagle whose son Hayden Aaron was born on April 9.



Thank you to all who helped clean up the grounds at the Trustees' clean-up day on Saturday, April 18.



Men's Softball... This year games will be on Monday nights, starting April 27. And, they have double-headers for the first six weeks. Watch for a full schedule and come cheer the guys on!!

The Book Bunch will meet on May 4, at 11:00 a.m. in the Gathering Place. Please join us!

Baseball July 2... Mark your calendars for our annual trip to see the Silverhawks and fireworks at "The Cove" in South Bend on Monday, July 2.



A Note from Mary Ann Graves:

Oh, WOW! The people of the First Presbyterian Church, Elkhart are absolutely the greatest!

I have so appreciated your cards and calls: your visits; your treats and especially—your words of support and encouragement.

Homebound Communion with Doni and Samantha was really special.

I'm looking forward to greeting you in the halls once again and Gordon MacKenzie, I promise to tap you gently on the shoulder—just short of knocking you to the floor! :)

P.S. Please pray for my sister Marthelle Merritt's family and friends as they grieve her passing.

Thank you so much for the caring card and Steve's visits during my hospital stay for back surgery. I am doing well and making much progress.

Jim Pyles

Thank you so much for the Easter Lily that was delivered last Sunday. It was greatly appreciated. Cathy is doing better and is now at home.

Burton & Cathy Johnston

*Hi,
My name is Deb Schuelke and I want to say thank you very much for helping my family in our time of need for help. It was very thoughtful and nice of you to help us. Again, Thank You!*

*The Schuelke Family,
Deb, Erica, Jeff, & Sammi*

Upcoming Weekly Worship Schedule

Date	April 26	May 3	May 10	May 17
Preacher Upstairs	Steve Braden	Steve Braden	Steve Braden	Steve Braden
Bridge Preacher	Kathleen O'Connell	Kathleen O'Connell	Kathleen O'Connell	
Liturgist (Chapel) (Sanctuary)	Steve Eldridge			
Special		Communion; Youth Musical at Sanctuary service	Mother's Day; baptisms	Consecration Sunday with all-church brunch
Welcome Table	Jill Stoll Ruth Linton	Phid Butler Paul Steward	Linda Forgey Betty Kegerreis	Carol Steede Tim Good
8:30 a.m. Ushers (Chapel)	Carol & Dave Steede	Carol & Dave Steede	Carol & Steve Eldridge	Kay & Dale South
9:15 a.m. Ushers (Bridge)	Jennifer & Vern Pitcher	Kristy & Robert Nix	Mary & John Seddon	Pam & Dick Whitcraft
11:00 a.m. Ushers (Sanctuary)	Kirk, Derek, Scott, & Ross Linton	Diane & Doug Evans Kathy Frey Jackie MacKenzie	Jane & Doc Atkins Mason Braden Ted Romanetz	Mary Jane Blanken Kathy & Bob Wall Phyllis Warrick
11:00 a.m. Ushers (Bridge)	Cheryl Ann Miller Mary Rasp	Teresa & Mike Swanson	Anita & Jessica Gorden	Marsha Brownell Starr Robinson
11:00 a.m. Music (Sanctuary)	Chancel Choir	Melodia, Jr. Chorale, & Westminster "The Life of the Party"	Chancel Choir	Chancel Choir
Hospitality Host	Linda & Delbert Schrock		Sue & Dick Griffen	Susie & Wen Wu
Counters	Bob Huber Stephanie Wright Wen Wu			

Daily Prayer Listings

the week of April 26, 2009

Sunday – Mary Peters
Monday – Mary & Larry Pio
Tuesday – Ronald Pisani
Wednesday – Lauren Pitcher
Thursday – Jennifer & Vern Pitcher
Friday – Nella & Jerry Putman
Saturday – Lou Putnam
And at Greenleaf Living Center – Bea Pyle

the week of May 3, 2009

Sunday – Vernease & Jim Pyles
Monday – Dorothy & Paul Randall
Tuesday – Mary & Jim Rasp
Wednesday – Audrey Reames
Thursday – Shawna & Olivia Reyes
Friday – Andy Rice
Saturday – Christine & Dave Rice
And at Eastlake Terrace – Isabelle Kauffman, Yi Kintner,
Dorothy Hemphill, & Gladys Deless

the week of May 10, 2009

Sunday – Kevin Rice
Monday – Elizabeth, Todd, Caleb, & Isaac Rice
Tuesday – Betty & Bill Rice
Wednesday – Sydney Rieckhoff
Thursday – Carol & Jay Robbins
Friday – Shirley & David Robey
Saturday – Starr, David, Miles, Molly, & Julia Robinson
And at Brentwood Retirement Center – Irene March

the week of May 17, 2009

Sunday – Melinda, Paul, Ben, Ted, & Leo Romanetz
Monday – Christobel Rosezelle
Tuesday – Jennifer, Nathan, & Charlie Sailor
Wednesday – Michele, Todd, Michael, Matthew,
& Andrew Salmon
Thursday – Janet & Dick Scholtes
Friday – Linda & Delbert Schrock
Saturday – Carla, Eric, Maria, Sarah, & Andrew Schubert
And at Riverside Village – Elizabeth Wood



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Stephen B. Braden, Pastor
Kathleen W. O'Connell, Associate Pastor
Celia S. Weiss, Director of Music & Organist
Brigitte Evens, Coordinator of Children
Shannon Cooper, Coordinator of Youth
Frank Cassella, Coordinator of Contemporary Worship
Todd Miller, Bridge Media & Technology Coordinator
Cinda Olinger, Executive & Financial Secretary
Terry Bishop, Sexton
Jim Davis, Patti Davis, & Steve Seward, Custodians
Mary Freed, Nursery Coordinator
Kelli Davis & Beth Ann Hoffer, Nursery Attendants
Walt Davis, George Frey, & Rudy Gourdine Parish Associates

Summer Camp at Geneva Center

Geneva Center, our presbytery camp near Rochester, IN (about 75 min. south), has some wonderful summer camp opportunities for children & youth. Call the camp for a brochure (574) 223-6915, or check out their website at www.genevacenter.org. Application forms are available in the church office or at the welcome desk. Scholarship help for up to half the cost of camping is available from the church. To request scholarship help, talk to Steve Braden.

**ALL ABOARD
FOR
SUMMER
CAMP!**

