



January 2007

SECOND THOUGHTS

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FROM THE DESK OF

REV. ANDY RIENSTRA

Making Decisions



Like many of you I have been watching the festivities associated with the funeral of former President, Gerald Ford. One of the topics that has been repeatedly discussed by numerous commentators was Ford's decision to pardon Richard Nixon. In thinking about that decision a number of thoughts came to mind, How difficult was that decision? Did he consult others before he made it and if so whose advice was most helpful for him? How long did he think about it before he made the decision? Did he pray about it? Did he do some reading in relation to the decision and if so what were some of the materials that influenced him? Did he lose sleep over it? And we could go on with questions. Making such a decision was not popular at the time. Even he admitted that it probably kept him from winning his election bid for the Presidency. Perhaps the greatest irony is that today most Americans see it as a bold and courageous decision, one that helped to heal a nation torn apart by scandal.

Most decisions we make are not as momentous as that one, yet making decisions, even small ones can be quite difficult. Some people have more trouble making decisions than others, and there are some things that are more difficult for decision making. My spouse Mae has difficulty making a decision when we go to a restaurant. She always lets everyone else decide before she does, and has become the brunt of some humor among our friends and family. Her reason for taking long to decide is that there is so much on the menu that looks so good. She is afraid that if she decides for one thing she will miss out on something just as good or even better. I bring up all this business about decisions because as a church you will need to make some big decisions in this new year. Since September of 2005 I have served as your interim pastor. During my term as interim there were some distinct tasks I needed to help the congregation complete. Most of those tasks are nearing completion and now the congregation needs to make some decisions about where you go from here. Although I have committed to a contract for this year it is my hope that some time during this year you will make some decisions that enable me to say that my work among you has been completed.

After all kinds of meetings with various ministry leaders from the community and denomination, plus meetings with the congregation, the self study team has developed a number of ministry options. The consistory has discussed these options and now they will be presented to the congregation for response and reaction. This meeting is scheduled for Sunday January 21 following worship and will feature a lunch together as well as materials on the budget for 2007.

Making decisions with respect to these options will be difficult because it will require a commitment on the part of members of the congregation to help make things happen. This could mean big changes in the way worship is conducted and ministry is supported and encouraged. Making new decisions always puts us under new obligations. Please be present with your fellow members on January 21 to think and discuss these matters. Above all be in prayer that decisions will be made that are in keeping with God's will for the future of this church.



Christian Education

Many thanks to all the children and parents who participated in the Dec. 24th worship service. The message about the real meaning of "Christmas Presence" was appreciated by all in the church. The bells played by the Senior Youth group under Annie Hays' direction was another highlight.

See Insert for pictures

I said to the children in preparation for the program, it was not about who had the most lines, or which part you played, but giving praise to God, to whom the GLORY AND PRAISE belong....Also, if we our doing our best to serve the Lord, it doesn't matter if we mess up or make a mistake. God is happy even if we make a mistake if our hearts are in the right place. I make plenty of mistakes! Thank goodness God forgives us again and again!!

Looking ahead in Sunday School, our classes will resume on Sunday, **January 7th at 11:25 am.** The kids have just about completely memorized the Ten Commandments as part of our Old Testament lessons from Exodus. If your child missed some of the weeks when we were going over the commandments, just pull out the Bible, turn to Exodus 20 and review them with your son or daughter....the wording does not have to be exactly the same!

Any of the children who would like to participate in the memory challenge will have until the end of January to memorize the ten commandments, and Jesus' summary of the law. We will have a celebration Sunday in late January at which time the children will receive their gift certificates, and we will have a fun day in class. In order to find out which date it will be the kids need to come to Sunday School- so don't miss out on the next couple weeks...

For younger students who may not be able to memorize all the commandments we will have an opportunity for them too to get in on the fun. Please keep the children, teens, parents, grandparents and teachers in your prayers. Please pray that our youth will keep God in their lives and hearts, since the WORLD WITHOUT GOD tries to exert its strong pull over them. Thank you. *Phyllis Beals*

Women's Holiday December Lunch

The women met on Tuesday, December 12th for their annual holiday lunch. The theme of the luncheon was "gift-giving". Mae Rienstra and Martha Palmer wrapped up white elephant gifts and the women played a gift game and exchanged gifts. Helen Sandor made her wonderful, festive seafood cream soup for all to enjoy. Martha brought in early books that she had from the 1940's and shared them with the women. The books were about Christmas, gift giving and the three kings.



The group also collected enough money to put towards the RCA mission Christmas offering. They were able to purchase 2 baby kits for infants in the US and abroad. There were new and old familiar faces in attendance.....13 in all!! *See insert for pictures*

Consistory News.... Dawn Harris has stepped down from her position of Deacon on the Active Consistory as of December 12, 2006. Consistory extends its heartfelt thanks to Dawn for her service and appreciates her commitment and contributions to Second Church. **Tom Williamson** has agreed to serve on an interim basis though June 30, 2007 in Dawn's place. We welcome Tom's return to consistory and thank him for his willingness to service the church. *Helmut Horr*

Commitment Sunday, January 14th

***Don't forget to bring your completed
2007 Faith, Commitment and Gratitude pledge form to church.***

Happy & Healthy New Year 2007!



Start the year off with a smile on your face!



The Computer is Down.... Two priests died at the same time and met Saint Peter at the Pearly Gates. St. Peter said, "I'd like to get you guys in now, but our computer is down. You'll have to go back to Earth for about a week, but you can't go back as priests. So what else would you like to be?" The first priest says, "I've always wanted to be an eagle, soaring above the Rocky Mountains." "So be it," says St. Peter, and off flies the first priest. The second priest mulls this over for a moment and asks, "Will any of this week 'count', St. Peter?" "No, I told you the computer's down. There's no way we can keep track of what you're doing." "In that case," says the second priest, "I've always wanted to be a stud." "So be it," says St. Peter, and the second priest disappears.

A week goes by, the computer is fixed, and the Lord tells St. Peter to recall the two priests. "Will you have any trouble locating them?" He asks. "The first one should be easy," says St. Peter. "He's somewhere over the Rockies, flying with the eagles. But the second one could prove to be more difficult." "Why?" asketh the Lord. "He's on a snow tire, somewhere in North Dakota."

The Lost Chapter in Genesis.... Adam was walking around the garden of Eden feeling very lonely, so God asked him, "What is wrong with you?" Adam said he didn't have anyone to talk to. God said that He was going to make Adam a companion and that it would be a woman. He said, "This person will gather food for you, cook for you, and when you discover clothing she'll wash it for you. She will always agree with every decision you make. She will bear your children and never ask you to get up in the middle of the night to take care of them. She will not nag you and will always be the first to admit she was wrong when you've had a disagreement. She will never have a headache and will freely give you love and passion whenever you need it.

Adam asked God, "What will a woman like this cost?" God replied, "An arm and a leg." Then Adam asked, "What can I get for a rib?" The rest is history.....

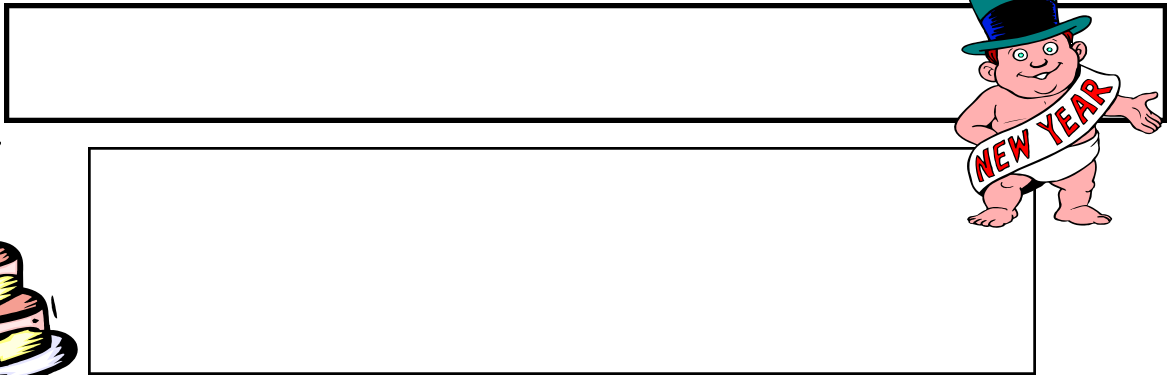
4th Quarter Mission Distributions

RCA Kits Christmas Offering	~ \$1,396
Elijah's Promise Soup Kitchen	~ 500
RU Protestant Campus Ministries	~ 500
RCA American Indian Ministries	~ 1000
RCA Special Support Missions (5)	~ 2000

Thanks to everyone who gave towards the McFoods Food Bank....it was definitely a success!!!

JANUARY 2007

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
HAPPY NEW YEAR!!!	1	2	3	4	5	6
7 10:00 Worship 11:00 Fellowship 11:20 Christian Ed	8	9 Noon Ladies Lunch 7:00 pm Consistory Mtg	10	11	12	13
14 10:00 Worship 11:00 Fellowship 11:20 Christian Ed COMITTMENT SUNDAY	15	16	17	18	19	20
21 10:00 Worship 11:00 Congregational Gathering	22	23	24	25	26	27
28 10:00 Worship 11:00 Fellowship 11:20 Christian Ed	29	30	31			



Coffee Hour Hosts

- 7—Joan & Curly Boelhower
- 14—Marilyn Koops & Annie Hays
- 21—Self-Study Team
- 28—The Park/Kang Family

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Ushers

- 7—Helmut Horr & Curly Boelhower
- 14—Tom & Kathleen Williamson
- 21—Richard Low & Hap Harris
- 28—John O’Shea & Curly Boelhower