

Secret saints: Reaching out to others is faith in action

BY JANET HIBBARD
Special to the Record-Eagle

Getting an unexpected gift appeals to just about everyone. And it's even more intriguing when you don't know who sent it.

I started getting secret pal gifts when I was a young married, playing cards with a group of old high school friends. We drew names and exchanged secret gifts all year and then on Christmas, we received presents revealing the giver's name on the tag.

At work, we had a variation of "secret pals" called Secret Santas. The entire week before Christmas, each day a surprise present would

appear on our desk. Silly gag gifts and useful items were all wrapped up in glitter. On Christmas Eve we would discover the identity of our Secret Santas.

At the Presbyterian Church, I heard about another secret gift program called Secret Saints. In the fall, members of the congregation who wish to participate could sign up to be a Secret Saint for a young person in our church family.

The goal was to let the youth of our church know we care about them. They could be college students, young adults pursuing a career out of town or military. Some of these kids are experiencing being on their own for the first time

and it can be scary. The Secret Saint program was started 10 years ago and has grown to 90 young people paired with members of the congregation.

I wasn't sure I could be a Secret Saint, being more than a little out of step with the 18- to 25-year-old set. Still, I thought maybe I could be of help to someone I didn't even know. Urged on by my daughter-in-law Jill who has been a Secret Saint for three years and who found it very rewarding, I decided to give it a try. I received my supply of address labels in September for a female student attending the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor.

I began sending little gifts

and cards each month so she would know someone back home in Traverse City was thinking of her and praying for her. I sent things I hoped she would like, like candy, angels and the BlueDay book. I tried to imagine her response and wondered if she would be as delighted with the gifts as I was selecting them.

When the Young Adult Ministries Committee from church sent out the names of the Secret Saints in April, I received a beautiful thank you note from my student saying "it made her day" to come home from classes and find a note or package from me.

If she only knew, her comments made my day! I have

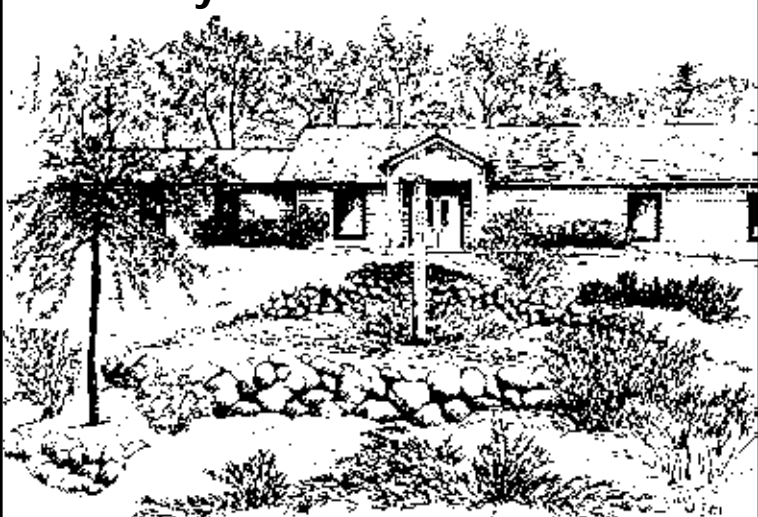
never met my student personally but I think the experience made a difference in both our lives.

The Secret Saint program was designed to give love and encouragement to kids who are thrilled with their new independence, yet need to be reminded that they have hometown support. It's about getting an unexpected gift or card just because someone cares about you.

It's faith in action and that's why Secret Saints has been so enthusiastically received at our church.

Janet Hibbard is a local freelance writer.

Unity Leaves No One Out



Unity Church of Traverse City

- Unity Youth
- Youth Education ages 4-9
 - Uniteens Class ages 10-13
 - Vacation Bible School - August 2-5

- Unity Adult
- Summer Class "The Keys to the Kingdom" 7 Wednesdays Starting July 14
 - Chaplain Program

Summer Sunday Messages "The Keys to the Kingdom" (Ongoing Programs For All Ages)

Rev. Judith A. Grimes, Pastor

Sunday Worship Service 10:30 a.m.
Nursery Care Provided

Church 938-9587 • Chaplain 938-1522
3600 Five Mile Road • Traverse City, MI 49686

E-mail: unity@traverse.net

6/12.752544.ff



**LELAND COMMUNITY
UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
106 N Fourth St, Leland, Michigan**

2004 Summer Worship Schedule

8:30 a.m. Traditional Service
July 4 - August 22

Weather permitting, the service will be held on
The Village Green on the fourth Sundays
Casual dress encouraged, and welcomed

Traditional Services

9:30 & 11:00 a.m. all summer

Join us on June 20 at both services for a
Choral Worship Service presented by our choir

Our church is located in beautiful Leland up the hill from the Post Office,
turn right on Fourth Street

CHURCH OFFICE HOURS 9:00 TO NOON WEEKDAYS
Pastor Joseph M. Graybill

256-9161

Children's Sunday School classes are not held in the summertime.

6/12.752596.ff



**THE
PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH
OF TRAVERSE CITY**

Connecting with Christ and One Another

Rev. Dr. Homer E. Nye, Senior Pastor
Rev. David C. Ramage, Associate Pastor
Rev. Becky A. Chamberlain, Associate Pastor

Worship Service and Sunday School
9:00 am and 10:30 am
Nursery Care Provided

Uplifting Music • Active Programs for All Ages
www.tcpresby.org

701 Westminster at Airport Access Road 946-5680

6/12.751994.ff



**IMMANUEL
BAPTIST CHURCH**
1027 McRae Hill Rd.
Traverse City, MI 49684
(Off of U.S. 31 1 1/2 miles south of the Grand Traverse Mall)
(231) 946-6938

Partnering with you to
discover and fulfill your
God-given purpose.

Senior Pastor: Rev. Bill Geisel
Associate Pastor: Pastor Rob Roush
Pastor of Youth & Worship:
Pastor Dan Carlson

Services: **Sundays 9:00 a.m.**
Contemporary Worship
Adult Bible Fellowship Groups
Children's Church

11:00 a.m. : Traditional Blend Worship
Adult Bible Fellowship Groups
Children's Sunday School

6:15 p.m. Wed: Impact Youth Ministry
Week Nights - Various Times
Home Groups at various locations and
topics for support, discovery, and growth.

6-12.ff.752545

Blaine Christian Church



Corner of Joyfield and
Putney Rds
Arcadia
352-9148

Summer Schedule:
8:30 a.m. and 10 a.m.
services
Rev. Robert Larimer

Come worship with us!

6/12.752599.ff