You are cordially invited
to the
Blessing and Dedication of our New Building
Sunday, January 8th, 2012 at 2:30 pm
at
All Saints Episcopal Church
2206 NW 99th Street, Vancouver, WA 98665

Miracles and Blessings

2011 has been an exciting year, a year of miracles and blessings! Each event was evidence of God's grace. Taken together, they are a series of blessings that arrived just when we needed them - not in advance, and never too late. We thank God for these blessings; they build our faith as we build so that we can serve our neighbors more effectively.

Babies In Need has moved four times since 1999 to accommodate its steady growth. Recently we overflowed from our room into three other areas at All Saints Church. We've prayed for years for more space and investigated renting space downtown or in other church buildings, but we didn't want to divert money from our ministry to needy families.

God saw our situation. The people of Vancouver First United Methodist Church (VFUMC) have supported Babies In Need since 2005 with donations of baby clothes and bedding, essentials and extras, and money. Last November they selected Babies In Need as their outreach partner for 2011, and donated $6000 to their Christmas outreach offering to use to assist this local ministry. When they learned that our greatest need was for space, they said, "We could help you construct a building!" That began our great adventure and was the first of many related blessings.

What evolved is a building with a 20'x30' space to store and sort donations for large gift bags for needy babies. It is "stick built", matches the nearby church's siding and roof, and is heated to protect donations and car seats from moisture.

God uses many hands and hearts to accomplish His work. Ray Johnson of VFUMC has worked with Habitat for Humanity for years and drew on his network of friends for assistance with all phases of the building. He is seen on the top of a ladder in many of our photos. He is a hard worker and wise advisor and his optimism is infectious. Another blessing!

"Mr. T" (who insists on being anonymous) drew our building plans, contacted the best suppliers, scheduled contractors and volunteers, directed volunteers, and worked many days by himself. He spent untold hours at the site and solved all kinds of challenges on the spot. His knowledge, skill and foresight were invaluable. What a blessing!

The Rev. Elise and Joe Astleford supported the project with prayer, ideas, work, enthusiasm and encouragement. Their past building experience was crucial during the first months of gaining approvals and starting the planning. We were blessed again!

Our building committee has members from three churches: Candace Weatherby (*Chair)*, John Stephenson, Ray Johnson, "Mr. T", and Kitty Ash. Each brings essential skills to the project. They've devoted hours to necessary details for drawings, approvals, permits, legal oversight, fund raising, purchasing and the actual construction. Blessings abound.

Meyer Memorial Trust shares our values and vision and awarded us $24,999 in June, covering the majority of our expenses. Then we knew the building would happen this year! We give them hearty

thanks on behalf of the many needy families who will receive practical help and encouragement. They have truly blessed "our" babies.

The Vancouver Rotary Foundation awarded $5000 to Babies In Need for the building project. More thanks and rejoicing! It is a blessing to have the support of this large organization of caring fellow-citizens.

When the county gave us their final approval, our excavation and concrete contractors were there within a week to get the project rolling. It was a pleasure to work with Karl Matson of KRG, Inc. who did our excavation.

When we needed to move an old shed quickly so our excavator could do the grading for a walkway, The Rev. Bob Chrisman took two photos, posted them on CraigsList, and had a deal in 20 minutes - and then had to turn down a stream of additional offers. Again, God had the right person there at the right time!

Clark County added a traffic impact fee of $2400 to our permit at the last minute. The next day Home Depot gave us a discount of almost $1,000, a donor gave us $1000, and the concrete contractor cut his bid by $600 because he didn't need to have a pump cement truck. Thank you, Lord, for these blessings!

We had large pieces of plywood to make into trays and bins for storage, and several people who would have done it, but no one had a big enough table saw. Enter *Friends of the Carpenter*! These good people not only cut the pieces, but assembled 30 trays and sanded them beautifully. Then they assembled and painted eight large bins on rollers that will hold incoming donations, quilts, blankets and other bulky items. We are now praying for each others' ministries. Another blessing!

The County approved our building on Wednesday, January 4, 2012. Thursday we built two walls of shelves. Friday a group of 30 "Miracle Movers" carried all our car seats, big layette gift bags, bins, boxes, and supplies into the new building in under 15 minutes! Saturday we organized the room and prepared for our building dedication. On Sunday, over 50 people gathered to see the finished building, hear our story and receive thanks. The Rt. Rev. Gregory Rickel, bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Olympia, and The Rev. Robert Chrisman, priest at All Saints Episcopal Church, led us in a service to dedicate and bless the new building and continuing ministry. As Bishop Rickel said, "The true blessing has been accomplished by the work of many hands in the past and the work to be done in the future."

Our new building is beautiful and fits nicely into the property and neighborhood. Now we'll be able to continue to expand our ministry and include new and used folding portable cribs - the kind with mesh sides. Safe cribs prevent falls, provide a flat surface free of objects that could harm a child or obstruct breathing, and create a barrier against young siblings and pets. Folding cribs will be easy to move as housing conditions change for our moms. We'll also accept new and used strollers in good condition to enhance the well-being of the children and make their parents' lives easier.