



Almena UMC

Newsletter

February/March 2007

269-668-2811

www.almenaumc.com

Sunday School/Adult Bible Study: 9 am

Sunday Church Services: 10 am

Greetings to my Friends in Christ,

As rhythmically as the seasons change, so flows our liturgical year.

Our Epiphany series on the Holy Spirit will come to a close in mid February and we will move on to the season of Lent. Lent is the 40 days (excluding Sundays) between Ash Wednesday and Easter. It recalls the 40 days Jesus fasted in the wilderness (Mark 1:13), and invites us to participate in the life, suffering, death and resurrection of Christ.

Hope you can join us on Ash Wednesday, Feb. 21 at 7:00 pm as we have a reflective worship service including prayers of repentance and the imposition of ashes. Ash Wednesday is one of my favorite holy days, because it is so uniquely "ours" as Christians. There is no commercial rush to turn ashes into a commodity to be sold. And where else but in the church can you come to confess your powerlessness and repent of your sin within the context of a grace-filled community?

Following that, on Sunday Feb. 25th we will have a guest preacher, Rev. Marty Culver, from the Milwood UMC. As he leads worship at Almena that day, I will be leading worship at Milwood. This pulpit exchange should provide some variety, as well as strengthening our connection with other UM churches. Pastor Marty will bring a message that leads into our Lenten sermon series: "The Way of Forgiveness".

Also as part of our Lenten journey, we will distribute devotional booklets and coin banks from the Society of St. Andrew. Titled "Let Justice Roll Down Like Waters", these daily meditations will provide a framework for you and your family to engage in spiritual renewal. At the same time, they will allow us to practice ministries of justice and mercy by sharing money to feed undernourished people right here in the United States. Ending hunger is a worthy and reachable goal.

My prayer for our church this month is that God will open our eyes to see where he is at work around us, and that we would join him there.

In Christ's Shalom, Pastor Donna

SUNDAY SCHOOL MIDDLELERS CLASS

Teacher: Shirley Huffman

Winter being upon us the class has concentrated on the "things" of winter. During the Christmas season we made a paper tree and placed decorations upon it with scripture lessons. The story of Jesus and his birth were studied along with the Wise men story. They also made silver stars to place on our clothesline outside of the classroom.

This month we have studied both Old and New Testament stories. We learned of the patriarchs in Genesis, following the stories of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and his sons, one being Joseph and his life in Egypt. We have also studied about Moses and the crossing of the Red Sea, living on the Sinai peninsula and the receiving of the Ten Commandments found in the book of Exodus.

The class is having fun making crafts. This past week we studied about snowflakes and how each is different. We made paper snowflakes and talked about how great and wonderful our God is as he creates everything unique and beautiful, even people. Our snowflakes are hanging on our clothesline in the classroom hallway, come and see them. On January 21 we celebrated Rachel Rickli's tenth birthday with cupcakes, blowing out candles and singing Happy Birthday.

In February we will concentrate on the word "Love" and where it is found in the scriptures such as, Love your neighbor as yourself" and what it means. Also we will look at I Corinthians Chapter 13, the love chapter. We will talk about God's love and how we can show concern for others that are less fortunate. Our craft will be the making of Valentines and writing our own verses. This will soon lead us to the Easter story continuing through March.

From the Treasurer,

We are nearing the end of January and this has been a very busy month for both the secretary and the treasurer. The secretary has been working on and passing out contribution summaries. If you did not receive one and you feel you should have please call Diane Ross. Do not file your 2006 federal income tax return before you receive your contribution summary. I have been working on and filing the proper forms with the IRS. We have to file a 944 which is workers social security and Medicare taxes. We have to file W-2 and W-3 Forms. There are also workman's compensation roll forms to be filled out for our employees for insurance coverage and tables to be filled out and returned to Conference. I encourage all church members to keep a copy of your W-2 Forms that you receive from your employer until you confirm that the earnings reported on your W-2 form show up as earnings for the same year on your annual Social Security statement. Social Security statements are automatically issued each year to all Americans aged 25 and over. If earnings reflected on an employee's Social Security statement are underreported the easiest way to rectify this and your records is for you the employee to present a copy of your W-2 for the year or the years in question to the nearest Social Security Office.

Just a reminder when purchasing items for the church, please use our tax free status, your committee chairperson has our tax exempt number.

Respectfully submitted, Susan Tinkler

MEMORIAL COMMITTEE by Shirley Huffman

The Memorial committee met January 13 and discussed how we should prepare for new memorials that come in to the church. The idea of future meetings, for decision making and other important events that pertain to memorials, will be held when needed. If a visitation is needed two from the Memorial Committee will call.

Past memorials given have been placed in a booklet that can be found on the foyer table for your taking. These booklets are a repeat of last year's booklets but has been updated. Also there is a portion of church history included. A yearly update of these booklets will occur when needed.

If you know of a memorial that has been given in the past and has not been recorded, forms are available and are hanging on the bulletin board for this use. Fill a form out and please give it to Sue Tinkler co-chairperson or me.

At this time we need a report on those who have purchased oil candles in memory of a loved-one. Please fill out a form and turn it in if you have not done so. Any questions can be directed to Shirley Huffman or Sue Tinkler.

A Bit of History

A short discussion during the memorial group meeting was the topic of the old church steeple. If you look on the front page of the memorial booklet mentioned above you will find a picture of this steeple and is the original one that our church forefathers built. It was mentioned at the meeting that the steeple had no cross on it. This made me feel really old fast. In the early part of the last century and before, most churches that held a cross on the steeple were often considered Roman Catholic. Few Protestant churches had crosses on the steeple. Placing a cross on a Protestant church became popular later on in the last century. A lightning rod on our Almena church was placed on the pinnacle giving assurance that it would be protected from lightning. Mr. Teed, one of the originators and financiers, of our church was concerned that lightning may strike the church leading to a calamity.

We have much to thank Mr. Teed for. He worked in and on the Almena Methodist church for years. He was also a spiritual leader holding Sunday school classes, he help start the Epworth League (young peoples class) and taught a scriptures class every Sunday for many children who gathered here at the church. Mr Teed is buried in the Almena cemetery and our Middler's Sunday school class has often placed flowers on his grave during the Memorial Day celebrations while having a lesson on the beginnings and history of our church starting in the 1860s.

When I think back, many faces come to mind that continued to carry on Mr. Teed's dedication and ambitions. If it weren't for their struggles, prayers and dedication, we may not have the privilege of worshipping here at Almena today.

SPRC REPORT BY THERON

The SPRC committee has started work on the "Church Photo Directory". Marie Wilke-Dolbe is heading up a committee to work on this. We will be checking out pricing on a three ring binder that has removable pictures, and pictures can be added. This should keep the Albums updated.

The Almena Quilters will not be meeting in February. Our next meeting is March 6th at 7:00 pm. At our last meeting we cut out about 20 pair of pajama bottoms for children, sizes from toddler thru teenager. In March we will be cutting out quilt blocks and hopefully have a fun craft project demonstration. - Diane Ross

Missions by Lois Richardson

Let's begin our new mission year with some great news regarding our December, 2006 mission project. The project was United Christian Services in Paw Paw. The Christmas Eve offering was also given to that cause and together the total given was \$821.65. Many local families will be aided by your generous support.

The National Project in Lane 3 for February is a new project for many of us but actually had its origin about 12 years ago. It is called PET for Personal Energy Transportation. PET is a hand-cranked (lever powered) wheelchair. It is sturdy and simple, made from wheelbarrow shells and tires. The cost for making and shipping one overseas is \$250. It is truly a gift of mobility for those who have lost the use of their legs due to polio, landmine injury, amputation, etc. You can imagine the huge difference one of these devices would make in an individual's life. There are 21 million people in the world in need of some kind of mobility. The PET is being given to those persons in greatest need and with the least resources in poor or underdeveloped countries. It is now used by children and adults in over 40 countries. This ecumenical project is a growing ministry to deliver mobility solutions to the "least of these". I have posted some pictures on the bulletin board so you can see what the PET looks like.

In March there will be two projects. The first is in Lane 6 for Local Conference Ministries. There will be a 1/3 split between three needs:

1. Golden Cross-Up to 50% may be retained for local church health and welfare ministries. The balance is used by the conference for these programs over and above the budget.
2. Rural Life-Strengthens the work of ministries in town and rural areas of concern within the West Michigan Conference.
3. Christian Education - Under girds the work to provide training in Christian Education within the conference.

On March 18 there will be a special envelope offering for UMCOR (United Methodist Committee on Relief), which is an international humanitarian aid organization. The offering is called One Great Hour of Sharing and is for Lane 4. Contributions to this offering "underwrite UMCOR's cost of doing business so that 100 percent of every donation to UMCOR can be spent on ministry, not on administrative costs. Without this offering there would be no UMCOR. This relief agency brings relief when a catastrophe strikes. It rushes with aid to disaster areas all over the world. Along with providing food, shelter, clothing and medical help, we stay to help survivors rebuild lives. With our contribution to this special once a year offering, we can ensure that when catastrophes cause suffering, our church will be in the lead to ease the pain."

Let's continue to work together to make our missions giving successful, for it really is the Lord's work being done through us.

-- Bea's corner --

We still ned 100 of those little Spartan UPCs ! Surely somebody else shops Spartan stores and SOMETIMES buys Spartan products !! Snip those little price codes and get them to Bea Ellis !!

Also the biscuits are going well at the Soup Suppers. If I make an extra pan, *making up to 60*, and a couple folks make a couple of dozen muffing each, should nearly supply anyone liking that little addition to the supper. See Shirley Lyke ~~



Relay For Life® is a fun-filled overnight event designed to bring together those who have been touched by cancer in our community. At the event, we celebrate survivorship and raise money to help the American Cancer Society in its mission to save lives, help those who have been touched by cancer, and empower individuals to fight back. During the event, teams of people gather at schools, fairgrounds, or parks and take turns walking or running laps. Each team tries to keep at least one team member on the track at all times.

But, Relay is much more than a walk around a track. It is a time to remember those lost to cancer and celebrate those who have survived. It is a night for people who have shared the same experience to comfort and console one another. During this event, we honor survivors during the Survivors Lap and we remember those we lost to cancer during the Luminaria Ceremony. We also celebrate life, friendship, and a chance to work together toward a cancer-free future.

Most importantly, Relay gives you the power to help in the fight against cancer. By joining together as volunteers and donors, our efforts help the American Cancer Society strive toward a future where cancer doesn't take the lives of our friends and family.

Relay is a wonderful opportunity for the Almena United Methodist church family to be part of the activities of an organization and exhibit their "faith-in-action" involvement as volunteers.

Kick-Off!! is February 5, 2006 at 6:30-7:30 p.m. at Lawton High School Cafeteria Lawton MI. Join us for our annual Kick-Off Party to celebrate the official beginning of Relay Season. There will be a lot of information for team's and their captains including "Relay On-line".
www.acevents.org/relay/mi/vanbureneast

- Relay for Life Van Buren East
- June 23-24, 2007
- 10:00 a.m.-10:00 a.m.
- Lawton High School
- Lawton, Michigan

In the Love of Christ;

Elizabeth Gordy; Van Buren East 2007 Co-Chair

Newsletter/Ad Board by Jerry

Next Ad Board meeting is set for March 15th at 7:00 pm

The next newsletter is April 1st, with the deadline on March 28th, I welcome contributions from all! ☺. email jerrylentz@almenaumc.com