



# Almena UMC

## Newsletter

October/November 2009  
269-668-2811  
[www.almenaumc.com](http://www.almenaumc.com)

10-1-2009

Dear Friends,

Once a year our church membership meets with Kalamazoo District Superintendent, Rev. Neil Davis, for a review of our concluding year and a time of setting direction and leadership for the upcoming year. This year's Charge Conference will take place on Thursday Oct. 8 at 7pm in the sanctuary. I encourage all professing members who are able to, to come and vote on our church business. All others are welcome to come and be a part of this worshipful celebration of our ministry, with voice, but not vote.

To prepare for the Charge Conference, our Lay Leadership Committee has been prayerfully discerning the gifts and graces of church members, and inviting them to step up to leadership for 2010. Many of you have accepted the invitations, and we are grateful for the commitments you've made. Great things are happening in the name of Jesus Christ at AUMC and in the Paw Paw community.

At the same time, we feel keenly aware of Jesus' observation: The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. (Mt. 9:27) It is the dream of your pastor and a goal of this church that God would raise up the number of people who are actively using their gifts in leadership and servant ministries. Every baptized person is a minister of Christ's gospel. It is my hope and prayer that each one who calls this church "home" would be growing in faith and holiness thru the regular practice of spiritual disciplines, including service to others. "Every member in ministry" is a biblical concept that the church is founded on. God's Holy Spirit equips us for every good work so that the truth and lifestyle of Jesus can spread around the world. Imagine what shape the world would be in if every Christian took that call to heart and hands.

Many though, feel inadequate or want to shirk from making commitments. Let me remind you of the prophet Isaiah's experience: In a time of national mourning, when he felt totally inadequate and guilty, his lips were touched with a coal by an angel and God cleansed him, taking away all his failures and sin. The Lord, referring to his dreams for Israel then said: "Whom shall I send?" And Isaiah replied, without hesitation: "Here am I. Send me!" That's when God laid out a plan that sounded intimidating, frustrating, and exhausting for Isaiah. Still, Isaiah took the challenge and God enabled him.

Friends, God has laid the same kind of challenge out for us. It is a privilege to be used by God to accomplish his goals, but it is not always glamorous work. It is assisting in the nursery, even when your own kids aren't there; it is in truly welcoming outsiders into our pews, into our potlucks, into our hearts; it is in praying, and painting, and cleaning the kitchen. It is in visiting the sick and the unlovable and it is in a number of other ways.

I pray that together we will listen honestly for God's call on our lives, and have faith and courage to answer when He calls by saying: "Here I am, Send me."

Peace,  
Pastor Donna

## ***MISSIONS***

We have several mission opportunities this fall. Please consider those below and how you might be able to serve God by serving others.

We will have **two local missions** again for **October**. For November, the congregation is asked to bring appropriate non-perishable food donations for Thanksgiving boxes. The mission money collected in October will be used in November to buy turkeys and any remaining items still needed to fill the boxes. Last year, we prepared and delivered 10 boxes, and they were greatly appreciated by everyone that received one.

The second **October mission** will be collecting clothing for the **Decatur Human Services Clothing Center**. At this time of the year, they are especially seeking warm outerwear which includes boots, hats, gloves, mittens, coats, and any other warm clothing for men, women, children, and infants. You may bring your clean and gently used items to the Fellowship Hall beginning October 11.

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We will have **two local missions** for **November**, the same as last year. One is the **Thanksgiving boxes** mentioned in the October mission's information above. Non-perishable food items can be brought to the Fellowship Hall beginning November 1. As the time approaches, suggested items will be listed in the Sunday bulletin 'Announcements'. If you know of any local persons or families who could use this assistance, please let Cindy Stineback, Marcia Williams, or me know. We can use strong, sturdy boxes, with lids if possible, if you have any to donate.

The second mission for **November** will be the **Personal Energy Transportation (P.E.T.) Project**. The two main goals of the P.E.T. Project are:

- 1) To provide mobility to some of the least of God's children.
- 2) To provide the opportunity for meaningful volunteer work for retirees, students, and others in the U.S.

We have supported this terrific national project in the past, but the exciting news this year is that we will be sending the money directly to the local PET International affiliate in Holland, Michigan, to make and ship PETs.

A PET is a simple, hand-cranked wheelchair designed to provide mobility to persons who have lost the use of their legs due to disease, accident, animal attack, and in particular, land mines. It is estimated that around 22 million people in the world have lost one or both legs to land mines, and that number grows by 3,000 each month. (See the August/September Newsletter at [almenaumc.com](http://almenaumc.com) to learn how Almena will send mission dollars for landmine removal in Angola.) A PET is built to travel in rough, rural areas where conventional wheelchairs either won't work or won't last. They are distributed, free of cost, around the world in poor and

underdeveloped countries to those who must crawl or drag themselves on the ground to get around. In addition to an amazingly changed life due to the gift of mobility, a PET can also provide independence and a new sense of self-confidence. The cargo area of a PET is often used to store small items the owner can sell or repair for others, enabling them to earn money to help support themselves and their families.

The Holland Pet affiliate, an ecumenical, non-profit ministry, opened in June and makes colorful PETs specifically for children. It is operated entirely by volunteers, and depends on individuals and groups for its support. As of last week, they have already sent 30 PETs, and they want to be able to make 10 per week. The cost for parts, assembly, and freight to a U.S. port for shipping overseas is approximately \$250.

The Holland facility is open Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday for two 4-hour shifts, and Saturday morning for one 4-hour shift. Volunteers don't have to be mechanically-inclined. Even if you can only use a paintbrush, your help is needed. I will try to arrange a trip yet this year for any Almena volunteers who would like to go to Holland and work. Stay tuned for more information. P.E.T. in Holland will be successful through the compassion and dedication of those who give their time and resources.

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***CAN 'PROJECT CONNECTION' HELP YOU  
OR SOMEONE YOU KNOW?***

The fifth **'Project Connection'** for seniors, the unemployed, and other people that need help is scheduled for 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Thursday, October 15, at the Van Buren Conference Center, 490-1/2 South Paw Paw Street, Lawrence. Project Connection is a one-day, one-stop-shop event designed to help individuals and families connect with the resources they need. At this free event, area residents can meet with 34 social service agencies for help with housing, finances, food assistance, legal aid, migrant services, medical questions, dental and mental health, and more. There will be help with filling out applications and making appointments, as well as information, referrals, support, and clothing. A free hot lunch will be served. Van Buren County United Way is seeking volunteers for set-up, clean-up, food and gift distribution, to act as greeters and guides, and child care. If you can speak Spanish, you are particularly needed. The fourth Project Connection served 567 people. For more information or to volunteer, please contact me as soon as possible.

## 'WESLEY FOUNDATION' UPDATE

The Wesley Praise Band will be leading our worship on November 22. The Wesley Foundation is the United Methodist presence on WMU's campus, serving the greater Kalamazoo community. Two Spring Break mission trips are planned for 2010 for students who are able to go. A domestic trip to Washington, D.C., will have components that focus on social justice, and students will have opportunities to volunteer in the community. An international trip to Nicaragua will allow students to work with a local missionary, and continue to build relationships within the community, as Wesley students have done in the past. Please plan to worship with the talented, exuberant Praise Band on November 22! (See the August/September Newsletter at [almenaumc.com](http://almenaumc.com) to learn more about the Wesley Foundation at WMU.)

*Janet Swigart*  
*Missions Chairperson*  
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Harvest Dinner is coming soon!!!

The Annual Harvest Dinner will be taking place at Almena UMC on Saturday November 7th, 2009. Dinner will be served from 4:30 - 7:00 PM. The fare includes Turkey, stuffing, mashed potatoes and gravy, choice of vegetables, cranberry sauce, dinner rolls and yummy pie!! Adult tickets are \$7.50, tickets for children 4-12 are \$3.50, and children 3 and under eat for free. Take out dinners are available for those that can not join us in the fellowship hall.

We need church family members to join in our efforts to make this community event successful, so please sign up to donate items needed, prepare your favorite dish, or be helping hands in your favorite job. We appreciate everyone's help in this cherished community dinner.

# ***A LITTLE CHURCH HISTORY***

## **ALMENA METHODIST LADIES AID SOCIETY ORGANIZED IN 1866**

This group of ladies met at the I.O.O.F. Hall. The church was not built until 1867-68 and later only had a sanctuary. This I.O.O.F. hall still stands west of the new Almena Township Hall and is now a home. The first church dining and kitchen area was made under our present sanctuary in the later 1930s by using a scoop and a team of horses. Many neighborhood men were involved. Two other areas have been built since for updating utilities and to make more room.

1. The extended basement area was built in 1967
2. Fellowship Hall built in 1992

From the 1921 minutes of the Almena Methodist Ladies Aid:

## **LADIES AID SOCIAL**

**Oct 26<sup>th</sup>** The final plans and committees were decided for the October 31<sup>st</sup> Church Social while the ladies busied themselves tying and piecing a silk quilt. Olive Buell - program chair. - George and Jane McKeown and Zelma Failing, table committee. Dish washing committee - Mrs. Vosburg and O. Buell. Mrs. Hoehn and sons - decorations. - Sales chair. Lena Tracy, Minnie Hoodmaker, L.B. Hoodmaker Mrs. Nora Hoodmaker. - Amusement booth, Lena Tracy. - Reception committee, Mrs. Miller and Mrs. Daisy Brown. It was approved that a charge of 25 cents for those over 12 years of age and under 12, 10 cents. All children in the program will eat free. Supper will be served at 6:30. All ladies are asked to bring dishtowels to use. (A later hour for serving was for the farmer's that needed to get their chores done before eating.)

## **RESULTS OF THE SUPPER**

124 people were served with 25 free suppers. Total \$49.66-Grab bag \$1.90-Amusement booth 81 cents.

Sale of fruits and vegetables and other donated items 16.90- sale of silk quilt 6.50- expenses- 6.50.

At the Ladies Aid meetings poetry was read and the Lord's Prayer and the 23<sup>rd</sup> Psalm were repeated. The ladies would meet at the I.O.O.F. hall or in homes. Often at these meetings there would be a potluck and the men were invited to stop and eat. The group would often help a family tie a quilt and a meal would be served in payment. On November 30, Mrs. McKeown served a surprise meal at the I.O.O.F. hall in payment to the ladies for tying two quilts for her family.

The Ladies Aid was made up of dedicated people helping to keep the church doors open by paying \$30. to help with the ministers salary each quarter. The rest of the monies earned went for helping local families and people in need.

## How are the people mentioned above connected to the church today?

**Olive Buell** - L.G. Buell's grandmother – The **Hoodmakers** are connected to Barb Alden's family

Nora Hoodemaker wrote Almena history helping us with past dates – **George and Jane McKeown** - Jane played piano later for the church services - George did solo work and was S.S. Supt. and a trustee – Daisy Brown played the organ for church and neighborhood functions and at times used a portable organ. This little 100-year-old-organ has been donated to the Historical Society and will be on display one day in the old town hall. - **Lena Tracy** was a long time A.M.C. Sunday school teacher - **Mrs. Miller's** husband built the church altar – **Mrs. Vosburg** lived in the home where the **Trykalls** now live and **Mrs. McKeown** and husband donated the archway that came from Chicago along with walnut wood from an old bedstead for the building of an earlier podium used until 2005. The McKeown family also donated the steeple bell that still rings today. Mrs. Hoehn's one son became an Almena fiddle maker and played for the local square dances and lived to be over a hundred years old.

**FROM THE MINUTES OF AUGUST 1922** - Letter received from Bronson Methodist Hospital asking the Almena Ladies Aid to supply eggs for the hospital. It was planned that the ladies would bring eggs to the next meeting for donating. – It was reported that the church is back \$30. on its Benevolence fund. Aid voted \$5. to help. Balance of Aid funds is now \$9.84. No meetings next month, as many ladies are working in the grape vineyards.

*Shirley Huffman: Historian*



**WORSHIP THE  
LORD!**

## Upcoming Worship Notes

**October 17**

**Eileen Scamerhorn preaching**

**October 25**

**Laity Sunday**

**Nov. 22**

**Wesley Foundation visiting**

## Meet Your Neighbor

By Lois Richardson

It is a pleasure to write about Chris Robbins so we can all get to know her better. She is a fun person with many interests.

Chris is one of Tom and Bea Ellis's six children so she grew up in our church. Chris has strong memories of some of our now older members and how they impacted her life. She said that "whenever the church doors were open, the Ellises and Connollys (Dale and Betty) were<sup>7</sup> always there." She also remembers Edith Burns always being there and helping in whatever way she could. She adds that when she was a teenager she was fortunate to be part of a strong youth group here that kept the kids active in good ways. Many of our members were leaders in the local 4 H group, which also strongly influenced her early years. Chris was involved with gardening projects, both flowers and vegetables, sewing led by Emma Arnold and wood working with her dad as the very capable leader who set the bar very high.

After her marriage Chris lived in Florida for about ten years and then returned to this area to raise her two daughters in Paw Paw. Daughter Angie is a teacher and now lives in Tennessee and has one little girl. Her daughter Lorrie's husband is in the service and is starting his second tour of duty in Alaska. They have a six year old daughter, who Chris keeps in close contact with over the phone, and a one year old son. She usually visits them once a year. While that has been a great enjoyment, she hopes that after this next four years he will be deployed somewhere closer to Michigan so visits can be more frequent.

Chris is employed at KVCC in the library as an acquisition assistant. She orders the new books and enjoys seeing them when they come in. She considers herself fortunate to have a job that she really likes.

You can probably guess that reading is one of Chris's hobbies but she is also really involved in some sports activities. Walking, or sometimes race walking, is her favorite sports hobby and she is very good at it. She has often placed first in her age group at these events. She also enjoys biking and for about 15 years has participated in week long bike trips that have taken her all over Michigan and even into Wisconsin and Indiana. The group traveled 50-70 miles per day! Most of the trips have recently been downsized to weekend or three day trips. This summer Chris took part in her first triathlon. It was sponsored by Calvary Reformed Church. She went into it knowing it would be a real challenge with a swimming portion included with the walking (5K = 3 miles) and biking (13 miles). Her goal was just to be able to finish. She not only finished but performed very well overall. She's already considering a repeat next year. Anyone want to join her?

Chris was a member of our first Alpha session and has been attending church and Sunday School regularly since then. We're very happy to have her officially join her childhood church where she fits right in. Be sure to welcome her and get to know her.

With Flu Season coming, our church leaders will be looking at things we can do to lessen the risk of spreading infection. In the mean time, keep yourself and others as healthy as possible by taking these precautions:

+Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Throw the tissue in the trash after you use it. If a tissue is unavailable, cough or sneeze into your shoulder or elbow instead of your hands.



# FLU

## PRECAUTIONS

+Wash your hands often or use hand sanitizer.

+Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth.

+Get the seasonal flu vaccine and/or the 2009 H1N1 flu vaccine, if recommended, see below.

+Try to avoid close contact with sick people.

+Keep sick children at home

+If you have flu-like symptoms (fever with cough or sore throat), stay home for at least 24 hours after you are free of fever without the use of fever-reducing medications.

### Who should get the seasonal flu vaccine?

The seasonal flu vaccine is recommended for anyone who wants to reduce their risk of becoming ill with flu. It is particularly important for persons at increased risk of severe illness or for spreading the infection to persons who are at high risk. These people include:

--People aged 6 months through 18 years or age 50 years or older;

--People with underlying medical conditions, such as chronic heart or lung diseases or diabetes (see Appendix A for a full list of these conditions);

--Pregnant women

--Healthcare providers

--People who live with or care for infants younger than 6 months of age; and

--Residents of long-term care facilities.

--If you are unsure about whether you should receive the seasonal flu vaccine, contact your healthcare provider.

## **REJOICE, REJOICE!**

We rejoice that on Sunday Sept. 27 Sam Gordy announced his intention to become an Inquiring Candidate for Ministry in the U.M. Church. Sam has heard the call of God on his life, and is taking a significant step of faith in answering that call. Please keep Sam and Elizabeth in your prayers as he begins the formal process of candidacy.

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### **Good News! Free Community Dinner Saturday October 10<sup>th</sup> 5-7 p.m.**

In these tough times it can be hard to stretch a family's grocery budget. It's discouraging to have a loved one out of work, and it gets tiring to eat alone. That is why we are offering a Free Community Dinner on Saturday Oct. 10<sup>th</sup>. ALL are welcome to gather for this fest of food and friendship. Dinner will be served from 5-7 p.m. Come alone or bring someone you know who could use some encouragement.

If you'd like to volunteer, see the bulletin board in Fellowship Hall. We still need a few workers, including greeters for the parking lot and in fellowship hall, and prayers for the sanctuary in case our guests desire prayer.

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### **Sunday School Update**

Sunday School got off to a great start Sept. 20 with a well-attended Celebration of Education. Children and adults enjoyed singing led by Dave Field, and a "sparkling" marionette show by Julie Richardson. Teachers welcomed their students and gave a brief description of the upcoming year's topics.

Something new this year is that Child Care is being offered during the Sunday School hour. Our new employee, Melissa Block and a volunteer will be on duty every Sunday morning. We hope this will make Sunday School even more accessible to many people. Bring a friend and come!

We offer classes for 3 year olds thru adults. The adult classes are studying The Life of David, and the Book of Job. See you in Sunday School!

## October 2009

| Sunday   | Monday                             | Tuesday                     | Wednesday                  | Thursday  | Friday | Saturday  |
|--|------------------------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------------|---|--------|---|
|  |                                    |                             |                            | 1   | 2      | 3   |
| 4<br>Sunday School 9:45<br>Church 11 a.m.  | 5<br>Bible Study<br>10-11:30 a.m.  | 6<br>Alpha Course 6-9 p.m.  | 7<br>Quilt Club 7 p.m.     | 8<br>Charge Conference<br>6:30 p.m. SPRC<br>7 p.m. Conf. Mtg. | 9      | 10<br>FREE Community<br>Dinner 5-7 p.m.                     |
| 11<br>Sunday School 9:45<br>Church 11 a.m.<br>Potluck Sunday (and a<br>Birthday Party)             | 12<br>Bible Study<br>10-11:30 a.m. | 13<br>Alpha Course 6-9 p.m. | 14                         | 15  | 16     | 17<br>Crystal Springs Camp<br>Fall Clean-up 9a - 3p.        |
| 18<br>Sunday School 9:45<br>Church 11 a.m.<br>Bronson Lakeview -<br>Lawton, Lead Worship<br>2 p.m. | 19<br>Bible Study<br>10-11:30 a.m. | 20<br>Alpha Course 6-9 p.m. | 21<br>Ad Board Mtg. 7 p.m. | 22  | 23     | 24<br>Alpha Retreat at Gull<br>Lake<br>Youth Group 6-8 p.m. |
| 25 LAYTY SUNDAY<br>Sunday School 9:45<br>Church 11 a.m.<br>Pastor Appreciation<br>Celebration.     | 26<br>Bible Study<br>10-11:30 a.m. | 27<br>Alpha Course 6-9 p.m. | 28                         | 29  | 30     | 31 HALLOWEEN  |

| November 2009   |                                    |                             |                            |                 |        |                                      |
|---|------------------------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------|--------|--------------------------------------|
| Sunday  | Monday                             | Tuesday                     | Wednesday                  | Thursday        | Friday | Saturday                             |
| 1<br>Sunday School 9:45<br>Church 11 a.m.                                 | 2<br>Bible Study<br>10-11:30 a.m.  | 3<br>Alpha Course 6-9 p.m.  | 4                          | 5               | 6      | 7<br>Harvest Dinner<br>4:30 - 7 p.m. |
| 8<br>Sunday School 9:45<br>Church 11 a.m.<br>Potluck Sunday               | 9<br>Bible Study<br>10-11:30 a.m.  | 10<br>Alpha Course 6-9 p.m. | 11                         | 12              | 13     | 14                                   |
| 15<br>Sunday School 9:45<br>Church 11 a.m.                                | 16<br>Bible Study<br>10-11:30 a.m. | 17<br>Alpha Course 6-9 p.m. | 18<br>Ad Board Mtg. 7 p.m. | 19              | 20     | 21<br>Youth Group 6-8 p.m.           |
| 22<br>Sunday School 9:45<br>Church 11 a.m.<br>Wesley Foundation<br>visits | 23<br>Bible Study<br>10-11:30 a.m. | 24                          | 25                         | 26 THANKSGIVING | 27     | 28                                   |
| 29<br>Sunday School 9:45<br>Church 11 a.m.                                | 30<br>Bible Study<br>10-11:30 a.m. |                             |                            |                 |        |                                      |

## December 2009

| Sunday   | Monday                             | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday       | Saturday                   |
|--|------------------------------------|---------|-----------|----------|--------------|----------------------------|
|  |                                    | 1       | 2         | 3        | 4            | 5                          |
| 6<br>Sunday School 9:45<br>Church 11 a.m.                                | 7<br>Bible Study<br>10-11:30 a.m.  | 8       | 9         | 10       | 11           | 12                         |
| 13<br>Sunday School 9:45<br>Church 11 a.m.<br>Potluck Sunday             | 14<br>Bible Study<br>10-11:30 a.m. | 15      | 16        | 17       | 18           | 19<br>Youth Group 6-8 p.m. |
| 20<br>Intergenerational<br>Sunday School Event<br>9:45<br>Church 11 a.m. | 21<br>Bible Study<br>10-11:30 a.m. | 22      | 23        | 24       | 25 CHRISTMAS | 26                         |
| 27<br>NO Sunday School<br>Church 11 a.m.                                 | 28<br>Bible Study<br>10-11:30 a.m. | 29      | 30        | 31       |              |                            |