



Almena UMC Newsletter

August and September, 2010

269-668-2811

www.almenaumc.com

8-1-10

Greetings Friends,

It's hard to believe we are already on the downside of summer, but here it is, August 1. Our summer series on church history has sparked much conversation as many members have childhood memories from neighboring branches of Christianity. I'd welcome more feedback on what struck you as best practices from other denominations that might enhance our community life and times of worship. Drop me a note or email at pastor@almenaumc.com.

I'd like to thank some of our youth for stepping up to take leadership in our church this summer. Tim Gill has offered to handle PowerPoint slide preparation and Sunday morning duties while Deidre Sweet is taking a medical leave. The garden pots that our youth group planted in May are blooming nicely, so thanks to them for providing us with herbs and fresh veggies. Thanks too to our neighbor Paul Harris who waters our plants twice a week. All are welcome to take what they can use from our garden. Seventh graders Kate Rozeveld and Rachel Rickli envisioned a brighter, cleaner and more functional nursery after volunteering last winter as nursery aides. Their ideas and planning have come to fruition with the help of our Nursery Caregiver, Melissa Patton and some faithful trustees and friends. Your children and grandchildren will be safe and happy in the care of our Nursery, so bring them on down!

Our ALPHA team, lead by Joe Swabash and Dave Field, is gearing up for a fall season of dinners, talks and conversation about the meaning of life. Be praying about how you might help and who of your un-churched family, friends, coworkers and neighbors you could invite as guests. A barbeque dinner with live music will kick off the program on Tues. Sept. 7 at 6:00 in our picnic shelter. Childcare will be available this year. Please stay tuned for more information.

In August our Lay Leadership Selection Team will begin arranging for leadership for the church in 2011. Please consider how your spiritual gifts and talents could be used to make Almena UMC the best we can be at "being and building disciples of Christ."

Coming up this fall, our Pathfinders Education program will resume on Sunday Sept. 19th at 9:45. Coinciding with that, we will begin a sermon series titled "Making Love Last a Lifetime". This will be a great opportunity to invite a single or couple you know to hear about the struggles, joys and foibles of God's plan for intimate relationships.

Thanks for being a great and supportive church family to Steve and I. We are blessed by your prayers and encouragement.

Pastor Donna

United Methodist Church Volunteers in Missions

“Love your neighbor as yourself.”—Mark 12:30

Jesus summed up the Christian lifestyle in a simple formula – “Love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength” and “Love your neighbor as yourself” (Mark 12:30)

When asked by a lawyer to explain who was his neighbor, Jesus told the story of the good Samaritan. The Samaritan was a good neighbor because he had compassion and was able to cross culture and religious boundaries to help someone who was obviously hurting and in need of help. And then Jesus said, “Go and do likewise!” (Luke 10:25-37). The gospel asserts that putting our faith into action is at the very heart of our Christian calling and not just something that we do in our spare time after we have reached our personal goals.

Through volunteers in mission every person in the church has the opportunity to serve and to live their calling and their lives more faithfully. And when we reach out in this way, using what God has given us in the service of others, we can expect life-transforming experiences.

My life-transforming experience will begin now as I prepare to join a group of 10 volunteers through Michigan in the service of others in Haiti. Our departure is scheduled for **January 23, 2011 and return on February 3, 2011.**

The main mission project is to help rebuild a church in Petionville Haiti which is slightly south of Port-au-Prince. A secondary project is to take and review VBS materials with teachers for future class studies.

Each volunteer will be taking 2 pieces of check on “luggage” that will be filled with 2 5 gallon white pails and lots of supplies to be taken directly to those in need. As I receive the list of needs to fill our luggage, I’ll post and/or request for donations.

I’m excited to represent my church family here at Almena along with our local churches within our conference as a volunteer to service those in need and exhibit a Christ like example for others.

Your prayers and support are appreciated as I prepare for this God lead mission.

Mesi!
Elizabeth A. Gordy



ADULT BIBLE STUDY, FALL OF 2010

Sam Gordy

GENESIS, CHAPTERS 37-50

JOSEPH - SON OF JACOB

The man of Dreams. The man with a Vision. He was the 11th of 12 sons. His father's favorite. Sold into slavery by his jealous brothers but rose to become the most powerful man in Egypt after Pharaoh.

In his generation he, more than any other, represented Israel---as a people who struggled with both God and human beings and overcame and as a source of blessing to the nations. It is, moreover, through the life of Joseph that the covenant family in Canaan becomes an emerging nation.

This class will take place in the downstairs classroom located in the far corner. The stories woven within this study of Joseph are many. They are very relatable to the issues we all face today in our daily lives. Please join in this enriching story that begins when Joseph is a young man of 17 and continues through the end of his life.

There is something for everyone. I welcome those who have participated in the past and challenge those who have not been in a Bible study recently to participate and grow as we all learn something new from God's word through scripture.

MONDAY MORNING BIBLE STUDY

The group will meet on August 9th at Jan's Restaurant in Gobles for an 11 a.m. brunch and discussion for forming new ideas and schedules while surveying the questionnaires. Anyone interested in the group is invited to join us. The date for starting the 2010-2011 Bible study year will be Monday, September 13. Watch the bulletin for other information.

Questions? Ph. 657-4300

CHURCH HISTORY

VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL, JUNE 1989

Shirley Huffman, Historian

The Almena U.M. church usually held Vacation Bible School each summer with groups of neighborhood children. Times were different in the last century. The problem with liability and the possibility of misuse of children was not considered. It was a time when neighbor helped neighbor and women of the church cared for the children of mothers that worked, but most children were blessed by having their mothers usually at home during the daytime. These same mothers were often the ones that led and helped with the V.B.S. At the time there was little technology. No overheads or power point. Words for singing were put on a large paper held by a tripod. A piano player with a song leader taught songs during the first twenty minutes of the morning putting the children into a jovial mood and the sense that Jesus was in their midst. Classes were held in the older basement area. No Fellowship hall, as yet had been built and V.B.S. was always held in the morning hours. It wasn't until mothers went to work that evening classes were held. Each teacher had their own theme and I am sure the older mothers setting in the congregation today could tell stories about our yearly Vacation Bible School.

I was prompted to write this article while sorting through church historical papers. My own children had already attended V.B.S. a few years earlier and later I found myself teaching my granddaughters and a new group of local children.

The following gives an account of the 1989 Vacation Bible School week for the middle graders class.

MONDAY - GET ACQUAINTED TIME - Study the Lord's Prayer - Make booklets for the week's lessons.

TUESDAY – Scriptures: Luke. 15:11 (jealousy) – Mark 9:33 (arguing) – Matt. 18:21 (sinning) - Matt. 21:3 (helping)

Prepare for the Wednesday Safari - bring camera, binoculars, pretzels, chips. Bug repellent, dress in Safari clothes. Find a walking stick. All wear your new camouflaged club headbands.

WEDNESDAY- Pile into the back of a truck after praise time - head for the trail in the forest to study God's Creation.

THURSDAY – Scriptures - Matt. 3:13 (what is Baptism and the beautiful Jordan) Matt. 4:1 (temptation) - do work books

FRIDAY - Discussion about the week and about our Safari. What did we learn about nature and God's world? Prepare for V.B.S. program - at 11 a.m. go downstairs for a slide show. Each day we had refreshments and playtime.

THE PLAY HELD BY MIDDLE AGE GROUP OF CHILDREN AFTER V.B.S. PICNIC

The group portrays on the sanctuary stage the week's Safari wearing their Safari equipment

Grandma "Bird" "Wasn't the Safari fun? We learned so much about God's world. Class, what did you like about the Safari?"

Jessica Huffman: "I enjoyed studying about nature and just being outdoors looking at things He has made for us.

Angela Lanter: "It was fun crossing the stream on the old tree limb, it was sort of scary"

Rusty Eli: "I liked where the animals lived in the old branch of that big tree we looked at."

Carissa Sweet: "It was just fun walking on the trail."

Sarah Grim "I loved taking pictures and it was hard crossing the stream without falling in."

Sarah McCorry: "I loved it too! I got some great pictures of the woods and flowers."

Grandma "Bird" asks Jay Dee: "What did you like about the Safari Jay Dee?"

Jay Dee Morrison "One thing I didn't like was the Poison Ivy." Everyone laughs

Grandma "Bird": "We have spent a whole week learning about God and His world. Let's sing about it.

Children Sing: This Is My Father's World. (Missing from the play: Dave Hall and Jeremy Rebenstorf)

Teachers that helped with V.B.S. through the years: Bea Ellis, Emma Arnold, Mary Sutherland, Evelyn Overacker, Sharon Lantz, Shirley Huffman, Harriet Doty, Hazel Rentner, Hildur Rumsey, Carol Buell, Jo Burns, Ella Mar Norton, Anita Rumery and many others. Carissa Sweet Hamre, Gail Sutherland Davis, as girls, attended classes. If past teachers or students remember stories or have pictures of the old V.B.S. days, a poster or article might be in order. See Shirley Huffman

Tuesday Sept. 7 6:00 PM

**ALPHA
BB-Q!**



Introduce your
friends and
acquaintances to the
Alpha Program by
bringing them to our
Alpha BB-Q.
Live Entertainment -
Childcare provided

Contact: Joe Swabash 657-6030

From the Trustee Committee:

Sunday, August 22nd we will need people to stay after Church to help pull up the carpet in the Fellowship Hall. We will be saving the carpet to recycle it for the new playground. We also need help putting the books in boxes and putting tables and chairs away. We will feed you lunch; please leave an RSVP for Sue at 628-4400 so I know how many to plan for.

Thanks, Sue Tinkler

Free Community Dinner

Saturday, September 18, 2010
4:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m.

Look for sign up sheets for workers and greeters in the upcoming weeks.

Kalamazoo Kings Baseball Game

Friday August 6th
7 p.m.

\$2.50/person, including Fireworks after the game! See Sue Tinkler after church August 1st for tickets and to pay for them. Make checks out to Almena United Methodist Church.



Hooray for playgrounds! They offer a fun welcome and place to play for our children and friends. Our current equipment was installed 15 years ago, thanks to a community donation and the hard work of Dave Field and friends. That equipment has outlived its usefulness, and is considered unsafe by today's safety standards. Therefore, most of our current playground equipment will be removed this summer. Don't fret though, our Trustee Playground Committee, headed by Jenn Nette, continues to be hard at work analyzing the safety issues and current needs for our congregation and the broader community. Our intention is to install a new playground next summer.



Playground
Changes

******Missions !!******

I would like to thank the Almena Quilters group for the 12 beautiful quilts and blankets they made throughout the fall, winter, and spring for Camp New Day in Reed City, Michigan. This camp is held in July for children and youth of incarcerated parents, and the blankets and quilts are greatly treasured by all the young people who receive them.

Almena UMC Volunteers for Habitat for Humanity

On Wednesday afternoon, July 21, Almena UMC sent a team of six workers to help staff the food concessions building at the Van Buren County Fair to raise funds for the Van Buren County Habitat for Humanity. This was the second year Almena participated. Our team consisted of Don and Jan Trykall, Jackie Coons, Dave Field, and Katie and Janet Swigart. We took/filled orders, grilled, cashiered, washed dishes, restocked food/drinks, and helped clean tables. This is the only fundraiser the local 'Habitat' has each year, which is why this event is so important. Three shifts of volunteers are needed each day, beginning with breakfast and continuing until about 9:00 p.m. Volunteers come from many local churches and service organizations. We worked hard and had fun for a very good cause, and I'm sure we will be asked back again next year. **Thanks, Team Almena!**

Our August mission offerings will go to the Mujila Falls/Musokatanda Agriculture Project (Lane 2 – World Project, Africa) in the Democratic Republic of Congo and Zambia, West Africa. In January, we supported the missionary there, Paul Webster, with our giving through a Covenant Relationship with him. However, our support in August will help support the project there to combat hunger through agriculture.

Mujila Falls is located in extreme northwestern Zambia, near the source of the Zambezi River on a high plateau, and enjoys moderate temperatures and plenty of rain in the rainy season. The year is almost evenly divided between the rainy and dry seasons, with the rainy season lasting from about October 15th to April 15th.

This area of Zambia is inhabited by the Lunda-Ndembu tribe. They are Bantu peoples who originally migrated into this region from Congo. They are hunter-gatherers who traditionally kept no livestock. This provides a major challenge as Paul and his co-directors try to teach them to plant commercial crops and to raise cattle, goats, pigs, rabbits, and chickens. The Lunda-Ndembu tribe is one of the smaller tribes in Zambia and it's poorest. The life expectancy of the people is less than 35 years, and the infant mortality is the highest in Zambia. Much of this can be traced to the poor diet and lack of proteins and minerals in the foods they typically eat.



Two men and two oxen can now ridge and prepare one hectare of land for planting corn or soybeans in just six hours. With hoes, this process took twenty men two days to complete and the work was backbreaking. By increasing productivity, families can utilize the abundant land and water resources to live abundantly as God intended for all humankind.



This pair of oxen and wagon can carry more weight than Paul's pickup.

Through all of their extremely hard work and sustainable projects, Paul and his co-directors, Tshala and Betty Mwengo, are able to grow the United Methodist Church and provide a 'hand up' instead of a 'hand out.'

We will have **two local missions** for **September**. The first is **The Wesley Foundation** at Western Michigan University (Lane 6 – Local Conference Ministries). Wesley is the United Methodist presence on WMU's campus, serving the greater Kalamazoo area. Almena has enthusiastically supported **The Wesley Foundation** as one of our monthly

missions for several years. The money we contribute is used for student programming such as worship, bible study, small group studies, fellowship, and service projects, including special mission trips. For some years now, Wesley has sent students on mission trips to Quilali, Nicaragua, to work with the people in language classes, and health and ministry work.

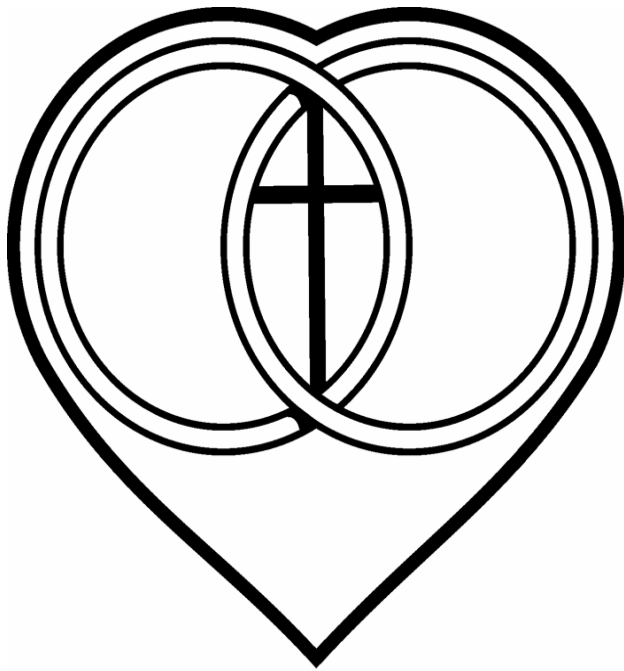
We had the opportunity to meet and spend a little time with some of the students and their Director, Lisa Batten last April, when Sue Tinkler, Marcia Williams, and I prepared and took a Sunday evening dinner to Wesley. Some of us also were able to enjoy the high-energy music of the Wesley Praise Band at the Kalamazoo District Conference in March and at Annual Conference in June. I've said this before, but it bears repeating: As a United Methodist, I am very proud to see these young people active in their community, in the West Michigan Conference, and in the world. At a time when many young people reject the God and the religion of their upbringing, I admire them for making a commitment to God in their college years, and for making the time to come together and grow together each week.

We hope to host The Wesley Praise Band for morning worship at Almena sometime this fall. Please say a prayer for the students and for Pastor Lisa.

The second **September mission** will be collecting clothing for the **Decatur Human Services Clothing Center**. We have done this for the last few years, but are starting earlier this year to get them to the Center at a better time when people are looking for fall and winter clothing. 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 August 29. All items at the Center are free to needy people in the local communities.

Thank you for your continued prayers and generous gifts for missions. If you have questions regarding any of the missions we support or would like to be on the Missions Committee, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Janet Swigart
Missions Chairperson
jlswigart@aol.com



Making Love Last a Lifetime

Starting Sept. 19, 2010

“Making Love Last a Lifetime” is our fall sermon series based on the book of the same name by Rev. Adam Hamilton. Come and explore topics rarely discussed in church, such as “What Women Wish Men Knew About Women,” “What Men Wish Women Knew About Men,” and “After the Honeymoon Is Over.” The study explores biblical perspectives on Love, Marriage and Sex. It is designed for singles as well as for married couples. An extra week titled “Single in the Pews” will encourage those who are often alone at church.

In preparation for the series, an anonymous survey for adults will be distributed in August to gather input on aspects of “Making Love Last a Lifetime” that are most relevant for you.

Plan to invite a friend or two to this informative and inspiring series.

Crystal Springs Camp turns 150!

Crystal Springs United Methodist Camp is believed to be the oldest Christian Camp in Michigan. This year we are invited to join in their 150 year anniversary celebration, August 21 and 22. Each summer children from Almena UMC attend camp, as well, our Men’s group has adopted the Crawford Cabin for a 3 year commitment on maintaining and upgrading the cabin. In addition to annual maintenance, a new roof and a floor restoration project have been completed. Outdoor painting is the next big upgrade.

Anniversary Events are listed below. The camp is located at 33774 Crystal Springs Street Dowagiac MI 49047. Note: Google directions are correct, others are not. Or See bulletin board for printed directions.

For tickets for the concert, or to RSVP for the picnic, go to the Crystal Springs Home Page at www.crystalspringscamp.com and click on the yellow anniversary banner at the top of the page. Scroll down to bottom of page. Or contact Crystal Springs Camp via email, crystal@locallink.net or phone, **269-683-8918**.

Crystal Springs Saturday Family Event

1:00 p.m.-9:00 p.m. Saturday, Aug. 21 Cost: \$20

Includes: All your favorite camp activities; swimming, target paintball, laser tag, mountain boarding, picnic dinner, an early fire bowl with s'mores and a reserved seat for the Ken Medema Concert. Tickets at www.crystalspringscamp.com and click on the yellow anniversary banner at the top of the page. Or phone, 269-683-8918.

Ken Medema Afternoon Concert

Saturday, August 21, 2010 (3:00p.m.)

\$10.00 in advance, \$15.00 at the door

Ken Medema is a nationally known musician, composer and performer and has ministered to the church for over 30 years. Ken performs in a wide variety of venues, from local congregations to charity fund-raisers, to high school and university campuses, to denominational youth gatherings, to globally televised religious programs, to corporate conventions, to annual assemblies of national organizations, and he does this without the use of his physical eyes, being able only to distinguish some shapes and differing degrees of light and darkness. In 2007, He performed for the West Michigan Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church.

His lyrics generally provide social commentary on themes such as justice, hunger, poverty, homelessness, and Christian charity as it pertains to them. He has recorded a total of 26 albums. Performances regularly include songs improvised both musically and lyrically by accepting audience recommendations, sermon topics, or guest speaker stories as their basis.

Crystal Springs Picnic & Revival

Sunday August 22, 2010

(RSVP's Appreciated, Free Will Offering Taken)

We'll open camp early enough that you can come right from church. Enjoy your favorite camp activities, take a walk in the woods or rest on a bench along the river. Visit the historic "Springs" or have a guided tour and hear about the history of this holy place and the plan for the future. Have a picnic lunch prepared for you. Later in the afternoon, we'll gather for a time of worship in the tabernacle, with the Rev. Neil Davis offering up some "fiery" preaching sure to revive your spirit!

Choir voices have never sounded better than in the 110 year old Tabernacle. Bring the whole choir and lift up a song as a group for worship or join your voices with others to praise God with the best revival hymns.

Sunday Schedule

10:30 a.m..... Camp Opens
11:00 a.m.-1:30 p.m. Picnic Food
2:30 p.m. Revival
4:30 p.m.-6:00 p.m..... Picnic Food
7:00 p.m. Camp Closes

Pathfinders Christian
Education classes for
preschoolers though adults
begin on

Sunday Sept. 19
9:45 AM

Childcare provided.

Stay tuned for more details.
Contact Pastor Donna to
volunteer to help!



Join a
PathFinders
Class



FALL SCHEDULE RESUMES SEPT. 19

11:00 AM WORSHIP

9:45 PATHFINDERS EDUCATION

NURSERY PROVIDED FOR BOTH

Youth Group Resumes
Second Saturday
September 11
6-8 pm

Contact Mr. Rozeveld
for details!

