



Almena UMC Newsletter

June/July 2007

269-668-2811

www.almenaumc.com

Adult Bible Study: **9 am**

Sunday Church Services: **10 am**

Grace and Peace to You Visitors and Friends!

The first of June finds me at the West Michigan Annual Conference in Grand Rapids. Also with me are Shirley Lyke, our Lay Member to Annual Conference, and Ann Field, who is representing the Kalamazoo District. We will be in conversation with our fellow United Methodists about a variety of topics. As well as spending time in prayer, worship and fellowship, we will elect delegates for the UM General Conference, (which convenes every 4 years) to be held in Fort Worth in 2008.

As you may be aware, our West Michigan Conference is actively exploring the ramifications of a proposed new identity as the "Great Lakes Conference", which would arise out of the former WM Annual Conference and the Detroit Annual Conference. No decisions will be made in 2007, but a comprehensive progress report will be given on the work of the Michigan Area Transition Team. A vote will be taken by both conferences in 2008, and if approved the recommendation will be taken to 2008 General Conference. The effective date for the new Conference identity would be in 2009. Won't you pray with me that this opportunity will be motivated not by fear or finances, but by our collective desire to shape an excellent new vision, mission and organization modeled on the life death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

At our local church level, we celebrated Pentecost last week with dancing and singing and praising God for the gift of his Holy Spirit. Sunday School classes drew to an end for the year, and we gave thanks to all of our teachers.

A team of four leaders, including myself, Walter Gerstung, Lois Richardson and Sam Gordy traveled to Oakbrook IL in May to receive basic training for running the ALPHA program. ALPHA is a short term weekly program whose purpose is to provide a light and welcoming environment for people to explore questions on the meaning of life. All are welcome at ALPHA; from those who have never been to church, to those who have been in the pews for a long time. We returned with great enthusiasm and vitality for starting up this new ministry in September. We will be meeting soon to decide on dates and other administrative details. Stay tuned for opportunities to learn, grow and serve to the glory of God.

I challenge you to make it a point to stay connected to God and each other over the summer months. Bible Study is available on Sunday mornings at 9 am, and on Weds. Evenings at 7:00. Our Women's Group continues to welcome new participants each Weds. From 6-8 pm in the sanctuary. Children are invited to join our Celebration Kids! Choir, which rehearses with joy and fun times each Sunday at 4:30. Vacation Bible School will be the week of August 12th

In Christ's Peace, Pastor Donna

Vacation Bible School Planning:

We will be holding Vacation Bible School this year the week of August 12th as mentioned. I know that may seem far away at this time but it will be here before you know it. If you are interested in being part of the planning, teaching, and/or preparing for Vacation Bible School this year, please see me, call me or you can e-mail me.

Ann Field

Almena Quilters:

We will be meeting on June 5th at 7pm. Please bring your quilt projects that we have been working on for relay for life in memory of Betty Smith. - Diane Ross

Missions by Lois Richardson

Have you all heard the exciting news about how well we did at the Crop Walk this year?

A big congratulations to all those who contributed in any way. The total of \$1,377.00 was by far the best we've done. There were twelve walkers and one station monitor. Thank you to everyone.

Our mission projects for June and July will be new for some of you. In June we will be supporting the Haiti School Hot Lunch Program in Lane 4 under Hunger/Relief/Umcor. Haiti is one of the poorest nations in the western hemisphere. And yet "education for their children is a definite priority for Haitian parents. For many students the school hot lunch is the only food they will receive; they often share it with younger brothers and sisters through the school fence. The Eglise Methodists D'Haiti has 105 schools (elementary, secondary and vocational) located throughout the country. Ninety-three of the schools provide a canteen program or school hot lunch which reaches about 17,000 students. Two years ago 25 cents would provide one meal of rice and beans. Inflation has increased the cost of a single meal to 50 cents in some places, \$2 in others. Most of the schools have had to cut back their meal program to a few days each week; few meals include meat." The need in Haiti is great and our support will help feed these school children.

In July, Ethnic Churches in Lane 5 will be our project with a 50/50 split between Lansing Korean UMC and Greensky Hill Indian Church at Charlevoix. The Korean UMC in Lansing is a very dynamic congregation as 90% "of the church members are students of Michigan State University. Worship, Bible study, and youth ministry are conducted in the Korean language. Cell groups meet weekly on John Wesley's model of the class meeting. A retreat in the fall, with special speakers, provides education in the faith as well as inspiration. The Korean Cultural Center is another ministry to local residents, students and their families."

The Charlevoix Greensky Hill Indian Church, "built in the 1850's, is a simple log church that houses an active, racially mixed congregation. Many members are from the Little Traverse Bay Band of Odawa, some descendants of the original worshippers. The church is named for Peter Greensky, a lay preacher. In addition to worship and Sunday School, the congregation enjoys singsirations and camp meetings. Our advance gifts supplement the church budget to allow special activities. Historical documentation continues of the nearby tribal cemetery. Greensky Hill provides a place of family connection, sacred space, and spiritual peace."

Choir News by Sandi Boucher

We finished up our year in May and are now taking the summer off. Practices will start up again in late August so we will be ready to sing in September. Please consider whether participating in our choir would interest you. There is always room for more and we really do need male voices. Our practices rarely last more than 30 minutes and are right after church on Sundays so you wouldn't have to make an extra trip.



You can donate to or volunteer for Almena United Methodist Church's team at this year's Relay For Life online at www.acsevents.org/relay/mi/vanbureneast. Click on Team Rank >> [more](#) to find Almena UMC.

If you would like to pledge to a participant or make a general team donation offline, see Nancy Mc Elroy or Dave Field, our team captains. Elizabeth Gordy is this year's event Co-chair. This is an awesome community event.

So far, we have 7 people signed up to walk. Please help support us!

Further information:

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

Almena UMC Photo Directory by Jerry

We just had our first round of photos taken Friday and Saturday and Marie is doing a fantastic job! Our directory will be for our church family only. Everyone who wants one, will get one. **Please sign up and participate if you haven't already.** This is not for church members only, but for all who attend and enjoy Almena UMC!

The new directory will be easy to update, help us keep in contact AND help us get to know each other a little bit better. As a giving church, letting people know we care brings us closer.

As most of you know, Marie Wilke-Dolber is a professional photographer who moved to the area and started her own studio here. If you would like larger prints of your great church photo for yourself, friends and family, let her know!

Her web site: <http://www.mallardpondphotography.com>

NEIGHBORHOOD ECUMENICAL BIBLE STUDY GROUP

The Monday morning bible study group has finished the Torah books. With watching two films during the last two mornings about the land of Noah, Abraham, Moses and Joshua we will take a break for summer.

On Monday, May 21 we gathered for our Mystery Trip. The weather was great and the gang had fun looking over the streets of Saugatuck, Lois Richardson got a great buy on carmel corn, and visiting Mt. Baldy finding ourselves reminiscing over how we at one time climbed the 300 plus steps. (picture is on bulletin board) We had lunch at the Pumpnickle and later traveled to Crane Orchards for dessert. Our last morning will be held at the Almena U.M. church on June 4 at 10-11:30. All are welcome.

If individual bible study is desired during the summer, please contact Theron or Shirley.

MIDLERS SUNDAY SCHOOL CLASS

Where did the year go? Our 3rd through 5th grade class had begun earnestly to delved deeply into scripture and now it is time for summer break.

This past Sunday School year we have learned from both the Old Testament and the New Testament. The children know about Moses and the Ten Commandments. They have followed the Hebrew Nation through trials and successes. We learned where to find scriptures in the bible and to memorize the Gospel names. We have studied about Jesus and his life. We have learned bible vocabulary, especially words that are hard to understand. We also have talked about the disciples and who they were and how and why Matthias replaced Judas Iscariot.

The last few weeks we have studied intently the last days of Jesus with the Last Supper, his walk that led to the cross and his resurrection. Did you know that Jesus walked at least five miles from the time of the Last Supper until he reached the hill of Golgotha? This walk was from evening until noon the next day and under duress and persecution.

Our class also has object lesson stories. After this year's study on kindness I do hope the children will have learned to be kind and thoughtful and finally we finish our mornings with a small craft. I am sad that more children don't attend.

Many children are late in coming to class and the children that attend every Sunday have to hear the many lessons over again while they are repeated to the "once in awhile attendees". This puts the class behind sometimes for a week or two. Nine A.M. is early for Sunday morning sleepy heads and I struggle too, to reach my classroom on time.

I do hope parents will see to it that their children attend every Sunday and come on time. I would appreciate it greatly. Urge your children to invite friends and neighbor children also to Sunday School. This year Rachel Rickli has had perfect attendance with the exception of one sick day and going away on a trip with her family. I congratulate her for being so diligent.

Have a great and blessed summer kids.

Mrs. Huffman

Adult Sunday School class will continue thru the Summer. Just a point of interest, we started the Adult Sunday School class in Sept. 2004, and went year around since then. We started in the New Testament and continued thru and now are starting the book of James. Thanks to all of you that so faithfully attended. - Theron

Bethany Christian Services by Lois

I have received an announcement from Bethany Christian Services regarding an opportunity to learn more about their adoption services. Following is the announcement:

"Considering Adoption? Bethany Christian Services of Kalamazoo is offering an opportunity to learn more. We will be having a general adoption information meeting which will take place on June 18 from 6:30-8:00 p.m. at Westwood Christian Reformed Church, 620 Northampton, Kalamazoo, MI 49006.

We will be sharing information about domestic, international, foster care, and older children adoptions. Along with helpful information given by professional staff, there will also be a panel of adoptive parents who will share their stories.

Refreshments will be provided though unfortunately, we will be unable to provide child care. To RSVP or for more information, please **call 800-862-7113** or email us at **mholtapp@bethany.org**. Drop-ins are also welcome.

Please consider the adoption process, and join us for our "Discover Adoption Night" on Monday, June 18th! Maybe this is the time to respond to that tugging in your heart!"

Almena UMC Janitor Position by Staff Parish Relations Committee

The SPRC has received a resignation from Michael Swigart that due to his current full time job, he will be leaving as the current janitor for Almena UMC.

Thank you Mike, for a job well done! He will continue until we find his replacement.

The SPRC has decided to first ask the congregation if there is anyone interested in filling this position or if you know of a responsible, trustworthy person you would recommend. We would need a person who could work several hours, once a week, unsupervised, completing cleaning tasks as needed.

Job Descriptions and Applications sheets will be posted on the Bulletin Board in the Fellowship Hall. All job applications must be received at the Church no latter than June 18th, 2007. All applications should be mailed to the church.

The mailing address to the Church is:

Almena UMC attn: SPRC
27503 CR 375
Paw Paw, MI 49079

**Congratulations to our Graduates!! God bless.
Have a safe and fun summer to all students!**