



Almena UMC

Newsletter

October/November 2008
269-668-2811
www.almenaumc.com

Greetings Friends,

The chill in the air reminds us that indeed the seasons are changing. It seems that this fall, all the talk is about change in the future. But let's acknowledge that change is already happening. In fact change in our country and our culture and our world is happening faster than we can keep up with. The upcoming election is likely to be as much about managing changes that have already piled up, as it is about creating new change.

A recent NPR report on multi-tasking revealed that human brains can only focus their external attention on one or two things at a time. When we attempt to think about and perform several tasks simultaneously, our brains go into overdrive, switching focus back and forth at lightning speed. Unlike computers, our brains cannot multitask with endless electronic precision. Our brains are 3 lbs. of soft living matter that must be nourished and treated kindly; they are what make us human. When the switching reaches a certain threshold, we cease to function properly and end up in doctor's offices and in accidents.

A key ability to guard against chronic and unhealthy overdrive is the ability to make good decisions on how we will spend our time, money, energy and talent. Keeping in mind God's principles of self-giving service balanced with Sabbath rest let me recap from a recent sermon four questions to ask yourself when making choices.

- 1) Would this choice show honor to God?
- 2) Would this choice be the loving thing to do?
- 3) How will this choice feel to the other side...is it how I would like to be treated?
- 4) What would Jesus have me do if he were in my shoes?

These four questions sum up the ethical principles of Jesus; to love God, to love others as you love yourself, and to treat others as you would like to be treated. Scripture, Tradition, the Experience of the Holy Spirit, and Reason can help inform our answers to those questions.

Living whole and meaningful lives is God's best intent for humankind. He is the only one who can multi-task to perfection and maintain multi-relationships to perfection. In the mean time, and with His help, may each of us blossom and grow in Christ's likeness.

In Christ's Shalom,
Pastor Donna

Missions by Lois Richardson

Support for our mission projects remains very strong. We donated \$428.60 to the Bible League and \$861.91 for Wesley Foundation at our local college campuses. Thank you so much for your generosity.

On September 25 a group of about one dozen from our congregation enjoyed a potluck and power point presentation by Paul Webster, the agricultural missionary we help support. The experience was so enjoyable and educational. Before he left, the group layed hands on and blessed Paul in his work. I think we all left with the feeling that we are indeed fortunate to be part of a program where the missionary has made such a positive difference in the lives of the people where he works in Zambia, West Africa. They are learning so much from Paul as he uses his agricultural skills there. Continue to keep him and the people there in your prayers.

It doesn't seem possible but it is already time to start planning for our Thanksgiving Baskets, which is one of the mission projects for the month of October. In November the congregation will be asked to bring appropriate nonperishable food items to fill the baskets while the money given to the mission project for October will be used to buy turkeys and any remaining food items still needed. These baskets are really appreciated by the families who receive them. If you know of local families who could use this assistance, please let either Pastor Donna, Janet Swigart or myself know soon.

We are also adding another project for October. We will be accepting clothing donations for the Decatur Clothing Center. Last year we supported this mission in December, which meant they didn't receive our donations until January. So this year we are collecting earlier so area residents can get these items much sooner to meet their needs as winter begins. They are especially seeking warm outerwear which includes gently used and clean boots, gloves, mittens, hats, coats and other warm clothing in all sizes for men, women, children and infants. Bring your donations to the church fellowship hall.

November will also have two projects. In addition to our local mission of collecting nonperishable food for the Thanksgiving Baskets, the proceeds from the other November mission project will go to PET (Personal Energy Transportation), which is a National Project in Lane 3. 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 no use of their legs due to birth defects, 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". In November I will post some pictures on the bulletin board so you can see what the PET looks like and a few of the people it has helped.

Sunday Morning (Sunday School)
Christian Education 2008
9:45 a.m.

The 2008-09 Sunday School year is underway. We opened the year with a Kick-off celebration on September 14th with a pancake breakfast. It was good to see returning participants and new faces adventuring out at 9:45 a.m.

I would like to thank Shirley Huffman, Jackie Coons, Sam Gordy and Theron Huffman for their leadership as teachers (group leaders) supporting the education of Christ. Everyone is welcome to attend Sunday School or start a small group for study which includes an extension of fellowship.

Our school year has started with the following classes! There is always an open chair in each class representing Christ presences. Our compassionate, caring Christ will let you use his chair. Come join US!

Pre-School – 2nd Grade – Elizabeth Gordy

October – Moses

November – Daniel

December – Birth of Jesus

Middlers (3rd -5th Grades) – Mrs. Shirley Huffman

Bible Exploration – Basic Bible applications

Jr./Sr. High School (Alpha Room) – Jackie Coons

“Amazing Bible Race” – TEAM SCAVENGER HUNTS THAT GET YOUTH EXCITED ABOUT THE BIBLE.

Go on a journey through the Bible. A thrilling scavenger hunt that brings to life the biblical characters, stories, events and messages that we have come to love and live by. Youth read through the Bible in its entirety over the course of 6 12-week “legs”. With every chapter read, Amazing Bible Race builds knowledge, holy habits and faith.

Adult Study (Downstairs-Back Corner room) – Sam Gordy

Book of Daniel / Be Resolute - Will your faith thrive in tough times? Do you desire a more resolute faith? How did Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego possess such a fearless faith that they never took the easy way out?

Adult Bible Study (Upstairs in Fellowship Hall); Theron Huffman

Our adult Sunday School class is studying the Gospels, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. We are currently in Matthew. Why the Gospels?

The reason, is the four books of the Gospels are about the Birth, Death, and Resurrection of Jesus Christ. We are reading what Jesus, said, his teachings, and what Jesus did. There are a lot of important items in the Bible, but what is more important than this?

Upcoming Sunday School Classes and SMALL GROUP STUDIES!!!

“Compassionate Companions”

Sue Gay will be conducting a 3-week training related to Caregiving Ministries. The class will begin on Tuesday December 2nd from 6:30-8:00 p.m.

January 2009, Pastor Donna will be conducting a 6-week class on “Prayer” (01/04/09-02/08/09).

Check your bulletin weekly for updates!!

Almena:

All Learning Makes Education a New Adventure

News from the Treasurer:

I probably don't need to tell you the topic of money is very volatile at this time. We had a finance meeting on September 17th to start working on the budget for 2009. This is not an easy task with the economic conditions around us.

What do our ministry shares do? When our church sends ministry shares (\$754.59) to the conference each month, we join approximately 35,700 other local churches. As a whole...

In Missions we support all throughout 165 countries, 1,812 missionaries, 80,000 volunteers in Mission placements, 102 UMC community centers and mission colleges.

In Health and Welfare we support 225 retirement homes, 70 hospitals, 50 child-care facilities and 30 ministries for persons with disabilities.

In Education we support 8 two-year colleges, 82 four-year colleges, 10 universities, 1 professional school and 13 theological schools.

In the West Michigan Conference we also support church start-ups, campus ministries and Christian camping and outreach throughout the 6 districts.

Payment in full of these apportionments by local churches is the first benevolent responsibility of the church.

We have another Finance meeting on October 15 @ 5:45 p.m. in the Fellowship hall, anyone interested is welcome to attend.

Thank you Church Family for being good stewards, you make my job as treasurer easier.

- Sue Tinkler

NEIGHBORHOOD ECUMENICAL BIBLE STUDY GROUP

The Monday morning bible study group is off to a good start with the planning of its agenda for the rest of 2008. Our first three studies will finish the Old Testament. We have read parts of Nehemiah and Malachi reviewing the close of that era, quickly moving into the 400 Silent Years that will carry the group's study to year's end. We will search during this time to find what events took place with the Israelite nation. Many do not realize that it was a time filled with many important events that also add to Jewish history and greatly affected the Ancient World. The time was not so silent only the prophets were silenced in proclaiming God's message!

There is a notice on the bulletin board, in the church foyer, giving the various weekly studies and our calendar of events for 2008. We want to invite everyone to our study and fellowship. On October 20th the group will travel to Plainwell to have lunch at the Old Mill. This will also be considered a color tour. YOU are invited. Phone 657-4300. The group of 10 to 15 meet at 10 a.m. every Monday with a coffee hour from 10-10:30 and a study from 10:30-11:30. We dismiss promptly for busy people.

SUNDAY SCHOOL MIDDLELERS CLASS by Shirley Huffman

What a wonderful group of children we have this year. They are very congenial and eager to learn bringing their individual bibles each week. We are now learning how to use our bibles as a daily tool. We are finding various books, chapters and verses. We are trying hard to learn the books of the New Testament and many symbols such as B.C. A.D. and who wrote the bible traveling from book to book.

Before snow flies we hope to take a little walk or field trip to our local cemetery to study the history of our church and its founders. Parents will be notified. It is important for each child to attend each week and not miss important teachings. We thank the parents for being so prompt in bringing their children each Sunday.

JESUS SAID: "LET THE CHILDREN COME TO ME, AND DO NOT STOP THEM, BECAUSE THE KINGDOM OF GOD BELONGS TO SUCH AS THESE. Mark 10:14 GNB



Harvest Dinner is coming soon!!!

The harvest dinner committee has already begun work for our annual Harvest Dinner that will be on Saturday, November 1 this year. A traditional turkey Dinner will be served from 4:30 - 7:00. Tickets are available to purchase from Pat Conolly, or Deidre Sweet, or they will be available at the door.

We are asking all of the church family to consider what gifts you have been blessed with that you might share to make this dinner a success. We need people willing to share their gifts of food donations, hospitality, and service. There are sign up sheets on the bulletin board in the narthex. This is a wonderful evening of delicious food, friends and fellowship for members of our community. We hope that you will join with us to make this another successful year.

If you have any questions, please contact Deidre Sweet , Pat Conolly, Sue Tinkler or Marcia Williams. Thank you!

Need Help in Paying for Prescription Drugs?

The United Methodist Association for Health and Welfare Ministries offers support and resources for several areas of health needs. There is no cost for using their services, and you need not be a professing member of a United Methodist church to participate. Some prescription drugs are offered at a reduced rate through a partnership with DestinationRx. Savings are available online or at your local pharmacy for your immediate family members. Take a flier found on the church bulletin board for more information, or check out the websites below.

Information and instructions about the prescription discount card can be found at the United Methodist Association website at http://www.umassociation.org/drug_card.html

To research participating pharmacies and drugs by name visit: <http://www.destinationrx.com/uma>

If you have specific questions about the program, please contact DestinationRx directly by email: customerservice@destinationrx.com

Submitted by Pastor Donna