



Almena UMC Newsletter

April/May 2009
269-668-2811
www.almenaumc.com

Dear Friends,

With wedding plans for our daughter in the works, I have come face to face with lots of etiquette questions in the past few months. What I've learned is that there used to be standard wedding etiquette; invitations were formal, guest lists were standard, a cake was required, and there were clearly defined roles for the bride's and groom's families. No more, though! Times and families are changing, and every decision is open to interpretation. In one sense, this is a good thing, but at the same time it adds a level of complexity to the planning. All assumptions must be tested, and clear communication is more necessary than ever.

Similarly, in the church, there used to be standards of etiquette that were widely accepted. You dressed up for church, no food was allowed in the sanctuary, and everyone knew when to sit and when to stand. Thankfully, most churches have relaxed those expectations and are more flexible to welcome all kinds of folks who are perhaps unfamiliar with the previous church etiquette guidelines. However, we still run into situations that require some discernment of manners. To help out in those etiquette dilemmas, here is a reference list of how to handle 10 common church manner dilemmas. (Thanks to Rev. Laurie Haller for the basis of this etiquette review.)

- 1. You arrive at church and find that someone you don't know is occupying "your pew".** Don't look panicked. Simply smile and introduce yourself, invite them to join you for coffee after church, and casually find another spot to sit. To take this manner even further, try sitting in a different place and meeting new people on a regular basis. Visitors often arrive late and prefer to sit in the back of the church. Leave some breathing room for them to slip in with ease.
- 2. At greeting time, you can't remember someone's name, even though you've been introduced before.** No problem, simply confess it, "I'm sorry, I remember your face but not your name. I'm _____, and you are...?" Wear your name tag to avoid putting others in the same dilemma!
- 3. The pastor ignores you at coffee hour.** Please don't be offended. She is frequently on information overload after church. If you have something you really want her to remember, jot it down.
- 4. You are challenged by a fellow congregant who holds a differing theological viewpoint than yourself.** Listen respectfully to understand. Don't defend, belittle, or attack. See if you can find any common ground. Agree to disagree.
- 5. At a church potluck, you see someone look around awkwardly for a table to sit at.** Graciously pipe up: "Please sit with us!" even if it means your usual tablemates will find a full

table. Let someone else invite them to join their table.

6. **You hear negative gossip while working in the kitchen or elsewhere.** Courageously insist that the gossip stop and urge people to talk directly to those with whom they disagree. Gossip stops when you refuse to engage in it. Let's spread peace, not conflict through the grapevine.

7. **You're considering leaving the church and don't know the proper etiquette.** Don't just fade away into obscurity. Make an appointment to share this news with your pastor. All pastors want folks to find the right fit for their spiritual home. We also appreciate honest and thoughtful feedback on how we might improve our ministries.

8. **Something hurtful happens at church, and you want to email the person who hurt you.** Avoid the temptation to hide behind email. A face to face meeting is always best when discussing sensitive or important issues. Another tactic to avoid when upset is to withdraw from church. Try to stay connected and civil. Pray for those who hurt you.

9. **You feel like you've been overlooked; desiring to serve, but not sure where you fit in.** Talk to your pastor. It is often difficult to know if people are holding back from service due to their own desire or due to lack of opportunity or for other reasons. We are all ministers of the gospel with gifts to share. Let's talk about it.

10. **You observe children running up and down the sanctuary aisles.** Be grateful that you have children in the church! If appropriate, gently explain what it means to be respectful of holy space. Perhaps introduce them to Dale Conolly, who always has a child friendly treat in his pocket!

Human interactions always carry an element of risk. When dilemmas arise, try not to take things too personally, look for the humor in a situation, seek first to understand, and always be respectful of yourself and others.

In Good Humor, Pastor Donna



Summer Hours Begin May 31st

The last day of Sunday School is May 24th
Starting May 31st, we will switch to our summer schedule, with
worship at 10am and no Sunday School.

Notes from the Trustee Chair, Sue Tinkler:

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!

No skills required!

We will be painting the Narthex and the Fellowship Hall the weekend of April 17-18. Sign up sheets are in the Fellowship Hall on the Bulletin Board. At this time we haven't gotten a lot of response about painting on Friday, April 17th from 3 p.m. until we get tired and again on Saturday, April 18th beginning at 8:00 a.m. until we are finished. I have only received 2 volunteers for Friday and 2 for Saturday. *Please give me a call if you can help!* My number is 628-4400. Food will be provided for all helpers. We will be working on a lot of things this year, such as more seating in the Sanctuary, more parking spaces, a new roof for the sanctuary, repairs to our sign and the painting. If you can't paint, there is taping off, spackling, prep, etc. Please join us. Many hands make the load light. Thank you. In your service, Sue Tinkler

Relay for Life Update

Our church is participating in Relay for Life again this year. I have volunteered to be chairwoman. The Relay is being held in Lawrence on Saturday, June 27th and ending on Sunday the 28th. We will have a tent with our church banner, and will be giving out water and candy with a bible verse. We are selling luminaries for \$5.00 to raise money. If any one would like to donate to the auction that will be held in the late afternoon on the 27th, please see myself or Elizabeth Gordy, or bring me the items you would like to donate. We need people to walk and you can join a team by going on our website www.almenaumc.com or www.relayforlife.org/vanburencountyeastmi. The team name is Almena United Methodist Church. Team Captain is Sue Tinkler. The theme this year is Happy Endings. I would like this to be a fun event for everyone to enjoy fellowship with each other, have a picnic and be there for our community. If you want, just bring a lawn chair and visit with each other and offer water and words of encouragement to the hot, thirsty walkers. Thank you for all you do to help! Sue Tinkler

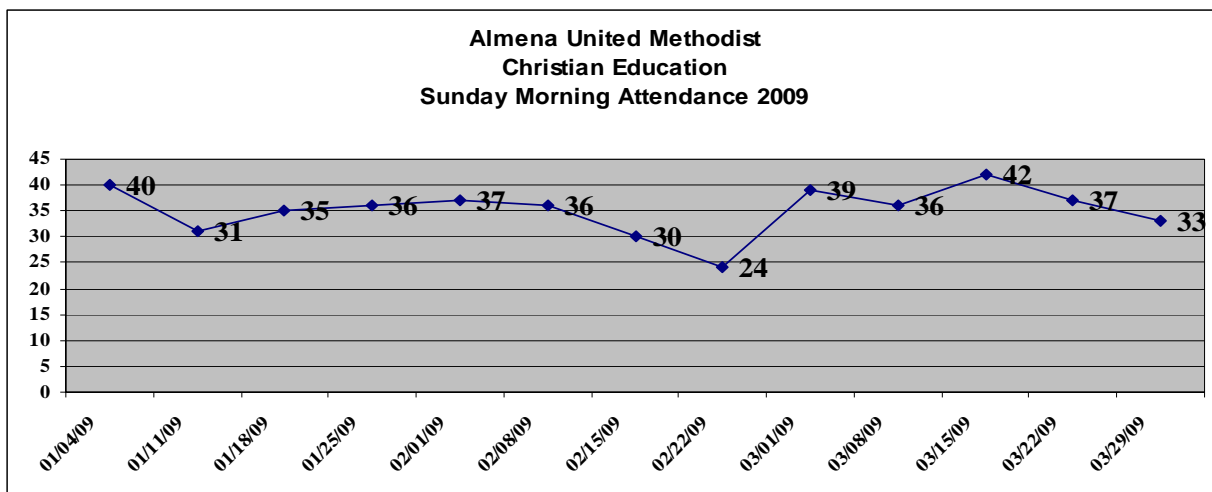
BENEFIT DINNER

Monday, May 11th at *The Copper Grille* from 5 p.m. to close, all proceeds from dinners go to: The American Cancer Society/ Relay for Life. Please come hungry, and bring friends!

Christian Education

It is hard to believe that we have only 2 months left before Sunday School is completed for another year. Children will be wrapping up segments of their learning and prepare for the next phase. There will be class level promotions and graduations. We will honor our children for their participation, perfect attendance and success. I would like to extend that honor to those parents who ensured their attendance throughout the year. We continue to enjoy their presence and yours each Sunday morning. Also, I'm pleased each Sunday morning with the overall attendance. We increased our attendance from last year and have some what leveled off. I'd like to challenge our church members and friends to help us reach **50 people** in attendance before the end of the year (May 24th). If you have not been attending or would like to come...we can make room for you in a class. Be a class helper for a day...or just find out what Christian Education is all about. I'm sure there is a class just right for YOU!

Pre-School - 2nd Grade; Elizabeth Gordy (Danielle Rickli, helper)
3rd - 5th Grade: Shirley Huffman
Jr. /Sr. High: Jackie Coons
Adult Downstairs: Sam Gordy
Adult Upstairs: Theron Huffman



Don't forget to get signed up for Summer Camp. Attention ALL CAMPERS...don't forget to have your teacher(s) to sign your attendance slips for credit/Camp \$\$'s toward camp.



Be Blessed!!
Elizabeth Gordy, Christian Education Chair



Musicians Wanted

The choir and Worship Committee are always looking for musicians to accompany singers and for soloists. If you can beat a mean tambourine, play a musical instrument, sing or are interested in dancing, please approach either Dave Field or Lauren Sorensen. We'd LOVE to include your talents. Your level of expertise is unimportant – a love of praising the Lord through music is what we're looking for. Children are encouraged to participate!

Missions

Our **April mission** offerings will supplement program costs and building needs of **Racial Ethnic Local Churches** and ministries in Michigan (Lane 5). This year, we will equally support the Native American Kewadin Indian Mission UMC in northern Michigan, and the multi-ethnic Faith UMC in South Lansing. The Kewadin Indian Mission uses the money for worship, Bible study, youth ministry, work camps, and camp meetings. Faith UMC is a multicultural new church start which offers worship, fellowship, and many other services. Our District Superintendent, Rev. Neil Davis, is a former pastor of Faith UMC.

The **May mission** offerings will be split three ways for local conference ministries (Lane 6). They are:

1. **Golden Cross** - The offering money goes to the West Michigan Conference for the Methodist Children's Home Society and Clark Retirement Community in Grand Rapids, and Bronson Methodist Hospital in Kalamazoo.
2. **Rural Life** – This offering strengthens the work of ministries in town and rural areas of concern within the West Michigan Conference. Some of the ministries provide: scholarships for rural pastors' continuing education; seed funding for Rural Summer Interns in local town and country churches; scholarships for pastors in training for rural ministries.
3. **Christian Education** - This offering money undergirds the work to provide training in Christian education within the Conference. It supports first-time Christian education projects or trainings in other congregations or districts.

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
657-7741

Would You Like to Go on a Mission Trip?

The Stevensville United Methodist Church has invited anyone who wants to join them to go on a trip to Cedar Rapids, Iowa, May 2-6, to work on flood recovery. If you are interested in going, please contact Pastor Gordon Barry at 269-429-5911.

CROP WALK - Sunday April 26

Mark your calendar! The 27th ***Eastern Van Buren County CROP Walk*** will be held Sunday, April 26th at 2:00 p.m., beginning and ending at the Paw Paw United Methodist Church on Red Arrow Highway, across from the Middle School. Registration begins at 1:00 p.m. The 2008 ***CROP Walk*** raised \$29, 217. Almena had 21 participants, contributing a record high of \$1,681.70!

‘***CROP***’ stands for Communities Responding to Overcome Poverty’. This year, the money raised is more important than ever for hungry and hurting people around the world and in our local community. The ***CROP Walk***, a program of Church World Service, raises pledge money to help stop hunger in over 70 countries. Walks are held all over the U.S. throughout the year, with one quarter of the funds raised staying in the local communities to help fund food pantries.

Our local ***CROP Walk*** is about 3 miles, and winds through downtown Paw Paw, past the wineries, and through a couple of the more scenic areas of Paw Paw. It is a fairly easy walk, with no big hills or muddy fields to cross. Families with strollers and wagons are welcome. We invite new walkers and everyone who walked last year to turn out again. It is always a fun time and allows us to chat and get to know each other better.

If you prefer not to walk but still want to help, you may pledge a donation to any of our walkers, or volunteer to help at the ***Walk*** (contact me to volunteer). Again this year, donations of specific items will be collected at the ***Walk*** for local migrant workers. Workers must wait three days to two weeks before they can obtain social service help. This helps them to sustain themselves until they have work and/or aid. Items can be brought to church any time between now and April 26. If you would like to contribute food, it is important to provide only the items listed below. (Refrigeration is not always available, so provide only the 8 oz. size of tomato sauce.) The items are:

White flour – Plain, not cake or self-rising	Salt
Bags of white rice – Non instant or brown	Hand soap
Bags of pinto beans – Not canned	Laundry soap
8 oz. cans of tomato sauce	Toilet paper
Lard/shortening/oil	

I will be available after church in the Fellowship Hall each Sunday through April 19 for you to sign up and collect your pledge envelope. Note: If you are unable to walk on April 26, I can even organize a mini-**CROP Walk** in Almena at a day and time convenient for you. We don't want anyone to be excluded!

Thank you in advance for all of your support!

Janet Swigart

United Christian Services New Food Pantry – Update

United Christian Services (UCS) in Paw Paw is working with several local churches to combine individual food pantries into a localized one on Drew Street in Paw Paw, the former site of Paw Paw Upholstery. The new pantry will be called 'Eleanor's Pantry', in honor of Eleanor Miller, who has been a dedicated worker for many, many years in Paw Paw, helping provide food and various forms of assistance to those in need.

The building for the pantry has been provided at no cost to UCS (except utilities), but some remodeling is necessary to make it efficient as a pantry and to bring it up to local codes. Renovations have been going very well. Our church volunteers, Sam Gordy, Dave Field, Steve Keyte, and Todd Harmon, have already been hard at work installing drywall, painting, putting up walls, and installing doors and an interior ramp. Jennifer Nette graciously loaned some of her equipment for their use. Almena's men's group and proceeds from a soup and salad supper have helped provide financial support for work at the pantry.

UCS expects to be able to open the food pantry this summer, with future plans to also provide clothing and to be a hub for all services. Once the food pantry opens, volunteers will be needed to help staff it for limited hours each day. Watch for future announcements about the grand opening, and how you can become part of the vital volunteer staff!

Janet Swigart

The Wesley Foundation at WMU

On Sunday evening, March 29, I had the honor to attend a 'thank you dinner' at the Wesley Foundation at WMU. The dinner was given in honor of churches within the Conference that support them financially. After a delicious dinner and fellowship time, one of the young women gave a report of what the students have been doing lately. One of their many activities was going on a mission trip over spring break. One group went to New Orleans and another went to Nicaragua. After the report, they then presented each church with a 'thank you' gift of a framed picture of a rainbow and a bridge, displaying a writing concerning bridges. The rainbow represented God's promise to man after the flood, and the bridge represented the relationship between each church and the students. Please be sure to look for the picture and take the time to read the message; this can be found on the table in the narthex.

The Wesley Foundation board recently made the decision to make major renovations to their 40- year-old building to make it not only handicapped-accessible, but also just generally accessible. They feel this is something that must be done at this time. (If you or someone you know might be interested in contributing to their capital campaign, please contact me.)

I am proud that our church supports as one of our monthly missions this talented group of young Methodist students who come together for fellowship, Bible study, sharing meals, fun, and to serve God with their music ministry and in other ways.

Foster Parents Needed

Please consider reaching out to help a child or youth in need. The Van Buren County Department of Human Services is looking for individuals willing to consider being foster parents to children removed from their homes due to family problems. Homes are especially needed for sibling groups and teenagers. If you think you could fill this need, please contact Kathy Block, Foster Home Licensing Specialist, at 269-621-2864.

MONDAY MORNING BIBLE STUDY

The group has enjoyed the study, PLEASING GOD. We thank Lois Richardson for leading the study. We now find that we have only **six more weeks** before we adjourn for the summer. We have one week planned for the study of Holy Week. The group will decide biblical subject matter for our last five lessons. Our attendance has been very good and we are looking for you to join us. We meet in the Fellowship Hall Mondays at 10:00 a.m. and adjourn promptly at 11:30. We have a time of coffee and treats while visiting. YOU ARE WELCOME AND YOU DON'T HAVE TO BE A BIBLE SCHOLAR. We learn together.

Clips from the past

Shirley Huffman: Historian

The following items are from past Bulletins found in the church archives.

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Douglas Smith, Pastor  
Edith Burns, pianist                      Tom Ellis, lay leader

### Week of October 21, 1956

October 21 - Laymen Sunday the Women Society of Christian Service has the Sunday service...Bea Ellis will give a report on Quadrennial Goals

October 24 - W.S.C.S. - meet at Rumsey home. Mrs. Helen Gancer will present a program for week of Prayer and Self-Denial

October 26 - 5:30 Potluck supper at church

October 28 - Church youth will meet for Youth Rally at Paw Paw First Methodist Sunday afternoon

The church budget for the up-coming year is \$1,619.

### 1957

Pastor James Grant,  
Pastor serves two churches, Almena-Glendale

The Lenten Series of sermons will be "The Hearts of the Saints" based on several Psalms. All are urged to attend regularly.

Today - M.Y.F. will meet at Glendale Methodist Church

Thursday - WSCS will meet at noon with Mrs. Jessie Grant at the parsonage.

Sept. 23 - WSCS annual rummage sale with lunch counter, held at the Almena Town Hall. Farmers are invited for lunch. Money goes for cost of church fuel

November 2 - Almena Church auction sale to be held. Donations accepted.

## PAW PAW COURIER-LEADER

### ALMENA LOCALS

*For many years and in most of the last century, local newspapers reported weekly news of various surrounding communities. Each community had a person that reported news each week. This practice came to an end during the late 1990s with various changes taking place in the community. With the small farms turning into fields of houses making it a "bedroom" community, Almena's newer residents had little connection with the neighborhood. Almena's "old timers" began to slowly fade away. The events reported below are some of the newspaper items that were printed about our church and its activities during this time. Bea Ellis reported news to the paper for many years.*

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1949 During the Almena Church Sunday school hour the Sunshine Class gave a short program observing Rally Day. The weekly church prayer meetings will be held Tuesday nights instead of Friday.

1958 A number of new KJV Bibles for each pew have been donated by Mr. and Mrs. Geo. McKeown

1964 The Mary-Martha group will meet at the Almena Church at 7:30, Oct 6

1965 The WSCS have collected Christmas toys for the Methodist Community House in Detroit. The Group has packed 22 Christmas boxes for shut-ins last week along with the help of the local (Gleaner Lodge) Arbor Circle

1969 The MYF celebrated New Years Eve at a party held in the highly decorated church basement.

Maundy Thursday will again be observed at the Almena church with the Meal in the Upper Room beginning at 7 p.m., March 23 in preparation for tragic Good Friday and triumphant Easter. The event is organized by the WSCS. Charles Gancer sang an inspiring solo during last Sunday's church service.

Wishing for a Garden in the Good Ol' Summertime?

Bea and Tom Ellis are offering free garden space on their property at 40058 CR652. If you would like to plant, maintain and harvest a patch of garden, give them a call. You would provide the seeds, supplies and labor; they offer the soil and the use of their tools. Bea is also happy to help if you'd like to learn how to prepare food for canning or freezing. 668-3657

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21st Century Technology for Small and Rural Churches May 2, 2009 at Camden UMC

Almena UMC has a great start on using technology to present the good news of the gospel. We have a great website and already make limited use of PowerPoint, but we still have room for improvement. If you are even a little bit inclined towards technology and/or worship, you are invited to attend a daylong workshop on Technology and Change with Pastor Donna. The event is being offered by the West Michigan Conference Town and Country Committee. Breakout sessions are offered on choosing hardware and using Presentation Software (i.e. PowerPoint, MediaShout etc.) If you have questions or are interested in attending please let Pastor Donna know. Details below:

Date: Saturday May 2, 2009

Location: Camden UMC
201 S. Main Street
Camden, MI 49232

Cost: AUMC will cover the \$15 fee

Time: Registration 8:30 - 9:00 a.m.
Training 9:00 a.m. - 3:15 p.m.

Potluck "Pickles"

The way the calendar falls this year, both Easter and Mothers Day fall on the 2nd. Sunday of the month. To allow time for family celebrations on those days, the potluck schedule will be changed. There will be no potluck in April. In May, potluck will be held on the 1st. Sunday which is **May 3rd**.

In addition, Administrative Board has decided to replace the potluck dinners for June, July and August with three alternate fellowship/outreach events. These would provide a great opportunity for you to bring a friend or neighbor along. In June a Saturday evening bonfire/game day is planned. In July we'll offer an all-church outing to a Kalamazoo Kings baseball game, and in August an after-church picnic with pony rides and games is in the works. Exact dates and details will follow.

As far as weekly refreshments after church each Sunday, stay tuned as to what the summer will bring. The principle behind the changes is to provide a Sabbath break from routine and from the expectations for volunteers to bring food. We still want to be welcoming to each other and to visitors.

Almena Happy Helpers 4-H club
**2nd ANNUAL SPRING LIVESTOCK/EQUIPMENT
AUCTION & CONSIGNMENT SALE**

10:00 A.M. SATURDAY, APRIL 11, 2009

Almena Township Hall 27625 CR 375, Paw Paw, MI 49079

Directions and information call: Karol at 269-668-5436

Livestock Includes:

Feeder pigs, Market Lambs, Market Goats, Chickens, Rabbits, and Ducks

Young animals ready to be raised as 4-H projects to market animals ready for processing.

Sale Process

Buyers required to take immediate possession of animal. Buyers must bring own transportation and cages. Payment is **cash or check** and will be required at time of sale and before possession of animal is taken. Processing arrangements will not be made by sale committee.

Proceeds

25% of every animal sale and equipment sale will fund the Almena Happy Helpers educational and Fair expenses. 75% of the sale will go to the Seller.

Animal Related Items Sale

Check out the many tables loaded with animal related items that will be for sale. Some used some new items, from horse tack, to cages, to bales of hay.

Sale Order

Small animals will sell first. Large animals will follow. Animals will be sold out of trailers.
PLEASE DO NOT UNLOAD.

Payment

Seller will receive 75% of sale price. 25% commission will go to support the Almena Happy Helpers 4-H Club. Checks will be mailed in 2 weeks following sale.

Seller Information

Please let us know what you will be selling. Small animals must be cages (no cardboard boxes). All animals must have food and water in cages. Seller must be present at time of sale unless prior arrangements have been made.

ALL ANIMALS MUST HAVE CURRENT HEALTH PAPERS REQUIRED BY LAW FOR SPECIES. ALL ANIMALS MUST BE IN GOOD HEALTH.

DONATIONS ACCEPTED!