



# Almena UMC

## Newsletter

June/July 2009  
269-668-2811  
www.almenaumc.com

June 1, 2009

Dear Friends,

I want to thank you for supporting me in my recent trek to Kentucky to gain more knowledge and to be inspired to grow as your pastor. As a part-time local pastor, I am required to take at least two classes a year of continuing education. In May I attended the Appalachian Local Pastor School and was blessed with excellent instructors, inspiring worship, and a diverse student body. One of my classes was on Psalms, Proverbs, and Prophets. I hope to apply that learning in the fall by preaching on the Psalms. When our adult Sunday School classes studied prayer last winter, we briefly touched on the Psalms, but many were left hungry to know more about this prayer book of the Bible. If you have any comments or questions on the Psalms that you would like to see addressed, please jot me a note and I will try to include that in my preparation.

Before we get to the Psalms though, we (thankfully) have a summer stretching ahead of us! In late June we'll complete our series on the book of Philippians, then in July we'll begin a sermon series titled:

"Ages and Stages: Biblical Wisdom for Navigating the Decades of Life"

We'll consider the predictable passages of human & faith development from childhood thru the golden years, and ask "What does God have to say about growing through each stage?" Whether you are a child, a youth, a young-to-mid adult, an empty-nester, a retiree, or an elder, you will find something of value in this series.

Also in July, an "Exploring Membership" Class will be held. All are welcome. Even if you've been attending Almena for a long time, there is much to be learned, and we appreciate having a mix of people for newcomers to get to know. Dates are Tuesdays July 7, 14, and 21 from 6:30-8:30pm. Coffee and dessert will be served as we explore what it means to be a United Methodist Christian at AUMC. Let Pastor Donna or Marcia Williams know if you would like to attend, and if you need childcare.

On Sunday August 9<sup>th</sup> we will pause to celebrate the sesquicentennial anniversary of the Village of Paw Paw. In place of our usual morning worship in our sanctuary, we will join with many area churches at the Maple Lake Band Shelter for a joint worship service. Time to be announced.

Finally, if you are looking for an interesting summer read, I would recommend The Poisonwood Bible by Barbara Kingsolver. It is a fascinating account of one family's misguided missionary excursion to the Congo. I have a copy I'd be happy to lend if you are interested.

I am truly grateful to be able to serve side by side with the people of the Almena Church. Know that I hold you in prayer and trust that in spite of economic difficulties in our country, our hope is built on nothing less than Jesus Christ our righteousness.

Blessings, Pastor Donna

# **MISSIONS**

Janet Swigart - Missions Chairperson - [jlswigart@aol.com](mailto:jlswigart@aol.com) - 657-7741

Our **June mission** is **Homelessness in the United States** (Lane 3 – National Projects). The vision of this project is to provide start-up assistance for new and innovative church-based ministries to homeless people.

Homelessness in the U.S. is an ongoing problem that is becoming even more serious as fuel prices continue to rise. Basic needs are becoming more expensive and local funds to assist people living in poverty are decreasing. People are more and more turning to local social service agencies, and churches are working to do their part to help in this national crisis.

The mission/goals and objectives of the project are to provide grants to church-based ministries to homeless people. Grants are to be used to supplement local fundraising efforts.

The ‘Activities Plan’ provides that the Community and Institutional Ministries Unit will promote this project throughout their networks. The expected outcome is that Church-based ministries will view this project as a resource in their ministry to the homeless.

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Our **July mission** is **Hope Secondary School** (Lane 2 – World Projects) for Christian and Muslim children in Beit Jala, an [Arab Christian](#) town in the [Bethlehem Governorate](#) of the [West Bank](#). Beit Jala is located 10 km south of [Jerusalem](#), on the western side of the [Hebron](#) road, opposite [Bethlehem](#). The inhabitants of the town are predominantly Christian Palestinians with a Muslim minority. Beit Jala is famous for its olive wood souvenirs. Other economic branches are tobacco, textiles, agriculture, and pharmaceuticals. There is also an important local winemaker located in the [Cremisan monastery](#).

**Hope Secondary School** serves Palestinian children in grades 7 – 12. Most of the children are poor and unable to pay for basic academic expenses. Some are physically or mentally challenged, unable to study in public schools.

The vision of **Hope Secondary School** is to give victims of political unrest and occupation a chance for a better life of faith and tolerance.

Their goals and objectives are to

- 1) provide free education to children who otherwise would not be able to receive one.
- 2) provide free lodging, food, and education for their boys in the boarding section.
- 3) evangelize their 150 students, both Christians and Muslims.

Their 'Activities Plan' is to

- 1) pay salaries for 10 teachers and four employees.
- 2) purchase school supplies.
- 3) purchase food for the boys at boarding school.
- 4) purchase school books for their students.

Last year, the school began science classes in addition to the existing literary classes. This gives the children, whose daily lives are limited by occupation and conflict, freedom to choose their line of study and hope for their future.

Please join me in June and July to support these worthy projects. Thank you.

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### ***CROP WALK UPDATE***

I would like to thank everyone who supported our **CROP Walk** on April 26. We had a beautiful day to walk and raised a total of \$1,046! I know this is a particularly tough time for many of us monetarily, but some people even pledged to more than one walker. We have a very generous, caring church family. I would particularly like to thank Marcia Williams, who sold CROP Walk t-shirts before, during and after the walk, and all of our walkers listed below. Once again, Barb Alden raised the most money, \$420! Plan ahead to walk next April!

Barb Alden  
Elizabeth Gordy  
Lois Richardson  
Chris Robbins  
Beth and Kate Rozeveld  
Janet Swigart

Exploring Membership Class  
Tuesdays July 7, 14, and 21  
6:30-8:30pm in Fellowship Hall  
Join Pastor Donna for dessert and  
conversation around the topic:  
What does it mean to be a  
United Methodist Christian at AUMC?  
Let Marcia Williams or Pastor Donna know if you are  
interested in attending. 657-3482 or 329-1560

## Trustee Update

The Trustee's have been very busy this spring serving our lord and the congregation. We had a DIY on roofing and then a meeting discussing the 6 quotes received. We then had another meeting discussing the facts about the least expensive roofer who left out many details to the ones whom gave us the most comprehensive bid to the most expensive roofer. We have chosen Rick's Handyman and Woodworking. He will start on the roof June 1st and it will take 3 weeks. He will clean up each day and rent a dumpster. This was taken to the Ad Board and approved. Jennifer Nette will take the lead and plant flowers again this year with the help of Pat Conolly and Art Morgan. We have finished demolition and painting the vestibule and fellowship hall. Thank you Gordon Conolly for finishing the doors and all the trim work. You have been a blessing to us. The next painting to be done is the white railing. Thank you Dan Naylor for keeping the grass cut and the yard looking so neat. Thank you trustee committee for all your hard work.

Sue Tinkler, Chairperson

## 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.

## Caring Companions

Next meeting Tuesday, June 30 at 7 p.m. at Sue Gay's house at 1760 South Eighth Street (between KL Avenue and ML Avenue).

Please contact Sue for more information or directions.

## SUMMER FUN and FELLOWSHIP

This summer there will be no potlucks in June July or August, and we will not have a Vacation Bible School. Instead, please bring your friends and neighbors and join in the following fellowship events.

**Saturday June 13 6:00 PM** -- Bonfire in our Backyard  
A celebration including songs, games, hot dogs and s'mores.  
Side dishes to pass are welcome, but not required.  
Hosted by Dave Field – see bulletin board

**Friday July 10** – Kalamazoo Kings Baseball Game and Fireworks  
Tickets are just \$2.50, bring a carload of friends.  
Hosted by Sue Tinkler – see bulletin board

**Sunday August 2** after church – Pony Rides and Family Fun  
Hosted by Carissa & Marc Hamre



# Almena United Methodist Church Business Directory

God has blessed each one of us with talents that He wants us to use to bless His holy name. Since employment has become harder to find in this economy, many of us are using those talents to operate our own businesses.

Because Almena United Methodist Church is a community that supports one another whenever possible, we are interested in collecting a list of those businesses and publishing them in the membership directory as a single page to include in the back of the book.

If you have a business that you operate, whether it supplies a product or a service, to a consumer or to another business, we would like to include your listing in the directory.

To be included, send Lauren an email ([sorensentrees@yahoo.com](mailto:sorensentrees@yahoo.com)) or jot down your business information and hand it to her at church. Be sure to include your name, the business name (where applicable), the products or services that you offer and any other pertinent information that you would like included.

Then, when the business directory is distributed, familiarize yourself with the listings. Consider hiring an Almena United Methodist Church business to meet your needs and take pleasure in knowing a portion of that purchase will end up back in the church in the form of tithing.

## **Quilt Club**

The Quilt Club will not meet in June. We will be taking a field trip on Friday, June 26 to Shipshewana to a quilt show, lunch, and shopping. All members of the church are invited to go. Be at the church at 9:00 a.m. to car pool. Contact Pat Conolly or Diane Ross if you plan to attend.

## **Father's Day, Sunday June 20**

There will be an participative Children's Activity on Sunday, June 20<sup>th</sup>. Children should plan to arrive at 9:30 a.m. to practice – bring train whistles, if you have them, and wear train hats!