



Almena UMC Newsletter

August/September 2009
269-668-2811
www.almenaumc.com

8-15-2009

Hello Friends,

As we have studied about the Ages and Stages of life this summer a consistent theme bubbles to the surface: We have decision points all along life's way... Will we to allow ourselves to be overwhelmed by the negative, or will we utilize the challenges of life to gain muscle and wisdom for the next leg of our journey? Consistently, we're presented with opportunities to decide if or how we will honor God and seek after his help. Will our choices diminish or enhance the image of God that is stamped on each human soul?

We'll soon be passing by "my" decade, and so I'll be seeking input from our elders on the challenges and joys of growing older.

Speaking of growing older, I am encouraged to see the number of young children coming forward for children's moment on most Sunday mornings. The babies of Almena's recent baby boom are growing into toddlers and preschoolers. Parents of preschoolers.....your child is invited to be a part of our Sunday morning Story Seekers program. In Story Seekers we aim to let children know church is a safe and loving place where they can make friends and learn about Jesus. We teach simple stories of faith in a memorable way using hands on activities. If your child (3+ yrs and older) has not attended in the past but will join in the Fall, please let our Preschool teacher,

Elizabeth Gordy, know so that we might be adequately prepared. (657-6410). While your child is attending Story Seekers, we offer 2 adult classes. All age class descriptions are found later in this newsletter. Setting the example of lifelong learning sends a powerful message to children that Christian Education is important in their family.

Another cause for rejoicing is that God has raised up two leaders to begin a Youth Group this Fall. Greg Rozeveld and Dave Field will be in touch with parents and youth to lay the groundwork for a year of friendship, growth and fun.

With these growing ministries, we will also be in need of volunteers to help in children's and youth programs. Please consider how you might be gifted and called to help us in our mission of building disciples of Christ for the transformation of the world. In addition to hands on helpers, we need prayer partners to support our children and youth ministries. Please let our leaders or pastor know if you will commit to either kind of help.

It is an honor to serve as your pastor and grow older and wisecr together!

Peace,
Pastor Donna

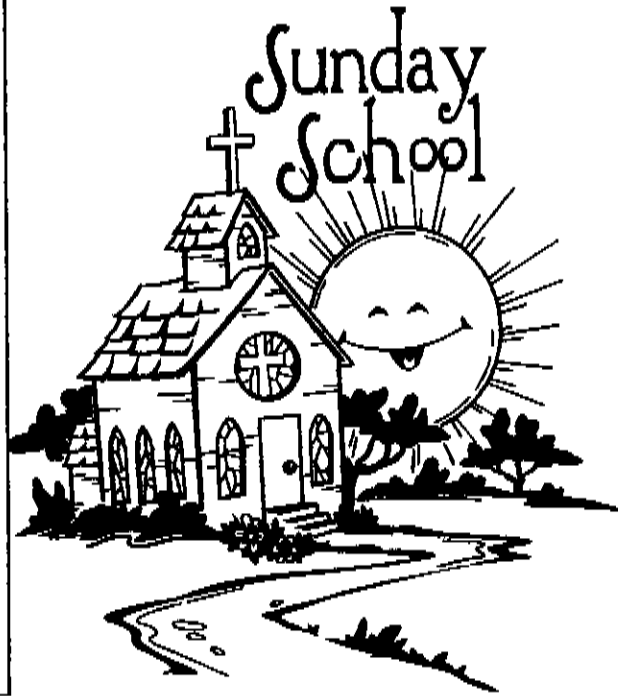
Sunday School: It's for LIFE!

**Kick-Off Event Sunday Sept. 20,
9:45 AM**

Whether you are an adult, a preschooler or any age in between, we have a Sunday School class for you. Our learning hour on Sundays aims build disciples by teaching about the Bible and how it applies to our lives. Age appropriate lessons and committed teachers make Sunday School the place to be if you'd like to grow in your faith and meet new friends. Sunday School: It's For Life!

There will be an intergenerational event on Sunday Sept. 20 at 9:45 AM in Fellowship Hall. Come and bring a friend!

Food & Songs
Marionette Show
Meet Our Teachers



SUNDAY SHOOOL SELECTIONS for FALL 2009

Hear ye Hear ye...all **Story Seekers from Pre-School to 2nd Grade!**

Our adventures will begin in month of September when we study "Samuel".
Our bible verse will be: "Speak Lord, your servant is listening." 1 Samuel 3:9.

Then in October, we will begin studies on "Elisha".
Our bible verse for this month will be..."Great is our Lord and mighty in power." Psalm 147:5.

Our class gathers in either 1 of 2 rooms: the 1) Craft Room, Snack Shack, 2) Bible Hut or Movie Theater through out that month.

If you have any questions about our class or would like more information, please contact Miss Elizabeth (aka Mrs. Gordy) in person or at 657-6410.

See you In September!!!

The Middler's Class teaches a child how to use the bible as a daily tool. Just, as a child uses textbooks in his or her school to learn math, science, history and etc., the bible is a book that instructs and is a helpmate during one's walk through life. It is the most important book of all.

Jesus tells us in the Word how one can rely on Him for direction. He tells us how to receive eternal life but yet also how we can have life and have it more abundantly here on earth with his leading and love.

Children need to know that Jesus cares and is their 24-hour friend and that God's love is something that lives in one's heart and is fed by the Holy Spirit.

Attending Sunday school helps a child to understand that in any situation they have Jesus to depend on even when alone. To know that God is on their side gives assurance of safety and security whether during happy times or sad times. The bible is their guidebook and promises a fruitful life.

The Middler's class will learn how to use the bible by finding the books, chapters, and verses. They will learn of various stories, such as, miracles, healings, parables and the stories of Christmas, Easter and Paul. Human Geography and maps will be woven throughout the lessons while learning about the history, times and events that took place in both the Old and New Testaments. Pre-history will be mentioned followed by creation along with the stories of the Patriarchs, Ten Commandments, the first Kings and Prophets. A short lesson on the Psalms and Proverbs will also be held. Because of this intense study it is important that the student attends every class.

A personal relationship with Jesus is what we hope to instill in each child and we welcome your child to this great adventure that can be found in Sunday school.

Calling all Youth!!

Come; join the fun as we explore our faith this fall with a new curriculum:

FaithWeaver

New and interesting stories from the Bible each week. A chance to talk about God, your beliefs and the questions that come up in your life every day. Fun in-class activities. Field trips included. Invite a friend and join us!! Mrs. Jackie Coons

Adult Classes:

The Life of David: A study out of the 2ND book of SAMUEL

Taught by Sam Gordy, meets in lower level back classroom.

The story of David, son of Jesse, a man after God's heart.

A bright and shining light for the God of Israel.

David's life had many great triumphs and many great sins.

He acknowledged his sins and sought God's forgiveness.

No man in the Bible gives us a better example of confession than David.

Adult Classes continued...

The Book of Job

Taught by Deidre Sweet in Fellowship Hall

Is your life not turning out the way you expected it too? Are you frustrated by stock answers to complex questions? Are your friends giving you advice that magnifies your pain? Do you have a grievance against God because of your suffering? Have you noticed how there is sometimes little correlation between the wrong we commit and the pain we suffer? Join this class to prayerfully study through all of the above questions and more. The Book of Job goes beyond dealing with suffering. It holds solid truth about our relationship with God, with others, and with a complicated world.



It's not too late to join the Summer
Adult Bible Study!
We meet at 8:45 AM Sunday
Mornings in Fellowship Hall.
Our current study is on the book of
Psalms. -Deidre Sweet

Sunday Schedule Change begin Sept. 20!

We'll say bye-bye to summer and go back to our school year schedule:

9:45 AM Sunday School

11:00 AM Worship

**Second Sunday Potlucks resume in
September. Join us after church Sept. 13th**

ALPHA AT ALMENA – Fall 2009

Introductory Dinner Tues. Sept 8, 6 – 8:30 pm

This evening includes dinner and a 35 min. talk titled "Christianity: Untrue, Boring and Irrelevant?" It offers a sample of what Alpha evenings will be like, and provides a question and answer session to help people decide if they'd like to continue the course. The dinner is free, but reservations are appreciated for yourself and any guests you will bring. Contact Donna Keyte at 329-1560 or pastor@almenaumc.com. Or sign up on the bulletin board in the church entryway.

Alpha Course continues ...

Tues. Sept. 15, 6-9 pm and runs till Nov. 17th

Register online at almenaumc.com; click on Alpha link, OR by completing a registration form available in the church entryway. Mail completed form to the church at 27503 CR 375 Paw Paw, MI 49079 or place in the Alpha mailbox inside the front door of the church.

What is ALPHA?

Alpha is a 10 week practical introduction to the Christian faith. ALPHA stands for...

A-Anyone can come. All are welcome

L- Learning & Laughter. Join others in an informal atmosphere.

P- Pasta (or other food). Each weekly session begins with dinner.

H- Helping one another. Large-group video and small group discussion.

A- Ask anything. Here's your chance to ask questions.

Alpha is for everyone, including individuals interested in investigating Christianity, newcomers to the church, new Christians, and those who want to brush up on the basics of Christianity.

No matter who you are the Alpha course offers an exciting avenue to explore life's most perplexing questions. The course is filled with great meals, thought-provoking talks, and worthwhile small group discussions.

What happens at Alpha?

Dinner

Evening courses begin with an informal dinner and time for fellowship.

Talk

The main presentation addresses a key issue relating to Christianity. The Alpha course presents a DVD series with speaker Nicky Gumbel.

Dessert and Small Groups

Guests often find the small group session to be the most valuable and rewarding time of the whole course. The sessions are an opportunity to ask questions, express opinions, and to discuss the topic of the evening. Small groups also provide an opportunity to get to know others and share ideas in a relaxed and non-threatening environment.

Update from the Trustee Chair:

The roof is finished and I want to thank Rick and Jackie Coon's for donating the Copper for the Cross. It was a very generous gift and it turned out beautiful. Rick's company also did a very thorough job on the roof and they took time to fix the siding between the addition and the sanctuary, which another company might not have done. Dave DeRyke, who is a friend and community member, donated his time and talent, and put a coat of sealant on the cross to protect it. Thank you for a job well done.

We have had several expenses recently, we had carpenter ants and I had to hire an exterminator to spray the inside and outside of the church. I sent in our water to be tested to Lansing and we passed. We fixed a broken window and two torn screens. Approved Fire Protection inspected all emergency lights and exit signs. We had to replace one emergency light and two batteries for exit signs. The health inspector came for a visit and I must confess before he came I unloaded the refrigerator. Please remember when you put something in the fridge or freezer, you MUSSSST label and date it. The rule for refrigerator is 7 days and then "out it goes". The freezer bread type items are 30 days and meat items should go after 6 months. Ice is supposed to be rotated every 3 months. If you put condiments or salad dressings in, please take time to clean off the drippings and please check the date. If "out of date" please toss it. Cutting boards need to be stored inside the cupboard or drawer. If left out be sure to clean it off before using, as it could have contaminants on it. A contaminant can be dust, insect leftovers etc. The sterno is to be kept separate from any food items and any silverware, straws, anything you put in your mouth as it gives off gases during storage. I corrected items while he was here and he passed us and gave us our license for another year. I have ordered a new shock for our diaper changing table and that will be fixed as good as new. Dave Field and his Dad are working on new railings that will be attached to the wood railings, which you will be able to grip when going down the stairs in front of the church. We are working on moldings around the outside of the front door that the squirrels will not chew on. Any ideas? We also are working on making the door behind the pastor's office going down to the old basement more weather tight. Please let me know when you see something broke or not quite right, so I can get it fixed or have someone look at it. We also have a yellow pad on the Trustee board that you can put items on to be fixed.

In His Service,
Sue Tinkler

Memorial Committee:

We had an anonymous donor, that has given our church \$500.00 in memory of Polly and he or she has designated it to be spent on a portable communion set, acolyte robes and belts, a bible marker and a new green parament for the pulpit. These items have been ordered and we want to thank our anonymous donor for this very generous gift.

Respectfully,
Shirley Huffman and Sue Tinkler

Welcome to New Members Jan & Don Trykall

Jan and Don lived in Illinois until they moved to Almena, Michigan in 2008. They have been married for 55 years, a great accomplishment! They have 3 children and 5 grandchildren. As a child Jan spent the summers with her uncles "Cub" and "Lefty" Roney,, who were well known as a "couple of cards" in the Almena area. While she was here she attended the AUMC and made friends with some of our current members. Jan's mother Hazel Rentner lived with her uncles later in life and while visiting attended AUMC. After moving to Michigan, Jan & Don belonged to the CRC on Red Arrow Hwy, where they became friends with Art Morgan. When the church closed, they found AUMC. We are thankful that they did!

The Paw Paw Community Chorus

The Paw Paw Community Chorus, sponsored by the Paw Paw High School Choirs, will begin practice on Monday September 14th at 7 PM at the Paw Paw First Presbyterian Church in preparation for their 10th annual Christmas Concert to be held on Sunday, Dec. 6th, at 4 Pm at the Paw Paw High School Performing Arts Center. The chorus under the direction of Theresa Vaughn and accompanied by Lisa Gardner will present both sacred and secular music including HOLLY CAROL, DO YOU HEAR WHAT I HEAR?, SOME CHILDREN SEE HIM, HOME FOR THE HOLIDAYS, CHRISTMAS ON BROADWAY and others. New singers are welcome. For more information please contact Orville Griffith at 269- 657-5190, Dee Henderson at 269-657-3644 or Theresa Vaughn at 269- 668-4631.

MISSIONS

Our **August mission** 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 designated **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. Two young men from Wesley, Ryan Minier and Jon Pyle, plan to take a two week and an eight month (respectively) mission trip to Quilali, Nicaragua, to work with the people in language classes, and health and ministry work.

I had the opportunity to meet and spend time with some of the students and their Director, Lisa Batten last April, when they prepared a "thank you" dinner and gave a presentation for churches who had contributed to them. I also was able to enjoy the high-energy music of the Wesley band at the Kalamazoo District Conference in March and at Annual Conference in June. 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. These are the years 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 Foundation students again for morning worship at Almena in October; look for more information on this later this summer. Please say a prayer for them and for Lisa.

Our **September mission** is **Landmine Removal** (Lane 4 - Global - Hunger/UMCOR). This program started in Mozambique where landmines prevented farmers from access to land and took away their only real means of subsistence. Landmines left resource-poor farmers with no livelihoods, and rural communities without much hope. Over a four-year period, millions of square meters of land were cleared. The success of this program in Mozambique led to a similar program in Angola. Angola has over 13,000,000 people, and landmines are critical obstacles to normal activities for daily life. Over 40 years of internal conflict has made Angola one of the worst mine-affected countries in the world. The mines not only maim and kill; they also make socio-economic recovery difficult and impede the delivery of humanitarian and development assistance.

Consider these facts about landmines in Angola:

1. Landmines hamper the return of more than one million internally displaced people.
2. Children represent 49 percent of mine casualties.
3. The amputee population is 80,000, of which 8,000 are children under the age of 15.
4. There are between 150 and 200 new landmine victims every week.
5. Less than 7 percent of landmine victims die, 37 percent require amputation.
6. A child's prosthesis must be replaced every six months; an adult's every three to five years.
7. Not even the parties who laid the mines have kept track of their locations or numbers.
8. To date, 2,200 suspected hazard areas (SHAs) in 1,400 communities have been identified. It is anticipated that there are at least 2,700 SHAs throughout Angola, affecting approximately 2.2 million Angolans.
9. An estimated six million landmines remain scattered across Angola.

Working in partnership, UMCOR, RONCO, Africare, and the Angolan government will develop and implement a program to increase the internal capacity and quality of the humanitarian deminers within Angola. Newly trained deminers and Mine Dog Detection (MDD) teams will initially focus their efforts to clear rail lines and access to local markets. Cleared rail lines will then allow for rebuilding internal infrastructure, allow people to vote for the first time in over 15 years, and allow people to get food and supplies necessary for daily living.

This increased internal capacity will serve as a model for future training and result in significant landmines being removed, and an eventual return to life in a country free of the effects of these deadly mines. There are two Annual Conferences in Angola, and both will benefit from cleared land, access by current and future members to return land to production, and through the possibility of energizing local churches and growing new ones.

The Planned Activities:

1. Implement Landmine Removal Program in Angola.
2. Purchase MDDs and train personnel.
3. Select and train deminers.
4. Select and train supervisors.
5. Implement Mine Risk Education/HIV/AIDS Program.
6. Develop and implement Artificial Limb Replacement Program.

The Projected Outcomes:

Landmines will be removed from railroad lines. The impact of this will be to reduce child-related deaths and injuries. The removal of landmines will open up the interior of the country for commerce, routine travel, and allow free, open, and accessible elections. MDDs will be used throughout the provinces to verify that areas previously demined are truly clear.

Quality control by MDDs is critical to families returning to their homes to restart their family farms. Land and areas free of landmines allow for an opportunity for The United Methodist Church to invest in starting new churches and to engage in mission programs.

Please join me in August and September to support these worthy projects. Thank you.

ELEANOR'S PANTRY UPDATE

We now have some projected dates for activities at the new Eleanor's Pantry at 221 Drew Street in Paw Paw. This pantry, named in honor of Eleanor Miller, will combine four currently active pantries in Paw Paw and Lawton. Although the pantry will initially just have food, the eventual goal is to expand into clothing and in other ways.

Almena already has seven people signed up to volunteer at the pantry – This is terrific! Training will take place mid to late August. The hours of operation will be M-W-F: 10 - 2, and T-Th: 3 - 7.

Dates to remember:

August 26: Move-in day

August 29: Open House 1 to 4 p.m. for the community. Everyone is asked to bring a canned food item. Enter by the front door, tour the facility and enjoy refreshments. Let's help celebrate this milestone of cooperation in serving the hungry people of our area.

September 8: Opening Day for clients

If you would like to donate to the Pantry, please make a check out to 'Gleaners', which is from whom most of the non-perishables will be purchased. If you would like to donate small cookies for the Open House, please let me know.

***Almena UMC Volunteers for Habitat for Humanity
at Van Buren County Fair***

On Wednesday, July 22, Marcia Williams, Don and Jan Trykall, and I worked the afternoon shift at the Habitat for Humanity food concession building at the fair, taking/filling orders, grilling, doing dishes, and cleaning up. 'Habitat' has only one fundraiser each year. Proceeds will be used to build a home in Lawrence. This was the first year Almena was asked to participate, and they really appreciated our help, as they had fewer volunteers than usual. We worked hard and had a good time, once we got two conflicting sets of instructions ironed out – after about two hours of confusion! Seriously, though, this is a good way to meet and work with people from other churches and local organizations while helping our community, and I think we'll be asked back next year.

*Janet Swigart
Missions Chairperson
jlswigart@aol.com*

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) 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 Update

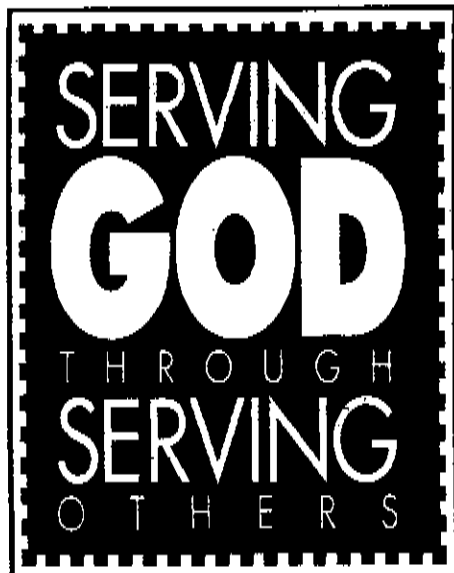
Quilt Club will meet Tuesday, September 1st at 7 p.m. We will be learning Whack-a-Stack cutting. Please bring a piece of quilt cloth with a large repeat pattern. It should repeat 6 to 8 times. Also, please bring a cutting board and cutting wheel.

ALTAR FLOWERS NEEDED

If you can help provide altar flowers for one or more Sundays of the season, please let tom and Bea Ellis know. 668-3657

Gospel Choir Field Trip

Anyone currently in the choir, possibly interested in joining the choir or just fond of choir music is invited to join us on a field trip to Decatur's Emmanuel Church of God in Christ on August 23rd to enjoy a bit of Gospel music. We'll be leaving *immediately* following church. Contact Lauren (423-8111) to catch a ride in the carpool.



The Lay Leadership Selection Committee will soon be meeting to consider our Leadership needs for 2010. Please be considering in your heart what area you could serve God and others thru the ministries of our church. Contact any member of our leadership team to offer your time and talents. The team includes: Pastor Donna, Sam Gordy, Barb Alden, Jerry Lentz, Janet Swigart, Jim Rickli.

August 2009

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1
2 Adult Bible Study 8:45 Church 11 a.m.		4	5	6	7	8
9 Adult Bible Study 8:45 Community Worship at Maple Lake 10:30 a.m.	10	11	12 SPRC Mtg. 7 p.m.	13	14	15
16 Adult Bible Study 8:45 Church 11 a.m.	17	18	19 Ad Board Mtg. 7 p.m.	20	21	22
23 Adult Bible Study 8:45 Church 11 a.m. Choir Field Trip to Decatur COGIC	24	25	26 SPRC Mtg. 7 p.m.	27	28	29 Eleanor's Pantry Open House 1-4 p.m.
30 Adult Bible Study 8:45 Church 11 a.m.	31					

September 2009

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1 Quilt Club 7 p.m.	2	3	4	5
6 Adult Bible Study 8:45 Church 11 a.m.	7	8 Opening Day for Eleanor's Pantry Alpha Course Intro Dinner 6-8:30 p.m.	9	10	11	12
13 Adult Bible Study 8:45 Church 11 a.m.	14	15 Alpha Course 6-9 p.m.	16 Ad Board Mtg. 7 p.m.	17	18	19
Second Sunday Potluck after Church						
20 SUNDAY SCHOOL KICK-OFF! Sunday School 9:45 Church 11 a.m.	21	22 Alpha Course 6-9 p.m.	23	24	25	26 District Mission Day at Crystal Springs Camp. Registration 8:30 a.m.
27 Sunday School 9:45 Church 11 a.m.	28	29 Alpha Course 6-9 p.m.	30			

October 2009

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1	2	3
4 Sunday School 9:45 Church 11 a.m.	5	6 Alpha Course 6-9 p.m.	7	8 Charge Conference 6:30 p.m. SPRC 7 p.m. Conf. Mtg.	9	10
11 Sunday School 9:45 Church 11 a.m.	12	13 Alpha Course 6-9 p.m.	14	15	16	17
18 Sunday School 9:45 Church 11 a.m. Bronson Lakeview – Lawton, Lead Worship 2 p.m.	19	20 Alpha Course 6-9 p.m.	21 Ad Board Mtg. 7 p.m.	22	23	24
25 Sunday School 9:45 Church 11 a.m.	26	27 Alpha Course 6-9 p.m.	28	29	30	31