

MARCH - APRIL NEWSLETTER 2014

ALLENTOWN UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
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Greetings,

I recently heard on the news that the Northeast has been hit with twelve snowstorms, so far, this year. It just seems to be never ending. I watch the Philly news. They had a story about a church sign in Connecticut. It said "Whoever's praying for snow, please stop!" My feelings exactly. I always look forward to spring, but this year I really can't wait to see the first shoots of green popping up in the garden. Spring brings with it a season of prayer - a season we know as Lent. As we enter this season there will be no church sign at AUMC asking you to stop praying.

On the Christian Calendar we are entering the Holiest season of the year: Lent/Easter/Pentecost. In March and April we will experience many highs and lows. During Lent we turn inward, reflect upon our own walk with Christ, our own discipleship and our outreach to neighbors. We look at what we have done and consider what else we might do.

Holy Week begins with the joy of Christ's entry into the city of Jerusalem on the day we refer to as Palm Sunday. Preparations are made for the celebration of the Passover table. The significance Christ gave to the bread and wine served that night causes Christians to call this day Holy Thursday. But suddenly the party is over. The heaviness of heart with which Christ enters the garden to pray follows. We witness the sadness as his closest friends fail to pray as he asked. Instead, he repeatedly finds them sleeping. How alone Christ must have felt as they all deserted him. The beatings, the humiliation, the false accusations; suffered all alone. The crowds that cheered on Palm Sunday called for his crucifixion on Good Friday. Then the journey to the cross, nails pounded into his hands and feet. His mother at the foot of the cross. The terrified disciples hiding away, fearing their own deaths because they followed him.

But then, then comes Sunday morning. The tomb is empty! Defeat turns to triumph, grief turns to gladness and joy abounds! For the first time the Good News is proclaimed. Christ is risen. Christ is risen indeed!

Your church is prepared to help you walk this prayerful journey to the cross and beyond to the glory of the Resurrection. Ash Wednesday and Holy Thursday will involve both meals and worship. During Lent there will be two weekly DVD studies and one devotional study. Our Sunshine Club will help us celebrate on Palm/Passion Sunday. The Greater Allentown Ministerial Association (GAMA) is preparing Good Friday worship and the annual Community Sunrise Service. In case of inclement weather the Sunrise Service will be held here at Allentown

UMC instead of the lakeside. The Easter Breakfast will be held here after the Sunrise Service.

We recognize that not everyone will be able to attend everything. However, we would ask that you prayerfully consider your involvement in these experiences. You will find detailed information about all the experiences available for study, fellowship and worship below. I look forward to walking this journey with you whenever you are able to join us.

I close with The Story of the Pretzel. . .

Long ago, Lent was a time of sadness, when early Christians felt they should suffer. For forty days they ate no rich foods: no meat, cheese, eggs, or even milk. They ate fruit and fish, and they baked a bread shaped into arms crossed in prayer. They called this bread *bracellae*, the Latin word for “little arms”. Christian customs spread to central and northern Europe. But the people there said *bretzel* instead of *bracellae*, and so the word later became pretzel. And the Sunday before Ash Wednesday became known as Pretzel Sunday, to remind people to think about the meaning of Lent and need for prayer during Lent. Pretzels were never served after Palm Sunday. European immigrants brought pretzels to America, and now we enjoy them all year! We will celebrate Pretzel Sunday on March 2nd. Please join us in a season of prayer.

May the reflection and spiritual disciplines of Lent prepare you to experience a Holy Week that ends with a joyous Easter shout - Christ is risen. Christ is risen indeed!

May the love of God enfold you,
Rev. Fran B. Ballinger, Pastor

OUR CHURCH FAMILY

PRAYER LIST: Rev. Dr. LaGreta Bjorn, Bob Brandt, Sue Britton, Darlene Butcher, Edith Cheney, Mary Clark, Charlotte Comisky, Dorothy Emley, Jerry Emley, Joan & Alex Fedor, Barbara Fennimore, Tom Forsaith, Betty Gervich, Matthew German, Jean Gladney, Dorothy & John Hollendonner, Lori Koch, Linda Marsh, Eileen Matson, Joyce Offery, Judy Pepler, Joan & Luke Platt, Bob Rosen, Julia Rosenberger, Mandy Sedgwick, Tara Silva, Sandy Spissell, Kenny Stites III, Pastor Wade, Debbie Weaver, Jane Wilson, David Zegrino, the Torres family, President Obama and Congress, renewal.

Those in our Armed Forces: Philip Barnes, Ben Haigh Bavona, Ryan Brudge, Brian Carpe, Justin Carpe, Joseph Chicoski, Billy Cravin, Larry Cravin, Jonathan Crawford, Jeffrey Emanmi, Jocelyn Ialacci, Jonathan Mele, Roberta Neidt, Tim Sorensen, Sonya Spradley, Stanley Wisniewski III.

Birth: We celebrate the birth of Alexis Anne Pepler born on January 15th to Crystal and Brian Pepler. Alexis weighed 8 lbs. 3 oz. and was 21 inches long. Her proud grandparents are Judy and Bob Pepler.

Baptism: Hunter Lee Shepherd was baptized on January 16, 2014.

Deaths: *Donald Sprague* went home to be with the Lord on November 23, 2013. *Peg Rockhill* went home to be with the Lord on December 30, 2013.

RENEWED IN BODY, MIND AND SPIRIT

Sunday Lenten Experience

March 2nd thru April 6th

On March 2nd we will begin a Lenten Experience: Renewed in BODY, MIND AND SPIRIT. The threefold experience begins in the Pastor's office at 9 a.m. using your MIND to better understand what the Scriptures teach about discipleship. Then refresh your SPIRIT as you experience worship at 10:30 a.m. in the Sanctuary. Finally, return with your coffee to the Pastor's office at 11:45 a.m. as we learn how to better care for the BODY via DVD. We will experience "The Everyday Gourmet: Making Healthy Food Taste Great".

Healthy eating is a profound part of living a longer, healthier, and happier life. In these six DVD sessions lead by Dr. Connie Gutteresen and Chef Bill Briwa, two master instructors from The Culinary Institute of America, you'll discover the nutritional benefits of foods commonly found in grocery stores, what's true and what's false about nutrition and diet, how specific culinary techniques and ingredients can transform healthy foods into taste sensations, why international cuisines are a key component of a healthy diet, and, most important, how easy and fun it is to cook with health and nutrition in mind.

Filmed on location at the CIA's Greystone campus in the heart of Napa Valley, these sessions are packed with tasty dishes that will get you excited about healthy cooking and eating - whether you're a novice cook or a seasoned home chef.

Join us for one, two or all three components each Sunday of Body, Mind and Spirit. . . a Lenten experience of living. We certainly understand that not everyone can attend for 6 weeks. Each Sunday will be complete within itself. So if you can only join us for some of the sessions please do so. Everyone is welcome. *NOTE: never make major changes to your diet without consulting your physician.*

ASH WEDNESDAY

March 5th is Ash Wednesday. Join us for a MEATLESS Covered Dish Dinner and Service at 6:30 p.m. This is a "family friendly" experience. Children are most welcome. In addition to your covered dish, please bring a candle. . . any size, shape, or color, that you are willing to leave at church through Holy Thursday.

NEW MUSIC DIRECTOR

It is with great joy that the SPPR and Administrative Council announce Dr. David Leifer NCTM has accepted the position of Music Director. Welcome David!

COMBINED BOARD MEETING

There will be a combined meeting of the Administrative Council and the Trustees on Tuesday, March 11th at 7:00 p.m. in the Pastor's Office. Dan McElwee will be here.

WORLD DAY OF PRAYER

March 7th is World Day of Prayer. . .I was a stranger and you welcomed me (Matthew 25:31-40). Let us join with Christians around the globe, to pray and to welcome the strangers, foreigners, migrants, and refugees on the first Friday of March. Below is the prayer you may consider praying that day:

O God, we understand the circle of love is repeatedly broken because of our sin of exclusion. We create separate circles: the inner circle and the outer circle, the circle of power and the circle of despair, the circle of privilege and the circle of deprivation.

We confess the circle of love is broken whenever there is alienation, whenever there is misunderstanding, whenever there is insensitivity or a hardening of the heart. Forgive us O God, our sins, as we forgive all who have sinned against us, and open our hearts to all your children. Amen.

UNITED METHODIST WOMEN

The women will meet on Tuesday, March 18th at 7:00 p.m. in the Palmer Room. Denise Erb will be presenting a program on “Zonta” a mission project, advancing the status of women through service worldwide.

Tuesday, April 15th at 7:00 p.m. – we will meet at Doris Hoagland’s home, 37 Waldron Rd., Allentown. A “book review” will be presented by Mary Tucker.

All women of the church are invited and we encourage you to bring a friend. Good fellowship & food provided.

24 HOURS THAT CHANGED THE WORLD

Lenten Wednesday Evening DVD Journey

March 12th thru April 16th

We will begin the journey each Wednesday in the parsonage at 7 p.m. sharp. Coffee available at 6:45. It’s been said no single event in human history has received more attention than the suffering and crucifixion of Jesus of Nazareth. Pastor and author, Adam Hamilton, guides us through the last 24 hours of Jesus’ life. We will experience the significance of Jesus’ suffering and death in ways we have never done before. We will learn much about the story of Christ’s crucifixion as we join Adam Hamilton in the Holy Lands. The last 24 hours of Christ’s life is experienced via the DVD making stops in the places where Christ spent those last hours. Everyone is welcome, come and bring a friend. You will gain the most from this journey if you are able to be with us each week. However, each DVD segment is complete within itself. So please feel free to join us as you are able.

SONSHINE CLUB

The Sonshine Club will meet on Monday, March 17th and Monday, April 21st from 5:30 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. in Fellowship Hall. Songs, crafts, Bible stories and a lot of fun. Any questions contact Denise Erb or Linda Watson.

MEN'S BREAKFAST

Men of the church are invited to join us for a time of fellowship and good food on Sunday, March 30th at 8:00 a.m. Please contact Clarence Fennimore to let him know if you are coming.

ONE GREAT HOUR OF SHARING **Sunday, March 30th**

The United Methodist Women will take part in worship on this Sunday, set aside during the Lenten season to remember those in need. Your support of One Great Hour of Sharing equips the United Methodist Church to respond to disaster and critical need around the globe every day.

PALM/PASSION SUNDAY

At our Palm/Passion Sunday service on April 13th both the Choir and our Sonshine Club will lead us in this special service. Join us as we remember both the joy of Palm Sunday and the pain of Christ's passion.

HOLY THURSDAY

Join us on April 17th, Holy Thursday, for a Covered Dish Dinner and Communion at 6:30 p.m. in Fellowship Hall.

April 18th GAMA Good Friday Service - time and place not yet set.

EASTER SUNDAY **April 20th**

Community Sunrise Service at the lake - time will be set when we know the time of sunrise. In case of inclement weather the service will be held in our sanctuary.

Easter Breakfast - following the Sunrise Service we will host an Easter breakfast here in our Fellowship Hall.

Morning Worship - Celebration of the Resurrection - 10:30 a.m.

EASTER LILIES

Easter lilies given in honor or memory or celebration can be ordered from Orysia Kaufman at 609-259-0508 or contact her by email at gkleinedler@verizon.net. The lilies are \$9 each. Orders need to be in by April 6th.

LOOKING AHEAD

Mark your calendar now - May 17th at 1:00 p.m. the UMW will host a Women's Tea. Musical entertainment will be provided by Rev. Jeanette M. Block. The women of the GAMA churches will be our guests.

FUTURE WITH HOPE CAMPAIGN

Some of us made commitments to the Future With Hope Campaign. This is just a reminder to mark your check or your envelope clearly that it is for Future With Hope.

Cyndi and the counters need to keep very accurate records of our giving so that we receive our full 25% for local Allentown mission.

If you have not pledged but would like to give a one-time gift, please also mark it clearly so we receive the appropriate amount for local mission. Thank you.

MISSIONS

Things to Save - Save Campbell labels and General Mills Box Tops for Education coupons and place in the proper containers on the Missions Table. Also, continue to save aluminum tabs for Children's Hospital in Philadelphia.

Local Food Pantry - The Food Pantry is always in need of non-perishable food. Rice, pasta, spaghetti sauce, soups, cereal, vegetables, tuna fish, etc. Place food in the container in Fellowship Hall.

Shop Rite Gift Cards - Linda Watson is selling \$50 Shop-Rite gift cards as a year-round fundraiser for Ranch Hope.

MARCH-APRIL BIRTHDAYS

Mar. 3 - Brian Erb Jr., Dorothy Hollendonner, Natalie Levine

Mar. 4 - Susan Fennimore

Mar. 5 - Eli Firth

Mar. 11 - Adam Levine

Mar. 15 - Miles Mayer

Mar. 20 - Bonnie Metterhouse

Mar. 21 - Norma Elgrim, Debbie Yuhas

Mar. 23 - Gerri D'Agostino

Mar. 24 - Horace Frantz

Mar. 25 - Russell Sharp, Garrett Marshall

Mar. 28 - John Kamer, Linda Watson

Apr. 2 - David Poinsett

Apr. 3 - Kyle Brady

Apr. 7 - Mary Jane German

Apr. 16 - Bernhard Giehl

Apr. 17 - Jennifer Matwiow

Apr. 23 - Doug Buscell, Carole Crane

Apr. 24 - Lauren Rheaume

Apr. 29 - Tim Bailey Jr.

Apr. 30 - Seraphine DesJardin

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