

NOVEMBER - DECEMBER NEWSLETTER 2013

ALLENTOWN UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
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FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK

It is only October 7th as I sit at my desk preparing a few thoughts for the November/December Newsletter. BUT if one were to judge by the Christmas displays in the stores, you would think it was already December! We seem to rush much too quickly to consume more and more “stuff.” We are encouraged to buy more Christmas “stuff” even before the Halloween candy is on the store shelves. And whatever happened to Thanksgiving?? It might go totally unnoticed if it weren't for the huge feast that must be prepared. Makes one wonder why do we buy so much “stuff” when many of us have been diligently cleaning out closets and garages to bring some of our “stuff” to be sold at the Bazaar! Of course we will probably buy more “stuff” at the Bazaar - after all it's for a good cause we rationalize. Now, to be sure I hope you will all come out to support the Bazaar, I know I will be there on November 2nd. It is a wonderful time of fun,

fellowship and wonderful home cooked goodies. I am looking forward to experiencing it for the first time this year. The point I want to make is. . .Do we NEED more “stuff” or do we just WANT more “stuff”? Most of us will spend a great deal of money this holiday season buying gifts for other folks who also have too much “stuff”. Perhaps this year we could consider spending less on WANTS and using some of those funds to help others who have many NEEDS. I have a friend who buys 2 of everything that goes on her family's Thanksgiving dinner table. The extra items go to the church food pantry. And, I know another family that takes 10% of their Christmas budget and gives it away as a “birthday gift” to Jesus. I leave you with this thought. . .What creative way might you come up with this holiday season to express your thankfulness to God for your blessings and to celebrate Jesus' birthday? Tell me what you think at coffee hour or send me an email. Look forward to hearing from you.

Blessings,

Fran

WEDNESDAY EVENING ADVENT GROUP

Join the Wednesday night Advent “Journey” Group Nov. 27, Dec. 4, 11, and 18 from 7 to 8 p.m. in the pastor's office. Via DVD we will travel to Bethlehem with our travel guide Adam Hamilton. Though we hope you will be able to make the whole journey, each week's destination will be a journey within itself. Everyone welcome to join us for the journey: Walking the Road to Bethlehem.

SUNDAY MORNING ADULT ADVENT STUDY

The Sunday morning **Adult Advent Study** meets on Dec. 1, 8, 15 and 22 from 9 a.m. to 10 a.m. in the pastor's office. Afterwards there is time to get a cup of coffee before church. During the season of Advent our Sunday Adult Group will be sharing in an Advent study that travels through the Bible using the resource. .ADVENT a calendar of devotions. This study will help us step back from the bustle and stress of the season and prepare hearts and minds to rejoice in God's loving gift, Jesus Christ. The season of Advent is to provide an opportunity for spiritual renewal for followers of Christ. But often what happens is that we get so caught up in the rush, the hustle and bustle, the frantic pace of the season that we emerge more spiritually exhausted than refreshed. This study will help us focus on the things that truly matter during this busy season and experience spiritual renewal. The author, Deborah K. Westbrook, invites us to "Come, pilgrim, and let us travel through Advent together." Please join us.

WORK DAY

There will be a Work Day on Saturday, November 9th starting at 9 a.m. so we can get some outside work done. Should the weather not cooperate, we will have a raindate of Saturday, November 16th.

OUR CHURCH FAMILY

PRAYER LIST: Hal Bailey, Rev. Jeanette Block, Bob Brandt, Jim Burd, Darlene Butcher, Edith Cheney, Mary Clark, Jill Cszazi, Dorothy Emley, Jerry Emley, Joan & Alex Fedor, Barbara Fennimore, J.C. Field, Tom Forsaith, Rose Francis, Sandy Garrett, Albert & Ella Giardinelli, Brent Himmelberger, Dorothy & John Hollendonner, Marty Lazarz, Jean & Bill Michaels, Lola Natale, Herbert & Mary Olcott, Judy Pepler, Art Perry, Joan & Luke Platt, Peg Rockhill, Bob Rosen, Tara Silva, Sue Smith, Heather Rassing, Pastor Wade, Ryan Waters, Debbie Weaver, President Obama and Congress, renewal.

Those in our Armed Forces: Philip Barnes, Ben Haigh Bavona, Ryan Burdge, Brian Carpe, Justin Carpe, Joseph Chicoski, Billy Cravin, Larry Cravin, Jonathan Crawford, Jeffrey Emammi, Bill Fortier, Jocelyn Ialacci, Adam Levine, Jonathan Mele, Roberta Neidt, Eugene Nelson, Evan Prince, Latoya Pritchard, Tim Sorensen, Sonya Spradley, Paul Steelman, Rob Sylestre, Dianne Tiano, John Ugart, Stanley Wisniewski III.

NEW BIRTHS: Keegan Quinn was born on August 28th to Molly Brown. Keegan weighed 8 lbs and was 21 inches long. His proud grandparents are Geoffrey and Melinda Brown, and the proud great grandmother is Mary Clark.

Remy Ellison Ruthven was born on September 24th, weighing 7 lbs. 7 oz. and was 21 inches long. The proud parents are David and Lauren Ruthven. The proud grandparents are Carol and Richard Ruthven.

FUTURE WITH HOPE ANNUAL STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM

A FUTURE WITH HOPE MISSION CAMPAIGN and our ANNUAL STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM kicked off on Sunday, October 17th. But it's not too late to join us in the journey. Why not join a discussion/study group on Sunday morning and/or sign up to read Bishop Job's book on your own timeline. Phyllis has the details not only for our book study but also for our mission project during the campaign. You will also find more info below.

FUTURE WITH HOPE MISSION FUND GOAL AND WHY WE ARE DOING THIS

The clergy and lay representatives from our 580 congregations approved a campaign at the 2013 annual conference to raise \$12 million for critical and urgent mission. This includes:

7 million for Sandy relief and recovery

2 million for Imagine No Malaria

And 3 million for local church mission.

25% OF EVERY DOLLAR OUR CHURCH RAISES STAYS IN OUR CONGREGATION TO BE USED FOR MISSION PROJECTS IN ALLENTOWN.

Kick off Sunday for a Future With Hope Mission Fund Campaign began an exciting four weeks in the life of our church. May the words of Bishop John Schol inspire you, "great challenges call disciples to greater faith and action. I believe God is ready to work a miracle in our

midst. I have seen how God has used greater New Jersey United Methodists to achieve an amazing ministry and I believe God is ready to do a miracle through us. A miracle that will raise more than \$12 million dollars but an even greater miracle that lives will change, faith will grow and congregations will be strengthened. I invite you to journey with me through prayer, believe and a readiness to be used for the purposes of God."

One of the questions often asked is why are we raising funds for Sandy, Imagine No Malaria and local church mission? The answer is because people need us more than ever right now. There are tens of thousands of people who still are not in their homes or are living on the second floor waiting for help to repair their ground floor. There are children dying of malaria, a deadly disease that once took the lives of thousands of U.S. citizens. Just as we have eliminated death by malaria in the U.S., we can do this in Africa as well. Since United Methodists have been working on ending this disease, the death of children has gone from one every 30 seconds to one every 60 seconds. United Methodists, working with people around the world, will end death by malaria. Lastly, our congregation's engagement in mission will not only help people around the world and in New Jersey, but it also strengthens the witness of Christ right here in Allentown as we reach out to our neighbors.

ARE YOU READING THREE SIMPLE QUESTIONS

Bishop Ruben P. Job, in the preface to his book states: that reflecting on the three simple questions can lead us to a new and fuller understanding about who God is, who we are as individuals, and who we are together as Christians and as God's human family. The Bishop invites us to a new exploration of these three simple questions with the confidence that they will lead us to a new understanding of the God of love who made you and me and a new understanding of ourselves as sons and daughters of this God, as a part of the whole human family and as a part of the living body of Christ in the world. Come join us as we reflect upon. . .who is God? Who am I? Who were we together? See Phyllis Heller for more info.

A HEART, HAND, AND HEAD WARMING OPPORTUNITY

We are also offering a mission project tied to the campaign. Our stewardship folks are partnering with the children of the **SONshine Club** to collect hats, gloves, and mittens for children and adults in Trenton. The items will go with our Ecumenical **Loaves and Fishes Group** to St. Mary's Roman Catholic Church in Trenton the Saturday after Christmas. Now we need your help. The children will prepare the tree, but they need you to provide the hats, gloves, and mittens to "decorate" it. You can add your heart warming offering any Sunday in November through Christmas. We thank you in advance for your help with this project.

STEWARDSHIP COMMITMENT SUNDAY

A **Future With Hope** and **Stewardship Commitment Sunday** will be combined this year with **Church Conference** at AUMC. The day begins with our Three Simple Questions study at 9 a.m. Worship and Sunday School at 10:30 a.m. Homemade soups and breads will provide a simple but delicious celebration meal after worship. After our Commitments are shared, the meal will be followed by Church Conference where we will celebrate past, present and future.

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.

**You're Invited to Come Out and Enjoy
Our**

**43rd ANNUAL COUNTRY BAZAAR
AND AUCTION**

Saturday, November 2nd

8:30 a.m. - 1:30 p.m.

Auction starts at 9:30 a.m.

**Baked Goods, Toys, Clothes, Books,
Flea Market Items.**

Soup by the quart

Serving lunch and dessert

Food table during the auction

Back again this year. . .

“Just a Cut Above Boutique”

Featuring the finer items

Hope to see you and your friends there.

THANKSGIVING BASKETS

Thanksgiving is just around the corner and the Presbyterian Church will distribute the Thanksgiving baskets on November 23rd. They do not know at this time how many baskets will be prepared but if there is extra food it will be put in the Food Pantry. Therefore, if you could please while you are shopping purchase some **boxes of stuffing** for the baskets (approximately 60 boxes needed). If you are unable to get the boxes of stuffing and would like to make a monetary donation for the turkeys or more food that is needed, that would be greatly appreciated. Anything you can do is appreciated; non-perishable items are always needed for the Food Pantry. All items and monies are needed **no later than November 17th**.

CHRISTMAS FOOD BASKETS

60 boxes of Scalloped or AuGratin Potatoes will be needed for the Christmas baskets. So if you wish to bring them in now but before December 15th, that would be greatly appreciated.

Thanking you in advance for your compassion and helping in the time of need of others. Please keep these families in prayer, names need not be known, God knows. Any questions please contact Linda Watson.

SERVICE OF REMEMBRANCE

The annual Allentown Ecumenical Service of Remembrance will be held on Sunday, December 8th at 2 p.m. Area clergy and laity will participate in the service. Light refreshments are served after the service in the fellowship hall. The holidays can be a difficult time for those who have lost a loved one. If you know someone who is grieving a loss, please invite them to the service. Better yet, offer to bring them. Deacon Joseph Hepp from St. John the Baptist Roman Catholic Church will bring the message. We are always grateful for the leadership Karen Pepler provides as the community comes together to remember those who have gone home to be with God.

FAMILY CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE

This service will be informal, focusing on family and children for all ages. The service begins at 7 p.m. Everyone is welcome. This is a wonderful time of year to invite family and friends to celebrate Jesus' birthday.

CAROLS, CANDLES, AND COMMUNION

The 11:00 p.m. Celebration of Christ's Birth is a traditional celebration of Carols and Lessons. Come share the joy of the season!

VETERANS' DAY

The three-fold purpose of Veterans' Day. . .remembering those who fought and died, celebrating all veterans, and promoting an enduring peace.

World War I ended on November 11, 1918, with the signing of the Armistice by the Allies and Germany. In the first Armistice Day proclamation in 1919, President Woodrow Wilson called for the nation to remember those who had died in their country's service and to make the day an opportunity for America to "show her sympathy with peace and justice in the councils of the nation."

In 1927 Congress called for the display of the U.S. flag on government buildings, and in 1938 Congress called for the observance of Armistice Day in churches and schools - again dedicating the day to the cause of world peace.

Since the end of World War II, observances of Armistice Day have been held all over the nation, but especially in our national cemeteries and monuments and at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier in Washington D.C.

Armistice Day became Veterans' Day by an act of Congress in 1954, changing its purpose and scope. President Eisenhower called on the nation to remember the sacrifices of those who fought in all our nation's wars, to celebrate the contributions of all veterans of military service, and to rededicate ourselves to the task of promoting an enduring peace. It is Eisenhower's call that remains the three-fold purpose of Veterans' Day: remembering those who fought and died, celebrating all veterans, and promoting an enduring peace.

CROP WALK

Our church raised \$1330.00 for our 8 walkers. We may be small in number but give from our hearts to help others. Your walkers were Kyle Taylor, (Cyndi's grandson) Cyndi Donnelly, Cathy Horan, Shirley Mayer, Tina Wisniewski, Jelyn & Rich Cook, and Linda Watson. We can't thank you enough. 25% of this amount will stay right here in Allentown (\$332.50) and that is only our portion. Thanks be to God, what a wonderful day it was!

The unofficial count right now is \$3993.45 from all walkers. Some youth groups did a Coin Harvest and that needs to be calculated. As soon as I get the grand total I will let you know. Also, 31 boxes of cereal were donated for the food pantry.

Thanks again,
Linda

WHITE GIFT SUNDAY

November 24th

Christ the King Sunday is November 24th and Rev. Fran and the mission team agreed that would be a perfect Sunday to share our many blessings with others. The local Food Pantry would be in need of food to restock their shelves since the Thanksgiving Baskets would already have been distributed. What a way to celebrate Christ the King Sunday with the altar filled with non-perishable food wrapped in white paper. If you can't wrap them that is okay, the food is most important not the wrapping.

HANGING OF THE GREENS

We will be decorating the church for the Advent Season on Friday, November 29th. A chili and corn bread supper will be provided at 6:00 p.m. For those who can't come at that time, we hope to start decorating by 6:30 p.m. Or you may want to stop by earlier in the week and get out the decorations, help put the tree together and set it up, or get the pew candles in place. Many helping hands are needed to prepare for the Advent season.

UNITED METHODIST WOMEN

November 19th - **Pledge Service** at 7:30 p.m. in the Palmer Room.

December 8th - The UMW annual **Christmas Tea** will be on Sunday, December 8th after the worship service.

We invite everyone to stay and celebrate this beautiful Advent Season. Invite your family and friends to share in the worship service and time of fellowship.

LOAVES & FISHES

Loaves & Fishes will be on Saturday, December 28th. Packing of 400 lunches will be at 9:00 a.m. on Friday, December 27th and anyone who can spare an extra hour to help take the lunches and nonperishables up to St. Mary's after packing the lunches on the 27th. Signup sheets for serving on the 28th, or baking desserts, will be on the bulletin board. If you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact Linda.

NOVEMBER-DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS

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November

Nov. 2 - Thomas DeMartin, Edna Litz, Christiaan Simms
Nov. 11 - Rachael Carmichael
Nov. 12 - Donna Kamer
Nov. 14 - Walter Farmer
Nov. 17 - Robert Pepler
Nov. 21 - Chris Matwiow
Nov. 25 - Ron Rheaume
Nov. 28 - Mary Clark, Erika Rittenhouse
Nov. 30 - Ross Carmichael, Gary Kleinedler,
Deborah Smetanka

December

Dec. 1 - Phyllis Heller, Dominic Ligorì
Dec. 5 - Allison Bailey
Dec. 6 - Marjorie Carmichael
Dec. 8 - Jack Munn
Dec. 11 - Chase Durbin, Claire Marshall, Carol Ruthven
Dec. 12 - Antonietta DiDonato, Allison Ligorì
Dec. 13 - Michael Giardinelli
Dec. 17 - JoAnn Carmichael
Dec. 21 - Hank Pierre, David Ruthven,
Thomas Smetanka
Dec. 22 - Peter Marshall
Dec. 30 - Charles Cottrell, Taylor Korneluk

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