



Williamsville United Methodist Church  
5681 Main Street, Williamsville, NY 14221  
(716) 634-4800 www.williamsvilleumc.org

Williamsville United Methodist Church  
**The Methodist Messenger**

## From Your Pastor



Well, can you believe we are talking February? *Where does the time go? I don't feel I have recovered from Christmas and yet here we are.* Just since the holidays, things have changed; our lives are different in many ways. It can kind of make you feel a little woozy.

I know I crave a constant in my life. I like to have a little stability in an ever changing and unpredictable world. I believe that is where our faith can provide some help. It is nice to be able to depend on God. The rock we build our house on is God.

Right now, if you feel as if you are being swept away by a whirlwind, I think it is nice to know you can always grab on to God.

In the name of Jesus Christ,

*Rev. John Wetherwax*

## The Conference is Helping!

This is a good example of how our *shared ministries* giving works. Rev. Gail Lewis asked District Superintendent Natalie Hansen for some time off. After approval from Bishop Matthews and the cabinet, Gail was given four weeks leave. To cover this time, the conference is reimbursing Williamsville UMC and providing a substitute pastor.

Rev. Kathryn Bindig, a Presbyterian minister, will help out at the church for 20 hours a week for the four weeks Gail is gone. It is a way to cover all the bases as we support Gail in her need for some time away.

The discussions in class have



## Contemporary Issues

been great! February is going to be a study of some denominations we may know little about but are very intriguing. The class has moved to the second floor area behind the balcony. There is an elevator for those who need it and plenty of coffee and tea. Come and join us!



### Upcoming Topics:

- February 1 *Seventh Day Adventist*
- February 8 *Mormons*
- February 15 *Jehovah Witness*
- February 22 *Scientology*

## United Methodist Women

The Niagara Frontier District United Methodist Women are sponsoring the annual **Morning Apart on Saturday, February 7, 2009** at the North Tonawanda UMC, 65 Main Street, North Tonawanda, NY 14120. Registration begins at 9:30 AM and the program begins at 10:00 AM. The Keynote Speaker is Mr. Walter Simpson. He will be speaking on "Called to be Green" - What can we do to conserve energy and save the environment?

Now retired, Mr. Simpson was a University Energy Officer for 26 years and was Director of the University of Buffalo Green Office. He provided leadership for a nationally recognized campus energy conservation program. He is a former Director of the WNY Peace Center and remains active in the Buffalo community as an environmental speaker, writer, educator, and activist whose primary commitment is address-

ing the urgent problem of global climate change. If you need a ride or have any questions, please call Carol Forden.



## Youth Christian Education



**Mark 10:13-14** *People were bringing little children to Jesus to have him touch them, but the disciples rebuked them. When Jesus saw this he was indignant. He said to them, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these."*

A warm welcome to anyone interested in attending our **Christian Education Team meetings**. We are always looking for new faces and ideas so if you've ever thought about becoming more involved in this ministry, please join us! We meet the first Monday of every month. This month we'll meet Monday, February 2<sup>nd</sup> at 7:00 PM in the outer office. See you then!

### Journey to Bethlehem



We had over 100 people participate in our Journey to Bethlehem! Every week they wore their pedometers, kept track of their steps and brought their slips of paper in to mark their efforts on the charts. Every week we'd add up the steps, figure out the miles and move Mary and Joseph a little closer to Bethlehem. We figured it was 5,820 miles from here in Williamsville, New York all the

way across the Atlantic Ocean to Bethlehem. I am so proud to announce we walked a grand total of 6,716 miles! Mary and Joseph not only made it to Bethlehem they walked back and forth to Nazareth a few times! When we figured the miles we calculated it takes approximately 2,000 steps to equal 1 mile. That means collectively we walked over 13,432,000 steps! Congratula-

tions to all who participated! Special thanks go out to our high steppers...Jack Stevens at 386 miles and Kim Truesdell at 352 miles!!



### Reach Out in Love

**(Ages 3 – 4<sup>th</sup> grade)**

February 8<sup>th</sup> will be our **REACH OUT IN LOVE** Valentine celebration in Fillmore Hall for the children from 9:45 – 10:30 (in between the services). We call it "Reach Out in Love" since we make valentine projects for others as well as for ourselves. It is a wonderful way to celebrate our love for God and our love for each other! Parents are welcome



to join us too! Did you know Valentine's Day is actually the day St. Valentine was killed for telling people of God's love? Before he was killed, he was able to send out notes saying, "Remember your Valentine!", so this year on Valentine's Day when you remind people how much you love them, don't forget to remind them God loves them too!

## Parents Only



This year on Valentine’s Day consider creating “I love…” book-marks for each of your children. Cut a 2x8-inch strip of card stock, print your child’s name up at

the top (Be creative!). Then list five or six sentiments that describe your child, such as “I love it when you give me bear hugs!” or “I totally appreciate it when you help take out the garbage!” Be sure and

include one that has to do with their faith, such as “I love how you always pray for others!” Then, give the bookmark to you child on Valentine’s Day as a constant reminder of how much you love them!

## Respect: Living God’s Word

Children in grades kindergarten through 4<sup>th</sup> grade are currently learning about respect in the 9:45 – 10:30 session of Sunday School. They’re learning about not only respect for themselves, respect for their friends, respect for their family but also, respect for God. They’ve learned that



Jesus taught us to treat others the way we’d like to be treated. This rule is called the Golden Rule! Every week they brainstorm ways to show respect and are creating a “Rainbow of Respect”, so please stop down and see their awesome ideas on showing respect!

### Upcoming Dates:

**February 2<sup>nd</sup>** – Christian Education Team meeting  
7:00pm – All are welcome to attend!

**February 8<sup>th</sup>** – Reach Out in Love

**February 15<sup>th</sup>** – New Rotation begins for grades Kindergarten through 4<sup>th</sup>

**March 8<sup>th</sup>** – Lenten Fair for families of children



## VBS Dates

Believe it or not we are already planning Vacation Bible School! The dates for VBS this year are August 3<sup>rd</sup> through August 7<sup>th</sup>. We are heading for Camp E.D.G.E. this year! **What’s Camp E.D.G.E. stand for? Experience + Discover God Everywhere!** Get your camping gear ready for a trekking adventure!!

## The Caring Corner

It is a new year and the holidays are now behind us. But, we need to keep Christmas with us all through the year. We need to keep our minds and hearts open for Christ to shine in and through us.

Since it is the New Year there are some things we need to do. We need to look at our Health Care Proxy and Living Will and update it. It is important to review this instrument so that if there are any changes you need to make, you can do it now. Make sure you are comfortable with who you chose to be your agent, review your wishes with your Spokesperson, and make your changes then.

If you do not know what a Health Care Proxy or Living Will is let me explain:

The Health Care Proxy and Living Will is actually Advance Care Planning and is a process of planning for future medical care in case you are unable to make your own decisions. It is a continual process and not merely a document or isolated event.

Advance Care Planning assists you in preparing for a sudden unexpected illness from which you expect to recover as well as the dying process, and ultimately death.

Along with your Advance Planning you may want to incorporate your Five Wishes. The *Five Wishes* document helps you express how you want to be treated if you are seriously ill and unable to speak for yourself.



It is unique among all other living will and health agent forms because it looks to all of a person's needs: **medical, personal, emotional and spiritual.**

Your Advance Care Planning is a gift you can give to yourself and your family;

it helps to avoid confusion and conflict in a time of crisis. It provides increased control and peace of mind. You make decisions regarding your medical care while you are still able. It is the first step in assuring your wishes will be honored. You will receive artificial nutrition and/or hydration if you do not document on the Health Care Proxy form that

you have had a conversation with your Spokesperson about it. If there is no Health Care Proxy form or clear and convincing evidence of your wishes decisions about your care may be made by the New York State government.

Another way to help your family is through an Ethical Will. This is a great way to pass on your values as well as your life story to your children. This is a non-legal document that typically imparts beliefs, lessons learned in life, hopes and wishes for loved ones. Did you know that ethical wills are not new? The tradition of passing on beliefs, blessings and advice to the next generation can be traced to biblical times. The earliest ethical wills were delivered by fathers

*(Continued on page 6)*

## From the Worship Team—Opportunities for Service Available



seeking to bestow WUMC is seeking volunteers for the following positions:

### **COORDINATOR FOR THE ALTAR GUILD:**

This person will schedule altar guild members to

prepare the altar with the appropriate paraments and flowers for the weekly services.

### **COORDINATOR FOR GREETERS:**

This person or persons will establish a list of people who will serve as greeters at the Main St. entrance and the Oakgrove entrance for both services every Sunday of the church year.

### **HEAD USHER/S FOR THE 9:00 SERVICE:**

The Head Usher or Usher Team will create a list of people who would like to usher at the 9:00 service and set up an ushering schedule. Information about the duties of ushers will be provided by the Worship Team.

### **COMMUNION SERVER COORDINATOR:**

Anyone who would like to help with serving communion during the Sunday services should sign-up on the Narthex bulletin board. The CS Coordinator let you know when you will be serving.

All of these opportunities for service are important contributions to the quality of worship at our Church. For more information regarding the positions available,

contact Cheryl Thomas, Worship Team Lay Leader at church during regular business hours, or by email at, ct20072@verizon.net Thank you.

*Submitted by Cheryl Thomas*



*(Caring Corner, Continued from page 5)*

blessings and other prophecies, as well as to leave burial instructions. In what may be the first such bequest, in the book of Genesis, Jacob gathers his 12 sons before his death to tell stories, predict their futures, and impart some wisdom of his long life. I encourage you to start a journal for your family, about who you are and stories about your life, their lives and it is a way for your family to know who you really are.

Wishing all of you a blessed and healthy New Year,

*Barbara Saltarella &  
The Visitation and Member Care Team*

## Fundraiser



Have you ever thought you might someday meet a First Lady? It's possible, you know. In honor of President's Weekend, Williamsville United



Methodist Church will be hosting a lovely event on **Sunday, February 22<sup>nd</sup>**.



Denise Reichard, church member and locally known performance artist, will be presenting the first person depictions of two famous First Ladies.



Come and meet two remarkable women of history through Denise's unique presentation in period costume and character interpretation.



**Dolley Madison** was well known as the southern "hostess with the



mostest". She was a natural with people and lived her presidential years with husband, James, during the times surrounding the War of 1812. Her story is educational and entertaining and reveals aspects of life of not only the younger **Dolley**, but the more mature lady as well.

**Eleanor Roosevelt** has more contemporary ties to American history. She was known for bringing her love for people and her quest for justice together throughout her life's work. Admired by many, "Eleanor Everywhere" was well traveled and well loved as she was a companion and true help-mate to husband,

Franklin. Her story unfolds to include childhood memories and life-long lessons for all.

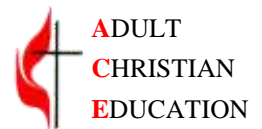
The performance will begin at 3:30 PM. There will be a brief intermission between presentations when beverages and cookies will be available. A time for questions and answers will follow the second presentation. Admission will be \$10 per person or \$30 per family. Proceeds from this event will benefit the mission work of WUMC.

*Submitted by Dave and Denise Reichard*

## ACE—Offering Two Study Groups

**The Disciple Course, "INVITATION TO ROMANS"**, a five week course, will begin on January 25th. The class will meet from 1 – 3 PM in the church parlor. On Jan. 18th the group met to preview the course and receive their participant's book. If you would like to participate in this study please contact Cheryl Thomas or Barbara Manhardt.

**COMPANIONS IN CHRIST**, a small group experience in spiritual formation will begin on Monday Jan. 26th. The meetings will begin at 7 PM and meet in the library. **COMPANIONS . . .** is a 28 week study which will be presented in 5 and 6 week segments. Come and join us on this journey and enrich your spiritual life and your connection with God. Contact Cheryl Thomas for information or to join the group.





## Post-Christian Spirituality

*Weavings, a Journal of the Christian Spiritual Life*, an Upper Room publication, the January / February 2009 edition, is entitled, "In the Watches of the Night." The articles included in this issue of the journal are: "Toward a Post-Christian Spirituality" by W. Paul Jones, "Dark Night: Being Re-Patterned by God" by Sandra Cronk, "A Hard Time We Had Of It" by Elizabeth Canham, "Shining" by J. Barie Shepherd, "The Brightness Of Rising: Reflections on an Epiphany Funeral," by Gerrit Scott Dawson, "Rootwork," by Gale Boss, and "Watches In The Night; A Weavings Liturgy," by Rueben P Job.

W. Paul Jones, in his article titled, "Toward a Post-Christian Spirituality," asserts that religion, as our parents knew it, has and is declining in this post-modern world. Benchmark events, such as Hiroshima, the Holocaust, Vietnam, 911, and Iraq, in conjunction with the shrinking of the world with the development of high-tech communication, has created a world in which the American dream, "entails immersion in a lifestyle of individualism, consumerism, and competition, with advertising turning every want into a need". Traditional religion is becoming as-

simulated into this new and radically different culture from the one our parents knew. Some churches have turned to featuring a gospel of prosperity. The once called "mainline" churches are in what Jones calls, "survival mode, alarmed by an aging membership and a decline in vocations, forcing leadership into the posture of CEOs generating marketing plans to reverse decline in clients and receipts." The sacred is being lost in the secular, and in Europe atheism is common and also on the rise in the U.S. We live in a post-Christian era. "for an ethos once conducive to Christian belief has been surreptitiously replaced by a secular worldview that permeates every part of how we live." In light of the present realities a post-Christian spirituality becomes essential. However, the basis upon which it will be built will need to be radically counter-cultural.

Jones examines the life and work of Mother Teresa as the model for the development of a Post-Christian spirituality. Shortly after she began her ministry she experienced, as her own writings express, a "terrible sense of loss," "terrible loneliness," "abandonment." This left her soul "a blank in which there is no God." Even with suffering this deep internal pain she was unable to shake her intense "longing for

God," no matter how unfulfilled. Jones continues: "This agony began drawing her closer to Jesus, who himself experienced similar abandonment by the Father in the agony of his passion. Mother Teresa and Jesus shared an intense thirst for union with the Father. Their experience of separation was like "the tortures of Hell," reaching a crescendo in Jesus' derelict scream against apparent cosmic emptiness." Jones asserts that, "What she discovered for us was that such abandonment is not the absence of spirituality but a central element in a Christian spirituality within a post-Christian world. This spirituality takes upon itself the depth of alienation implicit in a modern world intent on "living so far from God."

At the same time a post-Christian spirituality embraces the craving for love endemic in both poor and affluent as an unrecognized hunger for the unanswering God. The lonely doubting that had long plagued her was now a mutual doubting in which Jesus cried out for both of them:

*Submitted by Cheryl Thomas*

## Stewardship: Call to Financial Renewal

By Sean K. Mitchell

*Create in me a pure heart,  
O God, and renew a steadfast spirit  
within me. - Psalm 51:10*

One night when my wife and I could not sleep, we started chatting about everything in our lives - from marriage, to jobs, and even finances. At some point, I mentioned that Jesus' parable about the sower had been the subject of my personal devotions for the last few days. This is the parable where Jesus compares us to soil and the seed to the Word of God. In this parable, some seeds fall by the wayside, some on rocks, some among thorns, and some on good soil.

I told my wife that I felt like God was challenging me with this parable. In some ways, I felt like I was the soil covered with thorns. I reminded her that the seed sown among thorns could not grow or bear fruit. According to the Divine Storyteller, the thorns are a metaphor that represents the cares of the world and the deceitfulness of riches.

This parable caused us to talk late into the night about how we manage our finances. We adhere to a budget. We spend, we save, and we give. However, we began to question if our financial planning and approach to stewardship was missing something. Before drifting off to sleep, we decided to take a new course of action. We would continue our financial planning, but with a fresh approach. We wanted our discipleship, prayers, thoughts, behaviors and finances to become one with the heart of God.

We decided that our focus should be to follow Jesus' lead - through both financial discipline and spontaneity - rather than to build a stewardship plan. We did not want to be like the rich young ruler who could not obey Jesus' challenge to give his possessions to the poor



and then follow Him. In the case of the rich young ruler, the thorns won out since he cared more about money, feeling secure, and his own comforts, than trusting Jesus.

We found that our pursuit of financial wisdom and security has everything to do with our Christian calling in this world. That calling is to prayerfully listen for the leadership of Jesus in our lives, follow that leadership, and further the kingdom of God along the way.

As we try to follow God's lead in a new and spontaneous way regarding our financial stewardship, we are finding it easier to shed the fear of trusting God in these matters. The following steps have helped us bridge the gap between financial planning and following Jesus lead:

**Pray.** Prayer not only changes things, it changes us. A great deal of our transformation happens through the grace of prayer.

**Be Vulnerable.** Seek out a spouse, friend, mentor, family member, church class, etc., where you can discuss thoughts and ideas about financial renewal with others.

**Read and meditate on Scriptures.** The stories and wisdom of the Bible help us understand God's heart and the path He wants us to follow.

**Pray again!**

We pray these steps are helpful as you consider God's call to financial renewal.

<sup>1</sup> Adapted from article on Heartlight, ©2006 Sean K. Mitchell, "Hearing God's Call to Financial Renewal," posted June 1, 2006, [http://www.heartlight.org/articles/200606/20060601\\_financialrenewal.html](http://www.heartlight.org/articles/200606/20060601_financialrenewal.html).

*Submitted by Sondra Scott*

## Lupandilo Nursing School— Our Winter Quarter Missions and Outreach Focus



To better utilize the resources of the congregation and the Missions and Outreach team in 2009, we are launching a new quarterly "**Missions Focus**" event. With the concurrence of the Finance Committee, the Missions and Outreach team is requesting support for our winter quarter event which involves the sponsorship of scholarships to the Lupandilo ("Salvation") Nursing School in Katanga Province, Republic of the Congo.

We have been asked by the Niagara Frontier District/Bishop Natalie Hansen to participate in one "out of our immediate area" missions program, to support the connectional nature of our church. Our conference has developed a special relationship with the North Katanga Annual Conference where many needs and programs have been identified for our additional help. The Lupandilo Nursing School will provide trained medical care providers to a community sorely in need of them.

We have especially identified scholarships for

women as the focus of our donations, as families in this area traditionally give priority to the education of men, not women. For \$150 we can provide a year-long scholarship for a woman to attend this school. Throughout the month of February we will provide information about this program and will ask for your financial support of these scholarships (as many as possible!!) through a special collection taken on February 22nd (contributions can be made at any time and identified as being for the "Quarterly Missions Focus" program).

During each following quarter, we will select a specific missions area for special attention as part of the outreach program for 2009. If you have any suggestions for areas in which you are interested - or in which you currently participate - please contact Kevin Lyttle or any member of the Missions/Outreach team.

*Submitted by Kevin Lyttle*

## We Really Made a Difference in Our Community!

As a result of the programs we supported as a congregation for the Christmas holidays, we were able to really make a difference in the lives of people in our community. Here's what we accomplished:

- 60 "Gateway Angel" requests were fulfilled
- 30 Christmas dinner bags were filled to overflowing and each was accompanied by a \$25 Tops gift card - delivered to families in the Seneca St. Church Community
- 20 \$15 Target gift cards (plus some additional donations) and 35 \$5 McDonalds certificates were donated to the Seneca St. Church Youth Party - along with trays of cookies and the help and participation of our Youth Group and their advisors 5 families (some with four children) identified by the counseling center where Pastor John works, experienced a real Christmas with individual and family gifts and other assorted goodies

We shared our love and blessings with the community this past Christmas and have shown what we can do when we all work together. The Missions Team thanks you for your support and we'll look forward to what we can accomplish in the future.

*Submitted by Kevin Lyttle*



## Book Club's Spring Schedule

As we look forward to warmer weather and easier travel, the members of the WUMC Book Club invite you to join us in interesting discussions.

**February 20**, 7:30 PM, at the home of Sally and Bud Jost: *The Zoo-keeper's Wife*, a non-fiction selection. Written by naturalist Diane Ackerman, the book highlights a real event during the Warsaw Holocaust when over 300 people were hidden from the Nazis in the zoo by Christian zookeepers. This is a story of human evil and human empathy.

**March 20**, 7:30 pm, at the home of Midge and Vaughn Hackworth: *I Capture the Castle*, by Dodie Smith. Published fifty years ago, this novel has been re-released. This is a story about an English family who live in a castle in genteel poverty. The main character "captures the castle" in her chronicles of life inside the castle and the family.

**April** (no date yet) at the home of Barbara Whitney: *Three Cups of Tea* by Greg Mortenson and David Oliver Relin. NOTE: this book was originally scheduled for a different month. Mortenson, who was the keynote speaker at a recent UN Conference, failed in his attempt to reach the peak of K2, and, disoriented in the mountains, ended up in a remote, poor Pakistani village where he was nursed back to health. His observations of the village conditions, especially those concerning children, led him to build schools there and in similar villages in Afghanistan. This is an uplifting story of one man's hope of promoting peace in an area where Americans are feared and hated.

**May** (no date yet) at the home of Karen and Jon Patterson: *The Memory Keeper's Daughter* by Kim Edwards. This novel addresses the issue of handicapped children and their acceptance within our families and society. The story relates the lives of twins, separated at birth, and their finding each other as teens.

To all our readers: each of these books has at least 30 copies in the library system.

*Submitted by Ann Killian*



WUMC  
BOOK  
CLUB



Please submit your articles, news, announcements, etc. for inclusion in the next Messenger to Kelly Beckwith via email at [kelly.beckwith@gmail.com](mailto:kelly.beckwith@gmail.com).

Thank you!

### Our Staff and Lay Leaders Are Here to Help You

Lead Pastor: John Wetherwax

Associate Pastor: Gail Lewis

Associate Pastor: Daryl Bennett

Directors of Music: Judith Stafford and Wendy Amuso

Director of Christian Education: Judith Toone

Pastoral Assistant for Visitation: Barbara Salterella

Church Administration: Denise Barham

Financial Secretary: Debbie Parise

Custodian: Cheryl Thomas

Sunday Nursery Care: Kathleen Ciccone,

Amanda Dickerman, Shannon Casterline

Coordinating Lay Leader: Dave Reichard

Communication Ministry: Sondra Scott

Member Care Ministry: Barbara Saltarella

Outreach & Missions Ministry: Kevin Lyttle

Relational Ministries: Donna Seiler

Worship Ministries: Cheryl Thomas

Staff/Pastor Parish Relations Chair: Jack Killian

Trustee Chair: Ed Howard

Stewardship & Finance Chair: Rosemary Elliott

Treasurer: Dave Reichard

Newsletter Editors: Kelly Beckwith and Rachel Zeller