



Loved by God, Led by Grace

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

WILLIAMSVILLE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
The Methodist Messenger

What's Your Lenten Sacrifice?

By Rachel Zeller

Though sacrifice is not required by the United Methodist faith, Lent is an opportunity to think, regroup, and even reprioritize. Many people find that giving something up for Lent is a way to show our love for Christ, and to demonstrate our faith. Though we are in the midst of the Lenten season, here are some sacrifices to ponder:



Is there something you thought you could never live without, such as chocolate, gossiping, smoking, walking places instead of driving? (Personally, I gave up cheese...)

What about sacrificing pride? Extend the hand of forgiveness, or say "I'm sorry" to those who really need to hear it from you, especially when it seems like the most difficult thing in the world to do.

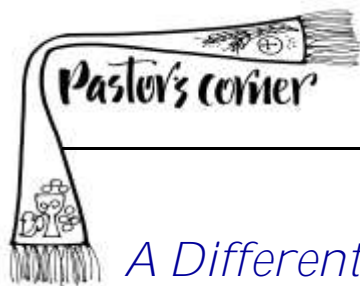
Perhaps time? A renewed focus on Bible meditation, a 40-day commitment to volunteerism or listening to your "Faith Comes By Hearing" CD.



Whatever you are doing, Lent is a wonderful gift to us. It is a time to reflect on what Jesus did for us by suffering for our sins on the cross; a time to think about God's gifts of resurrection and redemption.

May your Lenten sacrifice help reinforce your connection to God, and bring you closer to your faith!





A Different Kind of Lent

Over the past several weeks, our worship experiences have centered around “The Final Pulpit” - that is the Cross of Jesus Christ, and the last words He spoke to humanity before He died. It’s different than we have been used to doing. For much of our life we have gone through Lent as a sort of preparation for the Resurrection of Christ without recognizing what Jesus had to go through to get there for us. This time, we have ignored the days that led up to the Crucifixion, and instead focused on the last will and testament of Jesus given to us at the Crucifixion.

There are some of us who have been uncomfortable. There are others who have turned their attention aside. Still others have steeled themselves so as not to be too moved. And then there are some who have taken Christ’s words to heart, and recognized themselves in the stories from the Cross. For that last group, Lent has been a heavy time, a gray time, an inexplicable, slow process of recognizing their own mortality and pain.

I wonder as I sit here 2000 years after the crucifixion, if Jesus had that same feeling looking toward the Cross, knowing what was going to happen, and still turning his face toward Jerusalem.

Was He as afraid to die as we are? Did He fear the pain that would come before death? Did He know what would happen afterward, and if He did, was He still scared anyhow?



Somehow I believe that Jesus was never more human, more confined by his humanity, than at his Crucifixion. And yet He never renounced his commitment to God or to us.

It’s been a different kind of Lent because we’ve had a ringside seat this year, and are witnesses to that commitment. We haven’t jumped from Palm Sunday to Easter. We have walked the journey to the Cross and stood there with the faithful few to hang on Jesus’ every word. And it has made a difference.

It has been a different kind of Lent this year. And so it will be a different kind of Easter as well!

Blessings,
Pastor Gail

The Final Pulpit Sermon Series Continues Through Lent

The ongoing sermon series, “The Final Pulpit,” continues as part of the 9:00 AM and 11:00 AM services during the last weeks of Lent. For those who like to read the scripture ahead of time, below is the schedule of sermons, along with the corresponding reference:

March 25 – Luke 23:44-49, “Unconditional Trust”

April 1 (Palm Sunday) – John 19:29-30, “Said and Done”

April 8 (Easter Sunday) – The “Unnatural Truth”

Faith Comes By Hearing

And, don’t forget to keep listening to your audio bible for the

Lenten Challenge! If you’ve been doing this, we’d love for you to tell your thoughts and experiences with the Messenger. Please email rzeller143@aol.com if you have anything you’d like to share. If you haven’t had a chance yet, remember, it’s never too late to begin! For those who have not yet received their audio bible, more are available in the church office. A children’s version is also available for the kids, so be sure to take advantage of this great opportunity!



April 1

PALM / PASSION SUNDAY

Contemporary worship at 9 AM
Traditional worship with
communion at 11 AM

April 5

HOLY THURSDAY

The Milk and Honey Cooking School at 6 PM, concluding
with Holy Communion, see Soup Supper article below.

April 6

GOOD FRIDAY

Prayers for the community noon to 2
PM. We will assemble at church and

then go out into the community to silently pray for those
in the marketplace then return for a Service of Darkness
at 2 PM. The Sanctuary will be open for those who wish
to stay and pray or you may join us in prayer from your
home or workplace.



April 8 Easter Sunday

CELEBRATION OF THE RESURRECTION

Identical services with communion at 9 & 11 AM. All are welcome to join in celebration!

*Lenten Soup Suppers
Continue Through March*

By Peter Powers

Plan on dining out each Wednesday night through the month of March and
into early April. Join us for a simple soup supper and a Lenten program.
Dinner is at 5:30 with the evening's program to follow. A free will offering
will usually be taken.

Look for the sign up sheet in the narthex each week. Or call by Monday
morning each week. If not, you will miss out on great food, great compan-
ionship and fabulous Lenten programming.

March 28

Don Tomasulo will tell wonderful stories while leading us in origami.
Sponsored by the Trustees.

MAUNDY THURSDAY, April 5

The final event in our special programs hops from Wednesday to Thursday
night when we will have a special cooking and cultural experience called
The Milk and Honey Cooking School. Based on stories in the Bible and
sponsored by the Education Team, this promises to be a great production
which will conclude with holy communion. Reservations required!

LENT IS FOR KIDS, TOO!

*March 25 is our Lenten Fair for all children and
their families. Please join us downstairs in between
services in Fillmore Hall for lots of exciting Lenten
and Easter activities! Does anybody remember the
jellybean prayer? Who knows how to make a cross
out of palm branches? We have all new items for
our Resurrection Eggs plus there'll be lots of new fun surprises for everyone!*



April 1 (Palm Sunday)

8:15 a.m. -1:00 p.m.

Sponsored by Senior High Youth Group
Proceeds to support Youth 2007 Trip

Small \$5

2 pancakes, fruit,
choice of bacon or sausage

Large \$7

4 pancakes, fruit,
choice of bacon or sausage

**Tickets can be purchased Sunday
March 25 or at the breakfast **

**Palm Sunday
Pancake Breakfast**

There will be a
Pancake Flipping Contest at 10:00.
You can participate in the contest or sponsor a
participant!

Come cheer on the contestants
and see who will be crowned the
Pancake Flipping Champion of WUMC!

Help Build an Ark...Right in Our Narthex!

Our deepest thanks to Dr. Roger Ellis who joined us March 11 to help kick off our Heifer campaign to build an ark. Not only does Roger have over 20 years of experience working with Heifer International, but he also has a personal connection with us. His wife, Claudia happens to be the sister of our own Bev Heinen. Now, for those of you who don't know Bev and her talents, she happens to be the creative one who made our ark display in the back of the church.

The problem with the ark is that we need to purchase two of every animal so Noah can fill up his ark. In the Narthex every week we'll be selling stickers for \$1. You can then choose whatever animal you'd like to help purchase by putting the sticker on the bulletin board display. Some animals only need 20 stickers, but some need 500 stickers! You decide where you'd like your sticker to go! These animals can also be purchased up front. For instance if you and your family, your ministry team or even your workplace wanted to purchase an animal, a check could be written out separately to Williamsville UMC for that particular dollar amount. That animal would then be placed on the ark with your name written on it. Animals can be purchased in memory of or in honor of loved ones. What a great way to remember a loved one by

helping another family! So join us in the Narthex after the service and help us build an ark!

For those who missed hearing Dr. Ellis, Heifer International is an organization whose mission is to work with communities to end hunger and poverty and to care for the earth by promoting a world of communities living together in peace and equitably sharing the resources of a healthy planet. This simple idea of giving families a source of food rather than short-term relief caught on and has continued for over 60 years. Today, millions of families in 128 countries have been given the gifts of self-reliance and hope. Heifer not only gives families livestock, they require participants to "pass on the gift." As people share their animals' offspring with others – along with their knowledge, resources, and skills – an expanding network of hope, dignity, and self-reliance is created that reaches around the globe. For more information about this organization, visit www.heifer.org, or write Heifer Project International, 1 World Avenue, Little Rock, AR 72202, or call, (800) 422-0474. A station for donations can be found in the church parlor.



Youth News You Can Use

KID'S MOVIE NIGHT III – THIS TIME IT'S (NOT TOO) SERIOUS

Please join us Friday, April 27 at 6:30 for our third family movie night. Feel free to come in your p.j.'s (that means parents too!) Don't forget to bring your blankets, pillows, your favorite stuffed friend and of course your parents! Snacks will be provided (movies just aren't the same without them!). Please RSVP at 634-4800 and leave a message for Judy Toone by Wednesday, April 25 so we know how many are coming. See you at the movies!!



ELECTRIC GRIDDLES & SKILLET'S NEEDED

The Senior High Youth Group would like to borrow your electric skillet for use during the pancake breakfast on April 1. If you have one that we can borrow to prepare our great breakfast, please drop it off at church and be sure your name is on it so that we can make sure you get it back. Thanks for your help!

SENIOR HIGH YOUTH GROUP HAPPENINGS

March 25 Youth Band 5:30, Regular Meeting 6:30

April 1 Pancake Breakfast

April 8 No Meeting, Happy Easter

April 14-15 Midnight Bowling and Lock-in, Details soon to follow!

April 22 Youth Band 5:30, Regular Meeting 6:30

April 27-29 4Word '07 in Syracuse. We will need to know if you are going and your money in by the pancake breakfast so we can get rooms. We want to make sure everyone has a bed and that no one has to sleep on the floor this time!

July 11-15 Youth 2007 in Greensboro, North Carolina. Anyone interested in going who hasn't turned their deposits in needs to talk to Judy Toone ASAP since registrations and deposits are being sent in soon!

PLAN ON A PIZZA NIGHT

Pizza Hut invites you support WUMC by having dinner at the Eastern Hills Mall Pizza Hut on April 23 anytime between 4 and 6 PM. A flyer with coupons has been included with this newsletter. Save yours because you'll have to present the coupon to Pizza Hut to have them donate 20% of your purchase to WUMC. There's also a coupon you can give to a friend. What an easy way to support our youth.

WUMC SENIOR HIGH YOUTH ACCOMPLISHING GREAT THINGS!

Three of our senior high youth were inducted into National Honor Society this month. Congratulations to Christine Robertson, Jessica Gordon and Michelle Wolf!

Also, congratulations to Katie Ostroy, who was recently featured in the Amherst Bee for scoring over 1,000 points in her high school basketball career at Williamsville South. This is only the second time this milestone has been reached; the first being in 1987. A copy of the full article is posted in the Narthex for anyone who hasn't had a chance to read it yet.

BARBARA BRUCE PUBLISHES TRIANGULAR TEACHINGS

Many WUMC members who have been around since before the early 90's will likely remember our former Christian Education Director, Barbara Bruce.

Since her departure, Barbara has spent much of her time writing books, developing teaching methods and applying them to bible studies. Her newest book, *Triangular Teachings*, has recently been released through Cokesbury. *Triangular Teachings* integrates three intriguing areas of brain power including multiple intelligences, brain research and creative thinking; disciplines which Barbara has applied to teaching Adult Bible Study as well. She will be working with churches, districts and conferences to facilitate church teachers in *Triangular Teaching* methods.

Barbara has also been working in her current conference with her book, *Mental Aerobics – 75 Ways to Keep Your Brain Fit*, which she has applied to older adult ministry, and will be teaching on this topic at the Chautauqua Institution this summer.

For more information about Barbara's work, you can visit her new website at www.bbruce.com.

4Word '07 –

Together Youth Lead the Way!

What? The third Annual event for the youth in Grades 7-12 of North Central NY, Troy, Western NY, and Wyoming Conferences! Bring your youth group to praise God and form new friendships!

Where? Holiday Inn, Liverpool, NY (Syracuse)

When? April 27-29, 2007

Speakers: Bishop Violet Fisher, Bishop Susan Hassinger and Youth...(like Lydia Parsons) from each Conference

Workshops: Everything from faith issues to fun times. Youth Service Fund, Bible Trivia, Volleyball, New Games, Prayer Labyrinth, Mission of Peace, Basketball, Adult Leader Workshops, and Open Mic!

Registration fee: \$95 per person. This includes housing and program. Cost is based on 4-5 persons per room. For singles, add \$60; for doubles, add \$30 per person.

Registration: Online with Creative Convention Consultants!

Conference website: www.wnymc.org – click on the link for 4 Word 07 registration, or go directly to www.mycreativeevents.com and click on the link to 4 Word 07!

Questions? Call or email Ted at: 716 357-4045
hurlbut@madbbs.com

SEE YOU THERE!

SPLAT—

Seek, Pray, Learn, Act, Teach

Youth 2007 announces this year's Youth Conference will take place in Greensboro, NC, July 11-15.

This event is sure to be filled with praise and fun. There will be five stations for groups or individuals to participate in under the Seek, Pray, Learn, Act and Teach themes. There will be a total of 50 high-quality, interactive workshops and nationally renowned guest speakers each day. A house band will help lead worship in plenary sessions, worship services and bible studies as well as guest bands and a huge Friday night concert.

Registration is available online at www.Youth2007.org, or you may contact the Youth 2007 Event Office, care of The General Board of Discipleship at PO Box 340003, Nashville, TN 37203, or via email at Youth07@gbod.org, or toll free at 1-877-899-2780 ext. 7190.



As is our tradition, the Lily Cross will be hung in the chancel for our Easter worship services. In addition to donating towards the cost of the lilies, you can also make a donation towards Church World Service's Tools of Hope and Blankets Program which supplies blankets, tents, bedding, and other emergency supplies to people in the wake of natural disasters.

To donate towards lilies or blankets and make a dedication, complete this form, return it to WUMC, 5681 Main Street, Williamsville NY 14221 along with your payment.

Anyone who has made a contribution towards the lily cross or a donated blankets may take a lily home after the 11:00 Easter service.

Easter Lily / Blanket Dedication Form

Your name: _____

I would like to donate _____ lily plant(s) for the Lily Cross. (Lilies cost \$7 each.)

I would like to donate _____ blanket(s) to Church World Service. (Each blanket costs \$5.)

I have enclosed \$_____ for this purpose. (Please make checks payable to WUMC.)

Yes, I plan on taking a lily home.

No, I will not be taking a lily. Please have the Altar Guild distribute it at their discretion.

I would like the following dedication in the Easter bulletin:

FROM: _____

Examples of previous dedications are: In loving memory of Grandfather William Anderson from the Smith Family, in honor of our children from Lisa & Ron Breakman, or a gift from the Porter Family.

Remembering Barbara Swansfeger

By Rachel Zeller

It's not every day that you run into someone like Barbara Swansfeger. Formidable, outspoken, and above all, kind-hearted, Barb was as much a part of WUMC as the walls and pews are.

Barb was never afraid to jump in and get the job done – whatever that meant at that moment – and to those who saw her in action, her energy seemed tireless. She spent many years lending a helping hand at church luncheons, was very involved with church bazaars and yard sales in the 70's and 80's, and was an enthusiastic member of the choir for decades.

Judy Stafford, choir director and longtime friend, tells of how Barb was always ready to pitch in where help was needed. At one point, when our church had no custodian for a time, Barb put on her rubber gloves, grabbed a bucket and went to work. "She was always doing things like that," says Judy.

Another story Judy shared begins when Barb and her beloved husband, Frank, made the difficult decision to move from their home to the Asbury Pointe retirement community. Before a small get-together with other church friends at Judy's home, Barb asked Judy how many people were expected. Judy told her there would be about ten people coming. When Barb arrived, she brought with her some gift-wrapped items and offered them to the other guests. It turned out that each gift was a special item from her home that she knew she would not be able to use in their new place.

Bob Hayman, who with his wife Irene runs the Prayer Chain, recalls serving on the Council of Ministries with Barb and Frank. The Swansfegers' would host backyard breakfast meetings at their home, in lieu of a traditional "sit-down" meeting. "We got a lot accomplished during those meetings," says Bob. He recalls Frank firing up the grill to make eggs and other breakfast treats and Barb pouring the coffee as they held their discussions. "It was good fellowship, too – very relaxed."

For those who remember the days when there would be a real ceiling-high Christmas tree adorning the sanctuary, Bob also spoke of one year when Barb and Frank donated their own tree.

"It had been on their property, near the driveway, and they donated it to the church." Barb and Frank busily participated in the Christmas Decorating Party for many years.



Barb and Frank came to WUMC in 1964. Some of Barb's other church activities included the Rachael Circle, the Prayer Chain, and the Women's Society. Additionally, she was a member of the Bread Run (where she would go to local grocery stores and pick up day-old bread for the soup kitchen), the Forty Fellowship, and was a founding member of the Elderteens. Though Barb worked tirelessly behind the scenes at countless events and activities in the church over her lifetime, she was never looking for credit. Just knowing that things got done, and were done right, was enough to satisfy her. Nonetheless, this commitment to WUMC earned her and Frank the distinction of being honored at the Buffalo UM District's First Laity Banquet in 1998, where they were chosen by the church to receive a Certificate of Appreciation for all they had done.

As most who knew her are now aware, Barb passed away on February 8 at the age of 87. She leaves behind Frank, as well as her son Ed and his wife Carol, her daughter BJ, her two granddaughters Carrie and Cathy, her great-grandson Nathan, and a host of friends who love her and will miss her dearly, not the least of which are here at WUMC. A memorial service to honor her life was held on Saturday, March 17 at the church.



The Caring Corner

This Lenten season I have done a lot of reflecting. Whether it is because I reached the age of 60 or God is trying to talk to me and I'm not hearing what he has to tell me, I feel as if it is time to broaden my journey. But in order to broaden my journey, I want to take along some of you who are also interested in broadening your own faith journeys.

In May, there will be an opportunity for those who are interested in joining a group study called "Christian Caregiving: A Way of Life." As the forward of the book states, "You are in for a real serendipity (one surprise after another). Well, I love surprises and I hope that you do too. So, stay tuned for the date and time.

I had the opportunity to attend a workshop over at Beechwood a few weeks ago and it was really

educational. I got to visit with health care vendors, and came away with resources and ideas for our caring ministry.

In the fall of 2007 we will be offering a group study called "Living Fully, Dying Well" by Rueben Job. Along with this group study we will be bringing in speakers that will help each and every one of us deal with this topic of study. Again I say, stay tuned for time and date.

The visitation committee will be working hard to try and bring more information about health and wellness to you. There is so much out there for us to learn and do and we are just the team to keep abreast of what is happening.

Shalom,

Barbara Saltarella and the Visitation and Nurture Team

HEALTH ALERT

Patients who are taking any kinds of medications regularly should be diligent in following up on blood draws and doctors visits. These routine assessments are a simple way to determine a medication's effectiveness. For example, some "statins," medication used to help control cholesterol, can harm the muscles in some patients, including their heart. A blood test could indicate if this is an issue.

With a wide array of prescriptions and over-the-counter treatments available to combat so many different things, it is important for everyone to educate themselves about what they are taking, what side effects may occur, and how they may interact with other medications. Testing and conversations with your doctor can help find "hidden" issues, so proper adjustments can be made. Sometimes patients may be able to switch to another conventional medication; in other cases, many have success with alternative and herbal remedies. As the primary caregiver to your own body, knowing what's available and following up with your doctor are the best things you can do for yourself!

Love Letter

Editor's note: I received this in my email from former WUMC pastor, F. Ray Hazlett, a few days after last month's Messenger went out. It was such a nice testament to the folks here, I thought it should be shared! -rjlz

Hello Rachel!

Your introduction as the new Editor of the *Methodist Messenger* rekindled a host of past events, stories, and personalities in and around the Williamsville United Methodist Church. Indeed you became part of a "long line of splendor." - Best to you as you bring your gifts, energies and excitement to this ministry!

My introduction to *The Messenger* was in the summer of 1980. July 1 of that year was the start of a new appointment for me and I wanted to use *The Messenger* to introduce myself to the church family and share my greetings. That would take a special edition of *The Messenger* in as much as the preparation and mailing team traditionally did not function during the summer. I went ahead with a condensed summer version knowing that a substitute mailing team would need to be recruited. Then rumors of discontent surfaced... At first I thought it was in objection to the summer edition. What I discovered was that the mailing team, with significant longevity and valued relationships formed around their monthly work sessions, were mourning the loss of their fellowship of service. What a delight to find folk who delighted in a fellowship of service!

Kindly communicate my greetings to the church family.... Let them know how fondly I hold them in my thoughts and prayers and am so thankful and appreciative for the multiple ways they have and continue to support me in my personal journey.

Grace, peace and love
Ray H

This and That at Your Church

DO YOU GOODSEARCH?

Do you know that you can donate money to charities without ever having to write a check or open your wallet?

That's right! Without ever shelling out so much as a penny or even leaving your chair, you can help contribute to a plethora of causes, many of which are associated with Williamsville UMC.

The next time you need to do a search on the Internet, try using www.goodsearch.com. Powered by Yahoo!, GoodSearch contributes one cent to your favorite listed charity or school each time you do a search. Some of organizations that are available to contribute to include UMCOR, Habitat for Humanity, Heifer International, Narcotics Anonymous, the International Cesarean Awareness Network; and there are many others as well. Just put in the name of your favorite organization under "Who do you GoodSearch for", click on "Verify" to see if they are included, and search away!

BOOK CLUB ANNOUNCES SPRING SCHEDULE

The WUMC Book Club has announced its schedule and books for spring. Meetings start at 7:30 PM and the schedule is:

March 30 – The Glass Castle by Jeannette Walls. Meeting will be at the home of Holly and Phil Reynolds, 61 Old Orchard Drive, Williamsville

April – NO MEETING

May 18 – Home to Harmony by Philip Gulley. Location to be announced in a future newsletter.

Questions? Contact the Killians at 838-4513.

RACHEL CIRCLE TO HEAR LOVING REFLECTION

Rachel Circle will meet Thursday, April 12 at noon in the Asbury Pointe Club Room (50 Stahl Road in Getzville.) The theme will be *Simply Loving*, based on the *UMW Service of a Call to Prayer and Self Denial*. Our Deaconess in the WNY Conference, Ms. Margaret Wantuck will be our guest speaker and we are delighted to have her join us. Those interested in getting more information on coming to the meeting or joining the Circle are invited to call Betty Peck 631-3414 or Elka Wood 689-8647

SUMMER JOB OPPORTUNITIES

Both Camp Asbury and Camp Findley are now taking applications for 2007 summer staff. Volunteer counselors and deans are also needed at the WNY Conference camps. Positions include: Core Counselor, Kitchen Assistants, Wranglers, Lifeguards, Maintenance, Cooks, Health Directors & Summer Program Coordinators. Available positions vary at the two campsites. Volunteer counselors and deans are also needed at Conference camps. For more information or application forms contact Rev. Jeff Ridenour at Camp Findley - 716-769-7146 or e-mail at findleydirector@wnyumc.org or Rev. Larry Wiliford at Camp Asbury - 585-237-5262 or e-mail at campasbury@wnyumc.org.

DID YOU KNOW that you can go to the WUMC website to get the latest announcements and calendar updates? Just go to www.williamsvilleumc.org, click on the "NEWS" button and select EVENTS CALENDAR to get the latest schedule of events.

NORTH PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH PRESENTS TONY AND PEGGY CAMPOLO

Thursday, April 26, the North Presbyterian Church at 300 North Forest Road will present "Two Sides of a Christian View of Homosexuality: A dialogue between Tony and Peggy Campolo."

Tony Campolo, Ph.D., is a Professor Emeritus of Sociology at Eastern University in St. Davids, PA. An ordained American Baptist minister, he is founder and president of the Evangelical Association for the Promotion of Education. He is the author of 32 books and a media commentator of religious, social and political matters. He and his wife, Peggy, have two grown children and four grandchildren.

Peggy Campolo is an advocate for justice for gay, lesbian, bi-sexual and transgender people. She believes that the same rights and privileges should be extended to all of God's children, including those who do not happen to be straight. Ministering within the Christian community, and speaking in churches across the country, she tells the stories of people who are unable to tell their own stories.

The evening will begin at 6:00 p.m. with a supper, with the program starting at 7:00. A donation of \$10 per adult (\$25 maximum per family) or \$5 per person for the lecture only is requested. Childcare is available if requested with reservations. For information and reservations, call 632-1330.

PUT THIS DATE
ON YOUR CALENDAR

May 12 from 9 to 1

All Church
Work Day

One Great Hour of Sharing – A Response to God’s Love

Submitted by Sondra Scott

Once a year, One Great Hour of Sharing gives our church the opportunity to join with other United Methodists worldwide to provide a special offering to the United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR). Rev. R. Randy Day, UMCOR General Secretary, explains that this special offering underwrites UMCOR’s “cost of doing business.” This offering helps UMCOR keep its promise that 100 percent of designated donations go entirely to specific humanitarian projects.

UMCOR’s specialized ministries assist the most vulnerable people who have the greatest needs. UMCOR’s mission is compelled to share Jesus’ love and compassion by easing suffering around the world caused by disasters, war, hunger, and poverty. They also offer hospitality to immigrants and refugees. The three brief stories below help us understand how UMCOR uses contributions to transform despair to hope.

Armenia - The word *aregak* means sunshine in Armenian, which is why it was chosen as the name for an UMCOR micro-credit program for women. Established in 1997, AREGAK raises the living standards of poor Armenian women and their families by providing small business loans that are backed by groups of guarantors selected by the applicants. More than 15,000 clients have built home businesses and expanded existing enterprises. The children of these industrious women can now attend school regularly because their mothers can afford the school fees from the income earned through their businesses.

Columbia – UMCOR is working with 248 poor rural families in southwest Columbia to improve their basic survival conditions.

Racism has caused indigenous and Afro-Colombian communities to suffer extreme poverty despite rich natural resources. Many have fled their homes and ancestral lands because of violence and repression. To keep families intact, UMCOR and Church World Service are partnering to increase their food production and provide plots to grow medicinal plants. Forty-six families (236 people) have seen improvements to their income, and 100 children, ages 6 to 12, who had worked in local mines have returned to school.

Sudan - Despite security issues UMCOR continues to run a reception center for refugees arriving in South Darfur from Sudan. Some 2.5 million Sudanese people have been driven from their homes because of the ongoing conflict. The reception center suffers from lack of funds and has few shelter materials, blankets, or cooking utensils to distribute to new refugees. UMCOR’s agricultural program gathers seeds repaid by farmers and distributes each year to benefit additional farmers. UMCOR draws money from other programs to help meet one of the biggest challenges - the need for water. “To see a grown man shedding tears just at the sight of water, you feel you have done something,” said Jane Ohuma, head of mission in the region.

UMCOR strives to be a good steward of God’s gifts. “The One Great Hour of Sharing offering on March 18, 2007 is a gift of stability to UMCOR,” said Rev. Day. “UMCOR’s ability to respond and remain until the job is done is in direct proportion to the generosity of United Methodists at this time of offering.”

This article has been excerpted from information posted on the United Methodist Committee on Relief Web site (<http://new.gbgn-umc.org/umcor/>).

WNY Conference 2007 Loan, Scholarship and Grant Information

Western New York Conference Undergraduate Education Grants are available to any member of a United Methodist Church in the WNY Conference attending, or admitted to an accredited college or university. Because grant amounts are determined on the basis of funds available to all applicants that submit a completed application by the deadline, no applications will be accepted after the deadline. Applications for FOUR year schools must have been postmarked by March 16, 2007. Applications for TWO year schools must be postmarked June 1, 2007 and must be returned to: WNY Conference, Undergraduate Education Grant, 131 John Muir Drive, Buffalo, NY, 14228. Following are the list of grants, loans and scholarships whose application deadline has not yet passed:

Up to 1,000 scholarships of \$1,000 each are available to United Methodist students attending any accredited academic institution in the US, with preference given to students at United Methodist seminaries. Applicants must have been a member of the United Methodist Church for at least three years, have a record of leadership in their local church or beyond, and must also show how their education will provide leadership for a church and society and improve the quality of life for others. Applications are available from: The Office of Student Loans and Scholarships, PO Box 340007, Nashville, TN 37202-0871. (Phone: 615-340-7346) Applications due May 1st.

The United Methodist Church HANA (Hispanic, Asian, and Native American) and Ethnic Minority Scholarship Funds
United Methodist students of Hispanic, Asian, Native American, or African American heritage may apply for scholarship programs. Information and applications are available from: The Office of Student Loans and Scholarships, PO Box 340007, Nashville, TN 37202-0871. (Phone: 615-340-7346) Applications Due April 1 (HANA) and May 1 (Ethnic Minority).

The United Methodist Student Loan Fund Loans are available to any United Methodist student attending and accredited college or university. Up to \$2,500 may be borrowed per year. For applications and information and information, contact: The Office of Student Loans and Scholarships, PO Box 340007, Nashville, TN 37202-0871. (Phone: 615-340-7346)

More information on United Methodist programs of support for higher education can be found on the internet at: <http://www.gbhem.org> – Click the “Loans and Scholarships” link button at the top of the screen. Information and applications can be requested using the on-line form.

Additionally, you may email Cheryl Glose at wny-conf@wnyumc.org, or visit the Conference Website at <http://www.wnyumc.org/page.asp?PKVvalue=3D885>.

NOTES OF THANKS

Dear Williamsville Angels,
During the time of Lent we reflect on our many blessings and send thanks, to you, as one of our greatest blessings. Your prayers and support mean so much.

Have a Blessed Easter,
Connie & the Seneca Street UMC Family

Dear Friends,
Thank you for making a positive difference in the lives of the children and families served by Gateway-Longview. Your congregation's generous gifts of support help allow Gateway-Longview to provide protection, comfort and care to the children and families we serve daily. Thanks to you commitment, children placed in Foster Care will find loving families. Thanks to your dedication, students struggling in school will receive the educational help they need, and teenage mothers will learn how to properly care for their young children.

We appreciate your partnership and your support, as do the children and families that turn to Gateway-Longview every day for care, counseling and assistance. We know there is a need in the community and with your generosity we will continue to provide this support. Again, please know how grateful we are for your faithful support.

Sincerely,
James M. Sampson *Catherine Herrick*
President/CEO Vice President for
Organizational Advancement

PRAYER CHAIN

Church family and friends may request special prayers through the Prayer Chain. Please call Bob or Irene Hayman at 688-1258 to place your request.

If you have a pastoral need, please call the church office (634-4800) and leave a message. You may also call Rev. Lewis at 984-1140 or Pastor Bennett at 984-5483 and talk to them directly.

The church office hours are Monday-Friday from 9:00 AM to 3:00 PM.

Information for the May Issue of the
Methodist Messenger is due in the
church office Monday, April 16.

Information may also be emailed
directly to Newsletter Editor, Rachel
Zeller at rzeller143@aol.com.

Our Staff and Lay Leaders Are Here to Help You
Lead 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 Saltarella

Church Administrator: Michele Grammer

Custodian: Mary Ann Horey Housekeeping: Donna Seiler

Sunday Nursery Care: Kathleen Ciccone,

Amanda Dickerman and Megan Beck

Coordinating Lay Leader: Gary Jones

Communication Ministry: Sondra Scott & Marie Lorwa

Member Care Ministry: Barbara Saltarella

Outreach & Missions Ministry: Kevin Lyttle

Relational Ministries: Donna Seiler

Worship Ministries: Wendy Fortune

Staff/Pastor Parish Relations Chair: Jack Killian

Trustee Chair: John Tschamler

Stewardship & Finance Chair: Rosemary Elliott

Treasurer: Lori Pacer

Newsletter Editor: Rachel Zeller