Pastor’s Welcome

Giving It Up....For Good

Lenten Greetings. I will always remember the Lent when my son gave up pop. An athlete in middle school, he had learned it was not good for his body and decided, on his own, to give it up for Lent. I was ready with his Mountain Dew on Easter Sunday – but he said, “no thanks, Mom.” Ten years later, he rarely drinks soda.

Many of us give up certain things for Lent, and doing so can be very beneficial. There are also things that God wants us to give up, not just for forty days, but forever. Things like control, superiority, expectations.

What do you need to give up to be ready to receive the new life of Easter?
“Come closer. Come closer. And I will tell you everything.” Many times each day, we would hear these words from Munzer, our tour guide. And, with his PhD in history and archeology, he meant EVERYthing! I cannot begin to tell you everything, but here are a few highlights.

Most overwhelming: Church of the Holy Sepulchre. Originally built in 325/326. The traditional site of Golgotha (Calvary) and the Tomb. Multiple Orthodox and Catholic churches have presence. Stunning architecture and artwork. Overwhelming symbolism and meaning.

Most skeptical: The Upper Room. Jerusalem was destroyed by the Romans – it can’t be “the room”. Yet sitting on the floor, in the room built on the traditional site of the Last Supper, where the disciples re-gathered on the Feast of Pentecost, singing “Spirit of the Living God,” it was Holy Communion.

Most elaborate: The Church of the Nativity. Even though one wing of the nave was under renovation, the crystal oil lamps and vibrant, gilded iconography of this Greek Orthodox architectural wonder are in stark contrast to the cave underneath the altar, where Jesus was born.

Most ethereal: Church of the Annunciation. A modern (1969) structure over the sight of Mary’s home in Nazareth, with artwork from around the world and magnificent stained glass. A simple place of prayer and contemplation.

Most real: Sea of Galilee, Teaching Steps. Sitting in a boat in the middle of the Sea of Galilee, seeing 360-degrees of shoreline, envisioning Bible stories that I’ve heard since childhood. Sitting on the excavated steps of the second Temple where the Rabbis taught 2000 years ago. Very, very real.

Most simple: Valley of the Doves. Rolling green meadows dotted with rocks and sheep; sheer outcroppings of rock dotted with caves; a fresh-water spring that has quenched the thirst of travelers for millennia; the path from Nazareth and Cana to Capernaum. Holy land.

And then there was Megiddo, the Mount of the Beatitudes, Capernaum, the Jordan River, Jacob’s Well, Jericho, the Wailing Wall, Qumran, the Dead Sea, the Garden of Gethsemane, Caiaphas’ house, walking the Palm Sunday route and the Via Delarosa, and the Garden Tomb.

Yet each of these is but a coordinate on a map or a structure built by humans without the story of which they are a part, the story that has been passed down through generations, the story of which pieces are recorded in Holy Scripture. Though archaeologists have uncovered ruins, it is the stories, told from generation to generation of believers, which mark the spots where altars are built and churches erected. It is the stories that point to the places where pilgrims still gather and the Sacred is experienced. It is God’s story, our story, which names a Land Holy.
Athens First UMC Prayer Chain

As Paul advises Timothy in 1 Timothy 2:1 “I urge, then, first of all, that requests, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for everyone...” Our goal is to pray and petition on behalf of our church family and extended community, uplifting one another in prayer to the Lord. Thank you for your interest in this special ministry.

Prayers are submitted in various ways. Many are hand written at church on the yellow prayer cards by someone expressing a need, concern, praise or joy. Some are generated during the Tuesday Morning Prayer Gatherings. We also learn of needs through the pastor or other staff members, through the monthly TeleCare Ministry calls, and through emails sent to me. All requests are from the heart and are to be cherished and valued.

If you choose to participate in the e-mail prayer chain ministry, you will receive an e-mail list weekly of requests that need your prayer and at other times as needs arise. Please follow these Prayer Chain guidelines:

Keep all requests confidential, between you and the Lord. The commitment to pray for others is a sacred privilege and obligation. The information provided through our email prayer ministry is for prayer purposes. Do not discuss them with others or forward messages outside the Prayer Chain.

Immediately after receiving the requests, spend a few minutes alone in prayer for the needs. Continue to pray and intercede for the prayer requests during that week or until you feel a release or an answer is posted.

At times we get requests that are “unspoken” or ones that are unclear. We must still pray for these requests. Details are not necessary in order for God to act upon the request. Romans 8:26 tells us: “In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express.”

If you learn that a prayer has been answered or have updated information about a request you submitted, please send me an email to let me know, and I will update the email prayer group. May God bless you richly as you participate in this important ministry!

Sharon Stoltzfus sfink1950@gmail.com

MISSION Minute

By Carolyn Sweeney

Sister Pantries Help ACFP Fulfill Mission During Temporary Closing

Financially, this has been one tough winter. If you’ve caught yourself turning down the thermostat or unplugging appliances to cut your utility bills, imagine the greater impact the cold has had on those of limited incomes.

Imagine you have a minimum-wage job and are faced with a plumber’s bill for a burst water pipe. Or maybe you slip on the ice and break a wrist. Now you have unexpected medical bills on top of not being able to work.

This year, even the Athens County Food Pantry was dealt a blow by Old Man Winter. On January 14, flooding forced the closure of the facility indefinitely for repairs. Fortunately, the ACFP has something many individuals don’t, a system of connections that minimized the effect on its clients. Both the Salvation Army Food Pantry and the St. Vincent DePaul Society Food Pantry were alerted to prepare for the increased demand at their locations. And the St. Vincent DePaul Society went one big step further, temporarily expanding its packing to twice a week, the norm for the ACFP.

Meanwhile, volunteers from ACFP continued to buy frozen food from the Southeast Ohio Food Bank in Logan and transport it to the agency’s largest distribution site, the Athens County Department of Job and Family Services. There, it was added to the boxes supplied by the St. Vincent DePaul Society.

Jill Doose, chair of the ACFP, said she expects the pantry to resume regular packing in its renovated location at 528 Richland Avenue by the second week in March.

An offering for the ACFP will be taken during worship services on March 30, the fifth Sunday in March.

If anyone has material possessions and sees a brother or sister in need but has no pity on them, how can the love of God be in that person? Dear children, let us not love with words or speech but with actions and in truth. NIV Bible, 1 John 3:17-18
**CHILDREN’S Ministry**

**Upcoming Events**

The summer 2014 West Ohio UMC Camp Guides are here. The theme this year is “Changing Lives in God’s Great Outdoors”. There are lots of outdoor activities choices for a variety of age levels. If you would like a guide with a registration form in it you can pick up one in the office in the children’s ministry mailbox. We have scholarship money available. Contact Martha Sloan at 740-593-3977 ext. 16 for more information.

Children (pre-k – 3rd grade) in Sunday school and Children’s church will study about “Forgiveness” during Lent using art, cookery, games, science, storytelling, and videos.

There will be a special **Intergenerational Lenten/Holy Week Fair** on Palm Sunday, April 13, 2014 from 9 – 10 am in Fellowship Hall that will hopefully include ALL the Sunday school classes, the first service congregation and “families” of all ages. With help from you, we will have a number of learning centers that are related to the Lenten season and particularly Holy Week.

The Holy Hands Puppets are planning a presentation for Palm Sunday for the Children’s Moment at 2nd service. They are busy adapting a story written by Pastor Wendy. Plan to come and see their talented ministry in action.

“All in the Family” initiative team wants to update the ground floor (Growing Tree/Sunday school areas) to make it more “child friendly”. If you have ideas or know of people who would be great at this task please contact Martha Sloan.

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**LENTEN Sermon Series**

**What if we gave up more than chocolate for Lent this year?**

Many of us give up certain things for the forty days of Lent, and doing so can be a very beneficial thing for us. This seven-week series takes that idea one step further, talking each week about things that God wants us to give up, not just for forty days, but forever.

We invite you to join us during this Lenten season for Heritage Worship at 9:00 AM in the Chapel and at 10:30 AM for New Traditions Worship in the sanctuary.

**Giving Up Control (March 9)**

Genesis 2:15-17, 3:1-7; Matthew 4:1-11

**Giving Up Expectations (March 16)**

Genesis 12:1-4a; John 3:1-17

**Giving Up Superiority (March 23)**

John 4:5-42

**Giving Up Enemies (March 30)**

Luke 19:37-44

**Giving Up Our Lives (April 6)**

Ezekiel 37:1-14; John 11:1-45

**Giving Up Popularity (April 13)**

(Palm Sunday)

Matthew 21:1-11

**Giving Up Death (April 20)**

(Easter Sunday)

Acts 10:34-43; John 20:1-18
JEFF DAUBENMIRE, New Associate Director of Music

By Laura Dalton, Director of Communications

On March 2, First United Methodist Church welcomed Mr. Jeff Daubenmire as Associate Director of Music. Jeff’s primary responsibilities include accompaniment on organ and piano, as well as planning concerts and special musical events. A resident of Logan, OH, he holds degrees in music education and educational administration from Ohio University and is currently Dean of Arts, Business and Information Technologies at Hocking College. An accomplished performer, composer and arranger, Jeff also serves as Sub Dean for the Southeast Ohio Chapter of the American Guild of Organists.

A native Ohioan, Jeff started piano lessons at age seven. He cites the invitation to accompany his middle school choir as a turning point in his musical journey. Encouraged by this positive experience, he continued his musical education, and soon began as accompanist for the Sunday school program at the Methodist church in which he was raised. At age 16, he was asked by the minister of the Presbyterian Church in Logan to provide organ accompaniment for “a couple of weeks.” He stayed for more than 25 years, eventually serving as both Organist and Director of Music. During some of those years, Jeff has also played organ for St. John Catholic Church in Logan.

Jeff has many fond memories of performing at First United Methodist Church as an Ohio University student in the late 1980’s. He is looking forward to engaging in music ministry alongside our Director of Music, Dr. Peter Jarjisian, who was his college mentor. Delighted by this new opportunity, Jeff states, “Of all the things I enjoy doing, probably the thing I enjoy most is to play and accompany. The second thing I enjoy most is planning concerts and events, and to be able to do that [at First UMC] is like a dream come true.”

Jeff is enthusiastic about the possibilities for the expanded music ministry inherent in the proposed sanctuary renewal design: “Making the space more flexible and more inviting could be a really great thing for us.”

The new staff position which Jeff fills was created in part to support more intentional outreach through the church’s music ministry. He views the role of the music ministry of First UMC as reinforcing the mission statement “Knowing, Growing, Showing God’s love” in this way: “I think music is integral to all of those things. It’s part of the internal energy of the church. It’s a way to reach out, getting people involved. A concert can almost be seen as a mission. You’re reaching out, you’re bringing people in, and you’re ministering to them.”

Toward that end, Jeff looks forward to organizing an annual concert series which will showcase musical talent from the church and local community, as well musicians with more established careers. Plans also include organizing a major choral work every year or every other year.

Jeff’s interests extend beyond the worlds of education and music. He enjoys being in the woods and working in the great outdoors. He is a weekend farmer, baling hay, cutting firewood and doing forest management for his farm. We welcome Jeff Daubenmire to the staff and church family of First United Methodist Church and look forward to partnering with him in new and dynamic ways to share the Good News of God’s love through the ministry of music.
Scott Ewing, who has served for several years as Chancel Choir accompanist, is due to graduate in May with a Master’s degree in vocal performance and pedagogy. As he makes preparations to pursue his Doctor of Musical Arts degree at the University of Minnesota, his time of ministry with the First UMC congregation is drawing to a close. Scott’s last Sunday with us will be March 16. Scott and his fiancée, Amanda, plan to move to the Twin Cities in May.

First UMC Director of Music, Peter Jarjisian, shares these reflections about Scott and his time with us: “In January 2006, as a high school sophomore singing tenor in the Ohio University Honor Choir, Scott visited FUMC for the first time. When he entered OU as a music major, he joined our Chancel Choir and began a wonderful six-year friendship with our church, providing leadership in the choir, keyboard collaboration and accompaniment in worship, and creative ideas that have enhanced the worship experience each week.”

When it comes to his career aspirations, Scott’s current focus is on pursuing opportunities during his doctoral program. He plans to pursue options such as playing music theatre auditions and shows, private voice instruction, vocal coaching and accompanying within the university and without, and even singing work. Additionally, Scott has recently begun receiving instruction in organ, and he has taken a genuine liking to the instrument. He hopes that organist work in the Twin Cities might prove possible. He reflects, “Another exciting prospect is the vibrant church music community in the Twin Cities. The area has no shortage of beautiful churches, and the Twin Cities’ rich choral music tradition promises first-class worship music, and I’m definitely planning on getting involved.”

Scott’s gratitude for his time at First is expressed in his heartfelt words: “I am so grateful to have been a part of this family during my time in Athens. I want everyone to know how much my work at FUMC has shaped me into the musician I’ve become. I’ve had a chance, nearly every Sunday morning for six years, to hone skills in front of an appreciative and warm congregation. FUMC has played a huge role in my developing the confidence necessary to pursue opportunities I otherwise may have been too nervous or scared to pursue. From the first day I joined the chancel choir for worship, I found a true sense of belonging here which, frankly, is not always the easiest thing to find in a church.”

Scott extends special thanks to Peter Jarjisian: “When I accepted [the invitation to sing in the chancel choir], I didn’t know that I was making one of the best possible decisions for my long-term musical development. Dr. Jarjisian has been one of the absolute best teachers I’ve ever known, and I’m so fortunate to have been blessed with six good years of guidance and friendship from such an admirable musician and human.”

We wish Scott and Amanda all happiness as they anticipate their upcoming wedding and their new life in the Twin Cities. God be with you ‘til we meet again!
GOINGS On

Upcoming Events

**MARCH**

**WED, 3/5:** 12 Noon & 7 PM, Ash Wednesday Services (Sanctuary)

**SAT, 3/8:** 9:30 AM, “Discover First” Class (1st Floor Lounge)

**TUE, 3/11:** 7:30 PM, Missions Team Meeting (2nd Floor Conference Rm.) Anyone interested is welcome to come to this meeting. For more info, contact Ken Edwards at LMNO@LMNOeng.com.

**FRI, 3/14:** 6-9 PM, Kappa Phi Parents’ Night Out (Fellowship Hall)

**SUN, 3/16:** 11:45 AM, Church Conference (see announcement, page 5.)

**THU, 3/20:** 6:30 PM, Leadership Board Meeting.

7:30 PM, OU Choral Union and Wind Symphony Concert (Sanctuary)

**APRIL**

**SUN, 4/13:** 9 AM, Intergenerational Lenten/Holy Week Fair (Fellowship Hall)

*(A complete schedule of Holy Week events and Easter Sunday services will be published separately in April.)*

**TUE, 4/15:** 9 AM – 12 Noon, UMW Lap Robe Project (Sanctuary)

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TIME Change

Sunday March 9, 2014

Don’t forget to set your clocks ahead one hour before going to bed on Saturday, March 8! The time changes EARLY Sunday morning.

LIVING Word

**New Life in Christ**

*Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!* 2 Corinthians 5:17

What is life? What does it mean to be alive in Christ...as a person?...As a church? Most biologists use seven traits for organic life, and I think that they fit nicely when we try to understand the answers to these questions. Different sources have various ways of saying it - the list I’m starting from is found in Wikipedia:

“**Homeostasis: Regulation of the internal environment.**” Prayer, study, service - these are all ways that we keep our spiritual lives healthy.

“**Organization: Being structurally composed of one or more cells.**” For people, do you have boundaries? In other words, are you able to tell where the world ends, and where your life in Christ begins? For churches, God’s multicellular organisms, does everyone try and do the same thing, or does each use his or her gifts for the betterment of the body?

“**Metabolism: Transformation of energy... Living things require energy.**” Do you bring new energy in from God? As a person? As a church? Trying to live off of your own energy results in starvation. It is only by taking energy in that we can say that we are able to sustain life.

“**Growth: Organisms increase in size.**” Are you growing spiritually as a follower of Christ? As a church?

“**Adaptation: The ability to change over time in response to the environment**” Do you plug your ears, and shout at the world, or do you remain open, hear the world, and respond to it in God’s love?

“**Response to stimuli**” Are you able to be dynamic, agile in your spiritual life? When an opportunity for spiritual growth, for the outpouring of God’s spirit, or sharing of God’s love is before you as a person, or as a church, are you able to respond in a timely manner?

“**Reproduction**” This one comes down to a simple question. Does your life in God die with you, or have you spread that life to others?

With any living thing, some of these occasionally go out of whack, and others have a time and a place, but don’t happen all the time. But in every living thing, they all happen. So I plan to ask myself each day, and hope you ask yourself: Are my church and I alive in Christ today?

--Matthew Dalton, Leadership Board Member
The Vision of Athens First United Methodist Church

We aspire to be a community of faith where:

We know God’s love through Jesus Christ;

We share God’s love through care and service;

With God’s love, we welcome all to walk with us.