The Central Connection

MESSAGES & OPPORTUNITIES FROM CENTRAL UNITED METHODIST CHURCH TO YOU!

June 2011

MY FAVORITE HYMN

Thank you for your responses a few weeks ago when I asked you to list your three favorite hymns. It is instructive to view "our" favorite hymns in the list published on the next page. First of all, no one hymn was everyone's favorite. Secondly, the list reminds us that when we're singing a hymn we don't particularly like, it may be someone else's favorite. Thirdly, no one gets their favorite hymns all the time; we must take turns.

We may think our favorite hymns are the "best": how could everyone not feel the same? We see from the list that we do not all agree about which hymns we like, or which style of hymns we should sing. In addition, for any particular hymn, we probably don't all agree about its tempo, the accompaniment, the frequency or the singability. Music preferences are often a very personal choice for reasons which touch our emotions more than our intellect. I think this is one reason church people "fight" about music styles and choices more than some other things.

While some people in the survey gave no particular reasons for choosing their hymns, we might guess that either the music or the words are meaningful, moving and/or uplifting. Or maybe they just liked the tune and the way they felt when singing it. Or it reminded them of a particular time in their life.

Here's a sample from those who gave more specific reasons for their choices: The importance of the Trinity (Holy, Holy, Holy); God speaks to us in a "still small voice of calm" (Dear Lord and Father of Mankind); these [hymns] are comforting and let us know Jesus is not far away (Jesus Loves Me); it speaks of God's love; a hymn of assurance that always lifts my spirit (Amazing Grace); I remember this as a song during the Civil Rights Movement (Precious Lord Take My Hand); the total surprise: God did want me though I felt so unworthy (Is It I, Lord?); all from my childhood; all make me smile and cry at the same time (Holy, Holy, Holy; The Old Rugged Cross; Blessed Assurance); Resurrection power—universal and personal (Christ the Lord Is Risen Today). Someone wrote: "All these hymns were personally very precious to me since high school and college. There is the challenge [and] the promise of God's faithfulness."

Music is such an essential part of our worship. God enjoys all kinds of music, with all kinds of accompaniments, in all different tempos—as long as the music and words honor God, give glory to Jesus Christ and are sung from hearts filled with the Spirit. Our music and our songs are thank-offerings to God, who has given us voices to sing his praises:

> ". . . be filled with the Spirit, as you sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs among yourselves, singing and making melody to the Lord in your hearts, giving thanks to God the Father at all times and for everything in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ." *Ephesians 5:18b-20*

Let's keep singing,

Pastor Stephanie

OUR FAVORITE HYMNS

April 2011

The number indicates how many times the hymn was listed by participants in the survey.

A Mighty Fortress	1
Abide with Me	1
Amazing Grace	12
And Can It Be	1
Angels We Have Heard on High	1
Are Ye Able	1
Away in a Manger	1
Be Thou My Vision	4
Blessed Assurance	3
Blessed Be the Tie that Binds	1
Breathe on Me Breath of God	1
Christ the Lord Is Risen Today	4
Dear Lord and Father of Mankind	1
Eternal Father Strong to Save	3
Faith of Our Fathers	1
Freely, Freely	1
Gift of Love	1
Go, Tell It on the Mountain	2
God of Grace and God of Glory	1
God Will Take Care of You	1
Great Is Thy Faithfulness	3
Here I Am, Lord	7
He's Got the Whole World	1
He Leadeth Me	2
His Eye Is on the Sparrow	1
Holy, Holy, Holy	4
How Great Thou Art	6
Hymn of Promise	2
I Believe	1
I Love to Tell the Story	2
I Need Thee Every Hour	1
In the Garden	2
It Is Well	1
Jesus Loves Me	4
Joyful, Joyful	1
Leaning on the Everlasting Arms	1
Lift High the Cross	1
Lord of the Dance	5
Love Divine, All Loves Excelling	1
Morning Has Broken	1
Nearer My God to Thee	1
O Holy Night	1
O Sacred Head, Now Wounded	1
Old Rugged Cross	3
On Eagle's Wings	2
Onward Christian Soldiers	4
Open My Eyes	1
Precious Lord	3
Silent Night	1
Spirit Song	1
Standing on the Promises	1
Surely the Presence	1
Sweet Hour of Prayer	1
Take Time to Be Holy	1
'Tis So Sweet to Trust in Jesus	1
Trust and Obey	1
Up from the Grave He Arose	2
Victory in Jesus	1
Were You There	1
What a Friend We Have in Jesus	1
When Morning Gilds the Skies	1

The Central Connection is the monthly newsletter of Central United Methodist Church, Lewis and Beverley Streets, Staunton, VA.

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IN MINISTRY

The Mission of Central UMC is to make disciples of Jesus Christ.

Pastor. ..... Stephanie M. Sault
Minister of Music/Organist..... Sherry von Oeyen
Church Secretary..... Agnes Campbell
Child's Play Director..... Jo Ann B. Black
Custodian..... Janet Nuckoles
Retired Missionary Professor. ..... Hunter P. Mabry
Retired Pastor. ..... David D. Reed
Professor MBC..... Kenneth A. Beals
District Superintendent. ..... D. Michael Houff
Resident Bishop. ..... Charlene Payne Kammerer

MISSION / OUTREACH NOTES

Change the World! On Sunday, May 15, approximately 70 members of Central joined with members of hundreds, if not thousands, of United Methodist churches around the world to participate in mission/outreach projects. We chose to highlight several projects. For several months we have been collecting items for Birthing Kits to take to Annual Conference. Following a pizza luncheon provided by the UMMen, children and adults gathered to assemble the kits. We were able to complete 87 kits, and the UMWomen provided 26 more receiving blankets to complete our goal of 100 Birthing Kits. In addition, the UMW gave a gift of $100 to help UMCOR cover shipping costs of the kits. We also received $400 in donations to send to UMCOR to support Methodist relief efforts in Japan and 157 pounds of food for our Food Pantry! Thanks to all who contributed to and attended this event.

The next area of focus for Mission/Outreach is to assist those who have suffered tornado damage in the Pulaski area. Central has a strong history of sending work teams to serve those who have been impacted by natural disasters. We are beginning the process of planning a trip this summer and are anxious to hear from volunteers. The dates and length of our trip(s) will be determined by the availability of our volunteers. Please contact Jim Printy, 292-2029, for information and to get your name on the list to participate in this rewarding opportunity.

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Sign seen outside Lakeside Lutheran Church, Maplewood, MN:

UNITED METHODIST MEN

Saturday, June 4

8:30 a.m.

Fellowship Hall

Please note a change in the UMMen's June meeting. We will NOT meet at Mrs. Rowe's for breakfast on June 4. Instead we will meet at the church at 8:30am for coffee and donuts, followed by a brief business meeting and work at the church. If the weather is agreeable we need to spread mulch, and if not, we have inside work to complete. Remember all men of the church are always welcome at our meetings and events.

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THANK YOU

Dear Central UMC,

Thank you so much for your hospitality! We are very thankful for your support—without you, all of this would not be possible!

All our best,
NAMI "We Care" Augusta

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The NAMI (National Alliance on Mental Illness) support group for clients meets the 3rd Tuesday of each month in the Fellowship Hall.

For information on a Family and Friends Support Group, please contact Liz at (540)241-5691 or nami.wecare@gmail.com

FAREWELL RECEPTION

FOR AGNES CAMPBELL

JUNE 12

I know you will all want to attend the Farewell Reception on June 12 for Agnes, our much-loved church secretary. Agnes has faithfully served Central and the downtown community of Staunton for 25 years, and we will be gathering in the Fellowship Hall after worship on the 12th to express our thankfulness and good wishes as she enters retirement and part-time employment at her church. Refreshments will be provided. Gifts to a church-wide love offering may be sent to the church (P. O. Box 953, Staunton) or placed in the offering plate with the designation "Gift for Agnes." Cards are also welcome!

"I thank my God every time I remember you, constantly praying with joy in every one of my prayers . . . because of your sharing in the gospel from the first day until now." Philippians 1:3-5

–Pastor Stephanie Sault
& the Staff-Parish Relations Committee

HELPING HANDS

A Virginia Conference Children's Mission Event

Rising 4th–6th graders
& adult chaperones

Thursday, July 7, 2:00 p.m.
through Friday, July 8: 1:00 p.m.

Main Street UMC, Waynesboro

This is a two-day mission experience for children–come and learn about mission opportunities and the importance of being a caring Christian.

Registration deadline: June 15 – Space is limited. Details/registration info available in the Gathering Room and Church Office. (Cost $36 per person).

WORSHIP MINISTRY TEAM:
A SUMMER EXPERIMENT

Beginning June 19, we will begin to worship 15 minutes earlier, at 10:45 a.m. While the length of the service is not being changed (we will still celebrate Communion each week), this change will enable some of our members who live in senior housing to be on time for their prepared lunches. This change follows a recent (unscientific) poll of the congregation which revealed that 72 people were willing to try the experiment (86%), while 12 were not interested. We ask that everyone (even the 14% not in favor) give it a try for the summer months, and we will reassess the schedule at the end of August. Thank you for your willingness to try something new!

–Your Worship Planning Team

June 5
Acts 1:6-14
Psalm 68:1-10, 32-35 (UMH 792)
1 Peter 4:12-14, 5:6-11
John 17:1-11

June 12 – Day of Pentecost
Acts 2:1-21
Psalm 104:24-34, 35*b* (UMH 826)
1 Corinthians 12:3*b*-13
John 7:37-39

June 19
Genesis 1:1–2:4*a*
Psalm 8 (UMH 743)
2 Corinthians 13:11-13
Matthew 28:16-20

June 26
Genesis 22:1-14
Psalm 13 (UMH 746)
Romans 6:12-23
Matthew 10:40-42

FROM YOUR CHURCH SECRETARY

As many of you have heard by now, I've tendered my resignation effective June 30.

About three months ago I received clear direction from God that I should apply for early retirement and pursue a part-time secretarial position at my church. Although the leading was totally unexpected, it has neither left me nor changed. It has only been strengthened and confirmed as I've talked with my family, spiritual mentors, and friends. My Pastor and Church Council were receptive to the idea and offered the desired position, which I've accepted.

Obedience to God's leading has been my life-long goal, and He gives great joy and peace when I obey. (You noticed that I said "WHEN I obey," didn't you?! I wish it would have been every time, but human that I am...) Also, I'm looking forward to a shorter work week and being able to give a little more time and energy in support of my church's ministries and a few of my "projects."

Please know, though, that this change is being made with mixed emotions. It's really hard to leave my "weekday church family" after our twenty-five year relationship, and I'm going to miss you so much.

I've been blessed to work with six of your pastors, a number of other staff members, many ministry/work area leaders, and untold numbers of members, constituents, and visitors to the Church Office. And that doesn't even include friends and contacts in the Virginia Conference, Staunton District, and state and national PAUMCS (Professional Association of UMC Secretaries). The leaders, members, and friends of Central UMC have been very supportive; and so many of you have included me as part of the ministry team rather than just a secretary or receptionist. That means a lot to me. It just reinforces that fact that the body of Christ can function smoothly, even when all the parts aren't from the same church family or denomination.

You've given me opportunities to improve my skills through continuing education and exposure to local, district, and conference United Methodist programs and events, including several national PAUMCS events. Thank you for blessing me in this way. It was a joy to come back to the office and use the new and "updated" info. And, just so you'll know, I was always happy to talk about my work situation with other secretaries (especially PAUMCS). Some of their job situations and personnel relationships were not very pleasant. Their stories made me appreciate you and our good relationship even more.

In return, I've made a special effort as your Secretary to represent you well and help promote Central UMC as a caring congregation working hard to make Disciples of Jesus Christ. Thank you for making that an easy task. I pray that you will continue BEING strong Disciples and MAKING more Disciples.

Thank you, also, for cheering me on through the everyday joys and trials of life over the years. We've been through a lot together–and it's been easier with your love and support. I'm going to miss you.

Thank you. They're just two little words, but they're backed by a heart filled with gratitude.

Your fellow-servant in Christ,

Agnes Campbell

WHAT WE MISS!

I know that I don't always pay full attention. When that happens I am disadvantaged in ways from which I will never ever recover. For instance last Sunday, May 14, there was a complete rainbow. I knew it was there because Sherry called me and told me. My neighbor was outside trying to capture the moment— as I was as well, then.

Very often we have visitors at our church, and somehow they are allowed to slip away. We have no idea whom and what we have missed. That happened to me recently with Naeema Gawad I had met with her and spoken with her briefly. It was not until the UMW Unit meeting on May 11 that I realized what a jewel I had missed. She spoke with a great deal of passion and openness about her experiences not only in the US but in her homeland of Egypt as well. While her talk focused on her love and belief in God, the question-and-answer period gave us an opportunity to gain more insight into how she and her family are negotiating their lives in these complicated times.

The most illuminating thing for me was she got her information about what was going on in Egypt during the uprising in January. Her response to that query was Facebook!! She followed up that she relied on her family and friends to provide her with the accurate information. How amazing is that? She, by the way, kept in contact with her family by visiting with them a couple of times a week on Skype.

Quite frankly I discovered from Naeema that our lives, aspirations and beliefs are not very different. She was concerned about the events at home-- as we would be if we were not at home with rapid changes taking place. While the events in Egypt have been pretty amazing and kind of scary, we have experienced similar times in this country when there has been civil unrest or national disaster. However, our faith and belief in God anchored us as it did her.

Unfortunately I really got to know Naeema a little late in her time here in the US. I had seen her at church on Sundays and spoken to her only briefly. Preoccupied with the other stuff of life, I did not take the time to talk with her more to discover who she is or what her journey has been. How often do we not take the time to find out who the individuals are that worship with us in such a brief space of time on a Sunday morning? We are very gracious in greeting visitors and welcoming them to our worship service. However, do we engage them to share who they are with us? More importantly are we open to sharing ourselves and our beliefs with those we don't know? Without that openness, what are we missing? There a lot of Naeemas out there. Don't miss them, because your life can be immeasurably enriched.

–Anita Jackson, Lay Leader

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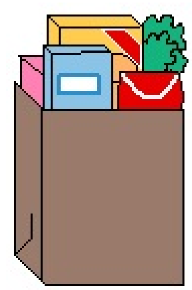
SERVING GOD THROUGH THE FOOD PANTRY



Thank you to all who participate in the Food Pantry ministry—through prayers, donations of cash, food items, time and energy! The following shows some of our most recent statistics:

Month	Households Served	Individuals Served	*Children (under 18)
JAN	57	136	(40)
FEB	77	175	(54)
MAR	85	188	(59)
APR	75	157	(45)

*Children are counted in the total individuals served.

We average 10 volunteers per week, most working about 2 hours per week. Pick up and sort volunteers work 3-4 hours per week. The results, as you can see, are outstanding! Thank you all!
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MUSIC NOTES

There are special times in the liturgical year of remembering our Lord Jesus Christ–Christmas and Easter particularly. However, it's very important to also remember Pentecost. Christ came to make intercession for us and sent the Holy Spirit to dwell with us and guide us, making our relationship with God more complete.

One of the finest hymns for the Pentecost season is "Spirit of God, Descend Upon My Heart." It was written by Anglican minister George Croly and first appeared in 1854 in Croly's own hymnal, *Psalms and Hymns for Public Worship*. Each stanza contributes an important truth for our spiritual benefit:

STANZA 1– a desire to change the focus of one's life from things temporal to things spiritual.

Spirit of God, descend upon my heart:
Wean it from earth, through all its pulses move.
Stoop to my weakness, mighty as Thou art,
and make me love Thee as I ought to love.

STANZA 2– the total dedication of one's self to God.

Hast Thou not bid us love Thee, God and King?
All, all Thine own—soul, heart
and strength and mind.
I see Thy cross--there teach my heart to cling:
O let me seek Thee, and O let me find.

STANZA 3– a prayerful concern for knowing fully the Spirit's abiding presence.

Teach me to feel that Thou art always nigh;
teach me the struggles of the soul to bear—
to check the rising doubt, the rebel sigh;
teach me the patience of unanswered prayer.

STANZA 4– a most beautiful metaphor of a Spirit-filled life: "my heart an altar, and Thy love the flame."

Teach me to love Thee as Thine angels love,
one holy passion filling all my frame:
The baptism of the heav'n descended Dove—
my heart an altar and Thy love the flame.

Excerpted from *Amazing Grace—366 Inspiring Hymn Stories for Daily Devotions* by Kenneth W. Osbeck

Sherry von Oeyen, Minister of Music

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PEACE WITH JUSTICE SUNDAY JUNE 19, 2011

The Peace with Justice Sunday offering, one of the six churchwide Special Sundays with offerings, allows The United Methodist Church to have a voice in advocating for peace and justice through a broad spectrum of global programs:

• The Ohio-based Faith Communities Uniting for Peace encourages Christians, Buddhists, Hindus, Jews, Muslims and Sikhs "to live from a vision of peace rooted in faith."

• In Liberia—in partnership with other religious and humanitarian groups, The United Methodist Church provides a place for former child soldiers to live, recreational activities to address war trauma, and necessities such as fresh drinking water and medical treatment.

Annual conferences keep half of the offering to fund local projects while a portion goes to the General Board of Church and Society (GBCS) Peace with Justice Program to fund U.S. and global work in social action and public policy education and advocacy.
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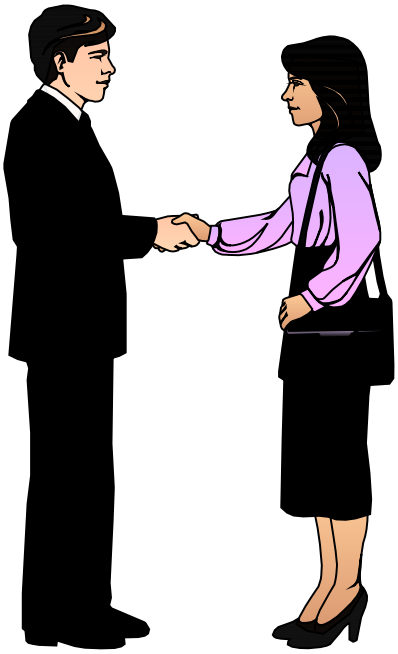
"GETTING TO KNOW YOU"

By Luz M. de Tablan,
UMW President



Many of you are familiar with this song: "GETTING TO KNOW YOU." Yes, this is the title of the song by Debra Kerr in the famous movie "The King and I." Nowadays, technology makes it possible for us to stay home to watch our favorite movies– even countless times. We watched the movie again recently and while watching it our attention was focused on the song: "Getting to Know You, Getting to Know All about You." The message of the song was of things called "blessings" from the works of the author and as James Moore described "things that takes our breath away" and "things that count the most." For those not familiar with the story, Yul Bryner played King Mungkot, the King of Siam, who wanted his wives, and particularly his children, to be educated. So he hired a teacher from England named Mrs. Anna Lenowen, portrayed by Debra Kerr. She was the widow of an English officer in the Navy and had a son named Louis. She sailed to Siam in response to the King. Mrs. Anna sang the song, "Getting to Know You," when she introduced herself to the wives and children of the King of Siam.

As we listened we realized that the song was an expression of true service and commitment which are essential to a relationship that brings satisfaction and blessings to both parties. Anna was able to perform her work well in a land away from home, getting to know the members of the King's household and training the children.

It's a task to know people and to establish relationship and trust. It takes dedication and genuine love from God to be able to win friendship and confidence, and Anna did it well. She was able to know King Mungkot, his wives, children, and the people of Siam; and there was joy and commitment in her service. She was encouraged by the message from Eph. 3:20: "He is able to do far more abundantly beyond all that we ask for." She believed that whenever God allows us to have authority over others (no matter how great or small), His intent is that we use what we're given on behalf of those whom we oversee. The message from Matthew 11:28-30 inspired her and gave her strength: "Come to me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light." She knew that there are burdens in life that no person in his or her own strength can bear successfully without God's intervention.

When I was invited to join the United Methodist Women, deep in my heart I sang "Getting to Know You" (not in literal sense). I had to know more about the organization. I wanted to be able to
enjoy life to the fullest and to be grounded in the love of God. I wanted to know more about the ministry, getting to know how it could strengthen my faith and what I could offer as a member in return. I have to know what the Lord requires of me to serve others, commit my time and support the organization in every way, especially to be a faithful member of the UMW. Like Anna, I got to know pretty well the "household I have chosen to belong" and in my little ways be able to create "things that count the most."

"Getting to Know You" was just an ordinary song, but it inspired me to have renewed minds with the Word of God that wash away worldly thinking and replaces it with the Father's viewpoint and instructions. It also enables me to yield to His promptings, sensing the presence of discovering the most satisfying relationship possible and an opportunity to understand how much God loves us and what God has done for us in Jesus Christ. We can't help but to "rejoice always," because no matter what happens to us, we know that God is for us and God will always be there for us, come what may in this world and in the world to come. "Getting to Know all About" our Lord is "a blessing that counts the most."

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Volunteer Schedule in this Issue!

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June 2011

Return Service Requested

Virginia Annual Conference
June 15-19
Roanoke Civic Center

The theme of our upcoming conference is *Being Christ to Others: Snapshots of the Kingdom*. This focus is based on the third component of our conference vision statement: "We envision faith communities where all God's people are welcomed at table, nurtured and transformed to be Christ to others in the world." Through this focus, our conference agenda will provide times for reporting and reflection on how the Virginia Conference is engaged in world transforming mission.

Quoted from the Book of Reports Introductory Letter written by Marc D. Brown, Director of Connectional Ministries