



# The Central Connection

MESSAGES & OPPORTUNITIES FROM CENTRAL UNITED METHODIST CHURCH TO YOU!

March 2010



## ARE WE THERE YET?

Whenever I set out on a journey—a trip to visit family in California, for example—I am usually focused on the destination, on getting there successfully.

I can be impatient with the trip and the time it takes. I can be so intent on the final destination, that I miss the journey itself and the opportunities it provides.

I'm certain the Hebrew people were impatient with the 40 years they spend wandering in the wilderness. "Are we there yet? I thought we were headed to the promised land? What's taking so long?"

They hardly enjoyed the journey. They thought it was unnecessarily long and inconvenient. They grumbled against God and their leaders.

Many of them missed the lessons of the journey itself.

In our strategic planning group, we likewise want to arrive at our final statement of purpose, our mission, our defining purpose, our destination. But it's on the journey that we learn to trust God. God is at work in us as we travel.

Lent has been described as a journey, traveling with Jesus from ministry and miracles to death on the cross, knowing that the cross isn't the end of the journey. Resurrection is the true destination.

Sometimes we are in a hurry to get to resurrection and celebration, and want to skip the self-examination, confession and self-denial that are on the path to our final destination.

Isn't there a way to new life that doesn't involve death?

No.

There is no resurrection without crucifixion. There is no shortcut.

This year, don't miss the journey, through these 40 days and as we enter again into the final events of Jesus' life. The journey is where God does some of his most important work: teaching us patience, trust, priorities and faith. There are parts of the journey we don't enjoy, but God is faithfully at work in us, shaping us to be his faithful people.

Trust God with your journey.

In Christ, Pastor Stephanie



# A New Beginning

While preparing for this past Christmas, I never did get around to sending all of my Christmas cards. So I sent New Year's cards in January and figured that, even in mid January, it's never too late for a new beginning!

Central's Witness Committee is busily planning a Lay Witness Weekend which could result in *A New Beginning* for us as a church family.

So what is a Lay Witness Weekend you ask? It is a weekend that allows all of us lay persons to talk to each other about the meaning of the church and Christ in our daily lives. A team of trained Laypersons from Aldersgate Renewal Ministries (an affiliate of the General Board of Discipleship of The United Methodist Church) will spend an entire weekend faith sharing with us. These Laypersons are people just like you and me. However they have been awakened by God to the possibility of living all of life in Christ. They will share their faith stories and journeys with us. These Laypersons are not perfect or saintly people but those who continue to learn to pray, find ministry and meaning in small groups and how to put their faith to work in the

vital issues of life. Successes are not only shared, but the heartaches and struggles are a part of their sharing as well. While they will share with us, they will also listen to us. This is a rare opportunity for us to be ministered to as well as for us to minister to others in a way in which all will emerge from the weekend with a new and **revitalized** faith which will manifest itself in many ways in our personal lives and well as our congregation. We hope that you will not only participate in the weekend but will contribute to making it happen.

There are many ways that you will be able to contribute.

- ◆ host team member(s)
- ◆ host a Saturday Morning Coffee
- ◆ make your favorite dishes for the covered dish meal
- ◆ bring a friend
- ◆ pray for the success of the weekend.

The opportunities for your participation will be posted in the bulletin and throughout the church. I pray that this is something that all of us will get excited about as we begin our planning. The date for the weekend is April 16–April 18.

***In faith we'll gather round the table  
To taste and share what love can do  
This is a day of new beginnings  
Our God is making all things new.***

—Anita Jackson, Lay Leader

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

Mailing address: P. O. Box 953  
Staunton, VA 24402

Telephone: (540) 886-3441

FAX: (540) 886-5771

e-mail: [centralumc@centralumcstaunton.org](mailto:centralumc@centralumcstaunton.org)

[www.centralumcstaunton.org](http://www.centralumcstaunton.org)

**The Central Connection** Editor: Agnes Campbell

## IN MINISTRY

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

Resident Bishop. .... Charlene Payne Kammerer  
District Superintendent. .... Kathleen Overby Webster  
Pastor..... Stephanie M. Sault  
Pastoral Assistant..... Daniel K. Purdom  
Retired Missionary Professor..... Hunter P. Mabry  
Professor MBC..... Kenneth A. Beals  
Minister of Music/Organist..... Sherry von Oeyen



# Lenten & Easter Schedule



## WEDNESDAY NOON LENTEN SERVICES AND LUNCHEONS

12:05 p.m. each Wednesday

### **Preaching/Serving Lunch:**

#### March 3

Rev. Patricia Meadows, St. John's UMC

#### March 10

Rev. Jeff Allen, St. Paul's UMC

#### March 17

Rev. Doug Akers, Marquis Memorial UMC

#### March 24

Rev. Don Warrick, Cherryvale UMC

A short Worship/Devotional Service will be held in the Sanctuary, following which a Soup and Sandwich Luncheon will be served in the Fellowship Hall (\$2 donation). The service and lunch time are planned to fit into the noon "lunch hour." Both are open to the public, and everyone is invited to participate.

## **EASTER TREE PROJECT**

**March 7-28**



Names of area needy children (along with pertinent sizes, etc.) are listed on the Mission Cart. By selecting a name you may bless the child with an age-appropriate toy, an outfit, shoes, story book, candy, etc. Gifts need to be brought no later than Palm Sunday so they may be distributed to the families before Easter. Please include the rabbit name tag on the gift. (Please sign your name on the list.)

Each butterfly on the tree has the name and address of one of our homebound members. We invite you to take one or more and send Easter greetings.

Thank you for taking this opportunity to share the joy of Easter.

## PALM SUNDAY— March 28

(10:30 Parade through downtown, begins at Trinity Episcopal Church)

Morning Worship Service 11:00

## MAUNDY THURSDAY – April 1

Service, 7:30 p.m. (Please note time change)

## Good Friday – April 2

Service 7:30 p.m.

(Please note time change)



(In addition to our Good Friday service, Trinity Episcopal Church invites everyone to participate in the Stations of the Cross walk through downtown Staunton, beginning 11:00 a.m. at Woodrow Wilson Birthplace.)

## EASTER — April 11

Morning Worship Service 11:00 a.m.

Invite your family, friends, and neighbors to the greatest celebration of the Christian year!

### EASTER OFFERING

- + What shall I give during Lent?
- + How shall I celebrate the wonderful victory of Easter?



## **THE POWER OF LOVE AND THE UNITED METHODIST WOMEN**

By Luz M. de Tablan, President UMW

Yesterday while it was snowing outside, I was on my bed reading a book entitled: *CHRIST AND THE FINE ARTS* by Cynthia Pearl Maus. The book is an anthology of pictures, poetry, music, and stories centering in the Life of Christ. While reading the book, my attention was caught by the word: Motivation. I stopped my reading and asked myself this question: What motivates me in joining the United Methodist Women, my eagerness to belong, and what is that strong force that drives me to be a part of this women's group.

I know that to some people they are driven by fear, greed, fame and some other incentives. Others see faith as a primary motivation or incentive. I am a member of the United Methodist Women for quite some time now, and if I have to answer this question: what is the strongest motivation in my life which makes me desire to be with United Methodist Women, my answer will be because of LOVE. I found out that when love is present in a person's life, it is one of the most powerful motivating forces known. It's not only I who can attest to this truth, but I have seen this in the life of the members of the United Methodist Women. Love drives each member to put her words into deeds and actions and they know that no one can, in her strength, carry out all these actions of love. It is impossible apart from the almighty power of God, who is the source of love.

The United Methodist Women acts on love, they have trusted God as their personal Savior and they have the capacity to love, the willingness to sacrifice and to be kind towards others whether or not they are kind to them. Love teaches us to be kind and that conveys the idea of healing, which means being willing to go out of our way to lift a person up. Our United Methodist Women have many opportunities for kindness, because discouragement, disillusionment, and despair abound. They often times get beyond themselves to let God's love flow through them. They also believe that if you and I belong to God, we lay down our rights. We do not necessarily allow people to trample us; we simply do not regard our rights as our primary concern. Instead we focus on allowing the love of God to flow through us to the other person. The power and the capacity to love is available, even in the midst of horrible or embarrassing mistreatment. God's love enables us to see the hurt in other people's lives and to hate evil that befalls them unjustly. The United Methodist Women always say: "love never fails," and the proper response always is love; that God is waiting to lead us into abundant life, redeemed by His love.



### **CHARITY WATCHDOG GROUP GIVES UMCOR AN A+ RATING**

The American Institute of Philanthropy (AIP), a leading charity watchdog that issues letter grade (A+ to F) ratings of nonprofit groups, has given United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR) an A+ based on the portion of UMCOR's budget that goes to program services (100%) and its fund-raising efficiency. UMCOR was one of only four organizations involved in Haitian earthquake relief efforts that were given the highest rating by AIP.



## MUSIC NOTES

Most of us are familiar with Johann Sebastian Bach, an 18<sup>th</sup> century German composer and musician.

Bach was a devout Lutheran and also very knowledgeable about Martin Luther’s theology and very influenced by Luther’s promotion of church music. You could say that Luther was the initial promoter of congregational singing, particularly the hymn. He believed that music, under God, was of supreme importance. He described it as “the greatest gift of God which has often induced and inspired me to preach.”

Luther himself wrote hymns for the congregation to sing, not to be sung only by the choir. His worship services were filled with music—all to be sung as the believer’s response to the grace of God. His tradition of congregational hymnody is one of the great gifts of the Reformation to the worldwide church. You know his greatest hymn, *A Mighty Fortress Is our God*.

You can see why J. S. Bach became so influenced by Luther’s theology and music practices. A recent biographer, Martin Geck, says, “That God can be found only...through the suffering and cross of Jesus Christ and his followers, is an insight coming from Luther and one that Bach passed down in a great many different ways in the texts of his cantatas and passions but most of all in his music itself.”

*Watch for more on Bach and the Gospel in future newsletters.*

—Sherry von Oeyen, Minister of Music



## LECTIONARY READINGS

- March 7**      Isaiah 55:1-9  
                      Psalm 63:1-8 (UMH 788)  
                      1 Corinthians 10:1-13  
                      Luke 13:1-9
- March 14**     Joshua 5:9-12  
                      Psalm 32 (UMH 766)  
                      2 Corinthians 5:16-21  
                      Luke 15:1-3, 11b–32
- March 21**     Isaiah 43:16-21  
                      Psalm 126 (UMH 847)  
                      Philippians 3:4b–14  
                      John 12:1-8
- March 28**     Liturgy of the Palms  
                      Luke 19:28-40  
                      Psalm 118:1-2, 19-29 (UMH 839)
- Liturgy of the Passion  
                      Isaiah 50:4–9a  
                      Psalm 31:9-16 (UMH 764)  
                      Philippians 2:5-11  
                      Luke 22:14—23:56

## Quote:

Lent is a time for repentance.

Repentance is the process by which we see ourselves, day by day, as we rally are: sinful, needy, dependent people.

It is the process by which we see God as He is: awesome, majestic and holy.

—Charles Colson

in *From Against the Night: Living in the New Dark Ages*

## APPORTIONMENTS 101:

### BLACK COLLEGE FUND – *What is it?*



Following the Civil War, the former Methodist Episcopal Church organized the Freedmen's Aid Society to help educate Black people newly freed from slavery. Between 1866 and 1882, the society established more than 70 schools in the U.S. South and Southwest. Today, 11 colleges from that

group—some created by mergers with other institutions—continue to educate people from all backgrounds.

The 1972 General Conference established the Black College Fund apportionment, which provides a constant reliable way to support United Methodist-related historically Black colleges' operations, programs, and capital improvements. Today The United Methodist Church supports 11 historically Black colleges and universities, more than any other religious denominations.

The Black College Fund helps:

- Maintain solid, challenging academic programs; strong faculties; and well-equipped buildings.
- Create vibrant spiritual environments that encourage pride and self-esteem in the accomplishments of African Americans.
- Provide the opportunity for approximately 16,000 students to interact with academic staffs that serve as strong cultural and spiritual mentors.
- Prepare and educate people for the new global technological world—never veering from an academic excellence based on the Christian perspective of community, service, and social responsibility.

In 2009, Central's share of Black College Fund was \$722. We didn't pay any of this amount. In 2010 Central's share is \$765.

## ONE GREAT HOUR OF SHARING

Share the goodness of life with those who hurt.



Giving to One Great Hour of Sharing enables the United Methodist Committee on Relief to keep our promise that 100 percent of your designated gift goes entirely to specific causes.

SUNDAY, MARCH 14

Purpose:

"Lent is the season of repentance, self-examination, and awareness of the hurts of the people of the world. One Great Hour of Sharing calls the Church to share the goodness of life with those who hurt."

(Par. 263.2, *The Book of Discipline 2008*)

History

In 1946, One Great Hour of Sharing began as a special effort of the Episcopal Church. In 1949, the observance became ecumenical. Originally, one special worship hour during the year was reserved for people of faith to contribute over and above their regular offerings. Today different denominations celebrate One Great Hour of Sharing on various dates, but the cooperative spirit remains.

Recipients

Many people around the world lack necessities of life such as food, shelter and clothing. The One Great Hour of Sharing offering makes those necessities a reality by sharing the goodness of life with those who hurt. **When a catastrophe occurs, your offerings to One Great of Sharing assist the United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR) to provide humanitarian aid. By giving to One Great Hour of Sharing, you enable UMCOR to keep the promise that 100 percent of designated gifts go to the specific causes.** Unlike other mission programs, UMCOR receives no World Service or other apportionment money. God calls us to be the hands, heart and hope of the church for people who are suffering. Through the One Great Hour of Sharing offering, we enable the church to answer that call.

Receipts

In 2008, the One Great Hour of Sharing offering totaled \$3,212,946, an average of only 41 cents per U.S. member. If every member gave \$1, that would total more than \$7.8 million!



## **STOP HUNGER NOW**

Packaging Event

**Saturday, March 20**

**8:30 a.m.**

(A light breakfast will be served 8:00–8:30.)

**Christ UMC, 1512 Churchville Avenue**

Goal: To Package 20,000 Meals for Haiti

You're invited to help:

- Donations of money (checks payable to Central UMC, marked for Stop Hunger Now)
- Volunteer your time (sign up sheet in Gathering Area; or see Pastor Stephanie)
- Pray – for this event, the volunteers, the hungry in the world
- You may sign up in the Gathering Room—or just show up to help!

### **WHAT IS STOP HUNGER NOW?**

Stop Hunger Now is an international hunger relief organization that coordinates the distribution of food and other life-saving aid around the world. The organization is driven by a vision to end world hunger in our lifetime and a mission to provide food and life-saving aid to the world's most destitute and hungry in the most sustainable, efficient and effective manner. In its ten-year history, Stop Hunger Now has provided over \$66 million dollars worth of direct aid and 20 million meals to more than 70 countries worldwide

Stop Hunger Now's meal packaging program provides volunteers the opportunity to package dehydrated, high protein, and highly nutritious meals that are used in crisis situations and in school feeding programs for schools and orphanages in developing countries around the world.

Stop Hunger Now created its meal packaging program, Operation Sharehouse, in 2005. The program perfected the assembly process that combines rice, soy, dehydrated vegetables and a flavoring mix including 21 essential vitamins and minerals into small meal packets. Each meal costs only 25 cents. The food stores easily, has a shelf-life of five years and transports quickly.

In 2007, more than 3.5 million meals were assembled. Surpassing projections, another 5.9 million meals were packaged in 2008 and 8.6 million in 2009.

**STAUNTON DISTRICT  
LAITY CELEBRATION BANQUET**

**Friday, March 12, 2010**

**6:00 p.m. Gathering**

**6:30 p.m. Dinner**

**Virginia Horse Center, Lexington, VA**



**Guest**

**Speaker:**

**Sparky Woods  
Head Football Coach, VMI**

Cost \$12.00 per person

For tickets: Contact the District Office

email [StauntonDistrict@vaumc.org](mailto:StauntonDistrict@vaumc.org)

or phone 540-932-1055, by March 5, 2010

**Reservations required**

Sparky Woods enters his second season as head coach of the Virginia Military Institute football program after guiding

the Keydets with a steady hand in his debut year.

Woods is a 1976 graduate of Carson-Newman and began his coaching career at Tennessee later that year. In 1977, he moved to Kansas before serving one year as defensive backs coach at North Alabama in 1978. From 1979-82 he coached at Iowa State, handling the receivers, before joining Appalachian State in 1983 as offensive coordinator, quarterbacks, and running backs coach under Mack Brown. One year later, Woods was named head coach at Appalachian State.

Woods and his wife, Jean Ann, reside in Lexington and have two children, a son, Casey (26) who is on the football coaching staff at Auburn, and a daughter, Emily (21) who is a senior at Alabama.





# Central United Methodist Church

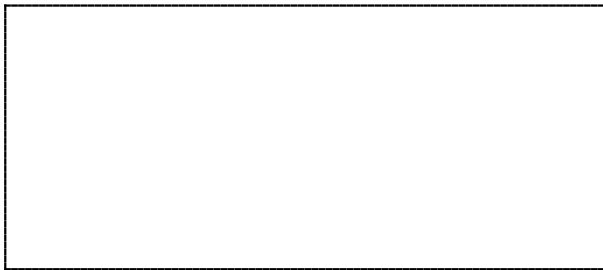
Lewis Street at Beverley  
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March 2010

Return Service Requested



*The following is probably not a true story. Nevertheless, it holds a great lesson for all of us.*

His name is Bill. He has wild hair, wears a T-shirt with holes in it, jeans, and no shoes. This was literally his wardrobe for his entire four years of college. He is brilliant, profound and very, very bright. He became a Christian while attending college.

Across the street from the campus is a well-dressed, very conservative church. They want to develop a ministry to the students but are not sure how to go about it. One day Bill decides to go there. He walks in with no shoes, jeans, his T-shirt, and wild hair. The service has already started and so Bill starts down the aisle looking for a seat. By now, people are really looking a bit uncomfortable, but no one says anything. Bill gets closer and closer and closer to the pulpit, and when he realizes there are no seats, he just squats down right on the carpet.

By now people are really uptight, and the tension in the air is thick. About this time, the minister realizes that from way at the back of the church, a deacon is slowly making his way toward Bill.

Now the deacon is in his eighties, has silver-gray hair, and a three-piece suit. The deacon is a godly man, very elegant, very dignified, and very courtly. He walks with a cane, and, as he starts walking toward this boy, everyone is saying to

themselves that you can't blame him for what he's going to do. How can you expect a man of his age and of his background to understand some college kid on the floor?

It takes a long time for the man to reach the boy. The church is utterly silent except for the clicking of the man's cane. All eyes are focused on him. You can't even hear anyone breathing. The minister can't even begin preaching until the

deacon does what he has to do. And now they see this elderly man drop his cane on the floor. With great difficulty, he lowers himself and sits down next to Bill and worships with him so he won't be alone. Everyone chokes up with emotion.

When the minister gains control, he says, "What I'm about to preach, you will never remember. What you have just seen, you will never forget."

Be careful how you live. You may be the only Bible some people will ever read!

