



# Almena UMC

## Newsletter

### January-February 2018

269-668-2811

[www.almenaumc.com](http://www.almenaumc.com)

Greetings Friends,

Each year U.M. Pastors are required to submit a summary of their ministry in the Congregation and the World. I present an abbreviated version below to give an accounting of my leadership over the past year. Other leaders' yearend reports are also included.

In 2017 Almena UMC baptized 2 infants and added 3 new members. We also said goodbye to 4 members by death and 16 more by withdrawal, leaving our membership at 89. Our average attendance at worship was 62 and in Sunday School 18. AUMC paid 100% of its ministry shares and gave generously to many additional causes.

#### Ministering within the Congregation and to the World

Within the Congregation I have ministered through weekly preaching and teaching in the pulpit, visitation at hospitals, homes, and nursing centers. I have taught a Pathfinder Sunday School class all school year, as well as teaching new member classes and leading quarterly training sessions for our 6 Care Ministers. I have counseled parishioners on a variety of personal and ethical issues. I've had the privilege of preparing parents for their children's baptism, and have officiated with compassion at 9 funerals. One of the joys of 2017 has been leading the congregation in preparing for and celebrating our 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Ministry in the Almena Community.

In the World, I have ministered by leading and participating in many outreach and mission projects. I attended all outreach events at the church, and use the opportunity to be an ambassador for Christ and a welcoming presence for the church. We hosted 4 community dinners, 7 funeral luncheons, and a grand summer picnic for the whole community. I participated in Conference camping ministries by cleaning and building at Crystal Springs Camp and Spirit Journey of Northport. I led worship and communion at Crystal Springs, and advocated for sending 5 campers on scholarship. Our partnership with United Christian Services of Eastern Van Buren County included my bi-monthly attendance at meetings as well as training church drivers for food pickups, and coordinating financial support on an as needed basis. I also administered Almena's Helping Hand Fund, which gave \$2,240 over 23 cases in 2017. I've been a hands-on member of our Mission team, organizing ministry moments in worship, collecting and cheering for donations of diapers, dorm supplies, final exam kits, money and servant ministers. We were happy to host our missionary Rev. Paul Webster and his assistant Silvester at a luncheon, followed by the tour the Rickli's farm. In cooperation with Almena's Native American Representative and our Men's Group, I have built relationships with members at the Salem-Bradley

Indian Missions and at Spirit Journey of Northport. I am pleased to share that overall Almena gave away approximately 16% of our total income to mission causes.

#### Administering the Temporal Affairs of the Congregation

In partnership with our Administrative committees, we have accomplished much in 2017. Our trustees upgraded our front signage and garden, resealed the parking lot, re-sided the sanctuary and properly disposed of asbestos siding. Our Staff Parish Relations Committee hired 2 new staff members and oversaw our Safety Policy. Our finances are in good order, having been annually audited by an outside professional. All of our ministry shares and bills have been paid in full, and the church has no debt. Financially in 2017 our income exceeded expenses by \$1,400.

#### Pastor's Program of Continuing Education and Spiritual Growth

Your pastor's continuing education included regular meetings with a Spiritual Director, four days of retreats, monthly Clergy Cluster meetings, and attendance at a dozen training workshops. Topics included "Being Mortal", Wesleyan Discipleship, Stewardship, Baby Boomer Ministry, Mission Insite Training, "Meet Your Muslim Neighbor", Visioning workshop, Faith Forums on Ecumenical relations, and a Justice for Our Neighbors training and workshop assisting refugees in getting green cards.

I am grateful for the opportunity to serve as pastor at Almena UMC, and thankful for the individuals entrusted to my spiritual care. –Pastor Donna Keyte

### **KALAMAZOO DISTRICT NEWS**

The boundaries of the new Michigan Conference Districts have been announced. The new Districts will be operational on July 1. District Superintendent Dwayne Bagley is seeking suggestions for a name for District 7, currently made up of Kalamazoo District plus many Albion District Churches. Considerations for new names would ideally include geographic identity. Send suggestions to [mandana@kalamazoodistrict.org](mailto:mandana@kalamazoodistrict.org). or call at 372-7525.

#### **WEST MICHIGAN CONFERENCE NEWS - Equalization Members to Annual Conference in Traverse City**

The Conference Board of Laity is seeking people to serve as Equalization Lay Members to the 2018 Annual Conference. Lay Members shall have been professing members of The UMC for at least two years and shall have been active participants in The UMC for at least 4 years (except for youth). You must be able to attend the entire Annual Conference session May 31-June 3, 2018. If you are interested in serving in this role, please contact Wynne Hurlbut by February 1 at (269)720-0741 or [wynne\\_hurlbut@frontier.com](mailto:wynne_hurlbut@frontier.com). The Board of Laity will be making their selections at their February meeting.

#### **Lay Servant Classes**

Kalamazoo District Lay Servant classes will be held **Saturdays, March 10 and 24** from 9am-3pm at Vicksburg UMC. The following classes will be offered: Basic, Leading Worship, and Transforming Evangelism. Classes are free - order your own book and bring a sack lunch. [Register online](https://forms.michiganumc.org/kalamazoo-district-spring-2018-lay-servant-classes) by March 3<sup>rd</sup> at: [forms.michiganumc.org/kalamazoo-district-spring-2018-lay-servant-classes](https://forms.michiganumc.org/kalamazoo-district-spring-2018-lay-servant-classes). AUMC will reimburse participants for their books. If you need help registering, or need reimbursement for books, see Pastor Donna or Lorraine deBaptiste.

## **NEIGHBORHOOD BIBLE STUDY**

2017 proved to be a great year for our group with the study of biblical scriptures and a time of enjoying friends starting with coffee and visiting at 10 a.m. each Monday. At 10:30 bible study begins with a lively discussion, as we learn about various biblical subjects that give us direction and peace for daily living. Each week, we collect quarters and have donated to various church missions.

A thank you to Lorraine deBaptiste and our "tech" girl, Jackie Coons, who have helped leading our study. Later in the year we voted to begin teachings by Joyce Meyer and therefore enjoyed her two DVDs and handbooks discussing THE MIND CONNECTION as well as THE BOOK OF JAMES, each being a four week study.

In December we sent out 22 Christmas Devotional booklets to shut-ins and visited many through the week and year.

The group enjoyed a Christmas get-together on December 18 with singing holiday songs with Anita Rumery at the piano. During this time several shared Christmas stories. Later the group invited Dave Heim to take novelty pictures of each person for a fun time. The group went to lunch afterwards.

Approximately 10-15 people attended each Monday from various places, and have come together and have become like family in many ways by praying together and caring to help others less fortunate. It is always good to see new people attend.

## **LAMB OF GOD at CHENERY AUDITORIUM**

As part of our observance of a Holy Lent in 2018, all are invited to join in attending a very special performance of "Lamb of God" on Friday March 23<sup>rd</sup>. at 7pm at Chenery Auditorium. The "Lamb of God" website ([lambofgodkalamazoo.com](http://lambofgodkalamazoo.com)) provides a sample video and many details, including an opportunity to participate as a choir member. From the website we share:

"During the last four Easter seasons, stirring performances of Rob Gardner's oratorio, Lamb of God, left Kalamazoo audiences spellbound. A sacred musical retelling of the final days of the life of Jesus Christ, His Atonement and Resurrection, the Lamb of God tells the story through the eyes of those who loved Jesus and knew Him best. Whether you experience the Lamb of God as a captivated audience member or play a part in it as a musician, choir member, soloist or narrator, you will leave transformed by the power and truth of this witness of God's love. So come live this Scripture-based masterpiece in its triumphant return to Kalamazoo. Discover why this miraculous combination of song, music and the spoken word has the power to transform."

Group tickets are \$12 each and can be reserved by signing up in Fellowship Hall by February 4<sup>th</sup>. Cash payments can be made by February 18. See Lorraine deBaptiste for details. Car pools will leave from AUMC at 6PM on Friday, March 23<sup>rd</sup>.

**Outreach and Missions Ministry 2018 January and February Update**  
**from J. Nette**

Happy New Year church family! A special “Thank you” to Julie Waldron for your 2 years of service and Missions outreach leadership.

Church family, thank you! Through 2017, our prayers, generous support and energy have comforted so many in so many ways. Here are some of the many 2017 highlights of our church family reaching out through our Missions/Outreach ministries:

Spirit Journey Camp Support (camp construction)	Eleanor’s Pantry Support (cash, food, and 167 diaper/wipes packs)	Wings of God Partners
Funeral Lunches	United Christian Services Support	Crop Walk Participation
Soup Suppers and Harvest Dinner	Quilts and Blankets for foster kids	Relationship built with Salem/Bradley Indian Mission (Todd Harmon)
Camp Scholarships Provided, including for foster children (6)	Seita Scholars- Dorm Supplies and Final Exam Packages	Foster Care Coalition-attend meetings, leadership, donations
Crystal Springs Support (Crawford Cabin, counselors, worship leader)	AUMC College Students Final Exam Care Packages (150 donated!!)	Meals for Church members
Wesley Foundation Support	Celebrated 150th Anniversary Hosting a Community Picnic Party	Christmas Party for ~100 Kalamazoo Foster Families
UMCOR: Disaster Relief, Justice for Neighbors, Committee on Relief (helps combat human trafficking, clean water, and safe water)	Fair Food Matters, Bethany Christian Services, Van Buren Domestic Violence Coalition	Helping Hand-AUMC Community Support

*Here are upcoming Mission/Outreach opportunities in 2018 January and February.*

**Soup/Salad Suppers:**

AUMC has continued the tradition of hosting Soup/Salad Community Dinners on the third Saturday of the month. Join us **January 20<sup>th</sup>** and **February 17<sup>th</sup>** for fellowship and delish food. Are you wondering if there are ways you can be part of this special outreach? If you can help, please sign up in the fellowship hall. If you have any questions, please see Marcia Williams or Sheila Croy. Soup Supper starts at 4:30 and ends at 6:30. The proceeds from Soup and Salad Supper for January will go for camp scholarships.

**CPR Training:** We are blessed to be able to arrange practical and potential life-saving certified CPR training at AUMC. If you haven’t already signed up and are interested, please sign up in the fellowship hall. Save the date for Saturday Feb. 24<sup>th</sup> 9 am- 1 pm. (Outreach Donations will be accepted to help us with the per-person cost)

**January Missions:** Our special globe offerings are to support our very-own Methodist missionary, Paul Webster in Mujali Falls Agricultural Center, Zambia.

**Foster kids / Seita Scholars:** Are you interested in learning about helping kids in care, their foster families, or their service providers? Do you have a heart for supporting aged-out youth or college students that have been part of the foster care system? There are many ways to share your gifts. The Missions/Outreach committee will help those interested to explore foster care related support opportunities in 2018. Here are some foster care related websites-

- [www.faithcommunitiescoalition.org](http://www.faithcommunitiescoalition.org)
- WMU Seita Scholars/Fostering Success Program: Interested in helping out more- possible mentor?
- [www.wmich.edu/fosteringsuccess](http://www.wmich.edu/fosteringsuccess) Click on the link for Seita Scholars... this website is a great way to see what's happening to support at risk kids, the families, care providers and case workers.

### **Words of Wisdom**

What I do today is very important because I'm exchanging a day of my life for it.