



# Almena UMC

## Newsletter

May-June 2018

269-668-2811

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

Greetings Friends,

From the feedback we received it seems that the return of Holy Humor Sunday was a welcome addition to our church calendar. Thanks to our "Travelin' Wayfarer", Lynne Meintz, for leading an A-maze-ing and joyful celebration of worship. In the midst of many struggles it is easy to have the joy seep out of our daily lives, but last Sunday was a good reminder that the Joy of the Lord is our strength. As we travel now through spring and early summer, below are some activities to keep in mind.

On May 13<sup>th</sup>, Mother's Day, we'll not have our usual potluck meal so that folks can spend time with family. However, the following week, **May 20** we'll have a family fun time after church with an **ice cream social** and activities in the front parking lot. Please park your cars to the sides that day to reserve space for our Ice Cream Social. This is a great day to bring a friend to church and stay afterwards for fun and games.

May 20th is our last day of Pathfinder classes and of our school-year Schedule. It is also the deadline for applying for camp scholarships. Starting the next Sunday, **May 27<sup>th</sup> worship will be at 10AM** and there will be no Pathfinder classes. Fall hours resume September 16.

May 27 is also the day before Memorial Day. We will take a **memorial walk** to the Almena Cemetery after church to decorate the graves of Almena members and friends who served or gave their lives for our country. All are welcome to join in this simple act of remembrance and thanksgiving.

**June 3<sup>rd</sup> is Pentecost Sunday**, "the birthday of the church". You are invited to wear RED to church as a reminder of the tongues of flame that appeared over the apostle's on the first day of Pentecost.

Finally, **June 10<sup>th</sup> is graduate recognition Sunday**. Let Pastor Donna know if you know of anyone connected to our church who will be graduating from high school or beyond so that we might recognize them. After church our Men's group will host a game of Wiffle ball in the backyard. Players are welcome from all ages and genders; whoever shows up to play will be divided into teams. June 10 is also potluck Sunday. Hot dogs and buns will be provided, but additional side dishes and desserts are welcome. So bring a dish to pass and a lawn chair if you like, otherwise picnic tables are available in our shelter.

Finally, as you travel through this season, remember that the Lord himself will go before you. He will be with you; he will not leave you or forget you. Do not be afraid, and do no worry. (Deuteronomy 31:8).

The Joy of the Lord is our strength!  
Pastor Donna

**Lisa Batten Open House:** Almena has had a long standing relationship with the Wesley Foundation of Kalamazoo, so it is with joy and sorrow that we announce the departure of Rev. Lisa Batten as Director and Campus Pastor at WMU. Lisa will be moving into a new ministry opportunity as the Young Adult and Campus Ministry Coordinator *for the Michigan Area UMC*. A celebration to mark her eleven years of ministry is being held Friday May 25<sup>th</sup>, with Open House from 6:00-7:15, and a Celebratory Worship at 7:15. Anyone is welcome to attend Lisa's celebration and visit the ministry center that we helped to build. It is located on the western edge of campus at 2350 Ring Road North, Kalamazoo.

Summer Hours Begin  
May 27, 2018  
10:00 AM Worship  
No Pathfinders Christian Education

**PRIDE Training Ministry Begins in June**

In June Almena UMC will become the host site for PRIDE Training for Foster Parents in Van Buren County. PRIDE training offers valuable information to prepare people to take children into their homes and hearts. Every licensed foster parent must complete 24 hours of training, which is administered through the Family Enrichment Center of Battle Creek. The full schedule for 2018 is below. Every other month we will host 3 daylong trainings, from 10am - 4pm.



We are pleased to announce that **Marie Wilke-Dolber** will be Almena's Pride Training Scheduler, working to get AUMC volunteers to assist the trainers in getting set up each day. Many in the church have already expressed a willingness to help by either being a "key" person to let the trainers in, or by being an on-call trouble-shooter in case of technical difficulties with the internet. If you have not yet had a chance to offer your time or talent for this ministry of hospitality, please let Marie know. A signup sheet is also posted on the bulletin board in Fellowship Hall, where you can select a specific date to serve. Simple training will be provided late May or early June.

**PRIDE TRAINING SCHEDULE – All are Thursdays**

June 7	Aug. 9	Oct. 4	Dec. 6
June 14	Aug. 16	Oct. 11	Dec. 13
June 21	Aug. 23	Oct. 18	Dec. 20

Thank you church! By supporting the training with our prayers, space, time and talent, we are supporting the biblical mandate to care for widows and orphans, in the name of Christ.

## Outreach and Missions Ministry 2018 Spring Update: from J. Nette

Hurray, spring is Finally Here! Let's take a moment to give thanks to God for the beauty of nature and for Christian fellowship. On behalf of our Missions/Outreach Committee, we say "thank you!" Our AUMC church family continues to share God's love...you provide prayers, creative support and energy that in turn provides comfort and material support to so many people in need. To help keep us be connected and aware...

Did you know that our Missions/Outreach committee has posted our monthly globe offerings and (\$ donated) on the bulletin board in the fellowship hall?

- Please know that you can share your ideas, and/ or share ways you've served with a member of the Missions/Outreach committee. Please see Marcia Williams, Todd Harmon, Beth Rozeveld, Jen Nette (269-598-5519), or Pastor Donna
  - Opportunity...We have signup sheets in the fellowship hall to provide a family meal, arrange for altar flowers, fellowship snack hosting and other ways to help

In **February**, 10 AUMC members received American Heart Association CPR/AED certification training. We wanted to offer this training so that we may better help in an emergency. *A special thanks to Beth Rozeveld and her colleague for teaching us!* Chris Robbins, Janet Swigart, Jen Nette, Bob and Joanne Wright, Sheila Croy, Jerry Lentz, Leah Pillar, Laura Sweet, and Deidre Sweet are certified.



At Almena UMC we are  
**Being and Building Disciples of Christ**

Here are some of AUMC 2018 Outreach March and April highlights:

March	April
Wings of God (Special Good Friday collection) raised \$371	Global Refugee Migration-Advance 3022144 (globe collection)
Spirit Journey Campground-raised \$478	AUMC Family/Game Night
UMCOR Sunday raised \$569	Crop Walk-raised \$ for local food support
Family meals and notes of support provided to families needing support (6)	6 Family Meals provided, and 9 cards mailed to college students to let them know we're thinking of them
Men's Group: Coordinated Crystal Springs clean-up for Crawford cabin and grounds)	Native American Church Salem/Bradley Indian Mission (Todd Harmon)
Kicked off AUMC Family/Game Night (17 attended)	Helping Hand-AUMC Emergency Community Support
Native American Church Salem/Bradley Indian Mission (Todd Harmon visited)	Hardings Food Pick up/Donations- AUMC members provided donations to local food pantries
Helping Hand-AUMC Community Support	United Christian Services-Marcia W. represents AUMC on the board and helps communicate and coordinate needs and donations
<i>Show Me the Money:</i> Deidre shared her skills and talents providing financial responsibility and budgeting strategies via United Christian Services Outreach)	AUMC Worship on the Road shared at White Oaks Assisted Living in Lawton
Hardings Food Pick up/Donations- AUMC members provided donations & delivery to local food pantries.	
United Christian Services-Marcia W. represents AUMC on the board and helps communicate and coordinate needs and donations	

*Upcoming Mission/Outreach opportunities in 2018 May*

**May Missions:**

- Our special globe offerings are to support Martin Luther King Academy-Grand Rapids. This is an important safe school and mentoring community for at communities in GR. (This is an Advance Lane 5 outreach).
- We'll have a returnable can collection at the end of this month to raise \$ for foster kids/Seita scholars
- Family Fun at AUMC- Ice Cream Social after Church - Bring a friend!
- End of May...We will be setting up a garden veggies/fruits/flowers table in the fellowship hall...Weekly, you can bring your surplus garden goodies to share w/ the church and extras will be donated to local food pantries
- We are having a food drive for Wings of God (a Paw Paw group home for recently incarcerated women transitioning back into society), Bring in donations the first two weeks of the month
- May is **National Foster Care / Adoption Awareness month!** We'll have information and prayer cards for you to take home
  - NOTE: Foster Care PRIDE Training preparations will be happening in May AUMC can host foster care training every other month through the end of the year. Our PRIDE volunteer coordinator is Marie Wilke-Dolber.



**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. 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.

### **Update on the Commission on a Way Forward**

Below are excerpts from a March 14, 2018 publication by the United Methodist News Service. It is included here to keep you abreast of potential changes in the future of the United Methodist denomination. A church-wide General Conference will be held in February of 2019 to discern and vote on a path forward. The “Commission on a Way Forward” is a bishop-appointed group of clergy and laity that has been meeting since January 2017 in various places throughout the global denomination to assist the bishops in their charge to lead the church forward amid the present impasse related to LGBTQ inclusion and resulting questions about the unity of the church.



The denomination’s Council of Bishops recently held a meeting to discuss options presented by the **Commission on a Way Forward**. At the end of the meeting, the bishops announced that they were asking the 32-member Way Forward Commission to continue working on two possible models for the church’s future.

- **The one-church model:** Under this plan, each annual conference would be able to decide whether to ordain LGBTQ individuals as clergy. Each pastor would be able to decide whether to perform same-sex weddings or unions. Each local church would be able to decide whether to allow same-sex weddings in its sanctuary or receive an openly gay pastor. Those who could not in good conscience participate in same-sex weddings or ordination of LGBTQ clergy would not be required to do so. Central conferences — church regions in Africa, Europe and the Philippines — could maintain their own standards on ordination and marriage, just as they do now.
- **The multi-branch, one-church model:** Under this plan, United Methodists would share doctrine, services and one Council of Bishops, while also creating different branches. The five U.S. jurisdictions would be replaced by three connectional conferences, each covering the whole country, based on theology and perspective on LGBTQ ministry — progressive, contextual and traditional branches. Contextual means allowing churches flexibility in ministry with LGBTQ people as best fits their mission field. Annual conferences would decide with which connectional conference to affiliate. Central conferences would remain as they are or could choose to affiliate with one of the three connectional conferences.
- Under either plan, congregations that did not want to remain in The United Methodist Church would be able to exit under terms not yet spelled out.
- Not listed in the bishops’ press release was what commission members call the “traditionalist model,” which affirms the church’s current bans on same-gender marriage and the ordination of “self-avowed practicing” gay clergy. That model also aims to add more strength to enforcement of

those restrictions. While not on the list, the traditionalist model is not off the table, said Dakotas-Minnesota Area Bishop Bruce R. Ough, the Council of Bishops president.

- “We continue to think deeply about the values held by traditionalist, centrist and progressive elements of The United Methodist Church and are seeking to consider how these various values inform and impact the various sketches of a way forward,” Ough said. “We continue to invite and welcome new ideas.”

### **DISTRICT 7 UNITING CONFERENCE—Saturday, May 12**

Our Lay Leader Jackie Coons would be happy to have a few church members join in attending the District 7 Uniting Conference. The purpose is to organize and celebrate the ministry of the more than 100 churches in the new District 7. (Formed from Kalamazoo and part of Albion Districts.) This inspirational event will include a special message from DS Dwayne Bagley, remarks from Bishop Bard, and Holy Communion followed by lunch and fellowship. The new District name will also be announced. Registration at [KalamazooDistrict.org](http://KalamazooDistrict.org). Let Jackie know if you plan to attend.

This will be held from 9am-Noon on info with lunch after and will be held at the Pathfinder Church, 8740 S. Westnedge Avenue, Portage.

### **FAMILY FUN**

Those that have attended Family Fun Night have been having a great time. We have great fellowship, good food, and LOTS of fun. We are hopeful more of you can join us in the future and BRING A FRIEND OR TWO.

**May 20<sup>th</sup>** immediately after church, we will be having an ice Cream Social. **Ice Cream** for all!! Sidewalk chalk and bubbles for the kids of all ages to play with.

**June 10<sup>th</sup>** will be the **Wiffle Ball Game** immediately after church. There will be further information closer to that time. All ages will play, cheer, or both.

**July 15<sup>th</sup>** is a **Growlers Baseball Game** in Kalamazoo. Game starts promptly at 3:05 pm. We will have a tailgate party at church before we go. Tickets are \$9.00 each and includes a hat. You pay what you are able, and the church will pay the balance. More information as it draws closer.

We hope to see lots of folks at these upcoming events. Bring a friend, a neighbor, or a stranger. One never knows just who might appear! These are open to everyone.

Have you ever noticed how many ordinary people God used in Scripture to do extraordinary things?

- Abraham was just an ordinary older guy living his daily routine in a town called Ur
- Joseph was a written-off teenage victim of human trafficking
- Daniel was a forgotten Babylonian captive
- Amos was just a regular guy taking care of fig trees and sheep
- Nehemiah was a guy whose job was to drink first out of the king's cup and not die
- David was the overlooked, youngest child shepherding the herd
- Peter and John were fishermen
- Mary was a young bride-to-be
- Joseph was a carpenter
- Lydia was a street vendor

God is using ordinary people to start fresh expressions of church all around the world.

UNITE in Christ



GROW in Faith



MAKE a Difference



REJOICE in the Lord

