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# The Messenger

## February 2008



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February 3: Title: *Imagine* Text: Revelation 7: 9-17. Rev. Brolin Parker will lead us in worship.

February 6: **Ash Wednesday**– A soup and bread dinner at 6:00p.m. followed by worship at 7:00p.m. centered around the theme “Come into this Circle of Caring”. Worship will include communion and dispensation of ashes. (See related article)

February 10: Rev. Yohang Chun will lead us in Worship.

**Retired Pastors Sunday**– a day to honor all the ministers and spouses who have served our church and are now retired. (see related article)

February 17: Rev. Yohang Chun will lead us in Worship.

February 24: Title: *Prayer and a Rabbit’s Foot* Text: John 14:8-14. Rev. Brolin Parker will lead us in worship.

# **An Invitation to a Lenten Journey**

Ash Wednesday will be noted and celebrated on February 6<sup>th</sup>, 2008. As Ash Wednesday begins our journey of Lent, those 40 days before Easter, you are invited to use this time to look for the ways that God is moving through your life and continues to be made known to you in surprising ways.

Our congregation will gather on Ash Wednesday, Feb. 6<sup>th</sup>, at 6:00 p.m. around a simple provided meal of soup and bread to be followed by a service at 7:00 p.m. of singing, prayers, and the offering of ashes. Let us begin this season of Lent together as I offer this invitation to:

**Come into this circle of caring,  
Come into the community of gentleness, of justice and love.  
Come, and you shall be refreshed.  
Let the healing power of Christ move through you.  
Let the loving kindness of joy pass through you.  
Let hope infuse you.  
Caring is a calling.  
All of us are called.  
So come, during this Season of Lent, to this circle of caring.**

Blessings,

Rev. Brolin

## **Ash Wednesday Worship**

Ash Wednesday is early this year - February 6, 2007. There will be a simple, meatless dinner in the Fellowship Hall at 6:00 p.m., followed by a service in the sanctuary at 7:00 p.m. Sandy Fishbough will once again provide the meal - three kinds of soup, as well as bread and vegetables. All are welcome. If you are planning to attend, please sign up on the clipboard in the Narthex by the end of January, so we have an idea of how much food to prepare. Thanks!



# A Pastoral Letter by Rev. Yohang Chun

I would like to share a story which I found very insightful. There was a man experiencing deep frustration with his work. Each day, his sense of meaninglessness increased, and he could barely force himself to go to work in the morning. When he could stand it no longer, he went to a doctor. The doctor listened to his complaints and then asked him where he was happiest as a child. The man responded that he had been happiest at the beach.

The doctor wrote four directives or “prescriptions” on four slips of paper. The man was instructed to go to a beach the next day. He must arrive before nine. He is to talk to no one, bring no reading material, and follow the directions on the slips of paper at nine, twelve, three, and six o’clock.

The man arrived at the beach well before nine o’clock but was extremely cynical. He was frustrated by the fact that there was no task to complete, no problem he could throw himself into solving. The time passed slowly.

At nine o’clock, he took out the first slip and read, “Listen carefully”. The man concluded that the doctor must be mad. There was nothing to hear. He began walking and noticed that there was a variety of sounds emanating from the surf, sand, and other natural sources. He was attracted by these sounds and soon found himself deep in contemplation. He was thinking about other things: things bigger than himself. He was comforted by this, but still felt he should be engaged in a more productive task.

Noon arrived and he read the next slip: “Try reading back”. Back to what? He wondered. As he continued along the beach, he found himself resurrecting memories of his past relationships. He remembered a fishing expedition with his deceased brother. He relived other family experiences, again feeling love the members of his family had for one another. He was impressed with the happiness he was able to find in his past. Even now, he is warmed by those past experiences.

By three o’clock, he was feeling somewhat relaxed and began to admire the wisdom of the old doctor. He was, however, shocked by the third slip, which read, “Reexamine your motives”. He became very defensive and rationalized his pursuit of money, recognition, and success. After a while, though, a quiet voice inside him suggested that perhaps these motives were not good enough. He began to recognize that an important aspect of alignment had been lost. In the past, his work had always been free and flowing when he felt like he was contributing something, making a sacrifice, rendering a service. As his work situation changed, however, he lost some of those feelings, and now felt entangled in the tentacles of the slow death process.

At six o’clock, he opened the last slip. It read, “Write your worries in the sand”. At this point, he saw the logic in the four thought-provoking statements. Getting outside himself, thinking about the happiness of the past, reflecting on the deep structure of the present, and eventually penetrating his own defenses allowed him to re-examine and re-align his own motives. Once he made those internal adjustments, his external problems were less of an issue. If his motives, conscience, and capabilities were aligned, he would perform to his best ability, no matter what the external problem. In an important way, this man changed the world by changing himself.

From my personal experiences, when I faced some difficult situations, I have tried to find the answers from outside of me, not inside of me. So this story gave me good wisdom.

# Welcoming and Nurturing Ministry

## Team update

by Wendy Cunningham

The past couple of months have found the Team very busy as they worked on several different projects:

### **During November**

Our College and Military members received 'Thinking of You' care packages.

### **In December**

Plants and cards were delivered to our At Home Members.

### **In January**

The Dinner Fellowship was organized for the winter months. Groups of six will gather three times for evenings of fun, food and friendship. Everyone contributes to the meals, and they take turns hosting at their homes. If you were unable to join the dinner fellowship this winter, be sure to watch for the sign up sheet next year.

### **March**

We're looking for Easter Sunday greeters (March 23<sup>rd</sup>). Anyone can greet. All you need is a smile, a handshake and 15 minutes of your time prior to a Church service. Watch for the Greeters' list, posted on the bulletin board at the far end of the Narthex, to sign up. It's a great way to meet people! And if you would rather call people asking them to greet, that would be helpful as well. Call or 581-8981 or email Wendy at [taxidriver0609@yahoo.com](mailto:taxidriver0609@yahoo.com)

### **April**

We will host a Fellowship Dinner to meet the new members of our Church family from this past year. We will also take this time to greet the Confirmation class. This is a pot-luck dinner on April 8<sup>th</sup> at 6p.m., so mark your calendars and enjoy an evening of fun, great food and fellowship.

### **Currently**

The Team is working on several projects, concerns and issues. Want to know more on how this team ministers to the visitors, the new members, the at home members, the college and military members? Or perhaps you have an idea you'd like to share with us. Please join us at our next meeting on March 4<sup>th</sup> at 7:30 p.m., or contact Wendy Cunningham at 581-8981 or [taxidriver0609@yahoo.com](mailto:taxidriver0609@yahoo.com).

## Church Directory

I apologize for the lengthy delay in the delivery of the new church directory. I had no idea it would take this long or require the amount of time I and many others have spent on it. I hope it will be worth the wait to have an accurate church directory that is updated on a regular basis and flexible enough to conform to our changing needs. Seriously, I am coming down the homestretch. I am on the final pass with only about 25% of the families left to check. If I could only get out from under this budget!!!!

## Retired Ministers' Sunday

On February 10<sup>th</sup>, we celebrate "Retired Ministers' Sunday" in Troy Conference. This special day is to honor those men and women who faithfully served our various congregations in past years. We owe a great deal of respect and love to these people.

This year we will have cards in the Fellowship Hall for each of the ministers and spouses who have served our church and are now retired:

Mildred Brandt  
widow of Donald H. Brandt  
Rodney P. Scoville  
Carol Blowers  
widow of Thomas Blowers  
Robert Trost  
Jane T. Borden  
Robert F. Long  
William A. Lasher

Please take a few minutes to write a note of love and support or just sign your name on these cards.

Retired Ministers' Sunday is also a day to give financial support to those retired pastors and spouses who served under a previous inadequate pension plan, which makes it difficult for them to face rising medical costs and the increase in the cost of living. In Troy conference there are less than twenty families who need financial assistance, but those who do need help are in great need. The money you give for this special offering goes 100% to these people. Please give as generously as you can to a very worthwhile cause.

# Turning a sense of Hopelessness into a season of Hope



**" The mind is everything.  
What you think,  
you become."**

I would like to share with you a letter that recently came to me from Nepal. It begins " I am 36 year-old Bhim Bahadur Pariyar, an inmate in Parbat District Prison. Until Heifer came into my life, I had been leading a life of despair and stigma inside the prison walls. The turning point in our lives came after the inmates began receiving Heifer's Cornerstones training. Though Heifer essentially reaches out to poor farmers, we feel fortunate to have received the opportunity to transform our lives. The Cornerstones training has inspired us to look inward, reflect on our responsibilities and explore our potentials. With our positive outlook towards life, we are now determined to emerge from this wretched state and transcend the prison walls. We might seem imprisoned in physical terms, but our minds have been rejuvenated and freed by the Cornerstones. Thanks to this training, the atmosphere within the prison looks healthy these days."

This is the impact the Heifer training has on persons around the world. In an effort to not make this too long, I will share the principles of the Heifer Cornerstone training with you next month.

Now I must share with you the wonderful news of our Advent drive for Heifer. During the four Sundays of Advent, we raised \$9,733.50! Our grand total for the year was \$10,829.33! You are the most amazing and generous congregation! Think of the example we are setting for others. Check out the posters found in the Narthex, done so lovingly by Margi Goodwin. They show real families and how a gift of an animal totally changed their lives, turning their sense of hopelessness into a season of HOPE! Rosy Zinn (583-1227)

## **SMALL WONDERS**

### **CHRISTIAN PRESCHOOL**

Our weekday preschool program, Small Wonders, is now accepting enrollment for Fall 2008 from all church families and preschool alumni families. Open enrollment will begin February 1. The class for the three year olds meets Tuesday and Thursday mornings from 9:30—Noon. The class for four year olds meets Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 9:30—Noon. For more information see the brochure—available in the narthex or the education lobby or talk to Natalie Bollerud at the office 584-3720 ext. 14.

### **SUNDAY SCHOOL MISSION PROJECT NOTHING BUT NETS CAMPAIGN**

### **BED NETS VS. MOSQUITOES**

### **FEB. 10 FELLOWSHIP HALL 12 TIL 2 (FOLLOWING BRUNCH)**

Nothing But Nets is a global, grassroots campaign to save lives by preventing malaria, a leading killer of children in Africa. (Every 30 seconds, a child dies from malaria.) The people of the United Methodist Church (The Advance 982015) along with Sports Illustrated, NBA Cares, the United Nations Foundation and several other groups, are raising funds to purchase anti-malaria treated nylon bed nets to end malaria. A \$10 bed net will protect a family of 4 for several years.

**Join us!** We'll play games, have fun, raise awareness and raise funds to help save lives by preventing malaria.

# Education

## **FEBRUARY IN SUNDAY SCHOOL MORE PARABLES**

The February unit continues with parables that we think are important for children to know:

**Feb. 3**

### **The Sower (Luke 8:4-15)**

In this parable, the seed is God's Word falling on the ears of everyone. In some, the words fall away, beaten down by the cares of the world and the pressures of life. But some of the words will fall on fertile soil; and, in those people, God's Word will flourish.

**Feb. 10**

### **The Forgiving Father**

(also known as the Prodigal Son)—**Luke 15:11-32**

This parable helped people know what God was like—loving and forgiving. The two brothers represent two kinds of people—those who are always faithful and those who stray but return to being faithful. God is there for both of them.

**Feb. 17**

### **The Pharisee and the Tax Collector (Luke 18: 9-14)**

The first part of this parable deals with pride and false piety. The second part deals with the Pharisee's inability to feel empathy toward the tax collector and to offer him acceptance in the eyes of God.

**Feb. 24**

### **The Two Houses (Luke 6:46-49)**

People who heard the words Jesus spoke, understood them, and lived accordingly were building their lives on a strong foundation that would stand up to the storms of life..

## **THE STORY OF THE PRETZEL**

Long ago Lent was a time of sadness when early Christians felt they should suffer. For forty days they ate no rich foods: no meat, cheese, eggs or even milk. They ate fruit and fish and they baked a bread shaped into arms crossed in prayer. They called this bread *bracellae*, the Latin word for "little arms".

Christian customs spread to central and northern Europe. But the people there said *bretzel* instead of *bracellae*, and so the word later became *pretzel*. The Sunday before Ash Wednesday was known as Pretzel Sunday. People were reminded to think about the meaning of Lent and to bake this bread for using during Lent. Pretzels were never served after Palm Sunday.

European immigrants brought pretzels to America and now they are served all year.

## **AT THE MOVIES**

### **Pirates Who Don't Do Anything**

A Veggie tales movie rated G—follows the comic misadventures of three animated veggie pals who reluctantly set sail for adventure and discover that real heroes don't have to be tall, strong, handsome—or even human.

Working at the Pirate Times

Dinner Theater is less than exciting when you're a busboy. For three moping misfits—Elliot, Sedgewick and George (Larry the Cucumber, Mr. Lunt and Pa Grape) - all they can dream of is the day when they can ditch their dishrags and take stage to star in the big pirate show.



### **The Great Debater**

Rated PG-13

This movie Chronicles the journey of a brilliant but volatile coach who uses the power of words to shape a group of underdog students from a small modest black college in East Texas (the 1935 debate team from United Methodist related Wiley College in Marshall, Texas) into an elite debate team, while challenging the social mores of the time, culminating with a groundbreaking invitation to debate Harvard's Championship team. For more info visit:

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

## **VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL**

Adults interested in helping with Vacation Bible School should contact Natalie Bollerud—We need to select dates and curriculum soon. 584-3720 ext, 14 or 584-1192

# United Methodist Men

Peter Elmendorf 587-4435 for more info

## Garage Sale

The annual mid-winter garage sale, Saratoga's largest, will be

Saturday, Feb 2nd

9 am to 4 pm.

Donations are accepted

Tuesday, Jan. 29

Wednesday, Jan. 30

Thursday, Jan. 31

Friday, Feb. 1

from 8:30 am to 2 pm

Wednesday, Jan. 29

Thursday, Jan. 31

From 7pm to 8:30 pm

The following items will not be accepted, since they do not sell and we will need to pay for their disposal:

Anything dirty or broken

Old microwaves, TVs

Out of date Baby furniture

Used car seats

Computer parts

Exercise equipment

Tires

If you think it is junk,

please throw it away

so we don't have to.

Workers are needed

Tuesday, Jan. 29

To

Friday, Feb. 1

8:30 am to 8:30 pm

For setup

Saturday, Feb. 2

9 am to 6 pm

For selling and cleanup

Please come to the sale

and bring a friend.

Plenty of bargains!

## Ham Dinner

Saturday, February 9th

4-6:30pm

Attention all Bakers!

Desserts are needed!

Workers are needed to set up, cook, serve and cleanup.

## Upcoming Dinners

Chicken BBQ

Saturday, March 29th

4-6:30pm

Roast Beef Dinner

Saturday, April 26th

4-6:30pm

## UMM Meetings

### February

Saturday, February 2nd

(same day as the garage sale)

7 am

Franklin Community Center will describe their programs, many of which our church participates in.

Breakfast will be served!

### March

Saturday, March 8th

7 am

Shelters of Saratoga program.

Breakfast will be served!

### April

Saturday, April 12th

7 am

The program will feature the new executive director of EOC.

Breakfast will be served!

## Tables for Sale

We are replacing our older heavier church tables, 8 foot in length, with a light weight model from BJ's. We are offering the old tables for sale to the congregation. The price is a free will offering. Those not sold by February 2nd will be put in the garage sale. Hurry, you don't have much time to act!

# Can You Spare?

Debbie MacAvoy

If you were asked to cut your spending by 50 cents each week-day or \$2 a week, could you? For some people it would be a struggle, but for the most part I think the majority of us would have no problem. For example, you could order plain old water instead of a drink just once a week when you eat or order out. Let's say you already do that or you don't eat out at least once a week. You could still drink tap water for lunch and save the cost of a drink. Water is very good for you! You could walk, carpool or cut out one trip in the car each week. Go to the grocery store one less time. When dropping off your child for practice, etc., wait there and read a book instead of driving home just to turn around and go back. Better yet, carpool with the kid down the street. You yourself can carpool also. Next time you come to choir or a church meeting, think about who else may be coming and share a ride. Call a store to see if they have what you want instead of driving there to check. Wait until you have several things to buy before you go shopping. Just collect your change and watch how fast it grows.

We need \$29,242.59 more in pledges to balance our 2008 budget. Let's see how many of us can spare just \$2 a week to close that gap. I'm doing my part. I've declined my 3% business manager salary increase for 2008. That's \$186 for the year or about \$3.50 a week. Please drop a note in the plate or the mail if you are able to join me. We can do it together!

# U M Women

## Shawl Ministry

Want to learn how to knit or crochet? Knit or crochet God's love, care & warmth into shawls that will comfort and nurture others. **All** are welcome (bring your daughters)!

Date: Tues. Feb.12 7 PM

Tues. Feb. 26 7 PM

Where: Church Lounge

Quest? BJ Fisher 893-2175

## Ruth Circle

When: Mon. Feb 18th 1PM

Where: Community Room  
2nd Floor of Woodlawn Commons/156 Lawrence St

Saratoga (near Embury)

Questions? Karen El.

587-4435

## Living Springs

Globalization led by Joan Whitford, Nancy Downing and Bonnie Mortensen.

Date: Fri Feb 15th

10AM-Noon

Place: Church Kitchenette

Questions? Lynn Wochinger  
893-0532

## UMW Reads

Discussion of "The Subtle Knife" by Philip Pullman

Date: Thursday, Feb 7th 7 pm

Place: Church

Questions? Natalie Bollerud  
584-1192

# The Chosen

## The Chosen

The Chosen Ugandan dancers completed a very successful series of performances in NY from January 12-15.

In three and a half days they appeared at three churches (SSUMC on Monday, Jan. 14th), a retirement home, and three elementary schools, performing to over 1,500 appreciative New Yorkers. Seven area newspapers covered The Chosen, with effusive praise. Two of the articles are on the websites poststar.com and saratogian.com, under a search for Uganda. The poststar.com site also has a brief video clip.

The audiences opened their hearts and their wallets to the impassioned pleas of the children and of Nancy Tushabe (some enthusiastic pastors also helped). A total of over \$7,700 was donated from offerings, CD sales, and jewelry sales. Additionally, 27 new sponsors of Ugandan children signed up, and more are expected.

At the schools, children are mobilizing to provide further assistance. One school is raising funds to pay for an additional suitcase that a volunteer team will take to AOET in February, filled with dictionaries and other school supplies. Another group of children are planning to sponsor a child.

When not performing, The Chosen enjoyed playing in the snow, eating lots of ice cream and interacting with the three



host families.

Expectations were high prior to the arrival of The Chosen, and they were greatly exceeded.

**The door**  
**is always open to**  
**all UMW events.**  
**Please Join Us!**

## United Methodist Women

Our United Methodist Women held a party with a purpose last December to raise money for the Ugandan children. \$305 was donated, which UMW doubled. \$610 will be sent to Uganda.

On Feb. 5th at 7p.m. in the church kitchenette, Cathy Kurran, a volunteer who has visited the Ugandan school The Chosen attend, will do a program on that school. We will also present her with the \$610 check. The program will be entertaining as well as informative.

Please join us. All are welcome!!

**If you no longer wish to receive our mailings,  
please call 584-3720 or email [ssumc@nycap.rr.com](mailto:ssumc@nycap.rr.com)**

**Lenten Bible Study  
with Camilla Smith**



Three sessions on the Gospel of John.  
This will be the concluding section of the  
two year New Testament study,

but

newcomers are welcome.

Two identical classes:

Monday evening (7:00p.m. - 8:54p.m.)

or

Tuesday afternoon (1:15p.m. - 3:00p.m.)

the first three weeks of March

March 3/4, 10/11, and 18/19.

Many have already pre-registered.  
New people should contact Camilla 583-7023  
or leave word in the church office.  
There will be a \$5.00 chocolate fee!