UUMC is capable of providing example of Jesus to strugglers

I wanted to take a moment to thank you for your warm welcome and hospitality. I am grateful for this opportunity to worship and fellowship with you this summer.

I have learned many things so far:

First, University UMC is full of friendly faithful people who long to serve God.

Second, the uncertainty of the city United Methodist churches is thought of as an adventure or a journey that God is leading the churches through.

Third, I have a lot to learn from this congregation and this experience. I'm having so much fun! But with this fun comes much learning about balance of worship, outreach, pastoral visits and my own family.

Last, there is much work to be done in this city. I have visited within the church and walked the streets. People are struggling. They are struggling to survive poverty, abuse, and keeping themselves and their children on the right path.

Most people are open to a relationship with Jesus Christ but are so used to relying only on themselves or their nuclear families that they don't naturally turn to God. As a church we need to find a way to be an example of Jesus in the neighborhood so that people think of God and this church when they struggle. I can tell we are up for the task with so many faithful people at University UMC.

As a quick reminder, the church is looking to provide Sunday morning breakfast weekly. Our neighbors are hungry every day. We need your help. Please consider volunteering.

Also, I am hosting a Bible Study Friday mornings 9:15-9:45. This is a DVD series by Rob Bell in which you may come once or all four weeks and get something out of it.

Keep telling me your God sightings. They are so inspirational! Again thank you for your warm welcome and your faithful service.

Peace,
Alicia

Ties with community became even stronger

By Rosemary DeHoog
Church Historian

In 1966, the Rev. Robert Bolton became pastor and in the next two years was joined by the Rev. Herbert Gordon as associate minister and Ethel Johnson as director of Religious Education.

No less interested than their predecessors in making the church a vital place for people of all ages, the new team sought to strengthen the ties that Dr. Donald Wright had been establishing between the church and the community.

Many neighborhood groups — Girl Scouts, drama clubs, anti-poverty

See CHURCH, Page 3
I saw the future one Sunday morning. I visited a downtown church that was uncannily like University Church. So much so that I felt immediately at home. The mix of people, their openness and warmth, music led by a talented organist and soloist, a competent pastor doting on a new grandchild ... all I had to do was close my eyes and click my heels to imagine I was back home in Syracuse.

The one noticeable difference was that the sanctuary was at least three-fourths full.

“How nice that would be,” I thought to myself. “Isn’t that one of the hopes behind our uniting with the other city churches — larger, more sustainable worshiping congregations?”

Then it hit me ... something I couldn’t tell the pastor ... that their future is our future ... and it isn’t pretty.

For all our similarities, it was who wasn’t there that was most telling. They were no better at involving people in their 20s, 30s and 40s than we have been.

Without that group of persons, the future of any church is clear ... and dismal. If we want a different, livelier kind of future, then we need to start making changes to our style of worship, ministry and leadership that can attract those missing 20-, 30- and 40-year-olds.

I wish you could have been with me for the Chautauqua-like lectures in Wisconsin. The lectures had two overriding themes:

♦ Jesus as a question-asker (more than an answer-man); and
♦ the Church’s tendency to focus on the wrong questions (questions that may seem important to us, but which no one outside the church is the least bit interested in).

I didn’t agree with everything I heard, but it certainly got me thinking. That’s why I wish you had been there — so we could have begun a conversation about what it means to follow Jesus in being (a) humble enough to admit we don’t have all the answers, (b) real enough to encounter people in the messiness of life and (c) courageous enough to ask questions that lead to richer, fuller life.

+ + +

My two weeks of summer school classes weren’t exactly what I was expecting. I went looking for answers — formulas — about how to create healthy congregations and how to successfully manage deep change.

What I learned was that no one of us — no matter how skilled or how smart — can single-handedly fix or solve anything.

We are part of interwoven, complicated systems or networks (families, churches, groups of churches) that beg simple solutions or quick fixes.

That’s both bad news and good news all rolled into one. All any of us can ever do is take responsibility for our own actions.

But ... because we are part of the overall system (or family or congregation), healthier behavior on our part will have a positive impact on the system as a whole.

I don’t have to try to do it all by myself ... but neither do I have to give up in helpless frustration or futility.

I simply have to take responsibility for myself (as much as possible) and not unnecessarily or unwittingly add to the stress and anxiety already present and at work in the system.

The trick is staying true to oneself and aware of one’s own reactions, while staying connected to and involved with others — regardless of the level of stress, anxiety, conflict or change. (Note to self and reader: This is much easier contemplated and practiced while on sabbatical!)

— Craig

All of the clergy appointed so far to the eight United Methodist churches in Syracuse will be at three “meet and greet” events this month. Come for a time of fellowship. Here’s the schedule:

July 22 6:30-8 p.m. Gethsemane UMC, 1700 Butternut St.
July 23 6:30-8 p.m. Bellevue UMC, 2112 S. Geddes St.
July 30 2:30-4 p.m. Erwin First UMC, 920 Euclid Ave.
THANKS
Sunday, June 8

- A huge thank you to all for being with us for ReciproKate!!
- Thanks to God for the past year and prayers for the next on this birthday of our church.
- I thank God for my son, Erick, who is being baptized today, and tomorrow will be his birthday.

PRAYERS REQUESTED FOR:

Sunday, June 8

- Elise: Prophet Jesus, test my reins to direct me to the six degree: Love, Divine!
- Peter: For the traditions of United Methodism, from Wesley to the Circuit Riders (“And Are We Yet Alive”) to Craig’s great ministry in the present!
- Russ: For all service members and veterans; prayers and wisdom for God’s people who are leaders of all nations, leaders of all churches, leaders of all people who serve others. Prayers and blessings for my daughter, Jamie, and my sister, Penny.
- Carrie Hunt: For my brother, John, recently diagnosed with stage 4 cancer and for his family and mine.
- Meredith, with health issues.
- Daphne Stone
- My friend Jeanette and all my family and friends
- A prayer to those who are sick and suffering, for the homeless, people with addictions. May they find their way to God and become members of this church.
- Heal our bodies as well as souls
- Be with us all during the coming changes for us all and for UUMC.

Sunday, June 15

- Anneke: Prayers for my son Jordan, who will be graduating next week and heading into the Air Force.
- Elise: Prophet Jesus, I plead you to educate me, to change my self-destruction!
- Jeanne Finlayson-Schueler: That Danielle Adams’ ankle heals soon
- Tom Boll: Ray Sturge and family. Ray’s mom is in hospice care.
- Blessings to God and to all our fathers in this congregation. Happy Father’s Day and to our father in heaven.
- Tolerance, peace and justice.
- Be with shut-ins, especially Katie Flynn

Sunday, June 29

- Peter: Maddie, Marti and Dana Horrell, who are starting out in new places with the work that brings people together.
- Starke: My friend Joanne Dias in Crouse Hospital for testing.
- A smooth transition back to Syracuse. For a healthy pregnancy
- Ila Christoff and family

CONTINUED from Page 1

Church welcomed groups, classes, forums, discussions

PRAYERS REQUESTED FOR CROSSROADS DISTRICT CHURCHES AND PASTORS:

- July 6: Jordan, Glen Hardman; North Volney, Tammie Nipper
- July 13: Palermo UMC, Tammie Nipper; Little Utica, Michaela St. Marie
- July 20: Skaneateles, Joelynn Tuttle
- July 27: Camillus Immanuel, Nicholas Preuninger
- Aug. 3: Manlius, Joseph Kim
Chimes newsletter                              Volume 14   No. 9  July 9, 2014                              Feed My People: Body, Mind and Spirit

Pledging Update
2014 total pledges: $230,877
Paid to date: $130,158
Non-pledge contr.: $12,882

Sounds of the Spirit Campaign
Donations received $70,843
Expenses paid $70,589
Current balance $254

August birthdays
2 – Dr. Barbara Miller
Beth Drew, Ray Ashwood
4 – Michael Borenstein, Valerie Young
5 – Will Drew, Dan Hyland, Jonathan Hosler
6 – Kathleen Stevenson, Gloria Morgan, Ingrid Coutts
9 – Marjorie Carter
12 – Don Steenberg
15 – Barbara Fought
16 – Barbara French
19 – Sue Bambacht, Jesse Miller
20 – Susan Borenstein
21 – Maria Fay
25 – Julia Duru, Katie Flynn
27 – Bruce Borenstein
28 – David Duru, Teddy Toe
31 – Roger Lund

If any birthdays are incorrect or missing, please contact Tom Boll at uumctb@twcny.rr.com.

Altar flowers
Altar flowers were given by Matt and Lynn Steenberg, Mary Fridie Wilson and JoAnn May, Harry and Shirley Miller, and Don and Margo Koten.

Flowers were given to Don Steenberg, David Bacon, Brad Bowers, Jim Wiggins, Art Echner and Diane Tarbell.

Flowers were delivered by Gale Youmell, Steve Bacon and Don and Margo Koten.

WEEK OF JULY 13
Sunday the 13th
9:30 a.m. Community/Church Breakfast
10 a.m. Contemporary Issues
11 a.m. Worship, Rev. Caroline Simmons preaching
Noon Fellowship, Narthex
12:30 p.m. Soup and Sermon Chat, Chappell Room
Wednesday the 16th
11:15 a.m. Staff Meeting Friday the 18th
9:15 a.m. Bible Study
10 a.m. - noon Friday Community

WEEK OF JULY 20
Sunday the 20th
10 a.m. Contemporary Issues
11 a.m. Worship, Tom Buckel, guest speaker
Noon Fellowship, Narthex
12:30 p.m. Soup and Sermon Chat, Chappell Room
Wednesday the 23rd
11:15 a.m. Staff Meeting Friday the 25th
9:15 a.m. Bible Study
10 a.m. - noon Friday Community

Community Garden
The Community Garden at Spencer Park is in great shape, but the weeds are also growing well. If you can spare an hour, come Saturday, July 12, at 8:30 a.m. and join our weeding party.

Video in Worship
UUMC is now using video in worship. If you have suggestions and ideas on using this medium, please stay after worship this Sunday, July 13, for a brief discussion in the sanctuary.

Finance Corner

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We began the service with people singing on the front steps and in the Narthex, led by Music Director Martha Sutter.
Alicia Wood offers a few words before we head inside.
The children gathered the donations of cereal for our food pantry.
We’ve added video to the worship experience.
The ribbons are multiplying as the “God sightings” mount up.
CNY Pride Service
June 17, 2014
at Unity Church
(2 photos)
UUMC members were part of the choir for the service.
The Community Garden is doing well. If you want to help weed—come to Spencer Park between 8 and 8:30 a.m. this Saturday, July 12.