

The Hotline

A publication of Holt United Methodist Church

DECEMBER 2009

Inter-Racial Fellowship Monday, December 7 at Holt United Methodist Church. If you missed prior opportunities to hear Dr. Wagner's program about his trip to the Middle East, he will be presenting it as the program. For more information about this meeting, call Joan Smith at 517-332-5853.

60+or- will meet December 8, 2009 in the East Room for a noon luncheon. Everyone is invited, bring a dish to share and your own table service. Our program will be children from our own Child Enrichment Center presenting a portion of their Christmas Program. The children will entertain us at NOON. After our luncheon Lisa Sriver, our Child Enrichment Center Director, will speak, giving us an overview of a day in child care, as well as some of the guidelines of the Enrichment Center. Please come join us, it will be a very informative program.

Are you grieving the loss of a loved one this Christmas? The special holiday memorial service sponsored by Estes-Leadley Holt-Delhi Chapel will be held this year at Holt UMC on Tuesday, December 8 at 7:00 p.m. with a message of hope from our pastor, Dr. Glenn Wagner. All are welcome. If your loved one's funeral service was handled by someone other than Estes-Leadley you will want to call the funeral home ahead at 517-694-2631 so that your loved one will be included in the service.

Early Birds are meeting December 9th at Delhi Cafe for our Christmas party. No meeting in January, February or March. You will be contacted about our April meeting. – Mary Odiorne



Caroling! Sunday, December 13 from 12:30-3:00 p.m. join with the Fellowship Committee for our annual Caroling Party. We will have lunch at the church before caroling to our shut-ins; please bring a dessert or a side dish. Questions? Contact Mary Edinger or call the church office. The more voices, the better we sound!

Worship for December

December is a month that evokes strong feelings. In children there is a growing anticipation

as snow flies, vacation nears, and imagination is stirred by the Holy Days to come. In the bereaved the season prompts grief and accentuates loneliness. In retailers this month ratchets up the pressure to succeed before the year end reckoning. In the home of your pastoral family the stress level rises with diminishing daylight and rising commitments. It seems that winter brings with it more hospitalizations, more meetings, year end reporting, more worship obligations. Take time in this Holy season to be still. Allow the hymns of tradition to feed your soul and inspire your steps. "Joy to the World...the Lord is come...let earth (or at the very least you and me)...receive her king...let every heart prepare Him room."

Come to church on Sundays and invite others to join you. Together we are growing a great church for Christ and offering a powerful witness to our world for Him.

Sunday, December 6, 2009- Second Sunday of Advent – Holy Communion

Dr.. Wagner preaching, "Why I Love Jesus: The Hope Ingredient."

Sunday, December 13, 2009- Third Sunday of Advent - Hungry World - Music Sunday

Dr. Wagner preaching, "Why I Love Jesus: Map for the Neighborhood."

Sunday, December 20, 2009-Fourth Sunday of Advent

Dr. Wagner preaching, "Why I Love Jesus: We All Need Forgiveness."

Sunday, December 24, Christmas Eve – 7:00 p.m. Family Service

featuring our Children's Choir and a new Musical written by Dave Dechow and Roger Rochowiak.

11:00 p.m. Traditional Service –

Choirs, candles and carols and Dr. Wagner preaching, "Why I Love Jesus: Incarnation"

Sunday, December 27, 2009-First Sunday after Christmas - Young Adult Sunday - One Service at 10:00 a.m.

We will be having one service this a.m. at 10:00 and will be blessed by shared witness from some of our gifted college age young adults who are home from school for the holidays. We will also share in a hymn sing of favorite Christmas carols.



Theme for December:

The Gift of Jesus

Memory Verse: “But the angel said to them, ‘Do not be afraid; for see – I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people.’ Luke 2:10

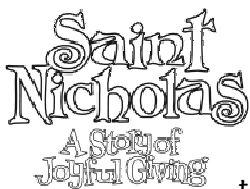
Mission Project through December 13: We will be collecting hats, mittens, scarves and socks for Give-A-Kid-A-Christmas. They will hang on our clothesline in the children’s wing.

Workshops: Solid Rock Cafe, Creation Station, Storytelling, Video. Kingdom Kids children will be having a **parade at the conclusion of the 9:30 service on Dec. 20, and will host the coffee hour also.** Please join us!

Kathie’s Corner One of my favorite Christmas memories is the year that my adult brother was playing the part of Joseph in a large local church’s Christmas program. Mary, Joseph and baby Jesus were in silhouette behind a sheet. At one point, a baby began to cry. Several in the audience (including me!) were looking around to see what baby was crying. It soon became apparent that the crying baby was the one playing the part of Jesus! What some of us considered a distraction was “*the reason for the season!*”

In all of our preparations and plans for those activities and traditions that “make” it Christmas for us, we must not forget that the Baby born that first Christmas is the reason for the celebration. When you are creating family traditions, how many highlight the newborn King? As believers, it is our joy and responsibility to share with others the holy wonder that God came to earth, “A Savior who is Christ the Lord.” May you be blessed!

Christian Education Thanks to Bob & Peg Guilford for craft donation.



Family Holiday Movie Break! Join us on **Sunday, December 6th at 3:00 p.m.**

We will share desserts, put together one craft project, and then head into the sanctuary to watch the newest VeggieTales Christmas Movie – **Saint Nicholas: A Story of Joyful Giving.** Bring a dessert to share; beverages and craft supplies will be provided. This event will conclude at 5:00 p.m.

New Members Class will be offered again January 10, 17, 24 & 31 from 4:30-5:30 p.m. in the East Room. The class is free, and taught by Pastor Glenn Wagner and Mary-Jo DeLany. If you are interested in attending, please contact the church office, or speak with Pastor Glenn or Mary-Jo.

Christmas with Auntie McFickle, an original musical written and scored by Roger Rochowiak and David Dechow, will have its premiere performance during the 7:00 p.m. Christmas Eve service at Holt United Methodist Church. The cast includes church members and friends of all ages. This entertaining and meaningful production will help you rediscover the true meaning of Christmas. Plan now to make it part of your family’s holiday celebration.

The Lunch Bunch meets Sundays at 12:30 p.m. for dinner and fellowship at the following restaurants: December 6 – Zeus’s on S. Pennsylvania; December 13 – Big Boy in Mason; December 20 – Flap Jack; December 27 – Bob Evans (note: there is only one service at 10:00 a.m. this Sunday, so we will meet at 11:00 a.m.). Please contact Sharon Showerman or Sharon Simonson with questions.

9:30 a.m. Communion Notice Because of concerns expressed regarding flu season, Holt UMC’s worship committee has made the decision that during at least November, December and January the first Sunday communion at the 9:30 a.m. worship service will be served in individual cups and pre-cut bread cubes at the altar instead of “intinction” as has been the custom.

Persons concerned about the potential spread of flu germs by shaking hands at church are welcome to make use of the hand sanitizer provided on the table outside the sanctuary.

Fair Trade Coffee: We continue to sell coffee, tea, cocoa mix and chocolate bars to provide a market for small farmers. These farmers are able to form co-ops and work together in their community to provide education, better housing and medical services for their families. Our sales through UMCOR help to make a real difference in their lives. Any of our items would make a great hostess gift or small remembrance for Christmas giving. Thank you for all your support.



Christmas Poinsettias from Smith Floral: See the order form inserted in this issue of The Hotline, or call the church office, 517-694-8168. Donations to the Holt Food Bank are an option again this year.

Body & Soul will resume meeting in March, 2010. Watch The Hotline and bulletin for details.

Have an interest in volunteering? If there are any who have been feeling moved to do some volunteer work and are looking for an opportunity, the Holt Public Schools have needs that involve both direct student contact such as helping in a classroom, or indirect things such as helping in the office. The only requirement is that you must have been cleared through the Human Resources Department. If you are interested, bring your driver's license to the Human Resources Office at the Administration Building, 5780 Holt Road, Holt during the following times: Monday-1:30-4:00; Wednesday-8:30-11:00 and 1:30-4:00; Friday-8:30-11:00. If you have already been finger-printed as in the capacity of a substitute teacher or other school employee, no further action is required. Working with youth is a very rewarding activity and you never know where you may be having a positive impact.

Rummage Sale News: With winter fast approaching, while you are cleaning and rearranging your closets and garage, please remember our church's rummage sale in January. The profits from this sale will go toward funding our Missionary Covenant with John & Suzanne Funk, missionaries in Bolivia.



Bell Choir: Looking for a "Johnny" or "Jane" One-Note. Unique opportunity to learn to play bells and only have one bell to play! Due to player injury, the bell choir is looking

for someone who would like to learn to play bells one-note at a time. If you are interested, please contact Matt Keck at matthew.keck@mindspring.com or contact the church office.

Please remember to notify Pastor Glenn or the church office with name of patient, hospital, type of surgery or reason for hospitalization and time surgery or procedure is scheduled beforehand, whenever possible. This is the only way we have of knowing where to visit you due to the privacy laws. Prayer requests may be called in to the church office, or e-mailed to RWTGreen@aol.com Thank you!

Special Thanks & Congratulations

Thank you for your generous contributions to the Thanksgiving and Christmas food basket program. Your generosity makes a difference.

Thank you Artis White, for your efforts to put together a wonderful collection of Holt UMC members on DVD, sharing their moving testimonials on giving, and Joe DeLany, for an inspirational PowerPoint composed of pictures from our 2009 ministry year at Holt UMC.

Thank you to our UMW and all who contributed to make this year's Fall Craft Festival a success. Funds raised support the great work of our United Methodist Women in missions.

Thank you to Matt Keck and members of the Holt UMC Handbell Choir for giving up a Saturday recently to play during the memorial service for Sara Huston at Central United Methodist Church. Your ministry of music was a blessing to the Huston family and the full house in attendance.

Thank you to Sharon Purdy and Art Nott for attending a workshop recently on Lay Leadership in the Church sponsored by our Conference Lay Leader and our Bishop.

Thank you Louanne Service for your labors on All Saints Sunday to arrange for 64 candles that were lit during our three services in memory of our loved ones.

Thank you Dr. Margaret Jones. Margaret, a UM Pastor, retired physician, and currently chaplain for Visiting Nurses Hospice, gave an informative presentation on ministry with persons who are grieving recently to our Pastoral Care Team.

Thank you to Catherine Mercer and the young women from Chosen Visions who provided special music for our church conference on November 30.

Chapter Change

In the best of books, skilled authors know how to engage the reader with appeal to the senses. Writers will create gripping word paintings describing scenes with vivid visual and perceptual imagery. Sights, sounds, tastes and smells will be enlisted. Authors will create memorable characters and points of identification with those characters so readers can relate. For example, "The old seaman warmed his leathery hands over the fire. The flames were rapidly consuming the scraps piled into the rusted oil drum on the wharf. The chill December air fought the flames for supremacy. Beyond the fire, the horizon disappeared into the nighttime ink and the monotonous gray of ground frozen into an iron sky. Waves slapped hard against the seawall, sending spray high, and glazing the pier, making footing uncertain. The seaman had been away from this harbor for so long his wife had filed for divorce. Now that he was back the old Salt was finding it hard to go home."

In great books the writer draws the reader into the story, invites an emotional connection and leads the way into every unfolding action with a touch of mystery, a dollop of love, a full measure of drama, and an ounce of humor. For good measure researched facts will impress the reader and sustain engagement with the tale. Life and death suspense holds interest hostage. When I meet up with a great book, bonding is quick, interest is kindled. I don't want to put the book down, ever eager to learn what happens next. When a book ends, if the author is exceptional, I can't wait for their next offering to reconnect with my heroes.

At important points in the narrative there will be a natural break in the action. One chapter will end and another will begin. Great authors know instinctively how to tease the mystery as one chapter draws to a close so the reader will leap effortlessly over the gap and onto the edge of the new chapter's beginning. The natural transition point is a time to cherish what has been and to look forward to the story yet to be revealed.

Have you noticed how life has natural break points very similar to a chapter change in a book?

Here are some "chapter changing moments" that are memorable life transitions:

Doctor: "Dad, here is your new daughter."

Pastor: "What name is to be given to this child?"

Parent: "Johnny, have a great day in Kindergarten."

Pastor: "Who presents this woman to be married to this man?"

Fiance: "Will you marry me?"

Employer: "You're fired!"

High School Principal: "Congratulations, graduates!"

Spouse: "To have and to hold, for better or for worse, for richer and for poorer..."

Nurse: "This is where you kiss your spouse goodbye...the waiting room is down the hall...the Doctor will see you there after the surgery."

Doctor: "I'm sorry, there is nothing more that I could do."

Doctor: "I'm afraid it's cancer."

Teen: "Dad, can I borrow the keys to the car? I have a date tonight."

Jury Foreman: "We the people of the jury find the defendant..."

The Gospel writer Luke, a physician, remembers history's greatest chapter changing moment in the speech of the angel Gabriel to a virgin in Nazareth named Mary.

And the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there will be no end."

And with that public declaration of God's intentions in Jesus, history changed. One chapter came to an end and another one began. Pre-Jesus, life stories always ended at death. Post-Jesus, life's purpose extends beyond the grave. Pre-Jesus we are stuck in our sin: mortal, fallible, capable of great stupidity. Post-Jesus we are invited to take part in a great journey, forgiven, and inspired to live for God. We are encouraged to reach in this new chapter of faith in the direction of God's highest hopes for each of us. Pre-Jesus God's intentions are mysterious. Post-Jesus God's love is revealed.

Just as Jesus' birth marks the changing of a great chapter in human history, the birth of faith in each human heart signals a chapter change for each Christian believer.

John's Gospel calls this change, "Being born again." 1st Century baptism marked this chapter change in life symbolically by having the new Christian come to the river's edge, strip naked, pass through the waters with water closing over the head like earth covering a grave, and rising out of the waters, cleansed, on the opposite bank where the new Christian was met by his new congregation and given a new white robe to wear. The journey through the waters and across the river signaled that life with Jesus now would be markedly different than life before faith. After the birth of faith

in the human heart by way of a conscious choice, the believer receives a new community, new values, a new outlook on life and eternity, forgiveness from past sin, and a new direction for living.

Life isn't static. Like a great book, our pages are continuously being written anew. Just as an author invites a reader to engage the story through the use of character, plot, conflict and hope, consider this new Christian year that begins in Advent as a time to write Jesus back into the center of your unfolding autobiography. There are lots of different ways your story with Christ can grow. Make worship a habit. Forgive an enemy. Give a piece of yourself away in an act of compassion. Turn away from a temptation that you know is sinful. Exercise hospitality for a stranger. Visit someone who is lonely. Decide to join a Bible study. Pray for a friend. Decide to give more of your resources for a Godly purpose than you spend each month for internet, cable, and cell phone. I can't wait to read the next chapter. I invite you to share the adventure with me.

See you in church on Sunday. We wish you a Merry Christmas and look forward to growing with you in faith as we write a best seller together in Christ here at Holt UMC.

Love,

Glenn

Jerry's Page - in honor of Jerry Robinson

The conversation on Wednesday morning in our Disciple Bible Study continued, inspired by the testimonies from Sunday, November 8. Weren't you lifted by the wonderful witness of Holt UMC members and friends who, thanks to the movie making artistry of Artis White, appeared on the big screen in church sharing their thoughts about giving?

The witnesses were varied: children, managers, special needs adults, medical miracles, pastor, entertaining father, tender hearts, people making sense of grief, authentic Christians touched by faith....

They all helped us to make sense of giving and inspired others to want to try giving more.

One member of the Bible study had to share what she thought about the topics: "What is the greatest gift you have ever given?" "What is the greatest gift you have ever received?" "Why do you give?" The great gift received and the great gift given both made a profound impression.

Another person said, "Those are such great questions. I think it would be wonderful if at our family Christmas celebration this year we spent time as a family sharing our thoughts about those questions at the table!"

It occurred to me that these questions inspire something that all of us can relate to.

How do you respond? "What is the greatest gift you have ever given?" "What is the greatest gift you have received?" "Why do you give?"

Thank you for all you do to give of yourself in thanksgiving for God's great gift to us in Jesus, and as you enter this Holy season remember the words of Jerry Robinson, who continues to inspire us through his memory, "Give until it feels good!"

Notes to the Congregation

Thank you to the Holt UMC Bell Choir for coming and performing at Mason Community Church on Sunday, November 15. It was so wonderful to hear you ring and I had so much fun ringing with you again. It is so nice to be able to cross the bridge and help spread the Word of God through music! Thank you so much! – Tracey Seyffert (and Mason Community Church)

On behalf of United Methodist Women, we want to say a special 'thank you' to everyone that volunteered to work so hard and to everyone who contributed through donations and purchases that helped make our Crafter's Bazaar a success. All of our profit goes to missions and we are most appreciative! – Mary Hamilton and Uyvonne Johnson

Thank you very much for all the support my family and I have received since my brain cancer diagnosis. I have been overwhelmed with all the concern and well wishes you have all expressed. Knowing there are so many people praying for my family has an awesome impact on us. I feel so much strength from your prayers and encouragement. Thank you, and God bless. – Jeff Steinhaus

United Methodist Women

A big Thank You to all who worked and donated and came to our Fall Crafters Festival. It was a successful day.

Executive Board Meeting will be Tuesday, December 1 at 10:00 a.m. in the library.

Cookies for Shut Ins and General UMW meeting on Tuesday, December 8, 2:00 p.m., in the East Room. Please note the time change! We will pack cookies for our homebound people, install our officers and be entertained with Christmas music. All women are invited to join us.

December dates for Circles:

Early Birds: Mary Odiorne, Chairperson 882-5834. December 9 at 12 noon at Delhi Cafe. Last meeting until April.

Great Lakes: December 22 at Great Lakes in the small dining room at 12:30 pm. All are invited to join us. Call Margaret Turner, 694-5971, for reservations. Merry Christmas to all!

From the CEC: Did you know that one of the most contagious places in our society is church? Pediatricians often tell new parents to keep their infants out of churches until they are over 6 months old. Physicians often tell the elderly to avoid church if they are recovering from a cold, the flu, or pneumonia. All of those sneezing and coughing people crowded together in one confined area! My grandmother was once told by her doctor to avoid church for an entire winter season. (She didn't.) Now we have the threat of H1N1 and a possible pandemic.

In the Child Enrichment Center we are in the process of sanitizing and disinfecting all of the time. So much so that the Center for Disease Control and Public Health recommends that licensed preschool/childcare facilities like ours need take **no** additional cleaning precautions in the event of a serious outbreak other than those we already use daily.

The only sanitizer that we are allowed to use is chlorine bleach. We must make a new solution of bleach and water each and every day to clean all the surfaces in our center. Toys that are frequently handled and those mouthed by our smallest people are put into tubs and sanitized with this solution throughout the day, every day.

Those of us who teach, care, and assist in the CEC are among the healthiest people you will find anywhere. There are two simple reasons for this. One, we clean and sanitize daily. Two, we wash our hands incessantly. Hand washing is the

single most important activity each of us can do to eliminate the spread of infection. It is more important than blowing your nose or covering your mouth. Why? Because most people use their HANDS to do each of those! Our children are taught to sneeze or cough into their elbows, not their hands. The children here wash their hands at least 10 times a day or once every hour. The staff washes hands approximately 25 times a day! Have you ever washed your hands 25 times a day? Experts say that if *everyone* washed their hands 20 or more times a day the spread of infection would be reduced by 50%! Just think! We could eliminate having those miserable colds, bouts of flu, and other illnesses by one half simply by taking a few extra minutes to wash hands. So grab the soap and scrub up. Sing through the ABCs like we do to wash for the proper amount of time. You will be helping all of us to stay healthy. Wishing you a healthy winter, Lisa.

P.S. Come see our Christmas Program Thursday, December 10 at 4:30 p.m. in the sanctuary.

Library News: Are you stressed out with all the holiday activities? Spend a few minutes with Liz Curtis Higgs laughing as you read her book, Only Angels Can Wing It, the Rest of Us Have to Practice. Or choose any other of the great books in the Humor section of our library.

3rd Annual Family University coming in January to Holt UMC! An educational opportunity for the church and the community with a top-of-the-line, well-known speaker! Mark your calendars now:

January 31st: Hidden Keys to Loving Relationships – by Dr. Gary Smalley

Presented by Dr. Glenn and Nancy Wagner

Based on the well-known seminar series by Dr. Gary Smalley, Hidden Keys to Loving Relationships will give you more insights and a greater understanding about the keys to building close and intimate relationships than any book you have ever read. Fulfilling marriages don't just happen! Truly joyful marriages are a lot of work! In Hidden Keys to Loving Relationships, Gary Smalley shares the principles of strong marriages. He points out the common problems between husbands and wives. And he shows how to turn those troubles into teamwork by exploring:

- Two reasons why marriages fail
- How to meet the needs of your spouse
- Crucial differences between men and women

A Veteran's Day Tribute: Ken

VanNocker was honored with a medal bestowing ceremony at American Legion Post 238 on November 11. Some of the medals he had waited 55 years to receive! Ken was in the navy from 1942-1951, serving as an Aviation Ordnanceman with his primary responsibilities being to load the guns and bombs for the seaplanes. He was stationed in Perth, Australia, as well as the Admiralty and Philippine Islands. Representative Barb Byrum and the Post Commander pinned on the following medals – WWII Victory Medal (1 bar), American Campaign Medal (1 bar), Asiatic Pacific Campaign Medal (1 bar), National Defense Service Medal (1 bar), Philippine Liberation Medal, and Philippine Presidential Unit Citation. In addition, Ken was given a citation from the State of Michigan recognizing his military service. The congregation appreciates Ken's service and wishes to add their congratulations! Thanks to daughters Liz and Sally for organizing this tribute with Congressman Mike Roger's office.

Michigan Christian Advocate to continue

We stand corrected. Contrary to what was reported in last month's Hotline, the Michigan Christian Advocate, the monthly publication which highlights news from our United Methodist congregations across Michigan is not going out of business. The Advocate will be continuing its monthly 32-page publication as the independent voice of Michigan United Methodists.

What has changed is that the Advocate will no longer receive direct funding from the Detroit or West Michigan Conference budgets. In addition both conferences will be jointly funding a new statewide publication with the help of the United Methodist Reporter. Those in the church who have grown to love the Advocate will still be able to receive it. Others who desire to subscribe to the magazine may do so at <http://www.mcadvocate.org/> or by contacting the church office.

The Advocate may be contacted directly at: The Michigan Christian Advocate, 316 Springbrook Ave., Adrian, MI 49221; phone 517-265-2075.

Important notice for current subscribers: If you currently participate in the group subscription through Holt United Methodist Church, your cost for the year is \$15.00, which needs to be paid directly to the church by December 15, 2009.

Community events of interest:

The Capital City Ringers will present their annual holiday concert, "Christmas Without Borders," featuring songs of the season, hymn tunes, and songs from around the world. Enjoy handbells, handchimes, clarinet, French horn, bass guitar, keyboard and various percussion instruments at Judson Memorial Baptist Church, 530 Vernon, Lansing, on Saturday, December 5, 7:00 p.m. A freewill offering will be taken.

December Story begins with a gourmet holiday dinner, then watch the Christmas story unfold on two elaborate sets at South Church, 5250 Cornerstone Drive in Lansing. 2 nightly performances, 5:00 and 6:45 p.m. are offered on December 11, 12 & 13. Tickets are \$9.00 for adults; \$7.00 for children 12 & under, and can be purchased at the church office or Delta Center Gift & Bible Store. Call South Church, 517-322-2000 for additional information.