

# Bellringer

---

Sherman Avenue United Methodist Church

February 2016

## ***From the Pastor's Desk:***

Time goes by so quickly. Just two weeks ago, my wife Mariana and I were in Dominican Republic celebrating the New Year together with our families. I guess it should not surprise us that we are entering the Lenten Season earlier this year. For the Christian Community around the world, Lent is a time of reflection, re-evaluation, repentance, fasting, self-examination, reconciliation and preparation for the coming of Easter. In the early church, Lent was a time to prepare new converts for baptism. Today, Christians focus on their relationship with God, often choosing to give up something or to volunteer and give of themselves for others.

**Lent** is a season of forty days, not counting Sundays, which begins on Ash Wednesday and climaxes during Holy Week with Holy Thursday (Maundy Thursday), Good Friday and ends on Holy Saturday. Lent comes from the Anglo Saxon word *lencten*, which means "spring." The forty days represents the time Jesus spent in the wilderness, enduring the temptation of Satan and preparing to begin his ministry.

Sundays in Lent are not counted in the forty days because each Sunday represents a "mini-Easter" and the reverent spirit of Lent is tempered with joyful anticipation of the Resurrection.

There are many ways to enter into the spirit of the season of Lent and to "observe" these days. It is not so important what we do as it is important that we do something to make these days different from all the rest.

To enter into the spirit of Lent, during the months of February and March (In preparation to the Celebration of Easter), I invite you to participate in two spiritual growth opportunities that will be offered at SAUMC: One is the reading of the Lent booklet "**The Sanctuary for Lent 2016**". It is a booklet that contains one devotion for each of the forty days in Lent, plus Sundays written by Sue Mink's.

The other opportunity for spiritual growth is the Sermon Series: "**It's All About Love and Freedom: Reflections on the Ten Commandments**". I will be preaching these sermons during the five Sundays in Lent, starting February 14th and going through March 13th.

Many people see the Ten Commandments as just rules to follow, or else they will be punished by God. The Ten Commandments are, for many of us, the very words that denote harshness and repression. Instead, in this sermon series, we'll be exploring the idea of these commandments being a gift from God which are meant to free us just as the people of Israel were liberated from their slavery.

As a gift, if we live in that love and freedom God has given us, following these logical guidelines for our living in relationship with God and with others, then our lives, as individuals and as a whole society, will be blessed.

I invite you to journey with us during this season of Lent and be blessed!

Your servant in Christ,

**Pastor Rafael.**

## Talk Less – Listen More by Veronica Berry

*“A person’s words can be a source of wisdom, deep as the ocean, fresh as a flowing stream.” Proverbs 18:4*

Have you ever been in a heated conversation and couldn’t wait to share your opinion? Your urge to speak was so strong that you weren’t even listening to what the other person was saying. All you wanted was for them to take a breath and pause so you could hurry up and get your point in. Most of us love to talk about issues we strongly believe in. How many of us can actually say we listen to another person’s point of view, especially when it’s totally different from what we believe?

Tuning in and really listening to another person’s views helps build a bond of trust and respect. When someone really hears you, they can hear the sadness in your tone or catch the inflection of joy in your words. Sometimes just knowing that someone is there to listen can bring a sense of validation and peace to your soul. When you hear me, really hear me, I know you see me.

There is so much noise and wasted energy around us. We tend to get caught up in the whirlwind, thinking if I don’t speak up now, no-one will hear me. Sometimes we need to stop and assess the situation, listen to the words around us, and instead of speaking in desperation, take time to speak words of wisdom and kindness. When we speak wisely, God provides the right person to hear and understand it. There are so many people who feel isolated and alone even in the midst of a crowded room. Rooms filled with swirling conversations of people talking at each other instead of talking to each other. Sometimes take a moment and focus on the person sitting in the middle of the frenzy with a faraway look in their eyes, looking like they don’t really fit in, and ask them, ‘How are you?’ Be prepared and show them that you really want to know. I think you will find how a few words and caring listening can make a big difference in someone’s life.

This is a wonderful lesson for us as Christians. When we pray and ask God for help, our prayers can become incessant words of longing, asking for an immediate outcome exactly as we think it should be. We can get so caught up in the questions that we never take time to listen to his answers, especially if they don’t agree with what we think we should have. We usually say another prayer in a different way asking for the same thing. If we really want God’s help, we can’t throw prayers at him. We need to talk to him and then be quiet, patient, and be open to listen to his answers and accept his will. Even when we feel like we don’t quite fit in, have faith, God accepts and loves all of us. When we focus on him, he will listen, and guide us to what he wants us to do. He is the one who validates our existence and brings peace to our minds, bodies, and soul. God hears us, and when he really hears us, I know he sees us.

Let’s use our energy to listen more intently and focus on speaking words of kindness and love.

*“Be quick to listen, slow to speak, slow to anger.” James 1:19*

### **MISSION TRIP PRESENTATION**

The next Men’s Group meeting is Saturday, February 6, at 5:00 PM. Special arrangements have been made with Patsy McDonald to make a presentation about the most recent mission trip to Ganta, Liberia to visit the Jabez School. Our church has been making contributions to that mission for several years. While Patsy is in Ganta she will be taking pictures and gathering information for this presentation. She will be returning on February 4th and will make the presentation on the 6th with up-to-date information on the Jabez School.

The Men’s Group is inviting everybody to attend this presentation.  
You can bring your relatives, friends and neighbors. Everybody is invited.  
And there will be snacks!

# UMCOR and Partners Supply Basic Needs to Families in Syria and Iraq

By David Tereshchuk\*

Submitted to newsletter by Craig Myrbo

May 19, 2015—As civil war in Syria staggers into a fifth year, the United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR) is responding to basic, often-overlooked needs both in Syria and in neighboring Iraq, as both countries also face the challenge of persistent attacks by the Islamic State, known also as IS or ISIS.

“In a complex crisis like those in Syria and Iraq, we see our role as providing a small but strong light in the midst of great darkness, as we work with partner organizations to supply basic needs,” said Francesco Paganini, UMCOR executive secretary for International Disaster Response.

Since late 2013, UMCOR has channeled more than half a million dollars to simple, well-targeted initiatives in Syria and Iraq, and to other countries in the region hosting a total of more than 4 million Syrian refugees.

A recent UMCOR grant to partner GlobalMedic, for example, is assisting the Toronto-based organization in its work with displaced civilian families in the Kurdistan region of Iraq, where almost 2 million people have taken refuge from violence perpetrated primarily by ISIS.

Temporary housing, for nearly half the displaced population in Kurdistan, according to the United Nations, has sprung up in the form of spontaneously accessed communal shelters in schools and abandoned or unfinished buildings.

Typically, families have left their homes without adequate supplies and equipment for a long stay, and so the UMCOR-funded provision by GlobalMedic includes simple supplies such as a space heater, mattresses, blankets, and coverlets, as well as soap, diapers, and sanitary pads.

In Syria, where ISIS has taken advantage of the long-running civil conflict, UMCOR has issued another recent grant to Turkey-based partner, International Blue Crescent (IBC), which is working with displaced people in four camps near the Syria-Turkey border.

Notable among the camps is one called Bab el Salaam, meaning “Gate of Peace.” This camp has become home to 1,695 Syrian families, comprising a total of 8,354 displaced individuals.

UMCOR funding is allowing IBC to address the kind of unwanted consequence that often afflicts refugees and displaced persons’ lives—mass outbreaks of scabies and lice. In Bab el Salaam almost every child has been affected with lice.

IBC is responding by prioritizing a simple, small-scale intervention: the distribution of hygiene kits to every family. These kits contain anti-lice spray bottles, cream to combat scabies, plus soap, shampoo, and wipes—all of which will make life in Bab el Salaam a little more bearable.

The anti-lice and anti-scabies activity, Paganini said, “is a vital need.”

The crisis in Syria is long and complex, but through simple, targeted interventions such as this one, UMCOR is providing relief to some of the most vulnerable populations impacted by it.

Your gift to **UMCOR International Disaster Response, Advance #982450**, helps alleviate suffering as a result of disaster or crisis in Syria, Iraq, and elsewhere around the world.

<https://www.umcor.org/umcor/resources/news-stories/2015/may/0519umcorsupplysyriairaq>

\*David Tereshchuk is a journalist and media critic who regularly contributes to [UMCOR.org](http://UMCOR.org).



## Christian Education and Classes at Sherman Avenue UMC



Join us each Wednesday at 4:30 pm as we continue studying *The Story* for the first 30-45 minutes then continue our study of Deuteronomy.

The sewing class is held on Fridays from 5:00 PM to 8:00 PM in Fellowship Hall. Please contact Kazoua or Patsy if you have any questions.

A Spanish Language class began on Saturday, January 23, 2016. Class hours will be 10:00 AM to 11:30 AM. (No class on February 13th.) This eight week course will be taught by Ms. Carolina Diaz, a member of El Libertador UMC. Please RSVP to the office before January 16, 2016 if you are interested in attending. Please contact Pastor Rafael if you have any questions.

### **Stephen Recognition In the spirit of the Book of Acts**

*"Therefore, friends, select from among yourselves seven men full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we may appoint to this task, while we, for our part will devote ourselves to prayer and to serving the word." Act 6: 3-4*

#### **Sherman Avenue United Methodist Church Certificate of Appreciation Presented to Jean Wilder**

In recognition of your volunteer service to our church as Director of Methodist Youth Fellowship and Vacation Bible School, Coordinator of Ham Dinner, Vice President and Treasurer of UMW, member of SPRC, Liaison for the Women's Week Reunion and many other tasks of which few are aware.

We hope this certificate will serve as a lasting memento of our appreciation for your continued and dedicated service.

In the name of God, Thank You!

### **A Valentine Prayer**

Dearest Heavenly Father,

I want to thank you for the precious gift of love you have given to the world and to me. Thank you for blessing me every day with this love and the power and strength that I get from you every single day. Without your love for me I can't be...I can't function...I can't even breathe...because I NEED your love to sustain me. It's like food and medicine for my soul Lord.

Please continue to let me feel your comforting love in my life and Lord I give myself over to you to perfect in me this gift of love...that I may be able to express it and share it with others. Lord...I have not always been good at this...forgive me. Lord...some people are harder to love than others...but I want to be like your Son Jesus...so please continue the work you are doing in my heart so my heart will be like yours. In Jesus name I pray.

Father I love you so much!

# February 2016

## Need A Prayer?

Call Pat Bruccoleri (576-7331) or Cyndy Hoffman (513-2280)

| SUN   | MON  | TUE  | WED   | THU                                    | FRI   | SAT  |
|---|--|--|---|--|---|--|
|                                | 1<br>6:00 Cub Scouts<br>6:15 Brownies                    | 2  | 3<br>1:30 Staff Meeting<br>4:30 Bible Study<br>6:00 Band Practice | 4<br>6:30 Choir                        | 5<br>5:00 Sewing Class  | 6<br>10:00 Spanish Class<br>5:00 Men's Group |
| 7<br>8:30 Sunday School<br>9:30 Worship<br>10:45 Sunday School<br>11:30 Worship                                 | 8<br>6:00 Cub Scouts<br>6:15 Communications              | 9<br>1:00 Girl Scouts<br>6:30 Trustees   | 10<br>4:30 Bible Study<br>6:00 Band Practice                      | 11<br>6:30 Choir                       | 12<br>5:00 Sewing Class<br>6:00 Hmong Ministry & Youth Bible Study  | 13<br>10:00 ELCC Meeting                     |
| 14<br>8:30 Sunday School<br>9:30 Worship<br>10:45 Sunday School<br>11:30 Worship                                | 15<br>6:00 Cub Scouts<br>6:15 Brownies                   | 16<br>6:30 Outreach and Missions   | 17<br>4:30 Bible Study<br>6:00 Band Practice<br>6:00 Craft Night  | 18<br>1:30 Staff Meeting<br>6:30 Choir | 19<br>5:00 Sewing Class   | 20<br>10:00 Spanish Class                    |
| 21<br>8:30 Sunday School<br>9:30 Worship<br>10:45 Sunday School<br>11:30 Worship                                | 22<br><b>5:00 Newsletter Deadline</b><br>6:00 Cub Scouts | 23<br>6:00 Admin Council   | 24<br>4:30 Bible Study<br>6:00 Band Practice                      | 25<br>8:00 Copy/Fold<br>6:30 Choir     | 26<br>Rummage & Bake Sale 9:00-4:00<br>5:00 Sewing Class<br>6:00 Hmong Ministry & Youth Bible<br>6:30 HUMWA Meeting | 27<br>Rummage & Bake Sale 9:00-4:00          |
| 28<br>8:30 Sunday School<br>9:30 Worship<br>10:30 Blood Pressure Clinic<br>10:45 Sunday School<br>11:30 Worship | 29<br>10:00 Jabez Board<br>6:00 Cub Scouts               | The Rummage Sale will be February 26 and 27. Donations are still welcome, especially if they arrive before the week of the sale. The Bake Sale will need 'your' baked goods that week to be successful. So far so good both for donations and the hard work of the ladies who are sorting and pricing. |   |  |   |  |

### February Birthdays

|           |      |
|-----------|------|
| PATSY M   | 2/1  |
| RYAN M    | 2/1  |
| CAROL R   | 2/1  |
| LUKE T    | 2/15 |
| LEAH B    | 2/17 |
| NANCY B   | 2/21 |
| CHENG L   | 2/21 |
| JOSEPH T  | 2/22 |
| MARLENE T | 2/26 |
| MARVEL M  | 2/28 |

### February Anniversaries

|                 |      |
|-----------------|------|
| FRANK & FAITH R | 2/3  |
| RALPH & LINDA S | 2/7  |
| PATSY & ED M    | 2/23 |

*These are the dates that are in the database. If you find that your name is not included with the Birthdays or Anniversaries, please call Matt Treadaway*

**Please take a moment to remember our homebound members. Contact Lisa in the office for current addresses and phone numbers: 244-0868**

**Linda Jungbluth**

**Marvel Mapes**

**Jean & Justin Kramer**