

The Messenger

United Methodist Church – 2210 Sixth Avenue East, Alexandria, MN 56308

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April 2011

Editor: Colleen Schutte

Dear Friends,

The text message on my phone asks, “Is it ok if I take 2morrow off?” The phone number is unfamiliar and there's no name attached. It must be a “wrong number”, right? So I text back, “Sure! Why not? Take the day! Take 2! You deserve it!” Suppose there'll be a new job opening in the area this week?

Actually I didn't respond for a variety of fearful, cautious reasons. I have been receiving an increasing number of unsolicited calls and texts recently, even though my phone is on the “Do Not Call” list. However, I was sorely tempted.

Years ago I was at an ecumenical worship service at a Catholic church. At the coffee time after the service an older woman came up to me and said, “Father Frank,” (the assistant priest and I could be confused for each other, if you turned off half the lights and squinted real hard), “I would really like to have some of those blessed candles at home for my own devotional use, but I don't know who to ask. Should I have to pay for them, and if so, is it a set fee or just a donation? Can you help me? What should I do?”

In a wicked moment I said, “Oh, just take some! They have more candles than they know what to do with! Besides, they can always bless more.” She laughed and agreed, and, thanking me, shuffled off – to abscond with holy articles – at my urging!

Oh, the shame! The remorse I have felt all these years. And, since that was a rather long time ago, and that woman was quite old then, I assume she's probably “gone on ahead.” What if that little theft showed up on her heavenly rap sheet, and kept her out? She'd never have come clean on that one in the confessional, since she'd been given permission to steal! And there's probably no statute of limitations where God – the eternal and all-knowing record-keeper – is concerned. Which means I'm in trouble too!

Okay, I confess, I don't really believe that – though the candle story is true. But a lot of people do. And in that context I think of some of the things that they, we, lay on each other and ourselves – in the name of God and church and patriotism and family and what *I just know* is good and right and true!

So last Wednesday we took up the cross, so to speak. Beginning with several different artistic renderings, we examined one of the traditional Stations of the Cross – the one in which Jesus, having been sentenced to death by Governor Pilate, does indeed receive and begins to carry the cross to the place where he will die.

The first two or three images we looked at clearly and obviously presented the early part of that agonizing walk, as Jesus stumbles and falls, gets up, then falls again under the weight of what has been laid upon him – and whatever you may imagine or believe it represents.

Then, we moved to some less traditional images, photographs, the first, of a group of black people from the 1930's standing in a food line after a flood. They were gathered beneath a billboard proclaiming the rich abundance of life for citizens of the U.S.A. Those lined-up people seemed to be carrying that message on their backs. Striking.

The next set of photos was from the recent earthquake and tsunami in Japan, showing neat, orderly lines of people, waiting for blankets. The third set was of people, not waiting in line, but looting from stores in New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina. And all of the “stations” elicited various responses, interpretations, judgments from us on the people and the behavior pictured.

Doesn't it seem that life itself lays on burdens enough, without our adding to others' or our own? So might we might hear this Lent in the one who takes up the cross, a word of release: “Let this one go, whatever it is; I've got this one for you.”

We continue on Wednesday evenings at 5:30. You're welcome and free to come – or not!

Shalom,

Jeff

Parish News

Hospitalized Recently. . .

Kathy Kelly—DCH—now home

Baptized. . .

Nathan Bradley Brunkow, son of Brad and Kayla Brunkow, was baptized on March 13. Nathan was born on Dec. 30, 2010. His sponsors are Alycia Stotesbery and Darren Athey.



In your prayers, remember LaVonne Ahlstedt, Luella Beto, Judy Blume, Lowell Gess, Barb Glanville, Marilyn Graczyk, Evelyn Hertel, Kathy Kelly, Bob Mohawk, Tami Noding, Dan Olson, Helen Paulson, and Dar Rushford.

The Northstar District Prayer Connection:

Mar. 30-Apr. 5—Henning UMC

Apr. 6-12—Herman UMC

Apr. 13-19—Hewitt UMC

Apr. 20-26—Hill City UMC

Apr. 27-May 3—Trinity UMC of Hoyt Lakes

Worship Attendance

	2011		2010	
	8:00	10:30	8:00	10:30
Feb. 27	81	80	63	96
Mar. 6	64	142	59	106
Mar. 13	33	99	57	112
Mar. 20	55	91	60	140

The April issue of *The Messenger* has been sponsored by Deloris Venekamp.

Published by the United Methodist Church
of Alexandria

Telephone (320) 763-4624

Pastor: Jeffrey Hansen

Parish Worker: Jocelyn Olson

Secretary/Treasurer: Colleen Schutte

Director of Youth & Children's

Ministries: Michelle Ferris

Custodian: Denise Dropik

Organists: Kay Hoffland, Kirk Landman,
Gale Maxwell

Choir Director: Kirk Anderson

Nursery: Amanda Winther & Amber Krienke

Office Hours

Jeff – Tuesday (3-5 pm)

Thursdays (10-12 noon, 3-5 p.m.)
by appointment at other times

Monday through Friday 9:00-1:00

Colleen – Mon-Tue-Wed-Thu-Fri

Jocelyn – Mon-Tue-Wed

Michelle – Tue-Wed-Thu-Fri – 9:00-4:00

Please call ahead if you wish to come in to the office. There are times when we are not in the building, even though we are working. We recommend that you call to see if the person you wish to meet with is in. There also may be times when someone is in the office later than 1:00 p.m.

Publication Date for the next *Messenger*:

is the last week of April. Articles submitted for the May issue need to be in the office by NOON on Wednesday, April 20th

APRIL VOLUNTEERS

Liturgists:

8:00 April 3 & 10—Jeff Reed April 17 & 24—Scott Johnston
10:30 April 3 & 10—Sue Helgeson April 17 & 24—Bruce Jordan

Ushers:

8:00 – Scott and Vicki Johnston, Brad Brunkow
10:30 – Roger and Beverly Parks, Chris Springman, David Nelson

Acolytes:

	8:00	10:30
April 3	Kirsten Hastings & Calley Richardson	Francesca Jost & Jack Nelson
April 10	Gavin Greengo	Ethan Scribner & Hannah Nelson
April 17	Evan Gettel & Kirsten Hastings	Robb Erlandson & Brynne Pass
April 24	Madeleine Evans & Calley Richardson	Jack Nelson & Emma Reilly

Greeters:

April 3	8:00—Deloris and Barb Venekamp	10:30—Chuck Bollen
April 10	8:00—Wes and Muriel Smith	10:30—Dennis and Arlyn Cin
April 17	8:00—Ron and Kathy Reiber	10:30—Virginia Ketter
April 24	8:00—Don and Pat Baustian	10:30—Kipp and Chris Hayes

Coffee Servers:

April 3 Mike and Jean Bristow, Derek and Alison Chinn
April 10 Wes and Muriel Smith, Jerry and Mary Wilkens
April 17 Arlue Beheng, LaDonna Anderson, Kathryn Erickson
April 24 Volunteers needed to serve purchased rolls

Organists:

April 3—Lonnie Kriel
April 10—Kirk Landman
April 17—Gale Maxwell
April 24—Gale Maxwell



A massive 8.9 magnitude earthquake rumbled through northeast Japan on Friday, March 11th triggering a 33 foot tsunami wave. The earthquake is the strongest to hit Japan in 140 years, and it is the fifth strongest in the world. The disaster caused widespread death and destruction including loss of homes and livelihoods. The crisis is intensified with the threat of nuclear radiation. United Methodists and friends are urged to pray for the people of Japan during this crucial hour and support this emergency effort through giving. If you wish to help, please put your contribution in the offering plate on Sunday morning, or mail it to the church office. Mark "Japan" in the memo section of your check.

On April 3, 2011, we will receive a special offering for One Great Hour of Sharing. Join United Methodists everywhere by participating in this special offering that supports UMCOR's vital work. Your gifts to One Great Hour of Sharing lay the foundation for UMCOR to bring restoration, healing and hope for tomorrow. This offering is what allows UMCOR to go in to areas such as Japan (see article above) and do their work. It also allows every dollar that you give to a relief effort (like Japan) to go directly to that effort. Please give generously.



We are looking for volunteers to serve coffee fellowship on Easter Sunday, April 24th, from 9-10:30 am. Rolls will be furnished. If you would like to serve your church

family in this way, please call the church office (763-4624) or email us at office@alexumc.org. Thank you!



SAVE THIS DATE: On Monday, April 4th, from 6:30-9:00 PM at St. Mary's Church, Terry Nichols and Adil Ozdemir, Professors of Theology from the University of St. Thomas

will present, "Can Christians and Muslims Get Along? Is There Any Common Ground?" St. Mary's Committee for Peace, Justice and the Integrity of Creation invites people from other congregations in the Alexandria area to learn about this important issue in light of the changing face of the Middle East.



Youth Bake Sale
April 2nd—7 AM



Highway Clean Up
Sat., April 9th
10:00 AM



Adult Fellowship
Tuesday, April 12
Potluck Dinner
6:00 PM

Rev. Roger and Beverly Parks will tell of their experiences in Costa Rica and also show some of Roger's beautiful bird photography.

MCC Continues

Please disregard the March 6th Sunday bulletin notice stating that we are no longer collecting pop tabs, Campbell Soup labels, box tops for education, used greeting cards and LOL milk bottle tops. Many people feel this is a beneficial project that should be continued. Sally Vano has volunteered to take over the project along with some former *Can-Do Kids* (currently youth) who agreed to help.

Please bring any of the above mentioned items (as well as eye glasses and cases and coins for Kissy Eye Hospital) and place them in the MCC basket/containers on the shelves in the narthex. MCC (Mission Collection Center) was named years ago by then elementary student, Colin Ryan. Thanks for your contributions that make this mission possible.



Joy Circle – Thursday, April 21, 9:30 am at Carol Meyer's. Pat Baustian will present the program.

Peace Circle – Thursday, April 21, 1:30 PM.



Reminder. . .the monthly calendar is now part of the web page: www.alexumc.org. On the left hand side, click on "calendar"...you will be able to

choose which month you wish to view and/or print. We have the whole year on there (as much as we have right now). Be sure to check the calendar frequently as things may be added or changed.



Free Community Breakfast—the 2nd Saturday of each Month—9:00 to 10:30 am at Alexandria UMC. If you need transportation, call the church office (763-4624) before 10:00 am on the Friday before the breakfast. The next breakfast will be April 9th. Sign up sheets will be up soon in the narthex if you would like to volunteer to work at the breakfast or donate food. Thank you to those who gave their time, talent or otherwise for the March breakfast, including: Pat Baustian, Florence Benson, Helen Glade, John and Sue Helgeson, Dave and Karen Morgan, Donna Phillips, Shawn, Colin and Olivia Reilly, Heidi Ryan and Andy and Sally Vano.



Community Garden Update. . .we may have snow on the ground, but there's lots of progress being made in our community gardens!

- ◆ Church members are invited to sign up for raised bed garden plots (4x8). Door hangars will be distributed in the neighborhood on April 8th and 9th inviting them to sign up as well. (We'll also ask them to "save the date" for our Neighborhood Block Party on May 22nd!).
- ◆ April 16th—we'll be offering a free gardening class "Extending the Season with Successive Planting" at the church at 10:00. Two Master Gardeners will facilitate the class.
- ◆ April 27th (with a May 4th rain date) 5:30 pm—we plan to construct 15 more wooden garden frames. Those frames will be installed and filled with dirt on May 11th and 18th. All in time for spring planting!
- ◆ Watch for other community garden improvements: rain barrels to collect rain from the church roof (to be used to water gardens) and a rain garden between the gardens and the parking lot. "Pay It Forward" plots designated for growing produce to donate to food shelves.
- ◆ Are you interested in getting involved? We'd welcome your help. Talk with a committee member and we'll be glad to help you get started: Sally Vano, Sherry Bruckner, Deb Parrott, Margaret Anderson, Julie Hansen, Jeff Reed, Heidi and Ken Ryan.



All Church Potluck on Sunday, April 3, following the 10:30 worship service. Bring a dish to share and join in the fellowship! If your last name begins with K-M, please plan on hosting (set-up, beverage prep and clean up). See you there!!!



The Education Committee still needs to fill 1,000 Easter eggs for the Easter Egg Hunt. Please donate candy! Also, the committee is in need of chocolate bunnies. The Annual Easter Egg Hunt is set for April 9th, 9:45 am.

The Prayer Shawl Group will meet on Tuesday, April 12th at 6:30 pm

GRATITUDE - HONOR - MEMORIAL OPPORTUNITIES

\$ 25.00	Weekly bulletin sponsor
\$ 60.00	Monthly Messenger sponsor
\$ 15.00	Biodegradable paper cups (200)
\$825.00	New computer for office
\$255.00	Computer Installation
\$125.00	Computer Software
\$140.00	Tall Table for Narthex
\$ 80.00	1/2 of lot snow plowing
\$500.00	Shrubs for around church building



SAVE COFFEE GROUNDS—Why throw coffee grounds into the garbage when they can be beneficial in gardening and composting? If you want more information, do a computer search on “coffee grounds”. A container to deposit used coffee grounds has been placed in the church kitchen. When serving coffee at church, please put coffee grounds (and filters) into this container. NOTE: When the small container is full, please empty it into a larger container in the furnace room marked COFFEE GROUNDS. Thanks!

Need For Allocation Volunteers



Have you ever wondered how United Way funds are distributed? Now is your opportunity to see the way it works! Be part of a group of volunteers who will interview agencies seeking to partner with the United Way. Help review their requests for funding and make recommendations on the amount they will receive. See the impact that your investment in the United Way makes! This year's panels are:

Monday, April 11th—8:30-12:00; 12:30-4:00; 5:00-8:30

Tuesday, April 12th—8:30-12:00; 12:30-4:00; 5:00-8:30

Wednesday, April 13th—12:00-5:00

Thursday, April 14th—8:30-12:00; 12:30-4:00

Prior to allocations, volunteers will receive a packet of information including date and time as well as funding applications from the agencies they will be reviewing. Interested? Contact United Way at united-1@rea-alp.com or 320-763-4840. Feel free to invite a friend or two to join you for one of the most rewarding evenings that you will have the opportunity to experience.

Easter Flower Garden



This year we will decorate the sanctuary with three different flowers for Easter Sunday. Because so many people have expressed to us an allergy to Easter Lilies, we have decided not to purchase lilies. **Our order needs to be in by April 11th, so the last day for you to place your order is Sunday, April 10th.** You may take your flowers home after the 10:30 Easter Sunday Service. Please indicate below which flower you would like to order. If you wish to have your flower in honor or memory of someone, please indicate that below also.

_____ Tulips - \$11.00 _____ Daffodils - \$11.00 _____ Hyacinths - \$11.00

Name (please print): _____

Please indicate if in memory or honor (please circle) of someone:

Memory or

(please print) *Honor* _____

Make check payable to Alex UMC with notation "Easter Flowers". **Checks must accompany order. Remember, orders must be in by April 10th.**



- | | | |
|--|---|--|
| <p>1 Louise Hosking</p> <p>3 Mel Nomsen
Jessica Roos</p> <p>4 Brynne Pass
Kelli Stember-Tung
Bryce Vogt</p> <p>5 Ann Heydt
Tony Primus</p> <p>6 Jeff Reed</p> <p>9 Gerry Olson
James Richardson
Marti Stember</p> <p>10 Betty Springman
Maureen Winger</p> | <p>11 Nicholas Schlapkohl</p> <p>12 LaVonne Goodell</p> <p>13 Mike Bristow
Todd Dirkes
Larry Mills
Riley Runnoe
Darlean Rushford</p> <p>15 Keith Mounsdon
Bea Swenson</p> <p>17 Phyllis Mounsdon</p> <p>18 Jim Jensen
Dean Lindstrom</p> <p>19 Randy Santjer</p> <p>20 Dave Battey
Donna Phillips
Dick Wittkamp</p> <p>21 Bill Glade
Peter Koel</p> | <p>22 Dell Blair
Isabella Vogt
Kaylee Vogt</p> <p>24 Nevin Brede
Christine Gadbow
Gale Maxwell
Muriel Smith</p> <p>27 Cleo Carpenter
Jodi DeWitt</p> <p>29 Bob Rishavy</p> <p>30 Katherine Evans
Joyce Martin
Heidi Ryan</p> |
|--|---|--|





Free Computers for People with Disabilities

Computer Go Round, a program of United Cerebral Palsy of Central Minnesota, wants you to know that there are computers currently available to people with a disability in Minnesota. Several computers have been donated to UCP by individuals and businesses, then refurbished by volunteers in compliance with Microsoft's Authorized Refurbisher standards. These personal computers are installed with the Windows XP Professional operating system and come standard with a 15" CRT monitor, 40 GB hard drive, 512 KB of RAM, CD-ROM drive, keyboard, mouse, and speakers. They are preloaded with Microsoft Security Essentials and a word processing software compatible with most of the current file formats used today.

To qualify for a computer you must have a disability, or have a family member living in your home with a disability, that is recognized under the Americans with Disabilities Act and pay a nominal packaging fee for the specific configuration of your computer (\$125, \$75 of which is due at the time of application). Proof of a disability will be required. To find out more and to download an application for a computer go to their website: <http://www.ucpcentralmn.org/computer>.

Community Events

April 4-May 9 – Anderson Funeral Home is sponsoring a grief seminar on Monday evenings at 6:30 pm. To accommodate the needs of more people, a daytime session is also offered on Tuesdays (April 5 through May 10) at 12:30 pm at First Lutheran Church. Details of the sessions can be found on the flyer on the bulletin board across from the furnace room.

April 7 – Alexandria Youth for Christ Family Celebration: *A Story of Rescued Lives*—6:00 pm at the Holiday Inn. Special speaker is Eric Timm. Contact Barry at 760-6712 for more information.

April 8-10 – Beginning Experience weekend at Luther Crest Bible Camp—Beginning Experience is a non-denominational organization who's mission is to facilitate the grief resolution process for adults who have suffered a loss through death, divorce or separation, thereby enabling them to again love themselves, others and God. For more information, see the flyer on the bulletin board across from the furnace room.

April 10—St. Nicholas Catholic Church of Belle River will host a Pancake/Potato Pancake and Sausage feed from 9:00 am to 1:00 pm at the Carlos Town Hall. Cost is \$7.50 for adults and \$3.50 for children. Children 5 and under are free.

April 15—St. Mary's and KC's Annual Fish Fry from 4:30-7:30 pm at St. Mary's School. Menu includes all you can eat fish, salad, baked beans, bread, cookies and bars, beverages—with a new item for kids: macaroni and cheese! Adults are \$7.00, students and seniors are \$5, Preschoolers are \$3. Everyone is welcome.

April 21—Free Diabetes Screening—Are you at risk for diabetes? One third of the people with diabetes are unaware they have the disease. Douglas County Lions and Broadway Medical Center are sponsoring the free screening clinic at the Alexandria Senior Center from 7-9 AM. Screening is most effective if four hours of fasting is observed before. Your Lions will serve a light snack following the screening.

April 23—Douglas County Hospital Auxiliary & Elder Network invites Grandparents/Grandchildren to an *Easter Bunny Tea and Brunch* from 11:00 am—1:00 pm. This event will feature an appearance by the Easter Bunny, Easter Egg Hunt, Children's Interactive Music/Entertainment, Parade and Brunch. Don't forget your camera! Tickets are \$15 for adults and \$10 for children and may be purchased at Elden's Food Fair, Trumm Drug (downtown) and DC Hospital Gift Shop. Tickets must be purchased by April 17th or call 762-6024 for reservations. NO TICKETS WILL BE SOLD AT THE DOOR.

April 28—Mobile Food Drop from 11:30-2:30 (or until food is gone) at New Life Christian Church—everyone who eats qualifies—need to be a resident of Douglas County—bring your own boxes and baskets to carry food. The food drop is made possible through private donations and the work of the Community Impact Coalition.