

# *The Messenger*

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

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February 2011

Editor: Colleen Schutte

Dear Friends,

“Drop dead!” Unless those words are followed by “gorgeous” or some other term from the same category, they usually indicate bad feelings, ill will, animosity. If someone says those words to you, preceded by, “I wish you would...” or “Why don’t you just...?” or “It would suit me just fine if you’d...”, well, it’s probably a safe bet that you won’t be getting a Christmas card next year from that person. She doesn’t like you. He hopes bad things befall you. She would prefer you were gone from her life.

Truth be told, most of us have such feelings at some time or other. We are taught however, most of us, that when we do have them, it’s best if we just keep them to ourselves. We are discouraged from going around suggesting to others that we’d just as soon that they ceased to be. It’s bad form. It can be damaging to the social order. And, though it is uncertain yet whether some of the recent tragic events in the news actually teach this, we learn the sad lesson too often that there are people in our midst who may take such voiced feelings as actual suggestions, words to act on, act out. Once again, we are reminded that words can be powerful, in some cases devastatingly so.

So, when I read that an activist in the Tennessee Tea Party (he’s the founder of Tea Party Nation, I believe) expressed essentially that very “drop dead” desire towards you and me, I was rather surprised. I can see by your face that you are too!

Judson Phillips wrote on his blog ([www.tngovwatch.org](http://www.tngovwatch.org)) back in December that his dream is for the United Methodist Church to “go out of business.” His ire was raised when, walking past the United Methodist building in Washington D.C., he’d seen a banner out front that advocated, “Support the Dream Act!” The Dream Act, as I understand it, was a piece of legislation, which dropped dead for lack of support in Congress in 2010, that would have provided a way for the children of undocumented aliens who were born in this country to gain citizenship here. In other words, it would have given them a chance to achieve the American dream. Mr. Phillips doesn’t want them to have that opportunity. I guess this is no longer the “land of opportunity,” at least in his mind.

As it turns out, Mr. Phillips, who was a member of the United Methodist Church but left us over thirty-five years ago, is still glad he exited, but apparently also still has some unresolved feelings for and about us...the drop dead kind!

Isn’t it a rather strange dream though? Especially in light of the famous one that we just re-visited, the one offered by Martin Luther King Jr. on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial. King’s dream, which still brings chills and tears when I hear the speech re-played even forty-eight years later, beckons to us still to do better, to enlarge the circle, to expand opportunity, to expect and practice generosity. Mr. Phillips’ dream seems to go the other way.

And yet, I do not desire for Mr. Phillips anything like what he dreams for us as a church. On the contrary I wish him well, all the best, the very best, truly. And I do expect that when and if that very best comes his way, should he receive it, he will also receive and share a new and truly improved dream. In the meantime, while he dreams that we will go out of business, based on the comments his blog inspired, his writing may actually be good for our business! Write on, Mr. Phillips! Write on!

Shalom,  
Jeff

## Parish News

### Hospitalized Recently . . .

Del Blair – Glacial Ridge Hospital  
Judy Blume – DCH – now home  
Tami Noding – Fairview Riverside

### Congratulations to:

Brad and Kayla Brunkow on the birth of  
Nathan Bradley on December 30, 2010.

Nathan and Amanda Pring on the birth of  
Madeleine on January 11, 2011.

### Our Sympathy To:

Margaret Anderson on the death of her  
sister.

Gary and Heidi Becker on the recent death  
of Heidi's father.



In your prayers, remember LaVonne Ahlstedt, Margaret Anderson and family, Gary and Heidi Becker and family, Luella Beto, Del Blair, Judy Blume, Lowell Gess, Barb Glanville, Marilyn Graczyk, Evelyn Hertel, Bob Mohawk, Tami Noding, Dan Olson, Helen Paulson, and Dar Rushford.

The Northstar District Prayer Connection:

Jan 26 – Feb 1 Fleming UMC  
Feb. 2-8 – Fosston UMC  
Feb. 9-15 – Frazee UMC  
Feb. 16-22 – Gilbert UMC  
Feb. 23-Mar. 1 – Glenwood United Parish

### Worship Attendance

	2011		2010	
	8:00	10:30	8:00	10:30
Jan. 2	32	89	42	97
Jan. 9	51	109	66	98
Jan. 16	50	117	56	98
Jan. 23	45	121	44	94

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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

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### Monday through Friday 9:00-1:00

Colleen – Mon-Tue-Wed-Thu-Fri

Jocelyn – Mon-Tue-Wed

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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.

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## Publication Date for the next Messenger:

is the last week of Feb.  
articles submitted for the  
March issue need to be in  
the office by NOON on Friday,  
February 18th.

## ***FEBRUARY VOLUNTEERS***

### **Liturgists:**

8:00 Feb. 6 & 13 – Julie Hansen Feb. 20 & 27 – Adrian Ledermann  
10:30 Feb. 6 & 13 – Jean Bristow Feb. 20 & 27 – Connie Good

### **Ushers:**

8:00 – Linda Cole, Ron and Colleen Schutte  
10:30 – Margaret Anderson, Chuck Bollen, Phyllis Freier, Chuck Holm

### **Greeters:**

February 6	8:00 – Carol Meyer	10:30 – Jim & Luverne Adams
February 13	8:00 – Jerry & Jeanne Miller	10:30 – Kipp & Chris Hayes
February 20	8:00 – Aaron & Brenda Thomson family	10:30 – Shawn & Christine Reilly family
February 27	8:00 – Gary & Heidi Becker	10:30 – Gary & Chris Schuldt

### **Coffee Servers:**

Feb. 6 – Ken & Heidi Ryan, Ted & Geri Zabrosky  
Feb. 13 – Don & Connie Mehesan, Dan & Cindy Perkins  
Feb. 20 – Green Sunday School Class  
Feb. 27 – Purple Sunday School Class

### **Organists:**

Feb. 6 – Kathleen Haining  
Feb. 13 – Gale Maxwell  
Feb. 20 – Gale Maxwell  
Feb. 27 – Gale Maxwell



Our church garden project will begin its second growing season in 2011. Because we received a \$3700 grant, plus \$500 for assessment from West Central Wellness, we were able to build 18 raised garden beds last summer. Thirteen more beds must be completed by June 1, 2011, with more possible in the future.

If you are interested in gardening in one of these raised beds (several handicap accessible), you should notify the church office by Monday, February 28. In March, neighboring senior town homes, low-income apartments, group home residents and other neighbors will be invited to share in gardening opportunities. This community building activity will allow for youth, seniors, families, neighbors and church members to work side by side and to enjoy eating their own “healthy, home-grown” produce.

Gardeners will be contacted prior to spring planting regarding their raised bed location, community garden guidelines and a class on raised bed gardening which will be offered. For more information about community gardening or to find out how you can help with this church project (building more beds, composting, rain barrels, a rain garden) please contact the church office and someone from the “garden committee” will get back to you.



The Education Committee is looking for a team of volunteers to help organize Vacation Bible School. Each volunteer will be paired up to help plan one area of VBS such as art, games, snack, decorations, etc. This commitment doesn't require you to teach the activities during VBS, but can include that responsibility if you desire. If you are interested in volunteering or have questions, please contact Shelly Ferris at [shelly@alexumc.org](mailto:shelly@alexumc.org); or 763-4624. Thank you!

Alexandria UMC Church families. . .friends. . .

January 2011 update on Reo and Cleona Van Camp. They appreciate your thoughts and prayers for them. They enjoy their meals on wheels each week. . . "so handy". They enjoy being together in their farm house. They enjoy their weekly Lawrence Welk Music. Mom says "tell them thanks. . . that's what we need is prayers!!"

We too are thankful to God and all of you for your continued "thoughts" and "prayers".

Brenda and Chuck Bollen



UMC Unit Meeting, Thursday, February 3, 5:30 PM. Program: "Call to Prayer and Self Denial - Give a Gift of Love". Hostess is Friends Circle.



Reminder. . .the monthly calendar is now part of the web page: [www.alexumc.org](http://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.



Friends Circle - Thursday, March 10, 7:00 PM

Joy Circle - Thursday, March 17, 9:30 AM at Traveler's Inn

Peace Circle - Thursday, March 17, 1:30 PM.

Cards are now available from the ushers that enable those utilizing direct withdrawal or one check a month givers, to participate fully during the giving of our gifts at worship.



Wow! The evening of December 24th was so . . . warm and moving with all those candles flickering around the altar, Pastor Jeff's message and those wonderful Christmas Carols. I'm glad that was so nice, because it got really lonesome around here for the next couple of weeks. Everyone must have been really busy and with no Sunday School for a couple of weeks I missed seeing all the activity down that hallway. Whoa – was I complaining about quiet? Didn't last! Second weekend of the month we had people enjoying pancakes, sausage and fellowship on Saturday and Sunday School resumed. There are so many adults attending (there's hardly room for me, but I continue to hide under Roger's chair) and so much good discussion happening in the Adult Sunday School. Between that group on Sunday and the Tuesday afternoon Bible Study, the walls of the lounge should radiate "good news".

Those nice ladies came again in January and removed the Advent Season decorations and replaced them with a variety of new items. I love scooting around the narthex to see what is new in the cabinets. Many meetings have taken place this past month and guess what, I have heard laughter at many of those meetings. I think that is pretty cool that you can talk about issues, some serious, and still retain a sense of humor. I even heard some laughter the night the Finance Committee met, something about "waving off the collection plate". I will keep a close eye on them and keep you posted.

It's been fun to watch the youth "step up" - have you noticed they are sharing ushering duties with the old timers? Last I heard they are planning a Valentine dinner. Excuse me while I head for the Fellowship Hall to seek out a vantage point for that event.



The Missions and Social Issues Committee and the United Methodist Women are co-sponsoring the viewing of several documentaries regarding the relationships between the food we eat, the environment and how the choices we make about our food and environment affect human lives.

On Thursday, February 17th the film "*Black Gold*" will be shown. This documentary explores the coffee trade in Ethiopia, its affects on the people that live and work in the industry.

On Thursday, March 3rd the film "*End of the Line*", a National Geographic documentary on the global fishing crisis will be shown.

Both films will be shown at 7 PM at UMC. A discussion period and light snacks will follow. More films will be scheduled for the fall!!

*Thank You!*

Thank you to everyone for the prayers and cards on the death of my sister.



**Our Angel Tree 2010.** . .The day started with a student in tears. Her mom had informed her on Sunday that the money she had saved for Christmas had to be spent on a car repair. Therefore, there would be no Christmas gifts. She also shared that they had reached an all time low and had to attend the United Way Food Drop last week to get some food in the house. What a blessing it was to be able to say to her, “Sweetie, today is the Angel Tree Gift Day.” A smile formed on her tear-stained face.

She and I headed to the classroom to join the rest of the seniors who were eagerly awaiting our gift exchange, white elephant gifts that is. A blue elephant night light and a can of sliced slugs proved to be the coveted white elephant items. The laughter in the room got everyone into the holiday spirit and caused me to reflect on the rarity of that sound in the room.

From there a group of 7 of us, proceeded to the church to pick up the Angel Tree gifts. After filling the back of my vehicle with gifts, Pastor Jeff offered to say a prayer. I had told the group that he would be doing this and that anyone could opt out. After everyone indicated they were comfortable with praying, one student suggested we all hold hands. This moment will be one of my favorite memories of this Christmas season.

On our way back to the high school, we passed an elderly woman walking in the 10 degree weather. We stopped and asked her if she'd like a ride. She was on her way to Alexandria Light & Power. Her purse was full of change, her attempt to pay a portion of her overdue bill. I asked her if she would please allow us to give her a ride back home, but she declined. As I drove away, the girls in the car said they felt like they were just part of something really special. And they were. It was an opportunity for us to give in a small way, with transportation and conversation.

When we arrived at Jefferson, I pulled my vehicle up to the doors of my East House classroom. A student came out and said, “It’s Mrs. K in the Hyundai sleigh.” Quite humorous, but I loved it. My car had become a makeshift “Santa’s sleigh”. We unloaded the gifts and the opening began. Mittens were put on as well as slippers. One student excitedly proclaimed, “A \$50 gas card?! My car is running on fumes.” One young man said, “This brings tears to my eyes.” Another told me about how thirsty he gets, but doesn’t want to drink the water at his home because it tastes so awful. He was thrilled to receive a Pur water pitcher and filter. One student shyly admitted that she didn’t actually ask for gifts for herself, even though I happen to know her family barely gets by. She had put in a request for a friend who she felt was in greater need. As I was heading out the door at lunch, a student appeared in my entry way. She had just come from the hospital. She wanted to inform me that another one of my students had a family emergency and that her brother was in rough shape medically. What a blessing for me to be able to say, “Can I send her Angel Tree gifts with you? I think it would brighten her spirits.”

I don’t know how to capture in words the feeling in my classroom on “Angel Tree Day”. Not one gift goes unappreciated. I have a student who I had never seen smile in the 85 days she has been my student, until “Angel Tree Day”. The hand– knit mittens and knit hat could not have fit her style more perfectly. It goes on and on. If you have ever doubted that your gift matters, don’t. If you have ever wondered if the gifts are needed, don’t. This tradition your church has created will live in the hearts of these kids forever. Thank you for letting me be the conduit. You are God’s angels on earth.

May God bless you as richly as you have blessed me and my students!

Chris Kragenbring, JHS teacher

**REPORT ON STAFFING MODEL  
RECEIVED BY SPRC:**

On January 3, the Staff Parish Relations Committee received the final report on a model for staffing our congregation in the future. Roger Parks, working as a consultant for the committee, met with committees of the congregation and with the staff to assess the tasks that in their view were necessary for our congregation to successfully fulfill its mission. In the course of those interviews, 244 tasks were identified—some duplicates, of course. Roger then sorted those tasks according to skills necessary to fulfill those tasks and prepared a model for staffing our congregation. It is anticipated that this model will serve to provide guidance for the SPRC over the next months and years in aligning our staff with the model. In his conclusion, Roger said: “The discussion in the committees and staff were lively and filled with a great deal of passion for the church. There appeared to be a genuine desire that the Church succeed in being a place both of spiritual nurturing and service to one another.

***UMW Honor Jeff Reed***

Annually, our United Methodist Women honor a local church member by making a contribution to mission projects in their name. This year, our UMW group has chosen to honor Jeff Reed. Jeff was recognized at the December 26th, 8:00 AM church service with a mission recognition pin. Jeff has contributed significantly to the work of our church. . . .serving as a Lay Leader, Mission committee co-chair, Worship committee, Youth Advisory Board, and as a Youth Sunday school teacher. Many of you enjoyed the worship experiences provided at last year’s Lenten and Taze services, which Jeff facilitated. Our outreach to the Rosebud Indian Reservation was spearheaded by Jeff. . .and he has been instrumental in planning and building our community garden. United Methodist Women appreciate Jeff’s outstanding work, and are pleased to be able to recognize him in this way!!



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|--|---|--|
| 2 Dan Olson<br>Aaron Thomson                       | 9 Ryan DeReamer<br>Karen Gadbow<br>Betty Sax<br>Coltin Wassengeso | 17 Julie Parks<br>Gary Seiler  |
| 3 Cora Smith                                       | 10 Maurine Hamelau  | 18 Otto Freier<br>John Halvorson   |
| 5 Madalyn Gimbel<br>Deb Vikander                   | 11 Megan Anderson<br>Gabriel Evans                                | 19 Adam Cummins<br>Alden Mattocks  |
| 6 Lamont Mounsdon                                  | 12 Jacqui Donahue<br>Chris Springman                              | 20 Francesca Jost<br>Jennifer Heydt<br>Fred Lindstrom<br>Lee Moench<br>Mathaies Noding |
| 7 Jackson Cavers<br>Brian Koehn<br>Eleanor Nygaard | 13 Arlene James-Carlson<br>Eden Phillips                          | 22 Courtney Richardson   |
| 8 Adam Pitcher                                     | 14 Alice Emmert<br>Linda Ruter                                    | 24 Ben Kakac<br>Deb Parrott<br>Jeanne Reed   |
|  | 15 John Heydt   | 28 Paula Glade<br>Pat Sherman  |
|  | 16 Chuck Bollen<br>Sandy Denke<br>Ron Larson<br>Will Reed         |  |

## Special Giving by Alexandria UMC in 2010

### Missions:

\$1,236.72	Sunday School offering (\$329.06-Kissy Eye Clinic; \$329.06-Food Shelf; \$578.60-Kids Against Hunger)
\$ 62.91	VBS Offering (\$31.46-Douglas County Food Shelf; \$31.45-Bread For the World)
\$2,999.66	Kissy Eye Clinic
\$1,879.35	World Hunger
\$ 65.00	Love Offering
\$ 150.00	Human Relations Sunday
\$ 225.00	Peace With Justice Sunday
\$ 132.00	World Communion Sunday
\$ 336.00	One Great Hour of Sharing
\$ 115.00	Native American Awareness Sunday
\$ 375.00	Blanket Sunday
\$1,525.00	UMCOR (undesignated)
\$8,040.00	Haiti Relief
\$ 100.00	Chili Earthquake
\$ 550.00	Pakistan Relief
\$ 600.00	Tree of Life (Rosebud Mission)
\$ 41.85	SS Birthday Mission Money (\$20.92-Kissy Eye Clinic; \$20.92-Food Shelf)
\$ 188.45	SS/Can-Do Kids Fundraisers (Heifer Project)
\$1,680.64	Douglas County Food Shelf
\$ 285.00	Heifer Project
\$ 300.00	Caring and Sharing Room Storage Costs
<b>\$20,888.08</b>	<b>Total</b>

### Other Giving

\$ 540.00	Camperships
\$ 170.50	VBS Supplies
\$1,370.00	Pastor's Discretionary Fund
\$1,755.00	Easter Offering (\$1,000-General Fund; \$755-Apportionments)
\$3,930.00	Christmas Offering (Apportionments)
\$ 212.50	Community Breakfasts
\$3,368.00	Playground
\$ 260.00	Block Party
<b>\$11,606.00</b>	<b>Total</b>

### Special Projects

\$93,836.28	Capital Campaign Pledges
\$ 752.18	Dishes
\$ 2,913.00	Handicap Door
\$ 200.00	New Addition Needs
\$ 200.00	Wildflower Project
<b>\$97,901.46</b>	<b>Total</b>

<b>Total Special Giving:</b>	<b>\$130,395.54</b>
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All Church Potluck on Sunday, February 6th, following the 10:30 worship service. Bring a dish to share and join in the fellowship! If your last name begins with D-G, please plan on hosting (set-up, beverage prep and clean up). See you there!!!

The Finance Committee has established an Opportunity List which will have various items, projects or programs you can support in whole or in part. Your support can be for a total item or a portion of an item. Your gifts can be done in honor or memory of someone or as gratitude for the gifts you have received. As an example, you may choose to dedicate a weekly bulletin in honor of your grandchildren or you could opt to support 1/3 of a Rosebud campership. Some items, such as bulletin sponsorship, will always be on the list and others will be removed from the list when the funds needed for them have been received. The Opportunity List will be in the Messenger and also available in Colleen's office. Please contact the Finance Committee if you have any questions or comments.

### GRATITUDE - HONOR - MEMORIAL OPPORTUNITIES

<b>\$20.00</b>	<b>Weekly bulletin sponsorship</b>
<b>\$60.00</b>	<b>Mailing of monthly Messenger</b>
<b>\$15.00</b>	<b>Biodegradable paper cups (200)</b>
<b>\$825.00</b>	<b>New computer for office</b>
<b>\$255.00</b>	<b>Computer installation</b>
<b>\$ 96.00</b>	<b>Computer Software</b>
<b>\$300.00</b>	<b>Rosebud Campership for Youth</b>

**Big  
Thank  
You!**

A big thank you goes out to the many, many volunteers who have helped in any way at the Caring and Sharing Room over the past year. Thanks, also, to the over 300 people who have made wonderful donations of furniture and household items and for your financial support. With your help we served 215 needy families in our community with nearly 1350 items of furniture, household and kitchen items, or bedding. Your continued support is encouraged as we move forward in this ministry. **Current immediate needs are blankets and bedding, toasters, pots and pans, and dressers or chests of drawers.** We anticipate another busy year so if you have items to donate or for more information, call the Caring and Sharing Room at 320-763-8084.



## Free Community Breakfast

Alexandria UMC offers a free Community Breakfast the 2nd Saturday of every month - from 9:00-10:30 AM. The next breakfast will be Saturday, February 12th. For more information or if you need transportation, call the church office at 763-4624. Please schedule rides for the breakfast before 10:00 am on the Friday before the breakfast. Watch for sign up sheets in the narthex if you'd like to donate items or help with the breakfast.

Thank you to the volunteers who slipped and slid into church to provide the January breakfast: LaDonna Anderson, Margaret Anderson, Chuck and Brenda Bollen, Julie Hansen, Donna and Eden Phillips, Aaron, Brenda, Zach and Davyn Thomson, Andy and Sally Vano. Thank you also to those who donated items to the breakfast: Margaret Anderson, Marge and Jim Jensen, John and Lori Mingus, and Andy and Sally Vano. You are greatly appreciated!

**PRAYER SHAWLS:** On Tuesday, February 15, at 6:30 pm, Mel Nomsen will teach any and all how to knit a prayer shawl. The shawls will be given to anyone needing to feel wrapped in prayer and God's love. Bring 2 skeins of matching yarn, size 13 knitting needles, and your sense of humor. Future meeting times will be determined on February 15th. If you have yarn and/or needles you would like to donate, please put them in Jocelyn's office. If you have a request for a shawl, there will be a request center near the display in the narthex.

## *Community Events*

**February 12** – 9 AM to 4 PM – Companions on a Journey at the College of Saint Benedict is offering a conference, "Open our Horizons," to explore and celebrate the experiences and journeys of women in faith and service. Featured speaker will be Rev. Safiyah Fosua, Director of Invitational Preaching Ministries at United Methodist General Board of Discipleship (GBOD), Nashville, TN. Meals and materials will be provided. This event is open to the public. Free will donations will be welcomed. For more information, or to register: [www.csbsju.edu/journey](http://www.csbsju.edu/journey) or 320-363-5939.

**February 12** – Connected Families Parenting Workshop with Jim and Lynne Jackson – Prairie Inn of Morris – beginning at 10:00 am. Cost is \$10 per person. For more information, see the flyer on the bulletin board by the kitchen – call 320- 589-2808 – or go to [www.connectedfamilies.com](http://www.connectedfamilies.com).