



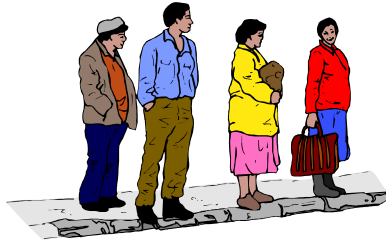
Quakertown United Methodist Church

**1875 Freier Road
Quakertown, PA 18951
215.536.4992**

Visit our website at www.qumc.com

Share Christ Grow in Christ Serve Christ

April 2010



Now What ??

We Americans have extremely short attention spans. We want short sermons, hesitate to make long-term commitments (only about 1/3 of the membership turned in commitment cards during November's "Showers of Blessings" campaign for the 2010 General Fund), go from one thing to another (some from one church to another), quickly lose interest, are easily bored, prefer sound bites to thoughtful analysis of issues.

We also forget quickly. "Thanks, but what have you done for me lately?" The Lord had a bone to pick with the church in Ephesus (see Revelation 2:1-7). He commended them for discernment and endurance, but faulted them for having "forsaken" their "first love." They had forgotten what God had done for them and were failing to bear the fruits of good works. They had lost their fervor.

On the Sundays of Lent we sang the beautiful hymn, "Lead Me to Calvary." Remember the chorus:

Lest I forget Gethsemane,
Lest I forget Thine agony;
Lest I forget Thy love for me,
Lead me to Calvary.

Will the "high" of Easter day quickly die? Will the impact of the suffering Christ endured because of OUR sins fade? Will we be Christians in name only — worshipping if and when it's convenient, giving token offerings with the expectation that others will pick up the slack as the church treasurer tries to deal with a stack of bills for utilities, snow removal (remember February??), staff salaries, our church's fair share of the support of our conference's mission and ministry, and more? Will important ministries go unfulfilled because no one will assume responsibility for carrying them out?

Do we even care?

Is Easter just one day — albeit a special one — that comes around once a year and then is over and done with?

A number of years ago someone posed this challenging question: If you were arrested for being a Christian, would there be enough evidence to convict you?

On April 5, the day after Easter, perhaps we should ask ourselves: now what? What do I need to do or change so that I take on more and more of the characteristics of my Lord and Savior, to whom I owe everything?

Nancy's Nook



According to the spiritual accounts, it was just as day was dawning on that first Easter morning. The women were moving quickly and quietly to the tomb, their arms full of the oils and spices that were a part of the “proper” burial rituals. Their primary concern was the opening of the tomb. Who would roll away the stone?

To their astonishment when they arrived, not only was the stone removed from the entrance, but the tomb was **EMPTY!** Have you ever considered what *your* life would be like if the tomb had been full?

The tomb would have been full, but our lives would be empty - empty of hope, empty of forgiveness, empty of love! As Paul declares, “And if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith...And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins...If only for this life we have hope in Christ, we are to be pitied more than all people.” (1 Cor. 15:14-19)

Praise the Lord that the tomb **was** empty! Because the tomb was empty, our lives can be full — full of hope, full of forgiveness, full of love! And eternity, too! “But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.” (1 Cor. 15:57)

I truly hope that you will join me in celebration of this great gift — a new, renewed life together in Jesus Christ, the **Risen** Lord.

Peace,

More From The Pastor . . .

As the glorious season of Easter continues through the month of April, (yes, Easter is a season of fifty days until Pentecost), try something for the month. For those who regularly read the Bible: when you have your devotional time, try reading a different translation from the one with which you are most familiar alongside the one you usually read. For example, if you usually read the New Revised Standard Version (NRSV), the one we have in the pews, try reading the same scripture in the Good News version, the New International Version (NIV), or “The Message,” a paraphrase. Then see what differences there are in the words and phrases. Do you sense any different meanings? Does a “light go on” that passage that you never experienced before? Why do you think these passages differ (if they do)? Then try to find out a little information about the various translations - when they were made; who made them; why they were made.

If you haven't been regularly reading the Bible, try this exercise for a month. You might find that it starts a habit that you won't want to break. It might help you overcome your “fear” of reading the Bible when you see the words in language you may be better able to understand. If you don't have a Bible, see Pastor Nancy.

Finally, you might want to try this exercise with a friend or relative, or maybe a child or grandchild, discussing the passages together. You have a whole library in one book - the Bible. Enjoy!



Food For Thought

Isn't it strange how a 20 dollar bill seems like such a large amount when you donate it to church, but such a small amount when you go shopping?

Isn't it strange how two hours seem so long when you're at church, and how short they seem when you are watching a good movie?

Isn't it strange that you can't find a word to say when you're praying, but you have no trouble thinking what to talk about with a friend?

Isn't it strange how difficult and boring it is to read one chapter of the Bible, but how easy it is to read 100 pages of a novel or Zane Grey book?

Isn't it strange how everyone wants front-row tickets to concerts or games, but does whatever is possible to sit in the last row in church?

Isn't it strange how we need to know about an event for church 2-3 weeks before the day so we can include it in our agenda, but we can adjust our schedule for other events at the last minute?

Isn't it strange how difficult it is to learn a fact about God to share with others, but how easy it is to learn, understand, extend, and repeat gossip?

Isn't it strange how we believe everything that magazines and newspapers say, but we question the words in the Bible?

Isn't it strange how everyone wants a place in heaven, but they don't want to believe, do, or say anything to get there?

Isn't it strange how we send jokes in e-mails and they are forwarded right away, but when we are going to send messages about God, we think about it twice before we share it with others?

It's strange, isn't it, that "God so loved the world that the Lord gave God's only son, that whoever believes in him shall have life everlasting" (John 3:16)!!!



Holy Humor Sunday

April 11, 2010

Joy is at its best when it expresses the transformation of sorrow — as on Easter. The Sunday after Easter (April 11 this year) is Holy Humor Sunday in a growing number of churches, including Quakertown United Methodist Church.

Laughter will ripple through sanctuaries across our nation, as the joy-filled reminders that have indeed the last laugh on sorrow, death, pain, and despair.

Holy laughter may come from the silliness of clowns in some churches, the timing of a great punch line from the pastor or church members, from seeing balloons stick to the peak of a church ceiling. A thousand different laughs born out of one great defeat of death!

The ongoing joy of Easter will not merely dull the pain of Good Friday, it will transform the tears, the fears, and the despair into a chorus of holy humor. Christ is risen! It is really worth laughing about!

This first Sunday after Easter, Quakertown United Methodist Church will worship through the joys of holy laughter. There will be balloons, Easter “carols,” humorous anecdotes, the joy of the scriptures, and colorful clothing (you are encouraged to wear bright, joyful clothing). May the joy of Easter be with you and your family all through the year!

WHY HAVE HOLY LAUGHTER SUNDAY?

- ☺ Because we are Easter people, celebrating the resurrection!
- ☺ Because everyone who is trapped in the tomb of defeat and sorrow needs to hear the joy of the Good News!
- ☺ Because God has a sense of humor. God has the last laugh and the last word. That word is Resurrection in Jesus.
- ☺ Because the joke is on human reason and rigidity. Christ is risen! Christ is risen indeed!
- ☺ Because there is a lot of joy in the scriptures given by the Holy Spirit!
- ☺ Because the apostle Paul refers to himself and the early Christians as “fools for Christ’s sake” (1 Cor 4:10).
- ☺ Because Proverbs 17:22a declares, “A merry heart is a good medicine,” and Ecclesiastes 3:4a states that there is “a time to laugh.”
- ☺ Because we live in a world that is joy-impaired.
- ☺ Because we are surrounded by chronic seriousness. This world likes to focus on the negative.
- ☺ Because the Christian perspective on the other hand is positively joyful! Christians are Easter people.
- ☺ Because of Easter, we have the knowledge, the faith, the hope, and the relationship with the Lord that can turn sadness into gladness!
- ☺ Because we are celebrating the laughter of God over God’s enemies — sin and death.
- ☺ Because let’s not live another day as if He were dead. Laughter is a sign that we are filled with God’s blessings!



Just For Kicks !!!

The book of Proverbs is classified as *wisdom literature*, and in its pages we find a wellspring of wisdom. Simply defined, wisdom is the ability to make good decisions. Throughout the book of Proverbs, we find a robust picture of wisdom and the person who possesses it. Over the next three months, we'll flesh out a picture of **The Wise Person According to Proverbs** in the form of an outline. For me, the logical flow and ordering of outlines help me process and connect with information. I hope this format is helpful for some of you as well.

The Bible often uses the word "man" to mean human rather than male. This outline will follow that pattern, so while we'll use the words *he* and *his*, these principle and characteristics are intended to apply to each of us. This month we'll look at the character of the wise man; next month we'll look at the relationships of the wise man (to the Lord, to his family, to his friends and neighbors); the following month we'll look at the words of the wise man (their power, their character, their source).

The goal here isn't to make us feel guilty for who we're not, but to challenge each of us to do what Scripture teaches: "to attain wisdom, discipline, and understanding; to acquire a disciplined and prudent life, doing what is right and just and fair" (Proverbs 1:2-3). May we read the outlines that follow not merely for information, but for transformation. As we ask hard questions about our character, our relationships, and our words, may we be convicted of our sin and convinced of His grace, His mercy, and His desire and power to transform us into the people we were created to be.

The Wise Person According to Proverbs

I. HIS CHARACTER

- A. **He is teachable, not intractable**
 1. He receives and loves instruction (18:15; 19:20)
 2. He grows in wisdom (1:5; 9:9; 10:14)
- B. **He is righteous, not wicked**
 1. He fears the Lord (1:7; 14:16)
 2. He hates what is false (13:5)
 3. He shuns evil (3:7; 14:16; 16:6)
 4. He does what is righteous (2:20)
 5. He speaks the truth (22:21)
- C. **He is humble, not proud (15:33)**
- D. **He is self-controlled, not rash**
 1. His temperament
 - a. He is self-controlled (29:11)
 - b. He has a calm spirit (17:27)
 - c. He is slow to become angry (29:8,11)
 2. His actions
 - a. He is cautious, not hasty (19:2)
 - b. He thinks before he acts (13:16; 14:8)
 - c. He thinks before he speaks (12:23; 15:2)
- E. **He is forgiving, not vindictive**
 1. He is patient (19:11)
 2. He is concerned about goodwill and peace (14:9)
 3. He forgives those who wrong him (10:12; 17:9)
 4. He is not vindictive (24:29)



Is SPRC Alphabet Soup??



Do they still sell alphabet soup? That was vegetable soup with small noodles in the shape of letters. Sometimes references are made to groups in the church that mean as much to many members as alphabet soup, because we neglect to spell out what the letters mean.

One such committee in all United Methodist churches is the SPRC or PPRC. The letters stand for **Staff-Parish Relations Committee** or **Pastor-Parish Relations Committee**. QUMC has a staff of pastor, assistant pastor, office manager (church secretary), organist/choir director, sexton. QUMC's SPRC members are: Jim Swearingen (chair), Barry Gossler, Bill Tomlinson, Andy Graham, Melea Rupert, Bill Scott, Mary Schwer, Pete Sawadski, Matthew Borzio, Elaine Aber. Two additional ex officio members (voice but no vote) are Dave Jamison, lay leader, and Mike Lehr, lay member of annual conference.

The committee is charged with conferring and counseling with the pastors and other staff to keep them advised of conditions and concerns of the congregation, and to interpret to the people the nature and function of the ministry. For a more detailed listing of SPRC's duties and purpose, please see The Discipline of the United Methodist Church. Pastor Ross has a copy.

Staff members work with SPRC to develop job descriptions, goals, and objectives. Each year the committee and the staff work together on an evaluation process.

Please feel free to contact SPRC's chair, or any of its members, with suggestions and concerns. Specific responsibilities and duties of the staff members are developed by the staff and SPRC together. Any issues relating to such responsibilities and duties should be referred to SPRC.

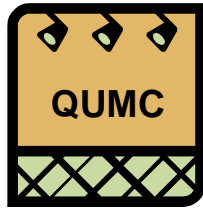


God's Great Gifts

One of God's great gifts to us is the gift of music. This year's celebration of that gift, **MUSIC SUNDAY**, is scheduled for **April 25**. There will be **one unified service at 10:00**. Sunday school will be held at **9:00**.

This will be a joyous and inspiring service. All of QUMC's wonderful vocal and instrumental groups will be participating. Our church is blessed with so many who willingly use the talents God has given them to praise Him and to enhance our worship.

Mark your calendars. **Remember: One worship service at 10:00 and Sunday School at 9:00 on April 25.**



Have You Noticed?

QUMC has a beautiful new sign at the entrance to the parking lot. The old one was looking shabby and in need of repair. Thanks are due to Friendship Circle and to an individual donor for their generosity in paying for the sign, and to the Board of Trustees for their diligence in caring for the “nuts and bolts” of our buildings and grounds.

And Speaking of Buildings and Grounds...



Trustees have scheduled their annual **Spring Clean-up Day** for Saturday, April 17. Most of us don't think our individual clean-up times are much fun, but when it is done with others it becomes an occasion for fellowship and laughs — as well as coffee and donuts! Come when you can — at 9:00 or later. The more workers, inside and outside, the easier the tasks and the more the fun!



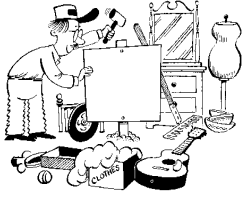
Maybe You've Been Wondering

We do try our best to keep all of you informed — through oral announcements, the Sunday bulletin inserts, the newsletter. But every so often there is something that remains a question or a cause for confusion.

For instance, you may have heard of the **Acts 4 Fund** — or maybe you haven't. This fund was launched nearly 10 years ago when attention was brought to the financial needs of some of our members. Sometimes, through no fault of their own, persons find themselves in circumstances of need. As a Christian community, a church family, it is our blessed opportunity to address such needs. So members are invited to help through the Acts 4 Fund. The pastor and several lay persons consider requests prayerfully and respond appropriately. Members may designate a gift to this fund at any time by including it in their regular church offering envelopes, **marking the amount on the line “Other (specify)” and writing “Acts 4 Fund” on the line.**

From time to time specific opportunities are given to contribute to this ministry. On Sunday, April 25, such an opportunity will arise. A special offering for this fund will be received. Please do not take from your usual gifts to the General and Christian Education Funds when you give to a special cause. The church's needs go on. Part of discipleship is sacrificial giving — of money, time, talents.

You may be wondering also about the name of the fund. Please read the Book of Acts, chapter 4, beginning at verse 32: “All the believers were one in heart and mind. No one claimed that any of his possessions was his own, but they shared everything they had...There were no needy persons among them...money...was distributed to anyone as he had need.”



Spring Rummage Sale

Friendship Circle has scheduled their annual Spring Rummage Sale for Friday and Saturday, April 9 and 10. Friday's sale runs from 9:00 a.m. until 4:00 p.m., and includes a bake table and light lunch menu. Saturday's hours are from 9:00 a.m. to noon. Items to be sold may be brought to Miller Hall at the following times: Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday mornings, April 6, 7, and 8, from 9:00 till noon, and Wednesday night, April 7, from 6:30 to 8:00 p.m.

Check your drawers, closets, and storage areas for good, usable items that you no longer need. Examples: clean clothing in good condition, games, toys, tools, jewelry, kitchen and other household items, baked goods, brown grocery bags. No very large and/or heavy items, please.

Lots of help will be needed before, during, and after the sale. For more information or to volunteer to help, contact Becky Petko (215.536.4741).

Teen Talk

Presented by Crossroads Pregnancy Care



Moms and their daughters, middle school and above, are invited to spend a morning discussing how to look towards their future with joy and confidence. This interactive event will be held at Providence Presbyterian Church, 2200 Krammes Road, Quakertown.

When: Saturday, May 15, 9:00 a.m. to noon. Continental breakfast will be served.

Cost: \$12 per mother and daughter; \$5 for each additional guest.

For more information and to register, contact the center at 215.538.3180.



Coming Soon

The highly anticipated new pictorial directory is going to print in a few weeks. Directories will be sold in the narthex following each worship service for \$5 (this helps cover printing costs).

If there have been any changes in address, etc. (this is for everyone; not just those who were photographed), contact Liz Cole as soon as possible.

If there is enough interest, a "yellow pages" section will be included. If you have a business and wish to advertise in this section, contact Liz Cole at 215.536.2046 for all the details.



Vacation Bible School



“Gadget’s Garage” will be the theme of Vacation Bible School this summer, Sunday, June 27, through Thursday, July 1, from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. Many helpers are needed for this popular event open to children from the church and community.

“Job openings” include construction crew, set-up, games, music, preschool tour guides, registration, school age tour guides, snack helpers, and theme room/craft guides. Contact Sharon Vietmeier at 215.262.0432 or vp@golfsweetwater.com if you can help out. Planning meetings will be held on the following Wednesday evenings at 6:30 p.m.: April 14, May 5, June 9, June 23. All are welcome to join us as we plan for this exciting event.



Gardeners Wanted: No Experience Necessary

For QUMC’s garden to supply fresh produce to the local food bank and others:

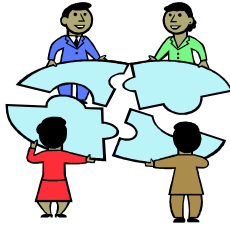
<u>Position</u>	<u>Job Description</u>
1. Planners	Ability to gather and formulate information into a workable format for growing a vegetable garden
2. Researchers	Find information on gardening basics as needed
3. Pricing	Document cost of goods requisitioned by the committee
4. Purchasing	Make purchases requisitioned by the committee
5. Engineering	Design a multiple barrel water collection system
6. Construction	Layout and fence perimeter of the garden, build a secure foundation for the water collection systems
7. Workers	General duties: Planting, weeding, tilling/cultivating, watering, fertilizing, harvesting, bug removal, etc.

Church Financial Report



2010 Actual Income - \$65,194.67
 2010 Budgeted Income - \$75,066.64
2010 Amount Under Budget - \$9,871.97

...Did you know that the gas bill last month for the church was \$3,292.59?



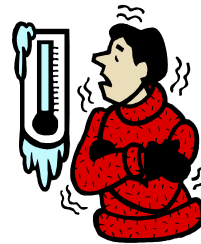
From Mike Lehr:

Thank you to all who volunteered and helped make the dinner for the mothers and children at the Milford Shelter a special and successful event. A special thank you to the Friendship Circle for their generous donation of the funding for the food.

Here is an excerpt from an email that we received from the director of the shelter: “I received nothing but rave reviews when I arrived to work on Monday. The ladies said it was the best meal they have had in a long time. The kids enjoyed the night too and loved the pizza and sundaes. How wonderful of your group to care so much to make the evening so special. We are lucky to have a group who is willing to help those in need. Thank you again for all your kindness and hard work.”

Please be on the lookout for future opportunities to volunteer and share God’s love with those in our community.

The Freeze Project



Saturday, April 17, is Global Freeze Project Day. The Freeze Project is an idea inspired by a group in New York called Improv Everywhere, which is taking their message global on Saturday, April 17. Participants choose a public location to freeze in place for five minutes. “By having a large group participate, their twist on the improv concept is to use the event to draw attention to some of the social injustices of the world. But instead of protesting, they create an experience that is fun, non-intrusive (in your face activism), and inclusive.” This “freeze” will call attention to the reality of modern-day slavery. The partner organizations participating include One Voice to End Slavery, Stop the Traffik, The Sold Project, and JustOne. For more information and details, check out their website at <http://thefreezeproject.com>.

As a local coordinator, Mike Lehr will be facilitating the event for the Quakertown area. Details on the actual location and time of the “freeze” will follow shortly. There will also be a Facebook event page. Contact Mike Lehr at mrlehr@gmail.com or 267.374.1051 if you are interesting in participating. This is not a “Christian” event, so if you know others who may be interested, invite them along.



Welcome Spring!



Time Out Talk

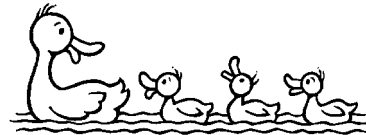


Spring is in the air at Parent's Time Out! During the month of April the children will review the Easter story and learn about God's wonderful creation. Many special activities are planned, including a "Bunny Day," "Hat Day," and a special-elective class entitled "Jump into Spring" - focusing on frogs! With the addition of a new six-week class for young 2's, a total of 41 children will be attending classes each week.

As always, the staff and board of the Parent's Time Out program thank the congregation for its continued support of this important outreach ministry to young families within our church and community. We appreciate your spreading the word about this program to your relatives and neighbors. Registrations for next year's program are currently being accepted. Information is available on the church website at www.qumc.com.

Additionally, an Open House is being planned for late April in conjunction with Faith Preschool. Once finalized, details will be published in the church bulletin and on flyers posted throughout the church.

Family Matters



HAPPY BIRTHDAY to: Marge Barndt - April 15 and Evelyn Lewis - April 22.

CONGRATULATIONS to: Matthew and Stephanie Borzio on the birth of a son, Cole, on February 3.

IN MEMORIAM: Henry Burden - February 28.



Red Hot Chile Papers from Missionary John Elmore

I was going to write this newsletter informing you of all the good work that was done by Volunteers in Mission (VIM) teams over the last eight months, but due to the recent earthquake I think this will be better.

Earthquake Chile

Friends, thank you for all your letters and prayers. First off, Cristina and I are fine. The area we are in is about two hours west of the main earthquake activity. The city of Angol where we live and work was hit with a 8.9 earthquake. Many buildings were damaged beyond repair. The buildings that suffered the most structural damage were made of adobe, so many very old brick buildings were heavily damaged.

El Vergel Agricultural School, where I presently work, suffered damage as well. The Hostal, which is the original farmhouse and is still used by the school as a kind of hotel, was severely damaged. The teams that



will come this year will be working on this building. The other damage that was significant was to the School Church, which is another beautiful old building. The Social Hall where a lot of volunteers worked this past year also will need some work.

Much work will need to be done to the outside as well as the inside. Here in Chile fall is approaching and that is the rainy season. For that reason it is urgent to fix the outside of these buildings. When groups start coming in July, we can work on the inside.

As I am writing this letter, March 6, 2010, it is six days after the earthquake. We have had at least three shakes per day. Everyone keeps expecting a bigger one. It makes it very hard to work, but everyone is doing their part in continuing their lives and repairing the damage where they can. The accessibility to internet for me here has been sparse. The first few days after the first quake, we had no electricity or communication with the outside. We had no water. Slowly things are on the mend. Yesterday I was able to go to the hardware store and purchase some supplies. Today, after a 6.8 quake this morning, they are only permitting one person in the store at a time. So it is not over here. I believe it is going to be a while before things return to normal.

Children's Home

Here in Angol, The Methodist Church supports a children's home. It is a place where kids from six months to 18 years old come to live. They are sent by the courts, due to problems in their homes, such as sexual abuse, alcoholism, drugs, or sometimes the parents just can't afford to have them. A few members of my church and I spend a lot of time with them, having cookouts and taking them to parks. We try to give them the love and attention they so desperately need. Church members go there every week and do a devotional with them. We take our guitars and sing with them.

Over the last eight months, every VIM group that has come to work at El Vergel Agricultural School has had the experience of being with the kids in their homes. This has made a huge impression on these kids. All the groups have donated something — new furniture for the area where the parents come to visit, a refrigerator, metal lockers with locks so that the older kids can have their own things. One group from Alabama had five ladies there every day, painting beautiful murals on the walls, and also painting other walls. The place looks and feels completely different from the way it did when I first visited and **now the bad news.**

The buildings' walls are adobe. During the early Sunday morning hours of February 28, the kids got out of their beds and were rushed outside into the yard. They could not return to their temporary home that night or even now. The home has been condemned. The kids were taken, along with some mattresses, to our church building. That is where they are now and probably will be until we can find them a new home. We moved all their things from the home into the church. I spent the last two days with the group that was with me, putting together bunk beds, and sorting clothes, turning the upstairs classrooms into dorm rooms.

The decision by the board is to try to build them a new home. We are working on finding land somewhere in town. It is possible that the owners of the old home, that has been condemned, will sell us the property; it is possible that we could build something new in the same location.

Reflection

When I talk to churches and VIM groups that come and work with me I remind them that the physical work that is done is secondary. The most important work is that relationships with Christ are developed and that the relationship between you and God is strengthened. It is also important that the relationship between two different cultures is strengthened. I don't want to say that the work is not important, but the relationships in Christ are eternal. Buildings fall down, and we have just seen a prime example of what a five-minute earth



shake will do here in Chile as well as in Haiti. So while we dig foundations and footings and raise the walls of a new building, maybe God is building something stronger and everlasting in us.

Out of the rubble and when the dust settles, the presence of God is seen, through the helping hands of many that come to the immediate rescue in prayer.

Request

If you would like to help financially with either of these projects:

- The repair work on the Agricultural School, which would include work on The Hostel, The Church, and the Social Hall/Gymnasium.
- Funds to help us build a new Children's Home. Just a note - the government department, from where the children come and through which they are monitored, has offered to help with some construction funds for the rebuilding.

This is the advance number - General Construction in Chile #3020485.

Write on the check where you want these funds to go; El Vergel Agricultural School or Children's Transitional Home.

The Advance: How To Give

The Advance is an official United Methodist program that gives you the opportunity to give to the ministry of your choice. From here you can donate in any of the following ways: online, through your United Methodist church, by mail, or by phone.

Giving Online

You can give to any of the ministries, missionaries and projects currently supported by The United Methodist Church through Global Ministries.

Make A Gift Online

100% of each gift to The Advance reaches its intended mission or ministry.

Through Your United Methodist Church

Make your check payable to your local church. Write the name of the ministry and the Advance code number on the check. Drop your gift in any United Methodist church offering plate or give your gift to your church treasurer, so that your church and annual conference will get Advance credit.

By Mail

Make your check payable to ADVANCE GCFA. Write the name of the ministry and The Advance code number on the check. Send your check to:

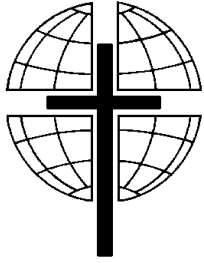
Advance GCFA
P.O. Box 9068, GPO
New York, NY 10087-9068

By Phone

Credit card gifts can be accepted by phone. The telephone number is (888) 252.6174 or (888) 252.6174.

Our Guarantee

100% of your gift will go to the ministry you choose. No exceptions.



From Missionary Helen Sheperd CPO Box 1242, Ulaanbaatar 13, Mongolia

Dear Friends,

Greetings to you from Mongolia! Happy Valentine's Day and Happy Lunar New Year, too. This is the year of the Tiger here.

This Lunar New Year rolls around fast, like everything else these days. For four days Mongolians will celebrate by visiting family members' homes, eating meat dumplings, sharing the snuff bottle, talking, and sometimes drinking lots of alcohol. We pray that this will be a safe and peaceful holiday for families here, knowing that the alcohol may make family relationships very difficult and that many people will be traveling on the roads as fast as they can drive to get to homes of their loved ones. Actually, today has been a beautiful day and so very pleasant for visiting. It is clear, sunny, and very crisp.

The three young missionaries visited the home of one of the young church members yesterday, which was Tsagaan Sar Eve (New Year's Eve). They had a great time eating, playing games, and visiting with the family. Today after worship two of the young people and I visited one family's home, our church manager. They are very gracious hosts - lots of good food and entertainment from the husband, as he played his accordion and harmonica. He took a photo of the whole group visiting from the church, and is going to use it on his book of poetry, which will be published this summer, about "friends." Then we moved on to the very modest ger of a single church member. She is studying English with these two young missionaries. We had buuz, meat dumplings and fermented horse milk there, too. After a good time of visiting, we left for home with plans to visit another family tomorrow afternoon.

Our yearly rush of visitors will start in only two weeks. We have a team from San Diego, and a friend of one of the missionary interns, and still another person, a photographer/journalist from GBGM will be here to make a DVD about the Mongolian Mission. Then comes April and perhaps the main Christian event, Easter, we can celebrate joyously with no visitors. In May we will have a UMC/KUMW group coming to lead a seminar for all of the UMW women of three congregations. Then comes the busy summertime of visiting teams.

We're hoping to have a doctor come in April to teach about symptom control and other things. She has experience as a palliative care doctor in Washington.

Hospice will be having a nurse volunteer from Germany return for one month of visiting patients - singing and praying with them. She has already been with our Hospice for two years. Astrid takes her vacation from hospital work to come here to volunteer and we are happy to have her angelic appearance and voice for one month. The patients just love to have her visit, even though she knows no Mongolian language.

Please keep praying for our Mongolian Mission as the financial problems have gotten worse and I can't see how we can continue like this much longer. What will happen to our programs? I don't know. But I do want you to know so that you can get all of the prayer warriors you know praying for us here.