



# **Quakertown United Methodist Church**

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**Visit our website at [www.qumc.com](http://www.qumc.com)**

**Share Christ   Grow in Christ   Serve Christ**

**May 2009**

## *A Tribute*



Times of pastoral change, a fact of life in United Methodist churches, elicit a variety of emotions for both pastor and people, and require more than a few adjustments.

Every pastor brings to a church his or her own personality, gifts, goals, and expectations. The challenges are many. Congregations are made up of persons of different backgrounds, a variety of experiences — or no experience — in church life and many different stages of spiritual growth and maturity.

When Pastor Ryan introduced himself to us back in 2003, he identified JOY as an aspect of his ministry that he hoped to convey. He wanted us to experience the fullness that discipleship can bring to our lives. Indeed, enthusiasm for the Lord, the Gospel, and the church soon became evident in his preaching and ministering, as he exercised his gift of creativity.

The Ryan family lost little time in integrating themselves into the Quakertown community and the ecumenical scene. For example, David quickly recognized both the value of the local food bank and its need for better organization and strong leadership. Over the years he was quick to offer our fine facilities for ecumenical and community events. He worked with both churches and secular agencies to address issues of poverty and other societal ills.

The whole family shared their talents and gifts with us and with the community. We were blessed by Jeanette's beautiful voice, her willingness to "step into the gap" when there were ministries that needed to be cared for, and her caring and gentle spirit.

Jon and Zac participated in Youth Group activities and service projects. They excelled in musical groups and dramas, both "bringing down the house" in the high school production of "Music Man."

We are grateful for David's and Jeanette's faithfulness to the Lord and to the church, their participating in our spiritual growth, their encouragement, and their challenging us to do more mission and ministry beyond our own doors.

Thank you, David and Jeanette, for the times you laughed with us, cried with us, taught us, sorrowed with us, rejoiced with us, comforted us, prodded us, and worked alongside us.

We will miss the Ryan family. We send with them our best wishes and prayers as they move on to new experiences, challenges, and opportunities. God surely has many more blessings and joys in store for them and the people of Hopeland United Methodist Church.



## The Pastor's Page

Greetings, Folks!

I don't usually make a practice of using this space to share good stories that I have heard elsewhere — but one of Jeanette's co-workers shared an article with her that has been on my mind for a few months. I thought it worth passing along:

"Every time I am asked to pray, I think of the old fellow who always prayed, 'Lord, prop us up on our leaning side.' After hearing him pray that prayer many times, someone asked him why he prayed that prayer so fervently. He answered, 'Well, sir, you see it's like this... I got an old barn out back. It's been there a long time; it's withstood a lot of weather; it's gone through a lot of storms, and it's stood for many years. It's still standing. But one day I noticed it was leaning to one side a bit. So I went and got some pine poles and propped it up on its leaning side so it wouldn't fall. Then I got to thinking about that and how much I was like that old barn. I've been around a long time. I've withstood a lot of life's storms. I've withstood a lot of bad weather in life, I've withstood a lot of hard times, and I'm still standing, too. But I find myself leaning to one side from time to time, so I like to ask the Lord to prop us up on our leaning side, 'cause I figure a lot of us get to leaning at times. Sometimes, we get to leaning toward anger, leaning toward bitterness, leaning toward hatred, leaning toward a lot of things that we shouldn't. So we need to pray, 'Lord prop us up on our leaning side,' so we will stand straight and tall again, to glorify the Lord."

Maybe it's because I am soon heading to Lancaster County again where there are a lot of barns that need propping up, but that story makes a lot of sense to me! I think about all the things I might be leaning toward. Maybe you have those things, too. Let's join that old fellow and pray that God will prop us up on our leaning sides.

God has been good and faithful to us! We were able to sell our home in just one week and find a new home in Ephrata that same weekend. We are in the midst of packing what we can, making a few repairs, sorting out things to give away and all of that fun stuff! Settlement date on both homes is May 29. I'll be taking the first two weeks of June off, using my remaining vacation time. Then I will be commuting for a little while, staying at the home of Betty Schwenk, Barb Hafler's mother. My last Sunday with the congregation will be June 21. Please continue to pray for us and your new pastor, the Reverend Nancy Ross, as we continue to prepare for transition.

Let's hope, as we seek to live faithful lives this month, that we don't lean too much — except when we are leaning on the Lord! Music Sunday is May 3 and will be a Festival Worship day for us, with the whole congregation invited to worship at 11:00. Mother's Day is the next Sunday — and not long after that, confirmation will be celebrated on Pentecost, May 30. See you soon!



## Just For Kicks !!!

In a recent sermon, we discussed the need for followers of Jesus to engage in intentional activities that help them stay in love with God. We identified some (commonly referred to as the spiritual disciplines) that have been particularly helpful to Christians over the years and shared our commitment to comment on each of them over the next few months. In the past two months we discussed meditation and prayer, and this month we'll be considering the discipline of fasting.

Consider the words of theologian Dallas Willard: "Fasting confirms our utter dependence upon God by finding in him a source of sustenance beyond food. Through [fasting], we learn by experience that God's word to us is a life substance, that it is not food ("bread") alone that gives life, but also the words that proceed from the mouth of God (Matt. 4:4). We learn that we too have meat to eat that the world does not know about (John 4:32, 34). Fasting unto the Lord is therefore feasting—feasting on him and on doing his will."

We should also take note that when Jesus teaches his disciples, he teaches with the expectation that they will fast. He says things like, "When you fast, here's how you should do it." Notice He doesn't say *if* you fast, but *when* you fast. This is the same line of teaching in which he gives instruction on prayer: "When you pray, here's how you should do it." We wouldn't think of ignoring his command or his example of prayer, so it's curious that so many of us ignore his command and example of fasting.

Perhaps we might each experiment with fasting at some point this month—not as a legalistic or self-righteous measure, but rather, so that we might become more like Jesus and more in tune with our Father. Richard Foster offers the following practical ideas for practicing and reflecting on fasting in the study guide to Celebration of Discipline.

- If you have not fasted before, plan a fast of two or more meals' duration—breakfast to breakfast, lunch to lunch, and so on—when you will consume only fruit juice or water. Seek a "gentle receptiveness to divine breathings" during your fast. Note your physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual responses to the fast.
- If you have fasted before, plan a fast of whatever duration is right for you this month. Perhaps this would be an appropriate time to reflect and pray about your continued journey into the Spiritual Disciplines in the months ahead.
- Fast from something that does not involve food—for example, the entertainment media, passing judgment on yourself or others, people (to experience solitude), etc.

After fasting, be intentional to write down what you did and when. What was the experience like? What changes did you notice from the way you normally would have spent that period of time? Based on this experience, what might you want to change about your practice of fasting to make it more fully centered on God?



## *Music Sunday - Festival Worship Day!*

Music Sunday, always a highlight in the annual life of our congregation, will be celebrated as a Festival Worship day on Sunday, May 3. The whole congregation is invited to worship at 11:00. We will hear from all of our choirs as they celebrate the word of God in song. There will be some great congregational singing as well. Holy Communion will be shared. Following the service, plan to stay for lunch. Our Missions Commission will be offering meatball sandwiches for sale in support of our mission outreach.

## Confirmation Class 2009



Our confirmation students have been meeting with Pastor Ryan and their mentors for several months. They have explored United Methodist history and polity; talked about major beliefs; and practiced spiritual disciplines of prayer, Bible study, worship and service. On Pentecost Sunday, May 31, confirmation will be celebrated at our 11:00 service. Please be in prayer for our students as they prepare for this important step in their lives.



## Out of Africa

Karen Ujereh, one of the missionaries QUMC helps to support through the General Board of Global Ministries, will be visiting us on Sunday, May 31. She will speak about her work in Senegal, Africa, during the Sunday School hour at 10:00. Adult and youth Sunday School classes will not have their regular lessons during that time so that they can hear Karen's report. All others who are interested in this important ministry are invited to join the classes in Miller Hall.

## Thank You



Hearty thanks to all those who worked hard to make Friendship Circle's Spring Rummage Sale a success. This is an important fundraiser for the circle, which funds a mission project from a tithe of the proceeds, and uses the remainder for the benefit of the church, caring for needs not provided for in the church budget. Leftover clothing not sold is taken to Jerusalem House, an inner-city Allentown mission.

Ten hams donated by members of the church were delivered, along with accompanying "fixings," to Jerusalem House for Easter.



## What do four bicycles, three cars, a motorhome, and 15 people, mean? A trip across the country in nine days!

I am writing to ask for your support for my graduation project. On June 20, 2009, my dad and three friends of his will be riding their bicycles for the NF Endurance team across the country in a four-person relay, "Drew's Crew," the Race Across America to benefit the Children's Tumor Foundation (CTF).

The Race Across America (RAAM) is the world's toughest bike race, from Oceanside, California, to Annapolis, Maryland, in less than nine days. I am going along as part of the crew. My job will be to document the trip through photos, videos, blogging, and help in other supporting roles.

CTF researches neurofibromatosis (NF), which is a genetic disorder that causes tumors to grow along nerves and affects the development of the bones and skin around it. These tumors can grow anywhere in the body. We were first exposed to this disease through a friend's 14-year-old daughter, who has been through a dozen surgeries to correct her 80-degree scoliosis caused by NF. There are nearly 2,000,000 people like her, struggling with NF. We are riding for our hero Drew, who is 10 and has had this disease since he was 13 months old. Recently, he had one of his tumors removed. Our goal is to raise money as a team to benefit NF and the CTF.

So, how can you help? Prayer support as we travel the country would be greatly appreciated. You can also donate to the Children's Tumor Foundation as we help to find a cure for NF. For more information about RAAM, CTF or donating, please pick up a brochure in the narthex at the Youth Group Bulletin Board or talk to me. I hope you can help us with this awesome opportunity.

Thank you so much! Christine Sterner

## Slumps



Those of us who are baseball fans are familiar with batting slumps. Good players all experience them, but the hard-working, really talented ones come out of them.

Churches typically experience "slumps" in attendance and giving in the summer months. Some of this is natural, as individuals and families take vacations. Please be faithful in your attendance and support whenever you are not away from home. Even before summer is upon us, QUMC has been experiencing a downturn in giving. God is faithful! God will supply if we trust in him, despite whatever is happening to the economy. Remember that hot summer months cause high air conditioning costs, and rainy weather means bills for mowing. In addition, the regular costs of ministry and mission go on. Thank you for being faithful, even as God is faithful!



## The Gift of Life

Red Cross Blood Drive will be held in Miller Hall, Thursday, May 28, from 1:30 to 7:30 p.m. This is an important opportunity to witness to your faith in a very practical way.

## We Want To Know!



Graduation for high school and post-high school students is nearing. Please inform the church of your sons, daughters, relatives, friends who are graduating from high school, college, or other institutions. They will be recognized during worship on Sunday, June 14. Give the information (name and institution) to the church office as soon as possible.



## Vacation Bible School

As the old song says, “June is (soon) bustin’ out all over!” Among other things, that means Vacation Bible School (VBS) is being planned and prepared for. In addition to the fun and fellowship, this is a significant means of community outreach. Every year children who are not members of the QUMC church family enjoy our VBS. Some of them do not attend other churches and/or Sunday Schools. For some, VBS will be the first time they learn about Jesus. Many teachers, helpers, workers will be needed. Be a part of this important ministry. Watch for details in the worship announcements and be ready to participate.



## Two Alerts!

From Trustees: Please be sure to turn off any and all electrical appliances that you use. A recent incident involving a coffee-maker could have resulted in a fire. Remember to check on appliances and lights before leaving a room. Thanks!

From State Police: Be sure to lock your vehicles when attending church, particularly on Sunday morning, and lock valuables in the trunk rather than leaving them in plain sight. This alert is because of a number of break-ins of vehicles at local churches on Sunday mornings.



# CHRISTIAN EDUCATION NEWS

## Help Needed

Assistants to help in the 2nd- & 3rd-grade class and the 4th- & 5th-grade class are needed during the Sunday School hour (10:00 a.m.). Please pray about this. If you feel this could be your ministry, please contact Tammy Swearingen.

## Thank You!

Thank you to the 2nd- & 3rd-grade class for participating in the 11:00 worship service on Palm Sunday, April 5 by reciting the Lord's Prayer. Thank you also to the 4th- & 5th-grade class for their upcoming participation in the 11:00 service on May 10. This class will be reciting the Apostles Creed. Both groups have learned this as part of their Foundations of Faith curriculum.

Additional thanks to Tammy and Jim Swearingen for again hosting the Sunday School Teacher Appreciation Dinner at their home on May 3.

## Summer Sunday School

Planning is underway for Sunday School classes during the summer. For the past few years creative ways to carry on Christian Education throughout the summer have been carried out. This is always a challenge because of family vacations and other conflicts. Christian Ed leaders and teachers welcome ideas and suggestions for this summer's program. Please contact Kim Kyra if you have an idea and/or would be willing to teach or help in the children's class or classes so that the regular teachers could have a summer break.

## Family Matters

### HAPPY BIRTHDAY

to George Lightkep - May 16,  
Dorothy Dorney - May 21.

### BAPTISM:

On March 29 - Owen Manley Victory,  
born December 29, 2008, to Scott and Mindy.

### WEDDING:

Best wishes to  
Tim Stewart and Melanie Schuelein,  
married April 18.



## Church Financial Report

2009 Actual Income To Date  
\$ 85,785.10

2009 Budgeted Income  
\$ 91,915.84

2009 Amount Under Budget  
\$ 6,130.74



# Shh !! It's A Secret !!

To give everyone an opportunity to express appreciation and good wishes, and to affirm the ministry of the Ryans, we will be assembling an album to be presented to them on their last day at QUMC, June 21.

On that day there will be Sunday School as usual, and **one worship service only**.

Examples of what you might wish to submit: an expression of good wishes for the future, appreciation for their overall ministry; a word of appreciation for a particular instance, sermon, experience, etc., that was especially meaningful to you.

These can be in the form of a note, a letter, a card. Please write on one side only. Feel free to include pictures. All submissions should reach Mary Schwer no later than June 7. You may hand them to her, put them in her mail slot in the office, or mail them to 222 Tohickon Avenue, Quakertown. Remember that this is to be a surprise.

In addition to the album, Staff-Parish Relations Committee (SPRC) invites you to contribute to a monetary farewell gift to be presented on June 21. A check (to QUMC) or cash in a plain white envelope may be placed in the offering plates at any worship service or into the offering box located on the small table outside the conference room to the left as you enter the church through the front doors. Mark the envelope **SPRC**. The deadline for this is also June 7.

If you have any questions, please call Mary Schwer (215.536.4596) or Jim Swearingen (215.538.7513).

A time of fellowship with light refreshments in Miller Hall will follow the service on June 21.