

THE MEADOWLARK

The Official Newsletter of the
MIDDLETOWN UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

February, 2010

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The official web site of the Middletown United Methodist Church:

www.middletownumcnj.org

Fall Worship

Praise Service	9:00am
Fellowship Time	10:00am
Traditional Service	10:30am
Fellowship, Discipleship & Ministry	10:00am
Adult & Youth Sunday School	9:30am



Middletown United Methodist Church
924 Middletown-Lincroft Road
Middletown, New Jersey 07748

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The Pastor's Message February, 2010

Dear Members and friends,

As we begin the month of February, we wanted to give you a review of how we ended 2009 from a giving and budget point of view. As of March 1 of last year, we were staring down the barrel of a deficit of \$72,392.76. In response to this situation, the Administrative Council, the Finance Committee, and the Staff-Parish Relations Committee began a very difficult process of cutting the budget in any way possible while we also looked for ways to increase the church's income.

I know that some of you grew weary of receiving messages from me and others about the need to increase giving, and that some of you thought that the fall Stewardship Campaign was a bit intense. I understand your feelings about those things; I grew weary of having to constantly write to you about it. The issue was, however, crucial. MUMC had never been in this position before. In prior years there was enough of a reserve built up that deficits were covered. That is no longer the case; there is not enough of a reserve to cover that kind of deficit anymore. \$72,000+ is a big amount to make up. In any case, deficit spending is something that can get any organization and especially a church, in a precarious position.

That is where we were.

The budget for 2009 went through several revisions and as of March 22, a deficit of \$55,336.26 was projected. That was still leaving us in a condition of crisis. The Staff-Parish Relations Committee (SPRC) made recommendations to the Administrative Council to further cut expenses by adjusting the staff. The Youth Coordinator and the Assistant Sexton were let go and the salaries of the Music Director and Administrative Assistant were significantly reduced. The pay for the Nursery Attendant was also adjusted downward. Bonuses for the staff of Mothers Day Out were reduced by 50% which enabled MDO to give more to the church than they would have otherwise. All of these actions were received with understanding and grace by those directly affected, though, of course, without a great deal of joy as you will understand.

At the same time, we were doing everything we could do to encourage increased giving and there were positive results from that effort. Praise God, a good number of you were able and willing to go beyond what you had originally planned to give. By November, the deficit had been reduced further and by the

(Continued on Page 3→)

Pastor's News & Church Reports...

The Pastor's Message

(←Continued from Page 2)

end of the year it was down to about \$16,000. That number is approximate as of this writing and it includes a balance owed to the Ministry Shares we send to the Annual Conference. As you can see, we made great strides in reducing the deficit. To go from a projected deficit of \$72,000 to \$16,000 in one year is a significant accomplishment.

The Stewardship Program showed very encouraging results for 2010. Those who turned in Estimate of Giving cards increased their commitments for 2010 by 17.2%. When added to the forecasts for other income, the Finance Committee will be recommending a balanced budget to the Administrative Council for the first time in about six or seven years.

A note to those who choose not to turn in Estimate of Giving cards: ***It's okay***. While we would prefer that everyone turn in cards as it makes the Finance Committee and Administrative Council's tasks a bit easier, we understand that everyone may not want to do that. If any of you got the feeling that you were being pressured to do something you really don't want to do, we apologize. Please put it down to the urgency of the financial situation, our love for this church and our desire to continue serving our Lord through MUMC.

We still have a difficult road ahead of us, but God will continue to bless this congregation for its commitment, love, and generosity. We, in turn, can go about the ministry of the church with renewed energy and a sharpened vision so that we can share those blessings with others.

I want to extend my thanks to our former treasurer, **Jeff Haffeman**, who did a faithful job of handling the church's resources under very difficult circumstances. Thanks too, to **Rich Smus**, former chair of the Finance Committee for his advice and counsel through the year. Others who have worked hard at making things better include our new treasurer, **Donna Cummins**, our new Finance Chair, **Sandy Whitten**, **Doug Goudsward** who was instrumental in completing our Annual Audit, and finally to **Mel Hooper**, our very hard-working Financial Secretary. Thanks are also extended to **Andrea Jacobs**, chair of the SPRC for her strong leadership and to our **Lay Leaders Judy Lipke** and **Dave Moore** who kept everyone focused and on task.

Thanks be to God for the progress we have made and for the exciting future God has in store for the congregation of MUMC. We have come a long way in one year, but we have to keep our resolve strong so that with God's grace 2010 will be a great year.

***Grace and Peace,
Glenn Ferguson***

2009 GIVING STATEMENTS

MUMC 2009 Giving Statements will go out the first week in February. Those of you who have previously approved electronic transmission will receive your statement by email sent under High Confidentiality with the subject "2009 Final Giving Statement." Please ensure that our transmissions are not blocked by your service provider. We estimate these transmissions will save the Church about \$55 in postage, paper, ink (toner) and envelopes.

Giving Statements should be received on or by February 15, 2010. If you haven't received your statement by that date, please call Mel Hooper at (732) 241-6508 or email webmaster@middletownumcnj.org.

I take this opportunity to echo the sentiments of our Pastor Glenn, thanking those leaving posts who did all they could to help me report accurately to you, and welcoming those entering their positions whom I look forward to working with.

***Respectfully submitted,
Melvin E. Hooper, Financial Secretary
On Behalf of the MUMC Finance Committee***

FEBRUARY, 2010

SUNDAY								MONDAY		TUESDAY		WEDNESDAY		THURSDAY		FRIDAY		SATURDAY							
MARCH, 2010								1		2		3		4		5		6							
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28	29	30	31																						
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COMMUNION SUNDAY 9:00: Praise Worship 9:15: Sunday School 10:00: Fellowship Time 10:30: Traditional Service SUPER BOWL XLIV 6:30: 7:00: 7:30:																									
VALENTINE'S DAY 9:00: Praise Worship 9:15: Sunday School 10:00: Fellowship Time 10:30: Traditional Service 6:30: Healing Team Meets 7:00: 7:30: 7:00:								PRESIDENT'S DAY 9:30: MDO Closed <i>Meadowlark Items Due!</i> 6:00: 6:30: 7:00: Adult Bible Study 7:30: 7:30:		BISHOP'S DAY 9:30: 6:00: 6:30: 7:00: 7:30: 8:00:		ASH WEDNESDAY 9:30: MDO in session 5:30: Youth Bell Choir 5:45: Jr. UMYF 6:30: Sr. UMYF 6:30: Bells & Choir 7:30: ASH WED. SVC 8:00:													
WOMENS RETREAT 9:00: Praise Worship (Healing) 9:15: Sunday School 10:00: Fellowship Time 10:30: Traditional Service (Healing) HAITI MISSION 6:30: 7:00: 7:30:								9:30: MDO in session HAITI MISSION 6:00: 6:30: 7:00: Adult Bible Study 7:30: Ministry Meets 8:00:																	
MARCH MEADOWLARK UNITY SERVICE 9:15: Sunday School 10:00: 10:30: Unity Service (1 Service) 6:30: 7:00: 7:30:								MARCH 1		2		3		4		5		6							

**DISTRICT DAY
OF LEARNING**

8:30: Men's Breakfast

**WOMENS RETREAT
HAITI MISSION**

**WOMENS RETREAT
HAITI MISSION**

Meadowlark Online

MARCH, 2010

SUNDAY							MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY		
APRIL, 2010							1	2	3	4	5	6		
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18	19	20	21	22	23	24								
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COMMUNION SUNDAY							7	8	9	10	11	12	13	
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DAYLIGHT SAVINGS BEGINS							14	15	16	17	18	19	20	
9:00: Praise Worship 9:15: Sunday School 10:00: Fellowship Time 10:30: Traditional Service 6:00: 6:30: 7:00:							9:30: MDO in session Meadowlark Items Due! 6:30: 7:00: Adult Bible Study 7:30: Trustees Meet 8:00:	9:30: 6:30: 7:00: 7:30: 8:00:	ST. PATRICK'S DAY 9:30: MDO in session 5:30: Youth Bell Choir 5:45: Jr. UMYF 6:30: Sr. UMYF 6:30: Bells & Choir 7:30: 8:00:	9:30: Prayer Fellowship 6:30: 7:00: 7:30: 8:00:	9:30: MDO in session 6:30: 7:00: 7:30: 8:00:	1ST DAY OF SPRING 9:00: Women's Group		
9:00: Praise Worship 9:15: Sunday School 10:00: Fellowship Time 10:30: Traditional Service 6:00: 6:30: 7:00:							21	22	23	24	25	26	27	
9:00: Praise Worship 9:15: Sunday School 10:00: Fellowship Time 10:30: Traditional Service 6:00: 6:30: 7:00:							9:30: MDO in session 6:30: 7:00: Adult Bible Study 8:00:	9:30: 6:30: 7:00: 7:30: 8:00:	9:30: MDO in session 5:30: Youth Bell Choir 5:45: Jr. UMYF 6:30: Sr. UMYF 6:30: Bells & Choir 7:30: 8:00:	9:30: Prayer Fellowship 6:30: 7:00: 7:30: 8:00:	9:30: MDO in session 5:30: 6:00: 6:30: 7:00: 7:30: 8:00:	April Meadowlark		
PALM SUNDAY							28	29	30	31	APRIL	1	2	3
9:00: Praise Worship 9:15: Sunday School 10:00: Fellowship Time 10:30: Traditional Service APRIL MEADOWLARK 6:00: 6:30: 7:00:							9:30: MDO CLOSED 6:30: 7:00: Adult Bible Study 7:30: 8:00:	9:30: 6:30: 7:00: 7:30: 8:00:	9:30: MDO CLOSED 5:30: Youth Bell Choir 5:45: Jr. UMYF 6:30: Sr. UMYF 6:30: Bells & Choir 7:30: 8:00:					

In Our Church Family...

SENIOR HIGH YOUTH GROUP

The MUMC Senior High Youth Group is back in full swing each Wednesday night from 6:30 – 8:00 pm throughout the school year. All 9th through 12th graders and their friends are



welcome. Nancy Wagner and Larry Lipke are the adult leaders for the year. Broadly speaking, our objective is to explore and practice our faith in a friendly and supportive environment, and to enjoy each other's company at the weekly meetings and other special events. Any of you who cannot attend full time are very welcome to join us whenever you can.

We have established a web site for the group featuring a shared calendar and automatic announcements of upcoming meetings and events by email and short text message. The site also lets us share files and photos. If we have a valid email address for you, you should already be receiving announcements even if you have not attended a meeting. If you would like to login to the site to view the calendar or other shared content and do not know how, or if you are not receiving announcements but would like to, contact Larry or Nancy for instructions.

The group has already scheduled two "fun" events. The first is a one day ski trip to Camelback Ski Resort in the Poconos on Saturday, Feb. 13th. The second is a trip to the Prudential Center on Saturday, Feb. 20th to see the Casting Crowns concert. If you would like to participate in either trip, see Larry or Nancy for more detailed information and to obtain the necessary forms. We have only a few tickets left for the concert, so if you wish to attend, please act quickly.

Every second Wednesday of each month is movie night from 6:30 – 9:30 pm. We watch and discuss a movie from a list that the group established at our first two planning meetings in December. At our first movie night on January 13th we watched August Rush, a moving story about an orphan boy who reunites with his parents through their shared gift of music. Join us at our next movie night on Feb. 10th for another great movie, popcorn and drinks.

A standard feature of our weekly meetings is to discuss one question in depth and to seek God's answer to the question through exploration of Scripture. One week we focus on a contemporary question and the next week we focus on a faith-based question.

(Continued in next column→)

The contemporary questions tend to be controversial and difficult, while the faith-based questions tend to be the types of questions that we all struggle with at some point in our lives as Christians. The first contemporary question was, "Is it okay to end, or help end, someone's life if he or she is terminally ill?" The first faith-based question was, "How can you know what God thinks?" The discussions to date have been lively and insightful, and are expanding our understanding of our shared faith.

The youth group is also planning outreach activities that we are calling "Building Bridges". The idea is to establish relationships with and improve our understanding of people or groups with whom we have little or no interaction. We want to get out of our comfort zones and see what we can achieve by reaching out to our neighbors with love as God commands. So far we are still in the idea phase. Initial ideas include being pen pals with people in the military, working with the elderly, and having a joint meeting or activity with people of the Muslim faith to promote peace and understanding.

In summary, the senior high youth group has resumed. Come join us for fun activities, insightful discussions, powerful movies and interesting outreach activities. We look forward to seeing you in the near future!

HOGAR INFANTIL - February 3-6, 2010

Praise God – we have reached our goal of 80 pairs of shoes



and socks for the children at Hogar Infantil. This year, in addition, we are also providing several bags full of yarn for the girls at Hogar who are learning to knit and enjoy doing so, 3 chess sets with instructions in Spanish, and, of course, Spanish New Testaments. Many, many thanks to everyone in our congregation who so generously donated shoes, yarn, chess sets, or cash, and to the MUMC Women's Fellowship for their generous support of our travel there. Betsy Peyton and Gary Kochman will be delivering these supplies to Hogar on February 3-6. We ask for your continued prayers for traveling mercies, and for all the children and staff at Hogar.

In Our Community...

ASLAN-HAITI MISSION TRIP

February 18-22, 2010

Five MUMC members (Don Jengo, Gary Kochman, Amy Peak, Joanne Taylor, Debbie Vincent) will be traveling with Aslan Youth Ministries to Haiti on February 18-22. Aslan has acquired 7 acres of land in Ouanaminthe (near Haiti's border with the Dominican Republic), and has begun work to build an orphanage, school, and medical clinic on the site. Originally the team was slated to help with Aslan's preliminary building efforts there, and to offer basic medical services to those in need in the area. However, although Aslan's site was not affected by the recent, devastating earthquake, regional hospitals have begun to be flooded with victims from the quake who are overflowing out of Port-au-Prince. Under Aslan's direction, the MUMC team will do whatever is needed at the time. We praise and thank God for the generous heart for missions He has given to MUMC members, and thank the Women's Fellowship and everyone for their prayers and contributions, without which this trip would not be possible. What a joy and blessing to belong to a church whose love for Christ is so evident in members' hearts for giving to help those in need!

R.I.S.E. 2010

Middletown UMC will again be sending 3 teams to RISE during the summer of 2010. We are tentatively signed up for the week of July 11-17th (this won't be confirmed until March, though). Registration forms will first be sent to those who attended last year then open to other Senior High involved in Sunday School or UMYF. Cost to attend is \$175 per person. Registration forms will be mailed shortly after January 1st. Please be on the lookout. Any questions, please call Jan or Ger Ferrara at 732-706-0819.

WOMEN'S RETREAT 2010

February 19-21, 2010 - Grove Hall, NJ

Our Women's Retreat is February 19, 20 and 21st at Grove Hall in Ocean Grove and will be here before we know it. We are looking forward to having a blessed and great weekend. There's still time, so if you're interested in going please register on the Retreat Sign-Up Sheet located on our Women's Board. The total cost of the retreat is \$155.00. For those who have already signed up there will be a quick meeting Sunday February 7th between services to finalize the details.

(Continued in next column→)

If you have any questions, please contact Denise Goudsward or myself.

*Thanks,
Linda Bardell*

WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP

February 27, 2010, 8:30am

The next meeting for Women's Fellowship will be on Saturday, February 27th. We will begin with breakfast at 8:30 followed by a short meeting. If you have thought about joining us but were not able to give much time, know that our meetings are not long and generally we are done by 10:30-11:00. Or just come and have breakfast. All are welcome. There is a sign-up sheet on our bulletin board for you to tell us you're coming.

HEALING MINISTRY - February, 2010

Healing ministers will be offering prayers with members at the altar rail or in the pews during both services on Sunday, February 21st.

We will be meeting on Sunday, February 14th, 6:30pm, in the church library. We will discuss the third chapter in Charles Stanley's book, The Gift of Forgiveness. In this chapter, entitled "The Only Solution," Stanley talks about:

- Different ways that people respond to God's offer of forgiveness.
- How God's forgiveness is like an executive pardon.
- Why the degree or quantity of sin makes no difference in the judgment of guilt.
- Why forgiveness is a settled issue, even for future sins, once it has been found.
- How we can come to grips with God's solution for our past sins.

We welcome anyone to join us in discussing these aspects of forgiveness. Members of the congregation may contact Pastor Glenn or Phil Welch, Jr., to arrange for the pastor and/or healing ministers to visit and pray with them and loved ones in hospitals, nursing homes, their homes or over the phone.

Jesus answered them, 'Have faith in God. Truly I tell you, if you say to this mountain, "Be taken up and thrown into the sea", and if you do not doubt in your heart, but believe that what you say will come to pass, it will be done for you. So I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours.'

[Mark 11:22-24]

Church Announcements...

RUMMAGE SALE

Saturday, March 6, 2010

It's that time again...time to get ready for rummage sale! The sale date is Saturday, March 6th with set up on that Friday before, the 5th. There is a sign-up sheet in the narthex for you to volunteer some of your time for these very busy days. All hands are needed no matter how short the time. Please consider volunteering on one of those days or both. A few things to remember when preparing your "stuff" to bring. First of all, please bring nothing to the church until Sunday, February 28th and then put everything behind the screen in Fellowship Hall. Books may be left in the area outside the sanctuary. Bag clothes and mark them..."ladies", "men", "children", etc. If you're donating shoes, it would be helpful to tie them together. Please bring no exercise equipment or encyclopedias. On occasion we receive an item where we don't have a clue what it is...if you feel like something you are bringing falls in that category, please give us a hint. Lunch will be served so even if you can't volunteer some time, come and enjoy our always delicious lunch and shop a while. Please remember, all proceeds go to missions.

2010 MEN'S RETREAT

April 23-25, 2010

The 2010 Men's Retreat Weekend has been set for **April 23-25** and will be held at Keswick. This weekend is open to ALL men who are members or friends of MUMC. The agenda for our weekend is currently being finalized, so now is the time to provide your ideas and suggestions. We will be providing more details as the weekend approaches. Please mark your calendar, sign up on the sheet located in The Narthex, and plan on joining us. If you have questions or for more information, please contact Dave Moore (732-796-7373, w davidmoore@verizon.net), Phil Welch, Jr. (732-747-5032, p2twelch@verizon.net), Russ Cline (732-530-8453, rcline@optonline.net), or Bill Smith (732-530-4002, wsmithusa@comcast.net).

FAMILY PROMISE VOLUNTEERS

RECEPTION - March 31, 2010

The Monmouth Reform Temple (at the end of Hance Avenue in Tinton Falls) will host a reception for Family Promise volunteers from all congregations on Sunday, March 31, from 3 to 5 PM. Here's a chance to compare notes with volunteers from other congregations and

(Continued in next column→)

meet Shanna Goldstein, our current director. Even better, we may have one of our recent graduates there to talk about her experiences as a guest and how her life has turned. (Do you remember Naomi? She's been visiting congregations to say thank you.) If you have any questions or need more information, please contact George Lavigne. Thank you!

KEYPORT PANTRY UPDATE

This past month of January's report from Keyport Panty shows a continued need for our support.

KMFP Board of Trustees January Report:

- **2010** served 201 families or 400 Adults and 261 Children (Under 18).
- **2009** served 128 families or 257 Adults and 194 Children (Under 18).

That's over 50% in families and adults and 35% in children. The month of February will be devoted to ASLAN. Please continue to remember the Hungry close to home.

Checks to KMFP are always welcome!

OUR DAILY PRAYER CONCERNS:

- * Irene Leonard * Patricia Vasporly * Emil Wrede *
 - Bruce & Robert Babcock, brothers of Carolyn Hooper
 - * Mary Frances Hooper, mother of Mel Hooper *
 - * The Ferguson Family * Clarice Fontaine *
 - * The Rougeau Family * Wendy Sadowski *
 - * Rich Bruno, co-worker with Mel Hooper *
 - * Donna Waters Fantasia's Niece Robin *
 - * Clinton Schuck * Tim Waters *
 - * Harold Lucassen * Philip Meyer *
 - * The people of Haiti, Rescue Volunteers *
 - * Families Who are Struggling Financially *
 - * Churches Which are Struggling Financially *
 - * The Families of those serving in the Military *
 - * Our Brothers & Sisters serving in the Military *
-

See the complete February, 2010

Meadowlark online at:

www.middletonumcnj.org