

# THE MEADOWLARK

The Official Newsletter of the  
**MIDDLETOWN UNITED METHODIST CHURCH**

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*March, 2010*

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[www.middletownumcnj.org](http://www.middletownumcnj.org)

## Fall Worship

Praise Service	9:00am
Fellowship Time	10:00am
Traditional Service	10:30am
<b>Fellowship, Discipleship &amp; Ministry</b>	10:00am
<b>Adult &amp; Youth Sunday School</b>	9:30am



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

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## *The Pastor's Message* *March, 2010*

### *Dear Members and friends,*

In spite of the fact that, as of this writing, we're buried in snow, March is upon us and with it comes the promise of Spring and warmer weather. This is also the period of the Christian year called Lent. The forty days between Ash Wednesday and Easter is meant to be a time of reflection, prayer, meditation, and worship. The goal is to prepare ourselves for Easter, so that when we celebrate the Resurrection, we may do so with hearts that are open and able to receive the great gift of Eternal Life in Christ.

While normally we do not go to Socrates for insight into the Christian life, one of his most well known quotations is this: "The unexamined life is not worth living." I think Socrates is right about that. If we do not regularly take inventory of where we are and where we might be or of who we are and who we might be, we cannot grow. For the Christian, this takes daily prayer and meditation, Scripture reading and study, regular worship and fellowship with other believers, fasting and self-denial.

These make up the core of the disciplines of Lent and without them we would not be ready for the Resurrection celebration and the ongoing presence of Christ within us. World renowned author Henri Nouwen makes a comment similar to Socrates' in his book, "Can You Drink the Cup?" when he writes, "a life that isn't reflected upon is not worth living. It belongs to the essence of being human that we contemplate our life, think about it, discuss it, evaluate it, and form opinions about it. Half of living is reflecting on what is being lived." This small book by Nouwen is one I recommend to you, especially in this Lenten season. The title comes out of Jesus question to a few of the disciples in the Garden of Gethsemane; "can you drink the cup that I drink?" (See Matthew 20: 20-23) It was an invitation to them to examine their devotion and commitment to Jesus and the Kingdom of God.

The answer was, of course, no. They *thought* they could and even *said* they could, but the disciples were not prepared for what was to come in the days ahead. They didn't understand who Jesus really was and they didn't accept his mission. When the time came for them to demonstrate their faith and readiness to follow, they fled.

The goal toward which we move is to be like Jesus. That is the aim of the Christian life. It takes time for the transformation from helpless sinner to devoted follower to take place. It also takes practice. That is why we say we practice our religion; because we rarely get it right the first time, or the second time...it

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# Pastor's News & Church Reports...

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## ***The Pastor's Message***

(←Continued from Page 2)

takes a lifetime. Lent is a season wherein the practice of our religion becomes more focused, where our faith is deepened, and where we craft a new understanding of what it means to be the person God wants us to be.

I invite you to join us for worship throughout these forty days; the Praise Service is still at 9:00 a.m. and the Traditional Service is at 10:30 a.m. Holy Week at the end of March and into the first week of April will feature the Celebration of the Palms, then Holy Thursday Communion at 7:30 p.m. a Sunrise Service on the lawn at 6:30 a.m. on Easter, as well as the regular services later that morning.

***Have a blessed Lenten Season.***  
***Glenn Ferguson***

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## **HEALING MINISTRY ACTIVITIES**

### **March, 2010**

Healing ministers will be offering prayers with members at the altar rail or privately, during both services on Sunday, March 21<sup>st</sup>.

We will be meeting on Sunday, March 14, 2010 at 6:30pm in the church library. We will be discussing ***"Faith and Forgiveness"*** the fourth chapter in Charles Stanley's book, The Gift of Forgiveness. In this chapter Stanley talks about:

- The "time game" with examples of how we use this to delay forgiveness.
- How faith functions as the door to forgiveness.
- Who or what the object of biblical faith is with regard to forgiveness.
- How we can appropriate forgiveness.
- How we can personally trust in the death of Christ for payment of our 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.

***Then [Jesus] touched their eyes and said, "According to your faith will it be done to you"; and their sight was restored. Jesus warned them sternly, "See that no one knows about this."***

*[Matthew 9:29-30]*

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## **SR. YOUTH GROUP UPDATE**

Bright and early Saturday morning on Feb 13, 9 senior high youth and 3 adults headed to Camelback in the Poconos for a great day in the snow. Some of us went skiing, some of us went snowboarding and some of us



stayed warm in the cafeteria! For many, it was their first time on the slopes. We had a great day, topped off by pizza. Senior High Youth Club meets every Wednesday night from 6:30 - 8 pm and we plan an outing every month. We'd love to see you there!

***Grace and Blessings,***  
***Nancy Wagner***

# MARCH, 2010

SUNDAY							MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY		
<b>APRIL, 2010</b>							1	2	3	4	5	6		
S	M	T	W	T	F	S	9:30: MDO in session	6:00: 6:30: 7:00: Adult Bible Study <b>7:00: Finance Meets</b> 8:00:	9:30: MDO in session	9:30: Prayer Fellowship	9:30: MDO in session  <b>Rummage Sale Setup</b>	9:00: Rummage Sale		
				1	2	3								
4	5	6	7	8	9	10								
11	12	13	14	15	16	17								
18	19	20	21	22	23	24								
25	26	27	28	29	30									
<b>COMMUNION SUNDAY</b>							7	8	9	10	11	12		
9:00: Praise Worship 9:15: Sunday School 10:00: Fellowship Time 10:30: Traditional Service  6:00: 6:30: <b>FAMILY PROMISE</b>							9:30: MDO in session	9:30:	9:30: MDO in session	9:30: Prayer Fellowship	9:30: MDO in session	8:30: Men's Breakfast		
<b>DAYLIGHT SAVINGS BEGINS</b>							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: <b>6:30: Healing Ministry Meets</b> 7:00:							9:30: MDO in session <i>Meadowlark Due!</i>	9:30:	9:30: MDO in session	9:30: Prayer Fellowship	9:30: MDO in session	9:00: Women's Group		
<b>HEALING CALLS</b>							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	9:30:	9:30: MDO in session	9:30: Prayer Fellowship	9:30: MDO in session	Meadowlark Online		
<b>PALM SUNDAY</b>							28	29	30	31	APRIL	1	2	3
9:00: Praise Worship 9:15: Sunday School 10:00: Fellowship Time 10:30: Traditional Service <b>APRIL MEADOWLARK</b> 6:00: 6:30: 7:00:							<b>9:30: MDO CLOSED</b>	9:30:	<b>9:30: MDO CLOSED</b>					
							6:30: 7:00: Adult Bible Study 7:30: 8:00:	6:30: 7:00: 7:30: 8:00:	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...*

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## **HAITI MISSION TRIP WITH ASLAN YOUTH MINISTRIES**

Praise God! Thanks to the prayers and generous support from MUMC's Women's Fellowship and other MUMC members, a team of 7 was able to travel to Ouanaminthe, Haiti with Aslan in February, bringing much-needed medical supplies, construction tools, shoes, clothing, toiletries, and children's toys and crafts, and holding an open-air medical clinic for children and adults who don't otherwise have access to medical care. Craig Bogard, Aslan founder and director, writes:

Hi Everyone,

Hope you are deeply touched by this latest post,

"One more day...One more life," at [www.theforgottenpeople.typepad.com](http://www.theforgottenpeople.typepad.com).

Please pray for this friend and for so many others that need our help so desperately. And please send this as far and wide as you can to help Aslan continue saving lives here in Haiti. (Pictured right, Joanne Taylor.)

God bless, Craig



(The narrative of "One More Day . . . One More Life")

**February 23, 2010**

### [One More Life . . . One More Day](#)

On Sunday, a wonderful group of seven visiting us through Middletown United Methodist Church in New Jersey came to Aslan's *Bel Peyi (Beautiful Land) Daniel & Dustin* to operate a wound clinic for families who rarely receive any medical care. Three nurses with the group brought medical supplies (purchased with \$1,000 raised by Linwood Middle School) and were able to see 75 children and several adults ~ cleaning out multiple infections on feet, ankles, legs, knees and arms. Then came our regular Sunday afternoon program with over 100 bright-eyed children. During the program, Joseph asked one girl to step forward for prayer for her mother. Shortly after this prayer, Joseph asked me to bring one of our nurses and travel on our motorcycle about a quarter of a mile away to see the girl's mother. Neither Debbie Vincent, the RN who came with us, nor I were prepared for what we saw.

We were invited into a small wooden hut with a tin roof to the bedside of a 37-year-old mother (pictured barely alive below), with huge bedsores on her hip and leg and bleeding from her mouth and nose. The odor from her infected sores filled the room. She had been sick for several months, and her mother had taken her to a hospital in January. But she was turned away because she didn't have money to pay to see a doctor or to be admitted to the hospital. Debbie immediately determined that she had severe edema (fluid retention and swelling of the feet and legs up to her knees). Debbie determined she was probably also in septic shock with a raging infection. We told her mother that we would take her to the hospital in Fort Liberte the next morning. Then we stood by our sister with our hands on her head and arm and prayed that she would live one more day so that we might help her.



Yesterday morning I awoke at 5:30 am and prepared for our trip to the hospital. It has rained almost every day since I returned to Haiti a week ago, so the road from her hut (below) to Ouanaminthe was pot-holed, muddy and almost impassable in places. All of us in the pickup were thankful once we were on the paved road to Fort Liberte. In the midst of all this indignity, this precious woman had nothing more than a quarter inch thin piece of badly stained, worn and dirty carpet between her and the steel floor of the old pickup.

*(Continued on next page→)*

# In Our Community...

(←Continued from Page 6.)

Carol and JoAnn (two nurses also with us) were in the pickup, and to my left throughout the trip sat her worried and frantic mother. To my right Debbie lovingly held the woman's arm, prayed quietly for her and fanned the flies away from her bloody face. To my right sat the woman's 13-year-old daughter, with one large tear slowly winding its way down the side of her face for the entire 45-minute trip. As the wind howled across the back of the truck, another tear would slowly replace the previous one along the same track.

I tried to "will" the pickup to go faster, but I knew our driver Rony was being very careful and safe with all of us. We all breathed a sigh of relief when we finally drove into the rocky entrance of the hospital. While our friend lay in the back of the pickup in the blazing hot Haitian sun, I ran from place to place until I found the American doctors in charge (part of our friend, Dr. Juan Padilla's group). Then four Haitian men grabbed the carpet beneath her and helped us carry her into a triage tent set up by the United Nations troops.

Debbie quickly explained her diagnosis of what she had learned so far, and two nurses and Dr. McDougal began to treat her. Her blood pressure would not register, and they could not find a vein in her arm to start an IV. They quickly located a vein in her neck, and started her on saline solution, a strong antibiotic and something for pain. Because we had to bring the group from Middletown back to Santiago, we were forced to return to Ouanaminthe. At this moment, I do not even know if our friend lived through the night. I can only hope and pray so. But this one thing I do know. We did everything possible to give this child of God the opportunity that she deserved to receive such love, care and compassion. And if she dies, we gave to her the dignity of a hospital bed to die in and wonderful doctors and nurses to care for her as she walks into eternity.

Aslan has been ready for almost a year to build a clinic and hospital. Our only obstacle is the funds with which to begin construction. Thanks to an outpouring of gifts for our Haiti Relief Fund, we are closer than ever to begin laying the foundation for our medical center. Your prayers and your gifts will make the difference! With proper funding, this clinic and hospital can be built and operational within two years! I just received a notice that the IRS has decided all gifts given for Haiti before February 28 through a recognized 501(c)(3) organization will still be deductible on your 2009 tax statement (as long as you itemize deductions). What an opportunity you have. Rather than carrying this poor, sweet mother some 20 miles away, we would have been able to treat her long before this infection began raging through her body. One More Life . . . One More Day.

**Craig Bogard**  
(Submitted by Gary Kochman)

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## 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. For more information or any questions, please call Janet or Gerry Ferrara at 732-706-0819.

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## ANNUAL EASTER EGG HUNT

**Saturday, April 3, 2010**

The Annual Easter Egg Hunt will be held at the Middletown United Methodist Church on Saturday, April 3, 2010 from 11:00am - 12:00pm. All children ages 2-8 are invited to attend and participate. Parents or Grandparents must accompany their children at all times.

The Hunt will be held on the Church lawn. In the event of rain or inclement weather, the hunt will be held indoors. All children of the community are invited to come. There will be a Program & Snacks. Mark your calendar now! For any questions or more information, please call Eleanor Collier at (732) 942-8597.

# Church Announcements...

## 2010 MEN'S RETREAT

April 23-25, 2010

CALLING ALL MEN! The 2010 Men's retreat weekend has been set for April 23-25, 2010 and will once again be held at Keswick. This weekend is open to all men who are members or friends of MUMC. Registration cost of \$160 includes meals and room. The theme this year will center on "Connectedness (to God and each other)." The Signup sheet will be posted in the Narthex. Mark your calendar and be prepared for a weekend of discussions, fellowship, and fun. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact the Men's Retreat organizers, Dave Moore (732 796-7373, [wdavidmoore@verizon.net](mailto:w davidmoore@verizon.net)), Phil Welch, Jr. (732 747-5032, [p2twelch@verizon.net](mailto:p2twelch@verizon.net)), Russ Cline (732-530-8453, [rcline@optonline.net](mailto:rcline@optonline.net)), or Bill Smith (732-530-4002, [wgsmithusa@comcast.net](mailto:wgsmithusa@comcast.net)).

## FAMILY PROMISE VOLUNTEERS

RECEPTION - March 28, 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 28, from 3 to 5 PM. Here's a chance to compare notes with volunteers from other congregations and 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 Noemi? She's been visiting congregations to say thank you.) If you have any questions or need more information, please contact George Lavigne. Thank you!

*Dear Coordinators & Friends of Family Promise,*

I understand that our supporters are looking to hear more from the Board of Trustees so I've decided to put out a monthly letter to keep you better informed of what's going on. Most of you know that we have been struggling financially and that continues to be the case as we enter 2010. We seem to be just able to pay our bills; a situation that is frustrating and stressful for all of us. In the best of all worlds we would like to hire a Development Director whose sole responsibility would be to raise the funds necessary to keep us not just barely operational but thriving. Shanna would still run the agency but she would have the time to build relationships in the community and get our second network launched. I continue to be hopeful that we may someday do just that. Getting my head out of the clouds and back to today, we are getting excited about

*(Continued in next column→)*

about Cardboard Box City—our major fundraising event set for this fall. You can go to our website and get the particulars but this event promises to be one that not only raises a substantial amount of money for Family Promise, but also raises awareness in the community about homelessness and the issues faced by homeless families. You will start to hear more about it over the next few months as we reach out to youth groups in Monmouth County to engage them in this event.

I should also mention that I have sent a letter to Pastors/ Rabbis of both host and support congregations asking for help with Board recruiting. We are now down to 6 board members when we should be at 10 or 12. I also intend to reach out to those congregations outside of our network to see if we might find some board members among them. Filling board positions has become a top priority for me. We have so much to do this year; I worry that remaining board members will get crushed under the load. As you can appreciate, sharing a job or a responsibility makes it fun and certainly less stressful. Please continue to keep listening for someone who might be willing to serve.

I hope you will take the time out to attend our Volunteer Appreciation event sponsored by the Board of Trustees on Sunday, March 21 from 3-5 pm at Monmouth Reformed Temple in Lincroft. You can reach me at any time at email address [carol@familypromisemc.org](mailto:carol@familypromisemc.org). I'd love to hear from you! Thank you for all you do for our families. Please continue to keep our families, our agency and our board in your prayers.

*Carol Barnett  
Board President*

## OUR DAILY PRAYER CONCERNS:

- \* Bruce & Robert Babcock \* Mary Frances Hooper \*
- \* Rougeau Family \* Amy Davis \* Clarice Fontaine \*
- \* Tim Waters \* Harold Lucassen \* Philip Meyer \*
- \* John Sarkissian, Sr. & Family \* Liz Hill \*
- \* Donna Waters Fantasia's Niece Robin \*
- \* Irene Leonard \* Patricia Vaspory \*
- \* The people of Haiti, Rescue Volunteers \*
- \* The Families of those serving in the Military \*
- \* Our Brothers & Sisters serving in the Military \*