

What If?

People say that the erratic weather pattern we see nowadays is indicative of the global warming. What snow we have had so far this winter! Those images of flooding both in Australia and Brazil are stunning, too. Frankly, I have held onto the reserved position of global warming. Having been bothered by the new evidences of the global warming, I tend to presume that all those talks might be a bit exaggerating. Regardless of my feeling, however, what we have observed this winter refreshes in my mind the concern of global warming.

Jesus mentioned several symptoms of the end of the age in Matthew 24. To name a few, they are the appearance of anti-Christ and a series of natural disasters. Speaking of anti-Christ, I think we are always open to plausibility of having some as long as we let ourselves to be controlled by the false trends and values which would keep our sight from truthful life. What about natural catastrophe? Just like my partially rebellious tendency to the prophetic voice of global warming, I also tend to hold a bit reserved position in interpreting Jesus' warning of natural disaster literally as a sign of the end of the world. I think my reserved attitude to that issue is somewhat empirically motivated more than doctrinally. I have seen the unfortunate cases in which some Christians neglect the true meaning of Christian faith as they take those words without theological discretion. Yet again, regardless of my effort to be reasonable in seeing

those matters, I cannot deny the worrisome feeling that the extreme weather pattern might be actually the beginning of the irrevocable natural catastrophe. I know that the gloomy news of fast melting glacier in the arctic regions is very real. I also am concerned with the warning from the scientists that once the destructive effect of the global warming is in progress its speed will only be accelerating in the coming years.



Jesus warns regarding the end of the world in Mark 13: 14~18, "But be ready to run for it when you see the monster of desecration set up where it should never be. You who can read, make sure you understand what I'm talking about. If you're living in Judea at the time, run for the hills..."

Responding to the recent global warming, a glacier analyst Eric Rignot at NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory says, "I wouldn't run for the hills. But it might be time to start walking." Yes, it might be time to start walking. I don't mean walking to the hills literally but taking the natural signal of global warning really seriously. For example, we can drive our cars more strategically. Maybe, we can do grocery shopping once a week instead of twice. Experts say that warming up a car more than thirty seconds even in winter is pointless. We might not be able to make a big difference by those practices but they are what we can do and, more importantly, what we ought to do as we long for the day of the Lord.

Peace be with you!

Pastor Steven Kim

Our CAN-DO Recycle Stewardship

By Richard Hassenfeldt

For 2010, we not only were good stewards for recycling, we collected the following proceeds:

January and February	\$172.30
February and March	127.70
April	200.00
May	200.00
June	110.00
July	110.00
August	110.00
September	80.00
October	80.00
November	80.00
December	70.00
Total	\$1340.00

Thanks to all for donating your bottles and cans – and keep them coming! As you can see, our church benefits and so does our environment.

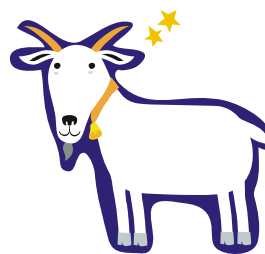


The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof, the world and those who dwell therein.

- Psalm 24:1 ESV / 3

Kudos to Our Sunday School Students

Our Sunday School 2010 Advent mission collected donations for the Heifer project. Good news...we were able to collect enough to purchase a goat for a needy family! Thanks to all who made this possible.



God, you are our Light: the primordial light of the cosmos, in Jesus Christ the Light of the world, and through the Spirit the Light within us all. You have told us to claim your Light and live in such a way that it shines through all that we do. As we bring our hearts, our gifts and our lives to you now, we trust you to transform these offerings into food for the hungry, shelter for the homeless, and hope and love for all who need you this day. Transform what we offer here, including the persons we are becoming by your grace, so that all your creation will see and give glory to you. This we pray in Jesus' name. Amen. (Matthew 5:13-20.)

-By Betsy Schwarzentraub
Director of Stewardship, General Board of Discipleship of the United Methodist Church. You may contact her at bschwarzentraub@gbod.org.



The United Methodist Church
of Naugatuck, Connecticut
208 Meadow Street 203•729•4236
Naugatuck, CT 06770 www.numcct.org

A community of God seeking, serving,
and growing in Christ with open hearts,
open minds, and open doors.

The Reverend Steven Kim, Pastor

Gretchen I. Usawicz, Editor, *The Circuit Writer*
gusawicz@region15.org 203•729•0572

Mission Opportunity

The All-Church Service and Outreach Day is Coming Soon

The Missions and Outreach Committee is making every effort to offer opportunities for us to fulfill our mission to go make disciples of Jesus Christ by continuing to go outside our comfort zone – the four walls of our Church building. We feel that we are making a good start toward incorporating the 'five practices of a fruitful congregation' with this church-wide event.

At last fall's Church retreat in Rocky Hill, committee members and others, discussed the five practices and whether or not we were meeting these goals within our committees and within our Church. The five practice goals are: radical hospitality, passionate worship, intentional faith development, risk-taking mission and service and extravagant generosity.

The All Church Service and Outreach Day will involve the whole church - children and adults going to work together outside the Church walls on a Sunday morning. The event will take place on March 13, starting around 10:00 a.m. at the Church with a sending forth into service blessing by Pastor Steven. Each team, with their team leaders, will then spend the morning working on a project at an appointed destination in Naugatuck or Waterbury. In the afternoon everyone will meet back at the Church for a meal, fellowship and a sharing of experiences from their day of community outreach.

Missions and Outreach has a few projects in mind and is firming up the details needed to make things happen. There may be changes. Here is a list of projects we are pursuing: Hopefully, you will find your passion in one of them. We are open to suggestions.

- **Waterbury Soup Kitchen and Store Room Organization**

Team Leader: Ruth Lilback

Involves food prep and cooking a meal for the noontime clients as well as cleanup of cooking area after. Some people will cook and some will organize the food storeroom.

- **Blight & Beautification patrol in Naugatuck**

Team Leader: Rob Petro

(Involves cleanup of an area in Naugatuck to be determined)

- **Free Lunch Meal for needy in Fellowship Hall and Delivery to Shut ins**

Team Leader: Chris Herb (Involves food prep, cooking, serving, clean up and delivery)

- **Visit local nursing homes**

Team Leader: Lin Behlman

- **Waterbury Shelter**

Team Leader: Ethel Grant

Involves planning a mini service/devotional, singing, etc.

- **Naugatuck Food Bank Collection and Stocking**

Team Leader: Elma Solomon

- **Home Care Inside/Outside for Shut-Ins/Senior members**

Team Leader: Jeff Hunt

Missions and Outreach is excited about this project and have planned for everyone – children and adults - to participate in fulfilling our mission. Stay tuned ... Signup sheets should appear in the Narthex, the February Church Bulletins and the March Newsletter. If you have suggestions or questions contact Pastor Steven, Ethel Grant or any member of Missions and Outreach.

IOWA MISSION TRIP

Flood Recovery

- Ethel Grant

On Saturday, January 8 at 4:30 a.m., I joined nine team members in Middlebury and headed to New York for our flight to Cedar Rapids, Iowa, to participate in a weeklong mission rehabbing houses.

We reached Iowa, 14 members strong with Methodists joining us from New Jersey, Philadelphia, and Massachusetts - four women and ten men - ages - 15 to 72. The Reverend Paul Hibbard of the Watertown United Methodist Church was the Mission Team Leader/Coordinator of the trip. Members from

Seymour Great Hill United Methodist were also in attendance. On landing, there was no snow in Cedar Rapids, and the temperature comparable to Connecticut's.

We were housed at the Presbyterian Church's Mission and Youth Center in Marion, Iowa. We slept on cots, sleeping bags, and couches - which were supplied by members of that church and the Methodist church across the street. We prepared our own meals, and the lunches we took out on the job.

Every morning we were on the job by 9:00 a.m. until around 5:00 p.m. Tools and materials were provided by a United Methodist based organization called Block by Block. Through volunteer workers and donations of money, materials, time and sweat this group is working hard to rehab flood-affected homes for low-income families. Their mission is to bring the neighborhoods affected by the 2008 flooding back to life.

The flooding was extensive - reaching above the first floor windows on some houses; and, businesses closer to the river - even higher. In driving around the practically abandoned neighborhoods, we could easily

see the water line on some of the houses. We could see some of the debris left behind by the waters and the gutted houses. We could see

that the people were missing and that there was no traffic. The

only cars and trucks in sight belonged to the various workers, electricians and plumbers and maybe a family who had

made it back into their house. Some in the group, who have been coming to Iowa since 2009, said that what we were seeing was a big improvement compared to how it was right after the flood - with a few more houses having new siding - even if the house was still only a shell. As of June 2010 there were 19 blocks in the affected area in need of rehabbing. Progress is slow, but happening.

This was a wonderful experience - I met great people - we became friends - we became kind of family - we worked as a team and brought a family a little closer to owning a new home and a neighborhood a little closer to living again. We painted a 'million' walls, put in outside and inside doors, built basement stairs, framed and trimmed windows, sheet rocked walls and fixed floors. At the end of the week, the last thing we did as we left our two work assignments, was to leave a token of God's love and our connection to our brothers and sisters in Cedar Rapids, Iowa - an 8 inch wooden Cross signed by each member of the team with our blessings and good wishes for a new beginning.



HAITI UPDATE

January 2011 correspondence from UMCOR (United Methodist Committee on Relief)

On January 12, 2010, a 7.0 magnitude earthquake shook the impoverished nation of Haiti, causing widespread destruction and loss of life.

UMCOR responded immediately, addressing emergency needs and offering emotional and spiritual support, while laying a foundation for long-term recovery. Recovery and rehabilitation are daunting tasks everywhere, but in Haiti, every undertaking is slow and difficult.

In the first ten months following the earthquake, UMCOR committed more than \$16 million to Haiti from our Haiti Relief Fund. A portion of those funds went to United Methodist Volunteers in Mission, whose personnel are working side by side with Haitians on projects throughout the country. UMCOR re-established our field office in Port-au-Prince one month after the earthquake and leveraged donations with government grants through UMCOR's non-governmental organization, UMCOR NGO. While shipping remains a challenge, the pipeline is beginning to open, and UMCOR is distributing thousands of donated health kits and school kits to those who are most in need.

The January 2010 earthquake provoked unprecedented devastation in Haiti. Our efforts help require creativity and perseverance. Long-term recovery needs your long-term help. Please share your blessings with the survivors of the earthquake in Haiti.

"UMCOR is in Haiti on behalf of the United Methodist Church, but more importantly, we are there for the people of Haiti." Rev. Cynthia Fierro Harvey, UMCOR Deputy General Secretary

To donate to Haiti, please use the following reference:

Haiti Emergency, UMCOR Advance #418325



Just
a
Gentle Reminder...

Please remember, the
FIRST Sunday of the month is
Food Bank Collection Sunday

Together We Make a Difference

Missions and Outreach Committee Members: Ethel Grant, Chairperson, Linnea Behlman, Bev Carrington, Lisa Herb, Diane Monsam, Kim Dilts Louey, Rob Petro, Elma Solomon, Ed Usawicz, Gretchen Usawicz, Marion Zirolli

Loving, just God, your law of grace shocks us. How can we possibly come up to your standard of compassion in our dealings with neighbor and enemy alike? But that is the point, isn't it? It is your grace that counts us as whole and righteous: all of us, whether we are as faithful as Abraham or as rebellious or destructive as the worst among us. You bridge the gap between who we are and the people whom you call us to be. We offer ourselves to you now, including all of our unfinishedness, trusting entirely in your transforming grace. This we pray through your love shown in Jesus Christ. Amen. (Matthew 5:38-48.)

-By Betsy Schwarzentraub
Director of Stewardship, General Board of Discipleship of the
United Methodist Church. You may contact her at
bschwarzentraub@gbod.org.

Spring Church Calendar

Ash Wednesday..... March 9
First Sunday in Lent..... March 13 (Outreach
Service Day)
District Healing Service..... April 3 at 4-5 p.m. at
Watertown UMC
Passion/Palm Sunday..... April 17
Maundy Thursday..... April 21
Good Friday..... April 22
Easter Sunday..... April 24

February Servers

Liturgists – Check on Line at www.numcct.org

6 FebruaryJeff Hunt
13 FebruaryWayne Zirolli
20 FebruaryJack Lewis
27 FebruaryJohn Hope-Ross

Ushers

Our appointed Usher Coordinator is
John Hope-Ross, 203-723-4091.

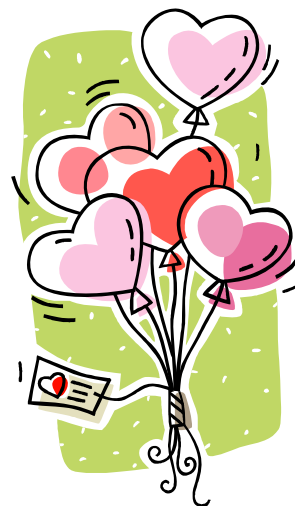
Shared Ministry Sunday

Together We Make A Difference Through Shared Ministry Apportionments!

For more 100 years the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits of The United Methodist Church has been responsible for the administration of the retirement, health and welfare benefit plans, programs and funds for more than 74,000 active and retired clergy and lay employees of the church. One such program is Healthflex, the health insurance program for both active and retired clergy.

Thanks to our committed support, the New York Annual Conference participates in this program with 30 other annual conferences to provide best-in-class health care access, protection, and support to our NYAC clergy at a cost-effective, competitive level. True to Wesleyan values, the goal is to improve the quality of health and health care for our conference clergy. This integrated health care program offers leading-edge wellness benefits, initiatives, incentives and strategies to help clergy become as healthy as possible

**Our Shared Ministry Sunday
is the 20th of February.**



A Personal 'Thank- You' from Pastor Steven

I am going to visit my mother in South Korea during January 31st through February 14th. Thank you for all your prayers for my mother. My visitation of family has been largely motivated by such a generous Christmas gift, in particular, as well as your supportive hearts. Thank you all, and may God bless you all!

A Meditation for February

Read Psalm 27:7-9

Where do we find ourselves crying aloud, crying for graciousness, desiring to be answered? A retreat leader once called this state of being one of dis-ease: dis-ease in church, dis-ease in families, dis-ease in society, dis-ease in the workplace.

Churches become places of dis-ease when personal agendas, functional processes, and infighting overshadow the discernment of God's will within the faith community. Church becomes what the leaders want, not what God desires for God's people.

Families become distracted in the rearing of children by the dis-ease of a culture of drugs, sex, and violence. Stretched to the limit by financial burdens, low wages, single parenting, homelessness, and the inability to climb out of soaring debt, families disintegrate.

God's word calls us to love our enemies, yet wars rage. Some Christians cling to the "one true faith." Skin color determines value in the minds of some, rather than God's love for all people. We are dis-eased by the stranger and by the traditions unlike our own.

Ruthlessness and greed have driven leaders in the work-place to cause the downfall of corporations, innocent workers, and clients. Survival from this dis-ease cannot be guaranteed.

The psalmist (or you or I) cries out for reassurance that God will always be gracious, that God will always show God's face, will never hide or turn away as he strives to overcome the dis-ease that surrounds him. What answer do you seek?

What is the dis-ease in your life today? Cry louder!
Look for answers from the God of our salvation!
Expect graciousness!

2011 VBS Update

We are planning to resume Vacation Bible Study in our church this summer. Our new VBS coordinator Ruth Lilback is screening two different VBS materials published by Cokesbury. One is 'Shake it Up Café: Where Kids Carry Out God's Recipe' and the other is 'Island Odyssey: To the End of the Earth with Jesus Christ.' There will be a VBS presentation to EWA during its meeting on February 6, Sunday.

Please, pray for our VBS.



Holy God, your holiness makes us more than uncomfortable. In times of surface living, when we think we are doing pretty well in our relationships and actions, we gloss over your demanding call to fulfill your teaching. Forgive us, we pray. Prompt us to realize how totally every one of us relies upon your grace. We bring you these gifts of our finances and our prayers, not to earn our way to you, but in overflowing gratitude for your grace. This we pray by your power through the Holy Spirit. Amen. (Matthew 5:21-37.)

-By Betsy Schwarzenraub
Director of Stewardship, General Board of Discipleship of the
United Methodist Church. You may contact her at
bschwarzenraub@gbod.org.

Wheel Chair Lift Funding Update

A Very Big Thank You!!

The Board of Trustees would like to thank Cindy and Tom Russo for their generous donation of \$1,500 to help us in financing our Wheel Chair Lift. They made this donation in honor of Cindy's parents Bob and Linnea Behlman. We continue to make progress with making this dream of a wheel chair lift a reality. We also received a grant from the district's DIMCHEX Fund for \$2,000 and a grant from the Parish Development Committee for \$8,746.

We are confident that we will be able to raise the remaining necessary funds to make our wheel chair lift a reality.

God Bless,
Mary Hope-Ross,
Chair, Board of Trustees

Super Bowl(s) of Chili



On February 6 Super Bowl Sunday, we will have our 2nd annual Super Bowl(s) of Chili. Rich King will make his award winning chili for you to take home to enjoy during the game or as a meal on another night.

Orders must be received by **Sunday, January 30** and will be ready for pick up at the church on Sunday February 6 by noon. Keep watch for an order form in the worship service bulletin. For more information, see Rich King or Chris Herb. Don't miss out on this wonderful opportunity to enjoy Chef King's Chili! **Need more information? Contact Chris at: 203-729-3293 or herbchristian@sbcglobal.net**

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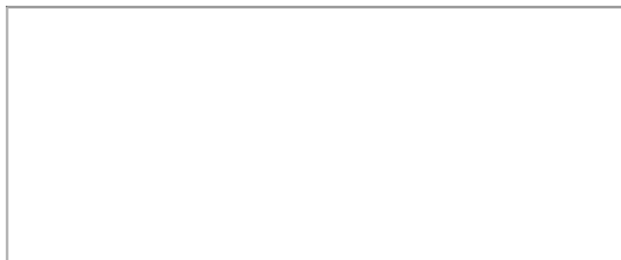
New every morning is your love, great God of light, and all day long you are working for good in the world. Stir up in us desire to serve you, to live peacefully with our neighbors, and all your creation, and to devote each day to your Son, our Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.



Upper Room Worship Book

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The People of the United Methodist Church of Naugatuck
A community of God seeking, serving, and growing in Christ.

The Deadline for
the MARCH Issue
of
The Circuit Writer
is February 17.
Thank You.