

NOVEMBER NEWSLETTER

FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH OF TOWANDA

FROM THE PASTORS DESK



Calling the Shot

On October 1, 1932 the New York Yankees and the Chicago Cubs were playing in the World Series at Wrigley Field in Chicago. It was game three of the series. In the fifth inning, Babe Ruth came up to bat. What happened next is the stuff of legend and controversy. The Chicago fans and players in the dugout were chiding Ruth mercilessly. He seemed to be giving the bench as good as he got. After four pitches, the count was two and two. At this moment, with 2 strikes, Ruth pointed. Then he drove the next pitch way out of the park, by some estimates 490 feet into center field—in the direction of his previous gesture. A leading newspaper's headline following the game reported "RUTH CALLS SHOT AS HE PUTS HOME RUN NO. 2 IN SIDE POCKET." Regardless of whether Ruth was pointing at the bench to remind them that it was only strike 2, or that he was pointing to center field where he intended to hit the next pitch, two things are indisputable: 1) He intended to help his club win the game, and 2) he achieved his goal. The next pitch was drilled into the right field stands by his teammate Lou Gehrig. The Yankees won the game 7-5, and beat the Cubs in the following game 13-6 sweeping the series to become World Champions.¹

At Church Conference this year, our congregation was challenged to call some shots. We were challenged to get as clear about our mission as Ruth was about his. His mission was to win ball games. Our mission is:

To go to make strangers into friends,
friends into family,
family into followers,
and followers into full-blown disciples of Jesus Christ.

There may not be much news coverage. It probably won't go down in national history. For our church, at this point in our life together, I would argue that it's even more important than winning the World Series.

In the preparation for, at the Church Conference and at the Executive Council planning retreat which followed, we prayerfully set five specific goals for our congregation for 2012, five specific ways in which we will execute our mission. 1) By the end of 2012, our average worship attendance will be 110: 80-85 during our 10:45 worship and 20-25 at River Rock (counting our folks who come to both worship services only once). 2) For us to reach the first goal, we will need to help 15–20 people make new professions of faith in Jesus Christ. 3) To help disciples of Jesus grow in faith, especially new disciples, we will start five (5) new small groups. 4) We will create and encourage opportunities to engage 25 more people in risk-taking mission and service. 5) Together, we will give \$10,000 based on past monetary giving and the value of HUB donations for supplies and time, working toward giving away a minimum of 10% of the total budget.

Calling the shot continued.....

There are the goals. They are every bit as bold as pointing to the fence in the middle of the World Series. Here's why they matter. For us to do any of this, we will need to get even more serious about why God has called this congregation to be the Body of Christ in this place and in this time—we need to get more serious about our mission. As a congregation, we've been struggling to follow the Great Commission to make disciples and to teach them. That's reflected in our attendance, our membership and our giving—

“God gave you a gift of 84,400 seconds today.

Have you used one to say “thank you?”

-William A. Ward

all of which have been sliding down for decades. We can't continue to follow that trend. It's not faithful. It's not fruitful. It's not Biblical. It's not the way to life. If we continue to do what we've been doing, we'll inevitably end up where we're headed.

That's the bad news. Here's the good news. God's vision for us is not to die slowly as a congregation. It's to grow. There are many, many people—right here in Towanda—that don't know the Good News of Jesus Christ. God has given us a lot of resources with which to work. And it will take work: work to think differently about what it means to be a part of this congregation, work to learn new skills and recover ones long dormant, work to identify and learn how to use the gifts and skills that the Holy Spirit has already given us for

the work of ministry, work to never allow ourselves to come to this amazing challenge and opportunity without fiercely seeking God in prayer. We will have to put in our Spiritual batting practice, defensive drills, spring training and pre-season. With God as our coach to drill us, to coach us up in our weaknesses, to play us to our strengths and to use all of our talents, skills and temperaments to field the best team we can be as a whole, we can do this. We can go to make strangers into friends, friends into family, family into followers, and followers into full-blown disciples of Jesus Christ.

We've called the Shot. Batter up.

Grace to you and Peace,

-Pastor Jim



¹(2011, 11 October). Babe Ruth's called shot. Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia. Retrieved October 26, 2011, from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Babe_Ruth's_called_shot

MISSION NEWS

Latest on the flood recovery in Bradford County

- Organized by the Wellsboro District Volunteers in Mission (VIM)
- Four work dates:
Thursday, Nov. 3
Saturday, Nov. 5
Thursday, Nov. 10
- There will be work but at this time, where and when

is yet to be determined.

- Bring a lunch
- Wear long pants and long sleeves, boots, hats, eye protection and gloves
- Bring tools for mucking, cleaning and demolition
- Please call or e-mail Carl Koch at 570-418-0318 or ckoch@epix.net to let him know you are coming.

- Please pray for all of those affected by the flooding
- There will be many volunteer opportunities in the coming months.





United Methodist Church “Rethink Church” Advent Study -- Outside the Box: The Gift that Can't be Contained

The Season of Advent -- Anticipation and Hope

Advent (from the Latin word adventus meaning "coming") is a season observed by Christians and is a time of expectant waiting and preparation for the celebration of the Nativity of Jesus at Christmas. This Christmas, as part of our Rethink Church initiative, you are invited to join us as we to unwrap the story of Jesus' birth and experience anew Love personified.

In recognition of this joyous season, there will be an Advent Bible Study offered for **ALL** starting Sunday, November 27th, 2011. As an outline for this bible study, we will be using the **United Methodist Church “Rethink Church” Advent Study -- Outside the Box: The Gift that Can't be Contained**. This four-week study provides one lesson for each week of Advent (November 27th, and December 4th, 11th, and 18th), and will guide you through contemplating ancient Scriptures, delving into Christmas traditions and relating to transformative experiences of Christ's birth throughout humanity. The series challenges us to go outside the box to find those forgotten, ignored or turned away from life's inns, so we may welcome all.

The Bible Study will be held during a modified “Sunday School” time period (**9:00AM to 10:30AM**) at the First United Methodist Church (Classroom TBD). Additionally, this Bible Study will be offered on Tuesday or Wednesday evenings @ 7:00PM if interest is sufficient. Contact the Church Office for more information and look for the sign-up sheets in the Narthex/ Library entrance.

National Bible Week—November 20th-27th

To acknowledge the place of the Bible in today's world.

Resources: National Bible Association, <http://www.nationalbible.org>

Reading the Bible publicly has its historical origins in the word of God. Israel gathered to hear its leaders read scripture.

The inspiration for the National Day of the Bible is from Nehemiah 8:1-3.

“Now all the people gathered together as one man in the open square that was in front of the Water Gate; and they told Ezra that scribe to bring the Book of the Law of Moses, which the Lord had commanded Israel. So Ezra the priest brought the Law before the assembly of men and women and those who could understand; and the ears of all the people were attentive to the

Book of the Law.”
And in the New Testament from I Timothy 4:13 “given attention to the public reading of scripture.”



“Reading the bible without meditating on it is like trying to eat without swallowing.”- Anonymous

Deadline for December Newsletter- November 20th!

NOVEMBER BIRTHDAY'S

- 4th Jenelle Lichtenwalner
Shawna Bankus
Eliza Hockenberry
- 7th Kristal Hendershot
- 10th Mark Montgomery
- 10th Collin Bellows
- 11th Lane Seibert
- 12th Sydney Williams
- 18th Vance Seeley
- 19th Marie House
- 23rd Gloria Montgomery

- 23rd Maria Miller
- 25th Taran Bellows
- 26th Marie Seibert
- 28th Pam Hertt
- 28th Danielle Dietz
- 29th Brad Zechman



Happy Anniversary

- 11th Barb & Stu Rosengrant
- 21st Ed & Melinda Maryott
- 24th John & Melinda Miller
- 29th Fred & Patsy Weaver

FIRST CHURCH MEMORIAL AND HONOR GIFTS PROGRAM

Charitable Giving is an important tradition for many people. Making gifts for the benefit of others offers a wonderful way to affirm our Christian values and priorities, as well as ensuring that First Church will endure the test of time enabling us to carry out our mission of “Making Disciples of Jesus Christ for the Transformation of the World.” Honoring a loved one through charitable gifts is often an especially meaningful act of paying tribute to someone special, while assuring that worthwhile values continue to influence the world around us.

Memorial and Honor Gifts allow you to thoughtfully remember family members and friends who have been such a vital part of your life. Read on to learn about exceptional giving opportunities that can help you make your memorial and honor gifts in the most effective and caring ways.

The First United Methodist Church of Towanda offers a Memorial and Honor Gifts program. The Memorial and Honors Gifts Fund is a general all-purpose fund established to receive bequests, contributions and/or donations to First Church. It is a way of procuring needed items and supporting the ministry of the church not included in the annual budget.

TWO WAYS TO RECOGNIZE A LOVED ONE:

Memorial Gifts: These gifts honor the memory of a relative or special friend. Such a gift becomes an enduring tribute to a loved one.

Honor Gifts: An Honor gift is given to recognize special events or achievements in the life of a loved one. The person so honored is able to enjoy this honor for the rest of his/her life.

GIFTS FOR EVERY “OCCASION”

The Memorial and Honor Gifts program allows members and friends of First Church to give gifts to the church in memory or in honor of loved ones and in recognition of special events such as: Mother’s Day or Father’s Day, at the birth of a child or grandchild, on a birthday, graduation, wedding anniversary, baptisms, marriages, or other notable occasion on which you wish to give gifts of love that show how much you care.

A GUIDE IN MAKING A GIFT TO THE MEMORIAL AND HONOR FUNDS:

Most of the gifts to these funds are made in cash. Checks should be made payable to the First United Methodist Church of Towanda and sent to the church office at 105 Main Street, Towanda, PA. 18848.

TYPES OF GIFTS:

Charitable Gifts are classified either as Memorial or Honor Gifts and may be classified as either “designated” or “undesignated” according to your directions.

Undesignated: Monies go into the Memorial and Honor Gifts account and are held until they can be utilized in the purchase of approved items or projects.

Designated – Approved List: Monies are held or expended directly for a specific, approved item or project.

Designated – Not Approved: The Memorial and Honor Gifts Committee will consider any gift to the church that is not on the designated approved list. The committee has the choice of either accepting it, suggesting something else, or refusing the gift. Careful consideration will be given as how this gift relates to our mission of “Making Disciples of Jesus Christ for the Transformation of the World.”

ADVANTAGES OF THESE GIFTS:

The program provides an opportunity for both members and non-members of our church to express appreciation for the life and achievement of another.

Contributing to these funds not only honors or memorializes a relative or friend but also assists First Church in accomplishing its mission of “Making Disciples of Jesus Christ for the Transformation of the World.”

In this program the donor’s privacy is protected since the amount of the gift will not be revealed but will be recorded and kept on file in the church office. The name of the donor will be listed in a special book(s) on display in the back of our sanctuary remembering those of our number who have joined the Church Triumphant with the name of the person memorialized or honored. Please take time to check out the book(s) at your convenience. Thanks to Natalie Maurer for giving her time for updating!

You may establish a permanent memorial to a family member or friend through a gift made now or through your will.

Although most gifts to these funds are made in cash, donors who wish to give other gifts such as land, stocks or bonds should first consult the pastor.

Donors are eligible for a legal charitable tax deduction.

At the request of the family, memorial gift envelopes will be provided by the church for use at a funeral home or a memorial service at the church.

This program has aided in the ministry and outreach of this congregation in many effective ways; examples have included: And many others!

The most recent purchases made possible through your generous Memorial and Honor Gifts are as follows:

5-Piece Vasant Dining Sets [Café Tables & Chairs] Given In Memory of Harvey C. Lubold, Jr.

Social Room Tables and Chairs.

Elevator to assist accessibility to worship services.

Defibrillator.

Kitchen and Rest Room renovations.

Pew Bibles.

Hand-bell Choir Bells and Bell Pads.

Acolyte Robes.



Library Purchases Given In Memory of Harvey C. Lubold, Jr.

These books are available in the First Church Library for your reading pleasure.

If you are a member of First Church and/or a member of our Church Leadership Team, we encourage you to recommend items for purchase that will better enable us to carry out our mission of “Making Disciples of Jesus Christ for the Transformation of the World.”

If you need further information or clarification on the Memorial and Honor Gifts Program, feel free to contact the church office at (570) 265-3276.

The Presence Based Church

How to Pray after You’ve Kicked the Dog

Simple Church

A Celebration of Discipline

The Irresistible Revolution: Living as an Ordinary Radical

The Practice of the Presence of God

and more to come!



Keepin' it Real

Have you ever woken up the day after Christmas feeling like you missed it? That with all the craziness (shopping, parties, cooking, family visits, etc..) you just didn't get the experience you had hoped for?

This Christmas, Towanda United Methodist Church invites you to *A Life-giving Christmas* – to widen the lens, focus on the real...the authentic...the things that really matter and the true gift of the season – life. And not just any life – rich, meaningful life from a very real part of God – God's own son. Hope, peace, joy and love are not just candles to be lit around an advent wreath – they are facets of a living Christ to be ignited in our lives and our communities. Christmas can be that time of refueling for the new year ahead, if we carefully invest ourselves and engage life-giving principles.

It all starts on November 27, 2011.



November 2011



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1 Girls Scouts 6-7:30pm Covenant Disci- pleship Group 7pm	2 Ugly Quilts 10am Choir 7pm	3 River Rock Praise and Dance Practice 6:30pm	4	5 Prayer Meeting 9:30am
6 Sunday School 9:30am Worship 10:45 River Rock 6:30pm UMY 6:30pm	7 Girls Scouts 6-7:30pm Exec. 7:00pm	8 Girls Scouts 6-7:30pm Covenant Disci- pleship Group 7pm	9 Ugly Quilts 10am Choir 7pm	10 River Rock Praise and Dance Practice 6:30pm	11	12 Prayer Meeting 9:30am
13 Sunday School 9:30am Worship 10:45 River Rock 6:30pm UMY 6:30pm	14 Girls Scouts 6-7:30pm	15 Girls Scouts 6-7:30pm Covenant Disci- pleship Group 7pm UMW 1:30pm	16 Ugly Quilts 10am Choir 7pm	17 River Rock Praise and Dance Practice 6:30pm	18	19 Prayer Meeting 9:30am
20 Sunday School 9:30am Worship 10:45 River Rock 6:30pm UMY 6:30pm	21 Girls Scouts 6-7:30pm Trustees Meeting 7:00pm	22 Girls Scouts 6-7:30pm Covenant Disci- pleship Group 7pm	23 Ugly Quilts 10am Choir 7pm	24 Happy Thanksgiving Office Closed	25	26 Prayer Meeting 9:30am
27 Sunday School 9:30am Worship 10:45 River Rock 6:30pm UMY 6:30pm	28 Girls Scouts 6-7:30pm	29 Girls Scouts 6-7:30pm Covenant Disci- pleship Group 7pm	30 Ugly Quilts 10am Choir 7pm			