



The people of The United Methodist Church

# The Messenger

## Commack United Methodist Church

486 Townline Road  
Commack, NY 11725-7310  
(631) 499-7310

Web Site: <http://www.commack-umc.org>

Email: [mail@commack-umc.org](mailto:mail@commack-umc.org)

Pastor's E-Mail: [pastor@commack-umc.org](mailto:pastor@commack-umc.org)

Rev. Richard C. Mills, Pastor (631) 499-4770

February 2006

*Open Hearts*

*Open Minds*

*Open Doors*



Dear Brother or Sister in Christ,

The story is told about a bus driver who became annoyed with what he saw. At the end of his run was an open field which "litterbugs" had turned into an unofficial dump. The driver had about a ten minute layover there several times a day. One day he grew tired of seeing the mess and decided to do something. He picked up a bag that someone had left on the bus and began to pick up some of the bottles and cans.

The next day he returned with a leaf bag and some gloves, and during each

layover he picked up a little more of the trash. He worked on his project throughout the winter and was amazed by his progress when spring came. One day he decided to plant some flower seeds.

By the end of the summer, some of his regular riders actually began riding with him to the end of the line just to see what the driver had accomplished. He had turned a dump into a garden, a few minutes at a time.

It is amazing what one person without much time can do, it is also amazing how many good works are left undone because they were never started.

God has called you to his service, it is amazing just how much can be accomplished a few minutes at a time.

See you in church,  
Rev. Dick  
A PRAYER

Make me to know Your ways, O Lord;  
Teach me Your paths, Lead me in Your  
truth, and teach me, for You are the God  
of my salvation; for You I wait all day  
long.

*Psalm 25:4-5*

### **UNITED METHODIST WOMEN**

The next meeting of the UMW will be on Wednesday, February 8 at 7:30 PM. We meet in the parlor and all women are invited to attend this month's most interesting program.

Maggie Hervey will present "People to People: Youth Spreading Peace". Maggie will speak about the group's trip to Australia and her experiences as a youth ambassador.

Betty Carson will serve as hostess for the evening.

Please note: Because of the Wednesday Lenten services, our March meeting will be held on Tuesday, March 7 and the April meeting will be on Tuesday, April 11.

---

### **INTERNATIONAL DINNER**

Our twelfth annual International Dinner will be held on Saturday, February 11 at 6:00 PM. Please use the sign up sheet located in the hall, listing the number of family members planning to attend. We are asking that you bring a heritage or family favorite entrée to serve your family plus 4 and a dessert or a salad. Beverages will be provided. A listing of needed condiments, etc. is also posted.

We are hoping to have some displays of artifacts and souvenirs from your travels or a sampling of your hobbies and crafts. The wearing of your family's national dress is encouraged.

If you wish to help set up, display or contribute to our entertainment, just let

us know. Thank you,

John & Kathy Muller,  
Co-chairpersons (499-6672)

---

### **BIG Thank You!**

Thank you to our Tuesday Men for renovating the pew racks to accommodate the hymnals and new larger Bibles. Special tools and wood preparation was needed. Time is spent each week on this project and will soon be completed.

### **MISSION WORKAREA**

This year our congregation, once again, gave so generously to the requests on our "Angel Tree". You made dreams come true. It is hard to comprehend how little some of these families really have. A gift of a warm sweater might be the only sweater that a child has to call its very own. Hand-me-downs are the norm for most children, and to get a sweater not been previously worn by an older sister or brother is a very special thing. Parents, struggling to provide basics, were able to smile watching delighted children open gifts. And it seems the smiles of those giving are as wide as those receiving. Please accept the thanks of those you helped so generously.

Our food baskets are also received with grateful thanks. Those small extras are not frills to some. Their wonderful Christmas dinners are enjoyed and the extras put in the cupboard so that the children have something more while they are home from school for Christmas vacation. We need to remember when schools are closed many children do not receive breakfast and lunch and have to eat whatever is available. Let us try to remember that this is an ongoing problem for these families, and keep our food box filled.

Our peanut butter gang made 750 sandwiches in December and 900 sandwiches in January. They are delivered to the main distribution point at St. Ann's in Brentwood. From there, the sandwiches are distributed to the Mary Brennan Inn in Hempstead, First Methodist Church in Roosevelt, Operation Homeless, Pronto on LI, Lighthouse Mission in Patchogue, The Soup Kitchen in Wyandanch and Christ Episcopal Church in Central Islip and other soup kitchens and are sometimes in the hands of a hungry person within hours of our making them. Aside from the regulars in our congregation we are helped by Boy Scout Troop 125, Girl Scout troops, confirmation classes from various churches, and community workers from the high schools. Thank you to everyone who helps organize, set up and clean up, everyone who spreads peanut butter, and everyone who donates peanut butter (along with jelly, gloves, bread, plates and sandwich bags). These supplies are crucial to our continuing this wonderful ministry. Along with our sandwiches, Gail delivered the mittens and hats knitted and crocheted by Kathy's wonderful ladies. We also thank Pepperidge Farm Bread Store in Elwood for their donations of bread. With your help we will continue this ministry on the first Saturday of each month and do our part to follow Jesus' commandment to love one another.

Help us continue reaching out to others in this New Year. When your grocery store offers – buy one/get one free, bring that free item for our food box. If you have something extra – donate it to someone without. If you have Saturday mornings free, volunteer the first Saturday of the month to spread peanut butter. Please contact us if you become aware of a need within the church or the

community and we will do whatever we can with confidentiality completely assured.

Anne Tammaro & Gail Stroup  
Mission Workarea

---

The people in THE Christmas story saw things they'd never seen before, like angels and a brilliant star. Because that night, a special baby was born. Just as they had been told. This year's children's Pageant gave us a glimpse into what we might feel if we had been there that wonderful night over 2000 years ago. As one narrator said, "Think about it, how would YOU feel if an angel appeared in front of you? As Mary divulged, she was less scared when she thought the angel was an alien than she was about having to tell Joseph her wonderful news!

In *A Surprise Christmas Story*, from the haughty inn clerk, to Tex, Gabby and Ringo the modern cowboy shepherds to the three Wise Guys – Newton, Einstein and Hawking, the Sunday School children and youth went beyond the legendary style tale we usually hear and gave us a glimpse into what the people in the Christmas story might really have been thinking had they been us. There were funny moments, poignant moments and a few thought-provoking lines delivered on Christmas Eve this year. Those in attendance were also treated to two wonderful songs by our Cherub Chorus.

Presenting a totally new script was a huge undertaking, but well worth the efforts. It started this year when Maggie Hervey decided she wanted to lead the pageant for her Girl Scout Bronze Award project. She spent time early this fall reading descriptions for several pageants in various publications. She

then selected three and reviewed all three, listening to the music, looking at the costumes and props required and reading the scripts. In the end, she selected Surprise Christmas Pageant.

By the middle of October, parts were assigned and Lisa started to rehearse the music. The scripts were distributed at the beginning of November. Mark Prasad also began practicing the wonderful accompaniment he provided. By the middle of November the parts were being read and rehearsed. The first week of December the costumes were brought out and assigned. Maggie personally ironed almost all of them! By the 2<sup>nd</sup> weekend in December Maggie and her mom were brainstorming what to use for the extra props. Several trips to the basement and garage found everything they needed. That wonderful campfire from VBS came in handy for the shepherds (cowboys in this version!) to sit around and play the harmonica. The Sunday School teachers became harried by December 19<sup>th</sup>, when the rehearsal looked like it was the first time the kids had seen the script (and the instructions said – “can be done with only two rehearsals!!!). But, thanks to the hard work of Maggie, Sobana, Paula, Rose, Kim, Lisa and Deb, at 5PM on December 24<sup>th</sup> everything was ready.

If you missed the pageant this year, you may want to think about attending next year’s Pageant Service!

While presented in a different style, it was still the same wonderful story. As the narrator shared in the finale, “By the time they left Bethlehem, all of them – the shepherds, the wise people, and Mary and Joseph – had seen something they’d seen a hundred times before: a baby. But everyone knew they’d seen something they’d never seen before:

God with us.” But does the story end? No! The story doesn’t end. “God’s grace and love for us isn’t two thousand years old. It’s new, every day. It may appear in ways we don’t expect, or in the things we see every day, but it’s always there.”



Have you ever dreamed of being able to hug a real live koala bear or swim with all the beautiful fish in the Great Barrier Reef?

Do you ever wonder what the people in Australia or New Zealand are really like? This past summer, Maggie Hervey got to do all of these things and many more when she represented Long Island as a People to People Student Ambassador to Australia and New Zealand.

The purpose of People to People International is to enhance international understanding and friendship through educational, cultural and humanitarian activities involving the exchange of ideas and experiences directly among peoples of different countries and diverse cultures. For the student program, this is accomplished by keeping the children “on the go” the entire trip.

While in New Zealand, Maggie’s delegation met with local government officials of the community of Rotorua, which is known for its hot springs. She got a taste of the New Zealanders’ love of adventure by touring Kelly Tarlton’s and learning about penguins and by taking a wild jet-boat trip up the Waikato River to see the Huka Falls as well as watching one of their leaders bungee-jump! (All of this was in the

first 4 days of their trip!). The end of their stay in New Zealand was spent visiting a Maori tribe where they were able to learn native weaving, were treated to a dinner and dancing and slept in the ceremonial house. The Student Ambassadors are among the few non-tribal people the Maoris allow to sleep in the house.

From New Zealand the delegation flew to Australia where they spent an afternoon in an Australian classroom. Maggie says that the lessons were similar, but the teachers and students were more formal than in the U.S. The sense of adventure continued as the group toured a wildlife park where, yes!, Maggie got to hold a real live koala! Her delegation also spent a day at the Great Barrier Reef where she bumped up against a sea turtle and saw lots and lots of pretty fish. The delegates also learned a little of Australia's history when they toured Sydney. It was an interactive tour with some of the group playing the role of prisoners brought from England, and some being the soldiers. A trip to Sydney would not be complete without a tour of the Opera House and the Olympic Stadium. The student ambassadors were able to swim in the Olympic Swimming Pool. Maggie says she never realized how long those pools are – the Olympic athletes make it look much shorter. Here, the trip ended with a stay at a family run farm in the Outback. There was no crocodile wrestling, but Maggie was able to go horseback riding in the outback and help feed the animals including kangaroos.

You can learn more about Maggie's travels and the goals of the People to People program at the February UMW Meeting, Wednesday, February 8th at 7:30 PM in the parlor. Until then, g'day

mates!

### **Food for thought...**

The most destructive habit...**Worry**  
The greatest Joy...**Giving**  
The greatest loss...**Loss of self-respect**

The most satisfying work...**Helping others**

The ugliest personality trait...**Selfishness**  
The most endangered species...**Dedicated leaders**

Our greatest natural resource...**Our youth**

The greatest "shot in the arm"...**Encouragement**  
The greatest problem to overcome...**Fear**

The most effective sleeping pill...**Peace of Mind**

The most crippling failure disease...**Excuses**  
The most powerful force in life...**Love**

The most dangerous pariah...**A gossip**  
The world's most incredible computer...**The brain**  
The worst thing to be without...**Hope**

The deadliest weapon...**The tongue**  
The two most power-filled words..."**I can**"  
The greatest asset...**Faith**

The most worthless emotion...**Self-pity**  
The most beautiful attire...**SMILE!**  
The most prized possession...**Integrity**

The most powerful channel of communication...**Prayer**  
The most contagious spirit...**Enthusiasm**

Everyone needs this list to live by...pass it along!!!

### **From the Church office...**

Dear Al, Ash Wednesday is on Wednesday, 3/01/06. If you have any questions, please call the office!

### **March 18, 2006 St. Patrick's Day Feast! 6PM**

Come and join in the St. Patrick's Day Dinner festivities, as we wish each other Cead Mile Failte...One hundred thousand welcomes.

Jim Hawkins will return to weave tales, satires and songs through the fabric of Irish history; plus our own sing-a-long, a Corned Beef and Cabbage Dinner with all the extras. \$10.00 – adults, \$5.00 – children 6-10, free – under 6.

### **Not necessarily a Methodist tradition...**

What is Fat Tuesday? That's the literal translation of Mardi Gras (Mardi = Tuesday, Gras = Fat). Mardi Gras is also called Shrove Tuesday, sometimes Pancake Tuesday or Pancake Day, and is the day before Ash Wednesday, which is the first day of the Christian season of Lent.

Traditionally, Lent was a season of rigorous fasting in preparation for Easter, the holiest and most joyful festival in the Christian calendar. To use up richer foods, such as fat and eggs, that would otherwise spoil during the long Lenten fast, it became traditional to make pancakes or other rich cakes on the day before Lent began – hence, Fat Tuesday. From this humble beginning came all sorts of traditions, from pancake contests to parties to the wonder – and quite long – celebrations of Mardi Gras held in many countries, including the German Fasching and the wonderful Carnival held in Quebec City every

February.

Of course, to prepare for Easter you also had to be – as much as possible – without sin, at least in Medieval times, where the term Shrove Tuesday comes from. There's an obsolete English word "shrive" meaning to forgive or absolve sin, with the past tense being "shrove" and – for grammar nuts like me – the past participle being "shriven". (If you have ever read Chaucer's "Canterbury Tales" in the original Middle English you'll have encountered it.) Hence Shrove Tuesday – the day you confessed your sins to the priest, did the required penance, and were absolved of guilt.

"Carnival", by the way, comes from the Latin "Carne Vale", meaning "farewell to meat", another reference to a last hurrah before an extended period of self-denial. And if anyone is interested, Ash Wednesday is the day that the faithful were marked on their foreheads with ashes as a sign of penitence.

From a lady whose English convent school upbringing hasn't been entirely useless.

---

The Thrift Shoppe would like to welcome Carol Fricke to its staff of volunteers! The volunteers invest quite a bit of time to display the items in a desirable fashion which has made the Thrift Shoppe successful and enabled them to support the beautification project, as well as a host of other projects, by financing the widening of the driveway. It is our hope to continue contributing to future projects, but we are in desperate **NEED** of more help! For people who work full time, flexible hours can be arranged for your convenience. **No experience is required!** Sometimes all that is needed is straightening shelves and racks of clothing. It is a wonderful way to give

your service to the church! Please see  
Carol Wilson for information.