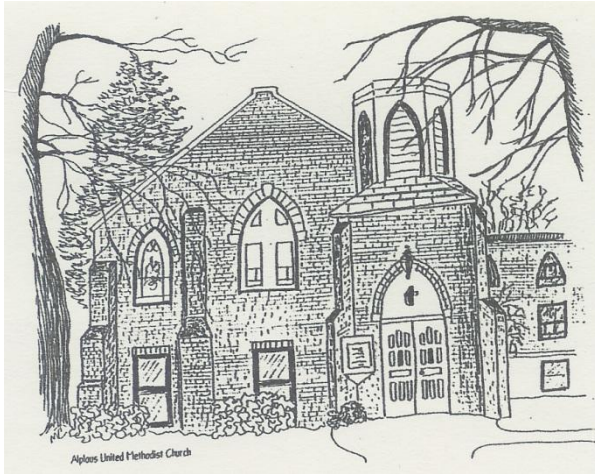




## The Alplaus United Methodist Church Muse



### ***The Alplaus United Methodist Church's Mission and Vision:***

*Our vision for the AUMC is to be a viable, active, open church that supports both individual members and the community with a loving, spiritual atmosphere.*

*Our mission is to worship, serve, pray, and play by connecting with the community and each other.*

### **Pastoral Letter**

### ***“Reflections on Belonging to a Church”***

I was going to begin by saying that I cannot remember a time when I did not belong to a church, but that's not true. There were some years - my last two years of college and the first few years of my marriage - when I was not involved with or attending a church. And I can't say that I remember missing church during that time. I was far too busy going to school, working weekends, teaching, coaching, hunting, fishing, starting a marriage and so on. But then the church reached out to draw me back into the fold.

I've been reflecting on that turn of phrase - “belonging to a church.” Do we belong to the church or does the church belong to us? In some ways we own the church. We control, through democratic processes and structures, what the church does - who can be a member, who can serve as clergy, what we spend money on, where we expend our efforts, even how we worship. Not just in the local church but the church at large.

In many denominations the local church “owns” the clergy. They hire, ordain, and fire clergy. Some United Methodists churches still think, or wish, they had such powers. But our polity is very clear - clergy are appointed to serve by the bishop of the Conference, are ordained or licensed by the Conference, are members only of the Conference and never the local church.

Still, there is a sense of “belonging” in which each of us *are* owned by the church. The church exerts some control over our lives. Not by fiat; the control is much more subtle. The church feels free to call upon our time, to ask us to set aside our other concerns and care for our structures and one another. The church asks that we spend time not in some nebulous, unarticulated longing for the presence of an Other but in active communal praise of our God and Savior. The church makes demands upon our money. It asks us to set a higher priority on its concerns than on our own.

I think all of this misses the point. I think belonging involves a longing, although the etymology of the word doesn't support this. We belong because we have a longing for something, a longing for God. We belong to God. The church belongs to God. God does not belong to us or to the church. We are not in control. Belonging to God is what controls our lives, so belonging to a church is just a part of belonging to God. This is an ownership I can live with. I belong to the church so that I can serve God and neighbors through it.

*Pastor Carl*

**Asking, not Demanding**

This past Sunday I offered those present in worship several opportunities for giving. Often we feel that the church is always asking for money, and it is. But who is asking and where is the money to go? Other than taking up an offering each week for the support of the local church, most of these askings are for the benefit of others, not ourselves. So I prefer to think of these requests as opportunities rather than obligations. In that sense, then, it is unfair to only ask those who are in attendance on a given Sunday; everyone should be given the opportunity to give. So here are the current askings. If any of these causes are dear to your heart or strike a chord in you, send a check made out to the Alplaus church.

1. Flood recovery efforts in Schoharie County are evolving from the recovery/rebuild phase to the preparedness-for-the-next-disaster phase. One of the efforts is to provide the homebound in the county with go kits to help see them through the first days of a disaster when they may be stuck in their homes without utilities awaiting rescue or when they have to quickly evacuate to a shelter. The goal is provide 200 kits for distribution to lower income shut-ins. Needless to say this will be expensive. I am grateful that our UMW; knitting group, and Church Council are all stepping up with contributions. Individual contributions would also be appreciated.
2. While attending Annual Conference Pastor Carl will be participating in the "Stop Hunger Now" meal packaging program. The aim is to pack 75,000 ready-to-eat meals. Donations to help pay for the food would also be appreciated.
3. Each year Rev. Bob Long solicits sponsors for his bike ride to Conference and uses the money to provide for scholarships at Africa University. AU is the largest university in central Africa and provides education for many clergy and future leaders of Africa. But in countries where clergy are paid as little as \$5 a week, where annual incomes may be less than \$1,000, and where countries lack even one seminary, college is far beyond the means of even very talented people.
4. Each church in the Conference is asked to take up a Love collection to be presented at Conference. The proceeds will be used to help support ministries throughout the Conference such as the SICM summer lunch program and the Albany United Methodist Society programs, ministries which we used to support through our apportionments in Troy Conference. We will take up this collection on Sunday, May 18.

**Lectionary**

These are listed with the idea that you might care to read the scriptures before attending church each week, especially if you will be the liturgist and especially the psalms, which we seldom read in worship.

	<u>Hebrew Scripture</u>	<u>Psalm</u>	<u>Epistle</u>	<u>Gospel</u>
May 4	Acts 2:14a, 36-41	Psalm 116:1-4, 12-19	1 Peter 1:17-23	Luke 24:13-35
May 11	Acts 2:42-47	Psalm 23	1 Peter 2:19-25	John 10:1-10
May 18	Acts 7:55-60	Psalm 31:1-5, 15-16	1 Peter 2:2-10	John 14:1-14
May 25	Acts 17:22-31	Psalm 66:8-20	1 Peter 3:13-22	John 14:15-21

**Prayer List**

Anne and Deontae Kwiatkowski	Ginny Smith	Dorothy Ziegler
Lu Diel	Terry Gleason	Rev. Dr. Brolin Parker
Claudia Lewis	Alice Lewis	Janice's family
Bill Broland	Betsy Hyatt	Jack Leveille
Marci Kraut	Tom Griffiths	Ginny Bopp
Gordon Neufeld and family	all victims of disasters and violence	



**May Birthdays and Anniversaries**

Birthdays

1 Oliver Suydam	4 Mary Herrick, Jeannine Bechand	
11 Claudia Lewis	15 Emily Kwaitkowski	22 Janice Mix
23 Jane Uttberg	25 Gemma Kwiatkowski	

Anniversaries

none

**Fulfilling our Promises - our presence and our presents**

	<u>Our Presence</u>	<u>Our Gifts</u>
March 2	29	\$1,332
March 9	27	\$1,448
March 16	28	\$580
March 23	28	\$518
March 30	23	\$747

**Comparison of expenses and income**

	For March	Actual year to date	Expected year to date (budgeted)
Expenses	\$6,002	\$18,983	\$18,400.00
Income	\$4,625	\$13,143	\$12,500.00

We are behind, somewhat as usual, even a little more behind than usual. This is partly due to front end loading our annual mission giving, and partly due to much higher insurance premiums through the conference.

**Religious-Based Campership Scholarships Available**

Summer camps play a valuable role in a child's life. The Alplaus United Methodist Church and the Alplaus Residents Association have a scholarship fund to help finance the attendance at religious-based summer camps for children in our town or who attend the Alplaus United Methodist Church. **Sky Farm Camp** in the Lake George area ([skyfarmcamp.org](http://skyfarmcamp.org)) and Camp Aldersgate in Syracuse ([aldersgateny.org](http://aldersgateny.org)) are examples of such camps that are offered through the Methodist church. They both offer numerous camp options during the summer for children of all ages with a wide range of activities. Even children as young as 3 years old can enjoy a 3 day adventure with their parent at the camp. Catalogs about these 2 summer camp experiences are available in fellowship hall for your viewing. If you borrow one of the catalogs, please return it the next week so other people can borrow it the following week. If your family would like help financing a camp experience for any of your children this summer, please fill out an application form (available on the display table in fellowship hall) and give it to Barb Trask. If you need an application sent to you, Barb can be contacted at 399-6454 or [dtrask1@nycap.rr.com](mailto:dtrask1@nycap.rr.com). We hope some of the children attending our church will be able to attend camp this summer!

**United Methodist Women**

The UMW will meet Thursday, May 15<sup>th</sup> at 12:30pm in Fellowship Hall. Mandy is presenting the Prayer & Self Denial Program. Mandy & Amanda are the hostesses this month.



### **Community Luncheon**

The luncheon will be held Tuesday May 13<sup>th</sup> at noon in Fellowship Hall. Spring is here! Come and bring a friend and a dish to share if you can.

### **Sunday School News**

Sunday School is winding down for the year. We have been using a program called "All-in-One Sunday School," and it is working great with our small group that has a range of ages. For most of the year we have studied the key stories in the Old Testament and always related it to our daily life. We started with the creation of earth, moved on to Adam and Eve, and then discussed Noah. Then we spent a lot of time on Abraham's family. Abraham, Sarah and his nephew, Lot, left the city to get away from worshipping many gods, and had to rely on God to lead the way. We made a road map to show how we use the Bible, prayer, our parents and teachers to guide us in our life today. We read about his Abraham's 2 sons, Ishmael and Isaac, and how Ishmael bullied Isaac. We discussed signs of bullying, ways to handle bullying towards us, and how to avoid being a bully. Then we moved on to Isaac marrying Rebekah and having twin boys, Esau and Jacob. We acted out how Jacob tricked Isaac into thinking he was Esau and stealing Esau's birth rights. That led us to a discussion on forgiveness for the next few topics. Later on Jacob married and had many children. Jacob tended to show favoritism toward one son, Joseph, and this angered the other children. Joseph's brothers end up selling Joseph to a traveling caravan that takes him to Egypt. Joseph ends up becoming an important person in the Egyptian pharaoh's government, and when he meets up with his brothers again, he forgives them for selling him. We just recently started reviewing events in the New Testament. We started with the week of events starting with Palm Sunday and ending with Easter. We did a re-enactment of the events which the children enjoyed. Next we took the parable of sowing seeds, pretended we were the seeds, acted out the story, and then discussed how it applies to our Christian life. In the remaining weeks we will cover stories about the disciples after Jesus' death. Our last day of Sunday School will be June 22 at which time we will celebrate everyone's birthday at once.

### **Lay Leader**

#### **My Father Never Drove A Car**

This is a wonderful piece by Michael Gartner, editor of newspapers large and small and president of NBC News. In 1997, he won the Pulitzer Prize for editorial writing. It is well worth reading, and a few good chuckles are guaranteed. Here goes...

My father never drove a car. Well, that's not quite right. I should say I never saw him drive a car. He quit driving in 1927, when he was 25 years old, and the last car he drove was a 1926 Whippet. "In those days," he told me when he was in his 90s, "to drive a car you had to do things with your hands, and do things with your feet, and look every which way, and I decided you could walk through life and enjoy it or drive through life and miss it." At which point my mother, a sometimes salty Irishwoman, chimed in: "Oh, bull \*&!\$" she said. "He hit a horse." "Well," my father said, "there was that, too."

So my brother and I grew up in a household without a car. The neighbors all had cars -- the Kollingses next door had a green 1941 Dodge, the VanLanings across the street a gray 1936 Plymouth, the Hopsons two doors down, a black 1941 Ford -- but we had none.

My father, a newspaperman in Des Moines, would take the streetcar to work and, often as not, walk the 3 miles home. If he took the streetcar home, my mother and brother and I would walk the three blocks to the streetcar stop, meet him and walk home together. My brother, David, was born in 1935, and I was born in 1938, and sometimes, at dinner, we'd ask how come all the neighbors had cars but we had none. "No one in the family drives," my mother would explain, and that was that. But, sometimes, my father would say, "But as soon as one of you boys turns 16, we'll get one." It was as if he wasn't sure which one of us would turn 16 first. But, sure enough, my brother turned 16 before I did, so in 1951 my parents bought a used 1950 Chevrolet from a friend who ran the parts department at a Chevy dealership downtown. It was a four-door, white model, stick shift, fender skirts, loaded with everything, and since my parents didn't drive, it more or less became my



brother's car. Having a car but not being able to drive didn't bother my father, but it didn't make sense to my mother. So in 1952, when she was 43 years old, she asked a friend to teach her to drive. She learned in a nearby cemetery, the place where I learned to drive the following year and where, a generation later, I took my two sons to practice driving. The cemetery probably was my father's idea. "Who can your mother hurt in the cemetery?" I remember him saying more than once.

For the next 45 years or so, until she was 90, my mother was the driver in the family. Neither she nor my father had any sense of direction, but he loaded up on maps -- though they seldom left the city limits -- and appointed himself navigator. It seemed to work. Still, they both continued to walk a lot. My mother was a devout Catholic, and my father an equally devout agnostic, an arrangement that didn't seem to bother either of them through their 75 years of marriage. (Yes, 75 years, and they were deeply in love the entire time.)

He retired when he was 70, and nearly every morning for the next 20 years or so, he would walk with her the mile to St. Augustin's Church. She would walk down and sit in the front pew, and he would wait in the back until he saw which of the parish's two priests was on duty that morning. If it was the pastor, my father then would go out and take a 2-mile walk, meeting my mother at the end of the service and walking her home. If it was the assistant pastor, he'd take just a 1-mile walk and then head back to the church. He called the priests "Father Fast" and "Father Slow."

After he retired, my father almost always accompanied my mother whenever she drove anywhere, even if he had no reason to go along. If she were going to the beauty parlor, he'd sit in the car and read, or go take a stroll or, if it was summer, have her keep the engine running so he could listen to the Cubs game on the radio. In the evening, then, when I'd stop by, he'd explain: "The Cubs lost again. The millionaire on second base made a bad throw to the millionaire on first base, so the multimillionaire on third base scored." If she were going to the grocery store, he would go along to carry the bags out -- and to make sure she loaded up on ice cream. As I said, he was always the navigator, and once, when he was 95 and she was 88 and still driving, he said to me, "Do you want to know the secret of a long life?" "I guess so," I said, knowing it probably would be something bizarre. "No left turns," he said. "What?" I asked. "No left turns," he repeated. "Several years ago, your mother and I read an article that said most accidents that old people are in happen when they turn left in front of oncoming traffic. As you get older, your eyesight worsens, and you can lose your depth perception, it said. So your mother and I decided never again to make a left turn." "What?" I said again. "No left turns," he said. "Think about it. Three rights are the same as a left, and that's a lot safer. So we always make three rights." "You're kidding!" I said, and I turned to my mother for support. "No," she said, "your father is right. We make three rights. It works." But then she added: "Except when your father loses count." I was driving at the time, and I almost drove off the road as I started laughing. "Loses count?" I asked. "Yes," my father admitted, "that sometimes happens. But it's not a problem. You just make seven rights, and you're okay again." I couldn't resist. "Do you ever go for 11?" I asked. "No," he said. "If we miss it at seven, we just come home and call it a bad day. Besides, nothing in life is so important it can't be put off another day or another week." My mother was never in an accident, but one evening she handed me her car keys and said she had decided to quit driving. That was in 1999, when she was 90.

She lived four more years, until 2003. My father died the next year, at 102. They both died in the bungalow they had moved into in 1937 and bought a few years later for \$3,000. (Sixty years later, my brother and I paid \$8,000 to have a shower put in the tiny bathroom -- the house had never had one. My father would have died then and there if he knew the shower cost nearly three times what he paid for the house.)

He continued to walk daily -- he had me get him a treadmill when he was 101 because he was afraid he'd fall on the icy sidewalks but wanted to keep exercising -- and he was of sound mind and sound body until the moment he died. One September afternoon in 2004, he and my son went with me when I had to give a talk in a neighboring town, and it was clear to all three of us that he was wearing out, though we had the usual wide-ranging conversation about politics and newspapers and things in the news. A few weeks earlier, he had told my son, "You know, Mike, the first hundred years are a lot easier than the second hundred." At one point in our drive that Saturday, he said, "You know, I'm probably not going to live much longer." "You're probably right," I said. "Why would you say that?" he countered, somewhat irritated. "Because you're 102 years old," I

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said. "Yes," he said, "you're right." He stayed in bed all the next day. That night, I suggested to my son and daughter that we sit up with him through the night. He appreciated it, he said, though at one point, apparently seeing us look gloomy, he said: "I would like to make an announcement. No one in this room is dead yet." An hour or so later, he spoke his last words: "I want you to know," he said, clearly and lucidly, "that I am in no pain. I am very comfortable. And I have had as happy a life as anyone on this earth could ever have." A short time later, he died.

I miss him a lot, and I think about him a lot. I've wondered now and then how it was that my family and I were so lucky that he lived so long. I can't figure out if it was because he walked through life, or because he quit taking left turns. "Life is too short to wake up with regrets. So love the people who treat you right. Forget about the ones who don't. Believe everything happens for a reason. If you get a chance, take it and if it changes your life, let it. Nobody said life would be easy, they just promised it would most likely be worth it."

ENJOY LIFE NOW - IT HAS AN EXPIRATION DATE! Remember - - NO LEFT TURNS

Lisa Beretz, Lay Leader  
(518) 330-9277 or [LLBeretz@gmail.com](mailto:LLBeretz@gmail.com)

**Church Directory Updates and Corrections:**

We will be including changes for you to update in your own copy of the directory within each Muse as we learn of the changes. Please remember to let us know when you move or have a change of any kind.

## Aplaus United Methodist Church – May 2014 Events Calendar

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				<b>1</b> 1–3pm Knitting Group 7pm Choir	<b>2</b> 6:30pm Bridge	<b>3</b>
<b>4</b> 3rd Sunday of Easter <b>9:15am Sunday School</b> <b>10:15am Church Worship Service</b> <b>Church Council meeting after coffee hour</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b> 7 pm Scouts	<b>8</b> 1-3pm Knitting Group 7pm Choir	<b>9</b> 6:30pm Bridge	<b>1</b>
<b>11</b> 4th Sunday of Easter <b>9:15am Sunday School</b> <b>10:15am Church Worship Service. SICM Food Collection Day. Mother’s Day!</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b> Noon – Community Luncheon	<b>14</b> 7 pm Scouts	<b>15</b> 12:30pm UMW 1-3pm Knitting Group 7pm Choir	<b>16</b> 6:30pm Bridge	<b>17</b>
<b>18</b> 5 <sup>th</sup> Sunday of Easter <b>9:15am Sunday School</b> <b>10:15am Church Worship Service. Church Spring cleaning after Worship. Special Love collection.</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b> 5:30pm Serving at City Mission <b>June Muse article deadline!</b>	<b>21</b> 7 pm Scouts	<b>22</b> 1-3pm Knitting Group 7pm Choir	<b>23</b> 6:30pm Bridge	<b>24</b>
<b>25</b> 6th Sunday of Easter <b>No Sunday School</b> <b>10:15am Church Worship Service</b>	<b>26</b> <b>Memorial Day!</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b> <b>Annual Conference</b> 7pm Scouts	<b>29</b> <b>Annual Conference</b> 1-3pm Knitting Group 7pm Choir	<b>30</b> <b>Annual Conference</b> 6:30pm Bridge	<b>31</b>

Pastor Carl’s schedule - In the office **\*\*NOTE CHANGE OF DAYS\*\***: Monday 10-4, Tuesday 12-5. Pastor Carl is on vacation April 28<sup>th</sup> – May 4<sup>th</sup>.

Alplaus Methodist Church  
1 Brookside Ave.  
Alplaus, NY 12008  
(518)399-6000  
AlplausUMC.org

First Class Mail



MAY 1, 2014



Articles for the June newsletter must be submitted to [alplausmuse@gmail.com](mailto:alplausmuse@gmail.com)  
no later than **May 20<sup>th</sup>**.  
Thank you!

If you would like to receive your copy of our monthly Muse via email, please let me know at  
[llberetz@gmail.com](mailto:llberetz@gmail.com) and put "Muse" in the subject line.