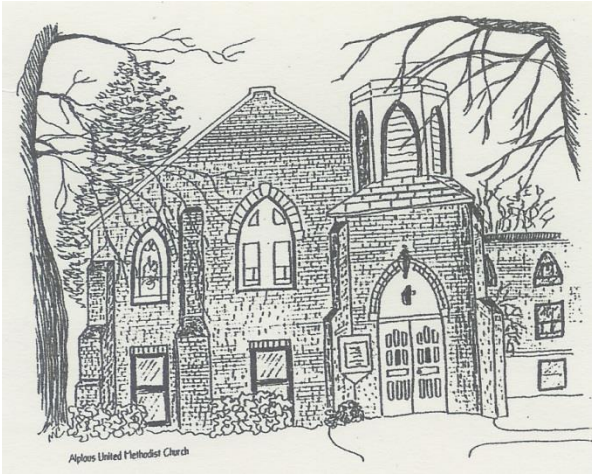




## The Alplaus United Methodist Church Muse



### ***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**

#### ***"Finding What You Seek"***

*"So I say to you, Ask, and it will be given you; search, and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened for you. <sup>10</sup> For everyone who asks receives, and everyone who searches finds, and for everyone who knocks, the door will be opened. - Luke 11:9 (NRSV)*

*"<sup>17</sup> So outsiders who seek will find, so they'll have a place to come to." - Acts 15:17 (MSG)*

*"We could seek after God, and not just grope around in the dark but actually find him. He doesn't play hide-and-seek with us. He's not remote; he's near. - Acts 17:27 (MSG)*

Johanne and I have started the search for a house. It has taken us a while to get started because we first had to sit down and think through what we were looking for - how many rooms and baths, what size garage, what heating system, how big a lot, where we want to live... We thought about what our future income will be, calculated what size monthly payment we could afford, how much we could put down, and so figured out what price range we could look at. We consulted Gray Watkins about a lawyer to represent us. We contacted a mortgage company about a loan. Then we took all that to a real estate agent. We are well prepared for the search. All of this advance planning should shorten the search process and increase the chances of success.

I find that when people are searching for a church to attend, they are seldom well prepared. Do they want a big church or a small one? Is the size of the Sunday School or the presence of active youth groups a factor? How involved do they want to be? How far are they prepared to travel to get to the church they want? Is the quality of the music program important to them? Are they seeking a fundamentalist or liberal or conservative theology? Is the quality of the preaching the deciding factor? These (and many others) are all factors one can (and should) think about beforehand.

When we invite people to our church we should be prepared to answer all of these questions for them. Just as we would not want to work with a real estate agent who couldn't tell us the particulars of a house, or tell us about the neighborhood in which it sits, or who keeps taking us to see houses that are not what we said we wanted or could afford, people we invite will not want to attend if we can't tell them - with some excitement - about our church.

On a personal level, when you seek God or seek God's help to attain some peace and satisfaction in your life, it helps to know what it is you're seeking. What kind of God are you looking for? How do you expect God to help? Have you actually asked or is God supposed to know? If you've done your homework - if you've studied scripture, listened to preachers and leaders exposing the nature of God, if you've thought about what



you are willing to put into the process, if you've talked to God about it - then your search for answers may be shortened and more successful.

Happy hunting!

*Pastor Carl*

**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>
Jan 5	Isaiah 60:1-6	Psalm 72:1-7, 10-14	Ephesians 3:1-12	Matthew 2:1-12
Jan 12	Isaiah 42:1-9	Psalm 29	Acts 10:34-43	Matthew 3:13-17
Jan 19	Isaiah 49:1-7	Psalm 40:1-11	1 Corinthians 1:1-9	John 1:29-42
Jan 26	Isaiah 9:1-4	Psalm 27:1, 4-9	1 Corinthians 1:10-18	Matthew 4:12-23

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

	<u>Our Presence</u>	<u>Our Gifts</u>
November 3	28	\$1,899
November 10	28	\$2,956
November 17	24	\$653
November 24	25	\$1,867

Comparison of expenses and income

	For November	Actual year to date	Expected year to date (budgeted)
Expenses	\$4,390	\$57,506	\$65,342.75
Income	\$7,374	\$51,630	\$45,833.33

I won't keep you in suspense. A large annual pledge has been received since these reports and, while there are some annual expenses which will yet raise our total spending for the year, there is every indication that ***we will end the year in the black for the second consecutive year!*** You'll have to wait until next month, though, to see if I'm right.

**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
Carol Slocum	Betsy Hyatt	Jack Leveille
Jay Paparella	the Kriss family	Ginny Bopp
Bill Hughes		

**Heartfelt Thanks**

Johanne and I are so appreciative of the generosity of this church. Thank you so much for your Christmas gift to us. The homemade jam will be great on toast and I will put some of the money toward golf league dues, so I'll be thinking of you every week all summer! - *Pastor Carl*

**January Birthdays and Anniversaries**January Birthdays

7 Virginia Marra  
11 Patrick Trask  
16 Robin Bowman  
30 Charles Guillaume

January Anniversaries

None

**United Methodist Women**

The UMW will hold its planning meeting at Mary Harrick's house on January 16<sup>th</sup> at 12:30. Come with your ideas!

**Community Luncheon**

The Community Luncheon will be held on January 14<sup>th</sup> in Fellowship Hall at noon. Come earlier and meet your friends. Of course, there will be plenty of good food. Bring a dish to share if you can.

**Lay Leader****A great Christmas story**

We were the only family with children in the restaurant. I sat Erik in a high chair and noticed everyone was quietly sitting and talking. Suddenly, Erik squealed with glee and said, 'Hi.' He pounded his fat baby hands on the high chair tray. His eyes were crinkled in laughter and his mouth was bared in a toothless grin, as he wriggled and giggled with merriment.

I looked around and saw the source of his merriment. It was a man whose pants were baggy with a zipper at half-mast and his toes poked out of would-be shoes. His shirt was dirty and his hair was uncombed and unwashed. His whiskers were too short to be called a beard and his nose was so varicose it looked like a road map. We were too far from him to smell, but I was sure he smelled. His hands waved and flapped on loose wrists. 'Hi there, baby; hi there, big boy. I see ya, buster,' the man said to Erik.

My husband and I exchanged looks, 'What do we do?'

Erik continued to laugh and answer, 'Hi.' Everyone in the restaurant noticed and looked at us and then at the man. The old geezer was creating a nuisance with my beautiful baby. Our meal came and the man began shouting from across the room, 'Do ya patty cake? Do you know peek-a-boo? Hey, look, he knows peek-a-boo.'

Nobody thought the old man was cute. He was obviously drunk. My husband and I were embarrassed. We ate in silence; all except for Erik, who was running through his repertoire for the admiring skid-row bum, who in turn, reciprocated with his cute comments.

We finally got through the meal and headed for the door. My husband went to pay the check and told me to meet him in the parking lot. The old man sat poised between me and the door. 'Lord, just let me out of here before he speaks to me or Erik,' I prayed. As I drew closer to the man, I turned my back trying to sidestep him and avoid any air he might be breathing. As I did, Erik leaned over my arm, reaching with both arms in a baby's 'pick-me-up' position. Before I could stop him, Erik had propelled himself from my arms to the man.

Suddenly a very old smelly man and a very young baby consummated their love and kinship. Erik in an act of total trust, love, and submission laid his tiny head upon the man's ragged shoulder. The man's eyes closed, and I saw tears hover beneath his lashes. His aged hands full of grime, pain, and hard labor, cradled my baby's bottom and stroked his back. No two beings have ever loved so deeply for so short a time.



I stood awestruck. The old man rocked and cradled Erik in his arms and his eyes opened and set squarely on mine. He said in a firm commanding voice, 'You take care of this baby.'

Somehow I managed, 'I will,' from a throat that contained a stone. He pried Erik from his chest, lovingly and longingly, as though he were in pain. I received my baby, and the man said, 'God bless you, ma'am, you've given me my Christmas gift.'

I said nothing more than a muttered thanks. With Erik in my arms, I ran for the car. My husband was wondering why I was crying and holding Erik so tightly, and why I was saying, 'My God, my God, forgive me.' I had just witnessed Christ's love shown through the innocence of a tiny child who saw no sin, who made no judgment; a child who saw a soul, and a mother who saw a suit of clothes. I was a Christian who was blind, holding a child who was not. I felt it was God asking, 'Are you willing to share your son for a moment?' when He shared His for all eternity. How did God feel when he put his baby in our arms 2000 years ago?

The ragged old man, unwittingly, had reminded me, 'To enter the Kingdom of God, we must become as little children.'

Sometimes, it takes a child to remind us of what is really important. We must always remember who we are, where we came from and, most importantly, how we feel about others. The clothes on your back or the car that you drive or the house that you live in does not define you at all; it is how you treat your fellow man that identifies who you are.

Amen!!!

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

## A WINTRY EVENING, FALLING SNOW, AND QUIET INSPIRATION!!

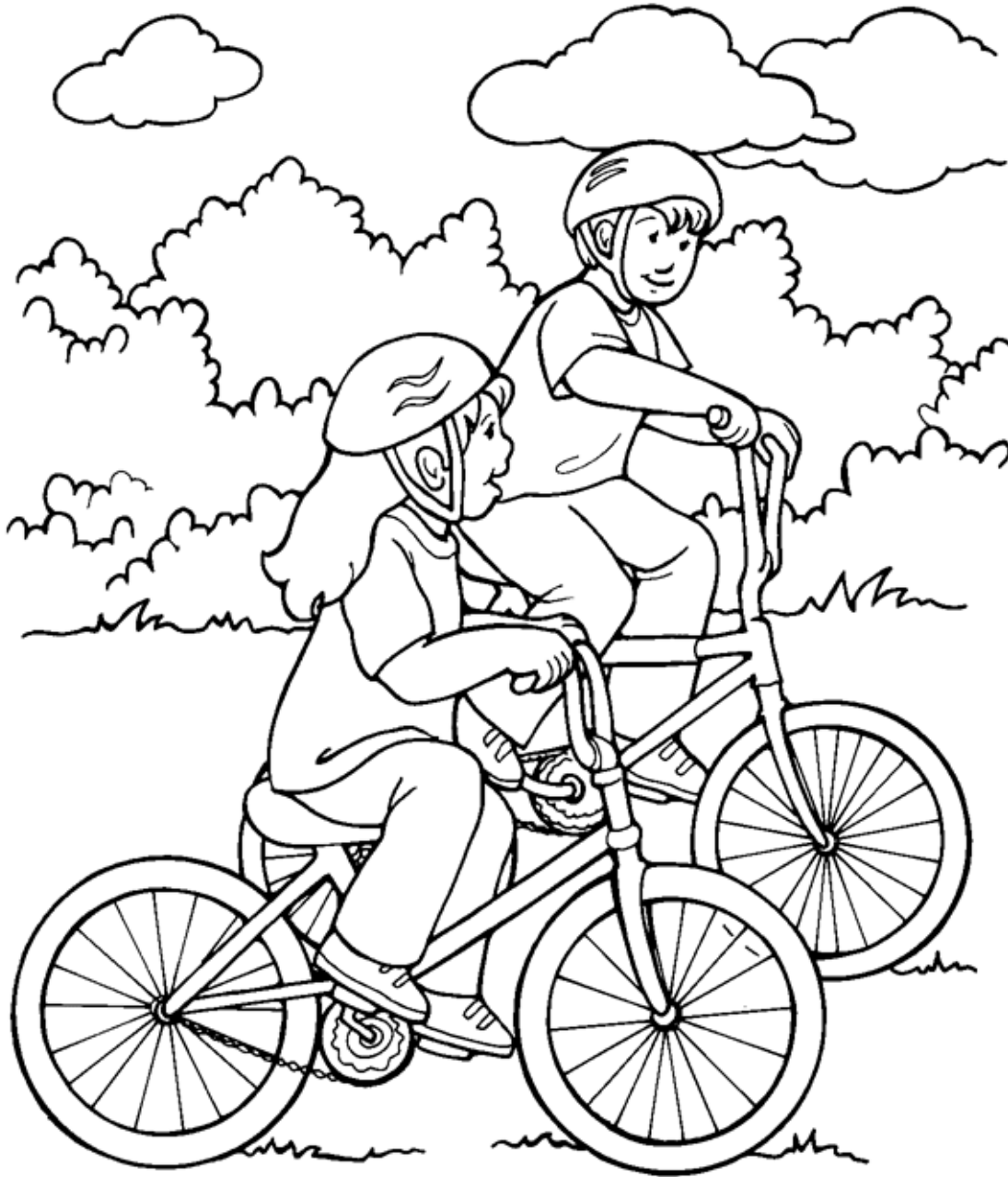
Across the hills and broad uplands, the valleys and all creation  
Smooth as a blanket across the world, Softly falling, falling,  
Quietly, gently as a mother's kiss on the face of her sleeping child,  
The snow drifts down, touches, settles,  
Lies on tree and shrub, on field and woodland, Like a soft mantle,  
Making all things new.  
So be my heart this night: The pain of things done and injuries unmended,  
The fears of things unseen and long dreaded, The ache of failures and mistakes of times past,  
The sudden angry passion and the bitter regret, And strength ebbing away with the inexorable beat of time,  
All forgotten, or restored to innocence, Clothed in gentle purity,  
The universal forgiveness which whispers to me and to the world, Behold, I make all things new!

This is a prayer for my life and mine for yours,

Blessings,  
Rev. Dr. Brolin Parker



Kids Pages



I can tell my friends about Jesus.



# Sharing Your Faith

"Nazareth! Can anything good come from there?" Nathanael asked. "Come and see," said Philip. John 1:46

Each number represents a letter of the alphabet. Substitute the correct letter for the numbers to reveal the coded words.



U	Q	Z	T	O	A	I	K	R	M	D	E	V	Y	G	S	W	L	P	B	J	C	X	F	N	H
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

- 24-5-18-18-5-17 \_\_\_\_\_
- 19-26-7-18-7-19 \_\_\_\_\_
- 25-6-4-26-6-25-6-12-18 \_\_\_\_\_
- 15-5-5-11 \_\_\_\_\_
- 22-5-10-12 \_\_\_\_\_
- 21-12-16-1-16 \_\_\_\_\_
- 4-9-12-12 \_\_\_\_\_
- 8-25-5-17 \_\_\_\_\_
- 25-6-3-6-9-12-4-26 \_\_\_\_\_
- 24-7-15 \_\_\_\_\_

TREE	JESUS	FOLLOW	COME	PHILIP
FIG	NATHANAEL	GOOD	NAZARETH	KNOW

## Alplaus United Methodist Church – January 2014 Events Calendar

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			<b>1</b> <b>New Year's Day</b>	<b>2</b> 1–3pm Knitting Group 7pm Choir	<b>3</b> 6:30 pm Bridge	<b>4</b>
<b>5</b> Epiphany Sunday <b>9:15am Sunday School</b> <b>10:15am Church Communion Worship Service</b> <b>Open House at the Parsonage after Worship</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b> 7pm Church Council 7 pm Scouts	<b>9</b> 1–3pm Knitting Group 7pm Choir	<b>10</b> 6:30 pm Bridge	<b>11</b>
<b>12</b> Baptism of the Lord <b>9:15am Sunday School</b> <b>10:15am Church Worship Service, SICM Food Collection Day &amp; Pampered Chef Party folders will be distributed</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b> Noon – Community Luncheon	<b>15</b> 7 pm Scouts	<b>16</b> 12:30pm UMW 1–3pm Knitting Group 7pm Choir	<b>17</b> 6:30 pm Bridge	<b>18</b>
<b>20</b> 2nd Sunday after Epiphany <b>No Sunday School 10:15am Church Worship Service</b>	<b>20</b> <b>Martin Luther King Jr. Day</b>	<b>21</b> February Muse article deadline!	<b>22</b> 7 pm Scouts	<b>23</b> 1–3pm Knitting Group 7pm Choir	<b>24</b> 6:30 pm Bridge	<b>25</b>
<b>26</b> 3rd Sunday after Epiphany <b>9:15am Sunday School</b> <b>10:15am Church Worship Service</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>29</b> 7 pm Scouts	<b>30</b> 1–3pm Knitting Group 7pm Choir	<b>31</b> 6:30 pm Bridge	

Pastor Carl's schedule – In the office: Monday 10-4, Tuesday 12-5, and Thursday 9-11.

Alplaus Methodist Church  
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First Class Mail



JANUARY 1, 2014



Articles for the February newsletter must be submitted to [alplausmuse@gmail.com](mailto:alplausmuse@gmail.com)  
no later than **January 21<sup>st</sup>**.

Thank you!

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