

March 2015

United Methodist Newsletter

Alton United Methodist Church

St. Paul United Methodist Church

Friends,

As I look over and reflect on the year-end reports for our churches, I see a mixed bag of results. Both churches netted a loss of one member. Alton actually gained 5 persons in average attendance while St. Paul decreased average attendance by 7. Both churches decreased slightly in income (offerings). Expenses increased somewhat at both churches. And that does not include the capital expenses line on the report. St. Paul had considerable capital expenditures this past year and likely will again this year. Alton's capital expenditures may increase this year.

Some say that these attendance and membership numbers are just that, only numbers and numbers do not tell the whole story. I agree, numbers do not tell the whole story. Numbers do not tell the whole story of spirituality. Or do they? Each "number" represents one soul won or lost for Jesus Christ. I do believe that if our folks in the pews are growing spiritually, then their attendance might become more regular and they might tell others which would increase the average attendance. What is clear is that we need to look at our churches in terms of hospitality and outreach. Are we making people feel welcome as they enter the door to worship? The answer is yes. But are we inviting them in the door to learn about Jesus? Is what we are doing in our worship making them want to come back? Folks, we are not here primarily to make the long-term members or attendees feel comfortable. We are here primarily to "go out and make disciples for Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world." Is what we are doing presently helping us to make disciples for Jesus Christ? The numbers say maybe not. What can we do better than we currently are, or what practices do we need to adopt to help us do disciple-making in a better way. Think on these things.



**In Christ,
Pastor Denzil**



LENTEN BIBLE STUDY

Both Alton UMC and St. Paul UMC will host a Lenten Bible Study beginning this month. **Renegade Gospel: The Rebel Jesus** written by Mike Slaughter, presents Jesus and his challenging message to inspire us during Lent, Easter, and through the year. The Alton UMC Study began on Sunday, February 22nd at 6pm. The Thayer UMC Study began on Wednesday, February 25th at 7pm. Cost of study books is \$9.74, let Pastor Denzil know if you are interested in joining either study group.

Meal of the Month

March

2 cans of Tuna or 1 family can
Tuna Helper
Canned fruit

Bonus: Baby food or Diapers



St. Paul UMW Adopt a Family

Check the Narthex for a new list of items to donate for March.

Keeping Our Children Safe

We, in the Missouri Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church and the United Methodist Church as a whole, are committed to keeping children, youth and vulnerable adults safe while they are participating in our ministries. I believe that you feel the same way. So, to that end, both Alton and St. Paul churches have adopted revised Safe Sanctuary policies and procedures. We require all persons who work with children, youth, and vulnerable adults to be certified in these policies to work with these participants in our ministries.

There are two types of certification. One is for local church only and one is to be with these participants at district and conference events such as WOW, which we attended in January, and our summer camping ministry. All persons working in our Sunday School ministries and Vacation Bible School ministries must be local church certified. This allows us to have the safe and secure staffing we need for these events, even if we invite others from outside our church to work in these ministries. All persons that might want to work at the conference events need to be conference certified.

This needs to be done as soon as possible. The certification training and process are all done on-line. The training takes about 2 hours. Certification also requires an interstate background check to be done. The fee for certification is \$30. Each church has agreed to pay the fee for those desiring certification. Please see Pastor Denzil if you have any questions or if you want to get started.



Everyone is invited to enjoy a spaghetti dinner right after church at St. Paul on Sunday March 29th. It will be prepared and served by the youth who want to attend camp this summer. They are working to pay their part of attending camp and would appreciate all donations. Come enjoy!!

Relay for Life 2015 Team Forming

The new team for 2015 is now forming. If you are interested in being a part of the team, please contact Richard Blount, 264-2999.



One Great Hour of Sharing

A special collection will be taken on **Sunday, March 15** to support One Great Hour of Sharing. Watch for special donation envelopes in your bulletins that morning. All checks should be made payable to the local church.



Alton UMC Adopt-a-Family

Bleach
Toilet Paper
Peanut Butter
Jelly
Milk
Cereal
Canned Fruit
Fresh Berries
Muffin Mix
Celery
Cauliflower
Mayonnaise

Sign-up Sheet 1st Sunday,
return items, 2nd Sunday.
Cash donations will buy
additional fresh produce.

Safe Sanctuary

We need YOU! The Methodist Church requires that Safe Sanctuary-certified adults are present when children are involved in a program or event—Sunday School, VBS, camp—whatever. It's designed to keep children safe from all kinds of abuse. You need to do a short on-line course and have a background check. It's relatively painless, please see Pastor Denzil for details.

Directories

Updated phone and address directories are now available in the narthex of both churches. Please be sure to pick up a copy.



WOW 2015

WOW 2015, held January 24-25 at Springfield's Expo Center, attracted youth and adults from all over Missouri. Our group consisted of combined youth from the Alton and St. Paul churches; Aspen Burton, Cynthia Neldon, Aaron Roberts, and Josh Roberts. Adult Safe Sanctuary-certified adults were Pastor Denzil Thomas and Nancy Alford. A great time was had by all! We would like to thank both churches for their support of our youth.



Scout News

The Cub Scouts, Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts and Venture Scouts attended Scout Sunday on February 8th at the Alton UMC, approximately 30 scouts and leaders attended the worship service. A big thank you to the UMM for another wonderful breakfast! The Scouts will be collecting food March 2-6 (Monday–Friday) at Harp's in Alton. The boys will be outside the store from 4-6 pm each afternoon collecting items for the local food pantry.



Alton / Thayer Newsletter

Alton & St. Paul United Methodist Church
P.O. Box 241
Thayer, MO. 65791
Return Service Requested

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“In the Spring, I have counted 136 different kinds of weather inside of 24 hours.” ~*Mark Twain*

St. Paul Monthly Calendar

Carry-In Dinner 1st Sunday at 12 pm
Leadership Mtg. 1st Sunday at 1 pm
UMM Breakfast 2nd Sunday at 7am
Trustees Mtg. 2nd Sunday at 12 pm
Piecemakers every Thursday at 9 am
Choir Practice every Wednesday at 6 pm
Exercise Group
Monday, Wednesday and Friday at 11am

Alton Monthly Calendar

UMM Breakfast 1st Sunday at 7 am
Leadership Mtg. 2nd Sunday at 7 pm
Stitches & Prayers every Tuesday at 9 am
Tn'T every Wednesday 3:30 –5pm
Choir Practice every Sunday 8:15 am
UMW 3rd Tuesday at 4:00 pm



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