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## MARK YOUR CALENDARS:

- July 13—Women’s Book Club discussing *The Help* by Kathryn Stockett. Meeting at 7:00p
- July 15—Golden Key potluck luncheon 12p Presentation of cross Atlantic adventures.
- July 23—Potluck Dinner/Movie Night Fellowship Hall 6:15-10:00
- August 8—Skating at B&D Skate Rink 4:30-6:30p \$2.00 per person

Blue Ridge Blvd United

United Methodist Church

# The Home Envoy

July 6, 2010

Volume 55, Issue 12

## Letter from the Pastor—Rev. Bryan Wendling



### One Nation Under God...

This Fourth of July there were probably many who had a hard time finding much to celebrate. After all, for an increasing number of us here in the good ole USA things aren’t going so well. Unemployment has remained north of 9% for over a year now, our national debt is on the rise, and our nation’s morale seems to be in a freefall. According to the news channels’ pundits and talking heads our best days are behind us and nothing lies ahead but gloom and doom.

Call me naïve, call me an idealist, or just call me crazy, but I for one don’t buy it. Sure, for many Americans times are tough right now, but I believe in my heart of hearts that the very thing (or One) that made America great in the first place is the same thing (or One)

that’s going to pull us out of our current funk and make us once again realize our own greatness and potential for good. .

As I was preparing for last Sunday’s “July 4<sup>th</sup> sermon” I ran across an article by Rev. James L. Snyder entitled “Some Patriotic Reflections for the Fourth of July”. Although it didn’t really lend much help to my sermon research, I was nonetheless intrigued by what Rev. Snyder had to say. The gist of his comments had to do with the reality that from our nation’s very founding God is at the heart and is the very soul of who we are as Americans.

Try as they may to expunge the Divine from our society, God remains right there in the middle of virtually every one of our national symbols. Don’t believe me? Check out a dollar bill. Think about it; every time someone uses a dollar bill in this country, they’re giving tribute to the awesome fact that this nation was built upon trust in God; not just any God, but the Judeo-Christian God of the Bible.

You see, our Founders understood something that perhaps we 21<sup>st</sup> century Americans need to be reminded of.

are as Americans and God is the source of the freedoms we Americans enjoy. To lose sight of that is to lose sight of what the founding of this great nation was all about.

Furthermore, as acknowledged by our Founders, all people are “endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.” While that truth extends to all, in this, the “land of the free”, it means we even have the God-given right to be an atheist if we so choose. Kind of ironic, ain’t it? Nonetheless, that’s what makes this country so uniquely beautiful and so beautifully unique.

So, with that said, my hope is that you sat aside the cares and woes of our nation’s current state and took some time to thank God for the blessing of living in “the land of the free and the home of the brave.” And, I hope that at some point during the holiday weekend you took the opportunity to pray for our nation; something along the lines of “America! America! God shed his grace on thee...”

## Capital Campaign Update

So far 118 families have pledged a total of \$393,256 and we are well on the way to completing the pledging portion of this project. Please join your fellow congregates in helping us to reach our goal. If you have forgotten yours, pledge cards are available at the Information Center in the Narthex.

Please continue to pray during this process the following prayer:

*O God, You are the Light who shows us the way. Source of our being, we come into Your presence in humility and with a spirit of thanksgiving, Through Your grace we are not only forgiven but also empowered to take up Your ministry. We ask for Your wisdom as we build on our past and chart our future as Your Church. Help us to find the needed resources to update our church facilities at Blue*

*Ridge and to continue in our mission to further Your work. Help us in all that we do to be faithful so that, as a people of faith, we may stand with You.*

Amen



## Music News— Linda Mann, Director of Music 353-4826

[lmann@blueridgechurch.org](mailto:lmann@blueridgechurch.org)



Encounter group is made up of 9th-12th graders from over 25 different churches in the Alton, IL area.

Encounter!!!

We meet Christ in many places if our eyes are open to see, and one of those places will be here at Blue Ridge on Sunday morning, August 8. A return concert by "Encounter" Youth Choir from Alton, Illinois, will fill both hours of our services with uplifting music. The group started in 1972 with 11 members and has grown to over 100. Made up of youth from grades 9-12 that represent over 25 area churches, they perform 10-15 times a season including a 10-day tour. Headed by a music staff, staff pastor, and 15 adult sponsors, the choir is not merely a place to sing and have fun, it is a place where young Christian people can grow and mature in their relationship with one another and in their walk with God—not to mention sharing this relationship with others through music. We know you will be moved by this energetic group and encourage you to invite others!

P.S.

Still looking for someone to volunteer to help with outside communication.....maybe it's YOU??

## Youth Mission and Work Camps

Please pray for our youth as they embark on two trips this month.

On Sunday, July 11, a group of 15 youth and adults will leave to travel to the Heifer Ranch in Perryville, AR where they will experience 24 hours immersed in different cultures from a third world country. This will lay groundwork for international mission trips in their future.

***"Thousands of homes and families were effected and some are still recovering..."***

The following Sunday, July 18, a group of 12 youth and adults will travel to Cedar Rapids, IA to continue with the rebuilding from the flood of 2008. Thousands of homes and families were effected and some are still recovering from the devastating flood.

Thank you for your support. Without the congregation lifting us up in prayer and helping financially it would not be possible to take so many of our youth on these trips.

-Anne Norton, Youth Director

## Saturday of Service a.k.a. S.O.S

S.O.S. - July 31, Heart-to-Heart International

The July S.O.S. (Saturday of Service) activity will be helping at Heart-to-Heart International. Heart-to-Heart is a global humanitarian organization that works to improve health and to respond to the needs of disaster victims worldwide.

We will be sorting medical supplies in

their warehouse. This is a great activity for all skill levels. Children are welcome, if accompanied by an adult.

We will volunteer at Heart-to-Heart (located at 1021 Pacific) from 9am to 12noon. Please meet at the church to carpool by promptly 8:30am. A few things to remember: Dress is casual, layers are good, and wear closed-toed shoes (open toed shoes are not allowed in warehouse).

If you have questions or know for sure that you are helping, please call Sherry Woodward, 356-6428, or email [sjwsmile@aol.com](mailto:sjwsmile@aol.com). However, RSVPs are not required. If you find yourself free Saturday morning, July 31, just be at the church by 8:30 am!

Mark your calendars:  
Harvesters August 28th

## Ministry Moment—Littlest Angels

By Karen Johnson

The “Littlest Angels” Ministry began in 1996 with the purpose of recognizing and celebrating births in our church family and to welcome new families to Blue Ridge. A minister or 1 of the “Littlest Angels” team members took a gift to the family at the hospital or shortly after the families arrival at home. Items given were a handmade diaper bag with our logo on it, a handmade baby blanket, a lullaby cassette ( now a CD) made by Linda Mann and Jennifer Mitchell, a welcome card explaining the nursery and baptism information, a book for the parent about being a Christian parent, I’ll Love You Forever story book, a Bible story book for a sibling, Parents as Teachers information, and diaper coupons and various other items that were donated. A large wooden sign was placed in the families yard announcing the birth of Blue Ridge’s newest Little Angel ( these are now placed in the entryway to the church instead of families yards).

In 2010 we continue to welcome new babies and parents to Blue Ridge with a diaper bag, baby blanket, lullaby CD, Jesus Loves Me book, Children’s Bible, and other items that are donated. We now also provide a meal to the family. We are always looking for donations from businesses or



church members for items to place in the diaper bag. Previously we had a UMW circle that cut out and sewed the diaper bags and made the baby blankets. We presently have 6 diaper bags and 2 baby blankets. Thank you to those members who have donated items for the bags. Some churches have baby showers for members, we are looking for just a few items for these “Littlest Angels”.

We have averaged 3 - 6 new babies each year. Many of these families are still a part of our Blue Ridge family today. We send out cards to new parents and now even grandparents when we receive notice from the church office.

I became involved with this voluntary ministry in 1996 because of my love for children and my involvement with programs and families at Blue Ridge. The program continued for 4 or 5 years and then disappeared. By 2006 we were starting to have a few babies born and they were not being wel-

comed to the church so I asked permission to start the program up again. Being a parent in today’s society is a hard job. Many families raising young children are far away from their parents so it is vital that the church help welcome, support and nurture them. Babies, children and young families are the future of Blue Ridge. Jesus said “Let the little children come to me and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these.”

*“I became involved with this ministry because of my love for children...”*

If you have any questions about this ministry or would like to be involved with our team please contact Karen Johnson 353-1795.

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New Website Coming Soon!  
[www.blueridgechurch.org](http://www.blueridgechurch.org)

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*At Blue Ridge we are about  
building life's important  
relationships. Centering the  
ministry of the church on  
Christ, we build these  
important relationships to God,  
others and self.*

The article deadline for the next issue is July 29.

### Happenings...

On Sunday, June 6th, the Builder's Class met with the Samaritan Class taught by Joyce Downing, Bonnie Downs and Jim Morris. This was an absolutely delightful time in a multi-generational setting. We sang, laughed and prayed together, opening the door for future relationships.

The purpose was to present them with tambourines and maracas as a gift from our class in memory of Corwin Moore whose son, Bobby, is a member. Velda Gantner taught this class for 28 years before joining the Builder's Class and Jim Morris has been teaching over 30 years.

We came away richly blessed.

### Church Family News

Congratulations to Lauri Munoz and Michael Mitchell who were married on July 3 in Madison, WI. Lauri is the daughter of Jim and Margaret.

#### Sympathy extends to:

The family of Virgil Barnett, father to Joyce Meyer. Virgil passed away June 6.

The family of Elizabeth Hagar Bonello, daughter of Joyce Hagar. Elizabeth passed away on June 27.

The family of Haydon Digges, brother-in-law of Jeanne Armstrong. Haydon passed away June 24.

The family of Richard Scheil, husband of Nellie. Richard passed away on July 2.

The family of Dr. John Nieman. John passed away on June 29.

This month's Envoy is sponsored by Clarice Titus in memory of Butch Titus who passed away July 12, 2008