

UNITED METHODIST HOUSE NEWS

Box 115 Chautauqua, New York 716 357-2055

Christmas 2010

Good Christian Friends, Rejoice!
The gift of Christmas comes to bless us
again....not so that we can possess it....
but so that we can give it away for others!
Christmas is merry when we do!
At the United Methodist House we are
praying that the blessings of this season
might be understood and lived out all
year long! Hope! Joy! Peace! Love! Merry Christmas!

the president's message...

Jesus often warned those who built up churches and temples for personal glory and personal gain. As we glorify God through our worship structures, we must constantly be aware that we are not just building structures where we can hide behind the music and prayers, behind the worship and the rituals. Does being in a place of worship motivate us with a desire to serve others?

My pastor, Rev. Sinnathamby Thevanesan at Christ United Methodist Church in Snyder, NY, recently presented a meditation on these thoughts. It set me thinking about our United Methodist House as a center of worship at the Chautauqua Institution, especially as we refurbish an older structure making it a place for meaningful worship, meditation, and study. Are we making the House a thing of beauty to mask our true worship intentions or is there a higher motivation behind our actions?

Rev. Thevanesan closed with a poem by Tagore, a Nobel peace prize winner for English literature from India:
Leave the chanting and the singing and telling of beads!
Whom dost thou worship in this lonely dark corner of a temple with doors all shut?
Open thine eyes and see, thy God is not before thee!
He is there where the tiller is tilling the hard ground and where the path maker is breaking stones.
He is with them in the sun and in shower, and his garment is covered with dust.
Put off thy holy mantle and even like him, come down on the dusty soil!
Deliverance? Where is this deliverance to be found?
Our master himself has joyfully taken upon him the bonds of creation; he is bound with us all forever.
Come out of thy meditations and leave aside thy flowers and incense!
What harm is there if thy clothes become tattered and stained? Meet him and stand by him in toil and in sweat of thy brown. Amen!

These thoughts came two weeks after a fall work party at the House, where people toiled around the house in the mud and dust, in the corners of the House needing a touch here and there. People working for the glory of God! May we use our House to glorify God through our sweat and stains. Thank you for a set of working Board and House members who toil in the fields, not for gigantic monuments and gorgeous buildings and magnificent structures.

Bruce Burr
United Methodist House President

**United Methodist House
Trustees**

Class of 2011

WNY Trustees
Avion Brooks
Bruce Burr
Rev. Matt Golibersuch

Class of 2012

Chautauqua Community
Trustees
Laura Corey
Ed Paul
David Shuff
Don Weaver

Class of 2013

WPA Trustees
Rev. Larry Homitsky
Chuck Bolan
J. Howard Wright

Ex-Officio

Rev. Patricia Harbison
Rev. Larry Baird
Judie Peterson
Rev. J. Paul Womack

Retreat Season Hostess

Cindy Shuff

Summer Host Couple

Karen and Bob Douds

**Newsletter Editor &
Assistant**

Nancy Richards
Debbie Caruso

Web Site: umhouse.com

A "hand-made-with-love" Christmas tree ornament When Bob and Karen Douds came to our House to be our Host and Hostess, a new tradition was born! We didn't ask Karen to do it, she just thought it would be a nice reminder for folks who had spent a week staying at our House, to have a memento of that special time. A "hand-made-with-love" Christmas tree ornament was presented as each room's guests departed for home.

This Season, a lot of folks will be hanging two special ornaments on their tree and others, will be hanging one special felt poinsettia with a wee tag that says a "reminder from your friends at the United Methodist House at Chautauqua." It's a lovely, thoughtful gesture that we thought you'd like to know about. Enjoy the gift, but more, the memories!

Farewell to Bill and Carol Cunius It's with deep appreciation and affection that we say "farewell" to Bill and Carol Cunius, Host and Hostess at the United Methodist Missionary Home, one of our "sister UM properties" at Chautauqua.

Bill and Carol arrived soon after Sally and Dick Grove came to our House in 1999 and have served faithfully and well. Not only were they friends of the Groves, but they were dedicated United Methodists, and very willing to work with the Trustees and friends of our House on a number of programs and projects. They will certainly be missed in the pews of the chapel, Sunday by Sunday, as well as on the porch as active participants in many of the special and social events held there. Our prayers go with them both.

Update on Rev Everett Fitts A number of friends of the House are concerned about the Rev. Everett Fitts. His hip prosthesis had to be removed to control infection, so he and Janet remained in South Carolina and never made it to Chautauqua last summer.

If you would care to be in touch with them, their address is :

Rev Everett and Janet Fitts
1110 Marshall Rd
Greenwood, SC 29646

We welcome our newest Trustee on the United Methodist House Board. J. Howard Wright was elected to serve as a Trustee of our House at the last annual meeting. Howard and Carol became aware of Chautauqua when he served as a District Superintendent of the Erie-Meadville District in the late 80's. Their daughter Diane worked at the Disciples' House when she was still in High School and Karen worked at the Missionary House.

Carol has been active in U.M.W. and through that connection, was elected to the Board at the Missionary House. Howard served twice as a Chaplain at our House, once when he was a D.S. and another time more recently. Another interesting fact about the Wrights is that their daughter Margo was the first to be married in our newly renovated chapel! She and Gordon Evans were married in February of 2000 and they now make their home in Erie. Howard serves on the staff of First U.M.C. in Erie and is a volunteer guide for the Erie Maritime Museum and has chaired Erie's CROP walk for the past six or seven years. Clearly, Howard is interested in serving his community and has had a lot of experiences in the Church which will make him a valuable addition to our Board. We welcome J. Howard to the Board! He has agreed to serve on the finance committee

Winter Hostess and "On-Call Trustee"

Do you know the Shuffs? Cindy and Dave Shuff retired to Chautauqua a few years ago now and became members of Hurlbut United Methodist Church and Dave became a Trustee at our House. They learned about our House from Sally and Dick Grove as they had been friends at Kenmore United Methodist Church in Buffalo and had come to a number of work parties to volunteer. Last year, Cindy took on the responsibility of greeting groups coming for Retreats and making sure the House was ready for them. Her welcome was particularly helpful for groups coming for the first time as often they had many questions...from where to eat dinner or whom to call in an emergency or just when Church started on Sunday. She has been a real treasure and her service has been invaluable to the mission of hospitality that is ours. If you've only been to Chautauqua in the summer Season, perhaps you didn't even know there were groups coming for reunions or retreats all year long.

In addition to her service, Dave has been exemplary as a member of the Property Committee as our Hands-On Trustee when there are problems with plumbing or plowing or meeting repair persons or others who have been hired to renovate or restore parts of our House. He has caught problems before they became real problems and he has been on hand to help solve and save other situations that would have become much more expensive and extensive if he hadn't been available to help and to know the right people to call. They are a great couple and a great asset to our ministry. Thank you Dave and Cindy!

Debbie Caruso, a United Methodist House Treasure

Everyone who makes a reservation at our House talks with Debbie at Hurlbut United Methodist Church. She is our link to all of you and she is an uncomplaining, hard-working treasure! For the past several years, she has also been working with me (NCR) on the newsletters and they wouldn't happen without her talent and dedication! I write, collate, and "remind" the various Chairpersons about writing their articles, and then e-mail everything to Debbie. She and I phone back and forth, e-mail back and forth and then like a miracle, the newsletter gets published on our web-site and arrives in your mailboxes! When we first started, I had to get our son to help me forward photographs to her and she had to get her daughter to down-load those photographs. We've learned a little since then, and our kids are off the hook to help, but the newsletters, our reservation process and lots of other little things that come up somehow need the help of Debbie and she is there for us. I just wanted to add my personal thanks to that of the Board of Trustees and let you know how valuable she is to the ministry of our House. Thanks, Debbie ,for all you do for us!

New Host and Hostess at the United Methodist Missionary Home

Congratulations to the Rev. Douglas Thompson and his wife, Celia of Youngsville, Pa. who have been selected to be the new Host and Hostess at the Missionary House. Doug and Celia are long-time Chautauqua vacationers, having stayed for many years at the Minister's Union (now the Ecumenical House). Doug was recently selected to serve as a Trustee of our House and Celia was our musical angel last summer, stepping in to take over for Janet Fitts as organist when Rev. Everett was hospitalized and the Fitts' were unable to come to Chautauqua for the 2010 season. Doug's help on the property committee and Celia's help with sewing all the porch pillows, cleaning out the kitchen and helping Karen with the Saturday welcome suppers has been so terrific, that we are sure they will bring their faith commitment, talent and enthusiasm to their new roles. As the pastor of Holiday Park UMC east of Pittsburgh where Karen and Bob Douds are members, it is sure to be a wonderful thing for both couples to be serving on the grounds of Chautauqua! You might get to ask them about the weeks they served together as light-house keepers!

For this year, Bill Cunius will continue to manage the reservations for the Missionary House as he knows the guests and has agreed to help in this way. As our house is fully booked, you may contact Debbie Caruso in the Hurlbut UMC office and she will give you Bill's e-mail should you want to inquire about availability at the Missionary House. Happily, all of the United Methodists work cooperatively together to support one another's programming and rental needs. It is a real blessing for visitors to Chautauqua, we know!

From the Finance Committee.....

As your Treasurer and new Finance Chairman, I want to wish all of you a Blessed Christmas and a Healthy New Year. I can assure you that our finances are in good shape and that we are maintaining a sufficient balance to meet our immediate needs.

We do, however, have many projects in the 'works' and our Property Chairman is preparing for more improvements to 'The House' to be made in our next fiscal year beginning June 1, 2011. If you would like to make a year-end, tax deductible, (to the extent of the law) gift to one of our current projects, we encourage you to do so. They include, residing the Waugh St. side of the house, (\$11,500), replacing the kitchen refrigerator,(\$1000), and conserving our large portraits of Chautauqua's founders, (\$300). We are also exploring ways to increase our Endowment Fund. One of the best ways is for YOU to name the United Methodist House a beneficiary in your estates.

Again, have a Joyful Christmas and I look forward to seeing you next year 'On the Porch'

Don Weaver, Chair, Finance Committee

Property Committee Report

On the 30th of October, twenty people came together and worked up a storm around the Methodist House. We accomplished a lot, the house looks terrific. Great job everyone, especially to my committee members who came early Friday afternoon and got an early start on building our new shed. On Saturday, the entire crew worked like beavers and cleaned up all my cards of tasks to complete. We raked leaves, sorted silverware, rerouted a drainpipe, and did all the usual fall clean up jobs. We had a great day, good food and great fellowship as we worked.

Since my last message to you we have had a new gas stove installed to replace a dangerous one, we have in the kitchen a set of matching silverware complete with serving utensils. We sorted through all of the silverware that was in the house, we put into the rooms a set of silver that has the same pattern, what we could not use was further sorted and some of the remainder was put into storage. The rest of it was discarded as being unusable. During the work weekend, a group of us, built a base for our new shed and following the directions put together a new shed, The really nice thing about this shed is that it does not need to be painted, it is all composite material. The base that we built it on is made of treated lumber making it an almost maintenance free shed. It is 8 feet by 7 and a half feet, and about eight feet at the ridge, so we now have added much needed storage space. This shed will replace the current one that is rotting away and will be disposed of at our spring workday.

I mentioned in our last newsletter that we had hired a painter for the upstairs. We found a gem of a painter. He does great work. Our cleaning staff comes in, sees that a room has been done, but there is no odor or mess to clean up. The Lord has provided for us a great craftsman.

I have some good news and some bad news. First the good news, I have asked Jerry Siess and Bob Richards to become members of the Property Committee and they both heartily agreed!! Welcome aboard. Many of you know Bob as the past President of the Board, while Jerry is a newcomer to our group. Welcome to the both of you. For the bad news, we have lost two of our members, Jack Getman has resigned because he is not spending as much time at Chautauqua as before and asked to be replaced. Doug Thompson has had to resign because of his new job responsibilities. He and Celia are the new hosts at the Methodist Missionary House. We will miss both these great helpers as we toil around the house in the future. Great working with both of you, you will be missed.

Chuck Bolan Property Chairman

Please share in our United Methodist House ministry at the Chautauqua Institution!
United Methodist House Rentals are available all year.

Reservations for the Chautauqua season were taken the first Monday in October, for the following 2011 summer. **Reservations for the Retreat season** are taken anytime...up to 24 months in advance.

On the first Monday in October, the phone lines lit up promptly at 9:00 AM in the offices of Hurlbut United Methodist Church as eager former guests and others hoping to stay with us took a chance that their call might get through and they would be lucky enough to stay with us next summer in 2011. There is only one reservation that was not spoken for that day but you can always call or email to see if others have become available. Call or email Debbie Caruso at the Hurlbut UMC office to secure it for your enjoyment.

Retreat weekends that are available February 2/25/11 March 3/4/11, 3/18/11, April 4/1/11, 4/8/11, 4/15/11, November 11/25/11, December 12/2/11, 12/9/11, 12/16/11, We have started taking reservations now for 2012 Retreat Season.

Please call Hurlbut Church (716) 357- 4045 for reservation information.

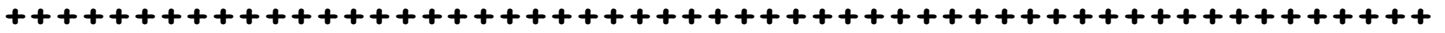
Office Hours are Monday- Friday from 8:00 am- 2:00 pm

Or email hurlbut@netsync.net.

Please check the new and improved United Methodist House web site: umhouse.com

Love came down at Christmas, Love all lovely, Love divine;
 Love was born at Christmas; star and angels gave the sign.
 Love shall be our token; love be yours and love be mine; love
 to God and all men, love for plea and gift and sign.

We at the United Methodist House are sincerely thankful for the kind and thoughtful gifts given to honor or memorialize special people in your lives. Since our last newsletter, we have received a donation from Rev. & Mrs. Donald E. Struchen in memory of Buzz Hussey.



CHAPLAINS COMMITTEE

Interested in serving for a week as Chaplain at the United Methodist House? Do you know someone who would be good in this position? Is there someone who would benefit from this experience? If the answer to any of these questions is YES... then send your request to:

**The United Methodist House
Attention: Chaplains Committee
Box 115
Chautauqua, NY 14722**

Your name will be entered into the computer and you will be given consideration when the Chaplains are being selected during January-February. If selected....you will be called to determine a suitable date and given more information.

Each year three Chaplains are selected from the Western Pennsylvania Conference, three from the Western New York Conference, and three "at large" from other areas of the world. We are not lacking for persons interested in serving as Chaplains...but are always happy to hear from those who would like to serve ...so the very best Chaplains may represent all United Methodists at Chautauqua each season.

We Would See Jesus

We would see Jesus; lo!
His star is shining above the stable
while the angels sing;
there in a manger on the hay
reclining; haste,
let us lay our gifts
before the King.

We would see Jesus,
on the mountain teaching,
with all the listening people
gathered round;
while birds and flowers and sky
above are preaching the blessedness
which simple trust has found.

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The communications committee is working to update the mailing list for our newsletter. We are asking for the assistance of our members in contacting us should their address change, or requesting to be removed from our mailing list if you are currently receiving this newsletter and no longer have an interest in the House or Chautauqua. We are mailing to 300 addresses currently and seem always to be adding more names! It's costly and wasteful to send mail where it's not needed, so we ask for your help in this matter. On the other hand, if you know of persons who would like to receive this mailings, please let us know about them so they can be added! Our newsletters are also posted on the United Methodist House web site.

Newsletter Mailings The Postal Service has new strict restrictions on having correct addresses for bulk mailing, which is part of its efforts to reduce the undeliverable-as-addressed mail. If we send out a newsletter with a wrong address, we are paying for the postage to mail the newsletter out to you and then we pay the postage to have it returned back to us. Please help the United Methodist House with your correct addresses. Drop us a post card at:

United Methodist House
PO BOX 115
14 Pratt Ave
Chautauqua, New York 14722.

Merry Christmas!

The United Methodist House

A year round center for retreats and renewal at Chautauqua

Offering a positive radiant expression of United Methodist Christianity.

Providing for spiritual refreshment, quiet renewal, friendship and fellowship!

The United Methodist House is centrally located at the heart of the Chautauqua experience! And the United Methodist House is available during the retreat season (September - June) for church and family groups!

For information and reservations call 716 357-4045.

Merry Christmas!