Connections

Arise-a United Methodist Church

January/February 2010

Arise CHURCH
a United Methodist Congregation

Ministers
Every member of the Church

Pastor
Don Weatherup

Director of Music
Rich Sliter

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The POWER of Love

Merilee Zane: Faith is a Family Tradition

Merilee Zane has been a member of Arise Church for five years. She grew up in Northville, the youngest child, with a brother and two sisters. Her father was a professor of Art, Art History and Industrial Design at Wayne State University. Her mother was a homemaker who returned to school and graduated from Wayne State with a teaching degree. She worked as a media specialist, was an assistant principal and then became the assistant superintendent in Livonia. "One of my earliest memories was of being at my mother's graduation and seeing my kindergarten teacher there in her cap and gown. She was also graduating that day," she says. "My dad's father was a Methodist minister. I grew up in the United Methodist Church and was very involved in church activities. I was in the kid's choir. My parents were MYF (Methodist Youth Fellowship) leaders for my older siblings and I used to go every Sunday with them, too."

Merilee got her first degree in criminal justice and then a Masters in Teaching (MAT). "I was going to combine the two and work with troubled kids, but the only kids I used it on were my own!" she quips. Her husband worked for IBM and travelled a lot, so she waited to finish her MAT until her three boys were older. She was the teacher at a preschool that she later owned and directed, but eventually, that business ended. By then, she had her Masters and subbed every grade from elementary to middle school, including physically and mentally impaired programs. She later joined the staff and has taught multiple grades at Northville Elementary, with 4th grade being her favorite. For the last nine years, she has been team teaching 5th grade and loves her team.

Merilee and her husband raised their children in the Northville United Methodist Church, where she helped with VBS, led the children's choir, taught confirmation classes, helped with the annual musicals and played trombone. "I have always connected with music. I came from a musical family. Even my mother, who has dementia now, can sing Christmas carols with me, even when she can't talk much." After her marriage ended, she and her ex-husband continued to attend the same church, giving the kids a consistent worship experience while they grew up. She later met her new husband, Bob, through mutual friends. Before he proposed, he first

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Christmas at Arise

Christmas is a time of wonder, joy, anticipation, praise, laughter, prayer, family and friends. Here, Micki Baumgart and other Arise-ers worship at the Christmas Eve candlelight service. See more photos on pages 5 & 6.

Pastor's Column

Pastor Don Weatherup

I've been spending some time the last few days on the Internet looking at the pictures and news updates coming from Haiti. The enormity of the problems in Haiti have overwhelmed me emotionally. At the time I write this pastor's page, over a thousand Haitians need immediate surgery. There are only a handful of U.S. doctors doing surgery there in Haiti. There are no operating rooms. They're doing surgery in the street, using crude instruments. One doctor said that some U.S. civil war doctors had better operating circumstances than they do in Haiti in 2010.

When problems seem so overwhelming, what do we do? Sometimes we feel like there is no point in even trying. Or perhaps we feel that the problem is so big, we ask ourselves "What impact can I make?" Sometimes we just don't know where to start.

As I look at some of the problems in my life, that's sometimes how I feel. When I think about losing weight, I often look at the idea of losing 100+ pounds and it seems overwhelming. When I look at the medical debt that Shelley and I have, it feels like we'll never get it paid off. As I look at our new building and then consider all the money we need to get it finished, sometimes I get weighed down with worry.

When we're faced with monumental challenges, what are we to do?

I've been thinking about examples from scripture that would address this issue. Isn't that what pastors do? And I came up with one example that brought me comfort. I hope it helps you as well.

As Jesus was teaching one day, a large crowd gathered. Word spread of the miracles Jesus had performed and how his teachings were so different than what the other Rabbis were teaching. More and more people kept following Jesus. To get a break from the crowd, Jesus and his disciples got in a boat and crossed Lake Galilee. When they got to the other side, an even bigger crowd was waiting. The text says that Jesus felt sorry for the crowd so he did some teaching and healing. Soon it was early evening and the crowd grew to over 5,000! The disciples and Jesus were so busy that they had not eaten all day. Neither did the crowd that was following them. The disciples suggested that Jesus make an announcement that the crowd should move into nearby villages and farms to buy something to eat.

Jesus said to his disciples, "You give them something to eat." The request surprised them. Talk about being given a huge task that would instantly overwhelm you. They replied, "Don't you know that it would take almost a year's wages to buy all of these people something to eat?" So Jesus asks them, "How much bread do you have? Go and see."

The disciples had to be thinking to themselves, "Why would we want to do that? It'll never be enough!" Maybe they grumbled under their breath, "This is a waste of time!"

In John's telling of the story, Peter finds a boy who has five small loaves of barley bread and two fish. And he asks Jesus, "But what good is that with all these people?"

Ah ha, I knew they had to be thinking to themselves, … "Yah, right!"

So Jesus takes the loaves and the fish in his hands, give thanks to God for them, and then asks the disciples to start passing the baskets around.

We're not privy to the details as to how it happened. But the result is clear. Everyone in the crowd ate that evening and the leftovers filled 12 baskets!

I keep thinking about the boy. I presume he willingly gave up his food—unless the disciples pushed him to the ground and stole it the same way a bully in the schoolyard steals lunch money. I doubt that happened. I don't believe Jesus would have been a part of it if they did.

So the boy must have given it to them! What must have gone through his head? Did he react like we would—reluctantly? Or did he, with the innocence of a child, happily share what he had? We don't know. But what we do know is that the little boy gives us something to shoot for!

The task was overwhelming, feeding 5,000 people. And while the boy could have come up with a hundred reasons why he should just keep the bread and fish for himself, he simply **did what he could**, and trusted that it would work out. Maybe that's exactly what we need to do when we're faced with tasks or problems that just seem too big.

Maybe what we need to do is just do what we can, and in faith, trust that God will take what we can do and will do an amazing thing with it. Don't focus on the enormity of the problem. Just do what you can do. That's in fact what the doctors are doing in Haiti. Not focusing on the hundreds they can't get to. They're just doing what they can and trusting God for the rest.

With you on the journey,

Don

Looking Back: A Reflection on Arise 2009 Accomplishments

By April Flanagan, Council Chair

Note: The New Year is an important time to review the past year, reflect, learn and plan for the future. This article will provide a brief review of 2009, followed by 2010 plans and priorities for Arise in the next issue.

Each year the Arise Church Council spends time reviewing how we did against last year's objectives, and what we should focus on for the coming year. This process began for 2009 and 2010 at the December Council meeting, and will continue at the February meeting. In addition, the Church Growth Task Force, which was launched last year to propose specific initiatives to the Council and the membership at large, will continue this year. Members of that group are Pastor Don Weatherup, Steve Cary, April Flanagan, Beth Plachta, Matt Plachta, Deb Short and Rich Sliter. Everyone is invited to offer reflections and ideas to group members.

In 2009, the overarching priority was to grow the church. Specific new initiatives included the Megachurch gathering, Dog Park and Halloween Fun Day. In addition, previous focus on excellence in worship, great music (thanks, Rich!), family activities (VBS, youth group, the "One" group, Meat and Greet), and spiritual growth (Bible classes, Sunday School) have continued.

Last year was a difficult one for many reasons. Membership at traditional churches has declined, and Arise was no exception. And we all know the economic difficulties so many are facing. On the positive side, we've had new members and enthusiasm continues. Stay tuned for more information on 2010 plans in the March/April issue of *Connections*.

Brothers and Sisters in Christ

Dog Park Available to Arise Members; Official Opening Slated for Spring

by Matt Plachta

The Arise Church – Community Dog Park is now open to members of Arise and their dogs! The park will open to the general public this spring.

In December, a group of Arise volunteers enclosed the park by installing fence posts, fence and gates. Volunteers included Paul Pagano, Jr., Matt Plachta, Tim and Ross Richards, Brad Topp, Brad and Jeff Vaden, Rob Wagner, Don Weatherup, Shelley Weatherup, and Bob and Tony Whalen. Gene and Fran Smith and Karen Vaden provided lunch for a few of the workdays. Thanks to everyone who helped, especially to Mark Wood for the use of his T-post removal tool.

The response from the community has been amazing. We've raised over $1,200 in gifts from local businesses, individuals and in DQ coupon book sales. We have also received several donations of materials including all the fencing, posts and gates and over the coming months will receive a few benches and a banner.

Meanwhile, we will be getting the park ready for the public. Some things that are planned include signs, waste stations, a donation box, a water feature for dogs, a walking path from the parking area, seating and possibly a stone patio.

The Dog Park Committee is in the early stages of planning a Grand Opening, hopefully in mid-May. In addition to inviting the community to come and enjoy the dog park, we are hoping to have several activities for families and pet owners. Our goal is to create a fun, community-oriented event. Our purpose is to introduce the community to Arise and—with God's help—grow His kingdom.

Christmas at Arise

Meet New Members at Arise

Jeff Vaden and Cyndi Hollister were recently received into membership at Arise Church. They share some details of their life and faith journeys below. If you haven't yet had a chance, please be sure to welcome both of them to our community of faith.

Jeff Vaden is married to Karen, his childhood sweetheart. They both grew up in Warren and attended the same high school. Jeff works for BorgWarner Drive Train in Auburn Hills as a Quality Assurance Manager. He got his building license years ago and used to build houses in Jackson. Since buying a home in Pinckney when they first got married, he has added on and remodeled their home in his spare time. He describes himself as an avid hockey player and plays both goalie and forward positions. "I didn't learn to skate until I was 48," he says. "I've played in Brighton, Hartland and Ann Arbor." He skates in men's leagues and also plays goalie for a women's team who didn't have a goalie. Jeff coached his son, Brad, 21, in the sport and claims he can compete with him pretty well, even now! Jeff and Karen also have a daughter, Melissa, 20, who has been active at Arise.

"My faith journey started with the people at Arise and I'm still on my faith journey to find Christ," Jeff says. "Karen started here before me. I went with her to an Arise Easter Breakfast…I guess it was the food that called me here! I started talking with Pastor Don and different people and that was it." Jeff's grandfather was a Baptist deacon, although Jeff and his younger brother and sister, Greg and Deb, did not attend church as children. "The strict religion

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Merilee Zane... *continued from pg.1*

asked her boys for permission to marry her. Bob has a Catholic faith background and is now retired, after being head of Investor Relations for GMAC. "Actually, he started out as a repo man," Merilee says with a laugh. What do they have in common? "We are both avid readers and enjoy spending time on Whitewood Lake (where they have a lakefront home). We also like to travel and plan to go on an Alaska cruise next summer." They have fun at family gatherings at his family cottage in the Adirondacks and her family's place in northern Michigan. This Christmas, they spent time with their 4 grandchildren, ages 9-13, at Disney World.

When she and Bob moved here five years ago, she made a list of area Methodist Churches to visit. "When I walked in on the first Sunday, the McMunns introduced themselves, recognizing me as a new person. I met Evva Funk and others and I felt connected from the beginning. I felt there was a true and genuine Christian spirit in the people here. I knew I could turn to anyone, if I was in need, and they would support me." Merilee has been Chair of Trustees, directs the God's Kids choir, played in the Arise Orchestra, and is currently a communion steward. She has helped out in many other ways, as well. Her latest passion is sharing her life-changing experience from a Port Huron Emmaus Walk she attended this fall. "It is the most powerful, soul-embracing experience you could ever have," she says with enthusiasm. "I have had God carry me through significant trials in my life, like my divorce and surviving cancer. Even given that, this experience was an incredible way to connect with God and other people. The women who worked at the Emmaus event were true servants of God, so generous of spirit and humble…everything we aspire to be. They are there just for the sheer joy of it…you can see it in their eyes. Emmaus is about gifts you're given - too powerful for words - too many to count." One such gift was when a woman sang "You Turn Broken into Beautiful" and Merilee recounted with awe how sunlight streamed through the stained glass window behind the singer, flooding the cross with light at the exact moments she sang the words "beautiful" and would go behind a cloud when she sang "broken." "I was able to affirm the gifts that God has given me. I have been doing a lot of reading, both in the Bible and other books, to help me learn how to remain open and stay available to help others. I pray every day that we get our church building done soon. It would be wonderful if we could have an Emmaus event in our own church someday!" Thank you, Merilee for sharing your story and for being one of God's disciples among us at Arise.

New Members... *continued from pg. 5*

of my grandparents didn't set too well with my parents." However, before Jeff joined Arise on confession of faith, he was baptized by Pastor Don in his grandmother's presence at her assisted living home, at the age of 96, which made the experience even more special.

Since attending Arise, Jeff has jumped in with both feet! He was invaluable at the 2009 Arise Barn Sale, coordinating the set up of the facilities. He has worked on the new Worship Center, is a member of the Arise Dog Park Committee, and is the new Moving Team Captain. Jeff also helps Rich Sliter with the sound board for the Contemporary Worship Service on Sundays. To sum it up, Jeff says, "I love being at Arise! It's a great place!" We're glad to have you with us, Jeff!

Cyndi Hollister also joined Arise by confession of faith. She grew up in a family of six girls, which includes her sister, Debbie Short, a long term member of Arise. She has two daughters of her own, Donna and Tabitha and a granddaughter, Taylor Cole, who is one of Arise's active teens. Cyndi loves to bowl, saying, "I've been an avid bowler for 25 years." and is currently a member of both women's and mixed leagues. She enjoys volunteering a lot of her time at a dog grooming business close to her home.

"I grew up going to church at Wesley United Methodist Church in Whitmore Lake," Cyndi says. "I was baptized there, as well as my daughters and granddaughter. I was never interested in becoming a member, though. For 34 years I thought I didn't need religion or God in my life." Then Cyndi's second husband, Ron, died. "My sister, Debbie, MADE me attend church with her. After Ron was gone, I needed something in my life besides liquor and sleep. At first, it was hard. As the weeks went on, the smiles and hugs from friends at Arise showed me I didn't have to give up. That's when I forgave God and He forgave me for hating Him for calling my husband home.

Cyndi continues, "Since that time (three years now), He has taken me in His arms and showed me the way. Just like the wonderful people of Arise. That's when I made up my mind that I wanted to be part of all of it. Pastor Don gave a beautiful sermon at Ron's funeral, and continues to do so each and every Sunday. I haven't fallen asleep once!" Cyndi considers herself to be a "proud member of Arise United Methodist Church, being active in both the Drama and Worship Teams." We're very glad that you are, too, Cyndi!

FEBRUARY 2010 CALENDAR

Peace is not the absence of trouble, but the presence of God.

— J. Oswald Sanders

WEEKLY EVENTS

Sunday

Worship Service at Country Elementary

9:00 am – Traditional Worship

10:30 am – Sunday School

10:30 am – Contemporary Worship

8:00 pm – Small Group Study—Crazy Love

Monday

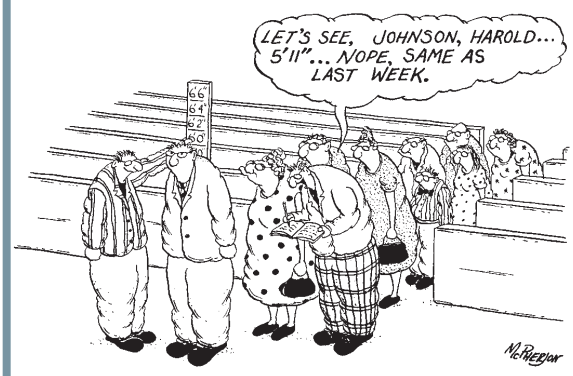
7:00 pm – Divorce Care

Wednesday

7:00 pm – Wednesday Nighters

7:00 pm – Small Group Study—Crazy Love

Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat
31 Worship at Country Elementary	1	2 **Ground Hog Day** 7 pm Council	3	4	5	6
7 **Holy Communion Sunday** **Boy Scout Sunday** Worship at Country Elementary 1 pm One Life Team	8	9	10	11	12	13
14 **Transfiguration Sunday** **Valentines Day** Worship at Country Elementary	15 **President's Day**	16	17 **Ash Wednesday**	18 6 pm Meat & Greet	19	20
21 Worship at Country Elementary	22	23	24	25	26	27
28 Worship at Country Elementary **4 pm Youth Group**	1	2 7 pm Council	3	4 **World Day of Prayer**	5	6



The growth committee at the Pine Creek Church was severely misdirected.

"Socking" Pastor Don Benefits Homeless

Arise members arrived at the January 10th services armed with socks for the homeless, which Pastor Don gamely invited to be thrown at him at the end of both services. As a result, 111 pairs of socks, 1 pair of gloves and a dozen T-shirts were collected, for distribution when Arise staffs the homeless shelter at Community Congregational Church on January 23rd and 24th.

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February/March Anniversaries

2/3	E.J. & Kim Sherry
2/13	Steve and Beverly Selvig
2/17	Bob & Merilee Zane
3/12	Jon & Marcia Gebarowski – Happy 5th!

February/March Birthdays

2/1	Tony Whalen
2/7	Gayle Fike
	Noah Sherry
2/12	Anjalie Sherry
	Natalie Sherry
	Shelley Weatherup
2/16	Jessica Short
2/19	Laurie Russell
	Myles Wagner
2/27	Barb Stafford
2/28	Steve Cary
3/1	Danielle Weatherup
3/3	Paul Pagano
3/7	Betty Korzilius
3/10	Nancy Schartzwelter
3/11	Amber Pagano
3/12	Donna Terhune
3/13	Carrie Germain
	Connor Graham
3/21	Sue Boltach
3/29	E. J. Sherry
3/31	Chelsea Sherry

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Thanks to all who contribute; please contact us with your feedback and suggestions!

• Arise *Connections* is available online and in color at www.arisechurch.org
Check out the Missions link on the website!