

Newsletter of the Ravenswood Fellowship UMC
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Church Office Hours: Tues – Fri. 9:30am – 2:30pm

e-mail ravfelumc@yahoo.com
Website www.ravenswoodfellowshipumc.org

Sunday Worship Service: 10:30am
Sunday School/Nursery Available

Pastor Rev. Linda Misewicz-Perconte

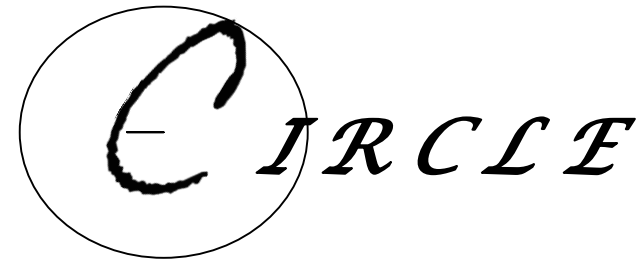
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Editor Lisa Sloan
Reporter Betty Morita, Donna Sagami
Circle Crew Members of the RFUMC Walking Group



Ravenswood Fellowship UMC
4511 North Hermitage Avenue
Chicago, Illinois 60640-5303

This  IRCLE Made Especially For

Open Hearts, Open Minds, Open Doors
The People of the United Methodist Church



We are a Christian community that celebrates diversity and values social justice. All who seek God, inclusive of age, race, economic status, sexual orientation, gender identity and special needs, will find a place here.

Ravenswood Fellowship United Methodist Church

December 2017 / January 2018

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Greetings and Peace in the Name of Emmanuel, God with us.

It's almost Christmas and we've been preparing in Advent for the birth of Jesus Christ, the son of God, the Prince of Peace.

This is the time to look around and give thanks. Jesus is among us. Take some time to review and read the nativity story from Luke 1 & 2; and Matthew 2. Where do you see God in the story? Who do you identify with in the story?

In Luke 2:22-40, Simeon and Anna are the older relatives who rejoice in the birth of Jesus. They show us the ways we can keep being thankful.

The older people in our church and in our families can help us recognize the importance of slowing down, being thankful, and paying attention to relationships. When we lose faithful and dedicated church members to illness or death it touches us deeply. People we love and admire will always be a part of our lives as the body of Christ redeemed for this world. We will always remember those who've gone before us and shown us the way.

Anna and Simeon loved Jesus. Joseph and Mary loved Jesus. They waked in courage with God's love and mercy as their foundation. They, like many at Ravenswood Fellowship have shown us the way.

We give thanks to the Christmas gift of Jesus – a gift that lives in the courageous and faithful who have loved and followed him. May the gift be received and cherished by you and me this Christmas.

Advent – Christmas blessings,
Linda

PRAYERS FOR HEALING and STRENGTH

Grace Tsuru who is in rehab at the Presbyterian Homes, Maomi Asai, Brittney Gilleland, our student intern, who is undergoing medical tests, Sayo Furukawa, Carol Ruth Kimmel, Chiyeko Onoda, Ann Warnecke, Carol Johnson, George Eng, Nora Yoshimura, Merle Kaneko, Steve Hines (cousin of Jack Welch) who is battling leukemia, Steve Johnson (grandson of Rev. Bill Johnson), Rosalie Brozik, Barbara Sechrest, Cristeta Villamin (Angelina's sister), Kane Senda, Tom Shinsato, Robert Omachi, Susan Schroeder, Russell Johnson, Sho Fukawa, Chiyo Omachi

PRAYERS OF SYMPATHY

Our deepest sympathies to Chieko Onoda and her family on the death of Sam Onoda. Sam passed away on November 30th.

Pledge Card for 2018

Name _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

Phone _____

Email _____



Yes! I will pray for the mission and ministry of our church.
I estimate I will grow in my giving next year as follows:

My yearly commitment to general funds and missions is \$ _____
I plan to pay as follows:

\$ _____ weekly \$ _____ monthly

\$ _____ quarterly \$ _____ annually

I understand that this estimate of giving may be revised or canceled at any time at my request.

Please return this form to the church office. Thank you very much.



5 th	Charlotte Hoffman
	Jason Moses
6 th	Carol Ruth Kimmel
	Ann Myers
7 th	George Asai, Jr.
	Julie Morita Trick
8 th	Barbara Sechrest
10 th	Richard Nakamura
12 th	Joe Eto
13 th	Pramodhini Bhonsley
	Ann Warnecke
14 th	Carolyn Kanaya
15 th	Jonathan Hannau
16 th	Anita Bernak
18 th	Forrest Hendrix
21 st	Hisako Takami
22 nd	Gail Crider
23 rd	Debbie Wilson
28 th	Wyatt Hendrix
	Preni Keshish

HAPPY BIRTHDAY
TO ALL!



We look forward to a visit from the Night Ministry on Sunday January 7, 2018. We will also be serving in Humboldt Park with the Night Ministry on that date.

OTHER INFO & NEWS

- Thanks to Rev. Lorna and the crew who planned and helped at the neighborhood Christmas Party on December 15th.
- Thanks to Donna Sagami for the homecooked meal fundraiser raising money for apportionments and the Latino ministry.
- Thanks to all who helped with the Fall clean-up and those who decorated the church for the holidays. The church looks beautiful.
- Thanks to the Finance committee for the delicious lunch and fun at the stewardship luncheon on Sunday November 19th.
- Thanks to Teddi Olson for running the See's Candy fundraiser for the church.
- Thanks to Lisa Dyer and Lisa Goodman and to all of you for your donations for Night Ministry Christmas stockings. Jack and Pastor Linda delivered many stockings and other items for people in the city of Chicago.



Ravenswood Homecooked Launches!

On Monday, November 20, the church started a new fundraiser called Ravenswood Homecooked Meals. My idea was to provide a home cooked meal to members and friends of our congregation and raise funds for our new Latinex ministry with Lorna Castro, and our apportionments to the Northern Illinois Conference. I decided to launch on the Monday before Thanksgiving with a miso soup, baked salmon, sauteed spinach with sesame, and Japanese style mushroom rice meal. I thought it might be a good time because many people would be so busy cooking and preparing for Thanksgiving later that week. We plan to offer 25 portions, so that we would not have to worry too much about storage or too many unsold portions. I ended up making 20 portions, and only had one unsold portion. We plan to offer 25 portions, so that we would not have to worry too much about storage or too many unsold portions. Our profit came was \$197.15, so approximately \$98.50 went towards our Latinex ministry, and \$98.50 went towards apportionments! Not too bad for a first time. Many thanks to all who supported us! We will offer these homecooked meals a few times in the year. Next time we will try to have the meals ready on Saturday, so folks can buy them either that day or after church Sunday, the next day. Different people in our congregation will be guest chefs, so stay tuned for what the menu will be! Plan to give yourself a holiday from cooking (or freeze for later), and help the church while you do it!

2017 at a Glance

By BJ Fukawa

As we approach the end of 2017, we would like to thank all of the Ravenswood Fellowship UMC family here in the city and miles away, for your continued interest and support of our church and its activities.

We have continued our involvement with the Night Ministry, supplying and serving meals for the homeless and/or disadvantaged in the Uptown and Humboldt Park neighborhoods, and once again filled Christmas stockings for their annual stocking drive. We collected school supplies and backpacks for children in need for ChildServ this fall, and we have partnered with Ravenswood School to provide after school bilingual homework assistance thanks to the efforts of Lorna Castro, our Lay Missioner.

We depend upon fundraisers such as the Spaghetti Dinner, Pancake breakfast, Chili Fest and some new initiatives organized by some of our creative congregation members:

- Andrew Lawrence created tasty fajitas for our first ever Fajita Grill
- Tracy Oishi provided vegetable plants and flowers for three plant sales
- Donna Sagami made homecooked meals, the proceeds of which went to the Latino school program
- Teddi Olson has spearheaded the See's candy drive
- The rental of the gym and other church spaces has provided additional revenue

However, even with all these efforts, our income from pledges has decreased, which has put a strain on our efforts to continue to help those in need.

You will find a pledge card enclosed in this month's Circle; if you haven't yet filled one out, will you please take the time to do so? We would appreciate any end of the year contributions, either to the general fund, or targeting onwe of our special programs. For instance, each time we serve at the Night Ministry, it costs us about \$200, in addition to some donated items.

We appreciate all you do throughout the year, and thank you for allowing us to serve others through your generosity. May you have a New Year blessed with health, and hope and peace.



BIRTHDAYS

2 nd	Arthur Riley
8 th	Gary Hougen
9 th	Shannon Moses
	David Birkhahn- Rommelfanger
	Rachel Birkhahn- Rommelfanger
10 th	Kent Moses
	Angelina Parangat
11 th	Carol Johnson
12 th	Edward Pool
15 th	Pearl Johnson
17 th	Debbie Buscato
18 th	Lisa Dyer
19 th	Dionne Harrod
21 st	Ruth Benson
25 th	Grace Tsuru
28 th	Jane Ogasawara



7. Live and enjoy the present.
8. Look to the future with optimism.
9. Don't set yourself up for disappointment and sadness by comparing today with the good old days of the past.
10. If you are lonely, try volunteering some time to help others.
11. Find holiday activities that are free, such as looking at holiday decorations, going window shopping without buying, and watching the winter weather, whether it's a snowflake or a raindrop.
12. Limit your drinking, since excessive drinking will only increase your feelings of depression.
13. Try something new. Celebrate the holidays in a new way.
14. Spend time with supportive and caring people.
15. Reach out and make new friends.
16. Make time to contact a long-lost friend or relative and spread some holiday cheer.
17. Make time for yourself!
18. Let others share the responsibilities of holiday tasks.
19. Keep track of your holiday spending. Overspending can lead to depression when the bills arrive after the holidays are over. Extra bills with little budget to pay them can lead to further stress and depression.



Annual Charge Conference is changed to Tuesday January 16th

Staff Parish meets at 6:30 pm, Charge Conference at 7:00 pm.



Christmas Eve candlelight service December 24 - 10:30 am and 3:00 pm

Please note: the church office will be closed on Tuesday December 26th and Tuesday January 2nd.

Holiday Depression and Stress

re-printed from WebMD

The holiday season for most people is a fun time of the year filled with parties, celebrations, and social gatherings with family and friends. For many people, it is a time filled with sadness, self-reflection, loneliness, and anxiety.

What causes holiday blues?

Sadness is a truly personal feeling. What makes one person feel sad may not affect another person. Typical sources of holiday sadness include:

- Stress
- Fatigue
- Unrealistic expectations
- Over-commercialization
- Financial stress
- The inability to be with one's family and friends

Balancing the demands of shopping, parties, family obligations, and house guests may contribute to feelings of being overwhelmed and increased tension. People who do not view themselves as depressed may develop stress responses, such as:

- Headaches
- Excessive drinking
- Over-eating
- Insomnia

Others may experience post-holiday sadness after New Year's Day. This can result from built-up expectations and disappointments from the previous year, coupled with stress and fatigue

19 tips for coping with holiday stress and depression:

1. Make realistic expectations for the holiday season.
2. Set realistic goals for yourself.
3. Pace yourself. Do not take on more responsibilities than you can handle.
4. Make a list and prioritize the important activities. This can help make holiday tasks more manageable.
5. Be realistic about what you can and cannot do.
6. Do not put all your energy into just one day (i.e., Thanksgiving Day, New Year's Eve). The holiday cheer can be spread from one holiday event to the next.

Gonna Sing

By Mary Schmich

*Oh it's Christmastime again
And we're all a little older
Life rushes like the wind
And the year's already gone
And some people that I love
Said goodbye and crossed on over
But I'll hold them in my heart
As I sing this song*

*I'm gonna sing
'Til I can't sing no more
Can't worry when you're singing
Maybe that's what singing's for
Gonna sing
And the world won't seem so weary
Singing songs of cheer and hope and joy and love
Gonna sing*

*Oh it's Christmastime again
And I think about my mother
And I think of my old friends
Haven't seen them in so long
And each year when Christmas comes
I think about my father
And I'll hold him in my heart
As I sing this song*

*Oh it's Christmastime again
And the world's still full of trouble
In places that I've been
And in ones I've never gone
And there's people I don't know
Leading lives of hope and struggle
And I'll hold them in my heart
As I sing this song*

Interesting Facts about the Methodists – Part 3

By Ann Warnecke

Methodism appealed strongly to Africans. Its central doctrines, repeated endlessly in sermon and song, assured them both of their possible worth, through God's concern with the human soul, black or white. The regular fellowship at the class meetings, the order of service (from the Church of England) lent drama to the great matters of life and death. And the Methodists were a singing people. Many of their tunes had a strong beat. The hymns released the imagination and encouraged improvisation; the hand clapping and enthusiastic shouting formed another basis of attraction. White and African Methodists had much in common except for the ridiculous importance that the whites attached to the difference in the color of the skin.

The unresolved issue of slavery in the Methodist Episcopal Church resulted in those advocating abolition to withdraw their membership and form a new church. The Wesleyan Methodist Connection of America was organized at a convention held in Utica, New York in 1843. A year later membership in the new church grew to fifteen thousand.

But the attitude of the Methodist Episcopal Church did not change and troubles continued. As delegates gathered for the 1844 conference, news that a bishop who owned slaves would attend. A petition against slavery was accepted, and a committee on slavery was appointed. But an appeal came to the floor by Francis Harding, a preacher who had been suspended for refusing to free slaves he had come to own through his marriage. Harding asked the General Conference to reverse the suspension. He contended that the slaves belonged to his wife, not to him, that Maryland law would forbid his freeing them even if he personally owned them. At the end of the four-day debate, the appeal lost by a vote of 17 to 56.

After the Harding case, it became clear that some means of conciliation must be found and named a committee to deal with "the relative position of our brethren North and South on this perplexing question." But there was no escape; the committee was forced to report that it was "unable to agree upon any plan of compromise to reconcile the views of the northern and southern Conferences."

Debate on the case of Bishop Andrews lasted another thirty days, ending with a resolution asking him to cease his functions as a bishop as long as he remained a slave owner. A declaration was made that the suspension of Bishop Andrew had made "the jurisdiction of this General Conference inconsistent with the success of the ministry in the slaveholding states." A committee was appointed to draw up a constitutional plan "for the mutual and friendly division of the Church."

While the church could not resolve the subject of slavery, it did not neglect the African. It treated the African as a subspecies, pushing him aside and treating him as a nuisance. That prejudice "ousted the African from white congregations," encouraging him to show that he can form his own church.

One Sunday after a group of African worshippers led by Richard Allen and another preacher, Absalom Jones, were relegated to the gallery at St George's Methodist Church, white ushers tried to remove them as they knelt in prayer, saying that the Africans could not kneel there. They left the church vowing to never return. The occurrence of this exceptionally rude act led to the founding of the first of several national churches for the Africans and other nonwhite. These churches were as Methodist as was Richard Allen, one of the founders of The African Methodist Episcopal Church.

Richard Allen, born a slave in 1760, was converted a Christian at seventeen. He bought his freedom and worked at jobs that paid a pittance while preaching on Sundays and at nights. He worked as a helper to white circuit riders and learned the ways and methods of the wilderness preachers.

Organizing a new church was frustrating and discouraging. Many wanted to follow the Church of England but Absalom Jones and Allen favored the Methodist Church as a model. Allen left the organization saying "I informed them that I could not be anything but a Methodist," He took over an old blacksmith shop and transformed it. He named it Bethel, the Hebrew word for House of God. At first it was affiliated with St. George's (under the white ministers of that church). However, in 1799 Asbury ordained Allen, the first Negro in America to be ordained. Gradually Bethel detached itself from St George's and became independent. Daniel Coker, whose freedom had been purchased with the aid of a Methodist layman and ordained by Asbury, joined with Allen in drawing representatives from societies to form The African Methodist Episcopal Church. In polity and doctrine the African body followed The Methodist Episcopal Church, though at its first General Conference in 1820, a provision was made that fellowship would be denied to slaveholders..

In need of a resolution...

Merry Christmas