



# ALPHA UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

211 North Scandia St., PO Box 607

Alpha, IL 61413

309-629-5161 | [www.alphaumc.org](http://www.alphaumc.org)

September 2022

Volume 2022 Issue 9

## Christians Fighting Christians!

By Bishop Frank Beard

It should not surprise anyone that the followers of Jesus fight each other. An honest look at the New Testament scriptures reveals the sobering fact that even before the Holy Spirit descended and gave birth to the church, the followers of Jesus were already fighting.

They fought over popularity, position, and power. They fought and argued over the use of money, managing access to Jesus, and the very character and nature of Jesus. I believe it is fair to say that just like two of the pre-Christian ancestors (Jacob and Esau), the church was born fighting.

Jesus' last Upper Room prayer with the disciples was a prayer for unity among the disciples and those subsequent followers. Jesus prayed that we would become united and function as one. There have been brief moments and sample-sized examples of Jesus' prayer coming to fruition but overall, sad to say, unity has not become the norm among Christians.

Martin E. Marty wrote an article in October of 2015 titled, Christians fighting Christians. Martin made the statement, "Cynics, but not only cynics, like to observe, not always inaccurately, that Christians are never happy unless they are fighting -- each other."

Shortly after becoming a District Superintendent, I was asked, "What do you do?" My response was quick and simple, "I referee church fights!" Even as a Bishop, I spend an awful lot of my time, assisted by the Cabinet and a very gifted staff, trying to settle church fights.

Christians fight over the dumbest of things! Churches argue and split over things that have absolutely little or nothing to do with them personally or locally. There are times that I want to say, as Jesus did to the disciple John, "What is that to you?"

I believe if we focus on the ministry needs that are right in front of us, we would be so busy and so overwhelmed that we would have no time to get caught up in how others are engaging their respective areas in a different manner. Much like Nehemiah, we would be consumed by our own work, and we simply would not have time to stop our important work to engage in the affairs of others. In short, we would trust the Lord of the harvest to know how and when to separate the weeds and the wheat.

Christians fighting Christians is always a costly battle and there are no winners. Everyone loses when we fight. The results are always negative:

- Credibility is tarnished or shattered
- Ministry is hampered or hindered
- People laugh at and mock us as hypocrites
- Our community witness and influence diminish and becomes irreparably damaged
- Mission and ministry take a back seat and is often ignored altogether
- The body of Christ is saddled with shame
- We assist the enemy of our faith in the war against the spreading of Christianity

Fighting seems to be built into our DNA as Christians. Fighting, however, is not what Jesus desires.

Jesus calls us to love one another and to be at peace with each other. This is only possible when we become individually committed to the pursuit of Christlikeness. Jesus did not demand that it be, “my way or the highway.” Jesus emptied himself and offered himself in service to others. Jesus listened carefully to the voice of God and did that which was costly and uncomfortable to himself so that others might be spared eternal pain and everlasting defeat.

I have noticed that in our current church “battle royale” each “side” is claiming and crying foul and unfair play on the part of others. I have not heard anyone say, individually or church-wide, “I’m sorry and I am regretful and repentant for any harm that I have caused you or the body of Christ. Please forgive me, I have sinned against God and against you.”

It is only when we become personally invested in stopping the fight, that armistice will come. I am convinced that we are all running out of time and that our attention and focus needs to be on seeking, serving, and saving this dying world, and not on Christians fighting Christians. My prayer remains hope-filled, “Let there be peace, and let it begin with me!”

God bless,  
Bishop Beard

## Church Council

Council Chair: Lindi Kernan

Treasurer: Parris Silvis

Financial Secretary: Linda Lanning

Trustees: David Lambin

S/PPRC: Dale Lanning

Outreach: Linda Lambin

Nurture: Kelli Swanson

Worship: Roger Swanson

Christian Education: TBD

Men in Mission: Dean Kernan

Youth Representative: Jack Silvis

Lay Leader: Lindi Kernan

Recording Secretary: Desirae Silvis

### Next Council Meeting:

**Tuesday, September 27**

**6:00PM**



## Church Office Hours

**9AM - 1PM— Monday, Wednesday, Thursday**

309-629-5161

alphaumc@gmail.com

Website: [www.alphaumc.org](http://www.alphaumc.org)

Facebook: @alphaunitedmethodist.com



### Pastor Karna's Contact Info:

Cell: 309-337-2700

email: [peteysaunt@yahoo.com](mailto:peteysaunt@yahoo.com)

## Let's Celebrate!

### September Birthdays

03: Roger Swanson

04: Bob Bateman

12: Travis Atchison

12: Brylee Brooks

18: Gina Medley

24: Grace Althaus

25: Lucas Althaus

26: Karen Schultz

27: David Althaus

27: Dick Rutledge

28: Abi Schafer

28: Meghan Cole

29: Dave Cole

30: Dale Lanning

### September Anniversaries

04: Stan & Barb Damron

12: Ned & Mary Nice

17: Ron & Gina Medley



## Join Us !

### Sunday Schedule

9:00AM - Coffee

9:30AM - Coffee Hour

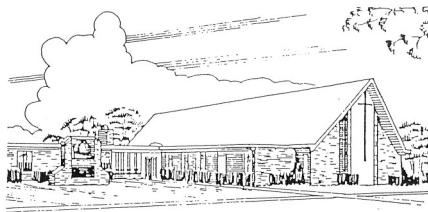
10:00AM - Worship

**Bible Study**

On Break

**Prayer Group**

Wednesdays 9AM



### September Worship Volunteers

#### September 4

Liturgist: Roger Swanson

Children's Moment: Angie Althaus

Ushers: Dave & Linda Lambin

#### September 11

Community Service @ Alpha Baptist

Children's Moment: Dale Lanning

#### September 18

Liturgist: Dale Lanning

Children's Moment: Lindi Kernan

Ushers: Sadie Carlson & Kurt Jordan

#### September 25

Liturgist: Lindi Kernan

Children's Moment: Dale Lanning

Ushers: Brooks Family

### Thank You Volunteers!

We are always  
looking for more  
Sunday morning  
volunteers.

Please contact  
the church office  
if you can help  
out.





# Alpha Sesquicentennial & Alpha UMC

## September 10 & 11, 2022

### Small Town. Big Celebration

Below are the events Alpha UMC will be participating in during our Sesquicentennial.

#### Parade

There will be a parade through the town at 11AM on September 10<sup>th</sup> as part of our sesquicentennial celebration. We would like to have a float in the parade, but ideas are needed as to what it will be. If you have an idea for the float, or would like to volunteer to build it or be in the parade, please contact Pastor Karna or the church office.

#### 5K & Family Fun Run

Our church is the starting point for the 5K and family fun run. Thank you to everyone who donated water and snacks!

#### Community Church Service

On Sunday, September 11 at 10AM, there will be a community church service lead by our local pastors, Pastor Melinda Bern, Pastor Andy Busch, and our own Pastor Karna Peterson. The service will be held outside the Baptist Church and will be in place of our usual Sunday service. Please bring a lawn chair.

# September 2022



SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT
				1 6:30PM Book Club	2	3
4 Communion  No Sunday School	5 Labor Day	6 9:30-11AM AlWood Food Pantry	7 9:00AM Prayer Group	8	9	10 8:00AM Race  Alpha Sesquicentennial
11 10:00AM Community Church Service @ Baptist Church	12	13	14 9:00AM Prayer Group	15	16	17
18	19 Charge Conf. Paperwork due to Desirae	20	21 9:00AM Prayer Group	22 October Newsletter Deadline	23 	24
25	26	27 6:00PM Council Meeting	28 9:00AM Prayer Group	29	30	

# ALPHA UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Sunday Schedule:

9:00AM Adult Sunday School

9:30AM Coffee Hour

10:00AM Worship

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