

## Lighting of the Peace Lamp at Watertown: Asbury UMC

In the gospel of Matthew Jesus tells us: "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God." (5:9)

Asbury Church in Watertown prays for peace and our peacemakers during worship in a very tangible way using the Taybeh (pronounced "tie-bay") Peace Lamp. It began when Leah Mae Carlisle was discussing possible Lenten activities with the Children's Ministry Team. In January 2006 Leah Mae and her husband Tom went from Asbury to Palestine and Israel. It was during that trip that they visited Taybeh and saw first hand the manufacturing of the peace lamps. They also had the opportunity to discuss with the parish priest what the peace lamp symbolized. The initiative acknowledges the terrible conflict that harms the Holy Land. Israelis and Palestinians have tried all possible means of action to put an

end to it, using both violence and non-violence, but with little success. P. Raed Abusahlia (Parish priest of Taybeh) discerned God's will and presented a simple and symbolic idea – to unite churches, through a Taybeh Peace Lamp, in a common prayer for peace in the Holy Land. The lamp, together with the oil and the light, become a message of peace and a sign of solidarity towards the Holy Land from all the churches around the world that participate.

This initiative also helps the Christian communities in the Holy Land to fight unemployment. These lamps are produced in Taybeh's new ceramic workshop, and provide jobs to 20 young men and women who now earn a decent salary and can live with their families in dignity on the land they cherish. This initiative also provides a needed marketing opportunity for the olive oil produced in the

Holy Land. The village has an overall population of around 1300 inhabitants, all Christian, with Latin, Orthodox and Greek Catholic rites.

Taybeh is the Biblical village named Ophrah or Ephraim, where Jesus stayed with his disciples before going to Jerusalem. Taybeh is about 15 miles north-east of Jerusalem. For more information about Taybeh and the Peace Lamps visit: <http://www.taybeh.info/en/index.php>. Leah Mae described the Peace Lamp initiative to our Children's Ministry Team. They supported the idea and considered additional ways Asbury could use the Peace Lamps.

Throughout our six Sundays in Lent Asbury prayed for peace in our world. Each Sunday as we lit the peace lamp we prayed for peace in different war torn areas, as well as for the peace makers struggling to end the conflicts.

On Feb. 10 we lit the candle as we prayed for peace in Iraq and for our peacemakers in Iraq, those serving in our armed forces. On February 17th, the second Sunday in Lent we prayed for peace and for our peacemakers in Afghanistan and the surrounding areas, those serving in our armed forces. On the third Sunday in Lent we lifted to God all people in the Holy Lands – Palestinians and Israeli as they work for peace. On March 2 we lifted up our United Methodist missionary Dr. Mark Zimmerman

and his family as they bring peace to the troubled area in Nepal. On the fifth Sunday in Lent we lifted to God in prayer the children of our peacemakers all around the world (the attached pictures include some of the children from our military families). On the sixth Sunday in Lent, our youth group lifted to God those striving for peace in the Darfur region of western Sudan in Africa. They also raised funds for the Darfur people as part of an ecumenical program in Watertown. On Easter Sunday we prayed for all of the world's peace makers and shared this quote from the Easter message of Bishop Munib Younan (Evangelical Lutheran Church in the Holy Land):

"...People ask me if I am optimistic about peace. I tell them I am not optimistic about the political atmosphere. And really, whether I am optimistic, pessimistic, realistic or idealistic doesn't really matter. What matters is that the Christian church has not survived 2,000 years because we were optimistic, pessimistic, realistic or idealistic but because we are witnesses to the resurrection."

Each Sunday Asbury continues to light the Taybeh Peace Lamp as we to pray for peace and for all peacemakers around the world. Asbury's prayer is that God will bless them, encourage them, strengthen them and above all – keep them safe.

### Frontier Foundation

#### I looked it up!

**The Rev. Dr. Keith A. Muhleman, President**

A foundation is established as a nonprofit corporation or a charitable trust, with the purpose of making grants to unrelated organizations or institutions or to individuals for scientific, educational, cultural, religious, or other charitable purposes. There are two types: private and public foundations. The most common main characteristic of a private foundation is that most of its funds come from one source. A public foundation, however, normally receives its assets from multiple sources, which may include private foundations, individuals, government agencies, and fees for service. Also, a public foundation must continue to seek money from diverse sources in order to retain its public status. (Definition provided by The Foundation Center)



Ironic, isn't it? The Frontier Foundation is a public foundation...and it is yours! Here we are blessed in our conferences with a way to make our money work today and last over many years and yet we still look to CD's and local saving accounts as a place to store one of our most precious gifts – funds given by the faithful to ensure that ministry continues in our communities.

Do not get me wrong! There are some great opportunities for interest rates in local banking institutions (from 1-5%), but it seems to me that church funds would go much farther with 9-20% returns. Annuities and trusts for our parishioners can assure a level-for-life and the life of a loved one plus they can continue to support ministries, services and churches they feel have been important in their lives.

Day trading, gambling with your funds, can reap major rewards, when the market is strong, the barometer is steady and the creek is not rising. But our churches cannot gamble with their futures and our people cannot take chances with their earning and gifts.

**YOU HAVE A FOUNDATION!** We are here to serve you and the ministry of the church. That means we are here for the individual church member and for the local congregation.

We are not a checking account, but we responds quickly to requests for funds that we manage on behalf of local congregations. In late December a pastor called and asked that \$10,000 be drawn from the church account with the consent of the trustees to pay apportionments, because emergency repairs to the parsonage roof made them short this year in their annual pledges. The check was sent the next day.

Where does your money go? It goes back to you. Our job? Maximize what you get back. Mission and ministry is too important to settle for less!



**The nine lighting are, from left, Sydney Fleshman, David Matthews, Alaina Matthews, Vivian Berg, Julian Sevier, Griffin Berg, Kaylyn Fleshman, Mary Margaret Matthews and Vanessa Berg.**



**The three lighting are, from left, Emily Bolton, Julian Sevier and Hannah Bolton**