

# Churches develop programs to reach children and teens

By MICHELLE MAZUR-ARNTZ  
Special to the Record-Eagle

Who said the following?  
“And if you choose not to decide, you still have amade a choice.”

A. Pastor Tim Mowry, Redeemer Lutheran Church, Interlochen

B. Pastor Dan Henke, Praise West Church, director of Campus Ministry, NMC

C. Rush, Canadian Rock Group

D. All of the above

The answer is D — all of the above. Parents who believe in not “forcing” a religion on their children are unknowingly taking away their option to choose, according to both

Traverse City pastors, Tim Mowry and Dan Henke.

But it is never too late to introduce spirituality to children. Most area churches have specific programs in place.

Mowry believes that if you give your children a religious background, then you are giving them a frame of reference and the experience needed to become spiritual adults, no matter what religious affiliations they may later choose.

“Can you imagine someone who has never eaten before, walking into a buffet? The choices would be overwhelming,” said Mowry.

With 23 years as pastor of Redeemer Lutheran, Mowry, his wife Robbie and their chil-

dren, Sarah and Nathan, have grown with the congregation.

“I only intended to stay around five years. But I just love this place,” he said.

### Windows of opportunity

Rev. Mowry feels that churches are a nurturing part of the community. Children can find peace and spiritual freedom from the often harsh realities in life by attending Mass, Sunday school and church-affiliated summer camps. One very successful program at Redeemer is the Secret Angel Program.

“Beginning in the sixth grade, children are showered with prayers, cards of encouragement and meaningful gifts from their own secret angel

for different occasions.” he said. “When the children are confirmed in eighth grade, they are introduced to that special parishioner who has watched over them for the last three years.”

Redeemer Lutheran has just added a director of Christian Education to the parish. Mowry and the new director will develop an extended mentoring program in addition to the Secret Angel program. This program will be another block in the foundation being built to assist children in weathering life’s challenges.

“The most important thing for children to understand is that God is never out to get

them. He is there for them,” he said. “When you cry, he cries with you. He never gives you more than you can handle.”

The Redeemer Youth Group is open to children in grades seventh through twelfth and keeps young parishioners involved in the church community. This summer, the group will get a chance to travel to Orlando, Florida to participate in a religious-themed rally with some 20,000 young Lutherans from around the United States.

“The kids have really worked hard raising funds for this trip, holding bake and rummage sales. The parents have helped and Thrivent Financial kindly matched the funds raised to make the trip possible,” he said.

### Being there

As children go from being the underclassmen of the congregation to adult members, the pastor’s wife, Robbie, quietly adds her touch to their lives. As she leads each individual to the front of the church, she asks them to “look out in front of them and see not a group of faces, but all the hearts out there that want you to do well. They are there for you forever when you need them.”

### It takes a village

Youth support from the religious community extends well

**PLEASE SEE PAGE 3**

## Come Celebrate GOD'S Word With Us!

### St. Francis Catholic Church

#### Liturgy Schedule

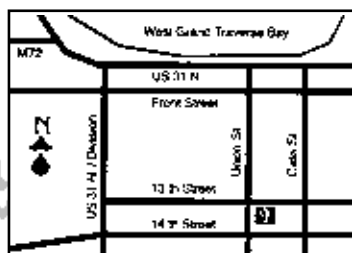
Saturday	4:00 pm
(Summer)	6:00 pm
Sunday	8:00 am
	10:00 am
	12:00 pm

#### Holy Days

5:30 pm evening before  
9:30 am and 5:30 pm  
on Holy day

#### Confessions

Saturdays 5:00 pm



231-947-4620

1025 South Union St.  
Traverse City, MI 49684

6/12/751986.ff



## Central United Methodist Church

*A Caring People Committed to Christ and Service to Others*

### Sunday Services

9:50 A.M.

Adventures in Christian Learning

9:00 and 10:55 A.M.

Worship

(Nursery and Infant Room)

9:00 A.M.

Church in the Park

mid-June thru August in Sunset Park  
on beautiful West Grand Traverse Bay  
(adjacent to Holiday Inn)

### Serving the Traverse City Community

Central is a strong, vibrant downtown church, serving the community, the visitor and the tourist since 1857. It is a diversity of people united in Christ's Spirit.

DOWNTOWN

222 Cass Street at Washington Street  
Traverse City, Michigan 49684 PHONE: (231) 946-5191

6/12/751983.ff



### EMPIRE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

10050 Michigan St. - P.O. Box 261  
Empire, Michigan 49630  
(231) 326-5510

empireumc@centurytel.net  
www.empireumc.org

Summer Sunday Worship 9 & 10 a.m.

Parking Lot Ministry  
Wednesdays 2:00 p.m. (Starting 7/7)

UM Youth Fellowship 1st & 3rd  
Sundays 4:00 p.m.

5-12.ff.751989