

South Central District  
Office of The United  
Methodist Church

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## LOWER LIGHTS



### Advent as A Journey

LET THE LOWER  
LIGHTS  
BE BURNING!



JULIS C. TRIMBLE,  
IOWA AREA BISHOP



BILL POLAND,  
CONFERENCE  
SUPERINTENDENT



PAUL SMITH,  
FIELD OUTREACH  
MINISTER

Year after year we enter the Advent season as a count down toward Christmas. We are to light candles each week to ponder the moment, reflect on scripture and be reminded to be ready for the in-breaking of God's Kingdom in any moment. But, instead we are often like little children in the backseat of the car calling out, "Are we there yet?" We hurry toward the day, eager and all too often anxious and distraught. So much so that we often find ourselves thinking and sometimes even saying, "Whew... I glad that's over."

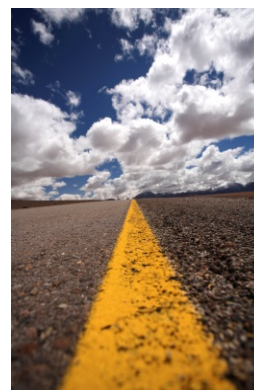
This year I would like to invite you to think of Advent as a journey or a trip whose goal is not simply to arrive at a destination. Think about a trip to California from here in the South Central District. You could drive to Des Moines, jump on a plane and be there by evening, but think about what you would be missing: the planes of Nebraska, not so bad you say, but how about the beauty of the Rockies in Colorado and Utah. Or the red sandstones of Arizona and Nevada, not to mention the Grand Canyon!

Before I begin a trip I like to look at a map and pick out sights I would like to explore. For me the joy of a trip is what you see along the way. Sure, I always enjoy my destination, but I also enjoy myself along the way. I can't begin to share the many special places I have discovered along the way and the interesting people we have met.

What if we were to approach Advent as a journey worth spending some time on? What might we find along the way? Clergy often spend most of their time in the Bible spent on sermon or study preparation, how about spending some devotional time exploring the lectionary scriptures you are not going to preach during Advent. Or how about taking some time to ring a bell at a kettle for the Salvation Army? Or you could take some time to ponder where you are in life and how you got here. Perhaps you could find a group of friends to share your faith journey with and then listen to theirs. Find a child who can read you the Christmas story. Ponder a while on the people in your life who love you. Think about the love of the God who gives them. I am not trying to add more to what can be a very busy schedule; I am encouraging you to take some time to nourish your soul in the midst of it.

In that spirit I want you to know I thank God for you. I know that sometimes you just get weary. It is my prayer that you take some time along the journey to nourish your own soul; time to remember that you, too, are loved by God, cherished by God. It is so easy for us to get caught up in the season's schedule that we forget the meaning of the season.

Advent is a time to experience and think about God's coming to us and remember Jesus' promised return. And when the Journey is over we can get together and share pictures. It's like taking the trip all over again!



*Keep Shining,*

*Bill*

## MUMMS UPDATE

As you know, MUMMS travels constantly taking the Gospel to children, youth and adults....in fact, in the past 15 years we have put 550,000 miles on three vans. Through it all GOD HAS BEEN GOOD....GOD HAS PROVIDED and GOD HAS PREPARED THE WAY.

As I traveled some of those miles this fall, I watched the fields go from being full of corn stalks and soy beans to now, being barren. The HARVEST is complete.

Jesus told his disciples in Matthew 9 "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few: therefore ask the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest." Folks, it is still true today.....the harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few!!!!!! OVER and OVER GOD shows me people who are hungry to be loved and hungry to hear the Gospel. THESE ARE GOD'S PEOPLE and they are people who could be part of the "harvest" if we would just reach out, love, invite, and tell the wonderful stories of JESUS.

We are entering the Christmas season....the greatest time of the year to share HIS LOVE.

I invite you to look around you.....for it is true, "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few."

Who can you share the "Gift of JESUS" with? Forget the hassle of shopping in the stores.....go, share the gift that is eternal,

share the gift that is FREE, share the gift that TRANSFORMS lives....and remember, JESUS IS THE REASON FOR THIS SEASON!!!

I want to share a story with you about a 9 year old girl. I met her at JOY Camp. When the Christmas season drew near I called her single parent mom and asked about gifts. Mom gave me some sizes so I did the shopping and then called her back to make arrangements to deliver the gifts. During that conversation, I discovered they were NOT going to have a Christmas tree that year. So, as I made my way to the

home, I picked up a 10 dollar tree and a few decorations. No one was home when I shoved the things in the door. It was cold, snowy, a long 40 mile drive home and I was weary. When I arrived home, there on the answering machine I recieved this message, 'OH Peg, we have the tree up....it is the most beautiful tree I have EVER seen." A 10 dollar tree....standing in a home with gifts around it....just 1 mile from a United Methodist Church...yet, this family was invisible.

It is TRUE....the harvest is plentiful....but the laborers are few~~~~Go, share God's love and share YOURSELF....it will be the greatest

Christmas YOU have ever had!!!!!!

May you all have a blessed Thanksgiving and Christmas!!!!

Peg Egbert, director of Mobile UM Missionaries

## Please answer these questions if you would like to see your Church grow Again!

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**Do you wish there was an effective and there was a proven way of helping your church to become more vital?**

**Are you in a church with 80 people or less in Worship attendance?**

**Do you think that you could get the pastor and 10 percent of your attending worship (for example 80 people in worship attendance would be 8, or 50 people in worship attendance would be 5 etc.) to meet with other smaller churches over a period of time?**

If you answer yes to these three questions, then the Small Church Initiative (SCI) may be for you. SCI is part of the Healthy church Initiative. SCI was developed in Missouri and it has been used in Indiana. They have very been good in helping churches to become more vital and reaching out to their community more effectively.

We are looking for Churches who would like to be a part of this pilot project (Starting sometime after the first of the year) in the South Central District. If you are interested or you have some questions or concerns, please contact me at [paul.smith@iaumc.org](mailto:paul.smith@iaumc.org) or at 641.414.5771.

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Save the Date!

Jim Griffith is coming back for his workshop on "Worship and other Pastoral Priorities". He would like for the Staff –Parish Relations Committee, those on the Worship Committee and any others who are interested. The date will be Saturday April 28, 2012 from 10-3pm. We will be at the Family life Center in Albia, Iowa. The cost is 100 dollars per charge and the cost of lunch which will be announced later.

**DISTRICT OFFICE CALENDAR****November**

24-25 ~ Office Closed for Thanksgiving Holiday observance

**December**

2 ~ Bill and Paul to Ministry Cabinet

3 ~ Bill and Paul to CCMC

6-7 ~ Cabinet

10 ~ Superintendency Meeting

13-14 ~ FOM/LDM Meeting

23-26 ~ Office Closed for Holiday observance

27-30 ~ Paul and Sue on vacation

**January**

2 ~ Office Closed for Holiday observance

8 ~ Epiphany Party Chariton UMC @ 4:00 pm

10-11 Cabinet

12 ~ Bill and Paul to Ministry Cabinet

13 ~ Bill to Joint Taskforce

15 ~ Bill to speak on South Africa trip @ Centerville, First @ 9:30 am

21 ~ Paul to BGOM

23-25 ~ Paul to Garrett Evangelical

### Save the Date

On Saturday, April 28<sup>th</sup> the Conference Older Adult Council will be conducting a caregiving workshop. This event is made possible by a grant from the Center on Aging and Older Adult Ministries of the General Board of Discipleship.

The day promises to be beneficial to pastors, parish nurses, Christian educators and other church leaders. The workshop will provide local churches with resources to help those in their congregations who are involved in caregiving. It will be held at First UMC in Des Moines. The cost is \$25.

Watch your mailbox for a brochure and registration form. The form will also be placed on the Conference website. If you have questions, call Christine Anders at 515-244-6209.

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### Mission Work Trip to Haiti March 15-25, 2012

We need medical and construction personnel to work at a Haitian Artisans for Peace International Project (H.A.P.I) at Mikai which is north of Jacmel. The cost of the trip is \$1600.

HAPI is an United Methodist Project supported by U.M.C.O.R. Contact Rev. Hugh R. Stone for more information [Hugh8@juno.com](mailto:Hugh8@juno.com) 641-414-4876.

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### CEMENT for CHRIST'S CHURCH (in Abuja, Nigeria)

Do you know that a bag of cement (110 lb) is only \$13? That's 2000 naira in Nigeria! The "to be constructed" United Methodist Church in the Federal Capital of Abuja needs cement for their new church building. As a new church start, they are operating under new and strict city building codes. With various challenges before them and considering the strategic location of Abuja as the new capital of the nation of Nigeria, church members embarked of the huge project of church construction. Under the leadership of Rev. Matthew Daniel Dangombe, a plan is in place for an edifice that will include a church/Sunday School building with conference hall, a guest house with guest rooms. This is a BIG project but trusting God to lead the way, the Abuja UMC Building Planning Committee requests assistance from their Iowa Partners.

When we Iowans travel to Nigeria on a yearly basis, we fly to and through Abuja. Rev. Matthew meets us at the airport, transports the team to a hotel just opposite the church site and returns us back to the airport for our onward flight to Yola. It would be wonderful to be hosted in the new church guest quarters!

Construction has already been started on the church property with cement block laid to the window level. Your gift of \$13 can buy a bag of cement to continue to cement the block walls of the UMC of Jesus Christ in Abuja, the new capital city in the middle of the country.

Gifts may be sent to the Conference Treasurer with notation: INP, #230, Abuja UMC.

Beverly Nolte

5221 Village Run Ave. #604

Des Moines IA 50317

515 266 4186 home

## Feeling Un-Merry during the Holidays

The Holiday season is portrayed as a joyous and happy time; filled with celebrations, happy family gatherings, and cherished memories. For those who have suffered the death of a loved one, the loss of a job, a serious accident or trauma, or the effects of substance abuse; the Christmas season generally is not happy or joyous. It is a time marked with sadness, sorrow, emptiness, anger, depression, and loneliness.

The common expectation is that we are to be “Merry” at Christmas no matter what our circumstances or feelings. This causes grief-stricken persons to feel like they are out of step with the rest of the world by not being “in the holiday spirit” even though they have a valid reason for being “un-merry”. How does one get through the holiday season in the midst of grief or unfortunate circumstances?

- Remember that your feelings are valid. Don't tell yourself not to be sad or to “buck-up”
- Embrace your memories of times past, this is one of the most honored legacies from your loved one and your earlier life. Talk about your memories and your grief, rather than ignoring your feelings.
- Be understanding about your physical and emotional limits. Grief causes you to be easily fatigued and have low energy. Listen to your body and don't try to push yourself.
- Be with supportive, comforting people. Don't isolate yourself. Find those persons who will encourage you to be yourself and will accept your feelings, both happy and sad.
- Think about what family traditions you want to continue and what you will do different. It is OK **not** to do a tradition or to wait a year or two. Do what is meaningful for you now.
- Accept that your emotions will surface unexpectedly as you face various aspects of the holiday season. Different sights, smells, memories, and activities will trigger your grief in abrupt and unforeseen ways. Be gentle with yourself as you experience those moments.

Rely on your faith, let God's love embrace and surround you as you cope with your feelings and memories. Participate in those Christmas activities that nourish and give you a sense of comfort and peace.

*“The Lord is near to the brokenhearted, and saves the crushed in spirit .”*

*(Psalm 34:18, RSV)*

Most of all, remember that you are grieving because this person and/or situation was important to you. You loved and were loved. I invite you to share your sadness, sorrow, and heartache with God and others who care.

Kae Tritle, RN

Wellness Coordinator

monthly Dec. 2011



*Epiphany*

**The South Central District Epiphany Dinner for Professionals in Ministry, Retired Clergy and Spouses and Guests will be held at the Chariton United Methodist Church, 923 Roland Ave, Chariton, Iowa 50049 on Saturday, January 14, 2012 3:30 — 6:30 p.m.**

**Please send registration to the District Office, PO Box 282, Osceola, Iowa 50213 by **Friday, January 6, 2012.****

**Reservations: Please list by name.**

**Name(s)**

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**YOU ARE NEEDED (in Nigeria)**

Yes, **YOU** are needed for the 2012 Iowa work team from June 10 – July 3. We're looking for persons with some knowledge of or skills in the following:

- Electricians to install solar panels
- General construction/maintenance, painters
- Librarians to reorganize Bishop Rueben Job Seminary Library
- Elementary and theological teachers to offer in-service training/short term classes
- Office/Business Manager/Financial Accountant/Bookkeeper
- Computer Technicians with IT experience, computer teachers
- School of Ministry Presenters on leadership development, bookkeeping/accounting,
- Church planting, Muslim/Christian issues, Bible studies
- Health Care professionals are needed to join the medical team but will return back to Iowa June 29-30. A week of free eye surgeries will be held during this time so any eye care medical personnel are desperately needed. Dentists to offer scaling, extractions and to address dental needs are a priority.

The trip cost will be approximately \$3,000. An orientation will be held on Sat. Feb. 25 in Des Moines. For additional information and application form (due Feb. 1) contact: Beverly Nolte, 5221 Village Run Ave. #604, Des Moines 50317, 515 266 4186, e-mail: [bnmedical@aol.com](mailto:bnmedical@aol.com).

Beverly Nolte  
5221 Village Run Ave. #604  
Des Moines IA 50317  
515 266 4186 home

A Note from Linda Remster in the Episcopal Office

Church Officer Form entry on the dashboard is due at your charge conference no later than January 1, 2012. The equalization grid is now available online. Please remember it is important to complete and submit this form with lay member names no later than January 1, 2012, to your district office.

United Methodist Church-Iowa Area  
2301 Rittenhouse St  
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Osceola, IA 50213

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We are on the web!

[www.iaumc.org/districts/detail/17](http://www.iaumc.org/districts/detail/17)

*"The child to be born  
will be holy;  
he will be called  
Son of God."*



*We would like to wish a  
very blessed Christmas to  
the South Central District  
from your district staff:*

*Bill*

*Paul*

*Sue*

