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Methodist Church

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LOWER LIGHTS



Reaching Out: New Places for New and Different People

LET THE LOWER
LIGHTS
BE BURNING!

Now all the tax collectors and sinners were coming near to listen to him.

And the Pharisees and the scribes were grumbling and saying,

"This fellow welcomes sinners and eats with them."

Luke 15:1-2 NRSV



JULIS C. TRIMBLE,
IOWA AREA BISHOP



BILL POLAND,
CONFERENCE
SUPERINTENDENT



PAUL SMITH,
FIELD OUTREACH
MINISTER

Luke 15 is one of the most compelling chapters for me in all of Holy Scripture. It is also a chapter we would do well to consider in the church today. Luke is telling us something important about Jesus. Notice in the first verse that all the tax collectors and sinners were coming to listen to him. They were being drawn to him. Do you ever wonder why?

What was it about Jesus that made him so attractive to such people? We certainly don't seem to reflect that attraction in the church today. I remember reading a story in Philip Yancey's book, What's So Amazing About Grace the story of a woman whose addiction to drugs had led her to a life of prostitution. She became pregnant and gave birth to a little girl. Her habit became so severe that she eventually started prostituting her young daughter because she could make more money. According to Yancey a friend of his began to work with the woman. As he began to work with her he suggested a church who could offer her real help. "Church" she said, "you want me to go to Church?" I feel bad enough about myself already." Her impression of the church was a place that judged; a place of condemnation.

Jesus is not that way. He offers hope and the possibility of a new life, not just someday, but from the day you meet him. Sure he got angry, but notice with whom. It was always the religious folk who should have known better. They were people who were supposed to know God and what God is like. Instead they could not recognize God's presence as it stood right there before them. Luke tells us that Jesus responds to their hard-heartedness by telling three stories of lost things that were found, a lost sheep, a lost coin, and a lost son. In each of the three stories he seeks to teach something about the nature of God and heaven. In the last story he invites us to learn something about ourselves. Notice in that story that the older brother has trouble recognizing the younger as being his brother at all. He refers to him as "this son of yours." He experiences no joy that his lost brother has found his way home. He takes no joy that his father has received back a son. He must even be reminded by the father that all the father possessed has always been at the older son's disposal. The older son cannot see because he has placed himself above his brother.



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In Jesus we see our God who is rightly above all things yet has chosen to take a place with the worst of sinners and call them to be friends, sisters and brothers even. He does not condemn, nor place preconditions upon them. He invites and welcomes; then celebrates when they respond. Do we mirror this attitude of Jesus? Do we seek out people on the outside as he did? Do we run to meet them when they make a gesture toward us? What must change in us? These are some important questions as we approach the Lenten Season. They are also helpful as we contemplate creating New Places for New People. May we all be true disciples of Jesus who follow where he leads.

Keep Shining,

Bill

Hunger Relief Grant Application

As part of the Thanksgiving Ingathering held each November, undesignated cash gifts and sale receipts are received in addition to kits and designated cash. A portion of these undesignated funds are returned to the 8 districts to disburse as grants to combat hunger in our local communities through our food pantries.

If your church is involved with a hunger project, you may apply for a portion of the available funds.

Application for Hunger Relief Grant Funds

Due Date May 1, 2012

UM Church(es) Sponsoring this Application _____

Name of Project _____

Address _____ Telephone _____

Contact Person _____ Tax Identification Number _____

Average Number of Households Served Monthly in 2011 _____

Average Number of Individuals Served Monthly in 2011 _____

Geographical Area Served _____

Narrative, to include how the grant would be used

Has this program received an Ingathering Hunger Relief Grant before?

___yes ___no

Please attach a 2011 year-end financial report or your most recent report.

Signature _____

Please send by May 1, 2012 to: South Central District BOGM %Janice Bolger at jjbolger@iowatelecom.net or 912 Woodland View Dr., Centerville, Iowa 52544.

In Sunday's Des Moines Register dated, January 8, 2012, there is an article entitled, "More Americans simply ignoring religion". In the article it has some interesting figures;

--44 PERCENT TOLD THE 2011 BALLYOR UNIVERSITY RELIGION SURVEY THEY SPEND NO TIME SEEKING "ETERNAL WISDOM" AND 19 PERCENT SAID, "IT'S USELESS TO SEARCH FOR MEANING."

--46 PERCENT TOLD A 2011 SURVEY BY NASHVILLE-BASED EVANGELICAL RESEARCH AGENCY LIFEWAY RESEARCH THEY NEVER WONDER WHETHER THEY WILL GO TO HEAVEN.

What does this mean for us in the Church today? How will we respond?

I have been reading Rueben P. Job's new book, Three Simple questions, knowing the God of Love, Hope, and purpose, and he writes the following, "To turn away from any of God's children is to turn away from God, who resides within, sustains, and loves each one beyond our comprehension, just as God loves us.....As Christians...it seems there is little agreement among Christians-as there is little agreement among all people-about who we are as God's children. We divide ourselves by race, social standing, wealth or income level, level of education or what we consider right theology or pure living. There seems to have been an eclipse of what we Christians hold in common with all people as we use markers to distinguish ourselves or separate ourselves from the larger family. Each division only makes it more difficult to remember who we are as God's beloved children." (Page 56-57)

WHAT CAN HELP US TO REMEMBER WHO WE ARE?

WHAT WILL SPEAK LOUDER THAN ANYTHING ELSE?

WHAT IS GOD CALLING US TO DO?

Blessings,

Paul

JIM GRIFFITH WILL BE BACK ON THE DISTRICT!

Save the Date!

Jim Griffith is coming back for his workshop on "Strategic Preaching and Worship". He would like for the Pastor, Staff –Parish Relations Committee, those on the Worship Committee, Praise Team or Choir members 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.

UPCOMING EVENTS TO NOTE ON YOUR CALENDAR

February

- 1-2 ~ Cabinet
- 5 ~ Bill to speak on his trip to Africa
at Centerville, First at 10:00 am
- 6-10 ~ Seminary Visits
- 11 ~ New Places for New People
- 17 ~ FOM/LDM Meeting
- 17-19 ~ CCMC Retreat
- 12-25 Bill on Vacation
- 28 ~ HCI Coaches Training

March

- 1 ~ PLD-2
- 3 ~ SCI
- 5-6 ~ FOM Meeting
- 10 ~ LLD-2
- 10 ~ MUMMS Board Meeting
- 12 ~ DCMC Meeting
- 13-14 ~ Cabinet
- 15 ~ Ministry Cabinet
- 17 ~ Superintendency Committee Meeting
- 19-21 ~ Paul to Garrett Evangelical for training
- 24 ~ New Places for New People—Follow-up
- 27-28 ~ Cabinet
- 29 ~ PLD-2

APRIL

- 06~ Good Friday - District Office Closed
- 08~ Easter Sunday
- 12-13 ~ Cabinet
- 14 ~ LLD-2
- 17 ~ District Committee on Ministry
- 18 ~ FOM/LDM Meeting
- 24-May 4 ~ General Conference Tampa, Florida
- 28 ~ Worship and Pastoral Priorities—Jim Griffith—
Albia, Trinity

MAY:

- 5 ~ District Conference and Pre-Conference @ Chariton, First 10:00 am – 3:00 pm
- 12 ~ PLD-2 & LLD-2
- 15-16 ~ Cabinet
- 17 ~ Ministry Cabinet
- 23-24 ~ FOM Meeting
- 28 ~ Memorial Day—District Office Closed

JUNE:

- 1 ~ Cabinet
- 2-5~ 169th Session of the Iowa Annual Conference ~
Des Moines
- 6 ~ Cabinet
- 9 ~ Superintendency Committee Meeting
- 18-19 ~ FOM/LDM Meeting
- 20 ~ Cabinet

Intentional Self-Care Through FIT

In January many people make plans to do better at taking care of themselves such as: losing weight, eating better, or wanting to make family time a priority rather than putting work ahead of family. In other words, to improve their health habits. This translates into what is known within wellness and health promotion as “self-care”. While we know we “should” take better care of ourselves, it is often hard to do. Several barriers include:

Knowing you want to change your eating habits and physical activity, but not knowing where or how to start. You have tried before, but have gotten discouraged due to the amount of effort required to keep doing the new patterns.

A constantly-changing schedule squeezes both your time and resolve in maintaining your new and improved life-style.

The people around you may unconsciously be resistant and/or un-supportive.

Your work environment could be detrimental to your efforts in improving your health habits.

An unconscious feeling that other persons and their needs should come first and that it is selfish to place my self-care practices/needs first.

If you resonate with several of the above statements, you are not alone. So, how does one go about coping with such barriers? I invite you to use the FIT acronym.

Focus: Most of us try to do too much too fast. Focus on the **one** change that you really want to do. It needs to be do-able and achieve-able on a daily and/or weekly basis. Use a time frame of 30 days and keep your goal small. For example: aim to eat at least 3 servings of fruits or veggies 3-5 days a week; or intentional physical activity for 15-20 minutes 3 days a week, or intentional family or devotional time 1 day per week. Each month, revise your goal up or down according to what has worked or not worked.

Invest: Intentionally invest your time and energy in the **one** change that you have decided to do. To be intentional, you need to think about how you are going to adjust your schedule and will need to plan ahead. This means making a shopping list and putting the fruits and veggies at eye-level in the refrigerator. Do you like to exercise alone for meditation or do you need a scheduled appointment with a person or group? What time of day works best in your schedule or personal energy level for your physical activity? Planning and being intentional is investing in yourself.

Tell: You need to tell another person of your planned change and enlist them as a helpful partner to keep you on track. 80% of us are trying to make a health change, but only 20% of us are successful because we attempt it alone. As you think about your support partner, consider the following; mutual trust and attentive listening is crucial, weekly check-in's are most helpful, you need to be open to honest feedback, and the best person may not be your spouse.

Let's keep focused on that goal, those of us who want everything God has for us. If any of you have something else in mind, something less than total commitment, God will clear your blurred vision, you'll see it, yet. Now that we're on the right track, let's stay on it (Phil 3:13-14 The Message)

I invite you to consider how you would like to change your health habits by using the above FIT. Let me know how I can be of help as you work to embrace a more health-full lifestyle. Bishop Trimble's Thanksgiving blog outlines his FIT goal at <http://goo.gl/6hzpT>. I invite you to respond.

Kae Tritle, RN

Wellness Coordinator

District news Jan. 2012

New Places for New People



This winter you and other clergy, ministry professionals and laity from your church will have the exciting opportunity to participate in training and equipping gatherings that will provide space to prayerfully discern where God may be leading you and your worshipping community to be engage in creative relationship building, outreach, and transformational ministries in 'New Places' with 'New People!'

During the one day gathering, there will be time spent in discussion and framing around what "New Places for New People" is about; stories shared from local churches in your district and around the Conference about some ways that they have creatively contextualized ministries in new places with new people; as well as intentional time spent discerning together with others where God may be leading you and your congregation to engage in creative and contextual ministries reaching outside the walls of your church.

The gathering will provide resources and practical tools that you can take home and begin to put into action in your local church and community. New Places for New People is an intentional process of ministry and leadership development that will provide continual support, new resources, and mutual mentoring and collaboration with other laity and clergy in your district.

We hope that you will take part in this exciting opportunity and bring other leaders from your congregation to begin to engage in the movement towards ministries for 'New People in New Places!' For more information, please contact any of the Leadership Development Ministers: scott.hibben@iaumc.org; eric.guy@iaumc.org; nsy.wittstruck@iaumc.org; dave.hobbs@iaumc.org.

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ALL CLERGY AND OTHER PROFESSIONALS IN MINISTRY ARE INVITED TO TAKE PART IN THIS EXCITING OPPORTUNITY TO DISCERN WHERE GOD IS CALLING YOU TO BE IN RELATIONSHIP AND MINISTRY IN NEW PLACES WITH NEW PEOPLE!

South Central District

February 11, 2012

9:30 am – 12:00 pm

Chariton, UMC

923 Roland Ave.

Chariton 50049

641-774-5023

South Central District Epiphany Gathering

We would like to say Thank You to all clergy and spouses that attended the South Central District Epiphany Gathering on Saturday, January 21, 2012. It was a inspirational time of gathering and fellowship. We would also like to say a big Thank You to Bishop Julius C. Trimble for his uplifting and encouraging sermon. We truly appreciated the announcement that Bishop Trimble gave about Rev. Bill Poland continuing as our District Superintendent for the upcoming year. It was also a great privilege to us all to spend some time with Mrs. Racelder Grandberry-Trimble and Rev. J. Robert Burkhart .

Your District Staff

Harry Denman Evangelism Award

The Board of Discipleship of the Iowa Annual Conference is now accepting nominations for Clergy, Laity and Youth for the Harry Denman Evangelism Awards. Denman was known for his dedication to introducing people to his friend Jesus. He founded the Foundation for Evangelism in 1949 and believed that it was the business of every Christian to be an evangelist. Anyone may nominate a person in any of the three categories of Clergy, Laity or Youth (persons age 18 or younger).

Begun in 1981 to honor United Methodist clergy and lay persons in each annual conference who exhibit unusual and outstanding efforts for the work on Christian Evangelism, the Harry Denman Evangelism Award helps draw attention to evangelism in the local church. Those eligible for these prestigious awards are persons who are effective in helping others to experience the transforming love of God through Jesus Christ. Each annual conference is encouraged to honor one YOUTH (age 18 years or younger), one LAY person and one CLERGY person from their conference each year. Anyone- laity, District Superintendents, or pastors-- may nominate someone from any of the three categories. Contact Sue at the SC District Office for applications.

MUMMS UPDATE

Happy New Year.....2012 and what does God have in store for each of us????

The only way we are going to know that answer is to be IN TUNE with GOD every day....praying, listening, studying His word and being QUIET ...allowing the word of God to penetrate our hearts.

Just yesterday I had a conversation with my husband that began me thinking about just how much do we Christians LISTEN to God. The topic was busy...busy friends who don't have time to even eat out.....busy neighbors who don't have time to neighbor.....busy siblings who don't have time to answer the cell phone and elementary age grandchildren who have FULL schedules even on Sat and Sun. It is a fact and it makes me wonder.....WHERE IS GOD FITTING INTO ALL THIS?????

Then this morning my devotions were from Luke 10:38-42. OOPS!!!! The message straight from JESUS....."Mary has chosen the better part, which will not be taken away from her." We know the story....Martha the BUSY BEE....Mary sitting at JESUS' feet SOAKING up the word which NOTHING or NO ONE can take away from her.

Our world is busy...our churches are busy....committees, meetings, projects, planning, and it the midst of all that.....DO WE LOSE WHY WERE WE CREATED?????

BUSY churches are not necessarily serving God in the way He calls us to serve.

For example....do you lack children in your worship service? Have you heard someone say, "there are no children out there", OR how long has it been since you held a VBS?

Give us a chance and MUMMS will come show you the children!!!! They are there...they are hungry to be loved and GOD SEES them.

What is God's will for your church ...for you????? Jesus' words to Martha give us deep insight into HIS heart. HE first wants us at HIS feet.

Above all, HE wants us to learn from HIM!!!!

My prayer for MUMMS is to.....continue to learn from HIM....to be HIS hands, feet and voice in a broken, lonely and desperate world.

We welcome the opportunity to come help you reach out and love in Jesus' name!!!!

Have a blessed year!!!

Peg Egbert, director of MUMMS

641-919-1533

The Emotional Challenge of Change

Remember last month when you were really thinking about taking better care of yourself? Things like: exercise 3 times a week, eat less junk food and eat more fruit, or take a full day off each week, or do daily devotions. I encouraged you to use the FIT acronym: Focus on one doable change, Invest your time and energy in that one change, and Tell a helpful partner about your change. Here it is a month later and you still aren't doing what you thought you wanted to do. The apostle Paul had the same problem:

"What I don't understand about myself is that I decide one way, but then I act another, doing things I absolutely despise." (Rom. 7: 15 The Message)

These mixed feeling forth for and against your proposed change are a normal part of the change process. It is called ambivalence. We want to, but we don't want to. Humans like things to stay the same; we resist change from what feels comfortable. We need to recognize that change happens on the emotional level. People do not process change rationally. In order for you to emotionally agree to a change, you need to commit to the change process.

X I know that a change needs to happen.

X This change will benefit me.

X I choose to take personal ownership to help the change happen.

As part of the emotional acceptance of the change that you need to make, really look at the "why" of the change. Dialogue internally with yourself about the reasons for the change. Look at the emotions that are causing you to resist the change. If you internally and emotionally fight the change, all the motivational tricks in the world won't help you. When you really get in touch with why you want to change, lasting change is much more likely.

Change is a process, allow the process to unfold. Remind yourself that you are choosing to change as way to honor yourself. Consider the following as you emotionally work through the change that you are planning:

- What are you changing? *Explain your change in one sentence.*
- What will be different? *Explain your goal in one sentence.*
- What will you lose as a result of this change?
- What will you gain as a result of this change?
- List your reasons and emotions that are resisting the change.
- Give yourself time to process the change.
- Don't let fear stop you from changing.
- Most of all, allow God and others to help you in this process.

"Keep alert, stand firm in your faith, be courageous, be strong." (1 Corinth. 16:13RSV)

As you continue on your self-care journey, I invite you to consider your emotions for making health-full changes. Along with God, they may be your strongest resource.

Kae Tritle, RN

Wellness Coordinator

Feb. 2012

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We are on the web!

www.iaumc.org/districts/detail/17

The Iowa Annual Conference website has a new look as of December 14, 2011.

Colors and images are new. Navigation is easier. Access to information is even more direct.

Endorsed by the Communications Advisory Team, the Communications Ministry Team and Conference's IT Manager have worked with Brick River to create a bold, fresh new look. The home page is entirely contained "above the fold," without scrolling down for information, as in the past.

Six "big buttons" lead directly to content within the website and from external sources. A media library button leads to the photo gallery and video archive. A newsletter archives button leads directly to compilations of eight different Conference publications. Quick links at the top of the page include access to the camping and retreat ministries. Directories of clergy and churches are in highlighted buttons at the top.

Featured news stories/videos links are connected to rotating images at the left. Top news stories are listed at the right along with a link to "all news" and events.

Images of the Iowa State capitol and a farm silo depict the diverse nature of the state, at the top of the home page. Icon links to

Twitter and Facebook are also in a line along the top, just to the right of the search box.

