



Monday Musings

December 19, 2011

Rose M. Blank

Conference Superintendent

Southeast District

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Greetings,

“In those days...” Luke’s gospel account of Jesus’ birth begins with these familiar words. He recounts the story of Joseph and Mary who travel from Nazareth to Bethlehem to be registered according to the mandate given by Emperor Augustus. While there, Mary gives birth to the child, her firstborn son, who is laid in a manger. A cattle feeding trough is hardly visualized as a place of welcome hospitality but it became a haven of safety for them when they needed it most. Luke’s story is filled with persons who are changed because of the news – shepherds who hear it from angels, others who hear it from the shepherds. There are angels and shepherds praising and glorifying. There is the shepherds’ terror and fear as well as wonder and amazement. There’s Mary’s pondering and treasuring the events that have just happened. No matter how many times I read the story, I experience all of these things as well. The story of Christ’s birth is a story that is ever new, a story that invites us in to ponder and treasure in our own hearts, a story that bears sharing just as the shepherds did.

As I ponder and as I treasure the ways in which God’s presence is born in my own heart and life, I wonder how this story will make a difference in the lives of people and in the ministries of our churches. What unlikely places will Christ’s birth be made real in the lives of those who seek purpose, healing and meaning for their lives? As we think about new places for new people, what modern day mangers are in our communities where Christ can be made alive to those in need of his hope and grace? What places can the shepherds of our day come to gather to see this thing the angels proclaimed had taken place? What places of hospitality can we offer to those who need a haven of safety in the midst of the stresses of this world? How might we share the “good news of great joy for all people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord.” (Luke 2: 10-11 NRSV)

I think the answers are in how we embody the love of the One who came to be Love among us. Perhaps it’s in this clipping I ran across the other day. Tucked in the pages of one of my Advent books, this selection from an old *alive now*, were written by Bonnie B. Belasic and entitled “A Living Sign.”

I know not always how God comes,
but that God comes – this I know:
 in an obscure stable,
 in splashing waters,
 in the breaking of bread
and often, my friend,
incarnate in you,
for God, I believe, still comes in the flesh, in
people.

Now and always

may the Christ in you
 keep you
 a sign of living love
 and love living among us.

In these remaining days of Advent, in the days of Christmas, and every day throughout the year,
 may the joy of Christ be present in you that you may be 'a sign of living love and love living
 among us.'

Pondering with you,

Rose M. Blank



January 2012

<i>Sunday</i>	<i>Monday</i>	<i>Tuesday</i>	<i>Wednesday</i>	<i>Thursday</i>	<i>Friday</i>	<i>Saturday</i>
1 New Year's Day	2	3	4	5	6	7
8 DCMC 2:30-4:00 Nominating Comm. 4:30- 6:30	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16 SE Dist Holiday Party 6:00 PM, IWC, Social Hall	17 Stewardship meeting @ 4:30	18	19 dCOM 8:30- 1:00	20	21
22	23 Superintendency/ FOM meeting 4:30 @ Mt. P, 1st	24	25	26	27	28 ERT training
2 SE Dist. Learning Event ERT training	30 ORDERS DAY @ Marshalltown 10:00-3:00	31				

Upcoming Events

January 16, 2012 – District Clergy Holiday Party –Mark your calendar. You will not want to miss it. It will start at 6:00 PM and will be held at the Social Hall, Iowa Wesleyan College in Mt.

Pleasant, IA. The entertainment will be the Southeast Iowa Players. For more information, contact Jean Carpenter in the Southeast District Office. Be sure to RSVP as soon as possible so the college can order the party food before they go on their Christmas break.

January 28 and 29, 2012 - Early Response Team (ERT) training will be held at Island UMC, 2598 Stewart Rd., Muscatine, Jan. 27-28. (Fri. 6-9 pm; Sat. 8 am – 3 pm). The mission of an ERT is to provide a caring Christian presence in the aftermath of a disaster. Those completing the training and passing a background check will be certified. Cost is \$18 for materials and background check. Please contact Becky Bartenhagen with questions or to register. Call 563-264-1537 or 563-260-1099 or email bartrb@louisacomm.net. Please inform your congregations of this opportunity. We ask that registrations be in by Jan. 20.

January 29, 2012 - First United Methodist Church in Mount Pleasant will be the host for our Southeast District annual learning event on Sunday, January 29, 2012, from 2:30 to 5 PM.

Workshops will be offered for many of the committees of the local church, including Staff-Parish Relations, Finance, Trustees, and the Church Council. Participants will be introduced to the basic roles of each committee. New leaders and members of these committees are especially invited to attend. Specialized ministries will be discussed as well, including best practices in stewardship, the role of the treasurer, the role of the financial secretary, developing an intentional discipling system (how to help persons discover and deepen a life of faith), and identifying and applying spiritual gifts of members to ministry.

In addition, workshops also will be presented on a variety of creative ministries being employed by local churches, including community gardening, puppetry, and environmental justice. Make plans to join us for an afternoon of inspiration and support to further our witness to Christ in our communities.

January 30, 2012 – Orders of Elders, Deacons, Fellowship of Associate Members, Local Pastors and Diaconal Ministers –First UMC in Marshalltown.

February 1-4, 2012 --“We invite you to help Nigerian clergywomen attend the first African Clergywomen’s Consultation from Feb. 1 – 4, 2012 at Africa University, Zimbabwe. There are eleven Nigerian clergywomen who want to attend. And the cost for each one is \$1,600. So you see the difficulty they face. So we are asking clergy in Iowa help make this possible for sisters in Christ. Funds may be marked: INP, #230, Clergywomen Consultation. Please advise Beverly Nolte, (bnmedical@aol.com) co-chairperson of the INP, of your support.”

February 26, 2012 – New Places for New People. The Conference Leadership Development Team is planning this event which will be held at First UMC in Fairfield. It will be from 2:30 PM to 5:30 PM. We will give you more details as we receive them.

April 22, 2012 – SE District Conference – Wapello UMC. More details later.

Announcements

Bishop Trimble is encouraging people to join him and his wife Racelder Grandberry-Trimble on the **Holy Land Classic 2012 tour** beginning February 3, 2012. The tour will be 10 days of Biblical discovery including Jerusalem, Galilee, Bethlehem and Nazareth. You can find more information at www.eo.travel/find_trip Tour=HL12 Date 020312T or www.eo.travelwithus.com

Kingston UMC has a mission project they thought might be of interest to you. Every Friday, they bake cakes and banana bread in canning jars and send to military overseas. We have both recipes in the district office. If you are interested, please contact Jean Carpenter.

Joys and Concerns

Prayers are requested for the people of North and South Korea, Philippines as well as people who will be traveling over the holidays.

If you have any joys or concerns you'd like to submit for the next Monday Musings, please contact Jean Carpenter at the SE District Office. You can reach her at 319-986-2095 or jean.carpenter@iaumc.org.

Birthdays and Anniversaries

January Birthdays

01/01 Linda Harding
01/05 Larry Love
01/07 Kerrin Kirkpatrick
01/15 Dong Hun Shin
01/15 Steve Braudt (husband of Anne Lippincott)
01/16 Cliff Neipert
01/17 Judy Hembry
01/17 Jackie Thompson
01/24 Tim Frasher

January Anniversaries

01/12 Ron and Beth Carlson

If we have missed your birthday or anniversary, please contact Jean Carpenter at the Southeast District office.