



# Iowa Annual Conference

Edition of The United Methodist Reporter



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August 29, 2008  
Vol.155 No.17

## Announcing the Second Round of the “Practices” (Five Practices of Fruitful Congregations)

by Scott Hibben

Nearly 500 individuals from over 130 churches all across Iowa got a “first taste” of the Five Practices of Fruitful Congregations last April when we met in three different locations within our Conference to learn more about applying the “Five Practices” within our own local churches. Now is your chance to experience the second of these three highly received workshops, this September 20th.

This “second round” will feature the following sites and themes: Vinton: Radical Hospitality & Passionate Worship; Winterset: Intentional Faith Development & Life-Long Evangelism; and Cherokee: Risk-Taking Mission & Service & Extravagant Generosity. Each workshop will begin at 10:00 and conclude by 3:00. You pick which site(s) and location(s) work best for you (such as your worship committee going to Passionate Worship or your Evangelism team to Intentional Faith Development). Some churches have sent multiple teams to two or three sites, and some have indicated that they want to “go back”/send additional teams to a theme they were part of in April. Any combination is possible.

All this is because there is a one-time only registration fee of \$50. For that fee you have access at all three workshops (last April 12 and this coming September 20 & November 8), receive Bishop Robert Schnase’s book **Five Practices of Faithful Congregations** as well as Bishop Ruben Job’s book **Three Simple Rules**, 6 copies of each presentation and a complete DVD set of all three workshops. In addition, over the nine month duration of this series of three workshops, through “homework” assignments that you’ll prepare before each workshop and the “covenant” that your church will be working on at each workshop, you’ll develop your own custom focused Ministry Action Plan (MAP) to “apply at home”. Sounds good, doesn’t it?

So now is the time to register. If you’ve previously registered, all you need to do is contact Dee Dee Sobotka (at [deedee.sobotka@iaumc.org](mailto:deedee.sobotka@iaumc.org)) and let her know which site(s) you’ll be coming to; then by September 14th let her know the number of meal reservations to hold for you. If you haven’t yet registered, it’s not too late. Again, contact Dee Dee and let her know your site(s) and send in your \$50 check. (Make the check payable to the Conference.) She’ll send you the books and other materials, then remember to get the number of meal reservations in to her by September 14th. “Homework” assignments will be sent out to you as soon as you register, so register early in order to have the time you need to prepare.

If you have questions or any special needs, feel free to contact any one of your Leadership Development Ministers: Scott Hibben ([scott.hibben@iaumc.org](mailto:scott.hibben@iaumc.org)), Eric Guy ([eric.guy@iaumc.org](mailto:eric.guy@iaumc.org)), Kevin Gowdy ([kevin.gowdy@iaumc.org](mailto:kevin.gowdy@iaumc.org)) or Naomi Sea Young Wittstruck ([nsy.wittstruck@iaumc.org](mailto:nsy.wittstruck@iaumc.org)).

### Also Coming Soon:

**Practicing Extravagant Generosity** – Listen for word at our September 20th workshops for how we will be sending out work teams later this year and well into 2009 practicing what we’ve learned, directed at tornado/flood relief within Iowa.

Conference-wide “**Day of Celebration with Bishop Schnase**”, Saturday, January 10, 2009, from 10:00-3:00, at Oakwood UMC, Pleasant Hill (eastern suburb of Des Moines) as we focus on Fruitfulness and Excellence. Put the dates on your calendars, now!



## Rising Above Life’s Storms

by Heather Monthei

TV cameras no longer dominate the street corners of our flood ravaged communities, and news anchors have returned to their studios leaving piles of tornado debris in the archives of their reports. The devastation our state has suffered in the past few months is far from our memories, however, and the monumental task of recovery will loom ahead for some time to come.

Whether or not we live in towns affected by this summer’s storms, each of us has felt the impact in some way. We have either felt the effects first hand or have some connection to someone who has. Most obvious is the damage done to homes and businesses, but the heartbreaking destruction is reflected in the faces of the people who have lost not only their homes and belongings, but their livelihoods, memories, and hope for the future.

As God’s representatives on earth we, as Christians, are called to minister to those in need, but the task before us is monumental. We need to understand more of the “how’s and why’s” to better enable us to reach out. An invitation was extended to pastors in the Northeast District to meet with UMCOR National Consultant Mary Gaudreau. Participants were given the opportunity to explore the emotional and spiritual impact of the recent events to enable them to respond better to the issues.

A simple beanbag game illustrated the chaos our communities have been facing. As the workshop attendees played, they experienced the same questions and emotions with which many disaster victims have been dealing: confusion, loss of support systems, and withdrawal as questions mount: why me, what did I do wrong, who is in charge, who can I trust, and who has authority? What will make me feel safe again? Is there hope?

Each phase of a disaster has three parts: (1) Rescue--immediate concerns such as restricted access, searching for survivors, finding shelters, and dealing with water levels. The media is there to give coverage to the outside world often for more than a week. (2) Relief—obtaining temporary housing, cleaning, and receiving donations. Reality sets in, tensions may surface, and often withdrawal occurs. This phase may take more than three months. (3) Recovery--getting back to normal. The displaced victims gain a feeling of safety and trust, and the end of chaos finally arrives. This step could take several years. Most people come out stronger from the experience, but violence can erupt over unresolved issues.

Please take advantage of each and every opportunity our Conference offers to learn more about how to respond to disasters. The better prepared we are, the better we can respond to those in the face of disaster.

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of the United Methodist Reporter**

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**Bishop**

Gregory V. Palmer  
dkbrockmeyer@iaumc.org

**Editor**

Arthur McClanahan,  
Director of Communications  
amclanahan@iaumc.org

**Communications Ministry Team**

Kevin Evers  
Communications Manager  
kevers@iaumc.org

Darci Hartman

Communications Assistant  
darci.hartman@iaumc.org

**Communications Advisory Team**

David Wendel, Chairperson

**Circulation**

Jill Stanton  
Pastoral Record/Clergy  
Rolls//Information Reports  
jill.stanton@iaumc.org

**Production/Publisher**

UMR Communications Inc.,  
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Iowa Conference Center  
2301 Rittenhouse Street  
Des Moines, IA 50321-3101  
515.283.1991  
www.iaumc.org

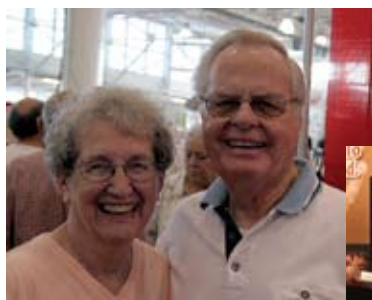
e-mail for news submissions:  
reporter@iaumc.org

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## You actually prayed out loud with someone at the State Fair booth?!

by Scott Hibben

That was the response someone gave me when they heard what I had done – right there in the aisle, beside our United Methodist State Fair booth, surrounded by the crowds of people nudging their way forward. And yes, I did. (Actually, I prayed with several people.)

As one of the volunteers at our Church booth last week, I took it upon myself to just say “Hello” to people as they passed by. And with this “opening,” I further engaged all kinds of people – commenting on their t-shirts celebrating Century Farms or that they were a Fair exhibitor or they were there for a special day/with a special group or what have you. Of some I even asked, “Where are you from?” – which was the question that led me to have a deeper conversation and one of those prayer times with one elderly gentleman.

“I’m from California, now,” he said, “but originally Iowa.” “Oh, where?” I asked, and he told me the town and Iowa United Methodist Church he still calls home. “So what led you to California?” I wondered; with sadness he proceeded to tell me about his wife, who for ten years has had Alzheimer’s and is now in a care center, in California, near their daughter. I shared with him that my mother has Alzheimer’s disease, too, and so our conversation went deeper as he exposed his pain, his sorrow, his love for this woman he has called his “wife” for “57 years next week,” for whom he now can do so little. So, what to do? Well, that’s when I asked him, “Can I pray for you and your wife, right here, right now?” Friends, he didn’t pause, but with almost a relief and joy in his eyes, he said, “Yes!” We took hands, and in the midst of the masses and fair hoopla, we called upon God for God’s blessing and God’s peace and God’s comfort. When we finished, his tearful eyes met mine with such gratitude, as he thanked me, then went on his way.

Tragically most United Methodist (and mainline) churches score painfully low in what is called “Passionate Spirituality,” which is simply the willingness to engage another person’s life at the place where they need it most – in meaningful ways that offer God’s touch/God’s presence/God’s hope to them, often in simple ways. Yes, even like a prayer at the State Fair booth. As Christians this is perhaps the most needed and certainly the best gift we have to feed hungry souls – who will just be hungry again, to use Jesus’ own words, if we only offer them things of this world. But let me guarantee you, the joy is there, as seen in relieved tears of an elderly husband for his wife of 57 years, when we share so much more.

I invite you, tonight, to join me in prayer for this man and his wife, Patricia – as I also invite you in these days to come to be that Bread to the very people God will certainly place in your pathway. As followers of Jesus, let’s be more than just bread that feeds bodies but “His” bread that fills the most piercing hungers of people’s lives, from deep within their famished souls. And when you do it, you, too, will discover what a joy it is to “pass the Bread”!

*“For the bread of God is he who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world” (John 6:33).*

*One hungry Christian to another hungry Christian who have the “Bread of Life” in us to share.*

## Mitchell Nets New Senior Olympics Record

Rev. Darrell Mitchell of Marshalltown, became the new record holder in the 400 meter dash, in the Iowa Senior Olympics, held at Valley High School Track, in West Des Moines, Iowa, on Sunday afternoon, July 13, 2008. The old record time was held by Emmett Bennet of Rapid City, S.D., in 1992, with a time of 1:33.70. The new record time by Rev. Mitchell was 1:26.09. He was competing in the 80-84 age group. There were six runners in the heat he was running in. A 70 year old man beat him by six steps at the finish line and he beat all the remaining four runners. Rev. Mitchell now qualifies to run in the National Senior Olympics in San Francisco, CA., Aug. 1-15, 2009. He will also compete in men's single bowling, having come in second place in that event.



## From Michigan Work Team Ministry Hub and Displaced Residents Get a Boost

by Jerry Elsea\*

The six kids from southeast Michigan had a simple plan -- a mission -- for their week long visit to the Matthew Ministry Hub in Cedar Rapids' Taylor School neighborhood: help with the afternoon children's program and paint a house. It was to be a lot like their mission trips to Birmingham AL and Washington DC the last two summers -- gratifying work in helping meet compelling needs.

What a difference a devastating flood can make. With each day's report from stricken Cedar Rapids, outreach plans in tiny Britton and Blissfield MI quickly grew. Instead of six youth and several adult leaders, the two United Methodist Churches would send that group plus many more adults, bringing the work team to 26.

And supplies: What a shipment of food, cleaners, dehumidifiers and tools came with the "Michiganders" six cars, one motorcycle and a U-Haul. There were implements enough for the Methodist-based Ministry Hub to set up a tool lending library. Another huge truckload was to arrive the week of July 13 from Hope and Encouragement for Humanity. Also supplying a cash donation, \$3,500, plus supplies was Blissfield Rotary. Kiwanis and Knights of Columbus also donated. Another \$500 came from the United Methodist Church's Ann Arbor District.

Fortified with the requisite tetanus shots, the Michigan group got down to work.

After a week of reaching out to flood victims, five of the six young people and 10 of the adults sat down to recount their experiences. "It was really eye-opening," said sixth grader Catie Seegert, "including helping remove muck from basements." This indeed was tougher work than in previous mission trips, agreed her colleagues -- 8th grader Christian Waggoner, 10th graders Katherine Waggoner (Christian's sister) and Lalona Young, and college-bound Weston Null. But they found it gratifying and spiritually moving. (The sixth in the youth group, Sam Wilson, had to leave early.)

Other observations from the young people, all from Grace United Methodist Church in Britton:

The response from those flooded out was "overwhelming," whether the aid was a mere bag of cookies or help more substantial. Displaced persons' thanks seemed to come from the heart.

Yet it was sometimes eerie. In some blocks, no one was to be found. Just severely damaged houses with dirty water lines halfway up the walls.

The work team left July 11 feeling their help was inadequate in light of all the work that will take months -- years! -- to do. Yet they were reassured knowing that if everyone can do just a little, the overall result can be huge.

Capping their experience the last night in Cedar Rapids was the "Moving Home" presentation at Bruce more, highlighting stories of the flood.

The youth and adults slept and received most meals at Marion First United Methodist Church and some meals at Matthew 25, itself displaced by flood waters. Quartered its first two years in the lower level at Trinity UMC, 400 Third Avenue SW, the Ministry Hub now serves the Taylor neighborhood from Sharon UMC, 1809 Ninth Street SW.

"We were very touched by the hospitality we received from everyone," said the Rev. Amy Mayo-Moyle, pastor at Britton UMC. "There was such a servant mentality by all those serving meals, creating space, providing programming for us. It was inspiring to us as we sought to serve the people of Cedar Rapids."

Her husband, the Rev. Mike Mayo-Moyle of Blissfield UMC, was co-leader on the Cedar Rapids trip. It is his previous connection with a Matthew 25 leader that led to planning for the Cedar Rapids visit.

"This story shows the power of relationships," said the Rev. Clint Twedt-Ball, who co-directs the Matthew 25 Ministry Hub along with his brother, the Rev. Courtney Ball. "The reason this group from Michigan had heard about Matthew 25 and cared so deeply," Twedt-Ball continued, "was because of Mike's having grown up in Iowa and going to college and seminary with me. His sharing of the Matthew 25 story and video with people who trusted him led to this amazing outpouring of donations. After spending a week here, everyone on the trip feels a little more connected to Cedar Rapids and Matthew 25. Part of this is from seeing the devastation first-hand. Part of this is from the relationships they built with homeowners in the Taylor neighborhood."

Twedt-Ball said the "Moving Home" experience at Bruce more saw virtually everyone in the audience crying at one time or another, including the new friends from Michigan.

"It is when we are at that point of rawness and openness, willing to just be ourselves, that the deepest relationships are formed. It is because of that rawness that hurts so deeply that our relationship with those from Michigan will last. . . . I believe this will also give rise to a new movement in Cedar Rapids as we begin to think how we want to re-imagine or community."

In that light, the young people and adults from Britton and Blissfield accomplished much and piled up lots of memories.

And that house in the original mission plan?

It got painted.

\*Jerry Elsea, retired Gazette writer-editor, is board secretary for the Matthew 25 Ministry Hub.



## Five Are Course of Study Graduates

On Thursday, July 31, 2008 five students of the Iowa United Methodist Conference graduated from the Saint Paul School of Theology Course of Study School. They were: John Brockschink, Pam Deeds, Robert Dvorak, Robert Dvorak, Mike Stevens and Glen Hanson.

Iowa -- John Brockschink, Pam Deeds, Robert Dvorak (front row) Mike Stevens and Glen Hanson (back row)

## Clergy Renewal - Free Week at Retreat Sites In Wisconsin, Ohio and Texas

by Mary Fraser\*

Here is a link for retreat sites that offer pastors and their spouses up to a week free renewal time -- no cost as this is a ministry to support pastors. In this time of stress, please consider this option. These retreat sites are in Wisconsin, Ohio and Texas. Review whether you are ready for a week of sabbatical rest and take it for the sake of yourself and those you serve.

<http://www.pastorsretreatnetwork.org/content/GeneralInformation.asp>

\*Rev. Mary L. Fraser, Ph.D., is Director of the Office of Pastoral Care and Counseling



# Farewell Reception for Bishop and Mrs. Palmer

A Special Celebration of the Palmers' ministry with the Iowa Annual Conference was held at the Iowa Conference Center on Saturday, August 23. Individuals from all across the state came to celebrate the Palmers' eight years of ministry with the Iowa Annual Conference. There was a special recognition program held at 2:00 p.m. in which words of appreciation were spoken as well as a special gift given to the Palmers' created by Ted Lyddon Hatten.

*A video retrospective of Bishop Palmer's eight years in Iowa is posted at [http://www.ourchurchvideos.com/50321/iaumc/view\\_video.php?viewkey=9d9058fcb0b968dbbbd6](http://www.ourchurchvideos.com/50321/iaumc/view_video.php?viewkey=9d9058fcb0b968dbbbd6)*



**Gregory V. Palmer**  
Bishop



## Missionaries Hoover, Kies and Mefors Itinerating In Iowa Conference

Six General Board of Global Ministries (GBGM) missionaries will be itinerating in the Iowa Annual Conference during the next few months, visiting churches that prayerfully and financially support their work in Africa. They will share their every day stories with other interested individuals and congregations as scheduling dates are available.

Dr. Jeff and Dr. Ellen Hoover serve in the Democratic Republic of Congo, formerly known as Zaire. They will itinerate August 27th - November 23rd in Iowa. Jeff is a Professor of History at the University of Lubumbashi and of Church History/History at Katanga Methodist University. He is currently head of university libraries in Lubumbashi. Ellen is the director of The English-speaking School of Lubumbashi, an international school (K-12) for children of missionaries and other English-speaking families in the urban community, and she is a part-time professor at Katanga Methodist University in Mulungwishi where she teaches church history and Islam. They have three grown children.

Larry and Jane Kies are assigned to Africa University, located just outside Mutare, the fourth largest city in Zimbabwe. They will itinerate August 31st - October 30th. Larry serves as a technical advisor at the university, assisting in the development of the university's farm and working to train a new generation of agriculturalists from countries across the continent. Jane teaches English to students coming from countries where it is not spoken. They have four children.

Dr. Emmanuel Ufonna and Florence Ogugua Mefor, who were born in Nigeria, are currently assigned to Mutambara, Zimbabwe. They will itinerate from September 29 - October 30. Dr. Mefor utilizes his skills as a medical doctor serving in the rural areas of Zimbabwe. Florence Mefor is a nurse mid-wife at the same hospital as her husband. Dr. Mefor and Florence have previously served in their medical professions in Nigeria and Mozambique prior to Zimbabwe. They have three children.

*Please contact Sue Hattel, Conference Interim Itineration Secretary at 563-556-1394 or [shattel220@aol.com](mailto:shattel220@aol.com) to schedule itineration visits for the Hoovers and the Mefors. Please contact Lois Novak at 319-377-2092 or [LGNOVAK@aol.com](mailto:LGNOVAK@aol.com) regarding intineration visits for the Kies.*



Kies family



Mefors family

Hoover family