

January 1, 2010



IOWA ANNUAL CONFERENCE—SOUTHWEST DISTRICT

Sharing The Mission

“Making Disciples...Developing
Leaders...Transforming The World”

From The District Superintendent

The Incarnation

Martin Luther, in a Christmas sermon, asked his congregation to meditate on the Nativity of Jesus Christ by looking at human babies. “I would not have you contemplate the deity of Christ, but rather his flesh...Divinity may terrify man. Irrepressible majesty will crush him. That is why Christ took on our humanity.” Christmas is God’s incarnation. God became human, not just to save the world, but to bless the world, to bless being human, to endorse being human, to join us in our humanness that we might more readily join in God’s divineness. The angel said, “Do not be afraid. Rejoice!”



May you experience blessing in God’s humanness this Christmas and may you come to know anew the One who gathers the hopes and fears of all the years into the eternal presence of our Creator.

Brian

A Prayer for Christmas

Holy God, we marvel at the mystery of your Incarnation among us, the message of the angels, the song of Mary, the birth of the babe at Bethlehem; give us grace to see all the ways you stand beside us, share our pain and sorrow and celebrate our joy, O Incarnate One, *Lord, hear our prayer.*

Because you came among us, dispersed the gloom of night, and dawned in our darkness, we know that you care, therefore, for all of those who this joyous season are sad, we pray—for mourners, for the sick, for those whose families are divided, for misunderstood youth, and little children who live in fear, O Dayspring from on High, *Lord hear our prayer.*

Lord, you deemed it good to be born an immigrant among a people in an occupied land, amid war and strife, therefore we pray for all of those who suffer from the turmoil of war and civic unrest. O Prince of Peace, *Lord, hear our prayer.*

Because you have come to us, we come to you, bringing all those problems of our lives which seem so overwhelming, offering up to you all of the fears which seem so great, all those matters which perplex us so deeply that we know not what to ask or pray; yet you know. Grant us that peace which only you can give; give us what we *need*, despite what we think we want. Make us more than we could be had we been left to ourselves. O Wisdom from on High, *Lord, hear our prayer.* Amen.



Have you heard of The Walk to Emmaus? Some members of the Southwest District are involved with the Walk to Emmaus Community. If you are not, we invite you to learn more!

The Walk to Emmaus is a spiritual renewal program intended to strengthen the local church through the development of Christian disciples and leaders. The experience begins with a 72-hour short course in Christianity, comprised of 15 talks by laity and clergy on the themes of God's grace, Christian discipleship, and what it means to be the Church. The weekend also includes prayer, meditation, worship, food and fun! It is an experience like no other!

The "Emmaus Community", made up of those who have attended the Weekend, put on and assist with the event by providing prayer, leadership, and many kinds of support. The weekend begins on Thursday night and concludes Sunday evening. Men and women attend separate events. Following the three days, participants are invited to meet regularly with a small group that supports each member in living faithfully. The goal is to strengthen and renew Christian people as disciples and as active members of the body of Christ in mission to the world.

The next set of Walks in our area will be held on the weekends of February 25-28 (Men's) and March 4-7 (Women's) at the Corning United Methodist Church. A later set of Walks will be held in August. You need a sponsor to be able to attend. If you are interested in learning more, contact Pastor Leila Blackburn at pastorleila@netins.net.

Ed Kail (Field Outreach Minister)



"Be There. Be Hope" - One Great Hour of Sharing

One of the very best parts of being a United Methodist is participating in One Great Hour of Sharing. This day with special offering is scheduled every year during Lent; in 2010 the date is March 14th. The offerings received for OGHS are used to provide the infrastructure for the UM Committee on Relief (UMCOR). UMCOR is our humanitarian presence "on the ground" all around the world, whenever disaster strikes. You may feel justifiable pride when you think of UMCOR. Often, UMCOR workers are among the first on site when



there is a hurricane, flood, earthquake, tsunami, typhoon, or refugee crisis provoked by violence. They are local people, trained for relief work, and linked into an international network for aid in relief and recovery. WE provide the resources they need to save and restore lives—and through the church, 100% of what we give goes to the need, thanks to One Great Hour of Sharing.

Personally, I think that one day out of the year does not do justice to the need nor to the dedicated servants who work so hard for UMCOR. As a pastor, my practice was to encourage my churches to dedicate all of Lent as One Great SEASON of Sharing. Creative people were turned loose to find ways to tell stories about how UMCOR transformed the lives of people—from Iowa to Louisiana to Indonesia and the Philippines. Then, on the appointed day, we could take up a really generous offering, with appropriate "hoopla" and celebration and a communal dedication to God's work through UMCOR.

What a privilege it is to be a part of such huge, important mission! Times may be tough in the USA, but nothing is as tough as being wiped out by a disaster—especially if you are among the world's absolute poor who exist on less than \$2.00 per day. Surely I can dedicate my surplus, my excess over my necessities, to the compassionate work of Jesus. OGHS provides the means—let's work on the motivation!

Pastors should have received a packet with a listing of free resources that can be ordered and used for promoting this holy cause. There are bulletin inserts, offering envelopes, posters, and fliers, along with helpful information and tips. It's January—time to get prepared for One Great Hour of Sharing!!

Happy New Year,
Ed Kail
Field Outreach Minister

Travel with the Trimbles to the Oberammergau Passion Play

Bishop Julius Trimble and Racelder Grandberry-Trimble invite you to join them on an exciting pilgrimage to Germany and Austria in August of 2010. On this trip we will attend a performance of the historic once-every-ten-years Passion Play in Oberammergau and stay in a historic Alpine village.

For further information and registration materials, please contact Ron and Ruth Anne Petrak at 1507 Pennsylvania Ave., Des Moines, IA 50316; 515/262-3691; email address: ronruthanne1507@msn.com.



A Testimony for Mission

Connie Garrett is a member at the Dow City UMC, who lives and works in Council Bluffs. After the experience described below, Connie wrote a letter to her congregation in which she shared the following testimony:

During worship in December, Pastor Tom asked for anyone going to Omaha to deliver quilts made by our church group to the Open Door Mission. My mom gave me the look; admittedly, I was a little irritated. I had so much to do. Hesitantly, I agreed and then on top of that, I had to go to Dunlap at 11:30 to pick up the quilts, back to mom's for dinner, to a baby shower, then drive right by Dunlap on the way to my house.

When I finally took off for my house, it was snowing, the wind was blowing, and it was very cold. I just wanted to go home but I had to pick up my cats. So, it was either unload all the quilts, which were stacked to the ceiling, then go pick up the cats, or just go first to deliver the quilts to the Open Door Mission, which seemed to be much more logical from a work standpoint.

So, in the freezing cold, I arrived at the open door mission and was directed to the project manager. He said he would be right with me and soon brought out a grocery cart. Opening the trunk, I asked if he had another cart I could get. He asked if that was all to be unloaded. When I said yes, he motioned with his hand and shortly 10 gentlemen were unloading my car. They were all very gracious, very thankful and very humble. The men were cold, they were undressed and they were very appreciative of our church's generosity. More than one asked if it was all to be unloaded. More than one thanked me. More than one shook my hand.

I know that not every person in that shelter should be there. I also know there are many people who are alone, who have no support group, no family, no shelter and no money. I also know that look in their eyes, I have seen it before.

On the way home, I started crying. I was so very humbled; so sorry I was short with my mom and embarrassed with my behavior. What if one of those blankets saved one person that night? What if one blanket brought enough courage to one person to have hope for the future?

When I got home, I called my mom, still crying, to thank her for pushing me to go. I wrote my business partners an email and asked if they would consider giving up 0.5% of profit so I could donate one blanket for every 100 we sold, not really sure if they would agree since our company is only three months old and we are not exactly profitable yet. The response I got was not what I expected—the end result is that in 2010, we are going to give 5% each month instead of the 0.5% I asked for and increase that donation to 10% in 2011.

What I have continued to learn over and over is “what goes around, comes around”; moms do know best; how incredibly fortunate I am; and how good it feels to help others.

Connie Garrett

Resources for Connectional Giving



There were dozens of times as pastor preparing for worship that I wished I had a way to strengthen the invitation to the Offering. I wished I had a story to tell about the way giving through the church had made a difference to someone. Recently, Phil Carver, FOM for the SE District pointed us to a web resource that addresses those wishes. The

“Mission Moments and More” feature of the General Church website has a weekly series on apportionment giving at:

http://www.umcsgiving.org/site/c.qwL6KkNWLrH/b.3596575/k.4A45/Weekly_Mission_Moments_and_More.htm.

Print resources are also available there.

These can be supplemented by the “Thank You Notes” found on our Iowa Conference website at www.iaumc.org. You can go beyond merely “announcing the offering” to encouraging worshipers to make a difference through their giving. Nothing like a good human interest story to give some “passion” to worship!

-Rev. Ed Kail, FOM

The First Meeting Submitted by Rev. Ruben Mendoza...(Council Bluffs-Broadway)

Members of the SW District Hispanic Ministries Team are having an impact beyond the bounds of our district. Besides leading the work in Council Bluffs, and working throughout SW Iowa, Rev. Ruben Mendoza works with the Hispanic/Latino Standing Committee of the Iowa Annual Conference, and shares with us some recent developments on that front:

On November 20 and 21, 2009, the first meeting of the Iowa Conference Hispanic/Latino ministries was held at the West Des Moines United Methodist Church. There were representatives from a variety of Hispanic ministries in Iowa, including Des Moines, Muscatine, Sioux City, Clarion, and Council Bluffs. Of the some 100 participants, 46 were from our ministry in Council Bluffs.

This was the first meeting of Hispanic ministries, and we hope to have one each year with improved experiences each time. This year's experience was full of blessings for all who attended the conference. We had activities, worship services, workshops and concerts. On the last day, we celebrated Holy Communion directed by Rev. Barbara Dinnen of Des Moines. It was a lovely and meaningful experience for all who participated in the meeting. Other conference leaders included Rev. Edgar Soliz of Muscatine, Jorge Martinez of Clarion, and Ruben Mendoza of Council Bluffs.

One of the participants from our own Broadway Church mentioned she had never had such an experience and she would be returning as many times as possible. The young adolescents who attended were thrilled, and from their participation came the idea to have a spiritual retreat at a camp exclusively for younger people each year to strengthen their spiritual lives.

Personally, I feel our Hispanic ministry in the Broadway Church has been blessed by this event. I am sure this experience will bring new expectations of growth for the church. I believe we are advancing on the correct path and in the correct direction. I feel my personal spiritual life has grown and I am sure that the will of God is in us. I invite you to continue enriching our ministry through your continued prayer and support. God has certainly shown Himself in our lives in a wonderful way.

There are many Hispanic/Latino ministries in the Iowa Annual Conference and I see hope as God awakens more and more Christians within Latinos to create an even stronger ministry.

Rubén Mendoza

Ecumenical Advocacy Days

The Conference Board of Church and Society announces
Ecumenical Advocacy Days

Takes place March 19-22, 2010, in Washington DC. This year's theme is

A Place to Call Home: Immigrants, Refugees, and Displaced Peoples

And Jesus said to him, "Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head."

Visit the conference website to learn more...<http://advocacydays.org>

The Conference Board of church and Society wishes to announce that three scholarships for \$500 each are available. You may write for an application form to Judy Kading at judykading@yahoo.com or call 641-740-7066 or write to her at 803 Golden Shores, Creston, IA 50801.

Act now to receive the lowest conference registration rates and low conference hotel rates at the conference site, the Double Tree in Crystal City, VA.

Join over 700 activists for intense and informative sessions and return to the annual conference ready to share information.

Greetings in the New Year by District Mission Secretary, LeAnn Baker

Greetings!

Well, we have completed another year, and I hope you were blessed in your work and are all ready making plans, or at least have some thoughts, as to what you want to do for missions in your church. It is a new year, the time is here for you to access the conference web site or use your book and get your Rainbow Covenant report completed. They are due to me by February 15, 2010. Write yourself some notes as you do your report for 2009 and that will help you do some new projects in this new year. The first item, of course, is apportionments paid in full so be sure to mark that for me please. Would you believe I received one report, a third mile one the first of December 2009?!?! He is on the ball! Good record keeping and planning ahead. Thank You for all that every church does in walking the mission mile. You are appreciated around the world. We are so blessed in our lives here in the USA. Remember, start your plan and forge ahead. Make a plan for the Ingathering in January. I look forward to your Rainbow reports!



Leann Baker
District Mission Secretary
2011 Vail Ave.
Clearfield, IA 50840-8011
641.336.2354 or 641.344.8820 or leann@iowatelecom.net

Youth Strike for Christ—BRING YOUR YOUTH GROUP!!!

“PORTABLE FAITH”

FEBRUARY 5-7, 2010

YOUTH STRIKE FOR CHRIST

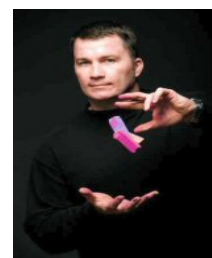
**MARRIOTT HOTEL & CONVENTION CENTER
DOWNTOWN DES MOINES, IOWA**

THE WEEKEND INCLUDES:

- Keynote Speaker, Kelly Croy
- Praise band
- Awesome Praise & Worship
- Small Group Sessions
- Room for two nights at the Marriott Hotel
- Meals on Saturday and Sunday
- Entertainment Groups
- Music Concerts
- Free T-shirt—And much, much more...

REGISTRATION INFO:

- * Visit our website for more information and pricing.
www.youthstrike.com



For More Information

Contact: Jim Oberbroeckling
E-mail: joberbroeckling@iowatelecom.net
Phone: 641-842-4136

Hunger Project Grants

Are you aware that a portion of the cash offerings given to the Thanksgiving Ingathering are returned to districts to disburse as grants to local mission projects addressing needs for food and nutrition? If you have a good pantry, a feeding program, or serve meals as part of an after-school program or other educational ministry, you could be eligible to receive a grant.

The Greenfield site co-chair from the Southwest District is Jim Tussey, from Orient. Feel free to contact him at: jim_w_tuss@yahoo.com or (641) 782-8704; or call Ed Kail at the district office.

Iowa UM Foundation Scholarships for 2010-2011



Now is the time to start thinking about scholarships for the 2010-2011 school year. The Iowa United Methodist Foundation will award approximately 175

scholarships to undergraduates, graduates, and seminary students for the 2010-2011 school year. Visit their website at www.iumpf.org and click on “Scholarships”. There you’ll find the qualifications for each scholarship and

the application forms. All applications must be postmarked by **March 15, 2010**. Please follow the directions carefully, as incomplete applications and/or late applications will not be considered. Please share this information with your students.

Retreat News from Okoboji Camp

Okoboji United Methodist Camp is excited to announce the arrival of wireless internet to all of our cabins and retreat facilities (even New Hope on the South Campus!) This new development will enhance our year-round retreat ministry. We are proud of our ability to meet the needs of the groups who gather at camp! The addition of WI-FI service to all Okoboji facilities will help retain groups as well as attract new ones.

Is your group looking for a place to meet? We'd be happy to host you! We are thrilled that each year, more and more groups are finding Okoboji's facilities, programming and food service the perfect compliment to their group's retreat needs. We would love to serve you! Call for availability today! More information can be found at www.okobojicamp.com, or call us at **1-866-856-9862**.

Retreat Ideas:

- Church staff planning
- Scrapbooking
- Men's groups—work projects available for all skill levels
- Quilting groups
- Women's groups
- AA and Al-Anon groups
- Families—reunions, weekend get-aways
- Sport teams—playing fields and team building opportunities available
- Clergy personal retreats—free to all clergy
- Youth groups—lock-ins, mission opportunities
- ANYTHING!! JUST COME!!

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Upcoming retreats:

#### Walleve Weekend Getaway

Take part in an Iowa Lakes Classic! Come to camp and enjoy this annual fishing tournament that brings anglers from far and wide in the hopes of winning the \$10,000 tagged fish! Your registration fee provides you with two-nights' lodging and a full Fisherman's Breakfast Buffet on Sat. and Sun. mornings! So grab some friends, family, or other fishermen for some food, fun and FISHING...Talk about a great weekend! Call **1-866-856-9862** or e-mail [info@okobojicamp.com](mailto:info@okobojicamp.com) for details.



## Southwest District Epiphany Party!!!



**Mark Your Calendars!!!**

**Southwest District Clergy Epiphany Party!**

**Friday, January 15, 2010**

*The Southwest District Office is eagerly planning this year's Epiphany Party! We are anticipating a great evening, with delicious food and great entertainment! This year we will be holding the event at the Griswold Community Center, located at 601 2nd Street, in Griswold, Iowa. We will begin with a Welcome and Fellowship time at 5:30 p.m. with the buffet dinner (provided by "Our Daily Bread" in Griswold) starting at 6:00 p.m., followed by the evening's entertainment. **Please contact Shirley Lewis at the District Office with your RSVP (712-243-8573). Cost to attend is \$12.00 per person.***

## Upcoming Events!

- **December 31st and January 1st**—District Office Closed
- **January 4, 2010**—Hispanic Ministry Team Meeting—6:00 p.m.—District Office
- **January 6, 2010**—District Worship Team Meeting—1:00 p.m.—District Office
- **January 13, 2010**—Small Church Seminar—10:00 a.m.—District Office
- **January 14, 2010**—New Pastor’s Seminar—10:00 a.m.—District Office
- **January 15, 2010**—District Committee on Ministry—9:00 a.m.—District Office
- **January 15, 2010**—**SOUTHWEST DISTRICT EPIPHANY PARTY!**—Reservations **MUST** be made by **Friday, January 8, 2010.**
- **January 24, 2010**—Laity Summit—2:30 p.m.—Griswold UMC
- **February 2, 2010**—R.I.M. Group—9:00 a.m.—District Office
- **February 3, 2010**—DCMC—6:30 p.m.—District Office
- **February 4, 2010**—Deepenings Book Study—10:00 a.m.—District Office

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### **MARK YOUR CALENDAR!**

- **May 2, 2009**—**Spring District Conference**—2:30 p.m.—Atlantic, First UMC.

## Intersections: God and Us”



• You Think You Are Ordinary? Think again. The **Young People’s Ministries** is sponsoring “Youth 2011, “MORE THAN” - Purdue University July 13—17, 2011, in Sacramento, CA July 27-31, 2011.

• Mark your calendar now for **Sunday, January 24, 2010**, for the next edition of the **Southwest District Lay Ministry Summit**. The event will take place at the UMC in Griswold, beginning at 2:30 p.m. You may take part in inspiring worship, meaningful conversations with friends old and new, and also join in workshops that will help us prepare to “become FIT” as churches in the Southwest District. Watch for further details!!!

• Do you have training, skills, or interest in research? Are you interested in the Annual Conference as an organizational system? The Committee on Planning and Research has a couple of openings. The committee meets 4-5 times a year. Members do research for the conference—surveys, project evaluations, demographics, environmental scanning, data for decision-makers, etc. Lay or clergy. Women and minorities are encouraged to apply. For more information, contact Jim Davis (515) 268-3360 or jimdavis95@msn.com.

• The conference Ingathering Committee recently reported to us the totals for the 5 Ingathering sites around Iowa. Our own Greenfield site reported the greatest amount of cash contributions, at \$89,729. Under the heading “Gifts In Kind”, which includes the various kinds of kits that are assembled, the Greenfield site was 3rd in

Annual Conference, with \$133,772—worth of kits. This included \$24,648 in health kits, \$52,085 in School kits, and \$66,885 in layettes. Well done!!!

• Save The Date!!! **United Methodist Advocacy Day—Monday, February 1, 2010**—Visit the Advocacy webpage at [www.iaumc.org](http://www.iaumc.org) for more information or contact Kristin Clark Nolan, 515.974.8911 or [kristin.clarknolan@iaumc.org](mailto:kristin.clarknolan@iaumc.org). Sponsored by the Social Justice and Mission Ministry, Iowa Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church.

• The online application process for **Impact Community Grants** and criteria can be found at [umcom.org/impactcommunity](http://umcom.org/impactcommunity), or if you need further information regarding these grants, you can e-mail [impactcommunity@umcom.org](mailto:impactcommunity@umcom.org).

• What would it take for your community to say “We’re better off because the United Methodists are in the area?” Contact FOM Ed Kail if you are seeking assistance in moving forward with outreach ministries.

• Are you doing a mid-week, after-school program for children? We know of several, but there surely are more than we know. If you have an after-school education ministry, please email [ed.kail@iaumc.org](mailto:ed.kail@iaumc.org). Ed is compiling a list for some future networking and re-sourcing. Tell us your story!!

## PLEASE

## PRAY

## FOR:



- **Rev. Gerald “Bud” Wisner (Noble-Grant)**, who is struggling with Shingles. Also be in prayer for his daughter who is dealing with heart issues and is awaiting a heart transplant.
- **Rev. Marlene Brown (Henderson-Macedonia-Wheeler Grove)** as she deals with health issues.
- **Jeff Leden, Husband of Rev. Leila Blackburn (Griswold)** as he deals with health issues.
- **Magnolia UMC**, which experienced a burst water pipe, and caused major water damage throughout the building. It will be a while before they have a usable building again.
- **Rev. Terry McClain (Elliott)** as he recovers from neck surgery that was held on Wednesday, Nov. 11.
- **Rev. Kick Krambeck’s (Cumberland-Pine Grove)** daughter as she struggles with significant heart issues in Milwaukee, Wisconsin.
- All **Soldiers and Families** who are separated during this Holiday Season.
- **Council Bluffs (Salem)** experienced a recent break-in and vandalism.
- Madeline St. Clair, daughter of **Rev. Chris St. Clair (Council Bluffs—Broadway)** is undergoing medical tests.

*The United Methodist Church*

*Southwest District Office  
1201 E. 7th Street, Suite 300  
Atlantic, IA 50022*

***Southwest District Newsletter***

Feel free to cut out the following contact information and place in a convenient location.



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## **Southwest District Office Contact Information!**

**The United Methodist Church  
Southwest District Office  
1201 E. 7th Street  
Suite 300  
Atlantic, IA 50022**

(Located on the corner of  
7th & Plum, Next to  
The Rolling Hills Bank)

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Monday thru Friday

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**Brian Milford—Conference  
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Superintendent, please call or  
e-mail Shirley Lewis, DAS.

**Ed Kail—Field Outreach  
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**Shirley Lewis –District  
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Shirley.Lewis@iaumc.org