

February 1, 2010



IOWA ANNUAL CONFERENCE—SOUTHWEST DISTRICT

Sharing The Mission

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

From The District Superintendent

LEADERSHIP IN HARD TIMES

During the most recent ice storm in a winter that seems to have lasted FOREVER already (ok, my rant is over), I have been doing some thinking about the question we set as our topic for the Laity Summit (By the way, it is now rescheduled for February 14, 2:30 pm, Griswold UMC. *See article inside*)



The question we pose is, “Have You Seen Jesus, My Lord?” We asked it before the debilitating ice storm in the northern half of our district, before the Annual Conference leadership met to discuss ways to address the health insurance and pension crisis for the 2011 budget year and before the horrific earthquake in Haiti. I know many of you have had hard conversations regarding your church budget for 2010. The question for the Laity Summit is meant to make us stop and consider where we have seen Jesus at work in our world. The summit will celebrate ministries that are real expressions of Christ’s love even in these hard times.

How do we provide ongoing faithful leadership during these difficult times? While quick fixes may provide immediate, practical and temporary relief, if they are made without prayerful reflection they may create larger problems. I want to encourage us all when we are facing difficult decisions as leaders in the church (lay and clergy) to stop and consider carefully the spiritual challenges that lie at the heart of whatever crisis we are facing, whether it be financial or otherwise. The Bible challenges us to ask the hard questions...what are the “fault lines” between prudence and fear, faith and foolishness, or-more problematically, realism and God-given hopeful imagination?

Discernment– the ability to see how and where God is at work in the world– is the abiding responsibility of congregational leaders, whether the circumstances be good or bad. Hard times and challenges are likely to shape much of the church’s life for decades to come. How will we make these times an opportunity to re-focus our mission without being enslaved to our fears?

Several points to remember during these tough times:

God is present in good times and bad.
Hard times can be clarifying.
Fear is **not** our friend.
Listen hard!
Act with courage

This ministry to which each of us has been called is not ultimately about us or about this moment. It is about the ongoing, redemptive work of God. God will provide hopeful imagination as we move into a future which God holds. ...”He’s here in plain view!”

Stay warm and safe,

Brian



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)



Learnings from "Form A" (Part 1)

During the snowy days of late December, I took some time to review the copies of "Form A" that each church submitted at their charge conference last fall. I noticed several things that I want to report or comment on in this newsletter this month and the next.

One theme that encompasses several phenomena is discipleship, or faith development. Martha Grace Reese proposes that one of the best measures of the evangelistic outreach and faith development of a congregation is the number of persons joining as adults or youth by profession of faith. Usually, for a profession of faith to occur, something has happened in the life of a person or has been done by the congregation that has sparked or developed a commitment

of faith. Out of 115 churches, 53 reported receiving no new members by profession of faith.

We can rejoice in the 298 professions reported by the other 62 churches, a number that includes churches of every size. However, the fact that 46% of our congregations have a zero to report raises urgent questions. Does this mean that these congregations have no effective ministry of outreach and/or Christian nurture? Are there no friends, relatives, associates or neighbors within 10 miles of these churches who profess no belief, or who are not involved in any community of faith? Is it okay that we are not reaching adults?

A large number of churches reported that they had begun or reconstituted a "greeter" program, posting people inside their entryways on Sundays before worship. It's an idea that was current when I was a kid in the 1950's. And it's an example of the way a system works when it doesn't know what to do: it does more of what it knows. My response is a "Dr. Phil" question: How's it working for you? My assessment of the typical greet program is that it is still too inside-oriented, to passive, and insufficient to impress any worship guest who might happen in. It doesn't constitute outreach.

22 of our churches reported doing some kind of after-school Christian education for elementary school children. Again, churches of every size are doing some fantastic work in reaching young people with the message of Jesus through relationships with caring adults. It is one of the most effective and most successful outreach tools in our kit. In most cases, schools cooperate well for transportation. The biggest challenge is finding the adult workers to serve the number of kids who tend to show up.

I was interested that 19 churches reported that they are utilizing computer-generated projection in support of their worship services. Even some of our smallest congregations are utilizing current technologies to enhance the visual impact of worship and other programs. Some of our largest ones are not. What's at stake is our heart-communication with the youngest 3 generations around us for their faith development. Are you considering investing in technology?

Stay tuned: next month's Theme from Form A is missions!

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 Conversation With...'

'a conversation with...' is an occasional conversation series focusing on the theological groundings of, and the practical implications for ministry with young adults.

For more information contact:

Eric Guy, Leadership Development Minister
Young Adult and Generational Ministry
The United Methodist church in Iowa
eric.guy@iaumc.org * 515.874.8944

Laity School of Theology—Kansas City Campus



Looking for learning that is a bit deeper than a typical Bible Study?

The Saint Paul Laity School of Theology has interactive Saturday sessions that are taught by seminary faculty, built on solid scholarship, and presented in an accessible manner for persons with a variety of educational backgrounds.

February 6, 2010 - Dr. Douglas Powe—E. Stanley Jones Associate Professor of Evangelism
Resurrecting Dying Congregations and Keeping Flourishing Congregations Thriving

If your congregation is on life support or if you want to make sure it doesn't end up there, this season focuses on the theological and practical ideas related to evangelism that will breathe new life into your congregation.

March 5, 2010—Dr. Robert Martin—Lovett H. Weems Jr.—Assoc. Prof. of Church Leadership and Practical Theology
A Biblical Model of Incarnational Ministry

The Emergent Church and Missional Church are both ways of talking about doing church more meaningfully in the current context. Using Paul's example in ministry with the Athenians in Acts 17, this session explores an incarnational approach to being the church together. We will discover important insights for your personal ministry and your church's spiritual renewal.

April 10, 2010—Dr. Nancy Howell—Professor of Theology and Philosophy of Religion
Faith and Science: Embracing Both God and the Apes

Political and media attention to conflict between science and Christianity creates a tension for Christians who are faithful disciples and Christianity creates a tension for Christians who are faithful disciples and science buffs. The good news is that the Christian tradition offers options for dialogue between science and religion. Christians can become better leaders in the church and community by learning how to engage and enjoy the dialogue, which promises to deepen our encounter with God.

This session will be broadcast to St. Mark's UMC in Lincoln, NE and First UMC in Dodge City, KS

Each Saturday seminar is designed to meet for one day from 9:00-3:00 on the Saint Paul School of Theology campus and broadcast to specified church locations.

Cost: \$50 per person, lunch included.

Contact: Audrey Williams
816-245-4815
institute@spst.edu

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:

Each New Year begins with new opportunities, including 2010. Last year has left us with memories—some good and some bad—but all of these remain in the past and a new opportunity arrives allowing us to begin all that we did not complete last year.

I share this Bible verse with you from Ecclesiastics 3:1-15.

There is an appointed time for everything, and a time for every affair under the heavens.

A time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to uproot the plant.

A time to kill, and a time to heal; a time to tear down and a time to build.

A time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance.

A time to scatter stones, and a time to gather them; a time to embrace, and a time to be far from embraces.

A time to seek, and a time to lose; a time to keep, and a time to cast away.

A time to rend, and a time to sew; a time to gather them; a time to embrace, and a time to be far from embraces.

A time to love, and a time to hate; a time of war and a time of peace.

What advantage has the worker from his toil? I have considered the task which God has appointed for men to be busied about. He has made everything appropriate to its time, and has put the timeless into their hearts, without men's ever discovering, from beginning to end, the work which God has done.

I recognized that there is nothing better than to be glad and to do well during life. For every man, moreover, to eat and drink and enjoy the fruit of all his labor is a gift of God.

I recognized that whatever God does will endure forever; there is no adding to it or taking from it. Thus has God done that he may be revered. What now is has already been; what is to be, already is; and God restores what would otherwise be displaced.

Opportunities are in front of us, not in our past. We learn from the past to live better in the present and future.

Rubén Mendoza

State-Wide IA United Methodist Advocacy Day Soon Approaching!

Do you want to join together with other United Methodists from around the state who are passionate about putting their faith into action in meaningful ways? The bring friends, family, and others from your church community to our 2010 Iowa United Methodist Church state-wide Advocacy Day!

This year's event will be held on Monday, February 1st from 8:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. at Calvary Baptist Church, which is located at 606 East 9th Street, Des Moines, IA 50309 (across from the state Capitol). We will be traveling to the state Capitol in the afternoon to do advocacy and meet with our state representatives and senators.

This year's Advocacy Day theme follows with Bishop Trimble's FIT Challenge:

Focus on issues as people of faith

Invest in our communities

Tell stories to our legislators that will change hearts, minds, and policy

There will be four different issue-based break-out training sessions for this year's Advocacy Day. They include environmental justice, restorative justice, immigration, and poverty/economic justice.

This year's keynote address will be given by Rev. Abraham Funchess who serves as a clergy at Jubilee United Methodist Church in Waterloo and who also serves as a staff member with the Iowa Department of Human Rights, the Division on the Status of African Americans.

Schedule for 2010 Advocacy Day:

8:30 Registration

9:50 Welcome

10:00 to 11:30 Worship

11:45 to 12:30 Break-Out Trainings

12:30 to 1:30 Lunch

1:30-3:00 p.m. Advocacy @ the Capitol

Please check the IA Conference website "advocacy" section later this week for more updates, registration information, and details on the event!

District Missions

It is a beautiful winter day here in Southwest Iowa. The sun is shining brightly after the foggy morning and the thermometer is rising. I am surprised that I have received 4 Rainbow Covenant reports as I write this letter. They are due to me by **February 15, 2010**. You may e-mail them to me, or send by ground mail. I ask that you send me a separate e-mail if you do e-mail it as I am always afraid it will get in my spam box and I might miss it. So, how was your Rainbow this year??? Was it complete or missing some color? I am always amazed when I see a rainbow in the sky, God's sign to all. It is a think of beauty and is God's light descending into a world that is lost in darkness. He is sending hope and love, and reminds us of His promises. It is time once again to make plans for the new year. If you have a plan for the year, then you are way ahead and can adjust as needed. Be sure to save your 2008 Rainbow book. There will be an update coming. If you are able, please go to the conference website and check out information there. I congratulate each of you for your mission work this year. Even though the economy is frail, I am seeing and hearing of good work in the mission field. Thank you for your caring/sharing in your churches!



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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.iumf.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.

Tribal Church—relating to the new generations

A conversation with Carol Howard Merritt, author of *Tribal Church: Ministering to the Missing Generation* and the upcoming *Reframing Hope: Looking at Vital Ministry in a New Generation*, will be held on February 19, 2010 from 6:00-8:00 pm and on February 20, 2010 from 9:30-11:30 am at 1st United Methodist Church in Des Moines, Iowa (1001 Pleasant Street). A \$10 registration fee for each conversation can be paid at the door before each event. These conversations are sponsored by First United Methodist Church in Des Moines; Martha Hill DiSilvestro, Central District Field Outreach Minister; and The Young Adult Ministries Office of the United Methodist Church in Iowa.



Carol Howard Merritt is a minister in her thirties, who has served congregations in Louisiana and Rhode Island. Currently, she is a pastor at Western Presbyterian Church, an innovative, intergenerational congregation in Washington, D.C. Western is the home of Miriam's Kitchen, a feeding program that serves a hot, nutritious breakfast to over 200 homeless men and women every weekday morning. Carol has written for several magazines and journals, and is the award-winning author of *Tribal Church: Ministering to the Missing Generation* (The Alban Institute, 2007). Her next book, *Reframing Hope: Vital Ministry in a New Generation* will be out in February. She blogs at TribalChurch.org and co-hosts God Complex Radio, an Internet radio show with Bruce Reyes-Chow, the Moderator of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (USA).

Continuing Education Opportunity 2010

From Bill Selby, director, Center for Pastoral Effectiveness

I recently heard an erudite discussion asking the question "Which is correct, two thousand and ten, two thousand ten, or twenty ten? As I listened, I thought "If life were that simple...especially when dealing with the church!" As I travel throughout the Midwest to one of the six Centers for Pastoral Effectiveness now meeting, I am struck by just how complicated ministry is. During my tenure as clergy the expectations seem to have greatly expanded, the financial pressures seem to have grown, and the anxieties of our people seem to have gotten more enmeshed in the system. No longer does it seem that being "called to ministry" and wanting to be a "good and caring pastor" to our people is enough, and you soon find yourself feeling overwhelmed.

The purpose of the Center for Pastoral Effectiveness is to assist you to be more healthy as a leader, to grow in your awareness of what raises your anxiety level, and to be more prepared to deal with the anxieties of others while continuing to follow your vision as minister. As you plan your "two thousand ten" (believed to be the most appropriate) continuing education, I invite you to consider attending, or attending again, the next Center beginning late summer and early fall. Over 400 clergy have discovered the meaning of "The most valuable continuing education experience!"

To put your name on a waiting list for the next Center, just email integrity4u@comcast.net. Make sure you indicate your current location. For more information, just click on the web site, www.pastoraleffectiveness.org. To gain an appreciation of the Center, talk to one of the many Center alumni in ministry near you. For a list of alumni near you, as when you email.

Southwest District Apportionment Status

Congratulations to the following Churches that paid 100% in Apportionments for 2009:

Adair	Blanchard	Greenfield	Malvern	Gray
Casey	Clearfield	Griswold	Strahan	Shelby
Anita	Mercer Center	Guthrie Center	Manning	Persia
Wiota	Sharpsburg	Bowman Chapel	Manilla	Thurman
Atlantic, First	Council Bluffs (Broadway)	Hancock	Maple Grove	Riverton
Bedford	Council Bluffs (Fifth Ave.)	Silver Creek	Marne	Silver City
Brooks	Council Bluffs (Hazel Dell)	Harlan, First	Buck Creek	Menlo
Carbon	Council Bluffs (St. Mark's)	Monroe Chapel	Massena	Tabor
Carl	Council Bluffs (Trinity)	Bagley	Bridgewater	Hawthorne
Carroll, First	Cumberland	Yale	Avondale	Villisca
Carson	Pine Grove	Linden	Modale	Woodbine, First
Mt. Hope	Denison, First	Dawson	Noble	
Charter Oak	Dunlap, First	Cooper	Oakdale	
Clarinda	Dow City, First	Bayard	Orient	
Norwich	Elliott	Defiance, Salem	Fontanelle	
Braddyville	Wesley Chapel	Logan	Panora	
Shambaugh	Farragut	Magnolia	Pisgah	
Northboro	Summit	Macedonia	Mondamin	

Upcoming Events!

- **February 2, 2010**—R.I.M. Group—9:30 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
- **February 14, 2010**—SW District Laity Summit—2:30 p.m.—Griswold UMC
- **February 14, 2010**—HAPPY VALENTINE'S DAY!
- **February 19, 2010**—9:00 a.m.—3:00 p.m.—DCMC Interviews
- **February 25-28, 2010**—Men's Walk to Emmaus
- **March 2, 2010**—R.I.M. Group—9:30 a.m.—District Office
- **March 4-7, 2010**—Women's Walk to Emmaus
- **March 4, 2010**—Deepenings Book Study—10:00 a.m.—District Office

MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

- **February 14, 2009**—**Southwest District Laity Summit**—2:30 p.m.—Griswold UMC
- **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.

• The District Office has two copies of the DVD entitled "Journey of the Kit." This DVD is 5 minutes long and follows the selection and preparation of InGathering kits made in local churches to their final destination in Nigeria. It reaffirms the need for the kits and how they are happily received by recipients in Nigeria!

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

• Congratulations to Noble UMC who are celebrating their 140th year of worshipping the Lord!!!

• 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. Ed is compiling a list for some future networking and resourcing. Tell us your story!!

• The following are the six dates for the Special Sunday Offerings:

1. **January 17, 2010**—Human Relations Day
2. **March 14, 2010**—One Great Hour of Sharing
3. **April 18, 2010**—Native American Ministries
4. **May 30, 2010**—Peace with Justice
5. **October 3, 2010**—World Communion
6. **November 28, 2010**—United Methodist Student Day

You may also go to the following link for further information regarding special offerings:

<http://www.iaumc.org/forms/detail/5>

- Conference Board of Church and Society announces **Ecumenical Advocacy Days** March 19-22, 2010 in Washington, DC. Visit the conference website to learn more: <http://advocacydays.org>.

PLEASE

PRAY

FOR:



- **Rev. Marlene Brown (Henderson-Macedonia-Wheeler Grove)** as she receives cancer treatments.
- **Jeff Leden, Husband of Rev. Leila Blackburn (Griswold)** as he deals with health issues.
- **Jerry Neal—District Lay Leader**—who is recovering from corneal replacement and cataract surgery.
- The **People of Haiti** and all of the rescue workers and volunteers.
- All **People who are still without power** due to the recent winter storms.

The United Methodist Church

*Southwest District Office
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Southwest District Newsletter

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



Southwest District Office Contact Information!

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

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712-243-8573

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Shirley.Lewis@iaumc.org

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Superintendent, please call or
e-mail Shirley Lewis, DAS.

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