

April 1, 2009



IOWA ANNUAL CONFERENCE – SOUTHWEST DISTRICT

Sharing The Mission

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

From The District Superintendent

Measuring Faithfulness

We United Methodists have measured *everything* from the earliest days of our history as a denomination. Our name itself came from others who thought it silly that we believed there was actually a method that could be applied to holiness. For generations we believed that measurement was a sure, undeniable indicator of fruitfulness.

Statistical Reports and Charge Conference Forms are intended to provide a means for measuring the success of local congregations and their ministries in their efforts to share the Gospel. The membership and apportionment records of local churches are two of the tools used as the Bishop and Cabinet make pastoral appointments.



Bishop Will Willimon is one of our Bishops pushing numerical means to measure fruit-bearing among clergy in the North Alabama Conference. As you can imagine, he is not winning many votes for popularity among the clergy!

Popularity notwithstanding, I do think the Bishop is on to something. Christianity is meant to GROW. We have been given a transforming, life giving, world-saving message. We have been commanded by Christ to go and share that message. Christ expects us to produce FRUIT by sharing this Good News. For some reason, we seem to be more focused on maintaining things as they are (or as we think they used to be). We act as if pastoral care for those within the church is more important than congregational care for the lost, the lonely, the least and the little in the community at large. Churches that are not growing are signs that something is wrong.

What would the writer of Luke say about our arguments that “you can’t measure everything in numbers” or “all the conference cares about is numbers”? Luke-Acts diligently reported the number of persons fed by Jesus as well as the number of converts at Pentecost. John Wesley, let alone Luke-Acts, would have no idea what our debate over numbers is all about.

Churches, not just pastors, should be held accountable to standards of numerical faithfulness. Every Christian is called to be in mission, not just the pastor. Our mission of making disciples of Jesus Christ is twofold: to make *better* disciples and to make *more* disciples. How are we doing?

Nobody thinks numbers alone are the **only** measure of success in the church. But we must admit that numbers are necessary for measurement, without growth something is seriously wrong. Ed Kail and I have been asking ourselves, “How can we as a District Leadership Team resource pastors and local churches for growth?” (Your suggestions are welcome).

When the numbers come rolling in and they don’t look so good, perhaps numbers will motivate us all to follow the Spirit’s lead and get about the work of the Church...

Making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world,

Brian

A SW District Day Apart for Clergy—“Developing Non-Anxious Leaders in Anxious Times”

Creighton Retreat Center

Griswold, Iowa

Friday, May 8

10:00 a.m.—3:00 p.m.

.4 CEU's
Will Be Offered
To Those
Attending This Event!

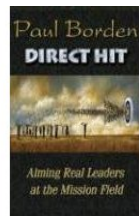
Led by The Rev. Bill Selby of *The Center for Pastoral Effectiveness of the Rockies*, Bill has worked with over 290 pastors (including the Nebraska Conference Bishop’s Cabinet and Orders/Fellowship groups). Over the past nine years Bill has been teaching clergy ways to manage themselves and their anxieties while living and working in the midst of anxiety-producing systems. Bill uses a “pastoral” model of systems theory and focuses his attention on enabling clergy to be healthier leaders of their church. This Day Apart seminar will focus on developing and maintaining healthy communication skills. **A registration fee of \$25** will help defray the costs of lunch, facility and speaker. Early registration is encouraged since space is limited. Contact Shirley in the District Office to register. Please make checks payable to “Iowa Annual Conference.” We hope you can care for your soul by participating in this helpful Day Apart!

Ed Kail (Field Outreach Minister)



Leading Systemic Change

One of the dangers of identifying churches as being caught in “survival mentality” is our tendency to think that there is nothing to be done about it. If our churches are functioning more as hospices or hospitals than as communities of hospitality, it can be hard to imagine the kind of change that will need to take place in order to claim a desirable future. It’s easy to feel stuck, trapped, frustrated and depressed.



In his book *Direct Hit: Aiming Real Leaders at the Mission Field* (available

from Abingdon), Paul Borden outlines a two step process of preparing for systemic change, and then producing systemic change. It’s a process that he developed among a group of American Baptist churches out west, including some churches in rural areas that had experienced long-term decline. That’s part of what got my attention.

Borden says that the leadership of the pastor is a critical issue in envisioning God’s direction for the church (basically from inside to outside), then communicating that vision and its accompanying mission and values to the congregation. First, leadership must concentrate on fostering readiness and a sense of urgency, while developing leaders and ministry in preparation for actually moving into a new reality. I believe that the strategies and processes he describes would be very doable in our setting here in SW Iowa. Your district staff has talked about it, and we’re considering utilizing at least some of Borden’s teaching to shape our own leadership work.

There is a foundational prerequisite to systemic change that is a source of spiritual conviction for me. In order to undertake the long and hard task of leading change, we need to be totally, passionately convinced that it makes a difference whether or not people are disciples of Jesus Christ. There needs to be a “fire in our bones” that people without a faith relationship with God through Jesus are missing out on something of eternal significance and lead diminished lives because of it. Am I actually behaving as though my relationship with Jesus points to something that others can’t live without? How about you?



I know that I recommend a lot of resources, but *Direct Hit* is another one of those that every pastor and a number of lay leaders should encounter before the end of the year. It’s time for us to be in earnest about systemic change, making disciples, and transforming the world.

Ed Kail
Field Outreach Minister

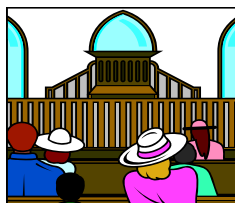
Southwest District Conference & Pre-Conference Training/Review

Celebration of Mission and Ministry And Pre-Conference Training

Sunday, May 3, 2009
First UMC
800 Poplar Street
Atlantic, IA

2:00 pm—5:30 pm
(Childcare Provided)

The Southwest District Conference will begin at 2:00 pm and include celebration of the SW District Mission and Ministry. A Special Offering will be received to support *Flood Relief*.



The following persons are members of District Conference according to the Iowa Conference Rules of Order: All Clergy, Local Church Lay Leaders, President of UMW, UMM, and UMYF from each local church, Lay Members of Annual Conference, Equalization Lay Members from each

local church, District-at-Large Members of Annual Conference and all members of the District Council on Ministries and District Committees. **(Please be sure that these persons in your congregation receive this announcement.)** Any material that needs to go into the District Conference Packets must be turned into Shirley at the District Office by **Friday, April 24, 2009.**

The Pre-conference training session will begin at approximately 4:15 pm for all persons who will be attending annual conference. Please be sure to bring your Pre-Conference Manual.

Next Step Conference

Dear Colleague,

Our church people are inviting your church people to join us for a Conference on October 23-24.

We are calling it the “Next Step Conference” because we will be sharing some approaches to ministry which have worked for us and which might provide some helpful ideas as you consider future steps in ministry at your own church. These ideas range from multi-site ministry to puppet ministry. They include sports evangelism, children’s ministry, mission partnerships, and vitalizing your church organizational structure by moving from committees to ministry teams.

Dr. Doug Anderson, Executive Director of the Bishop Rueben Job Center for Leadership Development, will provide the keynote address on Friday evening and will offer a workshop the next day focused on the needs of smaller membership churches. Friday’s bar-b-que dinner will be held in the new facility we have constructed to house sports, recreation, and fitness ministries. Tours will be offered.

We believe the Next Step Conference will help any church, regardless of size, generate ideas to enhance their ministry—and we would be honored if your church would join us in October!



For a preliminary agenda and workshop list please follow the link on our website:
<http://www.ankenfumc.org/content.cfm?id=2203>

Blessings...

Bob & Martha Ward, Lead Co-Pastors
Ankeny First United Methodist
Church
515-964-4249

“Rethink Church” Door-hangers Available



The district office has a carton of door-hangers available to churches who want to experiment with outreach to their communities. Building on the recently announced “Rethink Church” strategy, the flyers have space in which

your local church can place your own tailor-made message to help unchurched and de-churched people find an open door to God and a new life. Contact Shirley Lewis to reserve your supply; or stop by and pick up an armful of these outreach resources. As they say, “First come, first served!”

Let us know how you are using the

“Rethink Church” media resources that each pastor received in March. The shift from sitting passively, keeping the doors open, to actively opening doors for seekers is exciting and transformative. Let’s make “church” a verb: opening hearts, opening minds and opening doors for all possible people to draw closer, farther, deeper, and fuller to God!

Iowa Justice For Our Neighbors

It was prayer time in the Trinity/Las Americas bilingual worship service when joys are celebrated and concerns are raised. A father raised his hand and expressed his joy that he had voted the previous Tuesday. A mother stood and said, "I voted, too! I am so happy!" Yes! There were several grateful people in church that morning who had voted because JFON had helped them to make it through the immigration process. Some had been asylum applicants who had waited for more than ten years for their legal permanent resident, then five more to become citizens. Now they had voted!

Iowa Justice For Our Neighbors and our clients send a big "thank you" to the United Methodist Districts in Iowa! Your contributions have helped to bring hope and stability to many of our newcomer families. In 2008, you contrib-

\$52,431 through your Matthew 25 Funds and your District Askings. Our total 2008 income was \$170,250; our expenses were \$155,140; and more than 600 clients were served; making our average cost of service per client less than \$300.

Our JFON attorneys, Trina Scott-Zuor, Esq and Gary Walters, Esq are each currently serving around 200 clients with cases pending in the immigration system and courts, and they are counseling new clients at monthly clinics at all four Iowa JFON Sites. They helped 41 clients extend their Temporary Protective Status so they can continue to work in the United States and send much-needed money back to their families in Central America. Family-based and asylum applications continue to take much of their time as they help clients prepare their cases and accompany them to interviews and court dates.

Expanding our services with the second full-time attorney has increased our budget for 2009 to \$190,000 and given us the challenge of raising additional income. UMCOR has given us a \$10,000 matching grant to help us raise the additional funds we will need. We are implementing a plan to reach new donors with the belief that there are many who will welcome the opportunity to help provide free legal services for low-income immigrants, because helping immigrants gain a stable immigration status enables them to become leaders in their communities.

In 2009, Iowa JFON is celebrating our tenth anniversary. Stayed tuned for ways that you can participate in the celebration!

Doris Knight, Executive Director
515-277-4719—dorknight1@cs.com

News from Okoboji Camp

The 2009 camping materials are in! Packed with 1000's of fun, faith filled life-changing opportunities. The 2009 IAUMC camping catalog and Okoboji brochure offers something for everyone of all ages—it's almost unbelievable! Day camps to 5-night events, Pre-kindergarten through high school, family camps, volunteer/service opportunities, leadership training and much more. We have enough materials for every child, youth, young adult and family in your congregation. CALL US and share how many you need!

BIG CHANGES to the 2009 Okoboji Summer PROGRAMMING— This summer will see some exciting changes at Okoboji and we can't wait to share them with you! You'll notice that the camps look a little different this year and you have more choices than ever! The biggest change is in our Adventure Camp programming. This is the camp experience at its best! While attending any of the Adventure Camp sessions, campers will get to take part in Journeys, a camper choice, in-depth activity time. So, all the fun you're used to at Okoboji with added opportunities to choose what YOU want to do! For more information on Adventure Camps and Journeys, see their sections in this brochure.

Also new for 2009 is our Specialty Camps. Like the Journeys program, this specialty time will continue through every full day of a week-long session, giving campers the opportunity to really dive into these areas of personal interest and instruction.

If you've found you just can't decide between all the great 2-night programs we've offered in the past for younger campers, you'll want to check out our new mini-sessions. These compact versions of our Adventure Camps offer a taste of many of our week-long camp experiences, while also offering special activities designed especially for the mini-sessions. Read more about what these shorter camps are like in the mini-session section. With so much new to choose from, this summer you might just have to come to camp twice!

Bus Transportation—Don't feel like driving all the way to camp? Want to start hanging out with camp staff and friends even sooner? Then grab the bus to Okoboji and we'll take care of the rest! **The bus will depart from Atlantic, IA and make pick-up stops in Denison and Sioux City before arriving at camp in time for check-in.** You'll get full details, including departure times, when you register. All aboard!

HELP! Children, youth and families in YOUR churches or places of ministry need to know about camping opportunities! Camp is a place where 1,000's of people have made decisions about faith in their lives! Camp is a mountain-top experience in many people's faith stories. Maybe it's in yours too? Please share

camping opportunities with the families in your church!!

Camp Work Days—Campers need your help! Come to camp for a day in the spring, take on a few projects, make some new friends, and help get the camp ready for a summer of ministry! The ministry at Okoboji United Methodist Camp takes the work of so many people to thrive! You are helping us prepare a safe, clean campsite for God to enter into the hearts of children, youth and families! Every pair of hands counts! If you have the desire to serve through service and missions...WE NEED YOU! Perfect for youth groups, men's group or families! Projects for all skills levels and group sizes. Lunch, materials and supervision of projects provided. Call for more information.

Camp Sunday—Do you have a Camp Sunday celebration planned yet? If not...PLEASE DO! Everyone needs to know that camp is a fun, effective and exciting way to help children, youth and families grow in faith! There's plenty of time to schedule a special day to focus on the good news of our Iowa Camping Program! The activities and opportunities campers experience at camp will stick with them for the rest of their lives!

All worship resources are available for downloads this year at www.iaumc.org/camps.

Disaster Recovery is Still Going On!!

State disaster recovery officials declared in March that it is unreasonable to think that Iowa can completely recover from the damage of the floods and storms of 2008 in just one year. Some disaster victims are just now getting started on the road to recovery. Your church's volunteer efforts during 2009 could make a world of difference for someone in the flood/disaster zone.



Rev. Melisa Bracht-Wagner, coordinator of VIM work teams in the Linn County area, reported what is involved in restoring a family's home after a flood. She noted that each house is unique, requiring special attention and creative carpentry, but there is a definite order to the rebuild process. She outlined 14 steps, involving recovery administrators, workers, and volunteer specialists and workers, in moving from referral to final "house blessing". It takes roughly 3 months to rebuild a home, start to finish.

The average home requires 2,000 volunteer hours and countless amounts of love, tears, patience, encouragement and prayers. **You can see that there is something you can do to help—volunteer your time, your energy, your skills; make it possible for someone else to do it; or use your imagination, creativity and energy to raise funds to send for recovery work through your church!**

2008 INGATHERING FUNDS AVAILABLE FOR LOCAL FOOD PANTRIES

The Southwest District was granted \$4000.00 from the 2008 Ingathering funds for hunger relief. Local pantries may make application for consideration to receive a share of these funds. Please write a brief description of your needs noting the number of families and individuals and the area you serve. If you are fortunate enough to have reserve funds, please do not apply. The application needs to be received by May 1, 2009. Make application to one of the following representatives:



Jim McIntosh
2155 170th Street
Creston, IA 50801

Larry Gittins
308 S. 5th Avenue
Indianola, IA 50125

Randall & Phyllis Baier
71726 600 Street
Griswold, IA 51535

APPLICATION FOR LOCAL FOOD PANTRY GRANT

NAME OF LOCAL FOOD PANTRY _____
 ADDRESS _____
 CONTACT PERSON _____
 NUMBER OF HOUSEHOLDS SERVED _____
 SPONSORING CHURCH _____
 AREA SERVED _____
 SIGNATURE OF PERSON MAKING APPLICATION _____

Mail to one of the above representative before May 1. DON'T FORGET THE DESCRIPTION.

4 Goals of Mission...

1. Make Disciples of Jesus Christ. We will witness by word and deed to all. A caring presence becomes the means of Christian witness.
2. Strengthen, Develop and Renew Christian congregations and communities. Work in

- common growth, develop, nurture, witness and serve.
3. Alleviate Human Suffering.
4. See Justice, freedom and peace. We will participate with people oppressed by unjust economic, political, social systems.

Leann Baker
SW District Mission Secretary
2011 Vail Avenue
Clearfield, IA 50840
leann@iowatelecom.net
641.336.2354

Spring into Health Habit Renewal

During the 2008 Annual Conference Session, a clergy person made a commitment and a challenge; to weigh 10% less by the 2009 Annual Conference. Other clergy persons made a similar commitment. During the winter months, it is easy to lose interest and motivation to be active and to eat healthy. In life's every day struggles, it is often easy to follow the path of least resistance and to continue in unhealthy patterns. It does take an effort to move towards a more healthy balance of stress management, moderate eating, and some form of physical activity every day. And even though we may say "What's the use" I'll never lose this weight, or I don't like exercising, I'll never be able to do this", God's words says differently:



*"So, we're not giving up. How could we! Even though on the outside it often looks like things are falling apart on us, on the inside; where God is making new life, not a day goes by without his unfolding grace."
(2 Cor. 4:10 The Message)*

While most of us have good intentions of losing weight and being more physically active, it takes enormous amounts of energy and effort to maintain a major change in our lifestyle. So, before you chastise yourself for not succeeding, remember that lifestyle change is a process. Each time you start over, you have learned what didn't work, something about yourself, and are looking at other strategies. As you ponder what didn't happen during the winter ask yourself these questions:

- **Look at what you want to change.** Is it weight loss, becoming more fit, or being less stressed?
- **Then look at what is and what isn't working.** Are you eating the wrong foods, bored with your usual exercise routine, or are too many things competing for your attention.
- **Next, look at what is and isn't possible about your lifestyle.** Do you eat many of your meals out? What is a different physical activity that you enjoy or would like to try? What parts of your day can you control?

Now that you have done an evaluation process, open yourself to the creative process of the spring season and God's Spirit. Be receptive to new possibilities and different ways of accomplishing your goals. Here are some methods to help you improve your health habits.

- Make your health goal a priority. Your health-fullness is important to you, God and your families.
- Practice strategies of staying on track. Plan your meals, learn to say no, listen to your energy levels.
- Invite your family, friends, and colleagues to help you. Most of us need a support network when we work on lifestyle changes.
- When you hit a stumbling point, revise your plan and goals Don't quit.
- Most of all, stay connected to God, the Source of Life.

May these thoughts help in renewing your journey towards health-fullness.

Kae Tritle, RN
Wellness Coordinator

Unified Grants Program Open For Applications

Churches that desire funding for special ministries in Parish Development or in Hispanic Ministries are invited to apply for a grant through the Iowa Conference's Unified Grants Program. Contact Ed Kail at the district office for more information or for an application form. Application forms can also be downloaded from the Iowa Annual Conference website at: http://www.iaumc.org/form_detail.asp?pkvalue=288. The deadline for submission of completed applications to the district office is May 30, 2009.

Anyone Called to Ordained Ministry?

Do you know any youth or young adults whom you think God may be calling into ordained ministry? If so, consider helping them attend **EXPLORATION 2009!** EXPLORATION 2009, scheduled for Nov. 13-15 in Dallas, Texas, addresses The United Methodist Church's need for young clergy by offering youth and young adults who feel God's call a chance to explore that call. This national event is for high school seniors through young adults aged 24 who are considering a call to ordained ministry as a deacon or elder in The United Meth-

odist Church.

The Rev. Tyron Gordon, Dr. William B. Lawrence, Bishop Sally Dyck, and the Rev. Motoe Yamada will be the keynote speakers for the event. Participants will also have the chance to talk with admissions staff from the 13 United Methodist schools of theology, attend workshops, and take part in small group discussions. For more information, or to register for EXPLORATION 2009, please visit www.gbhem.org/exploration or www.explorecalling.org.

Upcoming Events!

- **April 1, 2009**—SMC Pastor's Seminar—10:00 a.m.—District Office
- **April 2, 2009**—RIM Group Meeting—10:00 a.m.—District Office
- **April 8, 2009**—Book Seminar—10:00 a.m.—District Office
- **April 9, 2009**—Southwest Subdistrict Meeting—9:30 a.m.—Hamburg UMC
- **April 10, 2009**—Good Friday—District Office Closed
- **April 12, 2009**—HAPPY EASTER!
- **April 14—16, 2009**—School for Lay Ministry—Des Moines, IA
- **April 26, 2009**—Final Service at Jefferson Center
- **May 1, 2009**—dCOM Meeting—9:00 a.m.—District Office
- **May 3, 2009**—**SOUTHWEST DISTRICT CONFERENCE**—2:00 p.m.—Atlantic, First UMC—Annual Conference training to follow.
- **May 1 & 2, 2009**—Lay Speaking Classes—Harlan UMC—Details are forthcoming!
- **May 8, 2009**—**A Day Apart**—Creighton Retreat Center, 16493 Con-trail Ave., Griswold, IA 51535

“Intersections: God and Us”



- **Beverly Nolte frequently has updates on the Iowa-Nigeria Partnership** and the needs of our brothers and sisters in Nigeria. If you wish to be included on Beverly's email list, please contact her at: bnmedical@aol.com.

- **All** Clergy and Diaconal Ministers are being asked to reserve **October 13, 2009** from 9:00 a.m.—4:00 p.m. for the next **Healthy Ministerial Relationships Workshop**. The Workshop is mandatory for all clergy and diaconal ministers and retired clergy who are hired by or appointed to a local church. More information will be provided by the Ministerial Ethics Committee in a timely manner.
- **There has been some effort to team up youth groups with small towns in need of Vacation Bible School programs this summer.** If your youth would be willing, or if you are in need of a VBS “team”, contact Ed or Brian in the District Office.
- **Congratulations to Rev. Dr. Marvin D. Arnpriester** who was awarded the 2009 Heritage Award for Education by Mercy Hospital, Council Bluffs on Saturday, March 28. Marvin has served on the Council Bluffs School Board for the past several years.
- **The DVD “Responding to Iowa’s Natural Disasters”** is now available

from the District Office for use in the local churches to increase awareness of the need for Disaster Recovery efforts across the state and to provide resources for persons who wish to support our efforts. This material can also be accessed through the conference website at www.stormrecovery.org (Two video options are provided, 8:30 minutes and 2:45 minutes). Resources including bulletin inserts and posters are also included in the kit and online.

- **REMINDER...for those that attend the Annual Conference, and happen to leave the area for the winter, please provide your contact information prior to leaving,** so that you can receive your registration mailing and pre-conference manual in a timely manner.
- Dates and locations have been set for **Youth 2011**, a gathering for United Methodist youth that occurs every four years. **Youth 2011** will be held July 13-17 in West Lafayette, IN and July 27-31 in Sacramento, CA. Visit www.youth2011.org to sign up for event updates.
- **Congratulations to Rev. and Mrs. Dean McPherson (Glenwood Grace)** on the birth of their granddaughter Becka Ray born March 23, 2009. Everyone is doing well!

PLEASE PRAY FOR:



- **Rev. Bonnie Peterson** (Anita—Wiota) who is dealing with a variety of health issues.
- **Nelva Petersen, wife of Rev. Tom Petersen**, (Dunlap—Dow City) who is struggling with heart issues. In addition, Nelva's mother, Jeanette, passed away Sunday, March 15, 2009. Services were Friday, March 20th in Carmel, Iowa.
- **Rev. Jack Hofmockel** (Logan—Magnolia) Son-in-law Steve Coffman, passed away Thursday, March 12, 2009. Services were Monday, March 16, 2009 in Glenwood, IA.
- **Rev. Clark Finehout** (Shenandoah) Father-in-law, Edward Davenport, passed away Saturday, March 14, 2009. Services were Friday, March 20th at Creston UMC.
- **Jefferson Center Congregation**—preparing for the closing of their church on April 26, 2009.
- **Clergy and their families** who are facing the transition of new appointments.

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.



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)

Office Hours:
8:00 a.m.—4:30 p.m.
Monday thru Friday

Telephone Number:
712-243-8573

Fax Number:
712-243-8574

Office E-Mail:
Shirley.Lewis@iaumc.org

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

**Ed Kail—Field Outreach
Minister (FOM):**
Ed.Kail@iaumc.org

**Shirley Lewis –District
Administrative Secretary**
Shirley.Lewis@iaumc.org