



# THE LOWER LIGHTS



JULY/AUGUST 2009

## Reflections on Annual Confer-



This year's annual Conference was an excellent one. We welcomed our Bishop, Julius Calvin Trimble and his wife, Racelder Grandberry-Trimble and I was truly enriched by the three sermons he shared with the Conference. He invited us to be a part of the FIT Challenge:

**FOCUS**, rebuild, restore and rejoice as we commit to the hard work of long-term disaster recovery. This is a time for our Church to be strong and focused throughout Iowa.

**INVEST** in new ministries, new churches and new ways of collaboration and innovation. New ministries reaching new people with radical hospitality and strategic witness in every district. Personally invest in a core value of self-care.

**TELL** the stories of Jesus and his transformational love. Renew our membership vows as we give voice and vision to living the United Methodist way. Extending Radical hospitality and receiving God's grace requires a commitment to both scriptural and social holiness.

Bishop Trimble invited us to also Focus on self-care and spiritual disciplines and the Four areas of Focus from the Council of Bishops:

- *Developing Principled Christian Leaders*
- *Creating New Churches and Renewing Existing Congregations*
- *Eradicating Poverty and Embracing the Poor*
- *Improving Global Health.*

During Annual Conference over \$4,000 was raised from the South Central District. I hope this is just the beginning. The Bishop challenged us to raise \$2,000,000 as an Annual Conference with half going to long term recovery from the floods of 2008 and half to start new faith communities in Iowa. This is an investment in hope for Iowa and for the Reign of God we all pray for.

While at Conference we also baptized people, Commissioned new Provisional Deacons and Elders, welcomed new Licensed Local Pastors, and Ordained new Clergy (one of them our daughter, Andrea Severson) and celebrated the ministry of others as they enter retirement.

Continued on page 2

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*"Let the  
Lower Lights  
be Burning"*

From our own district that included Pastors Raymond Doser, Sandra Smith, and Gary Armstrong. We closed the Conference with the fixing of appointments. We welcome the following persons serving in the South Central District:

- Judith Bunyi to Ottumwa, First from Van Meter-Booneville.
- Arley Ellingson to Agency-Eldon-Batavia from Onawa-Turin.
- Diane Olson-Schroeder to Corydon Parish (Assoc.) from Secular.
- Remigio Panlaqui to Fremont-Cedar from Stratford, Calvary-S Marion-Duncombe-McGuire Bend (UB).
- Lane Riggle to Knoxville from Prairie City-Pleasant Hill.
- Charles Rushing to Mount Ayr Larger Parish from DM, Marquisville-DM, Christ.
- Christopher Waddle to Mio-Green Plain-Liberty Center from Extension Ministries at Simpson College.

Continuing to serve on the District are:

- Richard Sperring to Harvey-Tracy.
- Raymond Doser continues to serve Russell, Faith in retirement serving half-time.
- Neil Montz to Albia, Trinity from Knoxville.
- Jodi Rushing to Lamoni-Decatur-Davis City from Milo-Green Plain-Liberty Center.
- Sandra Smith enters Retirement while continuing to serve Macksburg-Hebron-Lorimor half-time
- Joel Sutton joins Sandy at Macksburg-Hebron-Lorimor from the Air Force as Associate serving 1/4 time.

We also pray God's continued blessing upon those who have left the District to serve elsewhere: Bob Dvorak, Todd Holman, Gary Armstrong, Brian Hotrum, Kevin Leveck, Angie Loomis, Steve McElroy, and Sue Thomas.

We also celebrated the Ministries of those Churches which closed this past year. Specifically we remembered the ministry of the Pleasant Prairie congregation from the South Central District Please join me in praying for the people of these closed congregations and those who are moving and those charges receiving new pastors.

In addition the time and location for the 2010 Annual Conference was set for June 5-8, 2010 (Saturday through Tuesday) at Hy-Vee Hall within the Iowa Events Center in Des Moines.

It was an excellent Annual Conference and I am grateful for our Bishop, for all of you and for the privilege of serving with Sue Booth, Paul Smith, and all of you in the South Central District.

*With Much Love and Prayer,*



SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

**JULY**

- June 21—July 5 Bill Vacation
- 2 Book Study ~ Smokey Row & Family Table
- 3 4th of July Holiday Weekend ~ Office Closed
- 7-8 Cabinet ~ Conference Center
- 8-9 FOM ~ Conference Center
- 9 Book Study ~ Smokey Row & Family Table
- 12 District Picnic ~ Red Haw State Park
- 14 District Laity Ministry Potential ~ District Office
- 14 DCMC Executive Meeting ~ District Office
- 16 Book Study ~ Smokey Row & Family Table
- 21 Lay Speaker Advisory Council ~ District Office
- 20-22 UMW School of Christian Mission ~ Marshalltown
- 23 Book Study ~ Smokey Row & Family Table
- 30 Book Study ~ Smokey Row & Family Table

**AUGUST**

- August 13—August 27 Paul Vacation
- 21 District Committee on Ministry ~ Chariton
- 29 MUMMs ~ Ottumwa, Wesley



JULY 2009

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1	2 Book Study ~ Smokey Row & Family Table	3 Office Closed ~ Holiday	4
			Bill Vacation			
5 Bill Vacation	6	7	8	9 Book Study ~ Smokey Row & Family Table	10	11
		Cabinet		FOM		
12 District Picnic ~ Red Haw State Park	13	14 District Laity Ministry Potential & DCMC mtg.	15	16 Book Study ~ Smokey Row & Family Table	17	18
19	20 Lay Speaking Advisory Council	21	22	23 Book Study ~ Smokey Row & Family Table	24	25
26	27	28	29	30 Book Study ~ Smokey Row & Family Table	31	

AUGUST 2009

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
				Paul Vacation		
16	17	18	19	20	21 dCOM	22
		Paul Vacation				
23	24	25	26	27	28	29 MUMMs
30	31					

# "Growing in Faith", words from our FOM

## Being Led ....

"Jesus asked Peter three times if he loved him more than others and after having commissioned him to be a shepherd, he said in a very emphatic way"

"In all truth I tell you

When you were young

You put on a belt

And walked where you liked;

But when you grow old

You will stretch out your hands

And somebody else will put a belt around you

And take you where you would rather not go."

(John 21:18)

I like what Henri J.M. Nouwen writes in his book, In the Name of Jesus; Reflections on Christian Leadership.

"The world says, "When you were young you were dependent and could not go where you wanted, but when you grow old you will be able to make your own decisions, go your own way, and control your own destiny."

**But Jesus has a different vision of maturity: It is the ability and willingness to be led where you would rather not go.** (emphasis added is mine).

In Henri's discussion questions he asked; "Think of the last time God was calling you to make a change in your life. Was it difficult to let go of your own wishes and follow God's direction?" A good question to answer.

**But what would be tragic is that we have basically done what we wanted and gone where we wanted; that we cannot even think of a time when we subdued our wishes to follow God's direction!** If this is the case, then we will never know the gift that is given when we follow. We will never know the blessing that is bestowed as we leave our comfort zone.

God does NOT leave us be. God's direction does NOT always make us feel comfortable. God's direction sometimes has us doing things that we cannot even imagine.

I have been amazed at the large number of people that feel the call, that have known the nudge to reach out, to help, to listen, but feel to uncomfortable with that idea and in the end they say and do nothing. Try it once, follow God's direction and put your wishes and wants on the back burner and see the gift, know the blessing, and grow a little bit in your faith.

Blessings,

Paul

# LAY SPEAKERS' CORNER

## Lay Speaker's Corner ~ July/August 2009

What a great experience we had at Annual Conference! We started the day out Thursday in Ames with coffee and muffins and who should we see at the restaurant but our good friend Dick Sperring. He is always a joy to visit with. The rest of the day I kept very busy rehearsing and helping to present the Laity Session in the afternoon from 2:00-4:30 p.m. My husband drove golf carts to transport people to the parking lots and back, and his shift Thursday was 5:30-8:00.

Thursday night during the Conference Welcome of the Bishop, Bill, Paul and I presented Bishop Trimble and Racelder a matted and framed copy of the song, "Old Rugged Cross", because the author George Bennard came from Albia, Ia. The gift given from each district was suppose to represent something from that district. Thank's goes to Judy Poland for her inspiration and a job well done.

It was an honor meeting the Trimble's, what nice people they are.

Friday the sessions started at 8:00 a.m. My Husband's shift on the golf carts was 7:15 to 9:00 a.m. The legislative session I attended was on Board of Global Ministry. It was quite a session, with the arguments for and against changing several amendments to read that each Annual Conference would belong to a Regional Conference which would be able to organize sub-units called Jurisdictional Conferences.

For lunch my husband and I attended the United Methodist Rural luncheon. John Rothlisberger, a United Methodist lay person from Fredericksburg, Ia. was keynote speaker. John spoke on "Mobilizing the Rural Church for Outreach and Mission. John is school Superintendent of Turkey Valley School District. His speech was very inspirational to those who attend rural churches.

We attended the afternoon session and left to come home about 5:30, as Saturday morning we had to baby sit our 3 yr old granddaughter and I to do my baking for Green Plain's Monday luncheon, and we also had a family wedding in the afternoon at Newton.

I would invite any of you that would like to have a good home cooked meal to join us on Monday's at the Green Plain United Methodist Church for our luncheon. We serve from 11:30 – 1:30, GOOD WILL OFFERING. Here is the directions to the church!

**Go to the church web site: [www.gbgm-umc.org/threumc](http://www.gbgm-umc.org/threumc), for map Highway 65 to Roosevelt, East to 180<sup>th</sup> Ave, turn left.**

Remember August 1<sup>st</sup>, 12:30 p.m. at Chariton Hy-Vee dining room is our next Prayer and Discussion Group. Everyone is welcome, come join us!

God Bless You All!

Sharon Spear, District Lay Leader



### PASTORS - NEED CONTINUING EDUCATION HOURS?

There is still time to sign up for School of Christian Mission conducted by United Methodist Women to obtain CE hours.

STUDY TOPICS ARE:

*Food & Faith*

*The Beauty & Courage of Sudan*

*Giving Our Hearts Away—Native American Survival*

Check out our brochure which includes a registration form at:

[www.iaumc.org/umw](http://www.iaumc.org/umw)

You can receive 2.0 CEU's at School of Christian Mission which is being held in Marshalltown July 19-22 at Iowa Valley Continuing Education Center .

There will also be an opportunity to obtain 1.5 CEU's in the fall at the Mission Education Event being held October 16-18 at Iowa Valley Continuing Education Center, Marshalltown, IA.

If you have any questions, please contact the School of Christian Mission Dean, Rita Thatcher 515-887-5959 or [ritat@ncn.net](mailto:ritat@ncn.net).

At Annual Conference, Iowa Justice For Our Neighbors celebrated ten years of "welcoming the stranger" through our program offering free legal services for low-income immigrants. Our speaker was Joan Maruskin, who works with detained immigrants for Church World Service. She inspired us with the reminder that our faith response to migrants is rooted in biblical stories of God's migrant people and in Jesus's assertion that he, himself, is the stranger whom we welcome. The gracious support for Iowa JFON from those attending the luncheon strengthened and empowered everyone present to continue the very important work.

Our attorneys continue their professional services with almost four hundred pending cases, encouraged by the successful resolutions of many. Gary recently told us that Juan received his legal permanent residence after spending twenty-four years "in line" in our immigration system. Juan fled the civil wars in Guatemala in 1985, seeking safety in the United States. He applied for asylum which was arbitrarily denied. He then participated in a class action suit filed by the American Baptist Church which they won. The process after that involved applications for Temporary Protective Status and then an asylum application which immigration held without action for ten years. In the meantime, Juan married a United States citizen and they have nine children. Iowa JFON attorneys investigated the case and finally, after many delays, Juan was granted legal permanent residence in March. The family is still celebrating.

Iowa JFON received a matching grant of \$10,000 from UMCOR in March, and we need your help! If your congregation would like to help us continue the life-changing service which enables our newcomers to gain a stable immigration status, contact Doris Knight, Executive Director, Iowa JFON, PO Box 41006, Des Moines IA 50311, 515-277-4719, [dorknight1@cs.com](mailto:dorknight1@cs.com) We will send you a copy of our Tenth Anniversary booklet. Iowa JFON speakers are available to help your congregation have a conversation about immigration.

**2009 Apportionment Report  
(as of 5-31-2009)**

**As of May 31, 2009 in order to be considered current 41.65% of  
your apportionments should have been paid.**

<b>Afton</b> 42%	<b>Unionville</b> 42%	<b>Lamoni</b> 42%	Melcher/Dallas,
<b>Arispe</b> 42%	<b>Columbia</b> 42%	Decatur 33%	New Hope 33%
Agency 33%	Corydon 33%	Davis City 0%	<b>Russell, Faith</b> 42%
<b>Eldon</b> 50%	<b>Millerton</b> 42%	Macksburg 29%	Seymour 32%
<b>Batavia</b> 42%	Sewal 35%	<b>Hebron</b> 50%	<b>Promise City</b> 42%
Albia Trinity 33%	<b>New Zion</b> 42%	<b>Lorimor</b> 42%	<b>St Charles</b> 42%
<b>Allerton</b> 42%	Creston, First 12%	Milo 10%	Tingley 0%
Clio 0%	<b>Jerusalem</b> 100%	Green Plain 33%	Wishard Chapel 25%
Lineville 0%	Diagonal, Yoke 33%	Liberty Center 23%	Ellston 33%
Attica 18%	Earlham 25%	Moravia, Grace 24%	Leon 33%
Olive Chapel 33%	Worthington 33%	Moulton 0%	High Point 17%
<b>Pershing, Zion</b> 42%	Penn Center 0%	Mount Ayr 33%	Van Wert 33%
<b>Avery</b> 100%	Fremont 33%	Redding 0%	Weldon 0%
Barnes City 0%	<b>Cedar</b> 42%	<b>Middle Fork</b> 42%	<b>Troy</b> 75%
<b>Blakesburg</b> 42%	<b>Harvey</b> 51%	New Sharon 25%	Truro 7%
<b>Christiansburg</b> 42%	<b>Tracy</b> 42%	New Virginia 33%	<b>Peru</b> 42%
<b>Mt. Zion</b> 42%	Hopeville 41%	<b>Medora</b> 42%	Murray 0%
<b>Bloomfield</b> 56%	Lacelle 0%	Osceola 12%	Humeston 40%
<b>Drakesville</b> 42%	Iconium 33%	<b>Oskaloosa,</b>	West Grove 9%
Bussey 0%	Jerome 0%	<b>Central</b> 42%	Winterset 25%
Hamilton 0%	Kellerton 0%	Ottumwa,	<b>Patterson</b> 42%
Lovilia 0%	<b>Beaconsfield</b> 42%	First 33%	Woodburn 0%
<b>Centerville,</b>	Grand River 17%	Ottumwa,	<b>Norwood</b> 42%
<b>Faith</b> 100%	Kirkville 0%	Wesley 5%	DISTRICT TOTAL 30%
Centerville,	Knoxville, First 24%	<b>Ottumwa,</b>	
First 17%	Lacey 33%	<b>Willard Street</b> 42%	
Chariton,	<b>Beacon</b> 42%	Pella 33%	
First 39%	<b>Eddyville</b> 44%	Pleasantville,	
<b>Cincinnati</b> 100%	<b>Lacona</b> 100%	St. Paul's 0%	

**NEXT STEP CONFERENCE *Innovative Ideas for Any Size Church***

Hosted by Ankeny First United Methodist Church

We have discovered, by trial and error, some ministry models and programs which are especially effective. Churches of all sizes will find some of these ministry ideas worth considering as a possible “next step” for their ministry. We hope we will have an opportunity to share these ideas with you on October 23-24.

Cost: Early Bird Registration (by September 1) - \$35.00; Deadline Registration (by October 1) - \$50.00

Registration: Please register by using the Next Step website [www.NextStepAnkeny.com](http://www.NextStepAnkeny.com) Questions can be emailed to Rev. Bob Ward at [nextstep@ankenyfumc.org](mailto:nextstep@ankenyfumc.org) or call 515-964-4249.

# LAY SPEAKERS' CORNER

## LAY SPEAKER'S CORNER-JULY, 2009

As summer moves along, opportunities exist to fill pulpits as Pulpit Supply, teaching Sunday School, Vacation Bible School, and committee work. All are opportunities to use Lay Speaking skills. Don't wait to be asked! Find the opportunities where your skills can be used, and seek to contribute through them.

The May Basic Lay Speaking Class certificated [ ] new Basic Lay Speakers. The Advanced Lay Speaking Class certificated four new Certified Lay Speakers: and re-certified eleven existing Certified Lay Speakers. We are proud of the spring classes, and now we look forward to the fall training classes which will be announced soon.

If you are looking for a fall class in Advanced Lay Speaking on a certain subject, drop me an email telling me what you are seeking. We aim to get the most desired course, or courses, if we hold two, lined up. We held the spring course at Chariton United Methodist Church, and will seek to hold at least one Advanced course farther west this fall. If we hold a second course, it will be farther east. Our goal is to accommodate people in all directions within the District.

On July 21, the Annual Planning Meeting for Lay Speaking will be held at the District Office. We already have an ambitious tentative agenda, but if you want us to work on something, please contact me by email or phone. When our planning is done, we hope to be well organized to proceed with training and utilization of Lay Speakers.

Finally this month, let me call your attention to planning for Laity Sunday. United Methodists will observe Laity Sunday on October 18 this year. It is my hope that our churches support this concept, that the laity in each and every church will plan the service and conduct it. The topic this year is: "Disciples Transforming the World: Through Prayers." The General Board of Discipleship website now has materials, posters, bulletin covers, sermon ideas, and much other information. The website address is: [www.gbod.org](http://www.gbod.org). Open the site, and in the purple box on the left, click on *Laity and Lay Speaking Ministry*. Look at this site, start your planning now, and if I can be of any help, please email or phone me.

Richard F. Sperring, District Lay Speaking Coordinator

[rsperr@sirisonline.com](mailto:rsperr@sirisonline.com)

641-799-2083

Please keep the following in your prayers:

**All Pastors**, who will be leaving the South Central District and moving to new Districts this appointment season.

**All Pastors**, who will be arriving in the South Central District.

**All Pastors**, who will be retiring.

Please forward all prayer requests to Sue at the District Office. If you would like the prayer request to go out on the District email list, please indicate that.



**Prayer  
Requests**



July	
1	Jodi Rushing
2	Carol Oliver
5	Jim Gubser
8	Brenda Boatman
8	Dennis Reida
15	Rick & Marilyn Hawkins
15	Dick & Sue Booth
16	Steve Olinger
17	Dodi Fernandez
18	Jim Matheney
18	Sue Booth
21	Bob Dean
27	Janice Young
August	
5	Bill & Sue Ellen Ballard
7	Gene & Jolene Kubli
11	Jay & Terra Amundson
11	Jim Beranek
13	Sharon Squires
14	Alice Riggle
16	Brian Hotrum
16	Paul Burrow
17	Jim & Dorothy Gubser
18	Mary Hanna
19	Bob & Diane Dean
22	Dick Sperring
26	Diane Dean
27	Lane Riggle
29	Mark Young
29	Arley & Peggy Ellingson
30	Jerry & June Morrison
30	Jeff & Julie Flagg

### Self-Care: Supportive Networks

At Annual Conference, Bishop Trimble introduced his FIT Challenge. Part of that FIT Challenge is an invitation to be intentional about self-care.

Most of us do want to be healthier and want to take better care of ourselves. In fact, approximately 80% of us are trying to be healthier by making a lifestyle change, but only 20% of us are successful. Why? The key seems to be support from family, friends, and co-workers. (J. Allen, *Healthy Habits, Healthy Friends*, 2008)

We seem to have the perception that asking for help in the midst of difficulties and life-changes means that we are not self-sufficient and strong. Therefore, too many of us try to deal with the stuff of life alone. The reality is that in order to survive life's difficulties, lifestyle change, and the stresses of day-to-day activities, a network of people is needed to offer encouragement, emotional support, and strategies for coping.

*"Gently encourage the stragglers and reach out for the exhausted, pulling them to their feet. Be patient with each person, attentive to individual needs" (1 Thess. 5:14 The Message)*

If a supportive network is important in everyday life, it is essential when you are making lifestyle changes. It is the most significant tool for ensuring success. As you build your plan for intentional self-care and for lifestyle change include people with these qualities:

- someone you can trust,
- will be honest with you,
- hold you accountable but not be judgmental,
- offers encouragement,
- helps you formulate and revise your plans to improve your health and well-being.

I invite you to make support networks part of your self-care strategy. You may be surprised at how helpful a listening ear and encouraging cheer-leader can be in your self-care journey.

Kae Tritle, RN

Wellness Coordinator

Dist news July 09

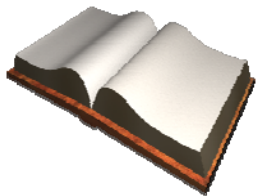
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### **Book discussion and time of fellowship!**

Please join us for a Book Study on Thursdays at 10:30 am at either Smokey Row in Oskaloosa or Family Table on HWY 34 in Osceola, we will have a discussion on Brian McLaren's book Everything Must Change. We will meet every Thursday until we have completed the book. Here is what the book is about,

**“In Everything must change, you will accompany Brian around the world on a search for answers. Along the way you’ll experience intrigue, challenge and insight and hope. You’ll get a fresh and provocative vision of Jesus and his teaching. And you’ll see his core message can infuse us with purpose and passion to address the economic environmental, military, political, and social dysfunctions that have overtaken our world.”**

All are welcome! Hope to see you there!