



THE LOWER LIGHTS

JUNE 2009



Everything Must Change!?!?

The mission statement of the United Methodist Church is: "To make Disciples of Jesus Christ for the Transformation of the World." How are we doing in our mission? I hear from some who don't like our Mission Statement, but I do. I wish we were doing better at it. I think it should be the mission of every one of our congregations. Let me break it down for you as I explain why.

Disciples are people who act like their teacher. There are many passages that bear this out, but my favorite is from 1



John 3:2: "Beloved, we are God's Children now; what we will be has not yet been revealed. What we know is this: when he appears we shall be like him, for we will see him as he is." As a child of

God and a Disciple of Jesus we should be about helping each other resemble Christ more and more. That is what Making Disciples is all about.

Transforming the world is another way of talking about its redemption. In Romans 8 Paul tells us that all of creation is waiting for the revelation of the children of God. The world is waiting for us to lead in its redemption, its transformation. From Genesis onward the Bible tells us that creation is good and we are to be its stewards because it belongs to God. Jesus tells us that God loves the world (John 3:16) and in Revelation salvation concludes with earth and even heaven made new.

The creation and the world around us is waiting for us to act, to lead, to offer real light and hope. But I fear many are growing impatient. Please read the following quote:

Continued on page 3

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**"Let the
Lower Lights
be Burning"**



JUNE 2009

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1	2	3 Cabinet	4	5	6
	Annual Conference ~					
7 Ames	8 Office Closed	9	10	11 Book Study ~ Smoky Row & Family Table	12	13
14	15	16 Cabinet FOM Mtg.	17	18 Book Study ~ Smoky Row & Family Table	19	20
21	22	23 Ministry Cabinet	24	25 Book Study ~ Smoky Row & Family Table	26	27
28	29	30				

June

2	Dwayne & Darlene Henrichs
2	Raymond & Dola Doser
5	Sharon & Richard Squires
7	Duane & Darlene Churchman
7	Sandy & Fred Smith
7	Mel & Terry Ammon
10	Julie Battern
11	John & Julie Battern
11	Kevin & Susan Gingerich
13	Lyle & Trudy Ball
13	Lynne Flagg
13	Brent Hanna
17	Bill Poland
17	Richard Squires
18	Bishop Trimble
18	John & Brenda Boatman
18	Brent & Mary Hanna
20	Sandy Smith
24	Bill & Judy Poland
25	Debra Montz
27	Tom & Ann Murr
28	Susan Sullivan Lane
28	Kevin & Lisa Smith
29	Bob & Denise Morris

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

June

3 Cabinet
 4—7 Annual Conference ~
 Ames
 8 Office Closed
 11 Book Study ~ Smokey
 Row & Family Table
 16-17 Cabinet & FOM
 18 Book Study ~ Smoky
 Row & Family Table
 23 Ministry Cabinet
 25 Book Study ~ Smoky
 Row & Family Table

July

2 Book Study ~ Smoky Row & Family
 Table
 3 Office Closed
 7-8 Cabinet
 9 Book Study ~ Smoky Rove & Family
 Table
 12 District Picnic ~ Red Haw State Park 5-7
 16 Book Study ~ Smoky Row & Family
 Table
 19-22 UMW School of Christian Mission
 23 Book Study ~ Smoky Row & Family
 Table
 30 Book Study ~ Smoky Row & Family
 Table

“Acclaimed author and Emergent church leader Brian McLaren states, "More and more Christian leaders are beginning to realize that for the millions of young adults who have recently dropped out of church, Christianity is a failed religion. Why? Because it has specialized in dealing with 'spiritual needs' to the exclusion of physical and social needs. It has focused on 'me' and 'my eternal destiny,' but it has failed to address the dominant societal and global realities of their lifetime: systemic injustice, poverty, and dysfunction."

McLaren asks, "Shouldn't a message purporting to be the best news in the world be doing better than this?" What he sets forth in this provocative, unsettling work is a "form of Christian faith that is holistic, integral, balanced, that offers good news for both the living and the dying, that speaks of God's grace at work both in this life and the life to come, both to individuals and to societies and the planet as a whole."

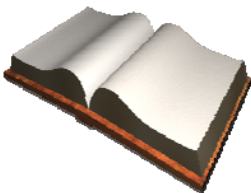
Paul and I are inviting whoever would like to come and join us in discussion of McLaren's book, -Everything Must Change. We will be holding simultaneous sessions in Osceola and Oskaloosa. I hope it will help us look at ourselves, at Jesus and focus us on what we should be about.

Blessings,

Bill

The *Grace*
of *God* is
with *you!*

Book discussion and time of fellowship!



Starting Thursday June 11, 2009 at 10:30 am at either Smokey Row in Oskaloosa or Family Table on HWY 34 in Osceola, either Bill Poland or Paul Smith will lead a discussion on Brian McLaren's book Everything Must Change. Please have the first section (Chapters 1-5) read by the first meeting. 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!

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.



This Changes Everything!

Jill Sanders, my counter part in the East Central District, told us this true life event. Jill and a group of friends went out to eat at a nice restaurant. The waitress was clearly not in a good mood. The waitress was not doing a good job and she was almost rude. Jill said, "well there goes her tip!" A sentiment I know that most of us would share.

A friend there said no let's not withhold our tip, but instead lets give her an outstanding, an extravagant tip! They discussed this idea. They talked about how she did not deserve it, but her friend talked about how maybe she needed it more now than ever. Grace won out and they gave this waitress a 50% TIP! They gave the waitress a tip that was a little over half of what their total bill had been. Jill relayed how this act of grace totally transformed this woman. She acted completely different not only to them but everyone she encountered!

Grace Changed Everything!

I could not help but wonder how we in the church who proclaim this and sing about how Amazing Grace can be, live completely opposite of this! How we limit our responses and our outreach to those that we perceive truly who deserve it. How sometimes our ministries look more like "taking care of our own" **rather than** a radical gift of grace to those who do not deserve it!

Or worse yet, we live and give in such a manner where we feel like we have no grace to even share!

Do you want to change everything? Do you want to see lives transformed? Do you want to be a part of the Kingdom of God?

If so, then give Grace,give it abundantly,give it extravagantly,.... give it undeservedly! And then watch how the people are not only changed but how we are changed. Stop living as if we people must perform in a certain manner and in a certain way BEFORE we offer them our gifts, our time, or our love!!!

Live as if we are a people who has seen and experienced the Grace we proclaim! The Grace that Jesus Offers!!!!

Blessings,

Paul

"For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing; it is a gift of God- " Ephesians 2:8

LAY SPEAKERS' CORNER

O what a beautiful trip I had into the office this morning. I had to go the long way around to pick up my husband at Liberty Center, he took his tractor to the garage to get it fixed. I took the highway to Milo, all the tilled soil, green trees and grass, sun, clear blue sky, it made me think of the words to the song, "America the Beautiful", O beautiful for spacious skies for amber waves of grain, wow! Its great to be living in Iowa and being American, let all prayer and work hard to keep freedom and country.

By the time this is read, the Lay Speakers Schools will be finished, as I know of at this time they both were well attended. Please don't despair if you were unable to attend one of the spring sessions, we will be offering both sessions in the fall, with dates and locations to be announced in a future newsletter.

We had a good Prayer and Discussion Group May, 2 at Chariton. We plan to have another meeting August 1st, at same place, Chariton Hy-Vee dining room, at 12:30, Chariton is the central location of our District, so that's why we meet there.

I am looking forward to going to Annual Conference, I'm taking my spouse with me and he is going to drive a golf cart to help the UMM out. I think he will enjoy that. We are at the age where we hate to leave each other and go off several days. We will only be able to go Thursday and Friday, as Saturday we have a family wedding we need to attend.

There is not much news this month so I will close by sharing this story about:

Two Little Boys

After a hardy rainstorm filled all the potholes in the streets and alleys, a young mother watched her two little boys playing in the puddles through her kitchen window. The older of the two, a five year old lad, grabbed his sibling by the back of his head and shoved his face into the water hole. As the boy recovered and stood laughing and dripping, the mother ran to the yard in a panic. 'Why on earth did you do that to your little brother?!' she asked as she shook the older boy in anger...

'We were just playing 'church' Mommy,' he said.

'I was just baptizing him....in the name of the Father, the Son and in...
the hole-he-goes. '

Blessings to you all!

Sharon Spear



2009 Iowa Annual Conference

June 4-7, 2009

Ames, IA



Mobilizing the Rural Church for Outreach & Mission

Gathering of Town & Rural Leaders at the Iowa Annual Conference

Friday, June 5, 2008 - 11:45 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. - Scheman Center

\$18.00 per person for Meal & Registration
[Registration deadline with payment is May 23]

Pastors and Lay Members of Annual Conference concerned about the Church in rural areas are invited to this gathering of rural church leaders to encourage rural laity and clergy to reach out in love in their places, resulting in the renewal of churches all over Iowa. This gathering is sponsored by the Iowa Chapter of The United Methodist Rural Fellowship (UMRF).

Keynote Speaker
John Rothlisberger

John Rothlisberger is a United Methodist lay person from Fredericksburg, IA, who serves as superintendent of the Turkey Valley school district in northeast Iowa. As a leader in the Fredericksburg UMC, he has been part of a revitalization effort there that has resulted in spiritual and numerical growth for the church. He will share some of that story with our Rural Fellowship luncheon, as he speaks about "Mobilizing the Rural Church for Outreach and Mission."

For more information contact: Ed Kail, Ed.Kail@iaumc.org; Janice Bolger, jbolger@iowatelecom.net, 641-856-8251
Bill Ballard, williamballard@iowatelecom.net

----- Please cut and Return -----

Name _____ Address _____
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Mail to Janice Bolger, 912 Woodland View Drive, Centerville, IA 52544-2040.
Make checks payable to Iowa United Methodist Rural Fellowship.

Celebrating the Rural Church



Self-Care: Living and Being Well

The buzz word in health promotion circles and insurance committees is “self-care”. Many of us have ugly feelings about what “self-care” means. Often, when we think about “self-care” habits, our thoughts may turn to; “one more thing I have or need to do”, eliminating foods that we really enjoy and adding things that we really don’t want to do such as daily exercise.

I encourage you to shift your thinking. Self-care means finding a way of **being** that nurtures your emotional and spiritual self and changing your lifestyle habits so that they enhance your physical self. This approach to living will lead to a sense of well-being and contentment within your inner self and your outer environment.

Taking care of yourself means looking at your whole lifestyle: eating, physical movement, relaxation, work habits, coping skills for stress, leisure activities and relationships that make up your life. As you take a wholistic look at your life, ask these questions;

- Are you emotionally nurtured and intellectually challenged?
- Is your physically body effectively functioning with minimal discomfort or pain?
- Are you well-rested and find some “play-time” during your day/week?
- Do you enjoy what you do for work?
- Is your body pleased with how you move it and what you put into it?

Reflecting upon the above questions may cause you to feel overwhelmed with the number and kind of changes you may want to make. Your first response may be “it’s too hard, I can’t do it, and nothing will ever change”. I ask that you select just **one** lifestyle change upon which you would like to focus. Intentionally make one small step that will move you closer to your goal. Make the change realistic and enlist someone to support you in your change process.

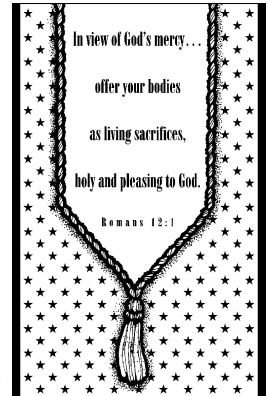
“So here’s what I want you to do, God helping you: Take your everyday, ordinary life, your sleeping, eating, going-to-work, and walking around life, place it before God as an offering...fix your attention on God. You’ll be changed from the inside out.” (Romans 12:1, 2b The Message)

I invite you to shift your view of self-care as a way of living and being well. Remember: Jesus came to give us abundant life.

Kae Tritle, RN

Wellness Coordinator

dist news 6/09



We've a Story to Tell

Do you need a speaker (short notice or in the future) at an upcoming church event or for a program? Interpreters from the Iowa-Nigeria Partnership committee are available to come to tell interesting and heart warming stories of Nigerian mission work. Hear them tell how the Iowa InGathering kits are received! The excitement of villagers who have a village well! The eagerness of women who are learning to read and write! The use of A3 to relieve malaria suffering!

From Akron to Ottumwa, from Carroll to Shell Rock and Cedar Rapids, we have speakers ready, willing and able to share their mission tales. Fourteen Iowans will travel to Nigeria in June to return in July with their first hand impressions. 2009 marks the 20th year of partnership with the United Methodist Church of Nigeria so let us come to motivate your group to celebrate mission! Contact: Beverly Nolte, 515 237 8544, e-mail: bnmedical@aol.com.

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