

United Methodist Church

Iowa Annual Conference

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What am I here for?



What am I here for? That was a question I was asking God back in the fall of 1979. I was recuperating in the Burn Center of University Hospitals in Iowa City. I had come close to death and finding meaning for my life became an urgent matter for me. It is one thing to exist; to exist for a purpose is to live. It was out of that question that my wife, Judy and I discerned our call to ministry. I believe my life can make a difference in the world for Christ and for his church. I believe that I am here to love as God loves us in Jesus Christ. I believe my life has a purpose.

With the re-organization of the Iowa Annual Conference it is a good time for us to ask that very same question. What are we here for? Are we here just to survive, to exist, or are we here for a purpose?

Jesus teaches us that to truly live we must be prepared to give our lives away. If we live for ourselves we will most assuredly die. If we willing die to ourselves, we will most assuredly live.

As we prepare for our District Conference I would like to invite you to prayerfully ask, "What are we here for?" You can apply the question to your own life and I think it may be helpful for you as it has been for me. More importantly I would invite you to apply it toward our congregations. When we meet at Manchester on May 6th, as our respective Charges I would like to ponder our response to this question as we make the transition into new districts and go about our ministry as congregations. I believe God will use it as we seek God's purpose for us. May we affirm together the words of the Apostle Paul, if we live, it is to the Lord; if we die it is to the Lord. So that living or dieing our life is in the Lord.

As we look toward the future that God has for us, it will be important not to loose our focus on our mission, our purpose. For me the most important question is not how long can we keep going? What matters to me is what we do and who we are while we are here. During our District Conference we will celebrate the past and give thanks to God for the faithfulness of those who have gone before us, but we must also look ahead to the calling we have each received. We can give of ourselves and find the Kingdom of God or we can seek out what is best for us individually and miss everything. God has given us that choice to make. Brothers and Sisters what are we here for? Our answer will make all the difference.

Working With you for the Realm of God,

Bill



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Along Jill's Journey

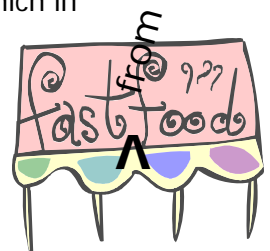
Dear Friends... Evangelism is a word that makes most mainline Christians uncomfortable. While we want to reach out in love to those who may not yet have a connection with Christ or the Church, we are uncomfortable with approaching total strangers, sharing the message of the gospel, and having our success judged by the presence or absence of an immediate response. It may surprise us to learn that there are fun ways to reach out to the people in our communities. Steve Sjogren leads us in the path of servant evangelism, sharing ideas in three books — **1. Conspiracy of Kindness**, **2. 101 Ways to Reach Your Community** and **3. Seeing Beyond Church Walls**. Summer is a great time to engage our congregations in fun outreach efforts. Here are some of Sjogren's ideas.

- 1. Mothers Day Carnation Giveaway:** Set up outside a grocery store on the Saturday before Mothers Day. Make a sign that says "Free Carnations" and a card that explains why your congregation is giving the flowers as a free gift.
- 2. House Gutter Cleaning:** Send out teams into the community to clean out gutters of leaves, sticks, and debris. Give residents a card that explains that your goal is to make God's love visible.
- 3. Sunday Morning Paper and Coffee Giveaway:** Go early in the morning to houses without a paper in the driveway, delivering Sunday papers and cups of coffee. Attach a card to the paper to let people know that this gift has no strings attached---just like God's grace!
- 4. Hand Out Bottled Water or Cold Pop along the 4th of July Parade route:** Include a card that says something like: "You looked too thirsty to pass up! We hope this small gift brings some refreshment into your day. It's a simple way of saying "God loves you---no strings attached." Let us know if we can be of more assistance. (Church name, address, worship schedule, etc.)
- 5. Plan a block party — a hog roast or wiener roast — and invite the neighborhood or community for a free meal, games and fellowship:** Do not accept donations. This is a great way to be neighborly and to challenge people's perceptions that "churches only want your money." Offer prizes for which people can register...and use the information they share to send information about programs and ministries offered by the church.

I hope that some of Sjogren's suggestions have primed the pump and enabled you to access your congregation's deep well of creativity. It is possible to carry out the ministry of evangelism and have a great time as well! Have fun — and please let me know what you decide to do! *On the Journey With You!* Jill

Colesburg UMYF Hunger Strike

Seventeen youth participated in a 30-hour fast on Maundy Thursday and Good Friday at the Colesburg UMC. The purpose of the Hunger Strike was to raise awareness of hunger in our world and to raise money for the Heifer Project International. Community service projects included gathering non-perishable food to donate to local food pantry. The youth used grocery carts to contain the food as they traveled around town. They made care packages for college students, and painted a mural of a lighthouse in one of the Sunday School rooms. It was a good time of fellowship, which included food for thought through devotions, games, presentations, and service to others. The youth traveled on Friday to visit New Melleray Abbey and attend the Good Friday services at St. Luke's United Methodist Church. They went miniature golfing for fun while in Dubuque. The hunger strike concluded on Good Friday evening with worship with the Colesburg United Methodist Church congregation and THEN the youth enjoyed a potluck of lasagna, garlic bread, salads, and desserts...



Lay Leader Notes: Feast or Famine

Do you receive the publication of the Iowa Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church, "Grace Upon Grace"? It is so good!! For information check the website grace@iaumc.org I would like to share some thoughts from the Bible Study in the last issue entitled *Feast or Famine*.



Many people choose to give up something for Lent. In other words...fast. Fasting is not just food, it can be television, foul language, or anything else that can improve your life. Sometimes we give up something with the idea that after Lent we can partake again...like chocolate. But you know this could be a time to make REAL changes in our lives; changes that make us better and more focused on God. When we do give up something, we should replace the longings, with God through prayer, scripture, devotions, or service.

For some fasting is not something they are able to do. Feasting is just as good. Now you will say "WOW, what did she say?" Yes, feasting...by adding something new and better to your life of faith. This may be joining a new group or class, making a special devotional time with your family; or it may be volunteering for something new to help others. Feasting is nourishing to your soul. It will strengthen you for the journey when paths become difficult. We will need to help each other as we journey through all the changes that the Iowa Conference is experiencing. When others have questions, help them find the answers, use the website of the church, the publications available or whatever it takes to relieve the anxieties many may feel during this time of change.

And we do not have to do these positive things just during one time of year, let us be about doing good all year long, not only for ourselves but for others around us.

Ilo M. Rhines

District Lay Leader • PO Box 312 • Edgewood, Iowa • 52042 • 563-928-6847 • buzzilo@juno.com



From Behind the Razor Wire

A little invitation from the Women at the Well: **YOU ARE INVITED!** We are scheduling visitors every week at the well these days. If you or your church want to worship with us, just call or e-mail Pastor Arnette at the addresses below. Why would we want to do that? Let me give you just a sampling of the comments we hear after worship:

- "I am simply amazed at the depth of their faith."
- "The prayers – oh when they pray – it comes from so deep within."
- "It really expanded my understanding of the body of Christ."
- "It's unbelievable that faith can grow in a place like this. It really reminds me of how blessed we are to have a community and a church to call our own."
- "They really sing with gusto!"

And, most often, at least one person says, "What an amazing experience. I don't think I have words to describe it yet, but I have certainly been blessed." So, come. Join us at the Well and taste the Living Water offered freely!

Pastor Arnette

2100 Center Street • West Des Moines, IA 50265
515.267.1090 • pastorarnette@msn.com

Women at the Well United Methodist Church
Iowa Correctional Institution for Women
300 Elm Ave SW • Mitchellville, IA 50169



Iowa/Nigeria Partnership



Show me the Money!

Funding for Iowa-Nigeria Partnership projects may be sent through your local church to the conference treasurer on the monthly remittance form marked #230 (if not designated for any particular project) or #231 (if for designated project/program). As chairperson I receive a monthly report. Twice a year our INP committee reviews the projects and programs that we support so that money given in Iowa is then sent to the Board of Global Ministries in New York. This money is designated for specific projects/programs in Nigeria where the money is wire transferred to the Area Financial Officer who then appropriately distributes the money. When we have a work group from Iowa going to Nigeria, we hand carry money and distribute it personally to the persons responsible for the programs/projects who have to sign for the money with a report to follow about the use of it. This distribution of money and accounting procedures has worked well over the past six years. You can rest assured that money given in Iowa gets to the proper project/program. The Nigerians are extremely grateful for the financial faithfulness of the Iowans since 1989.

United Methodist Women on the Go

Yearly the United Methodist Women of Nigeria hold an event somewhere in their conference for Bible Study, worship and fellowship. Women bring their babies, children, pots, food, sleeping mats and high enthusiasm arriving by foot, on the back of a truck, motorcycle, in a van, bus or car. The attendance in 2006 was 23,000+!

Iowans to Nigeria

Fifteen persons from Iowa will be traveling to Nigeria June 16th. The airline tickets are in hand, the orientation session is over, the Nigerian visas have been applied for and suitcases are being packed. Each person can take 100 pounds in two suitcases so believe me we will be laden with medications and medical equipment, seeds, books, teaching materials for health care professionals, altar clothes, layettes and anything else we can cram in. The team has been asked to bring the following equipment: stethoscopes, sphygmomanometers, sterilizing unit, centrifuge machine and several laptops (used but working). If anyone is able to provide us with any of this equipment we would be thrilled. Please let me know soon. We are desperate for as many *laptops* as we can secure! Do you have one? Groups wanting to help support the team with financial gifts for travel related expenses are welcome to do so. Designate your giving: #230 Summer Team to Nigeria!

Calling Iowa School Teachers!

Again, we emphasize that we are formulating a list of Iowa school teachers to help in the support of their counterparts in Nigeria. A variety of ways to support Nigerian educators is available. Contact me with your name, address and phone.

Let's Make This Visit One to Remember!

Have you heard it said, "Where does our mission money go? Is it used for what we designated?" Should we send money for layette kits for the Nigerians to purchase the supplies? What's the Dubuque Chapel used for?"

To **get the answers** to these questions and learn much more about the United Methodist Church in Nigeria, our mission partner a half a world away, **schedule** our mission speaker, **Mr. Jarama Filiya** in your church. Here's an updated schedule:



Wed., May 2: Maquoketa – All Day
 Thurs., May 3: Sherrill – Evening
 Sun., May 6: Grand View UMC – Morning
 Sun., May 6: District Conference – Afternoon
 Mon., May 7: Center Grove/Rockdale, at Rockdale – Eve
 Tues., May 8: West Union UMC – All Day
 Wed., May 9: UDTS – Noon; Epworth – 5:30 PM Supper
 Thurs., May 10: Decorah – 10:00 AM
 Thurs., May 10: Elgin – 2-4PM Coffee
 Thurs., May 10: Anamosa UMC – 6:00 PM Supper
 Sat., May 12: Pictured Rocks Camp
 Sun., May 13: Dubuque, St. Luke's UMC – Morning

Please consider the free times left on his schedule and organize a coffee, lunch or evening to **have Jarama** (jah rah ma) come to **share** with you and your group! **Large numbers are not important** as more interaction can take place with small groups in informal settings. This is Jarama's first visit outside the U.S. so you will enjoy getting his impressions about Iowa and Iowans as well as learn about his world. Consider showing him around your town, farm, factory, school and other places of interest so he can learn about us and our way of life!

He has housing in Dubuque so churches would be responsible for transportation to/from the previous group or back to Dubuque. The goal is to have him scheduled in at least two churches per day. Contact me or Karen. Thanks in advance for your assistance in hosting Jarama!

Beverly Nolte 515 237 8544 • BNMEDICAL@AOL.COM



Camp at Pictured Rocks



I was asked the other day, "Is it too late to register for camps?" The answer to that question is, No, you can register for a camp up to the day of the event, but I would not recommend waiting. If you wait, you may have to fill out paperwork registration day and the camp might be full. As I write this, all of the camping events at Pictured Rocks have openings. I encourage people to register early. Early registration ensures you get into your first choice of camps.



Encourage people in your church to register early or even have a night or weekend that you have a time when people can come, have assistance in registering and get questions answered. Some churches do this in conjunction with a meal or other fundraising activity for their local church to give assistance to those families going to camp. For ideas or more information, call Director Dave at (319) 465-4194.

Cornwell Youth Lodge Update

Work continues on the new youth lodge. When completed, this lodge will add 2 meeting/gathering spaces and 64 beds. The cold spells this spring have set us back in our work schedule. We are not able to mud when it is too cold. Yet, even with these set backs, God continues to show how awesome God is. Our plan was and still is to have Cornwell finished and housing campers this summer. To make sure that this happens, we need some help. We need your continued prayers, volunteers to help us with some of the work, and we need some additional financial support. To learn more about volunteering or giving a financial gift contact Director Dave at (319) 465-4194 or at dave.brachtwagner@iaumc.org.

Pastor of the Week

We are inviting clergy to come and spend some time at camp during the summer. Come for a day or come for the week. This is a great opportunity to renew yourself as you spend some time doing camp activities with campers and our staff. I invite you to just be. Come find some refreshment and renewal. If interested, contact me at (319) 465-4194 or e-mail dave.brachtwagner@iaumc.org. I would love

to have a pastor every week, from June 6 – Aug 14.

Sponsor a Camper, a Bunk, or a Cabin

Be a sponsor. Help a young person come to camp who might not think they would be able to come. Pictured Rocks Camp and the Camping Board of the Conference agree that no person should be told that they can't come to camp because of financial reasons. There are camperships from churches and the conference. Perhaps the biggest difference you can make in someone's life is to go up to a young person that you think some time at camp can make a difference for and tell them if they go, you'll pay for it. Then pray for that young person before they come to camp, while they're at camp and make a point to talk with them when they get back from camp. This is a powerful witness to our young brothers and sisters in Christ.



Another opportunity is to sponsor a bunk or a bunk bed. We would like to replace our old thin mattresses with newer thicker mattresses as well as the bunks that they are on. The cost

for a new bunk bed with 2 new mattresses is approximately \$300 which includes shipping. There are 20 bunk beds each in Oakwood and Locust and 40 in Timbercrest.

There are repairs that need to be done in each of the cabins, some minor, some not so minor. If you or your church is interested in helping us start an endowment for the purpose of maintenance and upkeep on one or more of our facilities, I would be glad to talk with you about those opportunities!

Ink and toner fundraiser

We all buy ink and toner for our copiers and printers.

Now, when you buy it you can help support Pictured Rocks UM Camp. Go to www.onpointdirect.net/PRUMC. Not only do you save money on your ink and toner, but 10% of your purchase price goes to Pictured Rocks UM Camp. These ink and toner products come with a 100% satisfaction guarantee. Just go to the website and check it out!



Rev. David Bracht-Wagner

Site Director Pictured Rocks UM Camp & Retreat Center • 12004 190th St. Monticello IA 52310 • 866-651-1223 • dave.brachtwagner@iaumc.org

Kae's Wellness Corner: AC Health Screen; Walk/Run; Blood Drive

Annual Conference attendees have the option of participating in three Wellness activities this year!

Blood Drive:

In conjunction with Mission Day there will be a Blood Drive. Come to Scheman Rm 299 8 am-Noon on Saturday June 9th. You must be at least 16 years old, weigh > 120# and be in general good health. The process takes approximately 1 hour. One person's single donation can save up to 3 other persons' lives. There are 35 time slots available. Contact Kae Tritle at bktritle@msn.com to register. .

5K Fun Walk/Run:

By popular request, a fitness activity has been arranged. This will take place along a easily-accessible route near Hilton Coliseum on Saturday morning during the Mission Activities time, approximately 10:30-noon. In support of Pastor Jennifer Meyer of Dubuque who is walking to Annual Conference on behalf of AIDS victims, the Wellness Committee is encouraging you to collect pledges for the UMC's Global AIDS Fund. 3 options to participate:

1. Join the walk for fun and fellowship without gathering pledges
2. Collect pledges from your home community and walk with us for the Global AIDS fund
3. Or, organize a walk/run/bike event in your own community and collect pledges to bring to Annual Conference.

Contact Kae Tritle at bktritle@msn.com for more information.

Health Screening:

On Thursday June 7, & Friday June 8th, 5:30 am-8 am; clergy, spouses of clergy, and laity on the conference health insurance are encouraged to participate in this event. Included are: a blood-pressure measurement, a self-serve weight measurement, and the following lab tests; glu-

cose, complete blood-cell counts, cholesterol (LDL, HDL, & triglycerides), magnesium, phosphorus, calcium, thyroid, BUN (blood urea nitrogen) and a thyroid level. Men also have blood drawn for a prostate serum antigen. Contact Kae Tritle at bktritle@msn.com to pre-register.

Appointments for mammogram screenings are also offered on Friday, 6/8. These need to be scheduled in advance through the McFarland Clinic by calling (515)239-4458. Appointments are being taken through May 18th. You need to call in advance for an appointment due to clinic policy. Walk-in appointments are not allowed.

Lighten-Up With God:

Those persons who enrolled in the Lighten-Up With God program in 2006 will be receiving information and the opportunity to register their weight loss prior to conference. The Board of Pensions is offering Cokesbury gift cards to those who lost weight. Persons may also weigh at Annual Conference.



"We take our lead from Christ, who is the source of everything we do. He keeps us in step with each other. His very breath and blood flow through us, nourishing us so that we will grow up healthy in God, robust in love." (Eph 4: 15 The Message)

May we serve God in a variety of ways. See you at Annual Conference.

Kae Tritle, RN, Wellness Coordinator

Congratulations to:

Rev. Penelope Thacker and Jack Knudsen were married in Pharr, TX on Feb. 15th, 2007. Home is 809 Brasher St., Nashua, IA 50658, until October!

Prayers for:

Judy Alford, former pastor at Hawkeye and Alpha UMCs will be undergoing knee replacement surgery on May 3rd. Please send your prayers Judy's way!



Upcoming Events: Dubuque District Conference 2007



An Invitation . . .
To Attend.

Dubuque District Conference and
Celebration of Ministry

May 6, 2007
2:30-5:00 (Gathering from 2-2:30)
Manchester United Methodist Church
413 E. Butler Street

*Together
we will honor
the
past,
rejoice in the
present,
and greet the
future.*

Who Should Attend District Conference?

The District Conference shall be composed of all clergy, diaconal ministers, deaconesses, the District and local church lay leaders, Presidents of the UMW, UMM, & UMYF, Lay Member(s) to Annual Conference from each charge, all District Council on Ministries members, and Fellowship from each church in the district.

Business of the District will be conducted, churches recognized for Rainbow Covenant giving and payment of apportionments, and a review of Annual Conference procedures and current resolutions.



Upcoming Events

There appears to be a flicker of hope for progress! With information regarding those interested in or involved in their men's groups taken from charge conference reports supplied by our faithful district secretary, I have sent out e-mails to those who furnished e-mails and to the e-mail of the church of those who did not, asking that the e-mail message be forwarded to them. I continue to get the impression that men get together for fund raisers, support causes that they deem worthy of their support, but are not interested in chartering with the national organization. One reply has come in and it is gratifying – one of our church pastors started a monthly men's breakfast fellowship open to all men in the community and he shares a devotional. I am sure that there are good things going on in other churches, and would be glad to hear of them.

Remember the conference in St. Louis in July featuring Tony Campolo. More later.

Dr. John Tyrrell, District UMM President



School For Lay Ministry



Have you felt a nudge to learn more? Are you thinking about stretching your journey with Christ? Maybe you are headed for the School for Lay Ministry program at Cornell College in Mt. Vernon. This program has just completed its 3rd year and graduated its first class of 18 in March.

The School for Lay Ministry is a three-year program, which enables lay people to work with ordained clergy in Iowa in ministries such as Christian education, visitation ministries, care-giving ministries, volunteer management, program staff positions, and/or leadership capacities.

Students meet four weekends a year (October, November, January, March) on the Cornell College campus. Instructors provide quality education in the areas of worship, Christian education, Biblical interpretation, church history, preaching, care and nurturing, church administration and leadership, developing theological perspectives, missions and social concerns, doctrine and polity, and strategizing for church growth. Classes begin on Friday evening at 7:00 PM and conclude on Sunday at noon.

Each class has approximately 20 students. There are lots of opportunities to meet new friends, hear of ministries happening around eastern Iowa, and to discuss class material.

To participate in the School for Lay Ministry, you must have been a member of the United Methodist Church for at least one year and maintain that membership throughout your training. Students need to be recommended by their local church, their local pastor, and their district superintendent.

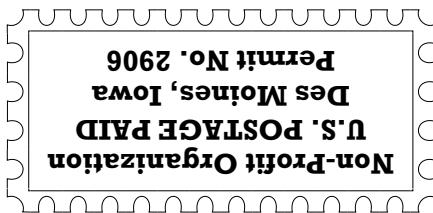
If you still feel that nudge or a name came to mind of someone who might be interested in attending the School for Lay Ministry at Cornell College, please contact me; I will be glad to answer questions and provide further information! One of the 2007 graduates stated, "Excellent! My, 3 years goes fast!! I'm grateful and thank God for such an opportunity."

Please join us at Annual Conference as the 2007 graduates are honored at the School for Lay Ministry reception on Friday evening AND/OR stop in and visit us at our booth.

Ann Glime

Dean, Cornell School for Lay Ministry · 563-856-4375 · aglime@edge-cole.k12.ia.us

Get a brochure on the IAC website, under Ministries / School for Lay Ministry / SLM Downloads / SLM Brochure !



United Methodist Iowa Annual Conference
2301 Rittenhouse Street
Des Moines, IA 50321

DUBUQUE DISTRICT CALENDAR	
May 6:	District Conference - Manchester UMC - 2:30 - 5:00 PM
May 10:	Clergy from Larger Dubuque District Churches Meet - Location TBD - 10:30 AM
May 15 - 17:	Cabinet
June 5:	Cabinet
June 7 - 10:	Annual Conference - Ames, Hilton Collesium
June 14:	Clergy from Larger Dubuque District Churches Meet - Location TBD - 10:30 AM
June 19-21:	Cabinet
TBD:	District Office Moves to Cedar Falls



Dubuque District Conference and Celebration of Ministry
May 6, 2007 — 2:30-5:00
Manchester United Methodist Church

