

Rainbow Covenant

Notes by Dan Houston with Janice Bolger Comments

March 15, 2014

RAINBOW COVENANT AS a PLAN

All churches of the Iowa Annual Conference are encouraged to complete the annual Rainbow Covenant Form even if they did not make First Mile that year. All of the congregations are involved in missions through various avenues and they are worthy of being made known.

Rainbow Covenant seeks to help churches to develop an intentional approach to mission giving. Travel the road to the rainbow, and remember that each mile means service with more of God's people. Remember, too, that each color of the rainbow represents a different aspect of mission. A road and a rainbow help us keep track of where we are and where we're going in mission giving.

The process of developing an intentional approach to mission giving through the Rainbow Covenant should begin the year before the church wants to be a Rainbow Covenant Church. Of course the Rainbow approach can be used effectively even though a church does not achieve full support in all categories. It is a method of diversifying the mission giving of the church. It is also conducive to learning about and quantifying the total mission gifts of the church.

A mission education and giving opportunities plan can be very beneficial for achieving full support of the various categories, if not the first year then later on. The plan might include:

- Promotion of special efforts to enhance the ability to pay apportionments.
- Encourage members to donate to their favorite United Methodist projects through the church treasury. This is also a great way to honor another person for a birthday, Christmas, etc. or a memorial gift. Give a gift that fits that person.
- Ask members to turn in lists of donations to qualifying ministries such as United Methodist Advance Specials, United Methodist Colleges, Volunteers in Mission projects, CROP walks, UNICEF, Missionaries of other denominations, Meals for Millions, etc.
- Promote the Special Offerings.
- Promote projects in each of the categories.
- Take Holiday offerings at Easter, Thanksgiving and Christmas.
- Promote the Ingathering projects.
- Promote a Project of the Month.
- Encourage the Sunday school to support projects that fit the plan.
- Encourage the UMM to support projects that fit the plan.
- Use all the normal giving that qualifies for Rainbow credit such as United Methodist Men projects, Builders Call, Ingathering, camperships, scholarships, food pantry cash and in-kind and discretionary fund.

Utilize the Conference Rainbow Covenant book and the General Advance Project Catalog in development of the plan. Make sure that Advance Projects are still listed. For instance Habitat For Humanity is no longer a General Advance Project as of 2013. There is more information about the projects at www.umcmmission.org and at www.umcor.org/search-for-projects. Contact your District Mission Secretary or Rainbow Covenant Contact with questions about the Rainbow Covenant.

Preparing to fill out the report form

- Obtain the report form for the reporting year. It is usually available on the conference web site, <http://www.iaumc.org/rainbow>, in late December. Use the previous year's form as a guide through the year.
- Your ability to fill in and send the on-line form may depend on your version of Adobe or another technical gremlin. Contact your District Mission Secretary or Rainbow Covenant Contact for assistance.
- Obtain the Rainbow Covenant book from the conference web site or ask the district office for a print copy.
- Obtain the current General Advance Project Catalog and any Supplement from the pastor or church office or call 888-346-3862 for a copy.
- Obtain the December Church Remittance Statement from the church treasurer or the conference website at <http://www.iaumc.org/remits>. Check the amount paid for district askings as some of them may be eligible for rainbow credit. The use of the district askings can be found in the Reports of Conference Action section of the Conference Journal of the previous year.
- The Voucher Credit Report is with the Church Remittance Statement and shows giving that did not go through the Conference Treasurer but was given through the church and reported by the church treasurer.
- The information about Ingathering in kind and Builders Call individual giving are also on the Voucher Credit Report. It may also be beneficial to obtain a copy of the Thanksgiving Ingathering Remittance Form from the church treasurer for the in kind credit.
- Check for local giving that did not go through the Conference Treasurer and was not reported on the Voucher Credit Report. Sources are the Pastor, Sunday School, church treasurer, missions chair and UMM. Sometimes the UMW supports something not reported through their normal channels also.
- Giving included in the Rainbow Covenant Report must have been done by the date in early January specified by the conference treasurer for apportionments received by the conference. Check with the person that will review the report for acceptable extensions of time.

Filling out the report form

- The suggestions for filling out the form to be sent to the District Mission Secretary or Rainbow Covenant Person are on page four of the Rainbow Covenant Book. (As of this writing)
- Church membership at the beginning of the year is in column nine of statistical table one in the current Iowa Conference Journal. District Asking amounts are

based on the beginning of the previous year due to the schedule of obtaining the information by the treasurer's office.

- Not all items have GBGM Advance Special numbers, especially in the lowa category where items will have three digit lowa Advance numbers. Also, items such as food pantry donations in the World Hunger/Poverty category will not have numbers.
- Be sure to use the advance special number if the project has one, and not the conference line item number.
- Many Volunteers in Mission projects in the World and United States categories will not have advance special numbers.
- Use good project descriptions, especially when there is no advance special number.
- Qualifying project amounts can be split among categories.
- Put parts of district askings paid in the categories that apply and the rest in the Local and Institutional category. Use of the district askings can be found in the Reports of Conference Action section of the Conference Journal.

THE ROAD TO MISSION

FIRST MILE

Apportionments fully paid for the report year by the date specified by the conference treasurer. Check with the person that will review the form for an acceptable extension.

HONORABLE MENTION

Church contributes \$12 or more per member to mission projects over and above apportionments but has not supported all the Second Mile Rainbow categories fully.

SECOND MILE

Church contributes \$12 or more per member to mission projects over and above apportionments and has fully supported projects in every Rainbow category.

1. Purple - Special Offerings \$1 per member

The twelve special offerings listed in the Rainbow Covenant book provide a strong support for the apportioned funds of the United Methodist congregation. Even though they are not apportioned and do not have an individually designated goal, each congregation is asked to provide promotion and opportunity for its members to respond. To qualify for Second Mile giving, a church needs to give a minimum of \$1.00 per member to any combination of the offerings. One Great Hour of Sharing can be reported under UMCOR (Yellow) or Special Offerings (Purple) as needed. The Hispanic/Latino Ministries offering, described on the first Parish Development page of the Rainbow Covenant book, can be reported under Special Offerings or can be reported equally in Parish Development Projects (Indigo), World Projects

(Red) and United States Projects (Orange). New in 2013, the Neighbor Helping Neighbor offering also qualifies for the Iowa Advance Special (Blue) category.

2. Indigo – Iowa Conference Parish Development Projects \$1 per member

The Iowa Annual Conference is committed to helping existing churches revitalize their ministries and to expanding ministry through establishment of new congregations. Local churches and individuals have the opportunity to share in this evangelism ministry through donations to listed individual churches or to general funds. Hispanic Plan congregations and projects are a part of Parish Development Projects (Indigo) as well as Conference Advance Specials (Blue). Money sent through district askings that are designated for Parish Development projects counts toward this category.

3. Blue - Iowa Conference Advance Specials \$1 per member

A conference advance special is a project located within the Iowa Conference that is directly related to the Conference Board of Global Ministries. Conference advance special projects are listed in the Rainbow Covenant book. Money sent through district askings that are designated for Iowa Advance projects counts toward this category. Hispanic Plan congregations and projects are a part of Parish Development Projects (Indigo) as well as Conference Advance Specials (Blue).

- Money for the Iowa-Nigeria Partnership, PET Iowa at Hawarden and Self Help International can be listed as World Projects (Red) or Iowa Advance Specials (Blue), as they are Iowa Conference related projects working outside of the United States.
- Value of Iowa Nigeria kits may be used here.

4. Green - World Hunger and Poverty Relief \$6 per member

Hunger and poverty are around all of us, in cities, small towns and rural areas. Each church knows of local needs and is encouraged to respond to those needs. We also ask that every church responds to one or more of the projects supported by the General Board of Global Ministries. Qualifying projects include:

- Projects listed in the General Advance Project Catalog that address hunger and poverty issues. There is more information at www.umcmmission.org.
- Donations of money given to local food pantries and meal sites.
- Food items given to local food pantries or meal sites. These may be valued at \$1.00 per pound, actual cost, or as reported by the recipient agency.
- Value of kits taken to Ingathering or sent to the UMCOR Depot or Midwest Mission Distribution Center or Iowa Nigeria.
- Money given by the pastor's discretionary fund for assisting people in need (this may have a different name).
- Money given to local CROP Walks.
- UNICEF collections.

Note that the only in-kind values that can be listed here are kits for Ingathering, UMCOR Depot kits, Midwest Mission Distribution kits, Iowa Nigeria kits and food items. Used clothing, furniture, etc. may not be counted. Credit can be given for new quilts, mittens, caps, scarves, etc. in Third Mile Local and Institutional.

5. Yellow – The Advance UMCOR Projects \$1 per member

The United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR) was formed in 1940 in response to the suffering of people during World War II. All its funding comes from the Advance and from One Great Hour of Sharing offerings. Qualifying projects are:

- Projects listed in the current General Advance Project Catalog that are related to UMCOR. Only a few are listed as such in the print catalog. Find all of them at www.umcor.org/search-for-projects. They can also be listed under World Projects (Red) or United States Projects (Orange), as applicable.
- One Great Hour of Sharing can be listed under UMCOR Projects (Yellow) or Special Offerings (Purple).
- UMCOR Special Appeals for disasters can be listed under UMCOR Projects (Yellow), World Projects (Red) or United States Projects (Orange), as applicable. Add advance special numbers as they emerge.
- Value of UMCOR kits may be used here.

6. Orange – The Advance United States Projects \$1 per member

Qualifying projects are:

- Projects listed in the current General Advance Project Catalog under North America or under Global if headquartered in the U.S. There is more information at www.umcmision.org.
- All support of missionary personnel under the General Board of Global Ministries working in the United States. The same funds cannot be used both here and in Third Mile.
- UMCOR projects shown as being in the United States in the General Advance Project Catalog or at www.umcor.org/search-for-projects can be listed under UMCOR Projects (Yellow) or United States Projects (Orange).
- UMCOR Special Appeals for disasters inside the United States can be listed under United States Projects (Orange) or UMCOR Projects (Yellow).
- Volunteers in Mission projects inside the United States if the project has an advance special number or if it is on the Volunteers in Mission USA Project list. Travel, food, housing and misc. expenses are not counted toward rainbow covenant credit.

7. Red – The Advance World Projects \$1 per member

Qualifying projects are:

- Projects listed in the current General Advance Project Catalog under Global; Africa; Asia/Pacific; Europe/Eurasia; Latin America/The Caribbean, and Middle East. There is more information at www.umcmmission.org.
- All support of missionary personnel under the General Board of Global Ministries outside the United States. The same funds cannot be used both here and in Third Mile.
- Money for the Iowa Nigeria Partnership, P.E.T. Iowa at Hawarden and Self Help International can be listed as World Projects (Red) or Iowa Projects (Blue), as they are Iowa Conference related projects working outside of the United States.
- Volunteers in Mission projects outside the United States if the project has an advance special number or if it is on the International Volunteers in Mission Project list. Travel, food, housing and misc. expenses are not counted toward rainbow covenant credit.
- UMCOR projects shown as being outside the United States or Global in the General Advance Project Catalog or www.umcor.org/search-for-projects may be listed under World Projects (Red) or UMCOR Projects (Yellow).

UMCOR Special Appeals for disasters outside the United States can be listed under World Projects (Red) or UMCOR Projects (Yellow).

THIRD MILE

Missionary Salary Support \$2 per member

This can involve Covenant Relationships or other individual missionaries, each of which has an Advance Special number. There is more information at www.umcmmission.org. It can also involve support of any of the three categories of mission service listed in the General Advance Project Catalog as follows:

- Church and Community Ministry 982147
- Missionaries around the World 00779Z
(includes the U.S.)
- Young Adult Mission Service Programs 13105Z

Local and Institutional Giving \$1 per member

Local and Institutional giving includes mission projects and in kind gifts that are NOT Advance Specials. This category affirms your local church's response to mission beyond the conference, national and world United Methodist mission projects as you see the need. Examples are projects and missionaries sent by other denominations or other than GBGM ministries, such as Bible translators, Bible distributors, and local programs your church initiates such as local housing or heat assistance for needy families, medical or transportation assistance, in kind services. Please note that in kind credit will not be given for used clothing, furniture or similar donations. Credit can be given for new quilts, mittens, caps, scarves, etc. Other examples are Camp Scholarships, Seminary Scholarships and Monetary donations to agencies such as Goodwill Industries, Habitat for Humanity and Salvation Army. Our Iowa United

Methodist institutions that qualify for third mile credit are the four colleges, three hospitals, ten retirement homes and three camps.

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Mission Education Standing Committee

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