

A MOMENT FOR REFLECTION...

(I surrender my usual space this month to share one of our pastor's reflections following the visit to the VRD of the Rev. Fannah Tartieh, Superintendent of the Grand Gedeh District in Liberia. It is shared with permission of the author, Andrea Boggs. Her words to the Braceville congregation are passed on for you to reflect upon.)
Keith

Dave and I had the opportunity to have DS Tartieh from Liberia, Africa stay at our home one evening during his visit to the United States. If God willing, Dave plans to take a mission trip to Liberia later this year. We had a lot of questions answered and DS Tartieh was able to share where we can be of help.

It's so hard for us to comprehend the way life is for our sister church in Liberia. We live in a place where we worry whether our curtains match the pillows on the couch – they live in a place where they worry about the next meal they will eat. We think nothing of turning on the water at the sink or the shower or the outdoor spigot – they have no clean water to drink or bath in and living to be 40 is beyond the age expectancy. We are extremely inconvenienced if our electricity goes out for a couple of hours – the members of the Geeken Church have no electricity. DS Tartieh has no means of transportation – no car, no motorbike – he walks (some of his churches are an 8 hour walk away). They have no mail service for the DS or Pastor Swen of the Geeken Church. When the DS visited our home he shared how his wife wanted to be a nurse but they couldn't afford the schooling – now his prayer is to find a way to keep his four children in school – but there is no money for their tuition either.

I'm not writing this to make anyone feel guilty for what we do have. But I do write asking for your prayers for our brothers and sisters in Liberia. Ask God what you are to do. We are so blessed – but I do not believe it's so we can take care of just ourselves. One of the great commandments is to “love our neighbors as ourselves”. God has thought of everything! He not only gives us the means by which we are able to do this – he's given us the neighbors that we can love! Pray and follow God's leading.

Love and God Bless,
Pastor Andrea Boggs
“Braceville Good News” – March/April 2008

DISASTER RESPONSE TRAINING

Does your church and your family have a disaster response plan? What would you do if you or your community is faced with a major tornado or flooding damage? What service could you or your church provide for those in need? Please come and participate in this training event and learn how to develop a disaster response plan.

On Friday, April 11, beginning at 6:00 pm, Rev. Mary E. Hughes Gaudreau, UMCOR consultant, will be leading the discussion on local church preparedness. Simultaneously, Barbara Tripp, also an UMCOR consultant, will be teaching sessions on Early Response Training.

On Saturday, April 12, Beginning at 9:00 am, Tripp will continue teaching on Early Response Training and Gaudrea will be leading sessions on Spiritual, Emotional Care following a disaster.

Registration is \$15 (includes materials and Sat. lunch). Contact Christy Blickensderfer at cblickensderfer@igrc.org or call 217-529-2473.

Judy Doyle – Chairperson of Disaster Response Team

APRIL

- 1-3 Cabinet
- 2 District Event at Bloomington Wesley
- 7 District Office will be closed
- 8-11 Cabinet
- 20 12:00 pm-2:00 pm Ingathering at Dwight UMC
- 21-30 Keith at General Conference



Oren Banks 04-02 Roberta Kerr 04-16

Julie Alderman 04-07
David Boggs 04-08

Oliver Zivney 04-24
Marilyn Sloan-Couch 04-24

- APRIL NEWS -

DISTRICT WIDE EVENT!!

The VRD is sponsoring a major and exciting District wide event on outreach for lay members and clergy from throughout the churches of our District, and from throughout our entire Conference. This event, being jointly sponsored with IGRC and the UMC of the Bloomington/Normal area will be held on Wednesday, April 2 in Bloomington at Wesley UMC. We are turning a major focus for the year of 2008 upon outreach by holding this all day and evening workshop filled with powerful, highly respected and innovative speakers.

We will be joined during the evening session by Bishop Sharon A. Brown Christopher, who will deliver the evening session's welcoming remarks to laity and clergy.

The major speaker is the Rev. Dr. Mike Slaughter, the ahead-of-the-curve and bold lead minister and chief dreamer of Ginghamburg UMC in Tipp City, Ohio. Rev. Slaughter took a declining UMC and turned it around.

The morning session of the workshop on April 2 will consist of both a presentation by Mike Slaughter, and an insightful panel discussion led by the three of the leading ministers of our conference: the Rev. Dr. Roger Ross of Springfield 1st UMC (the largest church of our conference), the Rev. James Slone of Belleville St. Matthew UMC (the second largest church of our conference), and the Rev. Dr. Timothy Bias of Peoria 1st UMC (the third largest church of our conference, and a candidate for Bishop at the 2008 UM General Conference). This panel discussion will focus upon what has and has not worked in growing churches in IGRC.

The afternoon session will consist of alternative workshops led by the Rev. Dr. Mike Crawford, IGRC Coordinator of Congregational Development, and Beth Fender, IGRC Coordinator of New Streams Ministries, followed by a workshop led by Mike Slaughter.

The evening session will consist of welcoming remarks by Bishop Christopher, followed by the keynote address by Mike Slaughter as he speaks on "Leading Your Church Out of Yourself and Into the World". This address will be a challenging cry to laity and clergy alike to draw out of ourselves and into the world, multiplying the kingdom of God by becoming missional churches.

There are no registration fees for the conference itself. A fee of \$5 will be charged for lunch and dinner. You may register for one or both meals. You can register online for the conference and meals at: www.wesley-umc.com, or by calling the Wesley UMC office in Bloomington at 309-827-8046.

Please come with other members of your church to all or part of this exciting and powerful District event.

Schedule:

8:30 am coffee and juice
9:00 am opening worship
9:30 am opening address – Mike Slaughter
10:45-11:45 ministerial panel discussion
12:00 pm lunch
1-1:15 pm worship
1:15-2:15 pm alternative IGRC workshops
2:30-3:30 pm interactive workshop – Mike Slaughter
6:30 pm worship
7:00 pm Bishop Sharon Brown Christopher
7:15-8:15 keynote address – Mike Slaughter

THE GREAT INGATHERING

On Sunday, April 20 from 12:00 pm-2:00 pm the Dwight UMC and the VRD UMM will host the 2008 Great Ingathering. A packet has been sent out to every church in the district with the details needed to make this mission a success.

Good and wearable clothes and shoes are needed. The goods are to be boxed not bagged. Good furniture is wanted. Please no refrigerators and all appliances must be in working condition.

Also, from 12:00-1:30 pm there is a meal available hosted by Dwight UMC youth, so come hungry and enjoy a great meal after you drop off your donations.

Verlin Karstens

- FOR YOUR INFORMATION -

2008 VRD/IGRC UMVIM WORK TRIP



Front row (left to right): Linda Edwards, Sharon Roggy
Back row (left to right) Richard Roggy, Ken Hamlin, Chris Milleison, Wendy Shelquist and David Prussner

A group of seven individuals from throughout the IGRC participated in the 2008 VRD/IGRC UMVIM Work Trip to Mississippi from Feb. 9-17. The entire group included Chris Milleison, Murrayville; Linda Edwards, Piper City; Ken Hamlin, Kankakee; Wendy Shelquist, Bourbonnais; Richard and Sharon Roggy, Bloomington and David Prussner, Bourbonnais.

The group traveled to Camp Gulfside in Waveland, Mississippi. Up until Katrina, Gulfside Assembly continued as a multi-cultural conference and retreat center and a place of ministry and growth for all people. It was completely destroyed during hurricane Katrina, and there are plans to rebuild.

The group worked in homes hanging drywall, mudding walls, sanding them and painting.

On Saturday the group left Waveland and began the return journey. They stopped in New Orleans for some sightseeing.

One of the Camp Gulfside Site Coordinators said it best when he compared the work that has gone on in the past 21/2 years to a sprint and the work that still needs to be done to that of a marathon. There has been much good work done since Katrina, but there is still so much to be done.

David Prussner

VALENTINE BANQUET



Friday evening, February 15, the Bonfield Grand Prairie Men's Fellowship sponsored a Valentine Banquet. This was our way of saying thank you to the ladies of our parish who do so much for our churches.



Seventy-six people were served Prime Rib or Chicken Breast, Baked Potato, Salad, Mixed Vegetable, Cake, and Ice Cream. The meal was enjoyed by all. Marty Kuipers was in charge of the cooking and Gerry Meyer was in charge of the dining room. Len Tetrault supplied musical entertainment throughout the evening.



Gifts were given to all of the ladies that attended. I would like to thank everyone who helped to make the evening a great success.

Phyllis Riegel

REV. FANNAH TARTIEH VISITS VRD



District Superintendents Keith Zimmerman and Fannah Tartieh at Pontiac First

Grand Gedeh District Superintendent Fannah Tartieh visited the VRD from February 20 – March 3. He preached at district churches and ministry area Lenten services. A big “thank you” to all of those who helped to get Rev. Tartieh to all of the events and also opened your homes to him.

District Office

NORMAL CALVARY HAS TWO STAFF POSITIONS OPENINGS

Calvary is looking for a full-time Tech Coordinator to oversee worship/special event tech and production. A qualified candidate should have experience in these areas and be familiar with using Apple computers and software. Calvary also has an opening for a part-time Junior High Coordinator to work with and minister to middle school students on a weekly basis. For detailed job descriptions visit our website (www.cumcnormal.org) and click on "Calvary Employment".

Josh Barnett

SPRING INTO CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

What it is: An opportunity to discover new materials and ideas for growing disciples

Who should come: Everyone involved in Christian education ministries with children, youth and adults

Included topics: Leadership essentials; matching curriculum with the needs of learners and your church; workshops specific to teaching children, tweens, youth and adults

Dates and locations: Friday, April 11 at Bloomington Wesley UMC and Salem Grace UMC; Saturday, April 12 at Champaign Faith UMC and Marion Aldersgate UMC

Time: 10:00 am-3:00 pm (registration begins at 9:30 am)

Cost: Free! (a donation is suggested for lunch)

This event is made possible by the IGRC Chapter of Christian Educators Fellowship, the Christian Education Sunday Offering, the IGRC Equipping and Connecting Team, and the UM Publishing House.

For more information, please contact Beth Fender (bfender@igrc.org) or JoAnn Overholt (joverholt@laurelumchurch.org) or Christy Blickensderfer (cblickensderfer@igrc.org) or by mail to: Christy Blickensderfer, UMC, PO Box 19207. Springfield IL 62794-9207

District Office

CONFERENCE UMW WEEKLY EMAIL NEWSLETTER

The Conference UMW have launched a new weekly email newsletter. To subscribe, please go to www.igrc.org and select E-news in the menu on the right. Fill out a short form, and then select from numerous options as to your interest in receiving news.

Please also read the latest edition of The Bridge, the UMW conference newsletter, at <http://www.igrc.org/The-Bridge-Newsletter.aspx>.

Carolyn Yockey

BIBLES NEEDED

Kumler UMC is in need of Bibles for the homeless ministry at the Neighborhood Ministries. We often get requests for a Bible during the Tuesday nights when we serve the homeless of Springfield. Anyone wanting to donate Bibles can drop them off at the Kumler Church, 600 N. 5th St., Springfield when the Ministries is open between 9 and 12. (The church is located at the corner of Carpenter and 5th St., with parking on the north side of the church). Call the church at 217-523-2046 if you have questions

Sangamon District Office

Give God what's right – not what's left