

A Moment for Reflection...

An update on the Liberia special **Road Way Project** to purchase a vehicle for each of our partner districts is long over due, but I am happy to report that...

WE ARE ALMOST THERE!!!

Thank you for your faithful support of this important project. As you will remember the superintendents in our partner Nana Kru and Grand Gedeh Districts in Liberia do not have a vehicle to connect with the clergy and churches of their district. Because roads are limited and in poor condition, a four wheel drive heavy duty vehicle is required. Fortunately it is possible for us to obtain two such vehicles in Liberia—*one for each district*—for about \$20,000.

The total raised to date for the vehicles is **\$17,718.24**.
This represents the generosity of 29 churches in our district!

Thank you, Thank you, Thank you!!!

In order to move this project to the status of “COMPLETED”, I invite you to consider taking a special offering in your congregation on either June 1 or 8 for the Road Way Project. If you are not one of the 29, (by the way...there are 86 churches in the district) this is the exact time to lend your support to effort and to help push us over the top!

As recently as this past Sunday, Fannah Tartieh, superintendent of the Grand Gedeh District, whom many of you met when he visited here during Lent, called to encourage us in this special project. He spoke again of the great need that exists for him to have transportation to his district, and to be able to transport seeds and tools. The vehicle he noted will make a huge difference in to Grand Gedeh.

Take a noisy offering...take a quiet one...
every dollar, every nickel counts—together we will reach this goal!

Thank you for making a difference!

Keith

Post Script: Submission Process for Special Projects:

Church treasurers are to continue to send contributions for pastor salary support and scholarship assistance for our partner districts to the Conference Treasurer.

However, a new process is in place to keep track of contributions being sent for special projects. Church treasurers are asked to please prepare a check to ***Illinois Great Rivers Conference*** for your contribution **AND send it to the Vermilion River District Office** in care of Sandy Shay, Administrative Assistant. Please indicate the name of the project (**Vehicle Fund, Seeds and Tools, Rubber Trees**), the name of the local church in the Grand Gedeh or Nana Kru Districts, if a specific church is involved. A record will be kept in the district office and gifts will be forwarded to the conference for processing through the **Liberia 2.41** fund at the *General Board of Global Ministries*. Remember that although your church will not receive *Advance Special* credit for these gifts, you can still list them on your annual report as mission giving, and know they will get to Liberia and our partner districts within weeks instead of months.

JUNE

- 4-7 Annual Conference
- 4-6 District Office closed
- 12 Connectional Table
- 17-20 Cabinet Retreat
- 30 10:00 am ROMEO at home of Karleen and Ralph Dude

10:00 am- Noon Cluster leaders at District Office



Bryce Hays	06-02	Vaughn Hoffman	06-19
Esther White	06-02	Lois Maxwell	06-23
Tammy Powers	06-10	Mary Runyon	06-29
Lori Harvey	06-18	Chet Sheldon	06-30

IN-DISTRICT APPOINTMENTS AND NEW CHARGE

Starting July 1 Kankakee Trinity, Aroma Park, and Bradley Evangelical will form a three-point charge. Their pastors will be full time James Williams and half-time Hiram Gonzalez.

CONGRATULATIONS TO...

Barb Anthony. Her status has changed. She is now a part-time local pastor.

APPOINTMENTS

Nate Hopping (student pastor) will serve as a supply at Braidwood Streams of Hope.
Larry Frank, Jr. (student pastor) will serve as a supply at Cornell/Blackstone.

FAREWELL TO...

Shalom Renner (Morningstar). He has been appointed to Greenville First beginning September 1.

- JUNE NEWS -

IGNITE THE HEART!

“Turning the Church Outward”, a spiritual event for all ages will be held Sunday, June 22 thru Wednesday, June 25 at 7:00 pm each night at the Saunemin Community Building (downtown Saunemin next to the post office). This event is sponsored by Saunemin UMC.

Rev. Robert Freeman from Geneseo First UMC will lead the worship each night. A praise band, “Same Time Next Year”, composed of five college age young men from the Geneseo area will be providing the musical inspiration each night.

For more information, call 815-832-4935, or 815-832-4370.

Dave Lowe

- FOR YOUR INFORMATION -

YOUTH BOOST WORLD VISION FUNDS AT UMYF DANCE



The Dwight UMYF recently held a World Vision Fund-Raising Dance at the Dwight UMC for 6th-8th graders.

“The youth opted to raise money for *World Vision’s Fast for Famine*,” articulated Corilyn Hensel-McCullough, Dir. Of Youth & Music Ministries at D-UMC. “UMYF wanted to give back to the world something that spoke globally and offered kids-for-kids ministry,” added Hensel-McCullough.

Dwight UMC and UMYF shared in the costs for putting on the dance so all the evening’s proceeds were presented to World Vision. According to Lane Hoffman and Ryan Kodat, UMYF members, and Randall Farris, Financial Chair at Dwight UMC, the youth raised \$461.64 for World Vision’s Fast for Famine. “It was a great night,” affirmed Farris.

The evening featured a local DJ, EVA. She rocked the purple-yellow-and-green-mask-themed bop from 7:00-10:00 pm. The Mardi Gras Café served food, pop and brownies as well as evening mementos. Dwight Subway donated three feet of the twelve feet of party-sized subs.

While working a shift in the Mardi Gras Café Kitchen Carson Banks stated, “It feels good to help. I’d rather help than not.” All the UMYF youth took turns volunteering in different capacities throughout the evening mixing a recipe of service to others while having fun with friends.

Back on the floor, everyone had a great time gettin’ down. Local 6th-8th grade crooners dedicated their own version of jammin’ karaoke under star-struck dance lights. While some sang, others smiled opting for pictures with friends. Photographer Michele Darby shot commemorative photos with Chester the Jester, the evening’s mascot.

“A night filled with kids dancing, laughing, eating, taking pictures and just hanging out painted the beautiful backdrop mural of Dwight’s youth making a big difference in this world just by coming together,” said Hensel-McCullough. She added, “Our thanks to all the area youth, their families, our Church family and community volunteers for making it such and awesome night. We could not have done it without you.”

Upon picking up their kids, parents were thankful for the community-open dance. Youth were asking about the date of the next dance. All were glad they came and made a difference in the lives of other kids. The evening will not soon be forgotten.

Corilyn Hensel-McCullough

HYMN SURVEY RESULTS ARE IN!

The General Board of Discipleship conducted a series of six online research surveys designed to provide information regarding the opinions of UMs – pastors, musicians, worship leaders, and laity – on a variety of subjects related to UM worship, congregational singing, and The UM Hymnal (1989) and The Faith We sing (2000). The surveys drew 19,091 responses. Check out the results www.gbod.org/worship

District Office

CELEBRATING 50 YEARS ON SCHOOL STREET



Rev. David Dees, Dr. Jim Bortell, Pastor Cheryl Peterson-Karlan

Sunday, April 6, was a day of celebration at First United Methodist Church in Normal as the congregation marked 50 years in its School Street sanctuary. The congregation moved to its current location on December 22, 1957 and the building was consecrated in April, 1958. Former pastors Jim Bortell and David Dees, whose combined service to the congregation filled 24 of those 50 years, participated in the 11 a.m. communion service and luncheon that followed.

According to current pastor, Dale Beck, one of the sacred memories celebrated by the congregation was its move from its original location at Fell and Ash streets in Normal to its new location at the corner of School and Locust. On December 22, 1957, former pastor Gordon White, under whose leadership the new church had been built, walked with the congregation, in a parade led by children, from the old church to the new one. The altar cross and Lectern Bible were also carried in procession.

Mary Fern Bartrum, 93, who was the director of the Primary Department, shared, by video recording, her memories of the children's march as well as how she had selected the furniture for the new building and stained it to match the woodwork in the sanctuary. John Claus, who has recently had to quit ushering after fifty years, shared by video about his experiences. Dorothy Claus recalled that she began attending First Methodist Church as a student at Illinois State Normal University in the 1940s when Martha Bussert was the director of the Wesley Foundation.

The site of the first church building that dated to 1868 is now the site of Manchester Hall, an Illinois State University residence hall. The 1868 building was constructed following an impassioned appeal by Dr. Richard Edwards, second president of Illinois State Normal University, to the Illinois Conference, for the building of a Methodist church on the campus to serve the students and faculty of the fledgling college. Special offerings were received throughout the conference to support the church which still maintains its ties to the campus and is the site of ISU Wesley, the Wesley Foundation of Illinois State University. Rev. Jennie Edwards Bertrand, Director of the Wesley Foundation, was one of the speakers at the afternoon dinner. She herself was an ISU student who attended worship at First UMC as a college student and was a volunteer and later staff youth leader for the church.

As part of the luncheon program, a photo-history was shown tracing the church's history from its earliest days up to Easter 2008. The photos brought back fond memories for many of those in attendance. Pastor Beck's hope that the church will continue its witness for Christ into the next fifty years is shared by the entire congregation.

Susan Scott

SHOES FOR SOULS

The Mazon UMC N.O.W. Committee sponsored a collection of shoes for The Great Ingathering, April 20th. The committee asked parishioners to check their closets for shoes that they hadn't worn in years, that were just collecting dust, and do a little Spring house cleaning at the same time! In about three weeks, over 850 pairs of shoes were collected! These good, wearable shoes were sent to our brothers and sisters in the Appalachian Mountains. Pastor Mark Amenda blessed the shoes before they left and also the people who would be receiving them. This ministry outreach was called Shoes for Souls.

Lynne Amenda

REPORT FROM THE GREAT INGATHERING

God's Blessings! Well the Lord is very much involved with the Vermilion River District. Once again we were blessed with a wonderful day and a steady stream of donations from more than 30 churches from across the district.

On April 20th, not only did we have goods donated to the United Methodist Mountain Mission (UMMM) but we also had cash donations to the following organizations: Africa University \$115, Heifer Project International \$175, Mountain Mission \$527, Hope of Hearing \$83, Chaddock Children \$240, Baby Fold \$230 and Volunteers of Mexico \$75 for a total of \$1445. Oh, by the way, this year, the UMMM sent 5 trucks and we filled them all and had a half truck left over. What a blessing! What an awesome God we serve. Congratulations to all the churches for participating to this mission. We can make a big difference to people right in the U.S.

I'm always amazed how it all falls into place. I know that it's difficult getting the packet into the right hands at each church each year. I really appreciate the use of email and the District Office as opposed to mailing a paper packet as we used to do. It seemed that the paper mailing too often ended up in the circular file, but as well as the email method is working to get the packets to the churches I know not everyone gets the packet. We'll keep working on improving the process and don't be afraid to ask for the packet if you haven't received it from the District Office or the Dwight UMC. Thank you.

*Vermilion River District United Methodist Men
Verlin Karstens*

BIBLE STUDY AT WAYNESVILLE

On April 29th, Linda Marvel of the Waynesville UMC began a six week book study on *Becoming A Contagious Christian* by Mark Mittelberg, Lee Strobel, and Bill Hybels. This six-week series combines a video with a discussion guide and has been well attended and received. It is an excellent course on sharing your faith that easily fits into people's busy schedules.

Pastor Andy Maxwell

ARE YOU LOOKING FOR A SPEAKER?

Is your church or civic group looking for a speaker who can tell them what is the purpose of those tan buildings south of Chatham, Illinois? Midwest Mission Distribution Center staff, board members or volunteers are available to give lectures regarding the mission of the Center and the history of the warehouses.

If you would like to lead your own program, we have power point presentations and literature available upon request.

Please call the MMDC office during business hours to schedule a speaker.

217-483-7911

8:30 am-4:00 pm Monday-Friday

Midwest Mission Messenger

Spring Newsletter

2008