

Greetings in Christ,

It was impossible for me to record the rushing thoughts that went through my mind and heart in the wake of Dad's death and the amazing experiences of the LAC sessions and services from Friday through Sunday, February 16-18, but this particular day, which happened to be my birthday, jolted me into reflection...literally. It stands as the final reflection that I recorded while in Liberia.

Journal of Reflections  
Liberia Trip

Monday, February 19, 2007

This was one of the roughest birthday's I have ever had. Yes, it was hard being so far away from home on this day (the 19<sup>th</sup>)...so soon after my Dad's death on the 15<sup>th</sup>. But, it was rough for other reasons:

like the condition of road between Monrovia and Buchanan (setting a new standard for the roughest I have ever been on);

like the ghost ships bombed out, burned out, rusting out in the once bustling port at Buchanan now languishing in despair;

like the sight of the little round faces who laughed and giggled as they sang and showed us their school and campus at Camphor Mission...children who were out of school on break but were still at the mission because they lived too far away to travel home or had no home to which to travel.

Seeing scrawny little piglets didn't help either. There wasn't proper hog feed to offer them, only vegetation and leftovers. It pained the farmer roots in me. Like I said, it was a rough day.

Fortunately though there were smooth places to be celebrated:

like the company of those I was with;

like the report of new jobs coming to Buchanan and the faithful efforts to raise livestock and garden items...especially the eggplant and cabbage seedlings that had sprouted and were leafing out...all giving hope for the future;

like dedicated, caring administrators, teachers and staff who were offering hope to those precious little round faces...not to mention those little round faces who laughed and giggled.

Thank God, for smooth places among the rough ones.

*Keith*

### **REFRESHER CLASSES FOR LOCAL AND ADVANCED CLASS FOR LAY SPEAKERS**

The date for lay speaking classes is November 10 at Pontiac First UMC from 8:00 am-8:00 pm. Classes are taught by Peg and Al Kulczewski, former conference directors of lay speaking. Classes are "Lay Speakers Teach Adults" or "Lay Speakers Discover Spiritual Gifts". Morning sessions of each class count as Refresher classes for local lay speaking. We will celebrate the renewal of local lay speakers during lunch and dismiss them at 12:45.

Contact Deb Honegger for registration material at [dhonegger@mchsi.com](mailto:dhonegger@mchsi.com) or 815-657-8840.

*Deb Honegger*

# OCTOBER

- 1 9:00 am-3:00 pm Clergy consultations at office
- 2 9:00 am-3:00 pm Clergy consultations at office
- 3 8:00 am-5:00 pm Clergy consultations at St. Mark
- 4 9:00 am-5:00 pm Clergy consultations at Lexington
- 7 Keith will preach at Roanoke and Secor
- 8 9:00 am-3:00 pm Clergy consultations at office  
1:00 pm Lower Middle Form Ministry Area at Pontiac First
- 9 9:00 am-3:00 pm Clergy consultations at Streator First
- 10 8:00 am-3:00 pm Clergy consultations at Dwight
- 11 9:00 am-4:00 pm Clergy consultations at Downs
- 12 8:30 am DCOM at Pontiac First
- 16 Los Amigos del Norte at Kankakee Asbury
- 16-18 Cabinet
- 20 Lay and clergy will meet at Pontiac First
- 22 DCOM with Iroquois District
- 23 9:00 am-12:00 pm Clergy consultations at office
- 24 9:00 am-12:00 pm Clergy consultations at office
- 28 Bishop Christopher at El Paso  
2:00 pm-4:00 pm Charge Conference at Streator First  
6:00 pm-8:00 pm Charge Conference at Coal City
- 30 6:00 pm-8:00 pm Charge Conference at Normal First



Lisa Roy	10-08	Bobbie Zimmerman	10-28
Richard Kerr	10-14	Brent Anderson	10-18
Wong Soon	10-18	Mary Louise Haxton	10-29
Bruce Yentes	10-18		

## **- DISTRICT APPOINTMENTS -**

### **FAREWELL**

Oren Banks from Ritchey  
Dan Harding from Essex

## **- OCTOBER NEWS -**

### **IGRC – UMW**

Award-winning photojournalist and missionary, Rev. Paul Jeffrey, will share some of his experiences when he addresses the UMW – IGRC at their Annual Celebration on Saturday, October 6 from 10 am to 3 pm at Faith UMC of Champaign, 1719 S. Prospect. The theme for this year’s celebration is “Spanning the World for Mission.”

For more information on the Annual Celebration, contact Lynn Travis, Vice President, UMW-IGRC at [umw@igrc.org](mailto:umw@igrc.org).

*IGRC-News*

## **HOMEMADE APPLE PIE SALE**

Mazon UMC is once again making and selling homemade apple pies. To place an order call 815-448-5677 – leave your order on the answering machine. The pies are regular or sugar-free and are \$6.50 each. Fresh pie pick ups at the church are Oct. 8, Oct. 15 and Oct. 22. To pick up frozen pies call 815-448-2140 or 815-448-5556.

*Donna Lee*

## **BAZAAR AT WESLEY**

On Wednesday, October 10 there will be a bazaar at Bloomington Wesley from 9:30 am-8:00 pm. There will be crafts, bakery, jewelry, centerpieces, wreaths, cookies by the pound and much more!

Lunch and dinner will be available. Dinner tickets should be purchased in advance at the church office at 502 E. Front St., Bloomington. Call 309-827-8046 for more information.

*Linda Stuckey*

## **- FOR YOUR INFORMATION -**

### **MISSION TRIP TO MISSISSIPPI GULF COAST**

The Vermilion District Volunteers in Mission are planning a winter work trip to Waveland MS, February 2-16, 2008. Persons interested can request a registration form by contacting David Prussner by phone at 815-935-8730 after 4:30 pm or by e-mailing David at ddugli@netzero.com. Once you have received and completed the registration form you can mail it to David Prussner, #4 Little Chief, Bourbonnais, IL 60914 by October 31, 2007. The total cost per person is \$350, which includes all travel expenses to and from Waveland, MS along with food and lodging at Camp Gulfside. All registrants are requested to attend the first meeting on Sunday, 11/11/2007 at 2:00 pm at the Asbury UMC, 196 South Harrison, Kankakee, IL 60901.

*David Prussner*

## **SERVICES ON DISTRICT WEBSITE**

The Memorial Service and the Ordination Service from the Annual Conference is on the district website at: [http://vermillionrd.org/annual\\_conference/video/](http://vermillionrd.org/annual_conference/video/).

## **VOLUNTEERS NEEDED**

Native American Fellowship Dayspring Church needs volunteers to help us get the building enclosed and ready for sheltering our people this winter. Volunteers needed immediately and through October. Carpentry, electrical, plumbing, heating and air, landscaping. Call Dick Lower, volunteer coordinator 309-241-5993. Call Dominic Irrera, project manager, 309-648-5647 to discuss jobs and times. God provides just in time!

*IGRC- News*

## **WORKSHOP FOR DISASTER TEAMS**

A workshop for Early Response Disaster Teams will be provided November 4 & 5 at the Mid-West Mission Distribution Center in Chatham. Barbara Tripp, a consultant with UMCOR, will be leading this workshop. Topics will

include: Why we do it. Why we need to do it. What we do and don't do. Who is a team? What are the positions and responsibilities? How to outfit a team. Necessary forms.

Sunday's session will begin with a light super at 6:00 pm. Monday's session will end by 2:30 pm. Meals are included in the registration cost. Participants staying at MMDC should plan to bring their own bedding (sheets, pillows, pillowcases, blankets or sleeping bags), towels and wash cloths.

Cost is \$35. Registrations may be sent to: [igrc\\_disaster\\_response@yahoo.com](mailto:igrc_disaster_response@yahoo.com) or Rev. Judy Doyle, First UMC, 1315 Court Street, Pekin IL 61554. Registration deadline is Friday, October 26. Registration is required.

*IGRC-News*

### **ISU WESLEY: BELONG, BELIEVE, BECOME**



ISU Wesley Worship Band performs at the BBQ and Live Band Kickoff gathering for the 2007-2008 school year on August 19.

Rev. Jennie Edwards Bertrand adopted a church growth model to intentionally expand the ministry of the Wesley Foundation at Illinois State University when she took over as director in 2006. This decision has brought many personal and professional rewards, not the least of which is that leadership of ISU Wesley is now shared with 13 student leaders who each have a deep passion for ministry.

Jennie notes that “the students who are attracted to ISU Wesley want to be involved and fully participate in its ministry.” “Merge” was the name recently selected by the students for their mid-week worship gathering. Students also designed the logo. *Merge* speaks to bringing all the various pieces and broken places of our lives into a oneness with God’s grace and love. Each worship gathering is wrapped in contemporary Christian music – a blend of popular and original pieces written by members of the worship band, and features messages that are relevant to the real lives of college students. The current worship series, *College MythBusters*, focuses on the “legends” surrounding college life that often drive students to make choices that are ultimately found to be personally and spiritually unfulfilling.

Last fall, Normal First transformed a large classroom off of its Fellowship Hall into a new office for the director of ISU Wesley and a café for the students. This light-filled space quickly became popular with students because it is a great place to grab a cup of coffee, study, or just hang-out.

This past summer, Jennie Edwards Bertrand worked alongside students and church volunteers to remodel the Foundation’s main space on the lower-level of the church. A few details remain but when completed, the lower-level will have a more contemporary look and a Prayer Room will have been added to the existing lounge, computer room, and kitchen/dining area. WiFi is available.

The Prayer Room was created in response to feedback from students who wanted a quiet, sacred space where they could meditate, connect with God, and pray. Prayer stations and devotionals will be changed frequently to keep things spiritually fresh.

Kick-off week for the 2007-2008 school year at ISU Wesley began with a BBQ and Live Band event on August 19 attended by more than 100 students. Mid-week worship has been attracting a number of enthusiastic students weekly. The newly remodeled space on the lower-level has been eagerly embraced by the members of ISU Wesley and has become the site of student-organized, impromptu movie nights each Friday.

Small group studies are being expanded. As she did last year, Jennie is leading *Genesis*, a study that provides support, encouragement, and a Biblical basis for all the things freshman are experiencing – good and bad. Two new small

group studies are being facilitated by members of the ISU Wesley leadership team. One uses the NOOMA video series to spark discussions on faith-based approaches to real-life issues. Another group, *Soup & Study*, gathers for lunch weekly to deeply explore the Christian basics that form the foundation of a strong faith. There are plans to add additional studies later in the school year.

Jennie expresses deep appreciation for the support ISU Wesley and the students receive from Normal First. Members of the congregation volunteer to prepare the weekly Sunday supper so that students have a chance to relax and enjoy some fun and socialize over a “home-cooked” meal. Members of the congregation also “adopt” college students. The caring and supportive relationships that are created through this program often continue well-beyond the college years.

As she reflects on her first year and looks forward to her second as Director of ISU Wesley, Jennie Edwards-Bertrand is pleased with the momentum the ministry is gathering and the lives it is touching. She feels that the ministry motto *belong, believe, become* says it all.

*Susan Scott*

## **KATRINA SUMMIT**

UM volunteers from across the United States were welcomed, thanked and challenged to keep coming to the Gulf Coast at a Katrina Summit in New Orleans to honor the work and workers of the past two years. More than 63,000 United Methodist volunteers from 42 states, two foreign countries and 60 annual (regional) conferences have come to the aid of the Gulf Coast since Hurricane Katrina stormed ashore on August 29, 2005. The Sept. 6-7 summit was organized to thank and recruit more volunteers, find new church partnerships and encourage more donations to the Katrina Church Recovery Appeal, a special fund established by the UM Council of Bishops to help rebuild churches, pay salaries and restore other ministries. Annual conferences from Alaska to Arkansas sent more than 200 representatives from volunteer mission teams to the event hosted by annual conferences in Louisiana, Mississippi and Alabama-West Florida.

*UMNS News in Brief*

## **A CHURCH “ON THE MOVE”**

Batavia UM is a church on the move-literally. The thriving downtown congregation in Batavia, IL, 45 miles west of Chicago, has outgrown its historic building and parking spaces. So, out of sheer necessity, the 850-member church has embraced a unique community outreach concept called “church in a bus.” Each Sunday,

in addition to holding three worship services in Batavia, the congregation sends a mission team with a 24-foot trailer to the nearby family-oriented community of Aurora. Inside the trailer are wheeled containers filled with an altar, hymnals, musical instruments, audio and video equipment, signs and even a coffeemaker – everything needed to provide a worship service, Sunday school classes and a nursery.

*UMNS News in Brief*

### **GENERAL CONFERENCE**

UMs want to change the tone of conversation and debate at the church's top legislative assembly in 2008. Organizers of the denomination's General Conference, which meets April 23-May 2 in Fort Worth, Texas, have endorsed "Guidelines for Holy Conferencing-What God Expects of Us" as a blueprint for such conversation. The guidelines, a set of 10 principles focusing on respect, civility and mutual understanding, are in response to long-held concerns that the General Conference more resembles the style and conduct by secular political bodies than the higher expectations of a faith-focused group, according to Bishop Janice Riggle Huie, who leads the Houston Area and is president of the UM Council of Bishops. "Holy Conferencing sets UMs apart from other organizations," Huie said in a letter introducing the guidelines, which will be posted on the General Conference 2008 Web site and included in delegate materials.