



Five Rivers District

Five Rivers District

Volume 11, Issue 4

From Your District Superintendent

Last month in my monthly column, I introduced you to a special ministry that the Five Rivers District Leadership Team has chosen to offer to the churches. We are inviting all of the churches of the district to participate in a special offering that will help support ministry in our district that is aimed at children and youth.

This offering will go in equal parts to the District Committee on Youth Ministry (DCYM) and to Camp Chippewa. These two ministry outlets provide some of the major opportunities for ministry with children and youth in our district. The DCYM develops ministries such as Project Revolution – a district wide youth event held each fall – to help youth grow in faith. Camp Chippewa has been providing great camping and faith development experiences for children and youth for many years. These ministries change lives for the better. God’s love is shared and experienced by the youth and children that have the opportunity to participate. We want to help ensure that these God experiences for our young people will remain vital.

The district office will be offering to each church a video promoting this special offering. We hope to have it to you by the second week of April. When it arrives, please use it to share this information with your congregation. We are not setting a particular amount of money that we want to raise. Our goal is that every church in the Five Rivers District will take part and do something. Together we can make a big difference in the lives of our children and youth. So, please prayerfully consider how your church can help with this special opportunity.

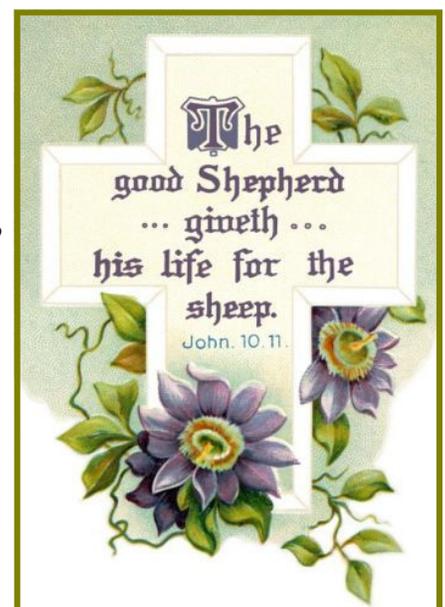
Thanks for taking the time to read this article. Thanks also for the effort that you will give to making this special offering a success!

Jesus said, “Let the little children come to me, and do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of heaven belongs.” Matthew 19:14

In Christ,

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April 2014

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1 <i>Five Rivers District Office Closed</i>	2 <i>Five Rivers District Office Closed</i>	3 <i>Five Rivers District Office Closed</i>	4 <i>Happy Birthday</i> <i>Rev. Jay Henderson</i>	5 <i>Ottawa First UMC</i> <i>9 - Noon</i>
6	7 <i>Happy Birthday</i> <i>Rev. Trudy Anderson</i>	8	9	10	11 <i>Happy Birthday</i> <i>Rev. Kim Serio</i>	12
13 <i>Happy Birthday</i> <i>Rev. Dan Norwood</i>	14	15	16	17	18	19
20 <i>Easter</i>	21	22	23	24 <i>Happy Birthday</i> <i>Rev. Butch Ritter</i>	25	26
27	28	29	30			

District Calendar

- March 30 ~ One Great Hour of Sharing (see page 9 for details and link)
- March 31 - April 3 ~ Appointive Cabinet, DS is in Wichita
- April 1-6 ~ District Office Closed, Marvé will be at PAUMCS Annual Conference/ continuing education.
- April 13 ~ Palm Sunday
- April 14-17 ~ Appointive Cabinet, DS is in Wichita
- April 20 ~ Easter Sunday
- April 22 ~ Youth Workers Training (see page 8 for details)
- April 25th World Malaria Day (see page 10 for details of 5R fundraising for Imagine No Malaria.
- June 11-14 ~ GP Annual Conference



Five Rivers District Monthly Prayer Calendar

April 6	Lyndon Rev. Loren Drummond
April 13	Osawatomie/Lane Rev. Marti McDougal
April 20	Welda/Kincaid Selma Rev. Bill Nelson
April 27	Vinland Rev. Shirley Edgerton

From Hospice to Health – One Church's Journey

By Rev. Kathy Symes

In 2011 the College of Bishops called for congregations to set goals for ongoing and renewed vitality. When I announced this new program, labeled 'Vital Congregations', to Vassar UMC a collective groan filled the room. The grumbling centered on the fact that most believed this just meant a new form had to be filled out that no one would even pay attention to. I replied with the old adage 'garbage in, garbage out. Meaning that maybe our history had been to just fill in the blanks of these required forms with little or no thought and maybe we should instead focus more on how the questions might lead us to new answers about what it means to be a vital church.

The entire church came together in small groups to fill out the form. When I write we came together I mean that I formed a worship service around the form and we spent our worship hour discussing our ministries and what it means to be a church. We used the demographics supplied by Mission Insight and many were surprised to learn that some of their long held beliefs about the community were wrong. After collating the information from the small groups we filled out the form, dropped it in the mail and set to work using our new found information.

Vassar UMC is located near Pomona Lake in Osage County and even at my 'advanced age' I pulled down the average age of the congregation. Our youngest member was looking forward to graduating college in the near future; there was not a child to be seen in the pews. The consensus was that we needed young people! So one member started to knocking on doors and inviting children and youth to our new Sunday School program.

Our new children's program averaged between 3 and 5 children on any given Sunday, not exactly huge numbers but exciting nonetheless. Imagine our surprise when we received an invitation to participate in a new program called Next Steps. It seems that someone actually read that report after all!

After inviting a group of 10 members to participate in the Next Steps program we made the drive to Iola First UMC, ready to begin. (continued on pg. 4)

Our group dwindled to just six before the first meeting but we were undaunted.

Next Steps is a live stream presentation presented by clergy and laity members, including Bishop Jones. After an hour long presentation two facilitators lead the group of churches through a period of discussion and sharing. The program focuses on moving from a membership church to discipleship church.



Photo by Mary Ann Coffee

Next Steps takes place over a five month period, one Saturday morning per month. Our group had lunch together after every class and met at least once midmonth. By the second month we were compiling a list of things we believed could help the church become more vital. Some were small changes – moving a couple of extra pews into the sanctuary to achieve a different seating pattern. Some changes were larger – renovate the main floor to include a restroom.

The congregation soon took notice and the questions were swirling. In order to include the whole congregation we hosted a breakfast for the congregation before church one Sunday morning. We took turns talking about our experience in Next Steps. We discussed our goals and our dreams. We answered question, took suggestions and received mainly positive response. Of course there were a couple of naysayers but overall the excitement took hold.

Because of the Next Steps training we achieved the following:

- A restroom was added to the main floor (using memorial money).
- A new Wednesday evening bible study called *Connections* began. *Connections* is lectionary based study connecting the scripture to today's issues.
- Every 5th Sunday we have a Time Flip. We flip worship hours with the other church in the charge so we can worship later and have a fellowship dinner after worship.

- A new outreach group that called themselves The Magnificent Seven began. This group focuses on a community member that is need of help and figures out how to make it happen. In October 2011 they sponsored a 5K fun run called The Goblin Gallop. The Gallop raised over \$5000 and the funds were used to purchase a new wheelchair for a young woman in the community with a degenerative disease of her muscles. Last year they raised funds for a young girl that suffers from a disease called Chiari Malformation. The funds help the family with medical, lodging and travel expenses. As Chiari is a relatively rare disease they have to travel to go to an out of state hospital for treatment. And yes, the group is self-named and currently numbers around nine members.



Photo by Mary Ann Coffee

- Continued support of the new children’s ministry. We recently had a group of 5 middle school and high school kids (all related) walk to

church and ask if they could join us in worship. They come by themselves each week and have made themselves at home. At a recent dinner their grandma said to me ‘they love it here, I think you’re their new pastor’.

After completing the Next Steps program last May we took up the challenge to move onto Phase 2 of the program. We meet with our coach, Dallas Peterson, this week. At this point I cannot tell you where we might end up. But this I know: last Sunday March 23rd, we had more people in attendance than we typically have on most Easters (about a 5% attendance increase).

Most importantly, we had 11 children in attendance and the sweet sound of them learning, singing and being God’s children echoes up from the fellowship hall into the sanctuary and that is a sound that makes my heart swell!

Martha Smith passed away on January 24, 2014, at age 108, 4 months, 9 days. To our knowledge she was the oldest living member in Five Rivers District. She will be missed by her Vinland UMC friends and all those she blessed with her presence.



Previous column about Martha Smith
Martha Smith October 09 Newsletter

The man is a success who has lived well,
laughed often and loved much.

Robert Louis Stevenson

For having lived long, I have experienced many instances of being obliged by better information or fuller consideration, to change opinions, even on important subjects, which I once thought right but found to be otherwise.

Benjamin Franklin

Only one life, twill soon be past, only what's

Is God Calling You? An invitation to explore.

Is it possible that God is calling you? Maybe you have heard the quiet whisper from God or a voice in your head that doesn't go away, nudging you to serve the church in a new way. Maybe a friend or a pastor has told you that you have gifts for ministry and you wonder what that means.

Discover Ministry is a place for you to listen to God and explore what a call might mean in your life. Come with your questions. Come with hearts and minds open to the work of the Holy Spirit. Come with a trusted friend!

There are two *Discover Ministry* events currently scheduled. The first one is May 10 at First United Methodist Church in Emporia, Ks located at 823 Merchant. The second one will be September 27 in Beatrice NE. More details for this one will be available later on

Both events will be from 10:00 a.m. - 2:30 p.m. CDT, with lunch included. There is no cost to you to attend. If you have questions, please call Nancy Lambert at 402-464-5994, ext 126, or one of the District Superintendents listed below. . Please register online for the May 10 event at: <https://gp-reg.brtapp.com/DiscoverMinistry>

Vinland UMC hosts Spring Seeding and Irrigation Workshop By **Nora Cleland**

The Vinland UMC recently reached out to the community to present a “Spring Seeding and Irrigation” workshop on March 8. The congregation arranged for three members of the Douglas County Master Gardeners organization to present “Spring Seeding and Irrigation.”

About 35 attended to learn about seed starting, rain barrels, irrigation and plant stands. The discussion was lively and several were interested in the Master Gardener program. The program, sponsored by the Kansas State University Extension Service gives 40 hours of training to interested gardeners. In return each individual provides 40 hours of service in workshops and local gardens.



Subscribe to the Great Plains Conference News:

You are not automatically getting the Communiqué version of the Great Plains Conference which is called **GPconnect**. If you would like to keep up with the news in the Great Plains Conference you will need to click on the link below and sign up to receive it electronically.

<http://gp-email.brtapp.com/subscribe>

You can always read it on the Great Plains website as well at this link. Scroll down to get to the GPconnect archives

<http://gp-email.brtapp.com/archivearea/54>

You can **register for Annual Conference** which will be held in Lincoln, Neb. this year at this link.

<http://www.greatplainsumc.org/registrationforms>

Youth Workers throughout the Great Plains Conference are invited to join us for a day of sharing ideas, resources and fellowship.

COST: FREE

WHEN: Tuesday, April 22nd Time: 9:30 am to 4 pm

WHERE: **Lawrence First United Methodist Church** ~ 946 Vermont in downtown Lawrence, KS

WHY: We need each other! We can learn from each other! And we really don't get out enough!

BRING: Please bring lesson plans, retreat schedules, fundraisers, etc. that you want to "Show & Tell". Be prepared to share the best of what you do as a youth leader and to write down lots of ideas! There will be sharing times... there will be inspiration...there will be prizes! Yes, PRIZES! AND...bring lunch money! We will be hitting Mass Street for sustenance!

RSVP: By April 18th simply by responding to this e-mail with your top 5 areas of interest in Youth Ministry. If you don't find them on the list below, please add them.

- Mission Trips
- Fundraising
- Retreats
- Writing Devotionals
- Small Groups
- Outreach
- Youth Worship
- Lesson Plan Ideas
- Social Media
- Confirmation
- Teaching Tough Topics (Depression, Suicide and Cutting, Sex, Drugs)
- Other: _____

EVENT HOSTED BY:

Allison Bond,

Youth Director

St. Paul's UMC in Lenexa, Kansas

Allison@stpaulslenexa.org

Tami Clark,

Youth Director

Lawrence First United Methodist Church in Lawrence, Kansas

Tami@fumclawrence.org

Lisa Freeman,

Youth Coordinator

Lenexa United Methodist Church in Lenexa, Kansas

lisa.freeman@lenexaumc.org

The three of us were looking for something a little different than your normal conference.

Bishop's Round-up for Hunger ~ Plans for 2014

The annual **Bishop's Round-up for Hunger** is a time for United Methodists to join together and provide for people in need. The 2014 round-up will be Nov. 15 at the Douglas County Fairgrounds in Lawrence, Kan..

A project of the Board of Global Ministries, the Round-up gathers supplies like food, health kits, cash, layettes (baby kits), birthing kits, diapers, clothing, paper items and bedding for around 30 missions and agencies. This program is not going away with the new Great Plains Conference.

The Round-up works with Heifer International which buys high-quality animals for people and with the EmberHope Animal Therapy Program, which collects young beef cattle, pigs and horses for their Farm and Ranch Program that helps hurting children heal by involving them with nature and animals.

In total, the supplies and donations earned from this event value near \$400,000 a year. As you can see, the Bishop's Round-up is a successful way to love the poor and hurting in areas both near and far from us.

For more information, please contact Matt Johnson, Bishop's Round-up chairperson, at 800-593-1950 or mjohnson@emberhope.org

The One Great Hour of Sharing

March 30th is the Sunday when our churches have the opportunity to take up an offering for The One Great Hour of Sharing. This offering benefits UMCOR. UMCOR stands for the United Methodist Council on Relief. Due to the funding through this offering and other individual donors, all funds that are mailed in to UMCOR go directly to the causes you specify. Administrative costs, training, staff, communications are all paid through the One Great Hour of Sharing funds. There are not too many programs that can boast this.

You can see all the good work that is going on by checking out the UMCOR link and UMC.org. The power of all of us working together has amazing results. That is why I personally tell folks, my tithe and donations always go to, and through the UMC. I trust the integrity of the system.

Not all of us are called to give sacrificially but we all are called to help where we can, and we all can do something. Here are a couple links with materials about this offering. If your church misses the date, you can take the offering at any time.

http://www.umcsgiving.org/site/c.qwL6KkNWLrH/b.3904011/k.475/Special_Sundays_One_Great_Hour_of_Sharing_Resources.htm

These are some of the advances that all get 100% of the funding donated due to the One Great Hour of Sharing.

<http://www.umcmmission.org/Give-to-Mission>

Five Rivers District



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Cultivating Christian Discipleship

Website: 5RiversDS.com

Imagine No Malaria Campaign Results

Bishop Jones made a request of all the churches in our Conference in 2012. His request was that we all contribute something to the cause of eliminating Malaria.

And so began the many fundraisers that lasted up until December 31st of 2013. The result was as amazing, and the fund raising efforts as different, as the 71 local churches in Five Rivers District.

The campaign called Imagine No Malaria, was the predecessor of the Nothing But Nets. All funds dedicated to it went to United Methodist Committee on Relief advance #3029910.

This very successful campaign yielded over \$27,000.00 overall from 2012-13 from Five Rivers District.

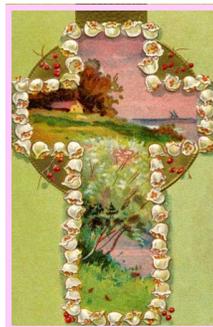
From some of our smallest churches to our largest, there were stories of joyful and productive fundraising and giving. Thank you to all who participated.

**Bishop of the Great Plains
Conference
Scott Jones**

**Five Rivers District
Superintendent
Rev. Dr. Dennis Ackerman**

**Newsletter Editor/Admn.
Assistant
Marvé Ralston**

April 25th is World Malaria Day



2014 Mileage Reimbursement

- 56 cents per mile for business miles driven
- 23.5 cents per mile driven for medical or moving purposes
- 14 cents per mile driven in service of charitable organizations