



*Mission Statement: To Cultivate Christian Discipleship*

# LIVING WATER

## From our District Superintendent

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The Pastors of the District have received a document titled *VITAL CONGREGATIONS PLANNING GUIDE*. The Lay Leaders and Staff/Parish Committee Chairpersons will be receiving this document by early September. I encourage the Pastors to go ahead and share the information with their leaders.

In this article, I am not so much wanting to share about the content of the *VITAL CONGREGATIONS PLANNING GUIDE*, but rather, to share some thoughts about what needs to be the motivation behind its use. What I am not interested in, and what will not be productive, is to see this tool as another hoop that the Conference wants the churches to jump through. I have been there and done that as the pastor of a local church. I didn't like it and neither do you.

### Upcoming Events:

Clergy Meeting/Poverty Simulation  
Sept. 6th ~ Ottawa 1st

Project Revolution 5R Youth Rally  
Sept. 10th-11th ~ Lawrence 1st (West)

Vital Congregation Training  
Sept. 18th ~ Garnett UMC 3-5 p.m.

Cross Cultural-Cross Racial Workshop  
Sept. 25th ~ Ottawa 1st ~

2:30-7 p.m.

Register on KE website

What I desire is that you will see this as a tool to direct conversations and consider questions that any church needs to be continually asking itself. As the Vital Congregations documents states: "... we need to find connections between our mission (and the Biblical foundations of that mission) and our day-to-day life in the congregations and communities we serve." What does it mean for us where we are, when we are, and with whom we relate?

For me the real motivation must be a deep and growing relationship with Jesus Christ. It is the Holy Spirit that ultimately motivates and directs all of us. The starting place is to challenge, encourage, and hold accountable one another in true Christian love. As John Wesley asked his society leaders regarding the members, so we must ask ourselves – "Have they fruit?"

A relationship with Jesus Christ produces fruit of the spirit. When we are experiencing the true transforming love of God in our lives we cannot help but share it with others. So, ask yourself, am I growing in my relationship with Christ? Am I encouraging and challenging others to do the same? I see these questions as the first ones that leaders in the church must ask of themselves.

Please, begin with your relationship with God through Jesus Christ and move out from there. Encourage and challenge one another in this life giving process. Approach the process outlined in the *Vital Church* guide as a means of growing in Christ, living in Christ, and sharing Christ.

I want to acknowledge that there are those of you that are already involved in a process as outlined in the *Vital Church Guide*. Great! Then please use the Guide as a tool to review, remember and report

Pastors, come to your consultation visits with your questions. Thanks!

God bless you!  
Dennis Ackerman



## August 2011

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>14</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>21</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>28</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>31</b>			

- August 1st-14th      DS is on vacation. The District Office will still be open. If you have a problem requiring a DS, call Michael Chamberlain, KC District Superintendent. 913-722-4775.
- August 21st            Blackwood Brothers, Fort Scott 1st UMC, 301 S National, Fort Scott, KS at 6:00 p.m. ~ All are invited, free will offering will be taken.
- September 6th        Clergy Meeting and *Poverty Simulation*, Ottawa 1st, 203 E 4th St, Ottawa, KS. Time to be determined later.
- September 10th-11th    Project Revolution, Five Rivers District Youth Rally, Lawrence 1st, West Campus 4 p.m. -11 a.m. This is open to all district youth. Look for registration form soon.
- September 18th        Vital Congregation Training Event, Garnett UMC, 205 S Oak St, Garnett, KS 3-5 p.m.
- September 25th        Cross Cultural-Cross Racial Workshop, Ottawa 1st, 203 E 4th St, Ottawa, KS 2:30-7:00 p.m. Registration form on the KE website.

## Report from the Kansas Conference on Poverty

By Pastor David Shrum Moran/Bronson UMC

Currently 826,000 Kansans struggle to make ends meet with incomes at or below 200% of the Federal Poverty Level. The effects of these struggles increase our health care needs and costs, reduce our tax base, limit the capacity of our educational systems, and damage economic development and overall prosperity for Kansas. Each year government agencies, non-profit agencies, service clubs, religious institutions, and a variety of interested parties and individuals come together for the Kansas Conference on Poverty in Topeka to address what can be done for this growing number of Kansas households living in poverty. This year's Conference took place July 20-22 at the downtown Topeka Ramada Hotel and Conference Center.

Several keynote presentations were given with one of the most powerful being **The War on Poverty: A Living History** with Charles Braithwait, CCAP Emeritus, and Charles McCann, CCAP Emeritus. including Mr. Braithwait's successful suit against President Nixon to save Community Action in 1973. Included in the presentation was the scholarly observation of the threat to community action's existence today as part of the ongoing federal budget fight in Congress.

Also presented as part of the conference was *The Community Action Poverty Simulation (CAPS)*: this is a unique tool that community action agencies are able to use to educate everyone, from policy makers to local community leaders, about the typical day to day strategies of a low-income family trying to survive from month-to-month with a shortage of money and an abundance of stress. It is a *simulation*, not a game. The object is to sensitize participants to the hardships faced by real people. **All clergy in the Five River District will have the opportunity to participate in the simulation at the District Clergy meeting on September 6<sup>th</sup> at First United Methodist Church in Ottawa.**

Other breakout sessions ranged from **Children in Poverty, Alternative Housing, Combating Sex Trafficking, Budgeting and Finance Management, Oral Health Assistance, Food Justice for All**, and many other topics of concern to Kansans at risk and those seeking to help them.

As always, this was a very powerful conference with much information to be absorbed and used. Many of the presentation topics correspond to the Methodist agenda of Social Justice. True partnerships are available with many of these interested partners.



United Methodist Churches in the Five Rivers District that currently house food pantries in their buildings are Baldwin 1st, Edgerton, LaCygne, Mound City, Osawatomie-Lane, Parker, Pomona, Prescott, Waverly-Prairie View. Several are run by outside agencies and the rest are church run.

*Above is Mound City's pantry shelving.*

Twenty-eight district churches contribute to their local or area food pantry through food, service and/or funds.

Food pantries vary greatly as do the stipulations for help. Some serve their residents only, hand out pre-packed boxes of food, and/or limit the visits of clients to once a month.

Most are open at least once a week and are seeing increased need.

*Below is Baldwin 1st pantry storage/stocking area.*





**District Office Address:**  
 3300 Clinton Parkway Court, Suite 110  
 Lawrence, KS 66047-2629  
 785-841-4804

Kansas Bishop: Scott Jones

District Superintendent:  
 Rev. Dr. Dennis Ackerman

Administrative Assistant,  
 Newsletter Editor: Marvé Ralston

E-mail: office@5riversds.com

### Clergy Birthdays

Joni Raymond August 14th  
 Marti McDougal August 28th

The best birthdays are those that haven't arrived yet.

Author Unknown

### District Prayer Calendar



Aug.7 Redfield-Uniontown  
 Rev. Joel Dunn  
 Aug.14 Parker-Beagle-Fontana  
 Rev. Marti McDougal  
 Aug. 21 Waverly-Prairie View  
 Rev. Nancy Swope  
 Aug. 28 Colony  
 Pastor Leslie Jackson  
 Kincaid/Selma  
 Pastor Bill Nelson

### Websites:

The official website of the United Methodist Church: [www.umc.org](http://www.umc.org)



Kansas East website: [www.kansaseast.org](http://www.kansaseast.org)

Global Ministries of the UMC: [www.gbgm-umc.com](http://www.gbgm-umc.com)



Baldwin 1st Food Pantry storage area. Helpers of all ages help restock and put away donated food.



If you can't feed a hundred people, then feed just one.  
 Mother Teresa

Many people mistake our work for our vocation. Our vocation is the love of Jesus.  
 Mother Teresa

Baldwin 1st Food Pantry is open once a week on Saturdays from 9 a.m.-Noon.