



LIVING WATER

Five Rivers District Office Newsletter

Volume 4, Issue 12
December 2008

Reflections From Ron

Hello Friends and Col-leagues ...

For those of us who profess Christ as the risen one, we are beginning a new year. In fact, in this season of Advent, what more appropriate words for our nation and our world to hear than the words and messages that announce the coming of the one who is called King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

As we watch our nation’s leaders groping for solutions to war and financial loss, a resounding word of hope can sometimes be muffled in the noisy distractions that are made to merely survive and people become hopeless rather than hopeful. A word of faith seems to point more and more toward a greater need for faith in God as we discover that our faith in each other is running low on fuel. Questions about how we might be able to love one

another boil to the top of our concerns as we watch the numbers of homeless and hungry increasing daily. We want to help them, but whispers of “what about me — will I be next” echo in the back of our minds. And our admonition to wait is layered with anxious anticipation — not of the coming Christ but of the coming end of it all. And waiting patiently has not been our strong suit. We are impatient and as anxious as anyone when we find the fires of devastation burning more closely to our lives.

And yet, this time of Advent is made for such a time as these. These are the times when we should be turning from the distractions of the world to focus on what God is really trying to say. In these times of uncertainty, God and Jesus Christ remain the certainties in life. Our focus should be to revisit

again the eternal truths that Jesus offers hope. Jesus offers an uncompromising answer to love and faith. Jesus comes to answer our questions about life and invites us to not just turn toward him, our light in a time of darkness, but invites and encourages us to become God’s light in a world of darkness.

These are the things that are and can be accomplished if we have taken time to nurture and cultivate our own Christian growth. These are the times, more than ever, when we don’t want to be found as the foolish man/woman who built their house on sand and when the winds came and the waves came their house was consumed. We want to be like the wise builder who built his home on the solid rock, and when the winds and the storms came her/his house withstood the constant barrage of the

elements.

There is no doubt that a storm is a brewin’. It’s already here in some very real ways. The winds are beating against the doors of our people’s lives. If we’ve built our homes on the solid rock, then perhaps now is the time to invite someone in whose spiritual home is being destroyed and tell them about your faith and how you’ve cultivated your own Christian growth to withstand these times. Agape, shalom, and Happy Christian New Year (Advent),
Ron

Inside this issue:

Reflections from Ron	1
Cultivating Christian Growth	2
Growth cont., Reading List	3
Calendar	4
Ministers Prayer Breakfast	5
Prayer Calendar, Birthdays	5
Vinland Benefit for Youthville	6



Cultivating Christian Growth By Marvé Ralston

(The Five Rivers District Mission Statement)

The November 1st District Conference on “Working Together in Growing Disciples,” was led by Carol Krau from the General Board of Discipleship (GBOD), Nashville, Tennessee. This was our fall conference and open to all lay persons and directed at lay leaders and pastors; working towards equipping us for our district mission statement which is, Cultivate Christian Growth. We had moderate attendance for this quality presentation. Here is a brief synopsis of what we learned.

We were given a hand-out to take notes and the conference began with guidelines for respectful communications. They lined up with the acronyms for respect. Didn't Otis Redding write a song about that? Ok, back to the subject at hand. The acronyms are:

R=Responsibility

E=Empathy

S=Sensitivity

P=Pondering

E=Examination

C=Confidentiality

T=Toleration

There was a lot of biblical reflection. We started with Ephesians 4:1. Taken from The

Message, the bible in contemporary language, we began.

In light of all of this, here's what I want you to do. While I'm locked up here, a prisoner for the Master, I want you to get out there and walk-better yet, run! On the road God called you to travel. I don't want any of you sitting around on your hands. I don't want anyone strolling off, down some path that goes nowhere. And mark that you do this with humility and discipline-not in fits and starts, but steadily, pouring yourselves out for each other in acts of love, alert at noticing differences and quick at mending fences.

This scripture was used for the purpose of talking about working together and the different parts/members of the church and their jobs and relationship to one another. We need “Patience,” bearing with one another in peace. Start by “building the center” which is peace within you.

There were specific steps for setting up a Discipleship System. First you need to establish your identity and purpose. Next develop or identify the spiritual leadership

needed. This can be measured by the evidence of effectiveness. Is your church displaying excellence on these key elements?

Hospitality/Faith Sharing
Worship/Spiritual Practices
Reconciliation/Justice
Service/Mission
Accountability

“You can't teach what you don't know; you can't lead where you won't go.” We are first called to be the spiritual leaders in our church. Once again scripture was used for faith sharing. Carol talked about radical hospitality not just coffee and donut time. She used Micah 6 on reconciliation and justice. Matthew 25 was used to exemplify service and mission.

The theme interwoven was “We will walk with you until you have determined what God wants you to be.” We need to watch with care for the broken places in the church; hurt, pain and finally reconciliation, always watching over one another in love.

She moved on to talk about the church defining itself



through a mission statement. Then using existing programs to develop existing members and bring new ones in. We talked in small groups about how our churches were effectively doing that. Some programs suggested were “Alpha”, “Discipleship” bible studies, “Abide”, and “Simply Wait – Advent.”

Some problem areas identified were, attempting to

do the same things over and over again and expecting different results. We need to evaluate the results not the people. At times we need to work the plan and at others we need to change it all together.

Much more was covered such as leadership styles, identifying leadership needed, and group behaviors. If you are interested in learning more, there is a reading list below

that she suggested.

This is just one of several workshops and or conferences we try to have annually. In the past we have had a workshop on Social Principles of the United Methodist Church, The Bishop gave an evangelism workshop, January Kiefer (LaCygne/New Lancaster) gave a workshop on Holy People Holy Space Holy Time. Look for another learning opportunity in the spring.

Selected Reading List

The Five Dysfunctions of a Team

Patrick Lencioni
Jossey-Bass, 2002

Growing in Authority, Relinquishing Control: A New Approach to Faithful Leadership

Celia Allison Hahn
Alban Institute, 1994

***Guidelines*, 2009-2012 (Lay Leader, Pastor, Church Council)**

Abingdon Press, 2008

How to Get along with Your Pastor, Creating Partnership for Doing Ministry

George B. Thompson, Jr.
Pilgrim Press, 2006

Leadership and Interaction Styles, Understanding Why We Behave the Way We Do in Groups

Dan R. Dick
Discipleship Resources, 2006

Leading from the Second Chair, Serving Your Church, Fulfilling Your Role, and Realizing Your Dreams

Mike Bonem & Roger Patterson
Jossey-Bass, 2005

Practicing Right Relationship: Skills for Deepening Purpose, Finding Fulfillment, and Increasing Effectiveness in Your Congregation

Mary K. Sellon & Daniel P. Smith
Alban Institute, 2005

December 2008

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22 5R Office Closed	23 5R Office Closed	24 Christmas Eve	25 Christmas Day	26	27
28	29	30	31 New Years Eve			

- December 1st Church Conference Osawatomie-Lane UMC 7 pm
- December 2nd Church Conference Parker-Beagle-Fontana UMC 7 pm.
- December 3rd Church Conference Richmond UMC 7 pm
- December 4th Church Conference Waverly-Prairie View 7 pm
- December 6th District Clergy Family Christmas Brunch/Party
- December 6th Vinland Music Benefit for Youthville, Vinland UMC (see pg. 6 for details)
- December 7th Christmas Candlelight Vespers 4:00 pm, 7:30 pm
Baldwin 1st UMC, 704 8th Street, Baldwin City, KS
- December 7th Church Conference Lawrence 1st 12:30 pm, Pomona-Vassar 4 pm,
Lawrence Centenary/Linwood 7 pm
- December 9th Church Conference Garnett UMC 7 pm
- December 10th Church Conference Uniontown/Redfield 7 pm
- December 11th Church Conference Iola Trinity 7 pm
- December 14th Church Conference Burlington UMC 12:30 pm, Wellsville UMC 4 pm,
Edgerton UMC 6 pm
- December 15th Clearfield-Ives Chapel 7 pm
- December 16th Gridley-Turkey Creek-LeRoy 7 pm
- December 21st-
Jan. 5th DS on vacation

You Are Invited

Minister's Breakfast

Ottawa, Kansas

Old Highway 56 Restaurant

8:30 a.m.

First and Third Thursday of each
Month

Next Meeting, December 4th, 2008



District Prayer Calendar

Dec. 7	Edgerton Rev. Gayla Rapp
Dec. 14	Uniontown-Redfield Rev. Joel Dunn
Dec. 21	Iola: Trinity Pastor Connie McKee-Smith
Dec. 28	Wesley KU Ministries Rev. Holly Snyder

Bethlehem Of
Judea

A little child,
A shining star.
A stable rude,
The door ajar.

Yet in that place,
So crude, forlorn,
The Hope of all
The world was
born.

Clergy Birthdays

Bud Tuxhorn	12/08
Marcia Eaton	12/09
Vida R. Williams	12/11
Dallas Peterson	12/21



Carol Krau leading the Conference on, "Working Together in Growing Disciples."

Five Rivers District Office Newsletter

The United Methodist Church
809 Seventh, #1
P.O. Box 565
Baldwin City, KS 66006-0565

Phone: 785-594-4804

Fax: 785-594-4820

E-mail: fiverivers@embarqmail.com

Kansas Bishop:

Dr. Rev. Scott Jones

District Superintendent:

Rev. Ronald King

Administrative Assistant,

Newsletter editor :

Marvé Ralston

We're on the web at

www.fiveriversdistrict.com



District Mission Statement: Cultivating Christian Growth

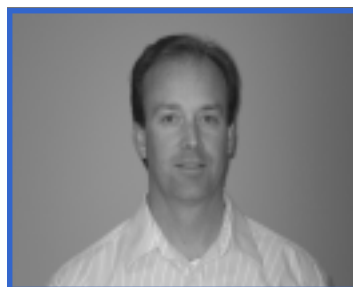
Vinland UMC Music Benefit for Youthville

Saturday, December 6th
soup, sandwich and home-
made desserts served begin-
ning at 5 pm.

Cost: Free Will Offering for
Youthville. www.youthville.org
Music provided by Witness
Band beginning at 6:00 pm.

Craft Bazaar and Soup Supper
in Fellowship Hall.

Contact: Jean Moore
785-594-3568



**Meet our District Lay Leader
Richard Croll**

Member of Burlington UMC

Richard is a member of the District
Leadership team. If you have con-
cerns, questions or inspiration for the
Leadership of the Five Rivers District,
please contact him or someone on the

Leadership Team.

District Leadership Team members are:

Rev. Tom Brady Lawrence 1st UMC, Mary Brooks Lyndon UMC, Dr.
Felix Burrows Ottawa 1st UMC, Richard Croll Burlington UMC, Eva
Durand Baldwin 1st UMC, Marvé Ralston Baldwin 1st UMC, Mary
Margaret Rowen Lawrence 1st UMC, David Wasserfallen
Wellsville UMC. The next district leadership team meeting is
January 22, 2009 at Ottawa 1st.