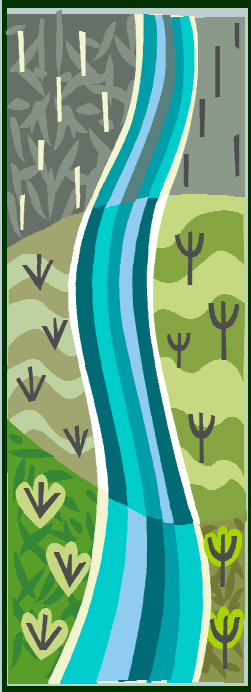


Living Water

VOLUME 5, ISSUE 5

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Reflections From Ron

Colleagues and friends,

We have waited all winter for spring and it's finally here, but not quite. The reason we know it's here is because our activity is saying so in words louder than we could ever shout. The nurseries from which we get all of our stuff to mulch our flower and plant beds are filled with people getting ready for planting. Packets of seeds are everywhere, from grocery stores to the local Wal-Mart, all inducing us to imagine what we might plant, grow and later harvest from vegetable gardens. And the reality of this all is, we don't yet know what spring will bring. It might bring weather so dry that it's impossible to grow and harvest anything that is stunted by the lack of rain. The summer may bring so much heat that it burns everything in sight and prevents growth altogether. Or, the rains may come in spring and summer, allowing molds and bacteria to infest everything we thought we might salvage. And yet knowing all of this hasn't stopped the host of activity going on at the local nurseries and garden supply stores.

Now rewind a moment. Go back to the fact that we don't know what spring will bring (nor summer for that matter) and yet we are in preparation mode. Those who are planters (gardeners) and those who are not are all preparing. Those of us who do garden and those of us who don't garden, prepare and expect to benefit from the work of spring cultivation. We harbor an attitude of cultivation, even if nothing but our taste buds and eyes are ready to savor whatever spring brings forth.

Now, let's fast forward to the more important issues of life; those of our spiritual growth. The Holy Spirit is always in a spring mindset, ready to plant seeds of growth and excitement about what God is doing in our lives. The word of God stands ready to penetrate our souls with truth and grace, but perhaps we've done little to prepare ourselves to receive that which God is already willing and able to give. Sometimes cultivating Christian growth invites us to prepare ourselves to receive what God is going to give. Do we know what the seasons of life will bring? No. Do we know whether the summers of our life will bring such scorching heat that all of our efforts will be burned up and our efforts seemingly wasted? No. Do we know whether or not the springs of life will bring such a torrent of rains that we are deluged and overwhelmed and flooded with life's unexpected tragedies? No. The reality is that we can't know what lies ahead, any more than those who plant and harvest. What we do know is that unless we prepare ourselves spiritually for whatever the seasons of life may hold, we may be like those plants — vulnerable to whatever life may bring.

And if life should bring us things that threaten the harvest, should we not

Two BHS Seniors Provide *Time Out* for Community

Contributed by Eva Durand Youth Director Baldwin 1st UMC



Shannon Roberts and Meagan Young, seniors at BHS, worked together since last July in planning, preparing, organizing, and producing their dream – a Christian outreach event for the Baldwin community, featuring “bands, speakers, and God.”



On Friday, April 10 ***Time-Out 4 Revelation*** became a reality at Liston Stadium in Baldwin City where a break in the rainy weather started the day off right. Christian bands from across the country, an inspirational speaker from down south, and youth from all over the area came to get a glimpse of God’s beauty revealed. Caleb Green (and friends), from San Diego, California, opened the evening with a folk/alternative sound. Next came New Heights, a rockin’ band from Seattle, Washington, and then Tom & Sherry Green from Lubbock, Texas wowed the crowd with jammin’ bluegrass. The evening ended with The Bypass, from St. Joseph, Missouri, playing a cool alternative set. Prior to the Bypass closing the evening, professional speaker, Zach Skipper, from Birmingham, Alabama, spoke to the crowd about who God is and who you are and how those two answers fit together. Between band sets, Young and Roberts shared their dream with the crowd, encouraging everyone to take time out – even if just for one night – to experience God’s beauty revealed. Young shared her musical talents through original song and Roberts kept the evening light with her comic relief.



In addition to listening to inspiring music and an encouraging speaker, attendees could play freely on the field -- Frisbee and football were most popular. Participants also could enjoy treats from the concession stand or simply take time out to reflect, listen, and “just be” in the *Sacred Space* (marked off by a circle of hurdles in front of the visitors bleachers). Also, a *Prayer Wall* was available for people to write and share their prayers. By the evening’s end, the Prayer Wall (two bed sheets) was completely filled with various joys, praises, and requests.

Roberts and Young are very grateful to their families and the many local businesses and individuals who supported them in order to make their dream of a Senior Mastery Project a reality. Their goal for this event was for people, especially youth, to come together to enjoy an evening of fun and encouragement, and also to inspire those in attendance to grow in their relationships with Christ.

The event hosted about 250 community members.

This is the time of year when many of you are anticipating new pastors and change is imminent. If change does not happen this year, you know at some point it will. The letter below is from Rev. Kathleen K. Whitmore who has been pastoring Overbrook UMC. This is the letter she wrote to her congregation and I asked to share it with you. Kathleen had written another article in an earlier newsletter. It is titled "Home is Where the Bishop Sends," You can find it on our website under archived newsletters, May 2007 (original was April 2005). You all are in my prayers as some of you anticipate change and others reflect on what it means to *Cultivate Christian Growth*. Blessings, Marvé Ralston

Kathleen's Korner By Rev. Kathleen K. Whitmore

Dear Friends:

Several questions have been raised concerning my appointment to Lowman United Methodist Church in Topeka. Did I *ask* to leave Overbrook? Is the Cabinet *making* me leave? Who made the final decision and how was the church brought in on it?

Regrettably, there are no easy answers to any of these questions. The appointment process begins in the local church months before the first announcements are made. The Staff/Parish Relations Committee meets with the pastor to fill out a series of forms that have been designed to help committee members and the pastor evaluate the ministry that is being done; the ministry that needs to be done; and the "fit" between the pastor and the congregation. One of the last questions asked is if the committee believes the pastor should remain for another year. Our Staff/Pastor Relations Committee requested I remain for another year.

Pastors are also required to fill out another set of forms regarding their thoughts on the suitability of their current appointments and conditions they would like considered if change of appointment is made. After being your pastor for eight years I knew there was a possibility of being offered another appointment. If that occurred I was willing to accept the Cabinet's decision. My two concerns however were, (a) Would I be allowed to remain within driving distance of Topeka so Micheal could continue working at his current job and (b) that the new setting offer an opportunity to be involved in a social justice ministry.

In addition to submitting the forms, pastors are also required to meet with their respective District Superintendents. I met with Rev. Ron King in the late fall. After discussing several different areas of our ministry at Overbrook, he asked if I believed that the Leadership Team was strong enough to help move the congregation forward without my involvement. My answer was "yes". While we were just a few months into the new structure, they were very comfortable in the process and in the steps that needed to occur to keep the congregation moving forward. He then asked if, in my opinion, this would be a good year to move. After thinking about it for a while, I responded "yes."

Did I want to leave? Was I hoping for "bigger and better"? The answer to both of those questions is no. Leaving people you have grown to love and respect is never easy. Wanting something "bigger and better" has never been a consideration in any of my moves.

I said yes for two reasons. First, this congregation is ready to move to another level of ministry. By leaving this year it will give the next pastor an opportunity to be involved with a group of laity that are focused, committed and faithful in building a Christ-led/Christ-centered ministry. By coming *this* year, he or she should be here long enough to help this congregation develop the next phase of this program. As an itinerant pastor, I knew the probability of my remaining was limited.

The second reason I said yes was because, as you have heard me state several times in sermons and other group settings, ministry is not about us. It is, instead, about following Christ's will for our personal lives and the life of the church.

This is a belief the Cabinet holds, too. As a result, all appointments are shrouded in prayer. A name is not suggested, a conversation is not begun, and a phone call is not made until guidance from the Holy Spirit has been obtained.

So, if I trust the Cabinet and have faith in the Holy Spirit then I must be willing to go where I am sent. I do not have to understand why and the leaving does not have to be easy. But if the Holy Spirit is at work then God's will is being done.

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May 2009

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	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

May 1st

May Day

May 2nd

Pre-Conference Briefing Ottawa UMC
203 East Fourth, Ottawa, KS

May 3rd

Garnett UMC celebrates 125th Anniversary
Sunday School 9:00 a.m., Church 10:10 a.m.
1:30 p.m. program in the sanctuary

May 10th

Mother's Day

May 16th

Extended Cabinet Spring Party DS in Wichita

May 17th

Baker Graduation Ceremonies beginning at 1:00 p.m.
George F. Collins Jr. Sports and Convention Center

May 25th

Memorial Day District and Conference Offices closed

June 3rd-6th

Kansas East Annual Conference

Reflections from Ron continued from page 1

still be cultivating our own Christian growth in expectation of the wonderful things that God has in store for us?

“Sow for yourselves righteousness; reap steadfast love; break up your fallow ground; for it is time to seek the Lord, that he may come and rain righteousness upon you.”

Hosea 10:12

Agape and shalom

Ron

Voices of Spring concert set for May 3

Baldwin City, Kan. — Under the direction of John Buehler, professor and chair of the music department, Baker University’s choirs will perform at the Voices of Spring concert at 7:30 p.m., Sunday, May 3, at First United Methodist Church in Baldwin City.

The University Singers will perform French choral music; the Concert Choir will sing a variety of pieces, including Schubert’s Mass in G; and the Chamber Singers will perform madrigals and jazz pieces. Buehler and his wife, Susan Buehler, associate professor of music, will retire at the end of the academic year. Susan will perform on the piano at the concert.

Help Wanted

Church musicians wanted: organist with skills to match a 17-rank pipe organ, and choral accompanist, or one versatile person who can do both. Contact Rev. Jim Hopwood, Paola United Methodist Church; revjhopwood@gmail.com, phone (913) 706-8133.

Clergy Birthdays

Gary Merritt	5/09
Felix Burrows Sr.	5/11
Maria Campbell	5/12
Richard Fitzgerald	5/19
Gary Gooding	5/30

District Prayer Calendar

May 3	Plum Creek Rev. Beth Hodgson
May 10	Iola Calvary-Salem Rev. Gene McIntosh
May 17	Melvern-Quenemo Rev. Jim Stigall
May 24	Michigan Valley Rev. Nancy Brown
May 31	Fulton Rev. Charles Russell

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District Superintendent: Rev. Ronald King

Administrative Assistant, Newsletter editor

Marvé Ralston

**We're on the web at
www.fiveriversdistrict.com**

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For almost eight years, members of this congregation have blessed my life. You have supported my family and I. You have surrounded us with love. You have celebrated with us as our family grew to include a husband, grandchildren, son and daughter-in-laws. You were there when my brother died and other personal tragedies occurred. We will never forget you and we will always love you.

Thank you for allowing us to be a part of your lives, too. It has been an honor and a privilege. If I have hurt you in anyway, please accept my apology. If something I said or did brought you comfort, give God the honor and glory.

You all have touched our lives and we will never be the same again. But the Holy Spirit has spoken. It is time to move on. So we'll keep on believing. We'll keep on trusting. Most importantly, we will continue ministering in His holy name.

See You in Church,
Rev. Kathleen Whitmore
Overbrook UMC