

Living Waters

Our District Mission is to cultivate Christian discipleship and strengthen the connection of the United Methodist Church in the Five Rivers District

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Reflections From Ron

Hello Colleagues and friends ...

It's May. Now's the time people are getting ready to plant their gardens. I've already seen neighbors breaking up the ground, putting down the fertilizer and compost. I may even put out a few tomato plants this year myself. Just the thought of getting my lips wrapped around some red, ripe, juicy tomatoes makes my mouth water. But, they won't come easy. Some work is going to have to be done before any fruit will be found on any tomato plants that I've planted. Even after the planting, there is the daily nurturing to protect them from the spring hail storms, bugs insects and those pesky "wabbits."

Let's shift for a moment from the gardens of tomatoes, peas, fruits and other spring vegetables to the garden of Christ's church where

each year our goal is to plant the seed of Christ in the hearts of those who have not heard of Jesus. *Do you remember the parable of the sower?* And just because we plant the seed, doesn't mean that we can then abandon the plant to the ravages of the world. It takes cultivation — fertilizing the soil, feeding and watering the plant, caring for the plant in ways that the "insects, bugs and pesky wabbits of life" don't come in and destroy what promises to be a fruitful harvest.

If you haven't figured it out, what I'm talking about is "cultivating Christian discipleship" in the community of our local churches. What's your plan for a harvest at harvest time? Do you have a plan? And if you don't have a plan, then what kind of fruit do you think will be produced from your garden?

The mission of the Five Rivers District is to: *"Cultivate Christian discipleship and strengthen the connection of United Methodist Churches in the Five Rivers District."* In our recent district clergy gathering it was indicated by some of you that what others were doing to cultivate discipleship in their gardens might be worth sharing. I'm excited about the possibilities of getting together and doing just that so that our gardens — the gardens of disciples in the United Methodist Church on the Five Rivers District may be strong, healthy, vibrant, and filled with the fruit of the Holy Spirit.

Agape and Shalom,
Ron



Home is Where the Bishop Sends Us

By Rev. Kathleen Ketchell Ferris (*reprinted from April 2005*)

The sign read: Home Is Where the Bishop Sends Us. As a young, idealistic seminarian looking forward to that first full time appointment, I viewed this message as an invitation to adventure.

That was sixteen years and five appointments ago. During that time I have served churches in three of this conference's five districts. In each of those five appointments I have been "the first" - the first female pastor, the first divorced pastor, or the first single parent pastor.

Congregations have not always been pleased with the Cabinet's decision to appoint me as their pastor. Some have watched as family members and friends left the church with a vow to never return. Others have withstood the ridicule, and sometimes cruel humor, of faith communities that oppose the ordination of females and/or condemn those who are divorced. Yet, during those first few months when our feelings were raw, and emotions high, amazing thing happened. With God's help, we learned to listen and pray for each other. In doing so, the Holy Spirit was able to move in our midst and a shared ministry began to take shape.

As our ministries progressed, gender and marital status became non-issues. Congregational members learned to trust my leadership while I, in return, grew to appreciate the many and varied gifts they possessed. In the end, it was the very congregations I would have never chosen to serve on my own that developed the most creative ministries, asked the toughest questions and demanded the highest commitment of their own members.

But regardless of the work that was being done and ministries that were being offered, we all knew the next phone call would come...the next appointment would be made. And those who protested my coming were the second ones to protest my leaving.

So, who were the first ones to protest when the call came and the moving boxes appeared? Two young daughters who never fully understood why they were so blessed to be the offspring of an itinerant pastor! And, oh, the stories they can tell! There were parishioners who became surrogate parents and grandparents; who willingly filled in when I was out of town or when both daughters were in separate events twenty miles apart. These were people they learned to love and to trust; the people they never wanted to say good bye to.

Yet, it seemed to them we were always packing our boxes and saying good-bye. Five different appointments meant five different school systems and that is not counting the school they attended while I was in seminary. We moved the summer before my oldest daughter's senior year in high school. The following year, on the morning of her graduation, Michelle listened as a member of the P.P.R. Committee stood in the pulpit and announced we were being moved the following month. The reception that was scheduled

At our house after graduation was filled with tears and disbelief as parishioners and town folk wrestled with the news.

That fall, Michelle left for college and my youngest daughter, Nichole, began classes at the third, and thankfully last, high school she would attend. We were now four hours away from our closest family member and *she* was without her sister, her best friend and closest confidant.

That was eight years and one appointment ago. Both girls have graduated from Emporia State and have established promising careers of their own. Michelle is the mother of a beautiful almost two year old. A few weeks ago I officiated at Nichole's wedding and rejoice in this new adventure she has embarked upon. Obviously our lives have moved on and my daughters have grown up! Yet, every year somewhere around February the inevitable request is always made: "Mom if the D.S. calls will you please hang up the phone?!"

We know someday the call will come and "our" next appointment will be made. When it comes "we" will respond with both joy and sorrow for we are well acquainted with both the pain of leaving and the excitement of new beginnings. Likewise, during the past eighteen years, we have learned some very important lessons. First, God does work through this thing called the itinerancy and if only we trust in the Holy Spirit's guidance there will be blessings, challenges, and adventures where we are sent. Second, we have lived through the best... and the worst...this system has to offer. Yet we also know with enough love, support, understanding, and humor there is a new home wherever, and whenever, the Bishop sends us.

Friends: When this first was printed in the newsletter I was just learning about itinerancy and how it works in the Methodist Church. We will greatly miss pastors that will be moving out of our District, while realizing that it is all part of the plan. We also acknowledge the discomfort this causes the congregations and pastors as they adapt to the changes. You are in our prayers.

District Calendar

May 2nd	DS in Wichita for Cabinet Meeting
May 5th	Pre-Conference Briefing Ottawa First at 2:00 p.m.
May 9th	KE BOPM Disciplinary Questions
May 14th	District Council on Youth Ministry Meeting 6:00-8:00 p.m.
May 16th	DS attending Healthy Lifestyles Workshop in Wichita
May 17th	Cabinet Incubator

One Church, Two Campuses

Lawrence 1st is blessed with two completely different facilities. The members there have the choice of where to worship within their church community. Their original building which is on the east side of Lawrence and the downtown area, remains the church home to some. It has a beautiful classic sanctuary complete with a pipe organ. This original building with all its rich history, made some members slow to open up to the idea of an added campus on the west side fearing they would lose the older facility that sits at the heart of downtown Lawrence.

Their newest building is very contemporary with a lot of massive windows overlooking native prairie grass and the city of Lawrence. It is a cleverly designed and functioning building that seems to fit with its woodland environment. The new location is all one level and has met all the building standards for handicapped accessibility. Located on the west side of Lawrence, six miles from the original building, it is situated on approximately 45 acres with a 2/3 mile walking trail, softball field, soccer field, and a wonderful, fully equipped playground. The property itself has three ponds and several native wetland areas. There was careful attention to environmental details as the parking lot and building were planned to protect the wetlands and the natural prairie areas.

The architect for this undertaking has been Gould Evans. The land is paid for completely, due to help from the Kansas East Conference who gave a generous sum of 750,000. and the sale of part of the land originally purchased which provided the additional 950,000. needed. This gave them additional borrowing power on the 3.4 million dollar facility which is in its second year of fund raising for their capital campaign. The additional 20 acres originally purchased were sold to church members who formed an LLC company and has restrictions on what can be built near the church facilities. They moved into the building last August 13th. It was consecrated on September 10th, 2006.

The senior pastor Rev. Dr. Tom Brady and the associate pastor Rev. Barb Clinger, share responsibilities at both facilities. They rotate between the churches, never preaching more than three Sundays in a row at one location. There is an office at the new worship center which is shared by both pastors. There is more informality at the new campus with tables in the worship center for families to sit with their children. Rev. Clinger added that it was neat to see several generations of families all sitting and having fellowship together. The tables lend themselves to conversation more than the typical pews. The chairs are easy to move and fully padded.

Careful planning was needed to provide functionality of the multi-purpose worship center. It takes four people each Sunday using several diagrams to get the worship center set up with tables and chairs for services. The sound system has its own cart to be moved into the worship center and locked up when needed. Several days a week the Worship Center has open gym night and allows free use of the basketball court to the community.

There is a large nursery/toddler room complete with a toddler bathroom. They have the ability to move the shelving units to provide more space for infants or toddlers depending on what is needed. The flexibility of additional Sunday School classrooms is seen in the massive, movable walls that can change the space to fit the use of the groups changing sizes. Another benefit to the community is the current Mother's Day Out program that is open two days a week and the newly developed Pre-School Program that already is maxed out at 150 children enrolled for next fall with a waiting list.

In addition to moving into the new building in 2006, it should be noted that Lawrence 1st *apportionment giving increased by 47% over 2005. They were able to meet their apportionments at 100%. We rejoice with this fellowship of believers in their successful blending of the old and the new. Please remember Rev. Dr. Tom Brady and Rev. Barb Clinger as well as this thriving congregation in your prayers as they continually seek out God's further plans for them.

*For more information on what apportionment giving is used for we would be happy to mail you a brochure provided by the East Conference. Just call or e-mail your request to the Five Rivers District at 785-594-4804 or fiverivers@embarqmail.com.



Left to right: Rev. Barb Clinger, Associate Pastor, Sarah Merriman, Trustee and Construction Site Manager, Rev. Tom Brady, Senior Pastor, Tracy Kihm, Church Business Administrator

Birthdays

May 1st	Lonnie Bailey
May 12th	Maria Campbell
May 30th	Gary Gooding

Anniversaries

May 4th	Ed and Janith English
May 9th	David and Pam Morrison
May 22nd	Lonnie and Charlene Bailey

Five Rivers District Office

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@mchsi.com

Hours: Mon.-Thurs. 8:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.
1:00 p.m.-4:00 p.m.

Kansas Bishop: Dr. Scott Jones
District Superintendent: Rev. Ron King
Admn. Assistant, Newsletter Editor: Marvé Ralston

Lawrence 1st West Campus Worship Center



West Campus View from 10 HWY



Rev. Tom Brady in the Multi-Purpose Worship Center



Lawrence 1st UMC playground overlooking the 2/3 mile walking trail



Lawrence 1st West Campus Facility. The massive windows have a large, light blocking blind that adds to the functionality of the spacious multi purpose center.