

Living Water

a quarterly newsletter for

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Five Rivers District

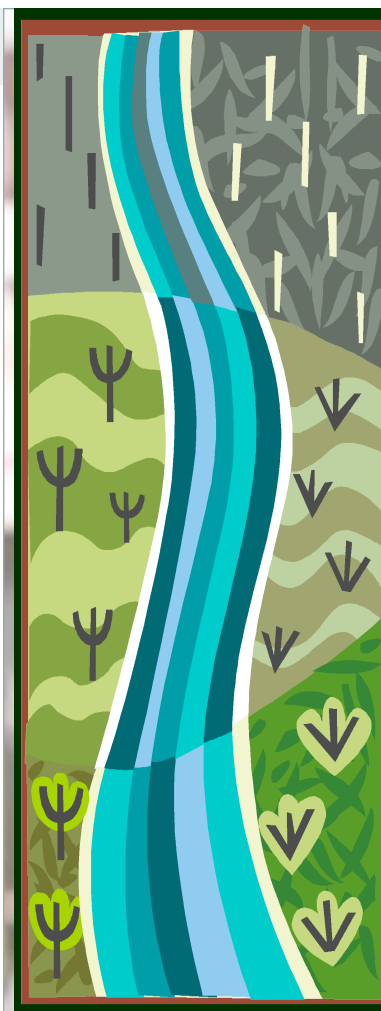
From the District Superintendent:

As we near the feasting season of the year, we in the church hear again the biblical texts anticipating Christ's return as Lord of all. The great festival of Christ the King is how the church year comes to a climactic close—with its reminders of the world transformed into God's reign of love and light. Amen! Come, Lord Jesus!

But that's a far cry from what we often hear about Christ's return. The message shouted by the prophets of doom and gloom is that Jesus can't wait till this old world hits rock bottom so he can rend the heavens and come down and spank us. And while that may sell books and bad B-movies, it just isn't what the Bible teaches. The Bible teaches that, rather than waiting for the world to get worse, God is waiting for it to get better! That if there is a reason for delaying the final "feast" (to use that old biblical language), it has everything to do with God's patience, not God's pique. When Christ returns it will be to present planet earth—fully redeemed and fully restored—back to God again; and to say to the stewards who have been getting it ready: "Good job. Well done. Now let's have a really big party and celebrate!"

I read an interview years ago with Gardner Taylor, the great preacher and pastor of Concord Baptist Church of Christ in Brooklyn, NY. In it, he said that there is a theme which runs the entire course of the Bible—"a scarlet thread," he called it—which connects the entire story. You know what it is? "God is out to get back what belongs to him." I love that. "God is out to get back what belongs to him." And I believe God is still doing it today.

Now, why haven't we been shouting **THAT** as we get closer to Christ's return? When we see evidence of God messing around in this old world—getting it ready for Jesus—why don't we proclaim it as **good** news? You see, our job as the church is not simply to point out to the naughty people what they're doing wrong (although we should and must do that), it's also to point out what people are doing **RIGHT**—and to recognize God's hand in that right behavior too. (continued on page 2)



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Marve' Ralston

I'll never forget this story told by one of my seminary professors:

"When I was first teaching in seminary," he said, "in one of our evangelism classes, we were looking at ways in which we could make into good news things that we could see God doing, but which other people could not necessarily see. In other words, to sniff out what God was doing and make sure everyone knew about it. And one of the exercises we did was to write a letter to some construction workers in Chicago. The reason was that the Chicago Sun-Times had carried a story about a young girl of eight who had leukemia and was hospitalized. But every morning she would sit on her window ledge at the 8th floor and take fresh air. They were building a new wing across the way, and before long, there was a full-blown flirtation going on between the construction workers and this little girl. And when she died....they stopped work. They closed the place down. And the biggest wreath at the funeral was: 'From your boyfriends across the way.'"

"Well, the class wrote," he said. "Sent it to the Chicago paper which passed it on to the construction workers. And basically the letter said this: 'You don't know who we are. We're some people training to be ministers of the church. But the message that we are learning is: That one day the whole world will behave like you've just behaved toward this little girl. And we want to thank you for showing us the way.'"

"Well, we got a letter back, several weeks later. And clearly, this had absolutely made those construction workers thunderstruck. 'WE are showing the way to this planet becoming the kingdom of God? Good grief, all we did was something kind!' EXACTLY! Why are we not pointing to all these things going on and saying: 'We're closer to Christ's return!'?"

My professor concluded by saying:

"Suppose every congregation in the country did something like that? For instance, suppose every congregation wrote to every politician within their constituency—not to say what a rotten job you're doing—but rather to say: 'On this and this and this and this you've brought us closer to the return of Jesus Christ. Thank you. Good work. Hang in there!' Maybe that would change some of the complexion of our politics....and ultimately, of our world."

Wouldn't that be something? Just suppose we behaved as though the kingdom of God were already here--what a difference it would make. Suppose kindness truly became king. Suppose treating others as we want to be treated was not just the golden rule, but the rule of thumb? Suppose we....well...."clothed the naked, fed the hungry, gave water to the thirsty, welcomed the stranger, cared for the sick, visited the prisoners"—just as Jesus told us to—we would be living as though the kingdom had already come. And so it would. So it would.

There is an ancient Jewish tradition which claims that if all Jews would observe the Law in its totality for one day.....then Messiah would come.

Well I don't know about that. But what if **we** behaved as if God's kingdom were already here—as if God was really in charge? Before you know it, the job would be finished. And the feast would begin!

Serving together,

David Watson
Five Rivers and Parsons District Superintendent

Five Rivers District Calendar:

Dec. 3, Active Shooter training, Chapel Hill UMC, 1550 N. Chapel Hill Drive, Wichita

Will also be livestreamed. Advanced registration is requested at <https://gp-reg.brtapp.com/activeshootertraining>

Dec. 11-13, Cabinet, DS is in Wichita

Dec. 19– Jan. 2nd DS is on vacation, Bruce Emmert, KC District is on call for him

Dec. 25-Jan. 2nd 5 Rivers District office is closed for the holidays

Jan. 7th, after morning worship, Lawrence 1st Church Conference at downtown location

Jan. 7th, 4 p.m. Epiphany for 5R Clergy, at Chanute 1st UMC 4:00 p.m.

Jan. 12-16 Cabinet, DS is in Kearney, NE

Jan. 17-19 Orders and Fellowship in Kearney, NE ~ Transformational & Entrepreneurial Stewardship

Register by Jan. 2nd to avoid 25.00 late fee. www.greatplainsumc.org/O&F

Jan. 31– Feb. 2 Continuing DS Group, DS is in Austin, TX

Festival of Nativities at Centenary UMC, 245 North 4th St., Lawrence, KS

For over 30 years we have opened the doors of Centenary United Methodist Church on the weekends in December to celebrate the true meaning of Christmas with the Festival of Nativities. We have over 400 nativities in our collection. Please join us:

Dec. 2-3 12:00-4:00 p.m.

Dec. 9-10 12:00-4:00 p.m.

Dec. 16-17 12:00-4:00 p.m.

Dec. 23 12:00-4:00 p.m.

Dec. 30 12:00-4:00 p.m.

You are invited to visit the Treats or Treasurer Shop for homemade cookies, candies, and other holiday and gift items. Donations appreciated.

Clearfield German Fest, Clearfield UMC, 597 E 2200th Rd, Eudora, KS

Dec. 9th, 4-7 p.m. German Christmas Celebration, Food 4-6 p.m. , Entertainment. Bake Sale and Crafts. Last but not least, authentic German Christmas tree. Free Will Offering

Vinland UMC ~ Live Musical Benefit Concert for “Ember Hope” formerly Youthville

Saturday, Dec. 2, 2017, Dinner from 5:30 to 6:30 p.m., Concert at 7 p.m.

Vinland UMC

1724 N 692 Rd, Vinland, KS call 785-594-3568 for more information

Five Rivers Flood Bucket Challenge Results:

We are a very Missions oriented district. Thanks to all that worked hard to help reach this goal!



Lyndon UMC flood buckets

**Five Rivers
District totals:
313 actual
buckets,
29,892.21 cash
sent to
UMCOR, this
amounts to 772
buckets!**



Fab Five Fall Festival 9.30.17

Worden UMC was the location for this year's Fab Five Fall Festival event. This year we had a workshop lead by Rev. George Bullard. Rev. Bullard's most recent book is, *Captured By Vision: 101 insights to Empower Your Congregation*.

His vision is to use his spiritual and strategic giftedness to empower congregations and congregational champions to fulfill their vision for Kingdom growth.

Thanks to Worden UMW for a wonderful lunch.

If you missed this presentation, you can find Rev. Bullard's books on Amazon. He also blogs at: www.BullardJournal.org



Happy Anniversary

David and Carolyn Epps celebrated their 50th Wedding Anniversary on June 10th, with a reception at Prescott UMC, their home church.

Happy 50th Anniversary to the Epps!

June 10, 1967



Leave it at the Cross ~ Project Revolution 2017 by Marvé Ralston



What motivates a group of youth to come together every year, meet at least 6 times, amid all kinds of their own activities, and work on planning a lock-in and concert for their peers? It's not money, fame, prestige, or much of what the world has to offer. It is the love of their fellow teens. To introduce Jesus to their peers, and hopefully steer them towards, a relationship with Him. Our group of youth that take this on each year, are the D.C.Y.M. (District Council on Youth Ministry) of Five Rivers Dis-

trict.

This year's Project Revolution (the name chosen by the 1st group of youth in 2008, for the youth Lock-In and Rally) was another testament to that love generated work. It was Five Rivers District's 10th year to hold this event. We have averaged around 100 youth every year in attendance. This year we opened attendance to Parsons District, and had a group attend with their youth coordinators. There are youth that have been attending since they were in 6th grade and gradually work their way into leadership positions on our D.C.Y.M.

Of course it also takes dedicated adults to help modulate the discussions and keep things on track, but by and far, the group are youth-led. Every year they elect a president, vice-president, secretary and chaplain. These officers are usually junior and seniors in High School. They can be depended on to lead, plan, send out minutes, and invitations to the others. At the end of the year, it is so easy to write letters of recommendation for them, they "shine." They show up, and lead by example to the younger youth that are new to D.C.Y.M.

Leave it at the Cross, was this year's theme for our rally. The theme and a scripture that goes with it, is one of the first things the D.C.Y.M. work on. Then they come up with a t-shirt design, find a band within their budget, plan worship, games, and develop a food committee. This usually involves breaking into groups. Everyone on the committee is needed and their "super powers" are utilized. Naturally we have parent "volunteers" that help as well. It takes a lot of folks to help with the barbecue dinner, cleanup, and supervision of that many youth.

Friends are made, honest and life changing testimonies are given. The bands are different every year but all have some faith based songs. This year's band was ***The Perks***. They also helped with the transition from "live concert" mode, to our more serious, worship time. Some years are better than others, with regards to sleep. But lives are always changed. We end the weekend after worship the next morning, in a circle of prayer outside the church. Many of these same youth go on to attend a Great Plains youth activity like The One Event in January, and/or Institute at Baker University the following summer.

It is with a heart of gratitude, that I thank the adults responsible for supervising this group and being our D.C.Y.M. Adult Coordinators, Tami Clark (Lawrence 1st Youth Coordinator),

Richard Croll (Burlington Youth Coordinator) and Eva Durand (Baldwin 1st Youth Coordinator). Along with each group of 1-6 youth, we require a Safe Gatherings certified adult sponsor, these parents, and local church members/pastors are invaluable to this group, thank you! Lawrence 1st West Campus has been the host for 8 years, and Worden UMC hosted us twice. We thank them as well! We also thank our local churches that have donated financially to this group through the years. This truly is a 5R ministry we all can be proud of.

Want to know more about events for Great Plains youth?
<http://www.greatplainsumc.org/youth>



Sharing our meal of barbecue hamburgers and hotdogs outside. Thanks to Lonnie Ralston and Rev. Kevin Hopkins for grilling this year for our group.





Youth led, outside activities are just one facet of Project Revolution. That combined with a live concert, barbecue dinner, stellar worship and a different theme and t-shirt yearly, help make this event successful.



“Cast your burden on the Lord—he will support you! God will never let the righteous be shaken!” Psalms 55:22 This years scripture for our theme, *Leave it at the Cross*.



The **Perks** were the band chosen by this year's D.C.Y.M. they artfully led into our worship after their performance. Band members are Russ Durand, Peyton Durand, Megann Lawrenz, and Shannon Roberts.

Mission Share Deadline

All 2017 remittances must be postmarked on or before **January 8, 2018**. **Remittance sent after January 1 must clearly be marked with "December 2017" if you are remitting 2017 money.** Money postmarked after January 8th will be considered 2018 money regardless of how the remittance is marked. Tips for submitting final payment:

Verify that the total of your remittance form and the check amount agree.

Make check payable to GREAT PLAINS CONFERENCE and mail it along with a remittance form to PO Box 4837, Topeka, KS 66604. Do not include benefit payments in this mailing as they go to a different PO Box.

If you are unable to meet the mailing deadline contact the office in Topeka (877-972-9111) to authorize a one-time automatic debit out of your church account. You must turn in the ACH withdrawal form no later than 10 a.m. January 8th to ensure the payment is received at the bank by the deadline.

Mission Share letters for 2018 are already posted on the website at <http://www.greatplainsumc.org/statementsremittanceforms>. Remittance forms for 2018 will be loaded to the website January 9, 2018 after 2017 remittances close.

THE OTTAWA FUMC STREET WALKERS

The Ottawa UMC Street Walkers have found a way to exercise both their bodies and souls while helping Ottawa First UMC become a more visible presence in their community. The object of the group is to simply walk around the various neighborhoods within Ottawa while stopping to visit with some, pick up trash for others and simply pray for those who live in the area. Families are encouraged to participate together so everyone can get physically and spiritually fit. The first session was Sunday, October 8th and some community members were so excited when they heard about the program while listening to the service on the radio that they got in their car and looked for the group around town.



Centered Living Calendar

Looking for something to give that is unique this Christmas? Pastor Jada Hodgson, Plum Creek UMC has teamed up with Claire Smith to produce a inspirational photo calendar.

- Inspirational photos
- Monthly themes
- Monthly reflections and prayers
- Weekly planning guide
- Daily planner
- Sabbath/Extra note pages

You need to pre-order by Nov. 26, 2017 if interested. Check them out at the below address.

<http://SurrenderInPrayer.Com>

Lay Servant Blog by David Wasserfallen, Registrar 5R LSM

Feeling a bit under-utilized? Looking for something to do? Want new ideas for service?

We have this cat, (well, actually, my step-daughter has) that is in the habit of coming in wherever I am, several times a day, and either jumping up on my lap or laying down beside me within easy reach. When I rub him, he sounds as if he'd swallowed a chain-saw and looks up at me with such gratitude in his eyes that I can't help but keep rubbing him—usually longer than I really want to.

Every Tuesday morning I go over to the local retirement center and lead a Bible class called Bible Trivia, based on a couple of books by J. Stephen Lang. I pass out a couple of dozen questions for the next week, and we go over the questions from the last week. The eight to ten “regulars” have repeatedly assured me that it's not the 10-15 minutes we spend answering last week's questions they enjoy, as much as the fact that they have something to do during the week—and they've gotten quite good at it.

Every week when I leave that class, they make sure to tell me how much they appreciate what I'm doing—and I think of that cat.

The difference of course, is that people are not cats...



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PLEASE
PLACE
STAMP
HERE