



Wesleyan welcomes Annual Conference

New day of mission event planned

As God has loved me, so I have loved you. Live on in my love.

John 15:9

“Live On in me: Gracious Generosity” is the theme for the 2010 Annual Conference Session, scheduled for June 9-12, at Nebraska Wesleyan University (NWU) in Lincoln. Gracious generosity is one of the Nebraska Conference’s six signs, expressing our vision as we work toward our mission to make disciples for the transformation of the world.

This year there will be a new event for lay and clergy members of the Annual Conference called “The Church Has Left the Building.” This day of mission



work will take place on Thursday. There will be two featured speakers this year: Bishop Arthur F. Kulah, Nigeria Annual Conference, and Dr. Clif Christopher, stewardship consultant and author.

We are also pleased to be returning to the Nebraska Wesleyan campus this year; the last time Annual Conference was held at NWU was 2001. Through the gracious welcome of the administration and staff, we will have a comfortable meeting

See **Live On**, p. 5



PHOTO BY PAULETTA LEHN

The participants of Nebraska Wesleyan University’s spring 2010 “Give Me Your Hand” service learning trip to Washington, D.C., display a show of unity in front of the Washington Monument. Read more about the trip on p. 4.

Nebraska Messenger downsizes, new look

Funding plan no longer supports six annual issues

By Kathryn Witte
Communications director

The 2010 budget is being funded at 80 percent and is impacting the production of “The Nebraska Messenger” in significant ways. Beginning with this edition The Messenger will take on a smaller format as well as begin a quarterly print schedule. The next edition will have an October issue date. This edition is the third in 2010. The funding plan percentage was announced well into the 2010 year, making it

difficult to make final budget and scheduling decisions.

Early last year the paper reduced its paper quality and only printed color on half as many pages. While it saved about \$1000 per issue, it was not enough to withstand additional 2010 funding reductions. A current effort is underway to ensure the quality of the distribution list. Pastors have been sent the list of members of their congregations receiving the paper and have been asked to review them and notify us of any names that ought to be removed.

Additionally, Nebraska United Methodists are invited to take advantage of the online version posted on the Web site at www.umcneb.org. The “sticky”

note on the front of this edition is intended to motivate folks to move to the online version. Those who choose the online version will get an e-mail announcing each edition’s posting to the Web site and a link.

Investigations into offering a subscription based newspaper have been explored. The recommendation has been not to go in that direction because of additional costs in running a subscription service and the overhead it creates. In most cases, a move to paid subscriptions has reduced circulation drastically, defeating the purpose of the publication, which is to reach all United Methodists in Nebraska with news and information that

See **New Look**, p. 6

If you would prefer to receive “The Nebraska Messenger” via e-mail or to read it online at www.umcneb.org, please contact rdelisi@umcneb.org or call 402-464-5994, ext. 107, to stop the delivery of your mailed paper copy of “The Nebraska Messenger.”

We appreciate your help in saving some trees.



From the Bishop

Annual Conference lets us grow from 'True Vine'

As God has loved me, so I have loved you. Live on in my love." John 15:9. So speaks Jesus after he tells the parable of the vine and the branches. Jesus is the true vine and we are the branches, given love and life through him. Jesus invites his disciples in all times and places to live on in this love, letting it grow in us. We are gifted through Christ with a love that transforms us and enables us to transform the world.

Annual Conference in Nebraska, June 8-12, 2010, is a celebration of



Bishop Ann Brookshire Sherer-Simpson

the love and grace God offers us through Christ. As you prepare for Annual

Conference, please pray we will have a growing openness to the love and grace God is nurturing deep within us. We can be a fruitful people because God is working in and through us.

Cliff Christopher, one of our Annual Conference speakers, will offer us ways to see how God is deepening our capacities to give ourselves and all that we are and have away, even as God in Christ has given God's self for us. There are no boundaries to God's loving capacity to be self-giving. As we stay close in prayer, worship and service to the True Vine, God's grace and love infuses us. Gracious self-giving flows from us as God lives in us, creating the capacity for gracious generosity of life, time and resources.

Bishop Arthur Kulah, resident bishop in the three Nigerian Conferences, will help us see and know some of the other branches of the vine with whom we are connected through Christ and The United Methodist Church. The witness of our brothers and sisters in Nigeria, who in the midst of violence and poverty, find life and hope through Christ and Christian community, inspires and enlivens us. What a privilege to be in community with these brothers and sisters and to have an opportunity to make a difference in each other's lives. These relationships are a gift of God and flow from the True Vine.

On Thursday the church leaves the building. A young person from Ord and I were working together at a Big Garden

site in Omaha. She said, "My grandmother says the church is what is left when the building burns down." How insightful she is! We are grateful for resources like a building, but what makes us who we are is our relationship to Christ, one another, and God's mission in the world. What a blessing it will be to join God in ministry to those beyond our walls. We follow the example of Jesus who met people where they were in life: the impoverished, the sick, the troubled, the person going about his or her work and life. Jesus shared grace, hope, love, healing and relationship. The risen Christ continues this work and invites us to share this world-transforming mission.

As Annual Conference adjourns on June 12, we go forth to our churches and mission fields across the state, as well as around the world. Pastoral leaders are officially deployed. It is my prayer that these leaders, and the local churches they serve, will team up and live on in God's love, joining God in God's mission to redeem and restore all creation.

May the grace and love of God, made known and available through Christ Jesus be with you.

Ann B. Sherer-Simpson
Resident Bishop
Nebraska Area
United Methodist Church

ON FAITH AND POLITICS

Note: Sen. Lowen Kruse served in the Nebraska Legislature from 2001-09 and is also a retired United Methodist minister. We have asked him to share ideas on how persons of faith can effectively discuss difficult issues and affect important community decisions.

Who is un-Christian?

In the legislature we count only the "yes" votes. My committee required five votes to get something out to the floor, even if there were only five senators there that day. Five hands was a go, debate over.

Apply this to a church or community; if a good idea is laying around, with no serious objection and only a few to push it, how many persons does it take to do that job? That many hands is a go, without judging the rest.

A common distraction for a senator is the person who knows what God wants you to do. Naturally, the "news" is also the person's adamant conviction. That attitude distracts from the issue at hand because it does not invite discussion. "This is what God thinks." Oh. Whimsically, I wonder if God even has to think, like we do. And is this the lone voice for God?

The classic case in my office was the fellow who e-mailed that it was obvious that I do not obey God, do not believe in scripture and do not support morality. Also obvious, that all senators ignore scripture.

How does he know this without knowing or speaking with a single one of us? We have not executed all prisoners. Well...

My first thought: That would solve our budget crisis. Prisons are very expensive. However, I was curious, as it did not fit my understanding of God. He found a verse of scripture that children should obey their parents, and a totally unrelated verse that said a parent has the right to kill a disobedient child. All prisoners have disobeyed their parents. Therefore, execute them on behalf of their parents. His verse, Colossians 3:20, plus the following, actually is quite profound in how families care. He picks his verses and ignores the rest of the Bible.

Complaints in an adult class, letters to the editor and comments over coffee will often declare someone to be un-Christian because they believe such and so. Frankly, that is ridiculous. Not one of us knows another person that well. Plus, scripture makes much of diversity of thought. Selected scripture is so supportive of slavery, for example, that sincere Christians were not able to make a clear opposing case using all of scripture. That was a major factor in the Civil War, which killed more troops than all our wars combined. Could we discuss morality?

When we develop a strong opinion we can search for verses to support it. We then are likely to take the verse out of context, which is a critical part of its meaning, and skip over passages that provide another point of view. Slamming a believer hurts us all, badly. The more thought and respect we bring to the discussion, the more we build up Christian faith.

DEATH NOTICES

Keith E. Bruning, 94, a Nebraska Conference clergy member, died April 12, 2010.

He is survived by his wife Marjorie, 1800 14th Ave. #107, Nebraska City, NE 68410; daughters, Maelyn Toelle, Keitha Thomson and Myra Nicolaus; sons, Leslie Bruning and Peter Bruning.

The memorial service was held on April 15 at the First United Methodist Church, 1023 1st, Nebraska City, NE. The Rev. Jeff Kelley officiated. Cremation.

Memorials go to First UMC, 1023 1st, Nebraska City, NE 68410.



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Kathryn Witte, editor: kwitte@umcneb.org
RoxAnn Delisi, circulation: rdelisi@umcneb.org
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Write to us

The Nebraska Messenger welcomes letters from its readers. All letters should be limited to 200 words, signed and include the author's name, address and church affiliation. Letters should address the mission and ministry of the church. Editing and publication of letters are at the discretion of the editor. Letters are the opinion of the writer, and not necessarily that of the Nebraska Conference or of the Nebraska Messenger.

Nebraska Messenger
3333 Landmark Circle
Lincoln, NE 68504
e-mail: kwitte@umcneb.org
fax: (402) 464-6203

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Micah Corps 2010

Interns begin work June 1

“The more I get into God’s Word and learn about missions, I can’t divorce making disciples and helping to transform communities and ultimately, societies.”

— Excerpt from application of **Rebecca Albers**, Micah Corps 2010 intern, member of Aldersgate UMC in Bellevue and soon-to-be graduate of Nebraska Christian College.

Rebecca’s sentiments echo the emphasis of the Micah Corps, the Nebraska United Methodist Conference’s young adult summer internship program.

The Micah Corps is an expression of your Mission Share dollars at work. This 10-week program is centered on faith-building, learning about risk-taking mission and justice, and sharing in local churches throughout the Conference. This Nebraska Conference

Risk-taking Mission and Justice (RTMJ) Ministries internship will begin its second year this summer.

The four other young adults who will join Rebecca this summer are:

Caryn Vincent, a member of York First UMC and student at the University of Nebraska at Kearney.

Lauren Fletcher, of Auburn First UMC and a student at Nebraska Wesleyan University.

Rachel Boellstorff, a member of St. Paul UMC

BLOGROLL

The interns will once again have a blog so you can keep up with their experiences this summer. Check out www.micah-corps.blogspot.com after June 1.

in South Sioux City and a student at Nebraska Wesleyan.

Brian Copely, soon-to-be Nebraska Wesleyan graduate, who attends First UMC in Syracuse when home from college.

If you are interested in having one or more intern share at your church, please contact Carol Windrum, director of RTMJ Ministries, at cwindrum@umcneb.org.

perspectives under 30

By **Zach Anderson**

I find it very easy to get frustrated and depressed when working for social justice. It seems that the work is never ending and the tasks are always big. Also, many times justice work is seen as secondary to other ministries. With all of this going on around us, why do we keep working for justice?

I must admit the answer to this did not come easily to me. I recently returned from the annual Peace with Justice Coordinators Gathering in Washington, D.C., and have found myself rejuvenated to continue the work of justice in the world — the chance to connect with other people. We must remember we are not alone.

So how do we continue on in this work and let others know they are not alone? First off, don’t be afraid to tell others that you are called to justice work. We need to let each other know that



COURTESY PHOTO

Zach Anderson (right) works with other coordinators on a resource for the General Board of Church and Society during the recent Peace with Justice Coordinators Gathering in Washington, D.C.

this is a vital ministry of the church. Second, go to the General Board of Church and Society’s Web site, www.umc-gbcs.org, and sign up for the ‘Faith in Action’ e-mail newsletter and identify that you want to be in the Peace with Justice network. You will begin

to receive action alerts about things you can do that will also be done by people all over our United Methodist connection.

Keep up the work for Peace for Justice and know that you are not alone in this vital ministry!

Zach Anderson is in his third year as a seminary student at Saint Paul School of Theology in Kansas City, Mo. He also serves as associate pastor of the Conestoga Parish in the Blue River District as well as the assistant Peace with Justice coordinator for the Nebraska Annual Conference. Zach grew up in the Wahoo First United Methodist Church and Saint Paul United Methodist Church in Lincoln. He has been a delegate and alternate delegate to General Conference and twice a delegate to Jurisdictional Conference.

Conference wins ‘Voices’ award

Voices for Children in Nebraska hosted its Spotlight Gala event on March 20 at the Embassy Suites in Omaha-LaVista. The evening’s festivities highlighted the organization’s and its stakeholders’ efforts to illuminate the needs of children throughout the state.

The Nebraska Conference was the recipient of the newly created faith-based award for its support of the organization’s mission to improve the lives of all Nebraska children. Nebraska Area Bishop Ann B. Sherer-Simpson and Director of Risk-taking Mission and Justice Ministries the Rev. Carol Windrum accepted the award on behalf of the Conference.

“It was our pleasure and honor to receive

Voices for Children’s first faith-based award on behalf of our Conference,” Windrum said. “So many persons within our United Methodist family in Nebraska deserved to be standing with us because of their tireless advocacy for better foster care, affordable and safe child care, access to health insurance for children from low-income families and other important issues.”

The relationship between Voices and the Conference continues as two Micah Corps interns will work with the organization this summer. For more information about Voices for Children, visit their Web site at voicesforchildren.com.

NOTES

PEACE WITH JUSTICE

Celebrate Peace with Justice Sunday on May 30. The offering received supports God’s shalom work within Nebraska (50%) and beyond. For worship resources and offering envelopes, visit www.umcgiving.org and click on Special Sundays.

COME TO THE HILL II

Jim Winkler, general secretary of the General Board of Church and Society, will share in leadership at the Come to the Hill II conference event at Camp Comeca, Sept. 30-Oct. 2, 2010. Mark your calendars and look for more details on the RTMJ Web page at www.umcneb.org/ministries/RTMJ/RTMJ.htm

HOLLYWOOD COMES TO RAVENNA IN JULY

Film crews will be busy filming “The Boarder” in Ravenna this July, and members of Ravenna UMC are preparing to offer the gift of hospitality.

The movie is based on Jane Ryan’s book by the same title about families with children who were traumatized while in their

mother’s womb, or during the early months of infancy, leading to a little understood mental disorder called Reactive Attachment Disorder.

Ravenna UMC staunchly believes in this cause and hosts bi-monthly meetings for supporters and helps generate community interest and involvement. Read the rest of the story at www.umcneb.org.

ONLINE



Learn more about Risk-taking and Justice Ministries at www.umcneb.org/ministries/RTMJ/RTMJ.htm

You can also search for our page on Facebook.

Soap, towels and General Assembly



By Louise Niemann
UMW president

United Methodists from Iowa and Nebraska collected 17,000

health kits, which headed to Sager Brown, La., in February. This emergency response was directed to the Haitians who were devastated by the earthquake. United Methodist Women are steadfast promoters and preparers of UMCOR supply kits, which provide basic necessities following a catastrophe.

United Methodist Women are in mission every day, knowing there are women, men, children and youth who are in crisis every minute. Due to these circumstances, there are people who lack essential everyday items. UMCOR has designed supply kits to help meet those basic needs. Directions for making bedding kits, birthing kits, layette kits, school kits and sewing kits can be found at the UMCOR Web site, www.umcor.org, under "How to Give."

We encourage everyone to join the effort in collecting these basic necessities. All of these supply kits will be accepted at Annual Conference in Lincoln on June 9-12. The session is being held at Nebraska Wesleyan University.

ASSEMBLY

The United Methodist Women General Assembly was held in St. Louis, Mo., April 30 - May 2. This assembly gathers every four years and the women celebrate, lift up and learn ways to help their communities work together in mission. Tens of thousands of women have been meeting in assembly since 1942 to help improve the lives of women, youth and children.

The Nebraska Conference United Methodist Women had 93 attendees from across the state. Included were five scholarship winners: Brenda Bland, Lincoln; Lisa Maupin, Omaha; Jessica Mews, Omaha; Erin Outson, Lincoln; Karen Stevens, Haigler; and Wendy Zook, Cozad. Also at the assembly were four past Nebraska Conference UMW presidents and 10 enthusiastic women from Grace UMC in

Lincoln, including 97-year-old Carolyn Mook, who has made many trips to assembly during her lifetime.

Of special interest were the intergenerational families who attended, including Carole Lashley, Blue River District UMW president, and her two daughters, Teresa Whitehead and Tami Ringland. Other families were Beth Hasemeyer, daughter Amy Hasemeyer and granddaughter Kaylee Thompson of North Platte; Marjorie Willard and daughter Charlotte from Omaha and Marjorie's cousin Julia McGrew of Hastings, Iowa; Marilyn Zehring, Columbus, daughter Stephanie Newton and granddaughters McKenzie and Riley, all of St. Louis, Mo.; Ann Cerveney and daughter Laura of Lincoln; and Ruth Knight and daughter Paula Latas of Lincoln.

We look forward to hearing more from these dedicated women as they return to their communities and share their insights and enthusiasm with their units to continue their work in mission.

CONGRATULATIONS

Mary Ellen Kilmer, Nebraska Conference UMW mission coordinator for education and interpretation, was commissioned as a deaconess at the UMW General Assembly in St. Louis, on April 29. Mary Ellen is a professional substitute teacher in northwest Nebraska schools, grades K-12. She also serves on the women's division reading program committee, evaluating books for the reading program. Kilmer is from Harrison, in the Great West District.

WOMEN'S MEETING

Nebraska Conference UMW's Annual Meeting will be at Valentine UMC on Oct. 15-16.

Keynote speaker will be Marisa Villarreal, executive secretary for language ministries for the Women's Division. Villarreal will also be leading a focus group on membership.

There will be focus groups at the meeting; members will choose two groups to attend. Topics include: Fun Meetings and Program Ideas; Mission Opportunities for You and Me at Epworth Village, Wesley House Leadership Academy

and UMCOR; Bible Study (1 John: 4); Environment-Global Warming/Climate Change, Social Justice and You; Tree of Life Ministry; and UMW 101.

Mark your calendar and "Let's Get Together" in Valentine!

LIBRARY UPDATE

Snapshot in time of the Nebraska Conference UMW Library, as of April 1, 2010.

UMW groups enlisted - 94
Books in circulation - 630
Average of two to three women reading each book
Total "reads" during two-month check-out - 1260 to 1890

If we might serve additional units, please e-mail stringbedes@windstream.net or call 402-421-8264.

Paid for by Nebraska UMW
www.umcneb.org/ministries/womens_ministry/

Contact:
Mary Ann Bede
stringbedes@windstream.net
7240 Carmen Dr.
Lincoln, NE 68516



NWU group lend their hands to learn, help

Nebraska Wesleyan University's (NWU) "Give Me Your Hand" Service Learning trip to Washington, D.C., was "powerful and transforming," as one participant put it. Sponsored by NWU Ministries and United Methodist Student Organization, 14 participants chose an alternative spring break in mid-March, centered around The General Board of Church and Society's seminar program on the topics of immigration and poverty.

The group learned about the complexities of these issues from diverse speakers who have dedicated their lives to transforming the world to a more inclusive vision of church and society.

They also met with state legislators, served in the D.C. area and saw the strengths of D.C. neighborhoods that are using asset-based methods of development, community organizing and empowerment opportunities for residents.

As a recipient of a Risk-Taking Mission and Justice Seed grant, the group expressed many times over what a worthy and influential experience it was in light of our mission to help make disciples for the transformation of the world.

NWU Campus Minister Pauletta Lehn expressed her gratitude. "This is an amazing connectional experience," she said. "Ministries like this are the best of our heritage, identity, and faith in action at work."

YAC¹⁰
OUR WAY OF LIFE

www.umcneb.org/ministries/youth_ministries

**YOUTH ANNUAL
CONFERENCE 2010
JUNE 8-12**

Nebraska Wesleyan University, Lincoln, NE

*For we are what God has made us, created in Christ Jesus
for good works, which God prepared beforehand to be our way of life.*

Apostle Paul



» Neb.-Kans. Episcopal Area Transition Team

Feedback encouraged at AC

Clergy, laity invited to voice thoughts in conference sessions

By Lisa Elliott Diehl
Kansas Area
communications director

WICHITA, Kans. — The Nebraska-Kansas Episcopal Area Transition Team held their third meeting April 6-7, in Wichita, Kans.

It was decided that team members will be invite clergy and laity from the three conferences to join the conversation at their Annual Conference sessions this May and June.

The team has formed three subgroups to work on a communication strategy for their work, defining the mission field and identifying the questions a plan for the new episcopal area must address. Some of those questions will be asked at the three conference sessions, and clergy and laity will be asked to respond and take those questions back to their local congregations.

“The fun part about this is actually that we are in a moment where all across our connection and denominations in North America, people are trying to learn what no one can teach them,” said Gil Rendle, the consultant working



COURTESY PHOTO

Gil Rendle, senior consultant for the Texas Methodist Foundation Institute for Clergy and Congregational Excellence, gives additional instruction to the area plan work group at the third meeting of the Neb.-Kans. Episcopal Area Transition Team, April 6-7, 2010.

with the transition team. Rendle, a United Methodist minister, is former senior consultant and seminar leader at the Alban Institute. He is now senior consultant for Clergy and Congregational Excellence for the Texas Methodist Foundation.

“We’re in a time when the old ways

don’t work and we have to teach each other along the way,” he said.

For the rest of the story, please visit www.umcneb.org and click on “Neb-Kan Transition Team” under Quick Links.

LIVE ON, from p. 1

space in the Weary Center, the modern convenience of the new and renovated dormitories and convenient food service and parking. Other events will be held at First United Methodist Church in Lincoln, adjacent to the NWU campus. Youth Annual Conference will also be held at Nebraska Wesleyan University. Children’s Annual Conference and child care are both being offered at First UMC.

Online registration is now available. To register online, visit www.umcneb.org and click on “Online Registration” under Quick Links. For registration forms, schedules, lodging information and more, visit www.umcneb.org and click on the Annual Conference logo banner on the left side of the home page.

PRE-CONFERENCE BRIEFINGS

The Pre-Conference Briefings will cover the schedule of the session as well as information for first-time attendees of the Annual Conference Session. All Annual Conference Session attendees are encouraged to attend the closest briefing location. Attendees are also asked to bring a copy of the resource book with them to the briefing (the books were mailed to Annual Conference delegates from each district at the end of April). The briefings are open to anyone in the Conference who is interested. For more information, contact the Rev. Carol Roettmer Brewer at crbrewer@umcneb.org.

Great West District:

May 7 — 7:00 p.m. (MT)
Sidney First UMC, 2622 11th Ave.
May 8 — 10:00 a.m. (CT)
North Platte UMC, 1600 West E St.

Prairie Rivers District:

May 16 — 7:00 p.m.
Hastings First UMC, 614 N. Hastings

Prairie Rivers/Elkhorn Valley Districts:

May 17 — 7:00 p.m.
Columbus First UMC, 2710 14th St.

Elkhorn Valley District:

May 18 — 7:00 p.m.
Orchard UMC, 380 Noble

Gateway District:

May 20 — 7:00 p.m.
Kearney First UMC, 4500 Linden

Missouri River District:

May 23 — 3:00 p.m.
Bellevue St. James UMC, 1501 Franklin

Blue River District:

May 23 — 7:00 p.m.
Lincoln Saint Paul UMC, 1144 M St.

NOTES

NIGERIA/NEBRASKA PARTNERSHIP

A special offering was taken on Mother’s Day, May 9, in support of the Nigeria/Nebraska Partnership Orphanage, located in Jalingo, Nigeria. Established in 2005, the orphanage is currently home to 48 children who have lost both of their parents due to various causes.

It takes about \$2,000 to support one student for one year. Perhaps your congregation would like to join in the Conference mission in Nigeria by supporting one student. Nickels for Nigeria is also a way to involve the entire congregation. Each year an offering is taken at the Annual Conference Session; all of the aggregated money generated by Nickels for Nigeria is then offered up to the Partnership. For more information on sponsoring a child or donating to Nickels for Nigeria, contact Nigeria/Nebraska Partnership Chair Dottie Halvorsen at 402-269-3125 or e-mail halvorsen312@yahoo.com.

SEMINARY SCHOLARSHIPS

The Nebraska United Methodist Foundation is accepting application materials for the nine seminary scholarships it administers for students planning to pursue careers in the ministry within Nebraska.

The deadline for application submissions is June 30, 2010, with the exception of the Baldwin F. and Amy L. Kruse Scholarship, which is May 31.

For more information and printable application materials, please visit the Foundation’s Web site, www.numf.org.

PEACE WITH JUSTICE GRANTS

WASHINGTON, D.C. — The United Methodist General Board of Church & Society (GBCS) has awarded grants totaling \$50,000 to 15 Peace with Justice ministries. The grants are awarded in conjunction with the denomination’s Peace with Justice Sunday, which witnesses to God’s demand for a faithful, just, disarmed and secure world.

The Hispanic Youth Leadership Academy (HYLA) Midwest in Omaha will receive \$5,000. College students will work with HYLA staff members to organize Hispanic/Latino youths and young adults to develop a curriculum to help address concerns for just immigration policy and practices in line with United Methodist Social Principles.

The proposal originated with United Methodist Hispanic college students that participate with HYLA at Perkins School of Theology and the Theology School at Drew University. The academy, sponsored by the Missouri Rivers District, would be held during the summer in Omaha and be open to other conferences in the Midwest to participate.

Don't just listen, do what you can

By Doug Kallesen
UMM communicator

James, in James 1:22 said: "Do not merely listen to the Word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says." And Jesus promises in John 14:12 the power of the Spirit working through our faith can do what Jesus had been doing, and even greater! Let Pentecost inspire you to do what you can.

RIDE/WALK/DONATE

There are three ways to help raise money for our 2010 mission plans. If you are not able to ride a bike or walk in Norfolk on Saturday, May 29, you can help by donating, or you can start your own local ride/walk. The event registration is available at www.umcneb.org/ministries/mens. If you don't know a rider/walker you may send donation checks to the

address at the end of the article and it will be included in the event proceeds. Or use these contacts for more information. The UMMen support about 20 missions, both locally and around the world.

SCHOLARSHIPS

The UMMen 100 Club provides scholarships to young men and women entering full-time Christian service. You can help by attending the 21st annual dinner and auction June 9 at Lincoln First UMC, at 5 p.m. (This event is associated with the Annual Conference Session). More information on purpose, reservations, or donating/purchasing auction items is available at www.umcneb.org/ministries/mens or by calling Doug Kallesen at 402-563-1570.

ALL THINGS SCOUTS

Duane Daake of Utica is the Conference UMMen scouting and youth coordinator as well as the following: charter representative for their local pack and troop, chairman of the Prairie Winds District of Boy Scouts of America (BSA), member of the Cornhusker Council BSA, Prairie Rivers District



DUANE DAAKE



COURTESY PHOTO

The attendees of the Nebraska United Methodist Men's winter retreat, held at Camp Fontanelle.

UMMen scouting and youth coordinator and member of the Utica UMC. Duane and his wife Sylvia have two sons, six grandchildren and seven great-grandchildren. Daake has been involved with scouting for 62 years. Thanks, Duane!

SPIVEY HONORED

The UMMen provided Gary Spivey, a UMMen prayer advocate, of Bellevue a Nebraska Lifetime EMS (Every Man Shares) membership award February 20 at Camp Fontanelle. The Rev. Carol Roettmer-Brewer, Conference director of connectional ministries, made the presentation.

Over the course of the weekend, 45 men attended

and heard from the Rev. Craig Finnestad of Water's Edge UMC in Omaha, Glenn Stinn and Joe Scahill of Bellevue, and via Internet connection, from Gil Hanke and Larry Coppock of the General Commission in Nashville.

There was also lots of singing, with Calvin Phillips at the piano and testimonies and fellowship with a bit of camp work mixed in.

SCOUTS HONORED

Nearly 60 men attended the annual Prairie Rivers District UMMen meeting hosted by the Central City men on March 22. Besides the fellowship and meal, the program included a

presentation by Duane Daake of Utica and Don Russell of Sutton. They presented the results and impacts from the two Scoutmaster honor banquets sponsored by the district UMMen during February in Beaver Crossing and Hastings celebrating BSA's 100-year birthday. President Larry Ulmer of Sutton cited the two men for their dedication to scouting.

CALENDAR

Summer Rally: Aug. 20-22, 2010 (Friday night – Sunday morning), at Camp Comeca
Winter Rally: Feb. 18-20, 2011 (Friday night – Sunday morning), at Camp Norwesca

UNITED METHODIST
MEN

Paid for by UMMen
www.umcneb.org/ministries/mens

Contact:
Doug Kallesen
dkallesen@neb.rr.com
402-563-1570
3917 Adamy St.
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NEW LOOK, from p. 1

increases our connection to each other and to the world.

Long-time and former communications commission member Dwight Trumble, from Springfield, Neb., touts "The Nebraska Messenger" as being vital to maintaining our United Methodist connection.

The cost for each edition of the newspaper averages about \$10,000, including printing and postage. Although the publication takes advantage of every postal discount available, postage comprises a greater portion of the total cost.

Future plans include conducting additional surveys on "The Nebraska Messenger" as well as forming focus

groups to gauge United Methodist opinions on Nebraska Conference print, Web site and e-mail communication.

For the immediate future, "UMconnect," the weekly e-mail link and the Web site continue to offer a connection to the Nebraska Conference and to the larger church across the U.S. and around the world.

ONLINE



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Congregations volunteer to 'Change the World'



COURTESY PHOTO

Nearly 170 youth and adults from across the Nebraska Conference volunteered to take part in the 'Change the World' event in Omaha on Saturday, April 24, 2010, one of many events that took place in the Conference. Here volunteers prepare the community garden site at JC Wade for spring planting.

What if ... on one weekend all around the world, United Methodists came together to work with their local communities? What if ... as we serve people locally, we unite globally to eliminate a preventable, treatable disease that kills one child every 30 seconds?

These were the questions posed in conjunction with 'Change the World,' a weekend event that took place on April 24-25. World Malaria Day was observed in many churches on Sunday, April 25. Congregations were invited to schedule a community-based workday, and were encouraged to collect a special offering to support the fight against malaria as part of United Methodist Communications' Rethink Church initiative.

More than 1,000 United Methodist congregations around the world participated, including numerous right here in the Nebraska Conference.

Approximately 170 volunteers participated in United Methodist Ministries' (UMM) event held Saturday, April 24 in Omaha. The volunteers came as youth or adult teams from all over the Nebraska Conference. The teams worked at nine different sites across the city, working in community gardens and greenhouses, constructing garden

beds, serving a community meal, assisting at community thrift stores and helping at food and clothing pantries.

A youth team representing Ord First UMC worked at a community garden in north Omaha, preparing the garden for spring planting. Orilla Orent, youth leader, said, "I think I speak for my entire group when I say that the experience was tiring but fulfilling. We worked hard but had a great time in fellowship with other youth as well as our bishop — couldn't ask for more than that!"

Trinity United Methodist Church in Grand Island celebrated going 'green' on Sunday, April 25. A Green Expo was held, with information available from a number of groups, including Sierra Club, Grain Place, Prairie Plains Resource Institute and the Nebraska Food Co-op. Equal Exchange coffee was served, and the first annual going green awards were presented to the church volunteers who give their time to wash mugs every Sunday rather than using Styrofoam cups.

Out in the church parking lot aluminum cans were collected for recycling, with the money earned going to Habitat for Humanity. There was also a seed distribution; church members have been donating seed packets during the month of April, which were then given away on Going

Green Sunday to encourage people to plant gardens.

"We hope that we can start a going green committee in the future, through our missions and education committees, and that as persons of faith we can encourage going green every day, as good stewards of the earth," said Maureen Vetter, chair of Trinity UMC's missions committee.

At Oxford UMC church members offered up prayers as they prepared to launch 70 'prayer balloons' on the morning of Sunday, April 25. "Today we lift these balloons and our prayers for those among and around us who need to feel the love of God and to know that someone, somewhere is praying for them," said the Rev. Eldon Fablinger as the balloons were released. Attached to each balloon was a card proclaiming God's love for whoever finds the card, also letting them know the people of the Oxford United Methodist Church are praying for them.

Members also performed work around the community, cleaning up a local park and school grounds.

"This weekend we joined with over 70 million other United Methodists as we work together to help make a difference in our local communities, and in our own way, help make the world a little better place to live," Fablinger said.

Alnor named new Great West D.S.

The Rev. Kay Alnor will be the new superintendent of the Great West District, effective July 1, 2010. She succeeds the Rev. Brian Kottas, who has been appointed to serve a local church.

Alnor has 30 years of experience serving churches in the Nebraska and Northern New Jersey Conferences; she currently serves Imperial United Methodist Church, in Imperial, Neb.

A member of the Conference Council on Finance and Administration (CCFA), Alnor currently serves as CCFA's representative to the Common Table and has also served on the Conference Hispanic/Latino



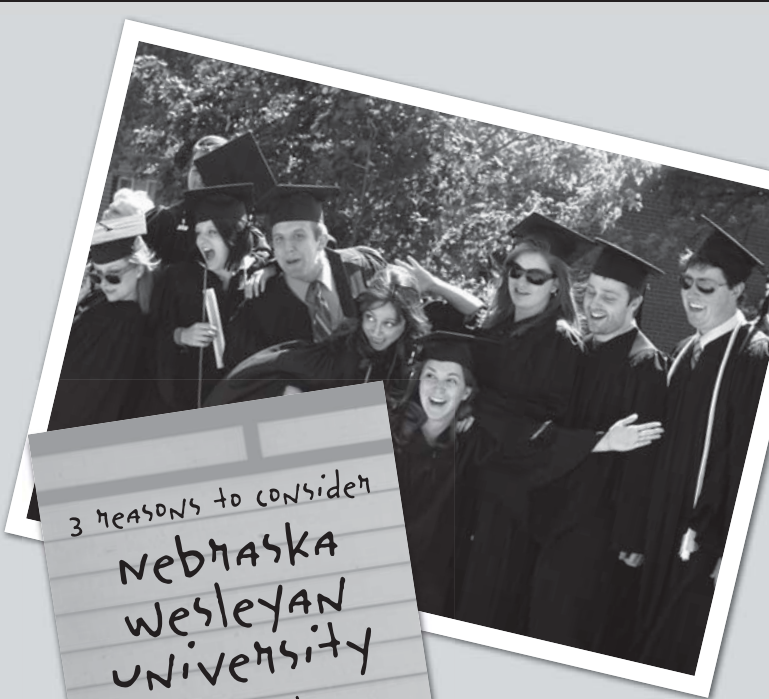
REV. KAY ALNOR

Committee and has worked on community development and Holy Conferencing.

Alnor comes from a long tradition of Methodism. She is the daughter of the late Rev. Warren K. Alnor, who was an ordained United Methodist pastor, and the Rev. Jean Alnor, a retired United Methodist pastor and member of the Nebraska Conference.

"I am proud to be a pastor in the Nebraska Conference," said Alnor. "I look forward to another step of working with the churches in the Great West District — to deepen our faith, to develop leaders and to serve Christ together."

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NWU Strong academics are only the beginning

End of an era



PHOTO BY LEW KAYE-SKINNER

The Rev. Dr. Karen Moritz leads the last worship service for Cornerstone-UMHE at Saint Mark's on the Campus on April 25, 2010.

UNL's Cornerstone Ministries holds final worship service

The board of Cornerstone Ministries, located on the campus of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, recently announced their decision to dissolve the ministry. In a letter written to friends and alumni of Cornerstone, the Rev. Dr. Lew Kaye-Skinner, Cornerstone board chair, and the Rev. Dr. Karen Moritz, campus pastor, wrote:

"The Cornerstone Board has come to the difficult decision to dissolve UMHE Cornerstone. As many of you know, our current funding structure will end on June 30, 2010. The ecumenical partnership, Nebraska United Ministries in Higher Education (NUHME), is dissolving and no provision has been made by the judicatories to continue working together into the future. Due to this and other factors, we are no longer able to continue this ministry in its present structure.

Other changes in the ministry have also led to this decision. As many of you know our long-time administrative assistant,

"We celebrated with sad and joyful hearts. Sad that we will no longer carry on ministry in this ecumenical partnership and joyful for all the years of faithful witness on the UNL campus and the unnumbered hearts, minds and souls that have been touched."

— The Rev. Dr. Lew Kaye-Skinner
Cornerstone board chair

Carlene Miller, retired at the end of March. At the end of June, Pastor Karen will also be moving on to another ministry. She will be serving the Presbyterian Church (USA) as an Ecumenical Relations Facilitator in the Czech Republic. It is with sadness that she leaves Cornerstone as she has served the students, faculty, and staff at UNL with joy and has enjoyed being a part of the Lincoln community.

All of these changes make it clear that it is time to let this ministry go and seek God's guidance on how to continue serving the UNL community. Partnering with Saint Mark's on the Campus Episcopal Church has been a joy and we celebrate our service with our partner churches and denominations. If you are interested in shaping the future of a progressive and inclusive Christian presence at UNL please feel free to contact

Pastor Karen or Board Chair Lew Kaye-Skinner. We have confidence that resurrection comes out of death and we trust in God's guidance and presence as we move into the future."

Cornerstone's final worship service was held Sunday, April 25. Over 40 people gathered in the chapel of Saint Mark's on the Campus Episcopal Church on UNL's campus.

"We celebrated with sad and joyful hearts," said Kaye-Skinner of the final service. "Sad that we will no longer carry on ministry in this ecumenical partnership and joyful for all the years of faithful witness on the UNL campus and the unnumbered hearts, minds and souls that have been touched. As Karen said in her sermon, 'We don't know what the future holds, but we do know that God remains faithful beyond anything we could possibly deserve.'"

Children's ministry program uses puppets to 'Reach and Teach'

The Rev. Jeri Soens has a passion for puppets and for ministering – to children and youth in particular – so it was only natural that she create "Reach and Teach," a Children's Ministry Program that employs simple methods she has used to grow her church and uses hand puppets as teaching aids

Soens, currently the pastor at Hemingford United Methodist Church in the Great West District, and Christy Baltzell, administrative assistant for the Great West District, began offering Reach and Teach puppet workshops almost a year ago. They've since traveled all over the Nebraska Conference, presenting at local churches and UM-affiliated institutions such as Epworth Village in York.

Participants learn the basics of Reach and Teach and provide hands-on training with puppets. Each attendee receives a comprehensive manual detailing the Reach and Teach program and how it can work in their church. The program is sponsored by The Nebraska United Methodist Conference's Young People's Ministry.

A course at Mullen UMC on April 10 drew participants from several churches and included a number of youth. In addition to learning about the Reach and Teach program, attendees had the opportunity to role play, practice skits and get comfortable with the art of puppeteering. Lots of critters found new homes and will be enjoying a career in children's



PHOTO BY CHRISTY BALTZELL

Some of the participants of the Reach and Teach workshop at Mullen UMC on April 10, 2010, with presenter Jeri Soens (center) and their furry new friends.

ministry.

The Great West District endorses Folkmanis puppets – the world's largest manufacturer of plush animal puppets – and has them available for purchase through the district office. All proceeds go to a children's ministry fund which later this year will begin providing grants for start-up children's ministries and supplements to existing children's ministries. For more information, contact the Great West District office at 308-284-8922 or e-mail greatwest@umcneb.org.

NOTES

UMCOR NAMES NEW LEADER

The Rev. Cynthia Fierro Harvey, a pastor from



REV. CYNTHIA FIERRO HARVEY

Texas with a background in the local church, international health ministries, domestic disaster relief and organizational management, is the new head of the United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR).

She was elected on April

13 by directors of the General Board of Global Ministries, the United Methodist mission agency of which UMCOR is a part. Harvey succeeds the Rev. Sam Dixon, who was killed in the earthquake that shook Haiti last January 12.

After election to the UMCOR post, Harvey said she "considers it a great privilege and an awesome task to serve people around the world on behalf of The United Methodist Church. I pray that God will provide me the courage to serve and the eyes to see and ears to hear the cries of the people and bring about hope, life-giving hope."