



DISCIPLE EXPRESS

Vol. 22, No 9 September 2014 A Newsletter to Inspire and Celebrate Oakland United Methodists

Iowa Area Resident Bishop
Julius C. Trimble
2301 Rittenhouse St.
Des Moines, IA 50321-3101
(515) 974-8902

District Superintendent
Rev. Terra Amundson
Southwest District Office
1201 East 7th St, Suite 300
Atlantic, IA 50022
Phone: (712) 243-8573
Fax: (712) 243-8574
Email: Terra.Amundson@iaumc.org

Field Outreach Minister:
Melissa Drake
Melissa.Drake@iaumc.org

Pastor, Karen Hoff
712-482-5539 (home)
712-482-5530 (office)
Email: Karen.S.Hoff@gmail.com

Newsletter Editor/Publisher
Sheryl Sindt
oaklandumc@frontiernet.net

Worship Service Time:

9:00 Children's Sunday School
9:00 Choir Practice
10:00 Worship
11:00 Koinonia
11:15 Adult Sunday School
5:00 Hispanic Service



YOUTH GROUP

Wednesday
nights at 6:30.

Light supper
served, then
fellowship

JOIN
★ us at ★
Sunday
school



SUNDAY SCHOOL

We will resume Sunday
School on September
7th at 9:00am. For ages
3+.

If you are interested in
teaching please contact
Leigh Bell 402-661-
8395 or
lbell921@yahoo.com

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

The August 25 edition of Time had several stories about the current crises in our country and abroad. As I read the articles, I questioned, "Where is the United Methodist Church during these times of crises?" It didn't take me long to discover that in times of national and world crises the United Methodist Church is in the midst of these crises seeking to share God's grace in Word and deed.

"In *the Ebola crisis*, , communication precedes prevention and treatment," said the Rev. Larry Hollon, top staff executive of United Methodist Communications, in a blog post. Misinformation has complicated efforts to contain the Ebola outbreak in West Africa. In response to the lack of accurate information about Ebola, Sierra Leone and Liberia are each receiving a \$10,000 crisis communication grant from the United Methodist Communications. Funds will be used for:

- Banners, posters and photocopies of messages that aid in prevention, diagnosis and treatment.
- Radio airtime for messages that address prevention and care as well as the pastoral needs of affected communities.
- Data access through mobile carriers for sharing health and pastoral messages.

UMCOR (United Methodist Committee on Relief), our denomination's humanitarian relief agency, has distributed \$87,000 in grant money in response to the Ebola crisis. UMCOR is working to support UM healthcare facilities so that they can keep their doors open. A \$50,000 grant through ACT Alliance provides for training, equipment, and construction of an isolation unit in Liberia. UMCOR has also granted \$25,000 to the Sierra Leone Annual Conference to provide supplies and build an isolation unit at Mercy United Methodist Hospital in Bo, Sierra Leone. United Methodist Global Ministries missionaries in West Africa have been given

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the opportunity to leave affected areas, but many – especially our medical missionaries – have elected to stay.

The United Nations estimates that almost a quarter of **Gaza's** 1.7 million residents have been displaced by the fighting, and all residents are struggling with power outages and a lack of basic supplies. ANERA (America Near East Refugee Aid) is one of the few international organizations that consistently gets health care and humanitarian relief supplies into Gaza. UMCOR (United Methodist Committee on Relief) has been supporting ANERA's in kind medical and relief work for over two years. In the latest crisis to hit Gaza, UMCOR has given ANERA two grants for food parcel deliveries to 2,280 displaced families.

UMCOR has been working with a partner in Northern Iraq who has been providing food and other assistance to internally displaced people who have fled from the violence caused by the Islamic State. As this **crisis in Iraq** continues, UMCOR will continue to explore opportunities for creative partnerships with organizations that are seeking to alleviate suffering without regard to the race or religion of the beneficiaries.

United Methodists are working to ease the **Border Crisis** of unaccompanied minors and others from Central America coming into the US. Methodist churches in southern Texas have addressed the Border Crisis in a variety of ways. Methodist members are a part of the Laredo Humanitarian Relief Team and are working with Laredo's Holding Institute, a community center that is a United Methodist Women National Mission Institution. The Neighborhood House and the Houchen Community Center, UMW affiliates, serve as front-line centers for helping the parents and children, providing needed health kits and socks. United Methodists in the Rio Grande Valley are providing volunteers and donations of shoes and other clothing. United Methodist Women made a \$7,500 grant to the Holding Institute for air-conditioner repairs and other emergency needs.

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UMCOR has provided 18,000 health kits in McAllen, Laredo, and Brownsville, as well as making an initial \$10,000 grant to the SW Texas Annual Conference.

Methodists from all over the country have sent monies and needed supplies to help ease the Texas Border Crisis.

Since August 9, the Rev. F. Willis Johnson, has devoted his entire ministry to fostering peaceful – and – meaningful – responses to the **crisis in Ferguson**, Missouri. The shooting of 18-year-old Michael Brown led to days of grief and pain and violence. Pastor Johnson is pastor of the Wellspring UMC in Ferguson. He led prayer vigils, helped with cleanup, met with community leaders, and comforted protestors. The church, in partnership with the Black Psychologists, has provided counseling to anyone in the community who requests it.

When unrest led the Ferguson-Florissant District to cancel classes, the church welcomed children with educational games and healthy food so parents could work without scrambling for childcare. Members of other area UM Churches volunteered to help, and the Missouri Annual Conference provided financial support for the church's outreach. The Missouri Conference Office of Mission, Service, and Justice has also offered support and volunteers to help with such basic tasks as clean up and support for those businesses that have been looted or severely damaged.

As United Methodists, what can **we, as a church and personally**, do to ease the above crises and others? First and foremost we pray. We pray for the peoples of Liberia, Sierra Leone, Gaza, Iraq, Texas, Ferguson, Mo., and for people of other places in the world in great need.

Second, we learn about the dynamics in these places, learn about the culture, about the people, about our life in mission together.

Third, we give of our God given resources to UMCOR

and other agencies who respond with help during times of crises.

As United Methodists, we are in mission and ministry together. May we continue to be in deep prayer for all of God's children in crisis.

In Christ's Love,

Pastor Karen

Acolyte Training

Acolyte training for 3rd graders and up will be provided following the worship service on September 7.

Confirmation Classes

If you are a parent of a youth entering 7th -12th grade, your youth is invited to participate in Confirmation Classes beginning in October. Please call the church office if you haven't already done so, before September 16 if you would like your youth to attend.

Bible Presentation & Recognition

Please join us for worship on September 7th. As part of our worship service, our third graders will be receiving Bibles. As a congregation, we will offer a blessing for our church workers as they begin a new church school year.

Children's Sunday School

Sunday school will kick off on Sunday, September 7th at 9:00 in the church basement.

We will be offering Sunday school classes for children ages 3 and up.

Hope to see you there!

VBS Offering Report

The VBS offering went to help support the local food pantry located at the Oakland Christian Church. \$291.10 was donated. Thank you!



OAKLAND UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
Administrative Board Meeting
June 19, 2014

Present: Barb Schorsch, Bernie Bolton, Norma Bolton, Dick Merkle, Gloria Gleaves, Dave Applegate, Merlin Jones, Skip Applegate, Lyle Bentley, Pastor Karen Hoff.

After prayer concerns were shared, Pastor Karen led the board in prayer.

Secretary's Report: The report was read. Norma motioned to approve the report. Dave seconded.

Treasurer's Report: Dick explained Treasurer's Report. Skip motioned to approve. Bernie seconded.

Trustees Committee: Dave presented the bills for the parsonage bathroom remodeling project.

Staff Parish Relations Committee: Bernie reported that Pastor Karen has been reappointed to the Oakland UMC and Marilyn Hackett has returned to be our full-time organist. The All Church Birthday Party was discussed. The date for this event will be August 24, at 6:30pm. Sean Ehmke is continuing to work on the elevator project.

Pastor's Report:

Calendar:

June 20- Pastor will meet with insurance adjustor

June 23-28 Pastor's Vacation

Youth: No report. Youth Group on break for summer

Lay Leader: Merlin reported he will be preaching in Odebolt on June 29th

Memorial Committee: Lyle reported new tables have been purchased for the lounge. Memorial money has been given in memory of Nancy Young to be used for

scholarships. Future purchase will be additional FWS Hymnals for pews.

New Business: Pastor Karen shared a thank you from former DS, Brain Milford.

After discussion, Gloria made a motion to pay Dick Kates \$300 for the additional time he worked cleaning up outside of the church after the storm. Lyle seconded.

There will not be an Ad Board meeting in July. Our next meeting will be August 21.

As there was no further business to come before the Board, Norma made a motion that the meeting be adjourned. Merlin seconded. Barb closed with prayer.

Respectfully submitted,

Pastor Karen Hoff, Recording Secretary Pro tem



MORE REPORTS

Youth Group – Grades 7th - 12th

We are excited to share with you that 46 youth (grades 7-12) came to our first ecumenical youth group of this school year. On August 20, at 6:30pm, we gathered together for a meal. Following the meal, we talked about upcoming youth events and played a game. We ended our evening with praise songs in the sanctuary and a group prayer. Please keep our youth in your prayers.

We are also in need of volunteers to prepare and serve the Wednesday evening meal for our youth. Please call the church office if you can help with meals.

Adult Sunday School class starting soon!

The adult Sunday School class will begin on September 7th following Koinonia (11:15 a.m.—noon) Hope you can join us!

THANK YOU'S

Vacation Bible School 2014

Oakland United Methodist Church,

Thank you to all the volunteers who made VBS a special time each night. From the Bible stories, to the crafts, to the food, to the games and music I enjoyed learning about Jesus and his love for everyone. I had a great time and was sad to see it come to an end!



Thank you again to all who had a part in making VBS so special for me and many others.

MOYRICK K KALEB

August 14, 2014

Dear Oakland UMC of Iowa,

Thank you for your gift of \$ 826.00 to Imagine No Malaria supporting the United Methodist Church's commitment to eliminate malaria as a major source of death and suffering in Africa by 2015. Your support serves as an example of how we are living Christ's call to heal the sick and help those in need.

Imagine No Malaria includes continued bed net distributions, community education programs with medical outreach training, radio communications programs reaching remote areas with vital information, and programs that strengthen clinics and hospitals to better diagnose and treat malaria.

Thank you for your generosity. Please continue to pray for our work and those we serve.

Peace and Joy!

Bishop Thomas J. Bickerton
Chair, UMC Global Health Initiative

September Daily Reading Guide

- 1 Psalm 37
- 2 Psalm 119: 1-16
- 3 Psalm 119: 17-32
- 4 Psalm 119: 33-4
- 5 Psalm 119: 9-64
- 6 Psalm 119: 65-80
- 7 Psalm 119: 81-96
- 8 Psalm 119: 97-112
- 9 Psalm 119: 113-128
- 10 Psalm 119: 129-144
- 11 Psalm 119: 145-160
- 12 Psalm 119: 161-176
- 13 1 Corinthians 1: 1-17
- 14 1 Corinthians 1: 18-31
- 15 1 Corinthians 2:1-16
- 16 1 Corinthians 3: 1-23
- 17 1 Corinthians 4: 1-21
- 18 Matthew 5: 1-20
- 19 Matthew 5: 21-48
- 20 Matthew : 6: 19-34
- 21 Matthew : 1-14
- 22 Matthew 7: 15-29
- 23 Matthew 13: 1-17
- 24 Matthew 13: 18-32
- 25 Matthew 13: 33-52
- 26 Proverbs 1: 1-33
- 27 Proverbs 8: 1-36
- 28 Proverbs 11: 1-31
- 29 Proverbs 12: 1-28
- 30 Proverbs 16: 1-33

August Answers

1. Which Gospel records the ability of the resurrected Jesus to walk through locked doors? *John 20: 19-21*
2. What was the affliction of the man Jesus healed on the Sabbath at the home of a Pharisee? *Luke 14: 1-4 Dropsy*
3. What Roman of Capernaum asked that Jesus heal his servant? *Matt 8: 5-13 The Centurion*
4. When Jesus was healing people, whose prophecy did he claim to be fulfilling? *Matt 8: 17 Isaiah's*
5. Where did Jesus send the demons he drove out of the Gadarene demoniacs? *Matt 8: 28-34 Into a herd of pigs*
6. According to Matthew's Gospel, what Sabbath healing caused the Pharisees to plot to kill Jesus? *Matt 12: 10-14 The healing of the man with the withered hand*
7. What did Jesus tell the two blind men not to do after he healed them? *Matt 99: 27-31 Not to tell anyone else*
8. What future disciple did Jesus see, through miraculous means, sitting under a fig tree? *John 1: 48 Nathanael*
9. When Jesus healed a man who was both blind and dumb, what demon did the Pharisees accuse him of consorting with? *Matt 12: 24 Beelzebub*
10. When the disciples saw Jesus walking on the water, what did they think he was? *Mark 6: 45-50 A ghost*

Bible Trivia with hints

1. What wealthy man had 14,000 sheep? *Job*
2. Who married the shepherd girl Zipporah? *Exodus:*
3. What former shepherd boy is supposed to have written "The Lord is my Shepherd"? *Psalm:*
4. Whom did Jesus command to shepherd his church? *John:*
5. Who was the first shepherd? *Genesis:*
6. Who is the good shepherd? *John:*
7. Which prophet said, "All we like sheep have gone astray"? *Matthew:*
8. Which Old Testament book compares a lover's teeth to a flock of newly shorn sheep?
9. In which Gospel does Jesus speak of separating the sheep from the goats?
10. Who had compassion on the people because they seemed like sheep without a shepherd? *1 Samuel:*

From *The Complete Book of Bible Trivia* by

J. Stephen Lang

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Dear Choir Members, and Music Team -

August 24th, 2014

It will soon be September and time to gear up for praising the Lord in song. Practice will begin on ... *WEDNESDAY, September 10, 7:00 p.m.*

in the Sanctuary. We will warm up and begin working in earnest on some new and recycled music. Please see and **SAVE** the calendar that follows for more rehearsal and performance information.

You will note the addition of a few Wednesday practices....if they work out, we can be more prepared, more comfortable and more effective in our music ministry.

Bring a friend to enhance our "family of music lovers"!

Blessings: *Veva*

Let's just praise the Lord with music and fellowship, and be grateful for the gifts He has given us!

Fall 2014 Rehearse at 9:00 a.m. on Sunday Morning—sanctuary

Exception: Wednesday, September 10th, 7:00 p.m. ----- rehearse

Exception: Wednesday, September 17th, 7:00 p.m. ----- rehearse

September 21st ---- rehearse and sing _____

September 28th -----rehearse and sing _____

October 5th -----rehearse and sing _____

October 12th ----- rehearse and sing _____

October 19th ----- rehearse—children sing

Exception: Wednesday, October 22nd, 7:00 p.m. ----- rehearse

October 26th -----no rehearsal or performance

November 2nd ----- rehearse and sing _____

November 9th -----rehearse and sing _____

November 16th ---- no rehearsal or performance

Exception: Wednesday, November 19th, 7:00 p.m. ----- rehearse

November 23rd ----- rehearse and sing _____

November 30th ----- rehearse and sing _____

December 7th ----- rehearse and sing _____

December 14th ----- rehearse and sing _____

December 21st ----- rehearse and sing _____

December 24th ---Christmas Eve---warm-up 1/2 hour before service

December 28th ----- no rehearsal or performance

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Have you ever noticed how crazy life gets?

It almost seems as though our lives were meant to be in a constant rush. We are all immersed in a culture that can't say no, and wants to continue adding to the schedule. Though we sometimes call this new era the 'information age', I think it might be better said that it's the 'frazzled age'. Do you feel this in your life lately, are you seeing your life slipping away without any meaning, without having any space or downtime to just feel life, to just live life, or to just know God's simple pleasure of peace in your life (spiritually and physically). Are you feeling that today, but maybe more importantly are you doing anything about that?

I think all of us are feeling these stresses today, the challenge really is knowing how to step back and reconfigure how we are living. I find it easy to look at what I did last week and to evaluate how things went, and what I need to change, I think the struggle I run into is to actually make the changes, to be fully committed to applying the changes day in and day out. I suspect you are the same.

Jesus took time to get away, time to reflect and time to just be. Mark 1:35 tells us that Jesus "Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed." This is right in the first chapter of this beautiful Gospel, and already in Mark's story you see Jesus being tempted in the desert by Satan and then calling His first disciples, and healing and casting out evil spirits of many different people, but in the midst of all this, Mark wanted you to know something, he wanted you to know that Jesus took some time away from the frazzled pace of life. Now granted, one chapter in Mark entails much longer than a week's span of time, but I think it's important to know and hear that Jesus' life needed balance, needed a quiet space of time away from the demands of life. In fact it's a fairly constant theme in the Scriptures of Jesus' need of rest and of renewal from the rigors of daily life, Jesus knew that only time and space with Go

would allow the renewal he needed. It also is amazing to me that there were times of joy and celebration with friends and family. I don't think that it's any coincidence that John's Gospel tells us that Jesus' first miracle was 'turning water into wine at Cana of Galilee'. For me, these examples from Jesus' own life share a powerful message of God's gift of daily 'sabbaths' that must be taken to remain whole within the constructs of a busy life. When and how they are taken is not as important as just taking them.

This brings me to the foundation of Camp and Retreat ministries. We are here to provide a space and time for you and yours to come and be at one with God. I guarantee you that there will still be 24 hours in a day, whether tomorrow, next week or the week after, yet you will find more and more things to fill in those hours, minutes and seconds. If you don't take the initiative to just 'go' and take some of this time for your 'true spiritual self', away from your 'busy cultural self' those 24 hours of precious, valuable time can be lost in things that don't offer healing or peace. I believe that there are 3 essential things that happen when you come and get away with friends or family (or yourself) to one of our sacred 'camp and retreat' spaces.

The first is that you finally realize that something is out of whack in your daily life that you wouldn't have noticed without finding a quiet, God-created space in the great outdoors. It's as though you'd gotten use to what the world was trying to teach you as 'truth' in your daily living, and you bought in, and now abruptly you know differently.

The second is that you realize how beautiful it is to have your senses opened up again, and this not only includes your physical senses, but I think more importantly your emotional and spiritual senses. Before coming to camp life felt a bit gray, a bit routine, and plain, but after coming for a several days and filling your mind, heart and soul with all the beauty around you, the colors of your life become more vivid and vibrant.

CONT'D ON BACK PAGE

SEPTEMBER BIRTHDAYS

09/01 Colvin, Mary Lou
09/01 Henningsen, Rita
09/03 Stott, Karen
09/03 Obrecht, Bethany
09/04 Rollins, Katie
09/04 Harris, G.G.
09/04 Myers, Jared
09/06 Husz, Lowell
09/06 Kates, Dick
09/06 Bane, Sandy
09/08 Henry, Abby
09/10 Keiser, Jason
09/11 Anderson, Penny
09/13 Way, Karen
09/13 Rollins, Debbie
09/13 Buckhahn, Jennifer
09/13 Schnack, Nicolle
09/16 Harris, Janice
09/16 Bentley, Lyle
09/16 Harris, Jan
09/19 Zuch, Chuck
09/19 Palmer, Katelyn
09/20 Beedle, Hilda
09/20 Applegate, Gabriel
09/21 Bell, Leigh
09/23 Applegate, Derek
09/23 Kinnison, Brock
09/24 Hinkhouse, Holly
09/24 Hildebrand, ReAnn
09/26 McMartin, Roger
09/26 Applegate, Dean
09/26 Clark, Tina
09/27 Duhachek, Sue
09/27 Houser, Joni
09/28 Pierson, Peggy
09/28 Rieken, Marty
09/29 Henry, Fred S.
09/29 Henry, Alex
09/30 Moore, Devyn



Our Military Family

Military Families

Kristie Copenhaver, John & Mary Lou Copenhaver's daughter; **Jared Myers**, son of Robert Myers and Sid & Tami Skank; **Sonja Husz**, Niece of Butch & Velda Husz; **Lucas Smith**, Addie Mae's grandson; **Brian Thornton** from Avoca; **Tyler Clark**, Marvin & Carolyn Clark's grandson; **Brad Grosvenor**, Cathey Grosvenor's son stateside, and other area service men and women. **Landen Pedersen**, son of Tab and Lorie Pederson.

If you have a loved one in the service and wish to have them listed on our prayer list, please contact the church office.



In Remembrance

Our sympathies are with the family of Wayne Colvin who went to be with our Lord on August 5. A memorial service was held on August 9, 2014.

NURSING HOMES – Remember those in the nursing homes with cards and visits.

Oakland Manor: Margaret Alff, Audrey Hartje, Dorothy Martens, Lucille Bentley, Erma Cleaveland, Anita Killion (for rehab)

Oakland Heights: Janice Harris, Pat Burgett, Neunonia Timberman, Joan Turner



Stop, Drop, and Roll won't work in Hell.

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NURSERY

VOLUNTEERS

- 7th Lindsay Bentley
- 14th Carol Wilson
- 21st Lisa Pierson
- 28th Cyndy Haines



KOINONIA

- 7th Louise & Dick Merkle
- 14th Fred & Joyce Henry
- 21st Veva Larson
- 28th _____



USHERS,

GREETERS,

CANDLELIGHTERS

- 7th Terry and Cyndy Haines
Marvin and Carolyn Clark

Candle lighters

Calvin and Eric Duhachek

- 14th Larry and Lucia Kinnison
Lyle and Peggy Bentley

Candle lighters

Emma and Aaron Ehmke

- 21st Craig and Lisa Hummel
Dave and Sheila Applegate

Candle lighters

Kyler Rieken and Aiden Bell

- 28th Paul and Debbie Rollins
Terry and Amy Gleaves

Candle lighters

Grace Gleaves and Anna Duhachek



ACOLYTES



5:00 p.m. Hispanic Worship Service

Host Nursery

- 7th Barb Schorsch & Mary Waggoner
- 14th
- 21st
- 28th Jones Family



Mark your calendars!

Jr. & Sr. High Youth Groups on Wednesdays

Sat, Sept. 6 Men's Breakfast

Sun, Sept 7 Beginning Sunday School
Third Graders receive Bibles
Blessing Church Teachers
Adult Sunday School

September Calendar of Events

Wed, Sept 3 6:30 p.m. Jr. & Sr. High Youth Groups
Sat, Sept 6 7:00 a.m. Men's Breakfast
Sun, Sept 7 9:00 a.m. Sunday School
10:00 a.m. Worship w/Communion/
presentation of 3rd grade Bibles/Blessing
of Church Teachers
11::00 a.m. Koinonia
11:15 a.m. Adult Sunday School
5:00 p.m. Hispanic Worship



Wed, Sept 10 6:30 p.m. Jr. & Sr. High Youth Groups
Sun, Sept 14 9:00 a.m. Sunday School
10:00 a.m. Worship
11::00 a.m. Koinonia
11:15 a.m. Adult Sunday School
4:00 p.m. D S Amundsen & Field Outreach Melissa Drake installation
Atlantic, First UMC, 800 Poplar,
5:00 p.m. Hispanic Worship

Wed, Sept 17 Pastor Karen will be out of the office for Professional Interview
Youth Groups to Habitat for Humanity

Sun, Sept 21 9:00 a.m. Sunday School
10:00 a.m. Worship
11::00 a.m. Koinonia
11:15 a.m. Adult Sunday School
5:00 p.m. Hispanic Worship

Wed, Sept 24 **NO** Jr. & Sr. High Youth Groups

Sun, Sept 28 9:00 a.m. Sunday School
10:00 a.m. Worship
11::00 a.m. Koinonia
11:15 a.m. Adult Sunday School
5:00 p.m. Hispanic Worship

GODLY HUMOR

LOT'S WIFE

The Sunday School teacher was describing how Lot's wife looked back and turned into a pillar of salt, when little Jason interrupted, "My Mommy looked back once while she was driving," he announced triumphantly, "And she turned into a telephone pole!"

GOOD SAMARITAN

A Sunday school teacher was telling her class the story of the Good Samaritan. She asked the class, "If you saw a person lying on the roadside, all wounded and bleeding, what would you do?" A thoughtful little girl broke the hushed silence, "I think I'd throw up."

DID NOAH FISH?

A Sunday school teacher asked, "Johnny, do you think Noah did a lot of fishing when he was on the Ark?" "No," replied Johnny. "How could he, with just two worms."

HIGHER POWER

A Sunday school teacher said to her children, "We have been learning how powerful kings and queens were in Bible times. But, there is a Higher Power. Can anybody tell me what it is?"

One child blurted out, "Aces!"

MOSES AND THE RED SEA

Nine-year-old Joey was asked by his mother what he had learned in Sunday School.

"Well, Mom, our teacher told us how God sent Moses behind enemy lines on a rescue mission to lead the Israelites out of Egypt. When he got to the Red Sea, he had his army build a pontoon bridge and all the people walked across safely.

Then he radioed headquarters for

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reinforcements. They sent bombers to blow up the bridge and all the Israelites were saved."

"Now, Joey, is that really what your teacher taught you?" his Mother asked.

"Well, no, Mom, but, if I told it the way the teacher did, you'd never believe it!"

THE LORD IS MY SHEPHERD

A Sunday School teacher decided to have her young class memorize one of the most quoted passages in the Bible - Psalm 23. She gave the youngsters a month to learn the chapter. Little Rick was excited about the task - but he just couldn't remember the Psalm. After much practice, he could barely get past the first line.

On the day that the kids were scheduled to recite Psalm 23 in front of the congregation, Ricky was so nervous. When it was his turn, he stepped up to the microphone and said proudly, "The Lord is my Shepherd, and that's all I need to know."

UNANSWERED PRAYER

The preacher's 5 year-old daughter noticed that her father always paused and bowed his head for a moment before starting his sermon. One day, she asked him why.

"Well, Honey," he began, proud that his daughter was so observant of his messages. "I'm asking the Lord to help me preach a good sermon."

"How come He doesn't answer it?" she asked.

BEING THANKFUL

A Rabbi said to a precocious six-year-old boy, "So your mother says your prayers for you each night? That's very commendable. What does she say?" The little boy replied, "Thank God he's in bed!"

Iowa Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church

ADVOCACY TEAM - 2014

Most criminal justice systems around the world are retributive. These systems desire to hold the offender accountable to the state and use punishment as the tool for accountability. In our nation, many of the early prisons were called “penitentiaries” because they were an early attempt to form a system of restorative justice based not primarily on punishment—i.e.: whipping, stocks, and capital punishment—but on opportunities for the offender to repent of his or her wrong-doing and thus return to society a repentant and better person.

The faith community seeks to make a clear witness that the criminal-justice system must adhere to principles of 1) community safety; 2) innocent until proven guilty; 3) rehabilitation and, 4) restorative justice.

Restorative Justice seeks to hold the offender accountable to the victimized person, and to the families affected and to the community. Restorative Justice seeks to repair the damage, right the wrong, and bring healing to all involved, including the victim, the offender, the families and the community. Restorative Justice seeks the use of victim-offender mediation, family group conferencing, family courts, and other practices to bring healing to all. Restorative Justice also focuses on assisting those who have been incarcerated to reenter society as productive citizens, without undue financial and legal burdens which could hinder their successful reentry. Restorative Justice grows out of biblical authority, which emphasizes a right relationship with God, self and community.

It is time to focus more on helping people released from prison become reintegrated into our communities. Part of that is restoring their voting rights so that they are not further ostracized from their community.

In a time of lingering recession and record deficits, it is tempting to look for new resources of income

instead of taxes, and during the last decade we have governments at many levels charging convicted felons more fines. But this is counterproductive. It makes it even more difficult for released felons to become productive citizens, and thus they become dependent on society or end up back in prison. We have become increasingly aware of the challenges faced by people reentering the community from prison and the challenges faced by communities and families receiving formerly incarcerated people. “It is simply not good public policy to impose financial penalties on people who live below the poverty line. With so many barriers to overcome in order to reintegrate back into the community, creating additional financial hurdles is neither cost-effective nor is it in society’s best interest.” (See *supra* note 85 New York State Bar Special Committee Report, *Re-Entry and Reintegration: The Road to Public Safety* at 443. Available at <http://www.nysba.org/MSTemplacte.cfm?MicrositeID=100>)

More on this topic can be found in the study SENTENCING FOR DOLLARS: THE FINANCIAL CONSEQUENCES OF A CRIMINAL CONVICTION Alan Rosenthal, J.D. Marsha Weissman, M.P.A. Center for Community Alternatives Justice Strategies 115 E. Jefferson Street, Suite 300 Syracuse, NY 13202 Feb 2007.

<http://csgjusticecenter.org/reentry/publications/sentencing-for-dollars-the-financial-consequences-of-a-criminal-conviction-2/>

We support SF2203 as one aspect of restorative justice. Persons who have committed a felony and served time in prison for that offense need signs from the community that their punishment is over. They have paid the price for their criminal behavior. Being returned to the voting rolls is a sign to them and to the community that it is time to move forward. . . to let the past be the past. . . to heal the hurt that their conduct had caused them, their victim(s) and the community. We are called to be healers, peacemakers and reconcilers. Let it be.

Brian Carter, (515) 979-5775, briancar@dwx.com or Marty Ryan, marty@iowappa.com (515) 681-8076

Disciple Express

OAKLAND UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

200 North Main

PO Box 606

Oakland, IA 51560

Phone: 712-482-5530

Parsonage ph. 712-482-5539

E-mail: oaklandumc@frontiernet.net

www.oaklandiaumc.org

Rev. Karen Hoff, Pastor

Sheryl Sindt, Secretary



Address Service Requested

"We invite all persons to be a part of our Community of Faith by participating in worship, education, fellowship and Christian service."

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CONT'D

Have you ever noticed how crazy life gets?

The third and most important is that you find out that life is all about hope and love and its absence truly deadens the soul, and some have lost its presence without even knowing it. Being with God and feeling His great love flowing into us in and through this wonderful outdoor sacred space allows you to know how important love is to our lives, it's truly the only thing that sustains our lives and brings grace back into perspective. And with this love always comes a hope that life is worth living and sharing with all those you meet, and that every day has true meaning and

God grades on the cross, not the curve.

purpose.

These are foundations of our ministries, and they truly can change one's life and future, all you have to do is to make the choice to come. I am praying you will consider coming and sharing in a time of renewal and hope in your life and in the life of others. I look forward to seeing you and those whom you love at one of our Iowa UMC Camp and Retreat sites and may God's grace and blessings be with you on this beautiful day.

David Hobbs

August 4th 2014

LDM for Camping & Christian Formation

See us at:

Web page: www.oaklandiaumc.org

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