

FROM: McKnight United Methodist Church
600 Fox Drive
Pittsburgh, PA 15237

www.mcknightumc.org

Your October 2009 FOCUS!

TO:

Our Purpose:

To make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world!

Our Vision:

We will be a growing community in Christ spreading the word of God by reaching out to all people in an accepting, supporting and loving way.

In This Issue:

About our Purpose ... “Our transformation begins when we decide that the central purpose of our life is to please God, and consequently, to subordinate our will to God’s will.” (see page 3)

Great Books in our Library ... “Steeler Nation” is by Jim Wexell, a sports writer, who has covered the Steelers since 1995; “Blood Brothers” is the true story, mixed with details of history, of a Palestinian Christian; lots of other good books there! (see page 5)

Continue the Journey ... (page 6) ... notice that the title is almost the same as *The Journey Continues* ... (page 9) ... is this an accident???

Square Dance Saturday, October 24, @ 6:00 p.m. (page 7)

Plus lots more about our life together and how God is at work in us!



Welcome Lorelai Mae Happel!

On Fri (Sept. 18, 2009) Meghan Happel gave birth to a 6lb. 1oz. baby girl named Lorelai Mae Happel. Since Lorelai was born a month early, she was in the NICU (Intensive Care for infants), where she is expected to stay for seven days. The Happel Family is anticipating eventually returning to Pittsburgh.

If you would like to send a note here's their address:
Tommy, Meghan, and Lorelai Happel
1401 Nokomis Avenue
Venice, FL 34285

Our Sympathy and prayers go out to the Hannigan Family on the death of Jeanne, who was a member here before she and Bill moved to Florida.

October Worship Ministry

Liturgists

- 4 Bob Moore
- 11 Audrey Edsall
- 18 Diana Barnett
- 25 Reyman Branting

Counters

- 4 Bill Conley & Becky Brandt
- 11 Ed George & Bob Conrad
- 18 Tom Gregory & Kay Fowler
- 25 Alice Moore & Rick Greenfield

Greeters

- 4 Bill & Audrey Edsall
- 11 Barb Jarmell
- 18 Don & Maya Riddle
- 25 June Bigalow

Ushers

- 4 Kris Bell, Reyman Branting & Phillip Bova
- 11 Rick Greenfield, Joe Brandt & Rich Czado
- 18 Mike Bova, Matt Matthews & Dick Pflugh
- 25 Mike Woolley, Tom Wiley & Bob Moore

October Birthdays!

- 1 Jordan Defibaugh, Joan Dawson
- 3 LeeAnn Pitrusu
- 5 Cindy Loughman
- 6 Rose Peduto, Tom Gregory
- 7 John Kane, Elise Kaiser
- 11 Kris Bell
- 13 Becky Brandt
- 15 Sharon Herborn, Therma Strickler
- 16 Carol Kane
- 19 Ellen Kuntz, Megan Povich
- 20 Lois Jourdan, Kim Weckley
- 21 Matt Matthews

Messages of Thanks

A Sincere Thank You.....Everyone has been so kind and thoughtful during this sad time for me and my family. Your cards, phone calls and kindnesses when we meet are so appreciated.

Thank you all, Therma Strickler

Dear Pastor Bill,
Thank you for the book! It looks so interesting! I'm going to read it this summer at camp. Thank the church for me, they were a big help in making me who I am today. Thank you again, and I'm going to visit the church soon!

--Christine George

We honor and pray for all those individuals serving our country.

The Blue Star Banners in the Narthex are in honor of the following military personnel from our church family currently serving on active duty:

- 1st Lt. Mike Conley, U.S. Marines
- SSGT. Keri Hoffman, U.S. Army
(Bill & Sue Baxter's daughter)
- SGT. Jason Hoffmann, U.S. Army (son-in-law)
- Major John Matthews, U.S. Air Force
(Matt Matthew's brother)
- Capt. Adam Hill, U.S. Army

Please keep these individuals, their families and all those serving our country in your prayers.

If you have an immediate family member or others currently actively serving in the military, please see Bob Brown for a request form, so that we can honor and pray for them.

The candle in the window is for Mike Conley, who is currently serving in Afghanistan.



FROM THE PASTOR

Dear Friends,

We have been taught that Jesus commanded his disciples to go into the world and make disciples, and indeed, that is true.

However, if the God of the universe has truly taken up residence in us, radical changes should be inescapable! No gardener takes over a new plot and doesn't remove the weeds, prune the trees, and introduce and nurture new, more appropriate and beautiful plants.

Think of it this way: Jesus came to do the will of his Father, which in Jesus' case, meant a local ministry of healing, teaching preaching, and eventually, crucifixion. Jesus' obedience entailed a short life followed by a brutal death, burial, and resurrection. Jesus' daily obedience to God's will gave birth to the global movement that bears his name today.

God's desire is for us is for each and every one to be transformed and restored personally into an expression of God's image, which is unique for each individual, just as each snowflake is unique, but yet a beautiful example of what a snowflake should look like.

God wants to restore everything about me and you – spiritual, intelligent, creative, moral, and relational – so that we become whole, or well (the word *well* comes from a root word meaning *whole*). There are NBA players who are scoundrels. There are mission-driven Christians who want to win the world for Christ, but ignore their family in the process of doing it. God isn't interested in transforming me so that I can transform the world. God wants to transform me so that I can become *well*! Transforming the world is the by-product, not the aim of becoming a disciple of Jesus Christ. Transforming the world only occurs when transformed individuals seek and do God's will as Jesus did.

Jesus was able to know and do God's will because God was central in his life and, as a result, he was not conformed to the culture around him. Jesus thought differently about virtually everything and therefore stood out from the crowd in dramatic fashion!

You may have noticed the front mailing page of the Focus. Our Purpose: To make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world!

God's transforming presence will change us, not so we can transform the world, but so we can experience God's presence more deeply and be restored to God's image more completely. When disciples who are being restored do God's will, they move into the neighborhood as a loving, transforming presence, like Jesus did. If there is to be a transformation of the world, it will be a by-product of God's transforming presence in each of our individual lives.

Our transformation begins when we decide that the central purpose of our life is to please God, and consequently, to subordinate our will to God's will.

Jesus said that the initial requirement for becoming his disciple is to deny yourself. Similarly, the Apostle Paul taught that our transformation begins by presenting our bodies as a living sacrifice.

Yet, in a self-oriented culture, yielding to God is foreign and *profoundly countercultural*! However, for the person who wishes to be a disciple and pursue deep faith, knowing and doing God's will must be his or her first desire. It is impossible to nurture God's presence or to be on a journey of discipleship without acknowledging God's centrality in our daily life.

When God is central, our life can be aglow with God's presence. Think of a kerosene lamp that once lit, sends out bright rays of amber light. When God is present and at the center, and when we are listening for and doing God's will, we become the light in darkness described by Jesus. The further God moves from the center of our life, the dimmer becomes the light of God's image that is reflected through us.

When John the Baptist encountered Jesus, he grasped the supremacy of Jesus immediately and said, "He must increase, that I may decrease" (John 3:30). This should be our prayer today.

Keep lookin' up!
Pastor Bill

* from *The Culturally Savvy Christian* by Dick Staub © 2007 by John Wiley & Sons, published by Jossey-Bass. Chapter 5, "God's Transforming Presence"

The HeLP Committee is beginning a new program called "Request for Blood Donations." We will list those individuals that require blood for upcoming surgeries or long-term illnesses. If you, a member of your family, or a friend are need of blood, please contact Lisa Bowen with the patient's name, your name and relationship, and the name of the city if the patient lives outside of Pittsburgh. The patient needs to be registered with the Central Blood Bank. This information will be published in the Focus and posted on the HeLP's bulletin board. No medical reason for the request will be indicated unless the patient approves. If you are a donor, please consider donating on behalf of these persons. Remember that **"There is Power in the Blood!"** Each donation has the possibility of saving three lives. Please donate if you can. Thank you.

Central Blood Bank phone number
1-866-366-6771

Website <http://www.centalbloodbank.org/>

Global Links: sharing surplus, saving lives!

Many hospitals in developing countries are unable to provide essential items for patient care and recovery. Patients with physical injuries or disabilities can be devastated by a lack of mobility. Global Links includes home health equipment in each medical aid shipment to Latin America and the Caribbean. Rather than disposing of these items, which can provide mobility, respiratory care and other lasting benefits, please put them to good use and keep them out of a landfill. The following donations are accepted:

- Crutches
- Walkers (folding)
- Wheelchairs (non-motorized)
- Canes
- Nebulizers
- Unexpired supplies in original packaging (syringes, gauze, catheters, gloves, bandages, etc.)
- Portable suction machines

Email vols2@globallinks.org for more information.

Endowment Fund

We have established an endowment fund to accept your planned gift to support a favorite ministry into the future and/or provide for a future new ministry.



Brittany Bova in Homecoming Court at Edinboro University

Can you believe it? Brittany and Megan Bova are already Seniors at Edinboro! Voting for

Homecoming Queen is underway at the school. Mom and Dad are proud of them both!

Cemetery Gravesites for Sale

In 1986, Virginia Walker donated 15 cemetery gravesites located at Allegheny County Memorial Park (412-366-8296). It was decided at the time to sell them to the congregation at half the current price plus the deed transfer rate. We have four remaining gravesites located in Section 9009, Block 2-D, Graves 3, 4, 5, and 6. The current price is \$1,860.00.

If you are interested in buying or have any questions, please contact Bob Brown. If the gravesites are not sold by year-end, we will be offering them to other United Methodist churches in the area.

Educational Opportunities

Strengthening Exercise for Seniors on Wednesday, October 21, 12:30 pm. at the Senior Center, Cranberry Township Municipal Building, 2525 Rochester Road. Helps to keep your muscles strong and flexible and helps with balance and mobility, and promotes self-esteem and confidence. For more info or to register call 412-367-6643.

Colon Cancer Awareness: Tuesday, Oct 20, 9-11:00 am. at the Kearns Spirituality Center, 9000 Babcock Blvd. Last year, more than 108,00 new cases of colon cancer and 41,000 cases of rectal cancer were diagnosed in the US. Over 49,000 people died from these two diseases. Dr. Brozovich will focus on prevention and detection of the disease and advancements in treatment options. For more info or to register call 412-367-6640.

McKnight Church website address:

<http://www.mcknightumc.org>

Please visit our web site and email any comments or suggestions for improvement opportunities. Inquiries and participation are welcome.

News and Views from the Library

By Alice Moore, Church Librarian

For youth (9-12) there is book called **“The Dream on Blanca’s Wall”**. It is a book of poems in English and Spanish. Blanca and others in her class are asked to draw a picture of their dreams. Blanca’s picture is different from the other children. It is a fun way to practice Spanish (or English).

“A Change of Heart” is by Philip Gulley. This story centers on a small town and a Pastor Sam and his wife Barbara. Sam struggles with some of the characters in the town and with his sermons. Ellis, a farmer, is caring for the daughter of his brother, who left her with him and ran off. The brother and his wife were drug addicts. He hates and distrusts them both and when he returns tries to keep the daughter from her parents. In spite of the seriousness of the story line there is a lot of humor in events and situations and often I found myself laughing out loud.

“Steeler Nation” is by Jim Wexell, a sports writer, who has covered the Steelers since 1995. In 2007 he decided to travel the road for 44 days of that season and visit and talk to friends, families, fans and even rivals to uncover the phenomenon of the Steelers Nation. He begins a little slowly with a mixed chapter on Harrison. The author visits the bars and ‘parties’ in cities like Cleveland and Phoenix. He finds fans all over. There are a number of new stories about the players: Willie Parker, Hines Ward, Greg Lloyd and Troy Polamalu, among many others. There are a couple good faith stories in there also and was why I put it in the library, particularly for the story on Troy Polamalu. A friend in Phoenix, and a former Pittsburgher, Jake Ross, gave Bob the book. (He tells his story on pages 79-81).

The following is a list of books in the library on the Israel/ Palestine situation; a study is being led at church school Sunday morning.

“O Jerusalem” by reporters Larry Collins and Dominique LaPierre, is a history of the conflict and early division of Jerusalem by the United Nations and the ensuing war to take over the city and country.

“Blood Brothers” is the true story, mixed with details of history, of a Palestinian Christian. The author, Elias Chacour can trace his Christian roots in Palestine back to the century when Jesus walked

the streets of Jerusalem. It a very moving story of friendship and also the pain of hatred, destruction and death balanced against the patience, reconciliation, forgiveness and love that he holds in his heart for both sides of the conflict.

Also available: **“Bethlehem Besieged”** by Mitri Raheb, a Palestinian and Arab Christian pastor who minister to people In Bethlehem.

“The End of the Peace Process” by Edward W. said **“How Israel Lost the War”** is by Richard Ben Cramer. Who, as a youth, went to Jewish ‘Sunday school’ where a friend summed up Jewish holidays, “They tried to kill us. They didn’t succeed. So, let’s eat.” He feels that the country he loves lost their soul. It is written very well. Stories abound. The subject is rough but his points are made clearly.



The picture above is of the temple wall where Jewish prayers are written and placed in the wall.

“Israel-Palestine, A Mission Study for 2007-2008” by Stephen Goldstein. He covers a great deal of history- both early and modern. There is a study guide in the back of the book.

I have added the magazine “YES” due to an article on the middle east entitled, “Abraham to Descendants: Knock It Off!”. It begins, “A rabbi, a minister and an imam walk into a bar.” After 9/11 the three religious leaders began meeting and joining each other in worship, spiritual teaching, and “vigorous discussions”. Rabbi Ted Falcon, Rev. Don Mackenzie and Sufi minister Jamal Rahman have a talk radio program in Seattle, WA. If you want to hear our religious leaders actually reasoning together **please read the article. (pg. 12-15) It makes great faith sense!**

Continue the Journey

As we change seasons and move into fall, we continue the journey of the seasons as we move from 2009 into 2010. This brings us to the end of our budget year in December and the start of a new one in January.

The Church Council and committee chairs are currently reviewing the programs and missions our church was able to conduct in 2009 and are beginning to plan to continue these in 2010 and hopefully add new programs and missions.

This is where you, and all of us, come in. With input from the committee chairs, the Finance Committee will prepare a preliminary 2010 budget in October and finalize it in December.

In the meantime, we will be conducting the stewardship program in October, which will be very similar to what we did the last few years.

Please review the information and prayerfully consider your intentions to support the church in 2010 through your time, talents and financial contributions.

Together we can continue the journey!

Sunday, October 4

Initial information in mailboxes

Sunday, October 11

Inspiration Sunday – program kick-off

Sunday, October 18

Gratitude Sunday – pick up second informational packet with 2010 offering card

Sunday, October 25

Return 2010 offering cards

Sunday, November 1

Consecration Sunday – prayer of consecration for returned offering cards

Sunday, November 8

Celebration Sunday – rejoice in continuing the journey in 2010

Ellen Kuntz

Financial Secretary

A Very Simple Mission Project

Some of you may know that a Clergy Reading Group meets at McKnight Church on the first and third Wednesdays of each month. Rev. Dale Reese, Pastor at Trinity Towers UM Church, emailed we who are in the group, inviting our congregations to join his congregation in this mission project:

Trinity Tower UM Church is collecting unwanted neckties. These ties will be delivered to Manteo, NC, where they are woven into rugs, purses, and other items. All proceeds from these sales then support women's shelters in the Outer Banks region.

Trinity Tower Church's Outreach committee will take the ties to North Carolina during the first week of November. We do this about every 6 months. Thank you for your help in this simple way of being in mission. If you want to see the website, it is www.ragweavers.com.

A fantastic spiritual opportunity for you!

Join Bishop Tom Bickerton and the Western PA Conference in an unforgettable Oberammergau Passion Play journey departing July 6, 2010.

The spectacular six hour musical and dramatic performance by over 2,000 Oberammergau citizens keeps a 370 year-old vow to present this drama every decade to enrich our pilgrim lives. You will also see the majesty of the Alps, the breathtaking scenery of the countryside, the magnificent castles and churches, photographic opportunities beyond description, life enhancing fellowship with others, spiritual guidance by our Bishop, and much more!

As you know, there are many ways God changes our lives and Christian travel is one of these. This is why we devote so much of our time and energy to Christian travel as Directors of Travel Ministry.

You are invited to join other Western PA United Methodists in this spiritual adventure. You can register on the web site at www.eo.travelwithus.com, or you may phone Educational Opportunities at 863-648-0383.

The per-person New York price begins at \$2,798 plus \$248 additional from Pittsburgh (tax, tips, and Passion Play Ticket, etc, are extra). Extensions are possible to Italy, Switzerland, Vienna-Prague and Alpine Village.



Sunday, October 18

at

North Park's Pie Traynor Pavilion

Register @ 1:30, Walk @ 2

Did you know that:

Each day more than 27,000 children die from hunger, malnutrition, dirty water, and preventable illnesses like diarrhea and malaria, according to the United Nations' Children's Fund.

1.1 billion people are forced to survive on less than a dollar a day – one of every six people in the world.

Almost 50% (2.8 billion) of the world's population lives on less than two dollars a day.

4% of U.S. households (11.1 million people, including 0.43 million children) experience hunger. Some families skip meals, eat too little, or go a whole day without food.

25% of your CROP Walk donation returns to help local food pantries.

CROP Walk forms will be available following worship in October. If you can't walk, please support those who do in this very important work!

All Saints Day is Sunday, Nov. 1

It's not often that November 1 falls on a Sunday, but that's the way it is this year. Churches traditionally celebrate All Saints Day on the first Sunday in November, but this year it's the actual day!

In your offering envelopes there is an *All Saints Day* Envelope. Your donation made with that envelope will be added to the Endowment Fund.

You may designate your gift to the Endowment Fund:

++++
I (we) wish to make a gift in honor of in memory of
(please circle one)

our saint: _____

Please return this form to Steve Lindquist's mailbox. A list of those honored / remembered will appear in the bulletin November 1, and in November's Focus.

Outreach Ministries Meeting

All those interested in Outreach are invited to a meeting at Panera's - McKnight Road - on Monday, October 19 at 6:00 p.m. We'll start with dinner and then discuss ways the McKnight UM Church family may be in service to those in our community and beyond. Please bring your ideas about mission days; events and trips; getting involved with UM missionaries; campaign to end hunger; UMCOR; and prayer as a form of Outreach.



Country Dinner and Square Dance

When: Saturday, October 24, @ 6:00 p.m.

Where: Fellowship Hall

Tickets: \$12 adults, \$6 children (10 years & under)

We are asking for your help to make it a Big Success!

Please mark your calendar and plan to attend... also ask your friends. You don't have to dance, just come and enjoy the fellowship... it is a lot of fun.

Questions? Call Bob Conrad @ 412-363-8604.

Tickets will be available from the church office or contact Bob Conrad. Please purchase tickets in advance so we can prepare accordingly.

Announcing a New Church Directory!

This will be a **free on-line directory**, but we will print some for folks who want a traditional one, for a nominal cost. Matt Matthews will be taking your pictures after worship on October 4, 18, and Nov. 1. Questions? Call Matt or Jenny at 412- 821-8410, or ask Pastor LaVelle.

Fall Rummage and Bake Sales

Have you heard that old adage “Actions speak louder than words?” We’re confident the McKnight UM Church family cares deeply about others and welcomes an opportunity to show it. How about donating clean clothing, bed linens, shoes and toys that you’re no longer using to the Fall Rummage Sale? We’re also looking for small appliances in working condition, as well as books, videos, CDs, dishes and tools. Winter is on its way and those sweaters you packed away last year (but never wear) may be just what a neighbor in need can use to keep warm.

The Fall Rummage & Bake Sales are scheduled for **November 7, 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.** and here are the ways you might lend a hand to raise money for mission:

Donate rummage sale items

Donate baked goods (homemade or store bought)

Help set up tables & racks at 6:00 Thu., Nov. 5

Help set up rummage items on Fri., Nov. 6

Work at the Rummage/Bake Sales on Sat., Nov. 7

Help clean/pack up after the sale at 2:00 Sat., Nov. 7

Please bring your donations to the church during the week of November 1 and place them in the Youth Room. If you require help, please call Gerri Czado at 412-901-9798 to arrange pickup.

As if the de-cluttering of your home, the fun of working, laughing and talking with others while offering usable items at a fair price to our neighbors isn’t enough, all of the proceeds from the sales go to mission, where your ACTIONS help yet more of God’s children!

North Hills Youth Ministry Counseling Center
800 McKnight Park Drive, Ste. 802

is now

Anchorpoint Counseling Ministry

...and there is an immediate need for 15 volunteer tutors! No experience necessary. Volunteer tutors need to be 16 years of age and older. Work one-on-one with students in grades K-12 in primary subject areas. Sessions are held Monday – Thursday, 4:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m. Volunteers may serve one or more hours a week. Training provided. Call Sandy at 412-366-1300 extension 23.

www.anchorpointcounselingministry.org

About the Planet Aid Container

Planet Aid boxes are seen in several places in our area. We were contacted by a representative to see if we would be interested in having a box placed in our parking lot to collect used clothing and shoes. Their website, www.planetaid.org, describes their work in detail. However, upon further research, the pastor has discovered that the Better Business Bureau refuses to recognize Planet Aid as a charity, and the American Institute of Philanthropy has given Planet Aid an F rating. The reason? While Planet Aid reports a 94% program ratio, AIP believes the ratio is actually 23%.

The American Institute of Philanthropy is an independent charity watchdog group: www.charitywatch.org. The United Methodist Committee on Relief, for example, received the institute’s “Open Book” rating.

Therefore, Planet Aid has been contacted and told to not place a box in our parking lot.

Men’s Breakfast

Saturday, Oct. 18 @ 8:30 a.m.

Last month Bernie Watson spoke about the G 20 Summit. Bernie is a consultant to the David Lawrence Convention Center, and was very involved in many phases of the planning process.

We will have another surprise speaker on October 18, so men, come out and enjoy breakfast with one another and have a great discussion.

Suggested donation is \$5, otherwise we won’t be able to pay for the breakfast, let alone have any resources for doing any good for anyone!



World Communion Sunday

October 4

Your Generous Gifts Provide:

- World Communion Scholarships (General Board of Global Ministries), with at least one-half of the annual amount for ministries beyond the U.S.;
- Ethnic Scholarship Program (General Board of Higher Education and Ministry); and
- Ethnic In-Service Training Program (General Board of Higher Education and Ministry).

The Journey Continues ...

By Bishop Thomas J. Bickerton

As is typical this time of the year, another wildfire is burning its way across California. Containing such fires requires a 24-hour effort by dedicated professional firefighting crews. One lesson they've learned is that fire creates its own wind, and that wind can cause the fire to spread more quickly than anyone expects.

This week I read an opinion piece sent across the church by a prominent leader in our denomination. He devoted significant space to justifying his position on certain issues by denigrating those with opposing views. The tone of the article had a disturbing arrogance about it and the writer accused church leaders of not being in touch with reality. The piece created a scenario of "winners versus losers" and did more to divide the church than to unite it. It is an article that, I am sure, will create a wind of its own -- sending the fire ahead far more quickly than it should.

The article caused me to reflect upon the role of leaders and how leadership should be exercised within the church. Some passages of scripture speak about the unique role that leaders play in the life of church:

- For I am longing to see you so that I may share with you some spiritual gift to strengthen you - or rather that we may be mutually encouraged by each other's faith, both yours and mine. (Romans 1:11-12)
- But speaking the truth in love, we must grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and knitted together by every ligament with which it is equipped, as each part is working properly, promotes the body's growth in building itself up in love." (Ephesians 4:15-16)
- Bear with one another and, if anyone has a complaint against another, forgive each other; just as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. (Colossians 3:13-14)

Probably the best biblical reference comes from Paul's writings to the church in Corinth, a people filled with conflict and discord: "The authority the Master gave me is for putting people together, not taking them apart." (2 Corinthians 13:10, The Message).

That is the essence of true Christ-like leadership. It does not tear people down in an effort to justify a position. Instead, it strives at all costs to go the extra mile in loving our neighbors as Christ loved us. It

doesn't mean that we never disagree, but it shows the right way to approach disagreement. Our calling, as I understand it, is to build up, not tear down.

After reading the article I began to reflect on my own leadership. That self-analysis caused me to admit that there are significant times when I become frustrated with my work. I have a low tolerance for bureaucracy that takes away from our church's mission. I get confused by the large number of our churches that are focused only on themselves, rather than reaching out through evangelism and mission.

I scratch my head over divisions in the church that rip apart the fabric of who we are instead of celebrating our diversity as a gift from God.

I wondered -- do these frustrations cause my attitude to be shaped in a way that I too tear down instead of build up? Admittedly, sometimes they do. That realization sends me into prayer for forgiveness for the times that I do not reflect the spirit of Christ in the way I lead.

What about you? Are there times that lead you away from Christ-centered leadership? When are you tempted to be critical when you could be constructive?

Our ability to recognize, confess, and move beyond those times is a critical dimension of effective leadership. It will make the difference in whether you are seen as a "pot stirrer" or "kingdom builder." When someone reads or hears your words, do they see the face of Christ inviting them into the heart of God? This is the essence of a church leader.

Webster's defines the word "lead" as the ability to "guide on a way, especially by going in advance, to direct on a course or in a direction, and to serve as a channel for (a pipe leads water to the house)."

That's not a bad definition. It could describe the spirit behind any number of opinion pieces written these days. But when you add the spirit of Christ, the definition of leadership is very different. To lead in that sense is to "guide into the heart of God, especially by leading through example; to direct on a course or in a direction that builds up and does not tear down, and to serve as a channel for others to follow Christ (a shepherd who leads the sheep into the house of God)."

That's a fire we should feed and a wind that we can only hope will jump ahead and show us the way.

The Journey Continues ...

UMCOR Birthing Kits Save Lives!

I am a labor and delivery nurse and about two years ago at an employee recognition function one of the hospital security guards relayed his personal story to the group gathered. Perry came to the USA from Liberia a country struggling to rebuild after its 14 year civil war ended in 2004. He lives very modestly, sending home as much of his wages as he can, not only to help his family members, but also to support a small nonprofit organization that he started. He is trying to raise money to educate nurses, build a women's clinic and a school. Why such great ambition? Perry stated it passionately to the group that stood spellbound by his story – he simply doesn't want another woman to give birth in the dirt, with just the shade of a tree from the hot African sun, like his mother did.

Having been already engaged in participating and leading medical volunteer in mission teams through the United Methodist Church, I was aware of the struggles that resource poor settings present medical staff on the ground. The teams I lead partner with United Methodist missions on the ground that serves the least – the women and children. Our goal is to empower women through accessibility to healthcare, through learning life skills, and in the process ensuring they survive, thus preventing more children being orphaned embracing the vision of the Global Health Initiative of the United Methodist Church.

In this work, God has revealed to us a world crying out in need and a wonderful opportunity to be instrumental in making birthing kits one of the supply kits that UMCOR collects and sends out from its depots to places around the world. For so many of us there is little desire to travel to places as far away as Africa, however, there is a passionate desire to help. The birthing kit initiative gives everyone the opportunity to save lives. For the cost of a cup of coffee and treat from a local bakery the funds can be used to make a kit. Imagine something you have touched making such a difference to save the life of a baby and a mother.

As a nurse I appreciate having the tools readily available to get my job done. Traditional birthing attendants (TBA) and lay women from village communities are being trained on how to deliver babies using these life saving kits. At the same time, they are receiving further health education that ensures they are knowledgeable as to which women need care at the hospital. The TBAs are excited

about the care they are now able to give, and also about their brothers and sisters so far away hearing the cries of the women and children in their community...and just think, one day no woman will give birth in the dirt, with just the shade of a tree from the hot African sun, like Perry's mother.

By Julie Warren, RN, Ganta United Methodist Hospital, Liberia, and volunteer coordinator for the Central Texas Annual Conference.

Birthing Kit contents:

- 1 hotel-size bar of soap (1 oz. and up)
- 1 pair of clean latex gloves
- 1 square yard of clear 4 mil plastic sheeting
- 3 pieces of clean string each 12" long
- 2 flannelette receiving blankets, each 1 sq. yard
- 1 clean single-use razor blade (carefully wrap blade in paper to protect it and keep it from causing injury)

October Calendar

Sunday 4 th	Sunday School 9:30 a.m. Worship 11:00 a.m.
Monday 5 th	AA 5:30 p.m.
Tuesday 6 th	North Side Feeding 10:30 a.m. Trustees Mtg. 7:00 p.m.
Wed. 7 th	Choir Practice 7:00 p.m.
Sunday 11 th	Sunday School 9:30 a.m. Worship 11:00 a.m.
Monday 12 th	AA 5:30 p.m. Finance Mtg. 7:30 p.m.
Tuesday 13 th	Great Escape Clergy Retreat
Wed. 14 th	Great Escape Clergy Retreat Choir Practice 7:00 p.m.
Thurs. 15 th	Great Escape Clergy Retreat Church Council Mtg. 7:30 p.m.
Saturday 17 th	Men's Breakfast 8:30 a.m.
Sunday 18 th	Sunday School 9:30 a.m. Worship 11:00 a.m. Crop Walk 1:30 p.m.
Monday 19 th	AA 5:30 p.m. Outreach Mtg. 6:00 p.m.
Wed. 21 st	Choir Practice 7:00 p.m.
Thurs. 22 nd	Global Links 10:00 a.m.
Friday 23 rd	Set up Square Dance 6:00 p.m.
Sat. 24 th	Square Dance
Sunday 25 th	Sunday School 9:30 a.m. Worship 11:00 a.m. Pgh. Dist UMW Green Team 2:00 p.m.
Monday 26 th	AA 5:30 p.m.
Wed. 28 th	Choir 7:00 p.m.