



SUMMER 2008

# Saginaw Bay Horizons

SAGINAW BAY DISTRICT  
The United Methodist Church

## New Appointment Changes in Saginaw Bay District

Churchill - **Rev. Cindy Gibbs**

Coleman: Faith - **Rev. Caroline Hart**

Glennie & Rose City: Trinity - **Rev. Don Wojewski**

Hale - **Rev. David Stewart**

Hillman & Spratt - **Rev. Don Derby**

Homer - **Rev. David Mulder**

LaPorte - **Rev. L. Cecile Adams**

Midland: First - **Rev. Lisa McIlvina**

Mio & Curran - **Rev. Marcel Lamb**

Pinconning - **Rev. Don Mosher**

Reese - **Rev. Harold Slater**

St. Charles & Brant - **Rev. Ernesto Mariona**

Tawas - **Rev. Mary Shipley**

Vassar: First - **Rev. Bill Sanders**

Whittemore & Wilber - **Rev. Brenda Klacking**

Retiring: **Rev.'s Dave Koski, Ray Jacques, Karen Mars**

Re-retiring: **Rev.'s Chuck Marble and Bruce Mitchell**

Leaving the SB District: **Rev.'s Bonita Davis, Pat England, Susan Kingsley, Reed Swanson and Steve Woodford**



**WE WISH EVERYONE THE VERY BEST IN THEIR NEW ADVENTURES!**

---

**District Conference: October 11, 2008 at Saginaw: Grace UMC**

**Keynote Speaker: District Superintendent Rev. Louise Ott**

**Worship, Workshops, Lunch, Learning and Sharing**

**Trustee meeting scheduled**

**Mark your Calendar NOW!**



"God is Not Fair – God is Gracious"

Matthew 20:1-16

So the last will be first, and the first will be last."

This summer I am getting paid to be with God. Someone else will answer the phone. Someone else will care for any problems that come up. Meanwhile, I will think and pray, read and write, sing and sleep. God and I have a serious date this summer. But how can I earn my salt in the world if I am off for three months?

Have you heard about the pastor who dreamed that he was standing in front of the Pearly Gates. St. Peter told him he needed 100 points to get in.

"Well, I was a pastor for 47 years," the clergyman announced proudly.

"That's nice," answered Peter. "That gets you one point."

"One point? That's all I get?" the pastor exclaimed. "Just one point for 47 years of service."

"Yes, that's correct," replied Peter.

"I visited the sick and discouraged every chance I got."

"One point."

"I worked with the youth, and you must know what that is like."

"One point."

"I mentored soul after soul until they prayed and preached in public."

"One more point. That makes four points. You need 96 more."

"Oh, no!" the pastor cried in a panic. "I feel so helpless, so inadequate. Except for the grace of God, I don't have a chance."

St. Peter smiled and said: "Grace of God - 96 points. Come on in."

\*\*\*

God is not fair! Even preachers don't get a break! We just can't earn God's love. No matter how good we try to be, what we do isn't enough to deserve God's love. I want to be GOOD ENOUGH, don't you?! I want to believe that everything I have, I have deserved.

Fairness is what we claim our society is based upon. This has not changed since the days of Jesus. The workers in Jesus' story expect fairness. But what do they receive? Grace. Grace is getting MORE than we deserve. Of course, you will argue, those who are unhappy in Jesus' little parable story are those who got exactly what we would call fair. They worked all day for the daily wage. So why were they upset? It wasn't fair to give one hour workers the same pay as all day workers.

But this kind of unfairness is exactly the point of Christianity. God's grace is unconditional. You cannot earn it no matter how much you work. I don't know about you but I have some really bad days. I don't want to have to earn my way into God's heart. Because even on my good days I mess-up.

*Continued on next page...*

## "God is Not Fair – God is Gracious", continued

Why is it that we want to make everyone else earn their way? We don't want anyone to get something free or easy. We resent those whom we perceive have gotten the same reward for less work. Grace is not in the fairness equation. But grace is something we all need.

Can we accept that God's love for us is unconditional? And perhaps just as difficult can we accept that God's love for others is unconditional? Can we accept that God blesses us in this life and the next

not because of the hours we have worked but because God's choice is to love us?

\*\*\*\*

It's sort of like a "Dennis the Menace" cartoon. As you know, Dennis is indeed a menace to his next-door neighbors, Mr. and Mrs. Wilson, and yet Mrs. Wilson continues to be kind and gracious. This particular cartoon shows Dennis and his little friend Joey leaving Mrs. Wilson's house, their hands full of cookies.

Joey says, "I wonder what we did to deserve this."

Dennis answers, and his answer is on target: "Look, Joey, Mrs. Wilson gives us cookies not because we're nice, but because she's nice."

--James Moore, Some Things Are Too Good Not to Be True  
(Nashville: Dimensions for Living, 1994), 86.

We can spend all of our lives trying to make God's love complicated and hard to reach. We can ruin our health and our peace of mind, trying to labor long enough in God's vineyard to be worthy of God eternal love. Instead, we are give high expectations are high of how Jesus taught us to live our lives. Love God with all your being and love other people as well as yourself. But no matter how we fail at faithfulness, this does not change the fact that we are loved, we are accepted. We are given more than we can earn, even time to relax, renew, and relieve our aching souls with God's unconditional love. That's grace.

Have a summer full of unconditional love!

*Louise R. Ott*



---

**Jubilee Spotlight** for next year will be using the 2008 book with an addendum that can be downloaded at [umc-detconf.org](http://umc-detconf.org) or contact the district office.

---

**The IRS has issued an increase in mileage effective July 1 - December 31, 2008.  
The new rate is: 58.5 cents per mile.**

**Please contact the Conference Office if you have any questions.**

**Medical/moving: 27 cents per mile**

**Charitable: 14 cents per mile**



## Your #1 Vacation Bible School Question

### "How do we increase attendance of children, youth and adults in our Vacation Bible School?"

This question comes up often, as did during our time together at the 2008 V.B.S. Showcase. So what is really effective in reaching children, youth and adults for Christ?

Barna Research Firm found that personal invitation, the one on one invitation, is the most successful tool in reaching and influencing others for Christ. **65 percent** of people who don't go to church regularly say they would be more apt to attend, if invited by A FRIEND! Post cards and flyers help to sow the seed, but the personal invitation of someone you know or someone in your daily path of life has the greatest potential for that seed to grow into someone seeking to know Christ.

Rick Warren, author of the Purpose Driven Life, Purpose Driven Church and Better Together, states that **90 percent** of Christians first went to church because a FRIEND or FAMILY MEMBER invited them!

Can this be true?! What about all those television advertisements for the United Methodist Church, Open Hearts, Open Minds and Open Doors from our Igniting Ministry? They are candid in sharing that even though there is success in drawing others into our churches for Christ through television advertising it only accounts for a small percentage, as compared to what we can do through personal invitation!

90% of Christians first went to church because a friend or family member invited them.

What about those that say "I am only laity!" "Shouldn't personal invitation come from my Pastor or other leadership in our church?" This may be surprising but according to Herb Miller's research with the National Evangelistic Association they found that out of 100 invitations from Clergy and laity, 50 percent more people responded to accepting the invitation from laity. Why? Laity was viewed (perceived) by those that received a personal invitation, as having a pure motive since they were not paid, even though the Pastor's motive was pure.

How do we invite? We know that Jesus approached all people with his genuine love. The Herb Miller's research with the National Evangelistic Association extends this reminder when inviting. It is important to examine our motives, as most people can see through our motives, pure or impure. Even as well meaning Christians, we can lose our focus. Proverbs 16:2 A man's ways seems innocent to him, but motives are weighed by the Lord. Paul was aware of the importance that pure motives brings in sharing faith, as he reassured the Thessalonians that his motive was not to please man, but to please God, who tests our hearts. 1 Th 2:3-6 What is our focus on inviting? **Is it individual value as being made and loved by God** or could it be a *sub-conscious* desire to recruit others to serve or to become members in our church?

I will never forget the following life changing lesson that God taught me. I only share the following story in hopes it will be of encouragement to you, as it has for me. Diane, a church member who I like to call an enthusiastic seed sower for Christ, had agreed to send out post cards to past and potential V.B.S. participants with the support of additional names and addresses from the congregation. I knew of one of the families that Diane had sent a postcard to and where they lived, but I did not know them. I noticed that they did not attend V.B.S. the first night. While driving home from V.B.S., I felt a strong nudging from the Holy Spirit to stop my truck, as I approached this home. Did I want to? NO! I didn't know this family. Here I was stopping to talk to

complete strangers. The children were outside playing. I shared with this mother that Diane had mailed a V.B.S. invitation to them and I had hoped they would consider joining us for tomorrow's V.B.S.. **What this mother said next, I will never forget, "My children wanted to go, but we did not know you." (know us in the church) What she said was so profound! How many receive our flyer or post card and want to attend, but don't because they hope for a personal invitation or wish to know us, so that they would have the courage to walk through the front door of our church or sponsored church activity?** From her response, I felt awkward and not sure what to say, but

I replied, "You know me now, may I take the children and yourself to V.B.S. tomorrow evening?" The children told their mother they wanted to go! The mother agreed, but shared that she was not ready to attend and neither was her husband.



Continued on next page...

## Your #1 Vacation Bible School Question ...continued

So the following evening I began to pick up the children for V.B.S. and bring them home each evening, until the last evening when the mother decided to step out of her comfort zone and attend the adult V.B.S. class with her friend. To summarize, the children started coming to Sunday school that fall, with transportation provided. After a few months, the mother started coming to Sunday school bringing their children, including their new baby. A few months later, the father began coming and bringing the entire family to church. This family continues to attend this United Methodist Church and every time I think of them, I am reminded what a little courage can do for Christ!

We have the good news of Jesus Christ to share, even if that good news of Jesus Christ comes in an invitation to join us at Vacation Bible School!

Perhaps, those that receive our flyers or post cards are seeking more, a personal invitation from us! Isn't that how Jesus invited?

Together in Christ,

Melene E. Wilsey

Saginaw Bay District

Emerging Ministries & Education Consultant

[umcedconsultant@aol.com](mailto:umcedconsultant@aol.com) 989-839-4798



---

## **MISSION SCHOOL of the NORTH**

**'LIVING THE SACRED'**

October 20-21, 2008

Gaylord UMC

Contact: Church at 989-732-5380 or Mona Dye at 231-864-3785

---



## **SAGINAW BAY DISTRICT YOUTH EVENT**

**AUGUST 9TH - in Saginaw**

**Kokomos "Celebrate Summer"**

\$20 unlimited use of: Go-Karts, Lazer Tag, Water War, Bumper Boats, Minature Golf

Pizza and pop included

Awards ceremony following at Kochville UMC

Contact: Mike Desotell 989-820-5214, [doulos\\_79@hotmail.com](mailto:doulos_79@hotmail.com)

**ALL YOUTH INVITED**



SAGINAW BAY DISTRICT  
The United Methodist  
Church

3617 Mackinaw Suite #1  
Saginaw, MI 48602

Phone: 989-793-8838  
Fax: 989-793-2077  
sagbaydist@aol.com

[www.gbmg-umc.org/  
SaginawMIDist/](http://www.gbmg-umc.org/SaginawMIDist/)

Rev. Louise R. Ott  
District Superintendent  
Teri Meyer  
Administrative Assistant  
Melene Wilsey  
Emerging Ministries  
Education Consultant

**Leadership Renewal Retreat for Leaders and Workers**  
for Leaders of Children, Youth and Adults in Christian Education  
**August 22-23, 2008**  
Lake Huron Retreat Center

Workshops designed specifically for Christian educators

Cokesby Book Store

Prayer Centers

Worship and Commissioning

Prayer labyrinth

Relaxing fun and fellowship

Beautiful settings

Yummy food

Contact: Melene Wilsey 989-839-4798



*Create in me a Pure heart, O God and renew a steadfast spirit within me. Psalm 51:10*