



The Methodist Herald

January, 2009

**Southern Delaware Charge
Colchester Community United Methodist Church
East Branch/Harvard United Methodist Church**

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Pastor's Column:

This month's newsletter is a little late because Laura, Philip, and I just got back from a weeklong vacation. We took the opportunity after Christmas to drive down to Jacksonville Beach, Florida to see my Mom and her husband for several days. As an added bonus, my youngest sister and her two kids, 5 year old Jenna and 2 year old Ethan had come out from California to visit as well, so we got to see them too. For me this was the first time I got to meet Ethan and the first time to see Jenna since she was about six months old.

We decided to drive down to Florida in part because it was far cheaper than flying and in part because I enjoy the drive. As we rolled down the highways through different states, every so often we would see a sign that said "Rest Area ahead. Next Rest Area 76 miles." These rest areas were strategically placed to be between towns at about the point where you were really ready for a pit stop. We pulled in to several of these rest areas and got out to stretch our legs, walk around a little bit, and use the facilities before continuing on our journey. These rest stops were a vital part of our journey.

Once we were down at my Mom's place, we were able to just relax and be bums for a few days. We had no particular agenda and just did whatever struck us at the moment. I got to enjoy seeing the world through the eyes of my niece and nephew, playing with trains and toy

cars, reading books, and watching The Adventures of Dora videos. Little Ethan took to saying "Hey, hey Uncle Dale" every time he wanted my attention. One of the blessings of this time of rest at my Mom's was I could just be Uncle Dale for a few days.

We all need periodic "rest stops" as part of our routine. They help us to recharge and restore ourselves, giving us a fresh perspective on everything. It may seem like we cannot find the time to take these rest stops, but it is vital that we do. If we do not, we can burn out. Exodus 20:8-11 reminds us "Remember the sabbath day, and keep it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work. But the seventh day is a sabbath to the LORD your God; you shall not do any work—you, your son or your daughter, your male or female slave, your livestock, or the alien resident in your towns. For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but rested the seventh day; therefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day and consecrated it.

You would not think of making a 18 hour drive without taking a rest stop or two. Likewise in our lives, God's wisdom tells us we need periodic Sabbaths or rest stops. As we enter a new year, won't you make one of your resolutions to take regular Sabbaths to rest and renew yourself in God's grace?

God's peace and blessings to you all,

Dale

Pastor Dale

AC Connection

If you have attended a United Methodist Church anywhere for any length of time, you have probably heard the word “apportionment” come up in conversation somewhere along the way. You may have wondered just what an apportionment is. Perhaps you have heard apportionments referred to incorrectly as a tax imposed on the local church by the Annual Conference in exchange for the right to be called a United Methodist Church. Actually, apportionments are an important part of our United Methodist way of being church, so I thought it might be helpful to offer an explanation of what apportionments are, why they are important, and how they help us to be the church in the world.

In brief, apportionments are shared ministry giving that every local United Methodist Church participates in. Our collective and connected giving allows us as a denomination to have a far greater impact in the world than any individual local church could ever achieve. Every local United Methodist Church is apportioned a certain amount for shared ministry giving, based on the actual local church budgetary expenses for program and ministry for the previous year. Our apportionments are a vital way we as a local church are in ministry to the world.

As a local church, we pay apportionments to seven denominational funds.

1. The World Service Fund apportionment is the heart of our United Methodist presence, enabling Christian mission and ministry around the world. We benefit from it, and we share God’s love through it.

Through the World Service Fund, a vast variety of ministries happen—age-level programs, camps and retreats, Christian education, colleges and universities, media, ecumenical cooperation, global mission, leadership training, peace and justice, stewardship, worship and much, much more. When we pay the World Service Fund 100 percent, our gifts—combined with those of other United Methodists—represent the heart, hands and hope of Jesus Christ.

2. United Methodist-related Africa University in Old Mutare, Zimbabwe, needs your help to continue educating men and women who shine hope into the future. Each year the university graduates superior students who become world-changing leaders in government, agriculture, the church, education, business and medicine. Africa University students are the hope of Africa.

Through the Africa University Fund apportionment, United Methodist congregations have a unique opportunity: to support the university with consistent funding each year.

3. Historically Black colleges and universities graduate about a fourth of all African-American college students. The Black College Fund provides financial support for United Methodism’s 11 historically Black colleges and universities.

For more than a century, these institutions have enriched minds and led the way in education, medicine, politics, religion and science. Thousands of promising students are nurtured to realize their full potential.

4. The General Administration fund may not grab your attention, but you might be amazed to learn what you would miss if it didn’t exist:

- Without it, you could not feel confident that the money you share through your local church is going where you expect it to go.

- Without it, United Methodist delegates—selected by their peers around the world—would not meet to decide the church’s future at General Conference.

- Without it, the nine-member Judicial Council, United Methodism’s highest court, would lack the means and the authority to grapple with serious questions of church law.

- Without it, United Methodist history would not be preserved—for the church today and for years to come.

5. Providing educational support for United Methodist ordained elders and deacons and diaconal ministers, the Ministerial Education Fund also assists theological schools and clergy recruitment. Twenty-five percent of the apportionment is returned to the annual

conference for professional development and continuing education of clergy.

6. When your congregation gives 100 percent to the Episcopal Fund apportionment, you enable our bishops to lead the church in responding to needs related to education, health care, natural disasters, poverty and much more.

The Episcopal Fund comes back to annual conferences in the visionary leadership of your bishop and the continuing support of bishops who are retired.

7. Even as we appreciate the uniqueness of being United Methodist, when we support the Interdenominational Cooperation Fund, we support ecumenical efforts around the world, foster Christian unity and understanding, witness to a common Christian faith, meet human suffering, and advocate for peace and justice around the world.

As you can see, our apportionments are really the way we as United Methodists are in ministry to the world. Our apportionments allow every local United Methodist church to reach out with the grace of God to change people's lives. Our churches have a history of paying our apportionments in full every year and that is something to be celebrated. This year we really struggled and stretched to pay our apportionments in full. We had to dip into our savings a little bit this year, but thanks be to God and to all of you, we were once again able to pay our apportionments in full. Our District Superintendent, Rev. James Moore extends his appreciation to both our congregations for our sacrificial giving and faithfulness in supporting the shared ministry of The United Methodist Church. To this I add my own thanks to all of you for your faithfulness in our ministry together.

Pastor Dale

Faith in Action

This month's mission offering is for Human Relations Day, one of six special Sunday offerings taken by The United Methodist Church. These offerings allow us to extend our ministry far beyond our local communities. They allow us to touch the lives of people

around the world with the grace of God. You may wonder what the Human Relations offering does. Below is an overview of this offering taken from the umcsgiving.org website.

"It doesn't matter where we work, what we do, how many degrees we have or where we grew up. What matters is having the willingness to serve God in the most unusual places."

She is called to help other realize their potential. It is where the homeless find a bed, where the hungry find a meal, where the vulnerable find safety. It's also where 25-year-old Delia Ramirez works – and once called home. For the first 6 years of her life, Delia lived in the homeless community that is a ministry of Humboldt Park United Methodist Church, Chicago. Today, as executive director of The Center for Changing Lives, she conducts business in the same room her parents used as a bedroom when they lived in the facility and exchanged work services for rent. "I have always known my calling in life was to work with the oppressed," she said.

The Human Relations Day offering makes it possible for Delia and other community developers to turn lives around and make a change for the better. The Human Relations Day offering helps church-based community developers work in racial- and ethnic-minority communities in the United States and Puerto Rico. The offering also ensures a second chance for youth offenders.

"My passion for this work lives because I understand I cannot call myself a Christian if I live blinded by the [situations] that surround me," Delia adds.

Why do we celebrate this offering on the Sunday before the observance of the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr.'s birthday? Because as United Methodists we believe in the development of better human relations and we seek to empower others to become the whole persons God intended.

The 1972 General Conference established Human Relations Day to "recognize the right of all God's children in realizing their potential as human beings in relationship with each other." Every one of God's children deserves justice

and equality. Every one of God's children deserves to open doors to success.

Our mission offering Sunday will be on January 18th. Please support this important way in which we as a church reach out into the world to be about God's work.

A Note of Thanks

Laura and I would like to say thank you for all the Christmas cards and for the generous gifts from both our church families. We are truly blessed to be a part of these loving and caring communities.

Pastor Dale

New Offering Envelopes

Offering envelopes for 2009 are available for anyone who would like them. You will notice that our offering envelopes are a little different this year. There are three different funds that you can direct your giving to.

The general fund is our general operating expenses for the church. It covers all our normal operating and programmatic expenses for the church, supporting worship, education, ministry outreach, and pastoral support.

The building fund is a new fund managed by the Trustees. This fund is used to support repairs and maintenance to our church building.

The benevolence fund is our ministry fund, used to support local outreach opportunities such as supporting victims of flooding or fires, and helping families in need. To contribute to this fund, use the line marked "Other" and indicate Benevolence.

If you are interested in obtaining offering envelopes please contact the Financial Secretary – Missy Lawrence for Colchester Community UMC and Joanie Roberts for East Branch/Harvard UMC. Thank you all for the many ways you support our church ministries.

Confirmation Class Being Planned

A Confirmation class is being planned for the churches of the Southern Delaware Charge: Colchester Community UMC and East

Branch/Harvard UMC, to take place February – May, 2009. Confirmation class is a faith journey for youth from 6th – 9th grades that prepares them to make their own profession of faith as they become full members of our churches. Confirmands publicly accept the vows made on their behalf by their parents or family at their baptism. For youth who have not yet been baptized, a service of baptism can be combined with their Confirmation. We will be using the Claim The Name curriculum from The United Methodist Church. The Confirmation class will meet weekly for approximately 9 weeks. The exact schedule and location of our meetings will be determined once I know who plans to attend the class. Our weekly meetings will typically be about 1 ½ hours long. Confirmation is tentatively scheduled for May 31st, Pentecost Sunday.

The youth in Confirmation class will also be helping with activities in our worship services, exploring a service project in the community, and attending worship services at a Roman Catholic Church and a Jewish synagogue.

For our Confirmation class we will need the help of adult members of our churches who can serve as mentors to the Confirmands. The role of mentor is an important one, as the mentor shares the journey of faith exploration with his or her Confirmand. Parents also play an important role in the Confirmation process, exploring faith issues with their children as they prepare for Confirmation.

All interested families of Confirmation-aged youth are asked to contact Pastor Dale at 363-2362 by January 25th to let him know of your interest. Also, those interested in serving as Confirmation mentors should contact Pastor Dale. An orientation meeting for Confirmands, parents, and mentors will be scheduled for early February. At that time schedules and locations for meetings will be determined and time will be provided for questions and answers.

Colchester Community UMC Angel Food Ministry

We are off and running and looking for a very successful month and year to come. We

will be taking orders on January 5th, 7th and 10th at the church and pick up will be January 17th at the fire hall. If you are interested in placing an order there are menus available at all of the local churches, the Eagle Dollar Store, Paula's and the Downsville Diner. We are grateful to the Girl Scouts and the Downsville Honor Society for their help during distribution and we are always looking for help to pick up the orders in Sidney and at the fire hall on distribution day. For more information call Toni Vessey.

Colchester Community UMC Update on Our NCD Process – Passionate Spirituality

One of the ways we would like to help you to enhance your prayer life is to offer some resources to increase your passionate spirituality. There are a number of books on prayer and devotionals that are available in our church library. They can be borrowed and returned at your leisure. There is a sign up sheet near the thermostat so we can keep track of our books. There are never any late fees or due dates so please consider using the resources of our very own library.

Also, for those who are computer savvy we have some online devotionals that are available on our Southern Delaware Charge website - http://www.gbgn-umc.org/Southern_delaware_charge/Devotional_s.htm. Those who are "computer challenged" can take advantage of our printed The Upper Room devotionals found in the hallway of the church. They are a daily reading that can enrich your spiritual life and help in times of crisis or need.

With all of these resources you will begin to see God in new and different ways so please take advantage of these opportunities to enhance your spiritual walk. We will be offering new ideas next month as we continue to work with you as we journey together. Please let us know if you have special books or prayers that have been a blessing to you that you'd like to share with others.

If you are interested in a daytime Bible study or women's program please let members of the Health Team know. We would like to

plan some events for the spring and would like your input as to what you might like to see happen.

Colchester Community UMC Youth Group News

Our Youth Group will be holding its first meeting of the new year on Sunday, January 11th at 1 pm. We will meet at the Colchester Community Church and drive up to Oneonta to go to InterSkate 88 for some roller skating from 2 – 5 pm. We will stop at a fast food restaurant for dinner before returning home. We should be back home no later than 7 pm. Youth should bring money for roller skating and for dinner. Any adults that would be willing to help drive up to Oneonta are asked to contact Pastor Dale at 363-2362.

Our second meeting of January will be held on Sunday, January 25th at 5 pm. We will be getting together at the Methodist parsonage for a movie and pizza. We will have a short discussion following the movie and should be done around 8:00 pm.

Our Youth Group is participating in the Souper Bowl of Caring on February 1st, Super Bowl Sunday. This is a nationwide event where Youth Groups all over the country raise money and collect non-perishable foods to donate to the charities of their choice on Super Bowl Sunday. On a day where we celebrate with friends and family, watching the game and enjoying good food and snacks, it is a way of remembering and helping those who do not have enough to eat. Our goal is to collect at least 100 cans of soup to donate to local food banks in Downsville and East Branch. Cans of soup can be brought to either Colchester Community UMC or East Branch/Harvard UMC on Sunday, February 1st during our normal worship service. The Youth Group will then take the soup to the local food banks.

Colchester Community UMC to offer a New Members Class

The Colchester Community UMC will be holding a New Members Class in January.

Anyone who is interested in joining our church family is invited to come attend this class. The New Members Class will be run in two sessions: Monday, January 26th and Tuesday, January 27th from 7:00 to 8:30 pm at the Colchester Community Church in the library. In the first session we will learn about the early history of the Christian church and the beliefs that we all hold as Christians. In the second session, we will learn about the history of the United Methodist Church and the unique understandings of Christian discipleship that make us United Methodists. Reception of new members will take place on Sunday, February 8th in our worship service. If you are interested in joining our church family, please speak with Pastor Dale or call him at 363-2362 to register for the New Members class.

Colchester Community UMC Release Time

The children worked hard on Christmas letters and cards for our "adopted friends" in Honduras. They sent cards and small gifts to Catherine and Jose who are the children we support in Helping Honduras Kids. It was fun to learn where Honduras is and to send something to children who have so little. A special Thank you to Lori Hafele for her generous gifts to this project. We're hoping to get back a letter and maybe even be pen-pals. They've learned about the Golden Rule and the true meaning of Christmas.

Colchester Community UMC Open Arms Prayer Shawl Ministry

It is our pleasure to report that we have given 32 shawls in 2008. In December we had 6 more shawls dedicated and we again would like to thank all the "helping hands" which keep this ministry going. If you would like to help please contact Emily Bullis. There is always a need for gift bags and tissue paper and money to purchase the cards that are sent with each shawl. Thank you for your generous support of this ministry.

East Branch/Harvard UMC Song and Supper Event

The East Branch/Harvard UMC will be holding a Song and Supper event on Friday, January 30th at 5 pm at the East Branch Church. This will be an informal, fun event that is open to all in our community. Bring a food dish to share, your own table service and drinks and come join us for a time of fellowship, eating, and singing. We will be singing our favorite hymns from the hymnal after we eat, so pick out a few hymns that you love to sing and come join us for Song and Supper.

East Branch/Harvard UMC Financial Update

There is, as they say, good news and bad news. The good news is that we made it through 2008 and were able to meet our budget. We had to dip into reserve funds to pay the balance of our 2008 apportionments, but thanks to the faithful giving of all of you we made it. The bad news is that we face some financial challenges in 2009. Due in part to the current economic downturn and other factors, our pledges for 2009 are down considerably, while our budget has increased. The Church Council will be working diligently this year to find ways to close the gap. We ask each of our church family members to prayerfully consider your own giving to support our church and we ask that each of you pray for our church, that we may continue to grow and be effective in the ministries God calls us to. The Church Council will also be looking at changes that will hopefully help us to grow and reach more people. We ask for your support as we work together to try to grow our church. We will strive to keep the congregation updated on where we are throughout the year.

Church Humor

A Sunday school teacher asked her little children, as they were on the way to church service, "And why is it necessary to be quiet in church?" One bright little girl replied, "Because people are sleeping."

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