



The Methodist Herald

March, 2009

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

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Pastor's Column:

For the past few months, I have been working on completely redoing the upstairs bathroom in the parsonage. This job required completely removing everything from the old bathroom: the tub, the toilet, the sink, the lathe and plaster, even the floor. I took the bathroom right down to the bare studs and floor joists. You could say that the room was quite open and unfinished in this stage.

After leveling out the floor joists, I began the slow process of reassembling the new bathroom. I put new insulation in the walls and then covered it with sheetrock. I put in a new subfloor. The new bathroom started to take shape, becoming recognizable as a new creation from the open and unfinished room that was there after the demolition work.

However, even with the new sheetrock up on the walls, there were still seams and gaps, uneven steps between the pieces of sheetrock. There were a number of holes in the ceiling. I had to start applying drywall tape and mud over these gaps and seams to cover them up. I had to blend between uneven joints in the sheetrock to try and create one seamless, smooth wall and ceiling. After the first coat of mud, the joints are still rough and visible. I had to sand them smooth and then apply a second coat of mud, which I also sanded. Pretty soon, most of the joints and seams, the gaps and holes disappeared, leaving a smooth even surface.

As I worked, it struck me that God uses a similar process in our lives. We are separated, estranged from God by sin. There is some demolition work that needs to be done by God in our lives to tear down our sinful ways. Then comes the building of a new creation. Slowly the gaping holes and empty spaces are covered by God's grace. But there are still seams and gaps in our lives caused by sin. God continues to seal up each gap and seam, to make each uneven joint smooth, making our broken relationship with God whole again. As we see God working in our lives, we learn how to do the same thing in our relationships with others.

In 2 Corinthians 5:17-20, we read "So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new! All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting the message of reconciliation to us. So we are ambassadors for Christ, since God is making his appeal through us; we entreat you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God." In this season of Lent, may God continue to work in our lives, filling the gaps and seams, making us whole and new again. And may we do the same in our relationships with each other.

God's peace and blessings to you all,

Dale

Pastor Dale

AC Connection

Bishop Park has announced the appointment of two new District Superintendents to the NYAC. The appointment of two new district superintendents is effective July 1st: The Rev. Kenny Yi will serve the Long Island West District following the Rev. Gunshik Shim who is completing an eight year term. The Rev. Kenneth Kiefer will serve the Connecticut District following the Rev. George Engelhardt who also has served as a district superintendent for eight years.

We welcome these appointments and are very happy that Rev. Jim Moore remains as our District Superintendent.

Sunday March 8th – Girl Scout Sunday

Sunday March 8 is Girl Scout Sunday. We invite all Brownies and Girl Scouts, past and present, and their leaders and parents to join us in our worship services (9:15 a.m. Downsville, 6:30 p.m. East Branch) on this Sunday as we honor the many ways Scouts serve in our communities and in our world. Scouts and leaders are welcome to wear their Scout uniforms. If any Scouts are interested in helping with the worship service such as ushering, greeting, or reading Scripture, please contact Pastor Dale

Colchester Community UMC Lenten Reminder

Don't forget and tell your friends that the church is open from 10:00 am till about 8:00 pm (weather permitting) on Tuesdays for private devotionals; a time to visit our prayer center or just spend some time in quiet meditation with the Lord during this season of reconciliation. We hope you will take some time and be quiet with the Lord.

Also, we continue to offer our weekly Lenten Devotional worship service on Tuesday nights at 7:00 p.m. through Lent. These services will be focused on the theme of "The Means of Grace: Getting to Know God Better." The first Lenten devotional service will be on Tuesday, March 3 and the last on Tuesday,

March 31. We invite you to join us for these short worship services each week of Lent.

Colchester Community UMC Soup Sale

The Colchester Community United Methodist Church will be selling soup, March 6th, Friday from 11:30 to 1:00p.m., at the Church. Homemade soups for sale will be: chicken noodle, vegetable and beef stew. You'll receive a 16oz. container of soup, crackers and a cookie for \$4.00. Soup order slips will be available at Downsville Central School; bus garage, D.W.S. Office, battery factory, and town shed. Or walk in and order your take out. Every one is welcome.

Colchester Community UMC Chairperson's Chat by Toni Vessey

As the newly elected Chairman of the Colchester Church Council I wanted to take the time to formally thank you all for your trust in me and my ability to lead your council. I would also like to formerly thank Jim Davis for his support and his fine example as my predecessor. His are big shoes to fill and I hope that I will do as good as job as he did.

My focus this year is to make our council not only efficient in its reporting and decision making but to make the council aware of their role in the spiritual leadership of our church. I have selected Three Simple Rules; A Wesleyan Way of Life by Rueben P. Job as the focus of devotionals that I will present at each monthly meeting. In January, I introduced the concept and in February, I presented a devotional based on Do No Harm. Part of the devotional was the selection of a prayer stone that will help to remind us to stop and say "Good Morning" and "Good Night" to our Heavenly Father who wants to be in relationship with us. Some of you may have seen the stones on the table in the hallway and I encourage you to take one home with you, too.

You should be very proud of the council you have chosen. They are a committed group who will continue the great work that past committees have begun. And I will be reporting

to you monthly on the special things we have accomplished and asking you for your input, too, in the workings both spiritually and in the physical business of the church. Each of us on council are willing and able to listen to your concerns and take them back to the full council for action. We ask for your prayers and support as we continue the great work of the church in making new disciples for Christ and spreading His kingdom here on earth.

Colchester Community UMC Update on Our NCD Process – Passionate Spirituality

In keeping with our work on passionate spirituality in our church we have provided a Lenten Prayer tree and various Lenten devotionals and resources for your personal use. The church will be open during the Lenten season from 10am till after the 7pm service each Tuesday for personal prayer time. Please take some time from your busy schedules on Tuesdays to sit and visit with our Lord or to simply "Be Still" with Him.

We also have changed the bulletin board in the hallway to post your suggestions on resources that you use in your daily Faith journey. If there is a special book or devotional that you use or a website, a TV program, a CD, a favorite Bible passage that you are especially fond of that may help someone else to enhance their personal relationship with God please write it down and post it so that someone else can benefit from it. It may be just the thing they are looking for to jump start their spiritual renewal.

If you are looking for some spiritual reading materials for this special season of Lent please don't hesitate to check out the resources in our library. The shelves are labeled and you are sure to find something to help you out.

Colchester Community UMC Angel Food Ministry

February was another good month for Angel Food. We had 39 regular boxes and 3 senior meals plus a number of specials that were purchased. The March menu offers an allergen free package of meat that promises to be

processed without any peanut, soybean, milk, eggs, fish, crustacea, tree nuts or gluten.

We hope you will share this information with your friends and neighbors. You don't have to be a member of the church or come from any particular financial background. There are no financial requirements and anyone can order. We are not able to take food stamps yet because we have no phone service in our church. If cell phone service becomes available in the Downsville area we will be able to add Food stamps to our current payment options. Payment is due when you order and cash is preferred but we will accept checks made to the order of CCUMC Angel Food.

We have added an additional order day this month in East Branch to make it easier for the folks who live there to order closer to home. You still have to pick up your orders in Downsville but you can order in East Branch. We will be taking orders in Downsville at the Church on Monday March 9th from 1-3pm; Wednesday March 11th from 4-6 pm; and Saturday March 14th from 10am - 2pm. In East Branch orders will be taken on Thursday March 12th from 10am till Noon. Delivery will be on Saturday March 21st from 9am till 11am at the Downsville Fire Hall.

If you would like to help in any way or would like more information, please call Toni @ 363-7363.

Colchester Community UMC Youth Group News

The Youth Group will be doing the 30 Hour Famine again this year. We will hold our 30 Hour Famine on Friday, March 13 and Saturday, March 14. This is an event sponsored by World Vision to combat hunger throughout the world. The participating youth learn about hunger and poverty in the world as they spend 30 hours going without food. We also raise money during this event to provide hunger relief, emergency food supplies, and agricultural projects where they are most needed in the world. The youth will be looking for sponsors to support them during their 30 Hour Famine.

Our famine will start right after lunch on Friday, March 13th and conclude at 6 pm on Saturday, March 14th. During that time our youth and I will not be eating anything. The youth can drink as much juice and water as they like during that time. The youth will meet at the parsonage at 10 a.m. on Saturday, March 14th to work on some special projects during the morning and early afternoon. Then we will go down to East Branch around 3 pm to help the East Branch/Harvard UMC set up and serve for their St. Patrick's Day dinner at the Fire Hall. We will conclude our 30 hour fast by returning to Colchester Community UMC for a dinner for the youth and their families. The youth will share about their experience during worship on Sunday, March 15th. All youth interested in participating in the 30 Hour Famine should contact Pastor Dale at 363-2362 right away to pick up a sponsor envelope. Parents, if you have any questions, please call Pastor Dale.

Our second meeting will be on Monday, March 30 at 5 pm at the parsonage. We will have a movie and pizza night.

Colchester Community UMC Open Arms Prayer Shawl Ministry

We are pleased to report that Joyce Bouw has donated 9 shawls this month. We are grateful for her continuing support of our ministry. One of our shawls went to Charlie Decker and we ask for your prayers for him and all of our recipients as well as those who give so freely of their time and talents to make the shawls for friends in need of a warm hug.

Colchester Community UMC Announces March Madness Fund Raiser

As many of you know by looking at the back of our church bulletins, we are sliding behind in our current expenses and apportionments. To help alleviate some of our financial problems we are offering some opportunities for you all to help. We have added what we are calling a "March Madness" calendar to this newsletter based on Biblical stories and quotes. This calendar works like the

one we had last year for the Ark Project at Annual Conference; the main difference being the money will be used here for our church ministries. We hope you will have fun reading your calendar each day and adding your "change" to the pot. At the end of the month we would ask you to "deposit" your check in the offering plate or send your check by mail to PO Box 305, Downsville, NY 13755. If everyone does a little no one has to do a lot. We understand that times are tough and everyone is tightening their financial belts but we also know that we are truly blessed with all we do have and it is up to us to help where we can to support the work of our church. We also welcome your comments and ask that you share them either with Pastor Dale or any member of the church council.

Another benefit to this project is the use of the calendar to influence your Bible study. You can use the day's Bible reference in your daily reading. So not only are you helping the church with your financial contributions, you are enhancing your personal relationship with God at the same time. Now that's "priceless"!

Colchester Community UMC Sunday School and VBS News

The children are learning fun songs and will be singing one in church on Easter Sunday. They are also preparing a craft and short program for the Easter Sunday service on April 12th, as well as having the regular Sunday School program each week. We hope to have good attendance in the coming weeks. Hey kids, we miss seeing you!

It's never too early to prepare! Mark your calendars for July 13th-18th for Vacation Bible School. It will again be held from 6-8pm each night and the theme involves adventure "treks" to such place as Bethlehem and the Upper Room. If you would like to help in this fun week please contact Joy Fisk. There will be more information coming in the spring.

East Branch/Harvard UMC Midweek Lenten Devotional Services Reminder

Don't forget that during the season of Lent, East Branch /Harvard UMC will be offering weekly Lenten Devotional services. These services will be focused on the theme of "The Means of Grace: Getting to Know God Better." The weekly Lenten Devotional services will be held at the East Branch Church on Thursdays at 7:00 pm starting March 5th and running until April 2nd. There will be a soup and salad dinner offered each Thursday at 6:00 pm before the Lenten Devotional service at 7:00 pm. Please join us as we journey through Lent together as disciples of our Lord Jesus Christ.

East Branch/Harvard UMC has a new mailing address

The mailing address for the East Branch/Harvard UMC has changed. All church mail now goes to the office mailing address for the Southern Delaware Charge. The new mailing address for the East Branch/Harvard UMC is as follows:

East Branch/Harvard UMC
PO Box 305
Downsville, NY 13755

East Branch/Harvard UMC is changing its worship time

We are making some changes to our worship schedule at the East Branch/Harvard UMC. Starting Sunday, March 8th, we will be holding our Sunday worship services each week at 6:30 pm at the East Branch Church instead of at 11:15 in the morning. On the last Sunday of each month at 5:30 pm, we will hold a community potluck dinner at the church, followed by our worship service. We are making these changes in an effort to make our worship services more convenient and accessible to the people in our community. If you have thought about visiting us for worship but found that our 11:15 a.m. worship service just did not fit your schedule, come try our new 6:30 p.m. worship service on Sundays. And join us for our community potluck supper on the

last Sunday of every month at 5:30 pm. Even if you have been away for the weekend, now you can still make church on Sunday evenings when you get home.

Don't forget that our new worship schedule, Sundays at 6:30 p.m., starts Sunday March 8th. And also do not forget to set your clocks ahead one hour for daylight savings time that Sunday as well.

East Branch/Harvard UMC Music Notes

Welcome back choir! I'm thrilled to announce that the East Branch/Harvard choir will resume practices each Sunday, 45 minutes before our evening service. We will be preparing our music for the Lenten and Easter Season and beyond. I'm so, so happy! Please join in as we can always use an extra voice to sing praises!

East Branch/Harvard UMC St. Patrick's Day Dinner

On Saturday, March 14th from 4:30 – 6:30 p.m., the East Branch/Harvard UMC will be holding a St. Patrick's Day dinner at the East Branch Fire Hall. The dinner will feature corned beef and cabbage, a vegetable, potatoes, and dessert. A free will offering will be taken at the door to help support the ministries of our church. So kick the winter blues, free yourself from cabin fever, and come join us for dinner and fellowship.

East Branch/Harvard UMC announces its Swing into Spring Gospel Sing

MARK YOUR CALENDARS! On Friday evening, March 20 at 6:30 p.m. we will celebrate the spring equinox by holding our "Swing into Spring Gospel Sing". Is there a song, a flower, a favorite food, a trip, a special event that typically marks "SPRING" for you? Well, bring along your stories, songs and snacks to help launch our entrance into spring. Come share around the table and sing those grand old songs we all love so well. Thank you to the 13 wonderful, song-filled people at our first Gospel sing-a-long,

Invite some friends and come and help us have some fun as we lift our voices and our spirits in song! I have a couple of special songs I found for me to have some fun with. And of course, last but not least, where two or three Methodists are gathered together, someone will serve dessert! Call if some particular snack "springs" to mind that you would like to bring!

Ruth
363-2730

United Methodist News Briefs

Church seeks 'Union with the Congo'

CONWAY, S.C. (UMNS)—Union United Methodist Church took on a new challenge this past Advent season. Faced with critical building needs, including fixing an uneven foundation, the church sought a way to make the needed repairs. Instead of looking to finance only what they needed to fix their building, they believed God was challenging them to do something different. This was the seed for what would become "Union with the Congo," the church's initiative to not only raise capital funds, but also raise an equal amount to construct wells and latrines in the Democratic Republic of the Congo in partnership with the United Methodist Committee on Relief.

Agency offers prayers during financial crisis

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (UMNS)—Upper Room Ministries, a ministry of the United Methodist Board of Discipleship, has published "Prayers for Hard Times: Words of Faith in a Financial Crisis" for individuals, churches and communities trying to keep centered in God while reaching out to all who are suffering during this economic crisis. The booklet features 32 pages of meditations from the Upper Room daily devotional guide, pertinent scripture passages, prayers, and a guide that serves as an index to find additional help for times of fear, distress and worry. The booklets are sold in packages of 20 for \$10 and may be ordered online or by phone (1-800-972-0433). The order number is #9998.

Church Humor

Two little boys, ages 8 and 10, were excessively mischievous. They were always getting into trouble and their parents knew all about it. If any mischief occurs in their town, the two boys are probably involved. The boys' mother heard that a new preacher in town had been successful in disciplining children, so she asked if he would speak with her boys. The preacher agreed, but he asked to see them individually. So the mother sent the 8 year old first, in the morning, with the older boy to see the preacher in the afternoon.

The preacher, a huge man with a deep booming voice, sat the younger boy down and asked him sternly, "Do you know where God is son?" The boy's mouth dropped open, but he made no response, sitting there wide-eyed with his mouth hanging open. So the preacher repeated the question in an even sterner tone, "Where is God?" Again, the boy made no attempt to answer. The preacher raised his voice even more and shook his finger in the boy's face and bellowed, "Where is God?"

The boy screamed and bolted from the room, ran directly home and dove into his closet, slamming the door shut behind him. When his older brother found him in the closet, he asked "What happened?" The younger brother, gasping for breath, replied "We are in BIG trouble this time. God is missing and they think we did it!"

A minister was planning a wedding at the close of the Sunday morning service. After the benediction he had planned to call the couple down to be married for a brief ceremony before the congregation. For the life of him, he couldn't think of the names of those who were to be married. "Will those wanting to get married please come to the front?" he requested. Immediately, nine single ladies, three widows, four widowers, and six single men stepped to the front.

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