



The Methodist Herald

May, 2009

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

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Pastor's Column:

The other day I was sitting having lunch with a clergy colleague at a Mission planning retreat. We were talking about getting lost on our way to the retreat and how wonderful it is to have all the resources like Google maps and GPS to help us find our way. My friend told me about his experiences when he served aboard a Navy submarine back in the 1970s. This was during the Cold War and the US submarines carried nuclear missiles. The submarines needed to know their position at all times.

My friend recounted how they had three different means of determining position. Apparently, one of the methods relied on the use of giant computers that filled an entire room. The computer program that calculated position had to be updated about every twenty miles. This meant bringing in a whole new set of IBM punch cards to feed into the computer to allow it to update the submarine's position. Being from a somewhat younger generation than my colleague, I had to tease him by asking what are punch cards?

The backup method of computing position if the computer failed was to navigate using the stars and a sextant, the way sailors of old did it. This method, tried and true, required nothing more than carefully observing God's created order all around us.

Today we can log on to our laptop computer or get on the internet with our cell phone, type

in an address, and retrieve maps with step by step instructions to get to our destination. We have GPS units that fit in the palm of your hand mounted to our dashboards that show our exact location every instant on a scrolling map. These GPS units talk to you, telling you turn by turn how to get to your destination. It is hard to see how we can still get lost today.

And yet when it comes to navigating our journey of life, it seems like so many people are lost, searching for some direction or purpose. For all our fancy technology, our laptops, cell phones, PDAs, and GPS units, we still get easily lost in the journey of life. Perhaps we need to remember to fall back to the tried and true method of navigating life – observing God's Word and listening to the Holy Spirit. Prior to his death, Jesus told his disciples in John 16:13 "When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth; for he will not speak on his own, but will speak whatever he hears, and he will declare to you the things that are to come." Jesus promised us the gift of the Holy Spirit, who speaks truth to our hearts and guides us in the ways that lead to life eternal in God's grace.

As we navigate our way through life, let us remember to consult God's guidebook of grace and wisdom, the Bible, and to tune in to the guidance of the Holy Spirit, who speaks to us.

God's peace and blessings to you all,

Dale

Pastor Dale

AC Connection

You are cordially invited to attend a real old fashioned Camp Meeting on May 16th at Camp Epworth in High Fall, NY. The event promises to be chock full of fun for all ages. The opening gathering under the tent will begin at 1:00pm with music provided by Glory Road followed by some words of inspiration from Bishop Park. Then onto the "shortest District Conference in History". (I have been asked to accept the position of Co-Lay Leader for the Catskill Hudson District and I would sincerely appreciate having my church family there to help me kick off what proposes to be a year of opportunity and new growth.) After the meeting we are on our own to explore the Camp and all the many activities it offers. There will be ball games, camp tours, labyrinth, trails, caves to explore and so much more. You can even just sit back and commune with nature. (Check out last month's newsletter for more detailed information on the day.)

There's a luscious barbecue at 5:30pm. The cost is \$5.00/person with the cost being partially subsidized by the District. We need a count so please sign up at church so they will know how many meals to prepare. A special campfire closing is planned for those who wish to hang around. The day ends at 7:00pm with plenty of daylight left to get home.

We hope you will plan to join our "caravan" as we car pool to Camp Epworth for a day of fun and fellowship... just like the good ole days!

Faith in Action

The following is excerpted from an article on the United Methodist Faith in Action website. The full article can be read at the following website: <http://www.umc-gbcs.org/site/apps/nlnet/content.aspx?c=frLJK2PKLqF&b=5119581&ct=6941607>

Included also is a way to take action on stopping hate crimes, a link on the same website. As Christians, we should not be silent in the face of hate and fear, but should speak out with a loud and clear voice against hate and racial prejudice that divides, advocating instead the wisdom and healing of love that Christ taught.

WASHINGTON, D.C. — United Methodist advocates against racism view a new report citing a record number of hate groups across the United States as unsurprising evidence of continuing problems. Ironically, they also view the increase as evidence of some progress in the nation's struggle to end racial bigotry.

The Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC), based in Montgomery, Ala., says there are more suspected hate groups in the United States now than ever before. SPLC's annual survey identified 926 active hate groups in 2008. That's a 4% increase from the year before and a 54% increase since 2000 when there were 602 such groups.

SPLC researchers concluded that the election of the first African-American U.S. president, Barack Obama, likely contributed to the rise in racist hate groups. A record number of assassination threats against him both as candidate and now as president have been reported, as well.

Other factors seen as contributing to the increase in hate groups are the struggling U.S. economy and opposition to undocumented immigrants in the United States, most of whom are Hispanic/Latino. The immigration controversy has been an ongoing source of hate-group recruitment. The economy situation, which fosters fear over loss of jobs and homes, no doubt bolstered those numbers as well.

Urge Your Representative to Stop Hate Crimes

Hate crimes target an individual because of his or her real or perceived identification with a particular group based on race, color, religion or national origin. Because hate crimes target an entire class of people, they must be dealt with more severely. Equally important, by collecting accurate information about these hate crimes, the government and non-governmental organizations can better plan educational activities to combat hatred. Although the stricter punishment is critical, the goal of hate crimes laws is often tied to the idea of educating perpetrators, law enforcement officers, and the general public about the scourge of hate in our society.

Section 245 of Title 18 of the U.S. Code, the primary federal statute used to combat racially and religiously bias-motivated violence, prohibits intentional force or threat of force on the basis of race, color, religion or national origin for the purpose of interfering with an individual's enjoyment of a federal right or benefit, such as serving on a jury, voting, or going to school.

Under the current statute, the government must prove that the crime occurred because of a person's membership in a protected group, such as race or religion, and because he/she was enjoying a federally protected activity. In its current form, the statute leaves federal prosecutors powerless to intervene in bias-motivated crimes if they cannot establish the victim's involvement in a federally protected activity. Additionally, federal authorities cannot intervene in crimes based on sexual orientation, gender identity, gender or disability.

The Local Law Enforcement Hate Crimes Prevention Act of 2007 (HR 1913) would amend existing hate crimes law in two ways. First, it would provide new authority for federal officials to investigate and prosecute cases in which the bias violence occurs because of the victim's real or perceived sexual orientation, gender or disability. Second, it would remove an obstacle to federal involvement by permitting prosecutions without having to prove that the victim was attacked because he/she was engaged in a federally-protected activity. While states would continue to play the primary role in prosecuting bias-motivated violence, the LLEHCPA would allow the federal government to address those cases in which local authorities are either unable or unwilling to investigate and prosecute.

In Leviticus 19:17, we are commanded "You shall not hate another in your heart." Jesus' entire ministry is characterized by his love for all people, and his desire that this love be manifest among his followers. However, all too often history has been plagued by acts of hate and violence. We have become desensitized and too often fail to see hate crimes for what they are: acts designed to victimize and dehumanize an entire community. We also take

to heart the commandment "You may not stand idly by when your neighbor's blood is being shed" (Leviticus 19:16). Our faith tradition consistently teaches the importance of tolerance and the acceptance of others. Inasmuch as we value the pursuit of justice, we must actively work to improve, open, and make safer our communities. As a community, we must continue to work painstakingly for a time when brutality based on fear, intolerance, and prejudice will be distant in the memories of all people.

Ordination Bus Trip on June 13th

On June 13th, Pastor Dale will be ordained at the NY Annual Conference at Hofstra University in Hempstead, NY. In order to have as many folks attend this wonderful event who would ordinarily not travel there by themselves, we have chartered a bus to take you from Downsville and East Branch right to Hofstra. The cost of the bus is \$26.50/person and includes a tip for the driver. The bus will leave Downsville at 8:00 am and will pick up in East Branch at the fire hall on the way. You will have an opportunity to stop once on the way down to stretch a bit and have a snack; lunch is available at the university; ordination begins about 2:00 pm and you should be heading for home sometime after 4:00 pm. The bus will stop for dinner on your own on the way back. It will be a lovely day of fellowship and an outpouring of love and respect for our Pastor as he formally takes on the title of Elder in the UMC. There is a sign up sheet in both of the churches and the bus is open for anyone, member or not, who would like to attend this once in a lifetime event. Please spread the word and plan to attend. If we cannot fill the bus we will have to try to make other arrangements for people who would like to attend. The money for the bus is due on May 24th. Let's try really hard to fill the bus and show Pastor Dale how much we really appreciate all he does for us and the community.

ReThink Church

"What if church was a verb and not a noun?" In the next few weeks and months you will be

hearing and seeing a lot about a new program being sponsored by the United Methodist Church. It is a natural out growth of our campaign of "Open Hearts, Open Minds, Open Doors". We are being asked to open our hearts and minds and doors to seeing opportunities for those who are seeking a different way of meeting God outside the traditional church building. Both Jesus and John Wesley made people rethink church and so we continue to challenge ourselves to rethink the way we are making contact with the outside world, especially those young seekers who are looking for something more relevant in their lives.

On May 6th there will be an official kick-off event in Manhattan with 200 volunteers doing random acts of kindness. There is a planned media event as well. Cabs and buses will display our new logo and websites rethinkchurch.org and 10thousanddoors.org. We hope you will all have open minds and hearts as we work through these new and exciting concepts to see where our church can open new doorways and provide new ways to serve God in our community and the world.

May 10th is Mother's Day

Sunday, May 10th we will be celebrating Mother's Day, a day we honor all the mothers and women who serve as mothers for us in our church family. The church calendar suggests a Festival of the Christian Home as a way of celebrating the value and importance of family in the many diverse forms that we may encounter today. We hope you will take time on May 10th to honor and remember those who serve as mothers, parents, guardians, mentors, or role models for us in life.

May 31st is Pentecost Sunday

Sunday, May 31st is Pentecost Sunday, which marks the birth of the Christian Church. For Pentecost we are inviting everyone to wear something red to church. You can be creative with this. Red is the liturgical color for Pentecost and it is symbolic of the flame of the Holy Spirit. Let's have a sea of red filling our church on Sunday, May 31st as we celebrate

Pentecost and show that God's Spirit is alive and active in our churches.

Colchester Community UMC Financial Update

In an effort to keep our whole church family apprised of where we are financially, the finance committee will be publishing regular updates in the monthly newsletter. The Colchester Community UMC financial status as of the end of April is as follows:

Total income received YTD: \$21,580

Total required to meet YTD budget: \$25,194

As you can see we are currently about \$3600 behind. What this has meant is that we have been unable to pay anything toward our apportionments so far this year. The finance committee is working together with the fundraising committee to find ways to try to address this shortfall. We are working to cut costs where we can and to monitor expenditures carefully. We appreciate the faithful contributions from all of our church family. Together we can overcome this deficit and accomplish the work of ministry that God has called us to. In these difficult economic times, we as a church can be a witness to God's generosity and grace, helping those in need.

Colchester Community UMC Chairperson's Chat by Toni Vessey

At this month's Church Council meeting we spent some time learning about a wonderful protein found in our bodies called laminin. It's the microscopic "super glue" that holds all of our cells together and amazingly it is in the shape of a cross reminding us of Paul's letter to the Colossians 1:15-17... "...in Him all things HOLD TOGETHER". The more we learn about the wonders of our human bodies the more we can see the hand of God.

Our Mission coordinator, Debbie Odell, reports that we collected \$179 for Native American Sunday. We are so blessed that even in these difficult times we can reach out and help others as we are called to do.

The trustees have crossed off another project from their list (side door and new roof over it)

and are planning repairs to the steeple, work on the driveway behind the church and a new sidewalk alongside the church, and a new handicap accessible bathroom. If you have any construction skills and would like to help out please contact any of the trustees and volunteer your time. They plan to begin work on the bathroom sometime in June.

Our finance committee continues to keep us informed of the shortages we are experiencing as we struggle to meet our obligations. If you haven't turned in your "March Madness" donations why not drop them in the collection plate this week and maybe it's time to re-consider your weekly offering. It sure would make our Finance Committee really happy to close in on our deficit.

Pastor Dale began a new men's breakfast devotional this month and hopes to make it a monthly event. If you'd like to join the group you are most welcome. They will be meeting at the Downsville Diner for food and fellowship.

Colchester Community UMC Men's Devotional Breakfast

The monthly Men's devotional breakfast will be held on Saturday, May 23rd this month at the Downsville Diner. We will meet at the Diner at 8:30 a.m for breakfast. Pastor Dale will lead a short devotional following breakfast. This monthly devotional breakfast is open to all men in our community. So men, mark your calendar and plan to join us for breakfast and a short devotional.

Colchester Community UMC Krispie Kreme Donut Sale

It is time for our Spring Krispie Kreme donut sale. Orders will be taken from May 3rd to May 17th and the pickup date will be May 20th from 3:00 – 5:30 pm at the church. See Ginny Davis or one of her group of donut order takers and get your order in. The cost is \$6.50 per dozen, of which \$3.25 per dozen comes to help our church. Proceeds from the Krispie Kreme donut sale will go to help us with our church ministries, including our apportionments, which are our shared ministry funds through

The United Methodist Church. Our apportionments support global missions, peace and justice issues, Africa University, and many other local and global ministries. Our apportionments are the way we reach out to help others in the world through the connected strength of all of our United Methodist Churches. So you can buy a few dozen donuts to enjoy with your coffee and help people in our country and around the world at the same time. What a deal!

Colchester Community UMC Memorial Day Luncheon

The Colchester Community UMC is again holding our annual Memorial Day Luncheon on Monday, May 25th at the Downsville Fire Hall. Doors will open at 10:30 a.m. This is open to our community. A free will donation to support the ministries of our church will be requested. Come and join us for lunch!

Colchester Community UMC Angel Food Ministry

We continue to grow and are blessed to be able to provide a love box to a needy family each month. We have received a special donation in April so that we can give away 2 boxes in May. Please talk to your friends and neighbors about our ministry and encourage them to give us a try. We hope to be "online" by June so that you will have the convenience of ordering online and paying with a credit card. Look for more information in the June newsletter. Pick up will continue to be at the fire hall but we are changing the pick up time to 8am-10am for the summer months. Our delivery crews are just so very efficient that they are getting back earlier allowing for us to get an earlier start on our distribution. Menus are available throughout the town. For more information please contact Toni at 363-7363.

Colchester Community UMC Trustees Renovating Church Bathroom

The trustees of the CCUMC are undertaking a restroom renovation project and are asking for your help. The project will include a full

makeover of the existing facilities to enlarge the space and make it wheel chair (handicap) accessible. This will decrease the serving island area a hair but the benefits will far exceed any loss of space. The stain glass window will remain in the kitchenette as the refrigerator nook.

Construction to our only restroom on the first floor in the kitchenette area adjacent to the library will begin on May 26, 2009 Tuesday after Memorial Day and tentatively be complete by Baccalaureate June 25, 2009. The restroom will be available for use for church and events during the project. The renovation is planned to be completed by all voluntary labor and this is where we need your help. Please signup and share your god given talent to this project. There are several areas of need: Material retrieval (times 4), Demolition, Framing , Plumbing, Electrical, Drywall and finishes, Mill work and finishes, Fixture installations and of course loads of cleanup every step of the way.

If you are able to help in any way, please sign up today. Thanks in advance for donating your time to this wonderful exciting project. Please sign up on the clip board in the CCUMC hall way or contact Brian LaTourette via email bclato@frontiernet.net, or by phone 363-7123 to volunteer your time.

Colchester Community UMC Youth Group News

The Youth Group will meet on Sunday, May 17th at the parsonage from 2:30 – 5:00 pm for a movie and pizza afternoon. We will be watching a movie together and then sharing in a short discussion on faith issues raised by the movie.

Our final Youth Group meeting before the summer break will be on Sunday, May 31st from 3 – 5 pm at the parsonage. We will have BBQ hot dogs and hamburgers, games, and activities.

East Branch/Harvard UMC Financial Update

In an effort to keep our whole church family apprised of where we are financially, the finance committee will be publishing regular

updates in the monthly newsletter. The East Branch/Harvard UMC financial status as of the end of April is as follows:

Total income received YTD: \$9,180

Total required to meet YTD budget: \$12,954

As you can see we are currently about \$3800 behind. What this has meant is that we have had to transfer over \$7000 from our emergency CD to our general fund to allow us to keep up with our expenses. This move leaves us with only \$10,000 left in our emergency CD. The finance committee is working together with the church council to find ways to try to address this shortfall. We are working to cut costs where we can and to monitor expenditures carefully. We appreciate the faithful contributions from all of our church family. Together we can overcome this deficit and accomplish the work of ministry that God has called us to. In these difficult economic times, we as a church can be a witness to God's generosity and grace, helping those in need.

East Branch/Harvard UMC Sponsoring a Chicken Bar-B-Q

The East Branch/Harvard United Methodist Church will be sponsoring a Chicken Bar-B-Q, put on by Miller's Bar-B-Q, on Saturday, May 23rd starting at 11:00 a.m. and lasting until we run out of chicken. The place is in the driveway of the house adjacent to the East Branch Sunoco station on State Highway 30, near the interchange with Highway 17. Proceeds from the chicken Bar-B-Q go to support the ministries of our church.

Start off your Memorial Day weekend right, by coming by and picking up some delicious bar-b-q chicken. We look forward to seeing you on May 23rd.

Church Humor

After a church service on Sunday morning, a young boy suddenly announced to his mother, 'I've decided to become a minister when I grow up.' 'That's okay with us, but what made you decide that?' 'Well,' said the little boy, 'I have to go to church on Sunday anyway, and I figure it will be more fun to stand up and yell than to sit and listen.'

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