



# The Methodist Herald

September, 2009

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

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## **Pastor's Column:**

The other week I was sitting at home on my day off with my wife Laura. Things had been pretty hectic of late what with getting my son Philip ready for college and all. So we were just kind of being bums that day. At one point the telephone rang. Now I have caller ID so I can generally see who is calling before I answer.

The number listed on the caller ID was an out of area phone number and the name was one that I did not recognize. I decided to go ahead and answer the call in case it was someone looking for information about the church. The gentleman on the other end of the phone introduced himself and said he was from out of the area and he needed directions to Route 10 and Delancey. He had tried calling the Colchester Chamber of Commerce but they were closed. He wondered who else he might call to get directions and decided to try calling the church. I asked where he was at the moment and where he was trying to get to and then offered him directions to get there. As I hung up, I told Laura about the call and we had a good laugh, finding it amusing that someone would call the church to get directions.

But then I got to thinking about it and it made perfect sense. Isn't that what the church is all about – helping people to find direction in their lives? We are all searching for direction in life. We look for ways to find fulfillment and happiness, peace and joy, a sense of balance, healing, and wholeness in our lives. We look

for that which can help us through the struggles and dark times of our lives. The world is filled with offers of quick and easy sure-fire shortcuts to achieving lasting joy, peace, and fulfillment in life, but most fail to deliver on their promises. We may find temporary pleasure and satisfy our desires for the moment, but in the end what the world offers falls short of what we are looking for.

God offers to meet us where we are at the moment and to guide us and direct us to where we deep down long to be, a place where we enjoy abundant and fulfilling life, a life with meaning and purpose, a life that can weather any storm, a life of joy in which we experience daily blessings and we live to bless others. That place is a deep, intimate, loving relationship with God. And the church is called to be a place where people can get directions to find that kind of relationship with God.

Psalm 25, verses 4 and 5, reminds us that we can always turn to the Lord for guidance. *Make me to know your ways, O LORD; teach me your paths. Lead me in your truth, and teach me, for you are the God of my salvation; for you I wait all day long.* Unlike the Chamber of Commerce, God is open 24/7/365 to give us direction and guidance in our lives. So if you are searching for direction in life, give God a try. You won't be disappointed.

God's peace and blessings to you all,

*Dale*

Pastor Dale

## **AC Connection**

Camp Epworth is holding a Spirituality and Creation Workshop at the Camp and Retreat Center in High Falls NY October 2-3. In the year 1900 most Americans (95%) grew up rural and were familiar with collecting eggs, butchering meat, picking beans, milking cows, as well as catching salamanders and fireflies. Today, less than 5% are this close to their food source and nature and yet when asked to describe a significant spiritual experience, the vast majority of Americans will begin talking about a moment in nature, a stillness, a beauty, a curiosity, a presence. Nothing can compare to creation for drawing near to transcendent and ultimate reality.

Pam Harris & Garrie Stevens and Karen & Terry Cianci will be bringing many years experience in camping and retreat ministry and collegiate level teaching in biological and environmental studies to this workshop. There will be gourmet meals prepared by Epworth's resident chef and many opportunities to explore all things natural as well as optional work projects on Epworth's sustainable house and gardens. Cost is \$25 registration, \$40 for meals, and \$25 for the overnight stay. If you are interested send your registration to Epworth Camp & Retreat Center, Creation and Spirituality, 8 Epworth Lane, High Falls, NY 12440. For more information see [www.epworthcenter.com](http://www.epworthcenter.com).

This workshop is open to anyone who has an interest in nature so why not share this information with your friends or maybe the young adults in your life.

## **Faith in Action**

As most of you know, the Church Council at Colchester Community in faith took on the sponsorship of two children through the Helping Honduras Kids (HHK) organization over a year ago. We continue to send support for our two children and receive updates, photos, and letters from them. What follows is an emergency update from HHK on a developing situation there. It is a sobering reminder of the challenges faced by people of faith in other

countries. I will be adding HHK and our adopted children to our weekly prayer list so we as a church can keep them in prayer for safety and for a resolution to this situation.

## **Friends and Supporters of Helping Honduras Kids:**

As president of Helping Honduras Kids, I would like to extend our sincere appreciation to all those on this team of caring people who want to see children living in poverty have hope, education, love and opportunity. This is what our children need the most, and with your help, they can have hope for a future in a difficult world. With the recent threats, evacuation and crisis at our Hogar de Amor orphanage, help for our children is needed now more than at any other time.

On Wednesday night, August 12, a car drove by the Hogar and fired an AK-47 directly at the building. The bullets impacted the front of the Hogar, but fortunately there were no injuries or deaths. We are so grateful that God was watching over our children and staff. This was a very scary situation for all of our children and staff living at the Hogar.

On Friday night, the same car returned with 5 armed men, who threatened our uniformed guard that he should leave and not return if he valued his life forcing him to return to La Ceiba and immediately quit his job. The two guards the company sent the next day were also threatened. Following these incidents, the same car continued to drive by several times each day with the same 5 armed men. Displaying their AK-47's and an assortment of other weapons, they pointed their fingers at the Hogar, making "shooting" motions. Out of fear, one of our new tias (housemothers) quit her job.

On August 20, the car stopped again in front of the Hogar and told the employees, administrators, and staff that if they did not leave they would raid the building. The terrified housemothers called for help and we sent a bus to take our children, the caretakers, and volunteers to safety. Our two international volunteers informed us a few days later that they were not going to come back due to their

concern for their safety. Without teachers, employees, and volunteers to help care for our children then our Hogar is in a greater crisis.

HHK is unsure of the motive for this unprovoked aggression against the Hogar and has reported these incidents to IHNFA (gov't child welfare agency responsible for our children), the police, the US Ambassador and as well, LLF contacted the Military. IHNFA has advised us to take the children out of the Hogar and move them to a new facility. The police have informed us that these men are most likely connected a dangerous local gang and we feel we are lucky that we were able to take our children, staff, and volunteers out of that situation and into safety before things went further.

HHK has lost a sizeable investment in the Hogar property with all the fix-ups that were done to improve the facility the last few months as well as all the schools, churches, and volunteers that spent countless hours doing manual labor making the Hogar a better place to live. More importantly is the amount of stress that was placed on the children as they were forced out of there beautiful home and temporarily homeless.

The children and staff are now safe in a smaller temporary home in a much safer environment. We are now looking for another permanent facility that will fit our 22 children and three tias more comfortably in. The sooner we can get the kids back to a normal routine the better. We have resumed classes on the back patio of the house and will continue to hold them there until we are able to find a larger, permanent home where these children can continue to grow and be safe.

Right now HHK is in greater need of donations to overcome this crisis than ever before. We calculated the actual costs of the move and conservatively, we estimate this will cost HHK \$11,000. If we raise enough funds, we may be able to purchase a new Hogar de Amor (Home of Love). We would greatly appreciate any additional donations you, your family members, or associates may be willing to share with us.

For those of you that would like to help our children, please click on the donations-net button on the left hand side of our webpage. Remember that this is a tax-deductible contribution. We feel confident that the move will help us to focus on what matters most and that is educating our children in a safe, loving environment.

HHK would like to express our deep appreciation to Dole Fruit Co., to ENERGUAA, and to the personnel of the US Embassy for their considerable help during this crisis. We would also like to thank our Honduras Staff for all they did to protect our children and to get them to safety and for their help in the move and our emergency evacuation. Thanks again for any additional donations you can spare. We greatly appreciate your continued support!

Warmest Regards,  
David Ashby  
President and Founder  
Helping Honduras Kids

### **Pastor Dale's Mission Trip to Ecuador**

As most of you know, Pastor Dale will be going on a mission trip to Ecuador in January as part of a Conference Volunteers in Mission team. One of the things each team member is being asked to do is to collect and bring one suitcase full of school supplies for the children in Ecuador. This is one small way each of you can be a part of Pastor Dale's mission trip. A suitcase will be placed in the hall of each of our churches to collect school supplies. The following supplies are needed: pencils, pens, paint, crayons, Kraft paper, scissors notebooks, rulers, NT pocket bibles (spanish), and other sunday school materials... if possible, spanish evangelization materials, stories, etc. Thank you for sharing in this mission experience.

### **Colchester Community UMC Annual Turkey Dinner**

The Colchester Community United Methodist Church will be putting on its annual Turkey Dinner on Saturday, September 19<sup>th</sup>

starting at 4:00 pm at the Downsview Fire Hall and running until 6:30 p.m. A free-will donation will be taken at the door. The money raised at this dinner goes to support the ministries of the Colchester Community UMC. Dinner includes turkey, potatoes and gravy, dressing, green beans, cranberry sauce and apple or pumpkin pie for dessert. We hope you will come and join us for a delicious turkey dinner and warm fellowship. Invite your friends and family to come as well.

### **Colchester Community UMC is Looking for Some Leaders**

The Colchester Community UMC will soon begin the process through our Lay Leadership Committee of looking for leaders to help our church accomplish the ministries God has called us to. Recall that our vision statement reads as follows: *The Colchester Community United Methodist Church, through God's grace, strives to be a loving, nurturing, and hope-filled community of faith dedicated to raising up new generations of Christian disciples to be in mission with us and the Holy Spirit for the transformation of our community and the world.*

With that in mind, one of the positions we are looking to fill is that of Sunday School Superintendent. After many years of faithful and dedicated service leading our Sunday School and VBS programs, Joy Fisk is stepping down from the position of Sunday School Superintendent and looking at other areas where she may serve the church. In addition we will be looking for a few people to serve as Sunday School teachers. After working faithfully for many years teaching Sunday School, Amelia and Russell Foote are shifting their focus to working more with our youth group. We ask all of you to prayerfully consider whether or not God is calling you to serve in this vital ministry to our children, helping us fulfill our vision statement. Please speak with Pastor Dale if you feel called to this special ministry.

Another important position we will be looking to fill is that of Charge Treasurer for the Southern Delaware Charge. Ginny Davis has served in this position for several years, doing

an outstanding job. Ginny will be stepping down from that position at the end of the year and we will need to find someone to fill her shoes. We would like to find someone soon so that they could be working with Ginny through the end of the year to learn the ropes. If you feel called to serve in this way, please speak with Pastor Dale as soon as possible.

### **Colchester Community UMC Hello in There Ministry**

Some of our church members have been participating in this morning phone call ministry and since we haven't been mentioned in a while we thought maybe you'd forgotten about us. This ministry was begun to give people who live alone a morning phone call to say "Hello" and to make sure all is well with them. It has been very rewarding for those of us who are on either end of the call. If you or someone you know needs or wants a daily call or if you would like to be a caller we are always happy to increase our numbers. You need not be a member of our church to participate. Please call Toni if you would like to be a part of the Hello In There Ministry. We also have sign-up sheets on the church bulletin board that you can fill out and drop in the collection plate. You can't imagine what a simple "Hello" can do to perk up someone's day.

### **Colchester Community UMC Church Council Chairperson's Chat**

*Every time I think of you—and I think of you often!—I thank God for your lives of free and open access to God, given by Jesus. 1Cor 1:3.*

Our church council continues to be a work in progress and just when you think you have it all together, it's time for changes. There will be changes coming in January as some of our committee members will be leaving in December. The Laity Committee will be working on filling openings on the council and we hope that if you are approached, you will pray over the decision and seriously consider becoming more involved in the working of our church.

One of our members who we hope will be staying on is Marcia Edel who does so much more than her Music ministry. Marcia is our Council Secretary and she keeps us all updated as to what happens at our meetings and seems to have total recall whenever a question arises. Not only that but she chairs the Worship committee keeping accurate records of church attendance not only for Sunday morning but for every worship service at the church. She's the "little elf" who tidies up the sanctuary after each service and waters the flowers and plants. She puts out the baskets for our special mission and 5th Sunday collections and she makes sure that we have enough candles and other worship supplies on hand. Be sure to give her an extra thank you next time you see her.

Our Day of Prayer will be held on the third Wednesday of the month from 10am till 7pm. We will be asking for members to sign up for specific times so that there will be someone on hand for most of the day. Devotionals and prayer aids will be available. Please consider spending some formal time in prayer as we begin this new ministry in our church. This ministry will be open to the public as well so please let your friends know that they are welcome, too.

As always, let us know how we're doing and ask us any questions you might have. Suggestions are always appreciated!

### **Colchester Community UMC Angel Food Ministry**

Our ministry is growing and we are in the position of looking for some new volunteers. Our need right now is for some hardy souls who will be able to travel to Sidney Center at 4am to pick up our order and deliver it to the fire hall. We are blessed to have volunteers from White Sulphur Springs UMC who can help to empty the trucks once you get to Downsville but it's getting it here that is the problem. If you have a covered truck or van or SUV and you can give us one Saturday every three months or so then you are what we need. It only takes 3 people to pick up our order right now; one to do the counting and 2 to fill the trucks. If you feel called to give us a hand, please see Toni or call

me at 363-7363. I pray that we can keep our ministry going because I believe it is a great help to many people in these times of economic stress.

Order dates this month are 9/8, 9/9 and 9/12 at Downsville and 9/10 at East Branch. Pick up is Saturday, 9/19, at the fire hall from 8am till 10am.

### **Colchester Community UMC Music Notes**

After taking a well-deserved rest over the summer, the choir will be starting up once again for the church year on Sunday, September 13<sup>th</sup>. We would love to have some new faces and voices in our choir this year. If you are interested in finding out more about the choir or just want to see what it is like, we encourage you to come and join us Sunday mornings at 8:45 a.m. for our rehearsal and sing with us in worship. The choir enjoys a lot of good fellowship and fun as we lift our voices to praise God.

### **Colchester Community UMC Men's Devotional Breakfast**

The monthly Men's devotional breakfast will be held on Saturday, September 26<sup>th</sup> 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. It is an opportunity for men to share and talk about some of the challenges and struggles we face and how our faith can help us through them. 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. And be sure to invite a friend!

### **Colchester Community UMC Youth Group News**

As the Labor Day weekend winds to a close, we bid farewell to summer and begin to look forward to the events and activities of fall. It is time for Youth Group to start up for the regular church year. Our first meeting for the fall will be on Sunday, September 20<sup>th</sup> at 12 pm at the parsonage. We will have a Bar-B-Q and we will

talk about what we want to do as a Youth Group for the coming year. In particular we will talk about participating in the Crop Walk in Walton on October 18<sup>th</sup> and the 30-Hour Famine. We will also talk about programs, activities, and service projects you would like to have in the coming year. So bring your appetites and ideas!

Youth Group is open to all interested youth grades 7 – 12. We will generally meet twice a month, usually on Sunday afternoon unless we have a special activity.

### **East Branch/Harvard UMC Upcoming Fundraisers**

The East Branch/Harvard UMC will be putting on a couple of fundraisers to support the ministries of our church. The first will be a chicken BBQ on Saturday, September 5<sup>th</sup> from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. at the Sunoco station on Rte 30 in East Branch. Chicken halves will be sold for \$5.50 and dinners will be sold for \$7.00. The dinner includes a chicken half, a roll, baked beans, a salad of some type, and a brownie. In addition to the chicken BBQ, there will be a pie and baked goods sale.

In October the annual East Branch/Harvard UMC auction will be coming to the East Branch Fire Hall. Watch the October newsletter or the local newspapers and radio for the date and times of this popular annual event. If you have items you would like to donate for our auction, please contact Louise Lombardi at 363-2594.

### **East Branch/Harvard UMC Financial Situation**

The East Branch/Harvard UMC currently finds itself in a very difficult and serious financial situation. As of the end of August, our total income from offerings, fund raisers, and donations from the caretaker in the parsonage is running about \$10,000 behind our budget requirements for this point in the year. The Church Council had anticipated some shortfall this year due to the current economic crisis in this country so they authorized moving approximately \$7600 from our emergency fund CD to our general fund operating account back in January. This left us with about \$10,000 in

our emergency fund CD. Even with this infusion of emergency funds into the general fund, we are still about \$2500 behind our budget requirements as of the end of August. Our deficit has been steadily growing each week.

The Church Council and the Pastor Parish Relations Committee (PPRC) will be exploring and weighing all our options in the coming month as we begin to work on our budget for 2010. Obviously we cannot continue in our present circumstance for too much longer before we run out of money and are unable to meet even our basic financial obligations. I have asked the Church Council and the PPRC to look 3 – 5 years ahead as they explore our options. We will be putting all options on the table as we seek to discern a path ahead. We will be keeping the congregation informed as we move forward by means of the monthly newsletter and other avenues as appropriate. We also value your input and feedback in this process.

We would ask each of you to do two things. First, prayer for our church and for our church leaders. Pray that God would guide us through these troubled waters and that we would be open to discern where God is leading us. Second, we would ask that if you can possibly make a financial donation to the church, please do so. If you have only occasionally donated to the church, we ask you to consider becoming a regular pledged giver, even if it is only a small amount per week or per month. We need the support, financially, spiritually, and prayerfully of all our members to keep our church alive and able to be about the ministries God calls us to.

If you have any questions, you can speak with Pastor Dale or any member of the Church Council.

### **Church Humor**

Big Ed seemed to always fall asleep during the Sunday sermon. His wife was fed up and decided to deal with the embarrassing situation.

The next Sunday when he fell asleep, she quietly removed some pungent Limburger cheese from a ziplock bag in her purse and passed it under his nose.

Groggily startled, Big Ed blurted out, "No, Helen, no—don't kiss me now."

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