



The Methodist Herald

November, 2009

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

Dale Ashby, Pastor
P.O. Box 305
Downsville, NY 13755
Parsonage Phone: (607)363-2362

E-mail: Southerndelawarecharge@frontiernet.net
Website: http://www.gbgm-umc.org/Southern_delaware_charge

Pastor's cell: (607)821-8762
East Branch Church Phone: (607)363-2911

Pastor's Column:

Well it is November and if you live in Delaware County you know what that means – deer hunting season begins in its various forms. Bow season is already under way and it will not be long before rifle season starts. Hunters are going out in the woods, getting their tree stands set up, and making preparations for the hunt.

I have to confess that I am not a hunter. But I do enjoy visiting with those who are hunters and hearing all of their tales. One recurring theme that I hear is that you can sit in your tree stand or be out in the woods hunting for long periods of time and never see a deer.

Well I have a little something to share with all my hunting friends – if you want to see deer, you need to ride with me in the evenings when I am driving in the area. The reason that you probably are not seeing any deer out in the woods is that they have all gathered along the highways and byways of this area, lying in wait for me to approach in my vehicle. They are intent on wreaking destruction upon my truck.

They are well organized, this car-hunting band of deer. They travel in packs of 4 or 5. They wait until darkness is settling in to launch their attack operations, so that it is more difficult for me to see them in time and take evasive action. These deer are clever and devious. Three or four of them will run across the road in front of me as I approach, far enough ahead of me that I can see them cross without having to slow down. But one of them will

hang back, hiding in the bushes along the road and wait until I am almost on top of him before leaping out into the road in front of me and stopping to stare me down. He seems to be on a mission to bring maximum destruction to my vehicle. On more than one occasion, I have had to slam on my brakes and hold my breath, hoping my truck will stop before hitting the deer that has leaped out in front of me.

While this may be told tongue-in-cheek, there are parallels to the temptations we face in our daily lives. We rarely have to go hunting for temptation. It is usually hunting us. Temptation is devious and subtle, using subterfuge to lure us in and ensnare us. And if we fall victim to temptation, it can wreak great destruction upon our lives. James 1:14-16 reminds us “But one is tempted by one’s own desire, being lured and enticed by it; then, when that desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin, and that sin, when it is fully grown, gives birth to death. Do not be deceived, my beloved.”

When I am driving at night, I am extra vigilant for deer that seek to wreak destruction on my truck. In the same manner we should be extra vigilant at all times for temptations that seek to bring pain and ruin into our lives. May God grant us eyes to see and courage and wisdom to avoid temptations always.

God’s peace and blessings to you all,

Dale

Pastor Dale

AC Connection

On November 7th there will be an exciting choral event at the Overlook UMC in Woodstock. Choirs from the entire district will be presenting a Festival of Song. The concert begins at 4pm but choirs will be meeting at 1pm to rehearse together for the first time. Pastor Dale, Laura and Joy Fisk are part of this mass choir and we sure would like to have you come along and support their efforts. It promises to be a most joyful time of song and praise and no doubt some fellowship and refreshments. Please try to plan to attend. We can probably carpool so look for sign-up sheets at the church or call a friend and bring them along!

November 29th is the date set for our Charge Conference. District Superintendent Jim Moore will be there to share important Conference news and to review the progress we have made over the past year. Every member of the church is invited to attend to voice your concerns and your approval of the new slate of church leaders which will be presented on that day.

Faith in Action

Over a year later, we are still suffering the repercussions of the predatory practices of the financial system in this country that led to the worst financial crash in this country since the great depression. While there are glimmers of hope for an improving economic situation in this country a year later, we should not forget that some of the practices that led to the crisis have still not been reformed. The following is an article that appeared on The United Methodist General Board of Church and Society's Faith in Action website:
<http://www.umc-gbcs.org>

WASHINGTON, D.C. — The United Methodist General Board of Church & Society is among more than 20 interfaith organizations that have signed a letter to members of the U.S. Congress encouraging reform of the nation's financial system. The signers emphasize their concern that the system should work fairly for

all participants and protect those routinely victimized by it.

"A year ago, when banks failed and stocks crashed, we, as religious leaders named that experience as both a moral and economic crisis," the letter states. "Since then, we have comforted those who have lost everything — jobs, homes, retirement savings — counseled a re-assessment of priorities, and considered the causes of the crisis."

The letter, coordinated by the Center for Responsible Lending, describes its signers as "front-line witnesses to the pain and suffering caused by corrupt financial practices." It is signed by representatives of Protestant, Catholic, Jewish and Muslim faith traditions.

The letter emphasizes that those traditions "recognize both the necessity of lending in our society and the ever-present danger of the lender's ability and temptation to take advantage of those in need of capital."

Various faith traditions expressly warn against charging excessive or unjust interest, the letter points out, "especially when it strips borrowers of their homes, their livelihood, and, even worse, their dignity." It adds that all of the faith traditions represented share concern for those marginalized or in need.

"Our ministries and services bear the burden of lifting up those who are in despair and providing needed assistance where we can," the letter points out. "We cannot do it alone. We ask Congress to respond to this crisis with us."

The letter states that unsustainable, usurious home loans are at the core of the crisis. According to the letter, lenders extended credit they knew borrowers could never pay off, and would have to refinance, "often obscuring options and the true cost of the loans." It adds that the decline in housing prices led to foreclosures that destabilized banks and the whole economy.

"In our communities and houses of worship," the letter stresses, "we have seen the pain caused by this crisis."

The letter calls for ending "blatantly usurious" financial practices, such as predatory lending involving unexpected mortgage hikes to triple-digit payday loans.

The letter especially criticizes the concentration of unfair lending in low-income communities and communities of color. This “undermines steps to end poverty and narrow the racial wealth gap,” according to the letter.

It calls for “sound regulation” to protect the integrity of consumer financial services. The letter calls for preventing “needless foreclosures” to keep people in their homes. “Efforts to keep families in their homes will restore and sustain the stability of whole communities,” the letter declares.

The Center for Responsible Lending has written an issue guide that provides background on the role of predatory lending in the financial crisis. The guide suggests steps forward from a perspective of faith. *Faith and Credit: Restoring Integrity to the Financial System* is available for downloading at <http://bit.ly/nuYH2> so it can be shared as widely as possible.

Signers of the letter include National Council of Churches of Christ, American Baptist Home Mission Societies, NETWORK: a National Catholic Social Justice Lobby, Friends Committee on National Legislation and Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

Also among signers are Islamic Society of North America, Presbyterian Church USA, Unitarian Universalist Assn. of Congregations, National Council of Jewish Women, United Church of Christ Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and Jewish Reconstructionist Federation.

Other endorsers are Bread for the World, PICO National Network, Rainbow PUSH, Evangelical Assn. for the Promotion of Education, and Sojourners.

Important PPRC Meeting

The Pastor Parish Relations Committee (PPRC) will be meeting on Sunday, November 8th, at 1:00 pm at the Colchester Community UMC for an important meeting. We will be completing paperwork for Annual Conference regarding the pastoral appointment process. The Conference is seeking more input from all local churches in the annual appointment process starting this year. This includes an evaluation of the pastor, an assessment of the

effectiveness of ministry in the church, and a church profile. All PPRC members are requested to be at this important meeting.

2009 Charge Conference for the Southern Delaware Charge

This is a reminder that the Charge Conference for the Southern Delaware Charge will be held this year on Sunday, November 29th at 4:00 p.m. at the Colchester Community UMC. Note that our friends from Walton UMC will be joining us at Charge Conference. Our District Superintendent, Rev. Jim Moore, is looking to hear how we are doing in four areas of church life:

Evangelism and church growth – How many new members received since last charge conference? What are your plans for outreach to others?

Mission and Care for Others – How does your church express Christ’s compassion for people nearby or around the world? What have you done this year? What do you anticipate doing in the coming year?

Stewardship and Financial Responsibility – Year-to-date financial status: income received from various sources; bills paid, any unpaid bills including current apportionments? Expectations for the remainder of the year.

Christian Education, Nurture, and Spiritual Formation – How do you help people to grow in their relationship with God? What have been the most important activities this year? What do you anticipate doing in the coming year?

I would like to challenge both churches in the Southern Delaware Charge to come with responses as to what we are already doing in these four areas and what more we hope to do in the future. This will be a time of honest conversation about the state of our churches, celebrating what we are doing well and acknowledging where we have more work to do.

Colchester Community UMC Hosting Community Thanksgiving Worship Service

On Wednesday, November 25, Colchester Community United Methodist Church will be

hosting a community Thanksgiving Worship service at 7 p.m. in the evening. Members and clergy of the other area churches are invited to participate in this worship service with us, as we give thanks to God for the many blessings we have in our lives. Please plan on bringing your family and joining us for this special service. We will also have a community choir made up of all who are interested in singing. Our offering for this community service will go to help the work of the Delaware County chapter of Habitat for Humanity.

Colchester Community UMC Annual Community Thanksgiving Dinner

On Saturday, November 28th, the Colchester Community UMC will host its annual Community Thanksgiving Dinner at 4 pm at the Downsview Fire Hall. This event is open to everyone in our community. Those who would like to attend can bring their table setting and a dish to share. It will be a time of fellowship and sharing, giving thanks for our many blessings as a community during this Thanksgiving season. There will be lots of good food and great fellowship. We hope you will join us.

Colchester Community UMC Church Council Chairperson's Chat

"To the elders among you...Be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care...because you are willing, as God wants you to be..." 1 Peter 5:1-2

Your "elders" continue to work on your behalf dealing with mundane matters of budgets and maintenance while looking for ways to spread God's love to our community and the world through new and exciting ministries. It has been my great pleasure to work with such an outstanding group of believers who are willing to go the extra mile to keep our church vibrant and moving in these difficult times. But they can't do it alone. It takes a village; all of us!

On November 29th we will be holding our Charge Conference. It is a time for reflecting on the many accomplishments of the past year and a time for looking ahead as we elect a new group of individuals who have agreed to take up

the challenge of being part of the Church Council. We are your representatives and as such we do the work on your behalf much like our elected government officials and we need your prayers and your support and most of all your input so that we can serve the needs of all the church. Please plan on attending the Charge Conference to vote your approval of the new candidates, to hear about the wonderful things we are doing and to support our Pastor who gives above and beyond in everything he does. It is another opportunity for fellowship and growth and each of you is important to that end.

As always, don't be afraid to approach any of us on the council or Pastor Dale if you have any questions or concerns and we will do our best to find the answers for you. Let us know how we're doing...

Colchester Community UMC Women's Bible Study – Hannah's Prayer

We are continuing our new Women's Bible Study group at the Colchester Community Church library. The group meets on Tuesday mornings at 10am till November 17th. This is a short term study of seven chapters of 1 Samuel. The emphasis is on individual prayer leading to prayers for our church, our community and our world. This study is open to any woman in the community who would like to share in some Christian fellowship and discussion; you need not be a member of the church to participate. Please come and invite your friends, too! The discussions have been lively and informative. It is a great time of sharing!

Colchester Community UMC November Day of Prayer

This month's Day of Prayer will be held on **November 18th** from 10am till 7pm. There will be a table set up with resources for prayer and meditation or feel free to bring your own. If you cannot stay the hour, any time that you can share with the Lord will be a blessing. Sign in sheets will be available so that we can have an idea of the participation in this new ministry. You need not be a member of our church to spend some time in prayer or meditation, so

why not invite your friends to come along or to plan on coming by themselves. In these difficult times it seems that a "little talk with Jesus" in a formal setting might be in order. This will be a monthly event so plan on marking your calendars for the third Wednesday of the month as a reminder that our doors are open and you are most welcome!

Colchester Community UMC Soup/Sandwich and Christmas Bazaar

The Colchester Community United Methodist Church will be holding its Soup and Sandwich/Christmas Bazaar on Saturday, November 14th from 10:00 am to 3:00 pm at the Downsville Fire Hall. Come join us for a nice lunch with your choice of soup and sandwiches and do a little early Christmas shopping away from the crowds in the malls. There will be a nice selection of items to choose from.

Colchester Community UMC Open Arms Prayer Shawl Ministry

God bless those busy hands!! We were excited to dedicate 15 new prayer shawls that were donated to us by Joyce Bouw. She and Lorna Luscomb have been faithful knitters and crotchetiers and we couldn't do our ministry without them. In October shawls were sent to Bob Birkel and Marge Wall. We ask your prayers for all our shawl recipients and all those who have donated time and talent and resources to keep this valuable ministry alive in our community. If you would like to donate something or submit a name please contact Emily Bullis. She will be happy to answer any questions you might have.

Colchester Community UMC Angel Food

Good News! Angel Food is now available online!!! To make your ordering easier, Angel Food orders may now be made online using a credit card. All you need to do is go to **angelfoodministries.com** and click on order online...type in your zip code and click on Colchester Community Church. Place your order...pay by credit card and then pick up your order at the Downsville Fire Hall on the

appropriate day between 8am and 10am. How much simpler can it be? No more wondering if you've got the correct dates to order in person.

We might recommend our signature box for kids who are away at college living off campus. I can recommend our Senior meals. I have tried them and I am much pleased with the quality and variety of the dinners. If you haven't tried them you might want to consider for those busy days when cooking is just not an option. They are quick and easy and pretty darn good.

The signature box and allergen free foods are still available as well as our popular fruit and vegetable and meat specials. Order dates will be November 4th from 4pm till 6pm and November 7th from 10 am till 2 pm in Downsville and November 5th in East Branch from 10:30am till noon. For questions or comments or to volunteer to help, contact Toni at 363-7363.

Colchester Community UMC Youth Group

The Youth Group participated in the annual CROP Walk that was held in Walton on Sunday, October 19th. Our group raised \$227 to help Church World Service combat hunger in the world. All of our walkers went the full distance, about 5 miles.

Our first Youth Group meeting for November will be on Sunday, November 15th from 3 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. at the parsonage. We will be putting together care packages to send to our troops in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Our second Youth Group meeting for the month will be on Sunday, November 22nd at 5 p.m. at the parsonage for a movie and pizza night. We will watch a movie together and this will be followed by a short discussion about some of the faith issues that the movie raised.

Colchester Community UMC Advent Festival

Colchester Community UMC will be holding its Advent Festival on Saturday, November 28th at 10:00 am at the church. We will be decorating our church for the Advent and Christmas season. There will be fun, fellowship, and Christmas music to lift our spirits as we prepare our church for the coming

of Christmas. Bring your family and friends and come join us at the church to decorate! The season of Advent is a time of preparation and waiting and what better way to prepare and wait for the celebration of the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ.

East Branch/Harvard UMC Christmas Bazaar

The East Branch/Harvard UMC will be holding its annual Christmas Bazaar on Saturday, November 7th from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the East Branch Fire Hall. We will be featuring a wide variety of gift items and decorations for the Christmas season for you to choose from plus several vendors will be selling items. There will be the Christmas cookie sale, a perennial favorite, and a variety of homemade specialty foods for sale. We will also have available our church cookbook at the Christmas Bazaar. There will also be refreshments and food available for lunch. So come down to our Christmas Bazaar, do some shopping, enjoy some food and refreshments and meet up with friends. If you can help with our Christmas Bazaar or have items to donate, please call Louise Lombardi at 363-2594.

East Branch/Harvard UMC Shifting Our Worship Time

The East Branch/Harvard UMC will be shifting our worship time from Sundays at 6:30 p.m. back to Sunday mornings at 11:30 a.m. starting Sunday, November 15th. We originally shifted our worship time to Sunday evenings back in March in an effort to make our worship service more accessible to folks in our community. Unfortunately our average attendance remained about the same. We did not see any real gain in going to the evening service format. Now with winter closing in on us and darkness falling early, we are discovering that a number of people in our church family have difficulty driving after dark. Thus after a 8 month experiment with a Sunday evening service, the Church Council decided that it was best for our church family to go back to a Sunday morning service.

We will continue to hold a potluck fellowship meal once a month on the last Sunday of the month following our worship service. All are welcome to join us for worship and the luncheon.

So make sure to mark your calendars and let neighbors and friends know that starting Sunday, November 15th, worship services at East Branch/Harvard UMC will be held on Sunday mornings at 11:30 a.m. And invite a friend or neighbor to join us for worship!

East Branch/Harvard UMC Advent Festival

The East Branch/Harvard United Methodist Church will be having an Advent Festival on the evening of Friday, November 27th at 6:00 pm at the East Branch church. The season of Advent, which is the four weeks before Christmas, is a time of preparation for celebrating the birth of Jesus at Christmas. We will be decorating the church together, sharing some cookies and other treats, and listening to Christmas music. We hope to also hold a lighting of the Community Christmas tree out in front of the East Branch church on this evening. If you are looking for something to put you in the holiday mood, this may be just the thing. We hope you and your families will join us as we prepare to celebrate the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Church Humor

A drunk man who smelled like beer sat down on a subway seat next to a priest. The man's tie was stained, his face was plastered with red lipstick, and a half empty bottle of gin was sticking out of his torn coat pocket. He opened his newspaper and began reading. After a few minutes the man turned to the priest and asked, "Say, Father, what causes arthritis?" "My Son, it's caused by loose living, being with cheap, wicked women, too much alcohol, and contempt for your fellow man." "Well, I'll be," the drunk muttered, returning to his paper. The priest, thinking about what he had said, nudged the man and apologized. "I'm very sorry. I didn't mean to come on so strong. How long have you had arthritis?" "I don't have it, Father. I was just reading here that the Pope does."

Southern Delaware Charge
Colchester Community United Methodist Church
East Branch/Harvard United Methodist Church
P.O. Box 305
Downsville, NY 13755