

Outreach is within reach for rural church

By: The MUMC Evangelism Comm.

During this age of global markets and mass consumption when people travel out of their own neighborhoods for almost everything, including a church home, small churches in both rural and larger communities face tough competition. Today's worship and church life take many forms and expand well beyond the traditional Sunday morning. Gyms, coffee shops, bookstores and multimedia experiences are part of church life in large congregations around the nation. Denominations now target those demographic areas that promise the quickest return in membership and revenue, while established churches often struggle in merely maintaining existing membership numbers as their communities change. It is easy for small congregations to feel inadequate, but it is essential to remember that each type of congregation - large, small, traditional or contemporary - has particular strengths and weaknesses.

Any congregation, regardless of size, has the ability to capitalize on its strengths and compensate for (ideally improve upon) its weaknesses. Small congregations cannot do everything that large congregations can do, but they can do exceedingly well those things that small congregations do well. Small congregations are often even in a position to act quickly in effecting change due to established practices of making the most of limited resources and streamlining decisions and committee processes. While limited resources limit what types of programming, facilities and equipment are available for worship and outreach, simple, small efforts can still yield tangible results that may even be a further catalyst in making disciples for Jesus Christ. The approach is holding true for a small congregation in Missouri's Southwest District.

The Moundville United Methodist Church is located in the town of Moundville, which has a population of slightly more than 100, lacks a neighborhood school and offers little in the way of organized activities for either youth or adults. As in many rural Methodist churches, the average age of the congrega-

tion is high compared to that of other denominations in the county. The Moundville United Methodist Church currently has an average attendance of 54 for worship and about 35 for Sunday School. With members now residing in various communities and school districts throughout Vernon County, the Moundville congregation is really no longer a neighborhood church, but still remains dedicated to making a difference within the neighborhood of the church and its congregational community.

In 2002, Moundville's worship service and Sunday School enjoyed a stable average attendance and adequate resources for operation, but a Disciple Bible Study and the current Adult Sunday School topics planted questions which led to exploration of what more the congregation could, and possibly should, be doing. By spring 2003, the Adult Sunday School class had sponsored a fellowship supper as a venue for sharing ideas and suggestions on what opportunities might entice more involvement in church life. The provision of additional programming for the few youth and young adults in the congregation was among the suggestions generated by the evening.

Moundville's Administrative Council had periodically researched youth group options, but had concluded the congregation lacked a core group of similarly aged youth needed to make a program successful. The absence of a local school only reinforced this conclusion. The fellowship supper did not produce a youth group, but it did lead the congregation to organize a second adult Sunday School class, which in turn organized a separate Sunday Children's Church in an effort to make worship more attractive to young families. Thus, a simple spaghetti supper rooted in a previous Bible Study and Sunday School discussion ended up generating a second Sunday School class, increased Sunday School attendance and a new Children's Church ministry.

After nearly a year of offering Children's Church, in addition to making an increased effort promoting its annual Vacation Bible School, the congregation was able to identify a core group of 10 youth as potential members of a youth program, and began to revisit what it could do for those youth. In the fall of 2003, volunteers from the congregation developed and presented a proposal to the Administrative Council that the church sponsor and fund Pioneer Clubs, a Bible-based club format with elements similar to the Boy and Girl Scouts. The council approved the proposal at its December 2003 meeting as a means by which to continue celebrating the congregation's 120th year of



The congregation at Moundville UMC gather for a photo before the cookout.

worship and service since the dedication of its 1883 sanctuary.

Organizers promoted Pioneer Clubs in January and had the first meeting in February 2004. Leaders had hoped for twelve to attend, but 18 showed up that first Thursday evening, and 29 attended the following week. By the end of the session, there was a list of 40 children who had participated in club at one time or another. Average attendance was 23 during the spring 2004 session, and there were seven adult volunteers. Volunteers were pleased with the program's success, but they also had to approach the Administrative Council again to deal with a budget that exceeded projections. Rather than apply for grants or seek outside funding, the Council voted to fund the program in full and affirmed an earlier decision that the club be offered free of charge to all youth who wished to participate.

Organizers made some changes for the 2004/2005 Pioneer Clubs session in an effort to make the venture more effective as an outreach opportunity and avoid conflicts with school activity schedules. Club night moved from Thursday to Wednesday to encourage more interaction between club members and those involved in Wednesday Bible studies and choir. An additional club group was also added to include children up through the fifth grade. Ten volunteers helped lead the various age groups, and members of the congregation continued to provide refreshments for the club each week, which had an average attendance of 21. Leaders are hopeful that the addition of older youth will lead to the formation of a confirmation class. The 2004/2005 session ended April 27 with a community cookout on the church grounds, an event attended by over 60 church members, club members with their families and visitors.

Pioneer Clubs at the Moundville United Methodist Church grew from a desire to do more for the congregation's youth, yet

yielded much more than the original week-day church activity intended to keep current youth active and interested in church life. The church now has an attractive program that reaches out to the other youth and families in the community, some of whom have no church home or have never even been to a worship service of any sort. Because the program is ecumenical, the club also has participants belonging to other congregations, which helps reinforce the connective aspect of the Christian faith. With the need for volunteers to lead club and provide refreshments, people in the congregation have another opportunity to be involved in a ministry of the church.

Community awareness of the Moundville United Methodist Church as an active and vital organization has increased thanks to its efforts in serving the community with Christian worship, education, mission involvement and social life. There are more events and programming to which people can be invited, and these events often receive publicity in the local newspaper, essentially providing free advertising for the church. The additional ministries even enabled the Moundville congregation to exceed the necessary credits for its Welcoming Congregation Certification through United Methodist Communication's Igniting Ministry Campaign, and three consecutive years of achieving that designation further challenges the congregation to live up to being both welcoming and inviting to those in the community and beyond. One small effort led to other efforts, all with encouraging results. Thanks to the particular strengths of the congregation and in spite of its particular weaknesses, outreach was within reach. Small churches do face increasing challenges, but even during this age of mega churches and the public desire for supersizing, small churches can still continue to do good works and have a positive impact in their communities.



Club Wild West at Moundville UMC

Cabinet continued from page 1A

of cabinet meetings.

"There's a real sense of the Holy Spirit guiding our course," she said.

On the other hand, the supervisory role of being a district superintendent is an aspect of the job Nenadal finds challenging.

"It's a transition for me, because I can't always function in the same pastoral manner as I used to," she said. "Sometimes we have to deal with things differently."

Steve Campbell, superintendent of the Heartland Central District, previously served Christ UMC in Independence, so he's pretty familiar with the Kansas City area.

"There haven't been too many addresses I've had to look up yet," he said.

An aspect of being a cabinet member

that Campbell has really enjoyed has been the charge conferences.

"It has been just wonderful to see churches that are alive and working hard, and giving their best to fulfill their mission," he said.

Cox-Johnson sees that in her churches as well.

"Simply walking in to churches for the first time and realizing that no matter what the size, every church in my district is involved in some significant ministry for Christ," she said. "That is an absolute joy, along with beginning to develop relationships of trust with both the pastors and laity."

For much more on itineration, see the issue of *Bridges* inside this newspaper.

Disaster provides lessons as relief workers prepare for winter

By Paul Jeffrey

MANSEHRA, Pakistan (UMNS) - Sher Shaider's 6-year-old son was feeling sick the morning of Oct. 8, so the school teacher decided to take him to a clinic rather than go to work.

It saved Shaider's life and gave him a chance to work saving other lives in his village of Thakot.

Shaider is one of more than 1,500 school teachers in northern Pakistan who have been trained in disaster preparedness and mitigation during the last two years. The training was sponsored by Church World Service, a member of Action by Churches Together, the international alliance of churches and church-based agencies responding to emergencies. The work of CWS is supported by the United Methodist Committee on Relief, which is also a member of ACT.

The most recent training took place Oct. 2 in Balakot, where some 100 teachers - meeting in separate sessions for women and men - were coached in preparedness for emergencies, including training their students to crouch beside their desks, how to evacuate the building to a safe location, and how to treat the wounded. CWS provided first-aid kits and stretchers for each location.

And then, less than one week later, the big one struck.

In most places the preparation had little impact, as the brisk shaking of the ground quickly knocked everyone to the floor, and concrete roofs collapsed onto classroom after classroom full of children. Some estimates claim as many as 10,000 classrooms collapsed in northern Pakistan. Most of the teachers that CWS had trained in disaster preparedness were killed, along with thousands of their students.

"There was no way out for them. No training could have helped them cope with this kind of disaster," said Dennis Joseph, the associate director of operations for CWS.

According to Saima Abbasi, a CWS field officer in the relief effort and one of the trainers at the Oct. 2 session, a few teachers did survive, with some reportedly hospitalized in nearby Abbottabad, but she's been so busy helping homeless families prepare for the looming winter that she hasn't had time to visit them.

She wants to hear how their training might have made a difference, but she admits that in most cases, it probably did not. "They had no time to respond," she said.



Operation Christmas Child

The Moundville United Methodist Church Pioneer Clubs collected gift items to assemble 13 Christmas boxes for Operation Christmas Child, a project of Samaritan's Purse. The gift boxes will be distributed to children around the world. Members of the Moundville and Bronaugh United Methodist congregations also donated more than \$120 to cover the shipping costs for these gifts and several others leaving the Operation Christmas Child collection center in Joplin.

The Pioneer Clubs meet in the Moundville UMC Fellowship Hall each Wednesday at 6:00 p.m. during the school year. This year's clubs are open to youth ages preschool through sixth grade.

Letters to the editor:

Due to limited space and the number of responses, unsolicited letters to the editor or opinion pieces may be limited in length. Suggested length is 200 words. Any piece may be edited at the editor's discretion.

Letters that attack individuals or that are anonymous will not be considered. Pieces that violate privacy or infringe on confidentiality will not be published.

Any letter to the editor or opinion piece that repeats the same content or voices the same view as an earlier writer may be rejected. A piece also may be shortened to remove repetitive material.

Letters to the editor relating to national issues in Section B should be sent to UMR Communications at 2400 Lone Star Drive, Dallas TX 75212.

All materials submitted for publication will be published only as space allows and at the discretion of the editor. Letters should be submitted to the editorial office by e-mail at fkoenig@moumethodist.org or mailed to Fred Koenig, 3601 Amron Court, Columbia, MO 65202.

Certified Welcoming Congregations

By meeting a specific set of criteria (see the Web site www.IgnitingMinistry.org for more information), churches can be certified as welcoming congregations through Igniting Ministry. These churches have done special training and work hard to make new and returning visitors feel at home in their churches.

Missouri's certified welcoming congregations are:

Moundville UMC in Moundville
Grandview UMC in Grandview
Zion UMC in St. Louis
First UMC in Lebanon
Weston UMC in Weston
Church of the Shepherd in St. Charles
Licking UMC in Licking
Potosi UMC in Potosi
Mineral Point UMC in Potosi
Grace Community Church in Buffalo

What's in it for the local church?

Through Igniting Ministry, local United Methodist congregations can raise their identity in their communities.

To best achieve these objectives, local church participation must be significant. Igniting Ministry is an undertaking

of the whole church, not a quick fix. Commercialism alone cannot raise awareness significantly; only a concentration of time and effort will achieve the objective that is primary to the others -- to make disciples of Christ.

www.ignitingministry.org

Churches reach out with Igniting Ministry materials

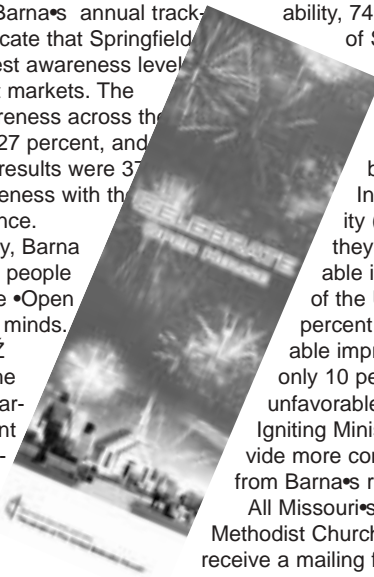
More than 70,000 door-knobs across Missouri will soon have an Igniting Ministry door hanger containing an invitation to a United Methodist Church swinging from them. As one of Igniting Ministry's test conferences through 2008, Missouri received 50,000 door hangers free and added another 25,000 to our order as requests poured in for the Igniting Ministry door hangers. On the front of the hanger, fireworks fill the sky above a church. The back of the hangers have

space for churches to customize them with information about their worship services. More than 120 churches have requested quantities of the hangers ranging from 20 for a church in a small community to 2,500 for a large suburban church. Already, people in the Springfield area are aware of the Igniting Ministry campaign. Springfield is one of six national media test markets where the Barna Group has gathered information about the impact of Igniting Ministry. Preliminary

results from Barna's annual tracking study indicate that Springfield has the highest awareness level of the six test markets. The average awareness across the test areas is 27 percent, and Springfield's results were 37 percent awareness with the seeker audience. In the study, Barna asks whether people remember the "Open hearts. Open minds. Open doors." promise. In the Springfield market, 60 percent of the respondents indicated that they remembered the promise. In terms of believ-

ability, 74.3 percent of Springfield respondents said they thought our ads were believable. In favorability (meaning they had a favorable impression of the UMC), 41.5 percent had a favorable impression, while only 10 percent had an unfavorable impression. Igniting Ministry will provide more complete results from Barna's research soon. All Missouri's United Methodist Churches will soon receive a mailing from Igniting Ministry containing informa-

tion about how to become certified Welcoming Congregations. Igniting Ministry's Welcoming Certification program recognizes congregations that actively and intentionally prepare to welcome newcomers. Currently, Church of the Shepherd in St. Charles, First UMC in Lebanon, Grace Community UMC in Buffalo, Grandview UMC, Licking UMC, Mineral Point UMC in Potosi, Moundville UMC, Potosi UMC, See Igniting Ministry, 4A



Igniting Ministry continued from page 1A

Weston UMC and Zion UMC in St. Louis are Certified Welcoming Churches in Missouri. A regional training is in the planning stages for the summer or early fall. In the meantime, churches, or groups of churches, that would like to explore offering Igniting Ministry training should contact Karen Gordy-Panhorst, communication coordinator, at (877) 736-1806 or e-mail KGordy-Panhorst@moumethodist.org.

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Leadership eNewsletter

Tips, tools and insights for
club coordinators and leaders.

December 2006 Vol. 1, No. 5

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- Basic Training
- Camp Cherith®

NEWSLETTER SIGNUP

What's Up at Club?



Bibles are being studied. Club members are busy with activities. Awards are being earned. Kids are laughing and making new friends. But don't keep the fun to yourself! To send us your stories and digital photos, [click](#)

Pictured this month are the Pioneer Clubs

members of the Moundville United Methodist Church in Moundville, Missouri. November 15 was a club-wide service project night where club members filled boxes for the Operation Christmas Child project.

For more club pictures, [click here...](#)

Outreach: Share the Gift of Christ

Christmas is a time when many think about the church and faith, making December a perfect month for outreach. People are seeking, and members of Pioneer Clubs have the best possible gift of all to offer—Christ.

So how do you work an effective outreach into your Pioneer Clubs program? Below are 12 terrific ideas that will make outreach a natural outflow of your club.

1. Create an inviting packet to give to visitors throughout the year. A [name button](#) will help everyone know the visiting child's name. Give a gift, such as a [Pioneer Clubs theme verse bracelet](#), and encourage the visitor to return next week. Have registration information and a club brochure ready for the child to take home to his or her parents.
2. Advertise your Pioneer Clubs to community parents. Check [Promoting Your Club Program](#)

VIEWPOINT

Cottey College: For Women, By Women, About Women

Cottey College Alumnae Newsletter

Winter 2006

KEEPING THE FAITH

by Steve Reed



his story is about faith. Not necessarily religious faith, although certainly it is important to all of the people involved. No, it's about keeping faith

in what you know to be right and true. Keeping the faith regarding the rights of women and in your own ability to do what you believe you are called to do, even when others discount it.

Second-year Cottey student Portia Hurney has faith. The kind that led her at age 14 to drive herself to church every Sunday when she was the only person in her house interested in attending.

"I've been feeling God was calling me to be a pastor, but I didn't think women were allowed to do that. I haven't told anyone because I thought they would think I was crazy."

Gwen Jones-Lurvey

"You can get a license in South Dakota at age 14," she pointed out, quick to note she wasn't doing anything illegal.

Rev. Dorothy Burningham had faith. The kind that led her to become one of the first women pastors in the Methodist Church in 1956 when women had not been allowed to become ordained as full clergy members.

Hurney, an Episcopalian from Pierre, South Dakota, and Burningham, a trailblazing Methodist pastor from the 1950s would appear to have little in common. Credit Cottey College with making the connection.

Tiny Moundville, Missouri, (approximately 15 miles southwest of Nevada), was looking for a student or intern who could help with some research on Rev. Burningham. The church was wanting to celebrate the 50th anniversary of full clergy rights for women in the Methodist

Church and their own unique niche in that history as they had one of the first women pastors.

Lindell Haverstic, of the Moundville UMC, said, "Burningham served the Moundville and Bronaugh Methodist churches from 1956-1958, and we decided we had an ideal and unique opportunity to do something to observe the anniversary, remember Burningham, and partner with Cottey and its efforts to focus on women's leadership."

Haverstic and the Moundville church contacted Cottey's Kolderie Academic Assistance Center asking if there was a student who might be interested in such a project. The Academic Assistance Center placed a short notice in the *Cottey Connection*, a weekly newsletter distributed to students on campus. Hurney saw the notice and answered the call, so to speak.

"I read about it in the *Connection*," she explained. "I was interested in it because I know I want to work in the church. I thought it would be the perfect project: Women in the Church."

Her research project on Rev. Burningham became a directed study course under the guidance of Dr. Angela Firkus, associate professor of history. At Cottey, a second-year student with a GPA of 3.3 or higher may receive credit for pursuing, on an individual basis, a topic or project related to, but beyond the scope of, regular course offerings.

"I had to visit with my advisor for an hour every week," explained Hurney. "I also had to do all of the research, write down all the information, and format it into a booklet."

Dr. Firkus also had Hurney read articles on how to conduct interviews and some general guides on how to be an historian, as Hurney is not a history major. As part of her directed study, Hurney did conduct an oral history project with members of the Moundville church.

Hurney researched the ministry of Rev. Burningham, and the church funded a stipend for research costs and the publication of Hurney's work for local libraries, United Methodist archives, and



November 11, 2006, Celebrations for 50th Anniversary of the Lord's Acre and 50th Anniversary of Full Clergy Rights for Women in the Methodist Tradition. Left to right: Portia Hurney, Cottey College senior, a member of Trinity Episcopal Church, Pierre, South Dakota; Rev. Elizabeth Hadler, Cottey College coordinator of spiritual life; The Rev. Mimi Savidge, All Saints' Episcopal Church rector, serving Hurney's Nevada church home away from home; Rev. John Swatosh, Moundville United Methodist Church pastor; Rev. Sandy Nenadal, Southwest District superintendent; Rev. Jo Hastings, retired UMC pastor, who was baptized by Burningham and retired from Burningham's first congregation.

others. On November 11, Hurney presented her work to the Moundville Church at its annual Lord's Acre dinner. It was the 50th anniversary of that dinner, which was originated by Rev. Burningham. The first Lord's Acre at the church took place in 1956 as an auction of grain and other farm produce donated by members of the congregation and community. Organized by Burningham during her first year of appointment to the congregation, the event became a favorite tradition of fellowship while also helping to fund construction of the Fellowship Hall in 1961.

Researching a female pastor in rural Missouri from 50 years ago did prove to be a bit of a challenge for Hurney.

"It was the hardest thing," she admitted. "I got some information from the church and its records. I wrote other churches Rev. Burningham served after Moundville, but got no responses. I ended up going through all the old issues of the *Nevada Daily Mail* that are archived in the Nevada Public Library to get a lot of my information."

Hurney hopes to follow in the footsteps of Burningham and other women clergy. She knew this as far back as age 14.

"I grew up in the Episcopal Church," explained Hurney, "but my parents left the church when I was in sixth grade.

Please see **Faith**, page 6

When I turned 14 and got my driver's license, I drove myself to church because it was something very important to me; it was what I wanted. I since have ended up teaching middle school youth group, and I've worked as a youth counselor. God kept putting things in my lap for me to do."

Once she finishes her degree at Cottey, Hurney plans to enroll at Sewanee - The University of the South in Tennessee to pursue a bachelor's degree in theology and perhaps a master's in divinity. Hurney sees herself as either a youth pastor or an Episcopalian priest.

When she reaches her goal, Hurney will be continuing in a long line of women who did not give up on their dreams of full clergy rights. Hurney found a quotation from Gwen Jones-Levey who became one of the first ordained female clergy in the Methodist Church. "I've been feeling God was calling me to be a pastor, but I didn't think women were allowed to do that. I haven't told anyone because I thought they would think I was crazy."

A handful of women pioneers have had a huge impact on the face of the church. From the granting of full ordination rights in 1956, today nearly 12,000 United Methodist clergywomen serve the church at every level. One of those is Rev. Elizabeth Hadler, who serves at Cottey's coordinator of spiritual life. Hurney's priest in the Nevada All Saints' Episcopal Church is also a woman, the Rev. Mimi Savidge. Interestingly enough, in this 50th year of Methodist female clergy ordination, the Episcopal Church announced the election of its first female Presiding Bishop.

Amazing things can happen if one just keeps the faith.

Bridges

A Supplement to the UMR Communications, Inc. 12/06

Clergy women's past and present in Missouri Methodism

Women in The Methodist Church

One example of a woman pastor who worked tirelessly for years without full recognition was Dorothy Alice Burningham. She was born in Maitland, Mo., on July 3, 1912. She graduated from high school in Blue Springs, Nebraska, in May of 1929, and attended Eldorado Junior College in Eldorado, Kansas. In 1939, she married Roe Burningham. She was ordained local deacon in 1952 by the Southwest Missouri Conference of the Methodist Church and local elder in 1954, following the completion of the course of study in 1953. She served a number of charges in the southwest part of the state, including Galloway, Bronaugh-Moundville, Butler, Noel and Oakton Circuit. In all, she served 29 years of full-time pastoral work, yet she was never granted full connection relation. The Missouri West Conference did grant her the new relation of Associate Member in 1969, following its creation by the MC General Conference in 1968. She died in Grove, Oklahoma, in 1978, and is buried in the Oakton UMC cemetery.

Burningham was one of twenty-three women who entered ministry as local pastors in the Southwest Missouri Conference of the MC between 1940 and 1956. She was one of only

four of that conference who was granted local elder status during the same period. In the Missouri Conference, there were twelve women who became local pastors during this time. Three of them were granted local deacon status and only one was ordained local elder. There were eleven female local pastors in the St. Louis Conference, four of whom became local deacons and one of whom was ordained elder.

It turns out that in 1956, there was one woman who was a full connection member of a Methodist conference in Missouri. Her name was Amma Dean Hindman and she was a member of the Southwest Missouri Conference of the Methodist Church. She was born Amma Dean Pippin in Milo, Arkansas, on August 16, 1901, the daughter of Dr. Lewis D. and Dora Pippin. She graduated from the University of Arkansas, Fayetteville, and attended a Methodist Protestant seminary in Magnolia, Arkansas. In 1924 she married the Reverend Don G. Hindman. She was licensed to preach in 1931 and ordained elder in 1934 by the Methodist Protestant Church. She and her husband served churches in the Fort Smith-Oklahoma MP Conference, and after 1939 in the North Arkansas Conference of the Methodist Church. In 1956, she transferred to Southwest Missouri Conference, serving Haymes Chapel, Swars Prairie and Granby churches. She was granted supernumerary status in 1962 and retired in 1967. She died August 5, 1990.

When it comes to the history of the people known as Methodists, Missouri has proven to be a microcosm of the national religious experience just as it has in other areas. Since territorial days Missouri has attracted reformers who wanted a little more freedom of expression and religious practice. Many of these people were Methodists or United Brethren who wanted all their members, lay and clergy alike, men and women alike, to have an equal voice in the operation of their churches. By 1956, women clergy in the Methodist and EUB traditions were well on the way to equal status in the church hierarchy. As we have seen, much of the credit for this achievement should go to the many Methodist women clergy who led the way in Missouri.

This story was originally written for *Toward the Setting Sun*, a bi-annual publication of the Missouri United Methodist Historical Society. The publication costs \$12 a year, or \$20 for two years. To subscribe to *Toward the Setting Sun*, send a check payable to Missouri United Methodist Historical Society, to John Finley, Missouri Conference Archivist, 411 Central Methodist Square, Fayette, MO 65248.



Dorothy
Burningham

January 12, 2007

Letters to the Editor



Would you die for Jesus?

In the last issue of Bridges, there was an article regarding Dorothy Burmingham and other Methodist clergy women. I knew Dorothy quite well and was very pleased with the article.

Women preachers have certainly proven to be an asset to the United Methodist Church. I say preachers because that's the name I like for all who preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ. I also

believe preachers are called by God and that our calling is the highest calling for man or woman.

I held three college and university degrees and was thirty-one years old before God finally got through to me and made me adhere to the call that I received from him when I was fifteen years old. I believe Dorothy was called and that she immediately said, "God send me even though I am a

woman." She proceeded to adhere to this high calling by pursuing her American Dream through her abilities and faithful service to Him.

During my ministry, Dorothy and I were at a retreat in Camp Galilee. The topic of this retreat involved our dedication and sacrifices for Christ and the extent of this dedication. She looked at me and said something I'll never forget. She said, "Dan, I know you

would die for Jesus if He asked you to do so." I know she was so dedicated and I'm glad to have known this fine Christian preacher. She was indeed an asset to God and His church and did help to pave the way for our wonderful, dedicated women preachers who fill many of our pulpits today.

Rev. Dan Sullivan
Springfield, MO



THE MISSOURI CONFERENCE REVIEW

an edition of the United Methodist Reporter

Three Sections, Section A

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You're welcome

Churches recognized for hospitality

Most churches probably think they do a pretty good job of welcoming people. But few have a plaque to prove it. The national Igniting Ministry office offers just that.

The Certified Welcoming Churches program gives churches

a checklist of things they may or may not be doing to make people feel welcome. If a church meets enough of the criteria, it qualifies as a Certified Welcoming Congregation.

"We felt that Wesley is a very welcoming church, so the inviting team thought we should be noted for it," said Tammy Nilges, director of nurturing ministries for Wesley UMC in Jefferson City, one of the most recent churches in the Conference to receive certification. "We were pleased to find that we surpassed the criteria necessary to earn the initial certification."

The church received its certification in December. It joins 17 other churches in the Missouri Conference that have been recognized as Certified Welcoming Congregations (see side bar).

The worksheet for becoming a Certified Welcoming Congregation makes it clear that there is more to being a Welcoming

Certified Welcoming Congregations in the Missouri Conference

- Zion UMC (St. Louis)
- Moundville UMC - Quadrennium certified
- Grandview UMC
- Buckner UMC
- First UMC (Lebanon) - Double certified
- Weston UMC
- Church of the Shepherd (St. Charles) - Double certified
- Licking UMC
- Potosi UMC
- Mineral Point UMC
- Community UMC (Columbia)
- UMC of Green Trails (Chesterfield)
- Marshfield UMC
- Morning Star UMC (O'Fallon)
- Grace Community UMC (Buffalo)
- Ashland UMC
- First UMC (Kennett)
- Wesley UMC (Jefferson City)



Jerry and Eleanor Keely are greeted by Beth Clark and Pat Proctor as they enter Wesley UMC in Jefferson City.

Congregation than just being friendly. Wesley UMC is a good example of that. People are met there on Sunday morning at each entrance by well organized and trained greeters, and are welcomed again at the sanctuary by trained ushers. Signs in the church make it easy for newcomers to navigate the facility.

The welcoming continues after the service is over. Newcomers are visited by someone from the

church who gives them a comprehensive information packet about the various activities and opportunities in the church, and a loaf of fresh-baked bread to signify friendship. Visitors are also given tickets to the weekly Wednesday night meal.

Linda Sullivan, a member of the inviting team at Wesley UMC, gathered materials for the Certified Welcoming

See Welcoming, pg. 5A

Welcoming

continued from pg. 1A

Congregation application and found the church was doing most of the suggested welcoming practices. They just needed to document them. But the checklist did help lead them to improving some areas.

"One thing it put into motion was getting "visitor parking" signs," Sullivan said. "We've also increased the training we do for greeters and ushers."

To treat visitors right, you first have to get them to visit. Wesley UMC has marketed with door hangers and newspaper ads, and has recently been running Igniting Ministry cinema ads in local movie theaters.

Moundville UMC is the only church in the Missouri Conference to be "Quadrennium

Certified," which means it has met or exceeded the criteria for four years in a row. Member Lindell Haverstic recalls that when the church, which averages about 52 in attendance, first learned about Igniting Ministry, they felt it was probably geared toward larger churches. But when they read about a couple other churches their size in the Missouri Conference that were certified, they decided to look into it.

"If they could manage, we thought that perhaps we could too," Haverstic said. "We reexamined the Igniting Ministry checklist and realized we were already doing much to qualify, and could also accomplish other suggested checklist items."

The church kept up the pro-

cess, which adds additional requirements for each year of recertification.

"The certification process became a framework on which to build our own efforts and by which to compare progress from year to year," Haverstic said. "It even inspired new ideas or ways we could make small changes with big results."

The Rev. John Swatosh, pastor at Moundville UMC, said being certified hasn't brought a lot of new people to the door, but it has helped raise the profile of the church.

"People in the community are now very aware of our presence," he said.

Haverstic recommends that churches visit the Igniting



The Wesley UMC bell choir plays on Dec. 17. From left, Leslie Wilsman, Tammy Nilges, Sandy Murray and Elizabeth Kastler.

Ministry Web site and explore the tools available to them.

"IM is not a panacea for small or large congregations, but it is a good tool and a well-defined start-

ing point for those trying to make a difference in their communities," he said.

The Igniting Ministry Web site is www.ignitingministry.org.