

February 2009

Issue 1



The Call

Tennessee Conference United Methodist Women

WONDERFUL JANUARY

Joy Lewter

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I have had such a wonderful January. It may have been cold, but my spirit has been warmed with all my new experiences. Joyce Clark told me I would be busy, but I had no idea how busy I would be. I am learning so much more about our church and how much hard work goes into all committee and agency efforts. But three special events have increased my passion for our United Methodist Women mission.

On January 4th, I left for Sager Brown in Baldwin, LA to work at the UMCOR depot. I was part of the Columbia District VIM team. Since learning of the work at Sager Brown, I have wanted to go there. I felt I needed to experience my Methodist and UMW roots. But I was not prepared for the sweet spirit of this place and the dedication of the staff and volunteers. At the worship service on Thursday night we shared our love for God and what being at Sager Brown had meant to all of us. One person said she thought we were on holy ground and should pull off our shoes. Another said it had been like junior high camp. We came just wanting to do something and were going home sad because we have to leave this place and we don't want to say goodbye to the people we have met. I hope you are considering making the trip with the TN Conference UMW group going to Sager Brown on May 31 - June 5. You will be so glad you did.

The second blessing was on January 23 and 24 at our first executive meeting and our district officer training. I have to admit I was very anxious about this meeting. I so wanted it to be worthwhile, to be spirit-filled and an environment for learning. I thank everyone who came. We had approximately 90 ladies in attendance and greeting everyone was such a treat for me. However, God had even more plans for us. Sue C. Johnson, staff for Women's Division, brought Elmira Sellu, a missionary serving in the East Africa Church. She told about her work with women in this area, giving them confidence, loaning money to start small businesses and improving their health. She thanked us for PLUM - Prayers, Love, Understanding and Money. What a blessing she was!!

Wonderful January continued on page 2

**Legislative Days scheduled for March has been canceled.
Make plans to go to Sager Brown in Baldwin, LA, May 31 - June 5.**

Is Your Newsletter Lost?

Berta Perkins, Editor

It is that time of the year to collect your directories so that I can get the newsletters to the proper persons. I send "The Call" to all district officers, presidents, vice-presidents, secretaries, treasurers and circle leaders of every local unit. That is, if I know you are one of these and I have your mailing address or your e-mail address. **Secretaries, help me to help all the new officers get their newsletter.**

I am really looking forward to the rest of this year. It was great to attend the Conference Executive Meeting and District Training at St. Mark's in Murfreesboro in January. It was well attended and I hope everyone went home feeling that the training they received was worth their time. It is hard to explain the duties an officer will have in an hour, but you get to meet your counterparts on the district and conference level. All conference and district officers are willing to answer questions and help in anyway they can if you will just ask. Invite a conference or district officer to one of your meetings. They don't have to be the main speaker. They just want to meet you ladies and perhaps compare projects, etc. The conference officer list is in this edition.

FYI - Birthday Dollars will go to the Sadie Tilman Fund this year. The contributions received at the Mission Study Event will go to Mission Giving (formally Undesignated Giving). Contributions made at the Spiritual Retreat will be given to Miriam's Promise. Bethlehem Centers of Nashville will receive the money given at our conference annual meeting this fall.

The three studies at the Tennessee Conference Mission Study Event will be *Sudan, Food and Faith* and a repeat of last year's study, *Native American Survival*.

Remember, if you want to get the newsletter by e-mail, just send me your e-mail address and the next edition will be zipped right to you.

Have you heard about the **Five Star Member**? No? Then ask friends until you find someone who knows. You could even ask me.

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Wonderful January

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On January 29th, I flew to Jacksonville, FL with leaders from the Tennessee Conference for training about the four focuses that General Conference established for people called Methodist. The theme was "The Methodist Way - Turning the World Up-side Down." There were 1260 people in attendance and I saw many UMW, including Harriet Olsen. I realized that United Methodist Women are already working in the four areas. The first focus is making spiritual leaders. Doesn't that sound like our officer training and reading program? The second was reaching new people in new places. Doesn't that sound like bringing new people to our Spiritual Life Retreat and School of Christian Mission and now going to Sager Brown? **The third was engaging with the poor to eliminate poverty. Well, this is us! It is what we are all about and the speaker said that about UMW.** The fourth was addressing global health issues. Again, I feel we are already working on that. I was so blessed to be part of this conference group. They were fun and spiritfilled. I could see our church is serious about the Methodist Way of making disciples for Jesus the Christ, transforming the world.

In 2 Corinthians, Paul said, "So we are ambassadors for Christ, since God is making his appeal through us; we entreat you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God." He deserves our best. May God bless you and your work.

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Reading Program

Have you read Three Cups of Tea? It is on our reading list and is an inspirational book. It was written by Greg Mortenson and David Oliver Relin. Greg Mortenson went to an impoverished Pakistan village after a failed attempt to climb a Karakoram Mountain. There he received so much kindness, he promised to return and build a school. He not only kept his promise, but did much more. Read to discover how many schools he has built. His story is a testament to the power of the humanitarian spirit.

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GREETINGS FOR A JOYOUS NEW YEAR IN OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST

Marina Rawls - Spiritual Growth

Our conference leadership training at Mt. Mark's United Methodist Church in Murfreesboro this month was so pleasant and educational. We had an inspiring guest speaker, Elmira Sellu, a missionary with the General Board of Global Ministries of the United Methodist Church assigned as a Regional Missionary with women, children and youth, based in Kampala, Uganda. Her message on the empowering work she is doing with women in micro-business loans was truly inspiring.

I was wondering if I would be able to make it for the training after a surprise visit to the ER the night before for a kidney stone. After 'giving birth' to it and with the help of some medication, I drove down for the day to train our district spiritual growth coordinators. I hope the training was helpful. You are always free to contact me with questions.

I learned a long time ago to appreciate the good health that we have in this life and to turn all worries and pain over to God, trusting Him to see me through.

I do believe that everything happens for a reason and my focus on God was brought a great deal clearer to me when I learned to take my health more seriously. In her book, Why? Trusting God When You Don't Understand, (from the 2009 Reading Program, Spiritual Growth) Anne Graham Lotz states, "Don't wallow in your 'why's.' Don't throw a pity party. Don't remain in your misery. Don't stop short of all God wants to do for you. Understand that you may not understand this side of Heaven. Respect God's silences. When I don't understand why, I trust Him because, I want everything God has for me!" Seldom do we take the time to listen to what God has in store for us. In the foreword for this book, Joni Eareckson Tada shares, "Anne reminds us all that we can trust the One Who holds all answers to that jarring question, WHY? Just knowing that is enough." During our life, there may be several times in which we ask this question of God and we need to listen more closely as God prepares the answers for us. A long time ago, I learned to turn these mysteries over to God and free my life from all worries.

"Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom."

2 Corinthians 3:17

As we begin 2009, let us be open to answers to all mysteries and share with others, as Jesus would have us, the good news for all who are willing to repent and be baptized in his name. I look forward to sharing with you this hope and love for all from our Savior and Lord.

WHAT'S HAPPENING IN SOCIAL ACTION

Diane Bennett

The priority for 2009 of social action issues has been updated somewhat from the past two years. The first issue is based on our current theme of, "Who's at the Table," focusing on Food and Faith, Food Security and hunger issues, and a mission encounter trip to UMCOR/Sager-Brown Depot.

The second issue will continue to promote the Charter for Racial Justice and Fair Immigration Policies and to promote goal #7 and #10 of Mission Today Criteria.

The third issue is our environment, Caring for God's Creation. This will promote goal #17 on the Mission Today Criteria. We can read books on the environment from our reading list.

I hope you are promoting using "fair trade" coffee, tea and chocolate at conference and district events.

Your Tennessee Conference Mission Trip to UMCOR in Baldwin, Louisiana will be May 31 to June 5, 2009. District Social Action Coordinators and presidents can provide copies of the forms you will need to fill out. Cost is \$190.00. Checks are made to TN Conference UMW and forms are due to Judy Vecchione, Treasurer, by March 1. Call me at 615/890-8305 for further information. We are really looking forward to this trip! Judy's address is 503 Brick Church Pike, Goodlettsville, TN 37027.

THOUGHTS FROM THE NASHVILLE DISTRICT

Eileen Vaughan, President

As we begin the New Year I would like to encourage all of you to let God's direction lead you as we minister to women, children and youth here and around the world. Our theme this year is "**Who's at the Table?**" which our program book defines as, "answering this question reveals great divisions in our society: divisions of age, race, income, ethnicity, education, and access to health care, to name a few". This year we are called to work together to identify areas of division and work to advocate for change when necessary.

The Nashville District United Methodist Women accomplished many projects last year and we are planning even more successful events in 2009. Last year several local units organized new circles with younger women, continued their mission work by providing snack meals to kindergartners to take home over the weekend. Some have increased their Pledge to Mission and many take part in hands on and educational events at all levels of the UMW.

Our Local leadership training was held February 7th. As president, my goals are to inspire our faithful members to reach out to women of all ages in their church and invite them to attend a meeting and join the fellowship. I also plan to improve our communication among unit members and share ideas to build up our membership.

We are very excited about the Spring District Meeting on April 18th from 9:00 - 11:30 at Belmont UMC. Naomi Tutu, daughter of Desmond Tutu, has accepted our invitation to speak about her work in diversity training and thoughts about our first African American President's plans for change. She was very interested to know about the UMW Charter on Racial Justice and how it is now in use in the United Methodist Churches worldwide. We are a part of a truly powerful and compassionate group of women!

Up coming events include our District Mission Study on Native American Survival in June, the mission trip to UMCOR-Sager Brown in May, the Christian Education Event in July and the Spiritual Enrichment Retreat in Beersheba Springs in September. I am encouraging all our members to attend the district and conference events to learn more about the United Methodist Women and help them grow spiritually as they minister in Missions.

I have always loved reading the lives of the saints, particularly Teresa of Avila. In this poem, she offers this reflection:

*Christ has no body now on earth but yours,
no hands but yours,
no feet but yours,
Yours are the eyes through which the compassion
of Christ is to look to a hurting world
Yours are the feet with which He is to go about
doing good
Yours are the hands with which he is to bless now.*

New Quadrennium - New Criteria for Mission Today

The Mission Today criteria have changed. “Why?” you ask. Every four years, at the beginning of a new quadrennium, the United Methodist Women’s Handbook is updated, so that is the most logical time to make other changes based on evaluation of existing programs and policies. Change keeps us from getting too complacent in our units. Last year there were 15 criteria. We now have 18, as listed on the new reporting form. The following highlights explain additions and revisions for 2009-2012.

- ❖ **At least one member of unit (other than conference/district officer) will attend the conference Mission Education Event.**
- ❖ **At least two members of unit (other than conference/district officer) will attend the district or conference annual meeting.**

Members from your unit who are district or conference officers are expected to attend the Mission Education Events as well as the district and conference annual meeting, and thus cannot be counted on the unit’s report for these criteria. Other members of the unit must attend as specified.

- ❖ **Unit will participate in the Campaign for Children in at least two ways.**

Previously this requirement was to co-sponsor a Children’s Sabbath as a way to participate in the Campaign for Children. We must now participate in the Campaign for Children in two ways, one of which can still include sponsoring a Children’s Sabbath. Possibilities for action include:

Help sponsor a church or community program related to children and youth needs.

- Sponsor a Children’s Sabbath, promoted by the Children’s Defense Fund.
- Get involved with children in mentoring, tutoring and “big sisters” programs.
- Write letters, e-mail, or call congressional representatives and/or others in government regarding children’s issues.
- Visit your local schools.
- Attend a school board meeting.
- Learn how our schools are funded.
- ❖ **At least two people from the unit, circle or subgroup complete one of the Reading Program Plans and report on one of the books read; have a book review program.**
- The reading program has been added back with a change. Someone must now report on at least one of the books read. Start a book review program or a reading group using books from the reading list.
- ❖ **Units will invite a district or conference officer, other than a member of the unit, to one of the unit meetings during the year.**
- This addition should help improve communication and interaction between the local unit and the conference and district teams.
- ❖ **Make a pledge to care for God’s creation and become a “Green” unit.**
- This new item encourages us to become informed and committed to caring for God’s earth. One of the first steps to accomplishing this is to take the Earthkeeper’s Pledge, which list a variety of concerns you can choose from and pledge to intentionally work on during the year. The form can be printed from the conference web site, www.gb-gm-umc.org/tnconfumw.
- ❖ **Hold a Mini-Spiritual Growth Retreat and prepare by watching video “Resurrection Road” and getting the accompanying study guide, “Resurrection Women.”**
- This new item does not mean that you must do the Resurrection Women retreat from the study guide and show the video at your retreat. That retreat was done at Beersheba a few years ago. The video and study guide are available on loan from the conference Secretary of Program Resources and will merely provide an example of how to conduct a retreat that has a spiritual foundation. Your retreat can be a few hours or an overnight event. Be creative, but make it a spiritual gathering.

The levels of participation for which your unit can receive recognition have changed this year. In an effort to make becoming a GOLD Mission Today Unit a possibility for small membership units, the number of items required to be completed has been reduced. The levels are listed on the bottom of the new reporting form. Every unit can work toward becoming a Mission Today unit.

Conference Contacts for 2009

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DISTRICT EVENTS FOR 2009

Clarksville District		President: Kay Martin
March 7	District Spiritual Day Apart, Ashland City UMC, Sat., 9am - 2pm	
April 25	District Mission Study, Hilldale UMC, Sat., 9 am - 2 pm	
August 17	District Intergeneration Event, Antioch, UMC, Sun. 2-4 pm	
October 24	District Annual Meeting, Bethlehem UMC, Sat., 9 am - noon	
Columbia District		President: Dixie Waters
Feb. 21	District Faith Lift, Lewisburg 1st UMC, Sat., 2 pm	
April 19	District Campaign for Children, Berlin UMC, Sun. 2 pm	
July 25	District Unit President's Roundtable, Godwin Chapel UMC, Sat 10am	
Sept. 26	District Annual Meeting and Leadership Training, Franklin 1st UMC	
Cookeville District		President: Donna Dilts
Feb. 21	District Officer Training for Local Units, Clark UMC, McMinnville	
March 28	District Mission Study, Native American, Cookeville 1st Sat.	
October 17	District Annual and Executive Team Meeting, Location TBA, Sat.	
Cumberland District		President: Claudia Sullivan
April 18	District Mission Study & Executive Team Meeting, Dodson Chapel	
Oct. 24	District Annual Meeting, Gladeville UMC	
Murfreesboro District		President: Margaret Hicks
Feb. 18	District Mission Study, I Believe in Jesus, Pleasant Grove UMC	
March 21	District Day Apart, Shiloh UMC	
May 2	District Mission Study, Native American Survival, Cedar Grove UMC	
Nov. 7	District Annual Meeting, Murfreesboro 1st UMC	
Nashville District		President: Eileen Vaughan
April 18	District Spring Meeting, Belmont UMC, Saturday	
June 20	District Mission Study, Crieveewood UMC Saturday	
Sept. 26	District Fall Meeting, Location TBA, Saturday	
Pulaski District		President: Beverly Duke
March 21	District Spring Meeting & Local Officer Training, New Prospect UMC	
Aug. 15	District Mission Education Event, Coleman Mem. UMC, Sat., 9 am	
Oct. 17	District Fall Meeting, Prospect UMC, Sat., 9 am	

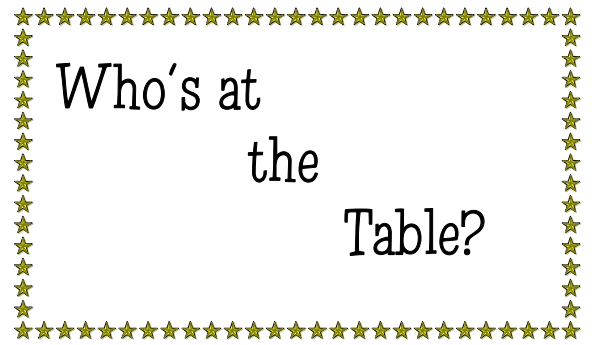
Remember to check out these web sites.

www.gbmg-umc.org/umw
www.gbmg-umc.org/tnconfumw

The Conference Calendar 2009

April 6-11	Holy Week (Easter April 12)
May 31 - June 5*	Mission Trip UMCOR Sager Brown, Baldwin, LA
June 11-14	South Atlantic Regional School Wesleyan College Owensboro, KY
July 8-11*	Christian Mission Education Event Martin College
Sept. 11-13*	Spiritual Enrichment Retreat United Methodist Assembly Grounds Beersheba Springs, TN
October 10*	Annual Meeting - Columbia First
Nov. 20-22	Conference Elected Officer Leadership Training St. Louis, MO

***Registration Required-Conference-wide event**



The Call is mailed four times a year to the President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer & Circle Leaders in each local unit. Please make sure a list of these current officers has been sent to the editor. **Please copy and distribute.**

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

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**Mission trip to
UMCOR
Sager Brown in
Baldwin, Louisiana**