

Mahoning Valley Messenger

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Soul Surfer

I recently saw the movie, **Soul Surfer**, which tells the story of Bethany Hamilton, a young surfer who loses her arm in a shark attack and continues in her quest to become a professional surfer. As the movie unfolds I was struck by the depth of Christian values underlying Bethany's life and of her passion to "not give up" and to "not see the end of her dreams because of the reality of the shark attack." Of course, it was a Hollywood movie with extra glitter but watching the movie I was drawn to the awesome presence of God's Spirit even in the midst of the deepest valleys. Paul's words to the Corinthians echo forth as we can hear, "*my grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness. . . Therefore I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities for the sake of Christ; for whenever I am weak, then I am strong.*" (2 Cor. 12:8b-10)

As we live on the other side of the resurrection, we have seen God's power made perfect, made strong in the midst of overcoming death and we are witnesses to that good news. We are transitioning from Easter to the great moment of God's Spirit falling upon the disciples and literally taking their weaknesses and making them strong. You and I are the living witnesses of Christ's power here in the Mahoning Valley District and we are challenged to not give in or give up to the forces that can seek to drag us under, to bite off the very life that we seek to share with those who don't know Jesus. My friends, we are not surfers along the coasts of Hawaii but we are riding the waves of God's Spirit among the people of the valley and no matter how many times we get knocked off the ministry path, we – like Bethany Hamilton – must keep getting back on the path. We can do it. I know we can, with God's continue help and strength. With God all things are possible, Amen.

On Sunday, April 17th I worshipped at New Waterford UMC and was overwhelmed by the spiritual waves of exhilaration as the congregation returned to the sanctuary for the first time in over ten years. For ten years they labored to complete the building project and to once again worship in the sanctuary. Sometimes the waves of doubt and despair overwhelmed them, but the faithful people of New Waterford never gave up and today they sing praises to God in a beautiful house of the Lord. They never gave up in living into the dream of returning to the sanctuary. "Never give up" is a phrase the athletes hear over and over again in their training and I believe those words speak to us, as well.

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Soul Surfer, continued:

When the movie, Soul Surfer, ended and Debbie and I watched the credits, I witnessed the family giving thanks to Jesus Christ for the faith to persevere and then I saw the final caption which, I paraphrase:

The End: Is really only a new beginning!

As we walk through the season of Easter and towards the Pentecost moment, may we truly be only beginning a new adventure for our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

Be Encouraged Always,

Dan

Rev. Dan Bryant

Feeling the Call But Don't Know Where to Start?

Exploration 2011 may be for you. From November 11th-13th, representatives of all 13 UMC affiliated seminaries will be in St. Louis, MO to answer your questions on where you would best fit in the seminary community. For more information, call the district office.

We ask for your prayers for the following in the days ahead:

Sue Wade, widow of Rev. Enzie Wade.
Pastor Curtis Miller (Ellsworth/New Hope) undergoing treatment for heart disease.
Churches in conflict and in stages of transition.

Pastors transitioning out of Mahoning Valley District:

Rev. Mary Murtha
Rev. Ruth Roth
Rev. David Martin
Pastor Jerry Herron (Retiring)

Pastors transitioning into new appointments in Mahoning Valley District:

Rev. Cathy Ake (Vienna UMC)
Rev. Ray Ake (Coalburg/Masury Lead Pastor)
Rev. Matt Darrin (Howland)
Pastor Mark McTrusty (East Palestine: Centenary/Emmanuel)
Lisa Evans (Pulpit Supply - New Garden/Franklin Square.

Memorial Day Observed
May 30
(Office Closed)



With Dan in May

- 3 Equitable Compensation
- 4 MVD Clergy Gathering / Finance Subcommittee
- 5 National Day of Prayer / MVOC Event
- 9 Black Theologian Day
- 10 Committee on Racial Empowerment
- 11 SPRC Consult
- 16-18 Cabinet
- 20 MVD Youth Event
- 21 Grant Writing Seminar
- 22 Youngstown Urban Plan Presentation
- 23-27 Abbey Retreat
- 30 Memorial Day
- 31 Cabinet via web-cam

Mark Your Calendars Now

Mahoning Valley District Faith Night with the *Mahoning Valley Scappers* will be Friday, August 5 at 7:05. Ticket/Reservation forms are available at the district website mvdistumc.org on the Events and Leadership Training page, in your Spring District meeting booklet, or by calling the district office.

Watch your mail/e-mail for news of a possible tailgate party before the game.

May Clergy Birthdays

6	Rick Dawson	Boyce
9	Russ Adams	Western Reserve
16	Walt Tully	Retired
17	Gordon Ferguson	
	Newton Falls/Pricetown	
27	Ash Welch	Boardman
31	InWha Shon	Korean

If we have your birthday listed incorrectly (or not at all) please let us know so we can correct our records.



The deadline for submissions to the June Newsletter is Monday, May 16

Submissions should be made in writing/via e-mail when possible

Reminder: If you would like to receive your newsletter via e-mail, please contact Kathy at mvdistumc@aol.com.

Clergywomen's Lunch

District Clergy women will meet at 12:30 p.m. May 11 at Fellows Gardens. Fellows Gardens is a part of Mill Creek Park in Youngstown. Easy access can be found from Mahoning Avenue near the 680 exit.

Retirees Breakfast

Retirees & Spouses of the district are invited to a breakfast gathering on Friday, **May 27** at 9:00 a.m. at Luciano's Café & Banquet Center, Wedgewood Plaza, Austintown.

Annual Conference 2011

“If We Are the Body...” is the theme for this year’s annual conference, to be held June 13-16 at Lakeside.

Using this theme we will take a look at one of the four foci of The United Methodist Church – “ministry with the poor.” Various areas of poverty, such as economic, spiritual and physical, will be examined.

Some East Ohio churches are already making great differences in their communities through active programs that minister to the poor. Bishop Hopkins will spotlight and share examples of such programs as part of this year’s annual conference.

If you would like your successful program of ministry to the poor to be spotlighted, please send a synopsis of the program, along with contact information of those involved, to Director of Communications Rick Wolcott. His email address is wolcott@eocumc.com.

Take Cleaning Buckets & Health Kits to Annual Conference

The Midwest Mission Distribution Center will have a truck at the corner of Hoover Auditorium from Sunday afternoon to Tuesday morning to collect Cleaning Buckets and Health Kits. There is a great need. Items in the health kits are:

1 hand towel (no kitchen towels), 1 washcloth, 1 comb (not pocket-size), 1 nail file or fingernail clippers, 1 bath-size bar of soap, 1 adult toothbrush in wrapper, 6 adhesive plastic strip sterile bandages, \$1 to purchase toothpaste. All must fit in a sealed one gallon plastic bag. Send only requested items—nothing more.

District Clergy Gathering

All Clergy on the district are expected to attend the **District Clergy Gathering on Wednesday, May 4th**, 10 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. at Poland UMC. Communion will be celebrated and Lunch will be served. Poland UMC is located at 1940 Boardman-Poland Rd., Poland, 44514.

Please call the district office at (330) 270-3400 to make your lunch reservation. Retirees are welcome too.

Native American Ministries Sunday, May 8, 2011

Your gifts on Native American Ministries Sunday fund ministries that pave the way for those who aspire to serve Christ’s church by making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. Because of your generosity, seminarians prepare to serve, congregations become stronger and communities are transformed.

In today’s economy, your contributions are critical to The United Methodist Church, honoring its commitment to ministries that support Native Americans.

Call (888) 346-3862 today to order envelopes and other resources so your congregation can participate in this churchwide offering. They will be sent at no cost to your church! Find more at umcsgiving.org/specialsundays.

If you are unable to celebrate this offering on May 8, you can observe this Special Sunday on any day of the year.

Dan Bryant urges you to observe each of the United Methodist Special Sundays throughout the year.

Annual Conference 2012

The ballots have been counted and the following persons were elected at the 2011 Spring District Conference to serve as Members-at-Large to Annual Conference 2012:

Melissa Allison—East Pal. Centenary
Lee Althouse—Damascus
Norma Anderson—Canfield
Barbara Beach—Boardman
Vernon Brown—Ygts. Trinity
Mary Ann Bryan—Canfield
Craig Carson—Boardman
John Cornell—Good Shepherd
Idabelle DeHoff—Smith Corners
Barb Enoch—Tod Avenue
Tong Ho Ham—Korean
Betty Haynali—Berlin Center
Ray Heverly—Damascus
Mary Kay Heverly—Damascus
Don Jones—Damascus
Pat Kendig—Smith Corners
Samantha Knight—Mahoning
Barbara Lendon—Boardman
Jim Lendon—Boardman
Regina McAlister—Fowler
Barbara Reed—E Liverpool First
Ralph Reed—E Liverpool First
Gale Reedy—West Austintown
Cheryl Thompson—Canfield
Penny Wells—Richard Brown

These persons will be contacted next winter to confirm their availability. The remaining nominees will be considered as alternates and will be contacted - in order of votes received - if any of the elected members are unable to attend.

District Gathering at Annual Conference

The District Gathering at Lakeside will take place on Wednesday, May 15, beginning at 8:00 p.m., at the Lakeside United Methodist Church.

Look for more information in the June newsletter.

Mission Opportunity

The Urban Mission Ministries JOSHUA (Journeys of Service Helping Upper Appalachia) Program is looking for Christian workgroups to help less fortunate and elderly home owners with repairs. JOSHUA is a well established summer mission program in Steubenville, Ohio and is looking for groups to come and be in ministry this summer. For information or to book your group call the JOSHUA director at (740) 282-8903.

World Premiere

July 23, 6:00 p.m., Powers Auditorium in Youngstown. Darren Thomas - World Premiere - Musical Performance - RAPTURE (Darren Thomas is the director of the Youngstown: Centenary United Methodist Church Praise Team.) More than 100 vocalists and musicians will perform in such styles as Gospel, Contemporary Christian, Latin, Neo-classical and many other genres of music. Call 330.207.8117 or visit www.symphonicart.org for tickets.

Buy, Trade or Sell - The Market Place Returns to our Annual Conference Clergy Spouse Coffee! Wednesday, June 15, 2011

For every clergy spouse who loves to craft, sew, and cook, you are invited once again to bring your items to sell at our Lakeside Clergy Spouse Coffee! Reserve a table now by contacting Elsa Court, elsacourt@roadrunner.com or call 740-255-5160. This "Market Place" was well received last year as hand-made and home-made items are appreciated for their quality and price. The proceeds are yours this is not a fundraiser. Those not selling can come early and S-H-O-P.

Clergy Spouses - Save This Date

The annual Clergy Spouses' Retreat is scheduled for November 18 & 19 at the Four Points Sheraton Hotel, North of Pittsburgh, PA.

Printed brochures will be available at Annual Conference and by mail in late in the summer.

It's Dinner Time, etc.

Baked Chicken Dinner - Tuesday, May 3, 4-6 p.m. at Hubbard UMC. Carry-out only — call 330-534-3383 to place your order.

Homemade Chicken Dinners to Go Thur., May 5, 4-6 (or until sold out) at Poland UMC, 1940 Boardman-Poland Rd.. Drive-up service only.

Drive Thru Stuffed Chicken Dinners - Thurs. May 5, 4-6 p.m. (or until sold-out) at Western Reserve UMC, 4580 Canfield Rd. (Rt. 62), Canfield.

Stuffed Chicken Dinners To Go - Thurs. May 5, 4 - 6 p.m. (or until sold out) at Salem First UMC, 244 S. Broadway, Salem. Drive-thru service only.

All You Can Eat Fish Dinner - Fri. May 6, 3:30-6:30 at Tod Ave. UMC, 155 Tod Ave., Warren.

Stuffed Cabbage Rolls - Every Tuesday in May, 11-4 at Mahoning UMC, 2214 Mahoning Ave., Youngstown. Call 330-799-5318 to order.



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