



SOUTH WEST DISTRICT NEWSLETTER

Rev. Dr. Rinaldo Hernandez, District Superintendent
Julie Bullerdick, Business Administrator
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November 2012

The same Spirit that was upon Moses

"The LORD came down in the cloud and spoke to Moses. Then he gave the seventy elders the same Spirit that was upon Moses. And when the Spirit rested upon them, they prophesied."

But Moses replied, "Are you jealous for my sake? I wish that all the LORD's people were prophets and that the LORD would put his Spirit upon them all!" ³⁰ Then Moses returned to the camp with the elders of Israel", Numbers 11:25, 29

One of the things I truly love about being a United Methodist is our approach to ministry as something pertaining to the laity and clergy alike. We pastors have been called to be "spiritual leaders" and at the same time hold responsibilities towards the proclamation of the Word of God, the administration of the Sacraments and the upholding of order in the Church, meaning by this, to help the leadership of the church "follow procedure" as is stated by the Book of Discipline.

And we Methodists do this following a principle that was stated and upheld by Martin Luther and the Reformation Movement during the 16th Century: "the priesthood of all believers", meaning by that the differences among clergy and laity are about areas of specialization, not about content or meaning. Luther said that there is the same holiness in the ministry of the shoe repair person as there is in the ministry of the priest.

In the early Methodist movement this meant ministry opportunities being given to all persons without any regard for ordination (except for the administration of Sacraments), gender or academic qualifications. I'm so happy to be a part of a movement where all that is required from people in order to serve the Lord is to love Christ with all of your heart, mind and soul!

All Christians have been called through Jesus Christ to be in ministry to the entire world, to make disciples of all nations, to baptize them and to teach them all the things Jesus taught us! We all have been called to *"share each other's burdens, because that is the way to obey the law of Christ"*, Galatians 6:2

Precisely because of that conviction, a long time ago I understood that there is very little value in what has been described as "heroic solo leadership".

The ministry of the Church was always supposed to be the ministry of all those who have been washed, saved and restored to the image of God in Jesus Christ, not just the ministry of the priest.

The practice of the “heroic solo leadership” style is one of the reasons why pastoral ministry is one of the most stressful jobs in the world and the reason why so many pastors burn out and quit. It is impossible to fulfill the mission of the Church (to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world) with the efforts and skills of just one person. In its very nature “Church” is a plural concept. It implies assembly, collective work towards one common goal, diversity of gifts used for the same purpose, unity in the midst of plurality. Oh, if we would just be able to abide by those principles, what a different Church we would be!

I was truly delighted to meditate and learn from this story in the Book of Numbers. It is surprising that Moses, the great leader of Israel, would feel stressed out and burned by the burden placed upon his shoulders. But that is what is so great about the Bible. It has real people in it. The Bible does not hide the fact that the heroes and heroines of our faith are real human beings, like you and me.

A part of Moses' problem, was that he was not well prepared to do what he was called to do. In fact, he tried to tell God that when God asked him to do it. He explained that he did not have the skills to this. God said to do it anyway, which he did.

Moses would have preferred to settle down in Midian and be a sheep rancher. But God said, "I want you to go back to Egypt to take my people out of there." Moses had to lead the people out of Egypt, across the Red Sea, into the Sinai desert, and to the Promised Land. Everything went wrong. In the first place they kept getting lost.

That is the only way you can explain why it took forty years to go across the Sinai desert, a trip that otherwise could have been done in forty days. They must have been going around in circles. They ran out of food. So God had to give them something called "manna" to eat.

Then the people on the tour started to complain. The people would complain to Moses during the day, and he would hear their weeping at night, crying, "We were better off in Egypt as slaves, than we are now free, wandering this desert."

Finally Moses, stressed out, became really upset with God. "Why have you done this to me? Am I the father of all these people that I should take responsibility for looking after them? This is enough! You can take your people and lead them yourself. I'm going back to the ranch." He found it easier to shepherd sheep than to shepherd people. Moses said to God, "I don't need this. Do something."

God said to Moses, ***"Take seventy of the elders and go to the tent of meeting, and I will meet you there. And I will put the same spirit which is upon you and put it on them; and they shall carry the burden of the people with you, so you will not have to bear it by yourself alone."***

We can learn from Moses, from whom God took some of the spirit that he had given originally to Moses, and gave it to seventy others. "They shall bear the burden with you, so that you will not bear it by yourself alone."

You could call it "the biblical model of leadership". It is called “servant leadership”. The "servant leader" is the person who sees his/her role as to encourage everyone to find fulfillment and realization in their work together as a body. "Covenantal relationships" is another term meaning common vision and mutual trust, rather than "contractual relationships," which are based on imposed expectations, rewards and punishments. But ironically, the slowest institution to adopt that biblical model has been the Church.

The image of the Church in the Bible is "community," not hierarchy. The image of the Church in the Bible is a "body," where everybody is as important as everybody else. Every person has something to give, equal to everybody else, because we all share the same spirit. We are all empowered by the same spirit. That is a source of equality in the Church. "We are one in the spirit."

The Church is not a "one man show." There is nothing in the Bible having to do with the veneration of a charismatic leader. Not even Moses, who was the founder of Israel. Not David, who was the greatest king who ever lived. Not Peter, who was designated by our Lord to be a spiritual leader of the Church.

The Church is still a hierarchical institution, but it didn't start out that way. If it is going to be reformed, renewed, restored it can't stay that way. In fact, every time the Church has gone through a reformation, it is when they have taken the spirit away from a few and disperse it to the many.

Luther said, "No." The gifts of ministry have been given to all who are baptized. We are all priests. We are all here to minister to one another and to a broken world. Just as a priest is God's representative at the altar dispensing grace through the sacraments, so we are all priests at our place of work, in our homes, neighborhoods, pouring out grace through our words and deeds.

We are called in Christ to be priests to each other. We have been called to share God's grace through our concern for other people. We can redeem their lives, give them hope, and turn them around, simply by making ourselves a vessel for God's grace to touch their lives.

The Church should be a community where we are able to share one another's burdens. All God needs to touch somebody's life, is for you to touch somebody's life. That is all it takes. Just let them know that you care about them, that you are thinking about them and praying for them. That is all God needs.

Every church should have as one of its goals the goal to become a caring community, especially to those who are outside the church walls. That is what it is to become a real church.

We all have been given the same Spirit that once was placed upon Moses. We have been equipped and deployed to be servants in the world and agents of transformation by sharing God's grace and redemptive power with people in need. Be a priest. Be a minister. And let us be the Church of all the ministers who go inside every Sunday just to be spiritually fed and go back to work out in the world, making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

In Christ's Service,

Rini



News article on the Conference website featuring Grace Place

GOLDEN GATE CITY -- You could say it's a place for second chances, but some might argue that many who find their way there never had a chance before.

Maybe it's safer to say that the former Golden Gate UMC near Naples is living up to its old name by offering a gateway to a golden future, while also stepping up to its new moniker: Grace Place.

As I've traveled to church conferences this fall and attended the requisite meetings that go along with this new responsibility, I'm intentionally listening more and learning. I lay down my right to myself

and how I want “church” and am available to find common ground with all other generations (loving my neighbors of whatever age!), that we might follow Jesus more faithfully together. Please pray for me – this doesn’t come naturally!

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Lay Servant Ministry

From the Desk of Gene Louise Fisher (South West District Director of Lay Servant Ministries)

Lay Servant Ministry Classes in the South West District

Basic – Local Lay Servant – Must be completed before taking the Advanced Course.

Advanced Course –Certified Lay Servant- Let The Whole Church Say Amen.

Each Course is 10 hours. You must attend both days.

Price is \$35.00 – Covers Study Material, Lunch, etc.

Make Check Payable to Gene Louise Fisher

Mail to – 7872 Barrancas Ave., Bokeelia, Fl. 33922 by November 10

Location: Christ United Methodist Church, 1430 Homestead Road N, Lehigh Acres FL 33936

Dates: Friday, November 16 - 6:30pm-9:00pm

Saturday, November 17 - 8:30am - 5:30pm

Jim Boesch will be presenting “**Understanding Men’s Ministry**” January 18-19. This training is open to men only. Pine Island UMC in Bokeelia will be hosting this event. The cost will be \$40.

Times: Jan 18 6pm-9pm

Jan 19 9am-4pm

Make checks payable to "Pine Island UMC Men" and mail to Pine Island UMC, 5701 Pine Island Road, Bokeelia FL 33922. Please contact Pine Island UMC with any questions at 239-283-2386.

See You There!

Contact Info: Gene Louise Fisher, email: piumchurch@comcast.net or phone: 239-283-2386

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YOUTH LEADERS

Report from Mike Edwards, SW District Youth Coordinator

After a hiatus of a few months, I am back as our SW District Youth Coordinator. The District Youth Coordinator is a lay volunteer (read: “unpaid”) position designed to help the district’s youth leaders/pastors/directors connect. We meet periodically for fellowship, support, prayer, sharing, and to plan events that will also bring our youth together. Many of you have my old contact info in your data bases. Please update your address books to Mike Edwards, Faith UM- Ft. Myers, medwards@faithum.com.

Our first lunch meeting of the season was held late in October in Port Charlotte. It was great to meet-n-eat with old friends and new, as we welcomed Will Dieffenbach to Englewood UMC as their new youth director. It was a sad one too, though. We said good-bye to Scott Folsom from Carlson Memorial UMC who is moving

back home to Maine to attend seminary. Scott has been in youth ministry in Florida for nearly 20 years. Scott's leadership and passion for our youth will be sorely missed.

It may take me a couple of weeks for me to get the district youth leader email database back on line. Meanwhile, if all the youth leaders would email me with current church, preferred email address, and a phone number, it would be a big help and much appreciated.

LOCAL CHURCH SCAM ALERT

Beware of a telephone scam perpetrated by **Online Public Yellowpages**. A quick Google of this company will reveal many complaints and methods used to extort money. Their favorite targets are local churches. One method recently used on a church in our district is to call minutes before the church office closes and they speak to the church secretary. They use information gleaned from the church's website to feign relationships with the pastors or administrators. They proceed with a high pressure, 'deadline is today', 'you will lose your job', 'I already have your pastor's permission', language. Ultimately they ask for permission to confirm the content of the ad. "To assure quality control, we will record your responses..." The secretary is only allowed to answer with 'yes or no' answers. In this case study, the secretary hung up on the company after she would not agree to authorize the purchase of \$600 for the ad.

After three months, the church received an invoice from Online Public Yellowpages for \$600 plus three months of interest. This was followed by aggressive collection calls from the company. They actually manipulated the recording to add a 'yes' to the question of "authority to make the purchase" so it sounded like the secretary agreed to the charges. This added much unwarranted grief and guilt on the secretary. This aggressive posture continued as they harassed the secretary that she would "ruin the pastor's credit rating if it was not paid...today!" At which point they replayed the altered recording and demanded payment. An attorney was eventually engaged to stop the harassing phone calls and threatening communications.

Please beware of any communications with Online Public Yellowpages.

CHURCH EVENTS IN THE SOUTH WEST DISTRICT

YOU CAN VIEW ALL LOCAL CHURCH EVENTS ON THE CONFERENCE WEBSITE – SELECT “LOCAL CHURCH EVENTS” UNDER THE ‘QUICK LINKS’ SECTION

Nov 12, 2012 - Thanksgiving Wednesday Theater Luncheon Benefit

Who of our Sarasota County community leaders will play Colombo, Sherlock Holmes and Charlie's Angels Kelly, Sabrina and Jill? Come and see at this the 12th Annual Sarasota Ministerial Association's full complimentary luncheon theater, Thanksgiving Wednesday, November 21, 11:45 am to 1:00 pm in St. Martha's Church Fellowship Hall (200 Orange Ave. North, 34236).

This community theater luncheon will bring together local government representatives, faith and other community leaders to dine with our County's homeless while enjoying an enactment of the iconic detective series, *Colombo*, *Charlie's Angels*, *Mission Impossible*, *Sherlock Homes*, and even *Spider Man*. Written by local playwright Kathryn Chesley, "The Turkey Trot" will be performed during the luncheon. A Free-Will offering will be taken and given to the Sarasota Salvation Army to benefit their Thanksgiving Day meals for our community's homeless.

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Apportionment payments for 2012 must be received either at the Conference office or in the lockbox at Regions Bank by Friday January 11th 2012. This is not a postmarked by date, but is the last day by which monies must be received in the Conference or our bank lockbox to be included in 2012 apportionments

The Remittance Report is located on our website at www.flumc.org:

- Complete the Remittance Form with the following information:

- [illegible]



HELP WANTED & CLASSIFIEDS....

- Don't forget to check the Conference website (www.flumc.org) to find job postings, items for sale, donations, etc. Just select "Classifieds" on the left side of the homepage.*

Nov 10 – DNA Coaching (Transformation TRAINING), Location: First-Immokalee (9am-11:30am)
Nov 10 – DNA Coaching (Transformation TRAINING), Location: Pleasant Hill-Arcadia (1:30pm-4pm)
Nov 12 – Conference & District Offices closed in observance of Veterans Day
Nov 13 – SW District NCD Meeting, Location: Charlotte Harbor Trinity (9:30am-2pm)
Nov 15 – DNA Coaching (Transformation COACHING), Location: First-Wauchula (9am-11:30am)
Nov 15 – DNA Coaching (Transformation COACHING), Location: Charlotte Harbor Trinity (1:30pm-4pm)
Nov 22-23 – Conference & District Offices closed in observance of the Thanksgiving Holiday
Nov 27 – Clergy Team Meeting. Location: Cleveland-Punta Gorda (9:30am-Noon)
Dec 2 – Clergy Christmas & Appreciation Dinner, Location: Kingsway Country Club, Lake Suzy
Dec 21-Jan 1 – Conference & District Offices closed for Christmas & New Year's Holidays
Jan 24, 2013 – dCOM, First UMC, Punta Gorda
Jan 26 2013 – Local Church Leadership Training, St. John's UMC-Sarasota
Feb 2, 2013 – Local Church Leadership Training, North Naples UMC
Feb 10, 2013 – Bishop Carter Preaching at Faith UMC in Ft. Myers
Feb 10, 2013 – Bishop Carter meeting w/district laity in the afternoon at Faith UMC in Ft Myers
Feb 11, 2013 – Bishop Carter meeting w/district clergy , Location: First UMC-Punta Gorda
Apr 16, 2013 – ALL DAY Clergy Team Meeting. Location: Boca Grande UMC (9:30am-3:30pm)

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THE GLOBAL MISSIONS BLOG

Click [here](#) to subscribe if you would like to receive notices when new blog entries are posted.

[Click here](#) for complete details and contest rules.

Contestants and the winners must be members of or regularly attend a Florida Conference United Methodist Church.

- Churches with an average weekly attendance of 125 or less;
- Churches with an average weekly attendance of over 125.

- Toshiba Camileo X200 HD 1080p Camcorder
- 2 - Transcend 16 GB SDHC Class 10 Flash Memory Card Polaroid
- 72" Photo / Video ProPod Tripod W/Carrying Case
- NEWER CN-160 Dimmable LED Video Light
- Azden WMS-PRO Wireless Microphone System Audio-Technical
- PRO24CM Stereo Microphone with Camera Mount.

DON'T MISS OUT ON AN OPPORTUNITY TO SUPPORT AND ENCOURAGE THE FATHERS IN YOUR CHURCH!

Dad and Me Weekend is a new program at the Life Enrichment Center planned for April 12-14. It's designed for dads and their children ages 5-11, with all your favorite camp activities from campfires and s'mores to creative and interactive worship experiences. You can find all the info at <http://lecprograms.org/family-programs/dad-and-me-weekend/>. You'll also find dates and information about the rest of the LEC's 2013 family programs. Registration for all 2013 programs will open December 1.