



SOUTH WEST DISTRICT NEWSLETTER

Rev. Dr. Rinaldo Hernandez, District Superintendent

Julie Bullerdick, Administrative Assistant

Sandy Voigt, Administrative Assistant

July 2011

Dear Colleagues in Ministry,

May the peace of God be with you always!

Yes! Here I'm at the beginning of this exciting stage in my life and ministry. I was asked to consider being a District Superintendent by November of last year, and for 3 months my wife and I were prayerfully considering what our answer would be. After much fasting and prayer, we decided to accept the challenge, with God's help. My wife Maggie and I certainly appreciate the prayers and support expressed by many of you through welcome cards, emails and letters, as well as personally during last Annual Conference in Tampa.

I also appreciate Alan's willingness and openness to guide me through this process, and to help me to understand some of the needs and challenges in the SW District. Please, keep him and Jo and your prayers as they transition back to the local church. I also want to thank Julie and Sandy at the District Office for their help in answering my many questions, their welcoming heart and their availability to understand and provide for many of our needs.

Now, I really would like to share my heart with all of you. As you get to know me, you'll learn that I'm not afraid to share whatever the Lord is placing in my heart. I'm a fifth generation Methodist, born in a family of faithful and committed lay leaders. My ancestors came to Christ through the preaching, teaching and social witness of Florida Methodist missionaries in the 1900's. Florida Methodism made a profound impact in the life of my family which has lasted for seven generations now.

As I was discerning God's will for me regarding the District Superintendency, I kept asking: "Lord, why me?" I came to Florida in 2001 with my wife and two children, with the vision to start a new church and provide a better education for my kids. Yes, I was a District Superintendent in Cuba for 12 years, but that was among people who knew me and spoke my first language, and in a whole different context. Why me, if there are so many valuable and capable people in this Conference, who would be excellent District Superintendents?

I felt in my heart God's answer as I was praying one morning at the altar in the church I served in Miami. "It's your time to pay back what you and your family have received so graciously from others. Go! I'll be with you!"

So here I am, fearing and trembling, but fully determined to be faithful to God, to make myself available to all of you, to share with the clergy and the laity in our churches all I've been able to learn during my 33 years of ministry, and fully conscious of the authority the Holy Spirit and Bishop Whitaker have placed upon my shoulders.

I'll be visiting all of you very soon, all of you, from Fort Meade to Marco Island. I want to hear you, learn about your challenges in ministry, pray with you and just try to be a helping hand reaching out to you all.

My dream and vision is to be an instrument to connect all of you in the SW District, to do in harmony things we can do better together, to help the weak and to encourage the strong, and to reconnect all together with the main reason why we are The United Methodist Church: “to make disciples of Christ for the transformation of the world”. Blessings to you all, your families, churches and ministries.

Truly yours in Christ,

Rini

Rev. Dr. Rinaldo (Rini) Hernandez

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Pastoral Changes in the South West District.....

LEAVING OUR DISTRICT:

- William Beebe – going to Christ-Neptune Beach
- Lee Carnahan – no longer serving
- David Harris – going to First-Oviedo
- Jay Kowalski – going to East Lake-Palm Harbor
- Jim McWhinnie - retiring
- Casey Neely – going to River of Life-Jacksonville
- Carroll Phillips – re-retiring
- Steve Polk – going to Lake Gibson
- Mike Weaver – going to Christ-Leesburg
- Dennis West – no longer serving

COMING TO OUR DISTRICT:

- Glenda Brayman – going to Venice-Nokomis
- Tom Derrough – moving from Assoc. Pastor to Sr. Pastor at Grace-Venice
- Kirk Dreiser – going to Wesley-Marco Island
- Amy Harper (SY)– going to First-Bowling Green
- Christine Holden – going to Hope-Cape Coral
- James Holden – going to Grace-Olga, Ft. Myers
- Steve Knitter (SY)– going to Indian Lake
- Brian Russell (SY) – going to Pine Level-Arcadia
- Mike Winchell (SY)– going to Friendship-Punta Gorda
- Kip Younger – going to Estero

New Mileage Rates begin July 1, 2011

The IRS reimbursement has been increased as indicated , beginning July 1 trough Dec 31.

2011 Annual Conference

CLERGY TEAM MEETING

[illegible]

[illegible]

\$300K in Clergy and Seminary Grants Available

Up to \$300,000 in grants is being offered to clergy leaders and UM seminaries whose ideas and programs help strengthen The United Methodist Church's ability to maximize racial diversity and inclusiveness among leadership, congregations and beyond. Applications are being accepted now through July 31, 2011 for the new CORR Action Fund priority (funded by the Minority Group Self-Determination Fund) of the United Methodist Church's General Commission on Religion and Race (G CORR).

"GCORR is responding to the unique role and responsibility it carries in shaping principled Christian leaders for the United Methodist Church," said GCORR's top executive Erin Hawkins. "We're investing in the success of culturally competent leaders who are committed to racial justice and capable of understanding, advocating for and authentically building Dr. King's vision of the Beloved Community."

The awards will be offered in two categories:

- The Racial Justice Grant for Clergy leadership, of up to \$20,000 for clergy and programs within districts and annual conferences that support efforts to dismantle racism by promoting the values of diversity, inclusiveness, multiculturalism and cross-racial/cross-cultural work;
- The Racial Justice Grant for UM Seminaries of up to \$80,000 for efforts by faculty, staff or students to improve racial, ethnic and cultural intergroup relationships and/or to bring about organizational, institutional and systemic changes in the church, seminary, and in society.

The Clergy grant can be used but is not limited to education, multicultural training projects that raise awareness about and take action against racism and for pastors entering or serving in cross-racial/cross-cultural appointments. The Seminary grant is intended for efforts including curriculum development and the development of programs and processes that impact the seminary's ability to positively address institutional racism, diversity and multiculturalism, including faculty and student training that furthers understanding of racial/ethnic/tribal cultures within the church and society.

Full information and applications can be downloaded online at gcorr.org/correctionfund. Completed applications must be postmarked by July 31, 2011 submitted on the official application form and mailed in typed print, or e-mailed to applications@gcorr.org (electronic submissions are strongly preferred.) The funds will be awarded before December 31, 2011.

"Ministry that reflects cross-racial and cross-cultural relationships is a major focus for the agency and a value of the Church," said Bishop Minerva Carcaño who chairs the CORR Action Fund committee. "The recent Facing the Future event co-sponsored by GCORR and the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry (GBHEM) evidenced the need for resources and support to assist the church to more effectively serve a multicultural world, and this is responding to that need."

[GCORR](#) is one of six general commissions of The United Methodist Church charged with addressing specific, focused areas of concern. GCORR was established in 1968 to challenge and help the denomination's agencies, institutions, annual (regional) conferences and congregations to achieve full, equal participation of its racial and ethnic constituencies in the total life and mission of the church. GCORR strives to accomplish this task through education and advocacy and by reviewing, monitoring and supporting The United Methodist Church's efforts to ensure racial inclusiveness and foster racial justice and reconciliation.



Conference Board of Pension & Health Benefits introduces Wellness Initiative
From Wendy McCoy

Every day, Americans face the risks of developing chronic diseases. No one is immune to these risks. The risk of heart disease, high blood pressure, osteoporosis, diabetes, being overweight and some

cancers can all be reduced by incorporating healthy behaviors such as physical activity, good nutrition, and stress reduction into our daily lives.

To begin addressing these and other health issues, The Conference Board of Pension & Health Benefits is introducing a wellness initiative for *clergy and laity* enrolled in the conference health insurance plan. This initiative will provide medical screenings to help diagnose problems at the earliest stage, encourage prompt treatment and follow up care of identified health conditions, provide specialized support for those with chronic diseases, promote fitness and exercise programs to help preempt diseases, health education to raise awareness on how to lead an active and healthy lifestyle, and behavior modification programs that help curtail tobacco use or attain weight control.

The programs and tools being made available through this initiative are provided by United Healthcare, the administrator of the conference health insurance program. UHC offers an extensive array of programs and tools that can support you and your family, from advice on diet and exercise to coaching programs that provide specialized support for people living with chronic diseases like asthma and diabetes. The health and wellness section of the website www.myuhc.com also offers a large library of articles, calculators, quizzes and other information to support your efforts to live a healthy life.

I know from experience how difficult it is to live a healthy balanced life. But, I hope you will take this opportunity to evaluate your physical and mental health needs and make a commitment to take some action to care for yourself.

I'm also asking you to support this initiative by completing the United Healthcare online Health Assessment. Just go to www.myuhc.com and register or login to the home page and click the link **Take a Health Assessment**. You may be eligible for the wellness incentive – **a \$100 prepaid gift card** - if you complete the assessment by August 31, 2011. Please share this opportunity with lay employees of your church, if they are enrolled in the Conference United Healthcare plan, as they are eligible for the incentive too.

Prepaid gift cards will be mailed by the end of September, 2011. The eligibility criteria for this incentive are listed below.

Thank you, in advance, for your support of this important initiative.

Eligibility Requirements for the Wellness Incentive

- Participants and their spouses (clergy and laity) who are enrolled in the Florida Conference United Healthcare Choice Plus plan for active participants are eligible for this incentive.
- Married couples who are both enrolled in United Healthcare's Choice Plus plan can earn up to \$200. Both the participant and spouse must each log in to the www.myuhc.com web site using their own unique username and passwords. (Spouses cannot take the Health Assessment under the participant's username).
- For married participants with a spouse not enrolled in the Florida Conference's United Healthcare Choice Plus plan, only the participant needs to take the Health Assessment to qualify for the \$100 incentive.
- For retired couples where one participant is enrolled in the United Healthcare Choice Plus plan and the other participant is enrolled in a Medicare Supplement plan, only the participant enrolled in the United Healthcare Choice Plus plan needs to take the Health Assessment to qualify for the \$100 incentive.

A place worth visiting in the South West District!

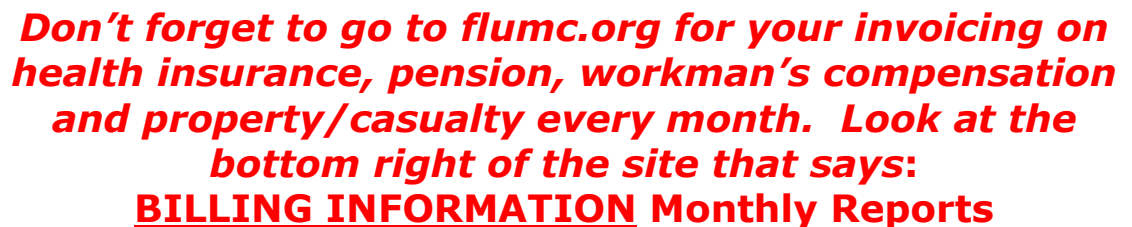
ECHO (Educational Concern for Hunger Organization) located in North Fort Myers, FL is a non-profit mission that strives to find affordable agricultural solutions to the world food crisis. Our Global Farm is situated on our 55 acre campus containing over 350 different tropical plants. We have replicated six different climate zones to experiment with plants and crop varieties that may be cultivated in various parts of the world. ECHO labors to add nutrition to the diets of some of the poorest peoples of the world. We are here to help farmers around the world become net producers of food, helping them help themselves. ECHO engages college graduates who spend a year working the farm, learning about soil treatment, crop rotation, irrigation techniques and what crops will grow where. The reference library at ECHO contains thousands of books, articles, pertinent reports and instructions, as well as hundreds of research papers on file. Our tech department sends out 2,400 documents a month by computer, free of charge. The seed bank at ECHO is producing 1,400 packets of seeds per month which are sent around the world, free for the asking.

We are busy all year at ECHO, learning what we can in order to share the knowledge through our network of 3,500 agencies and missions who are “out there” helping the poor. Public tours are available. **For more information, please visit our website < www.echonet.org > .**



If your church has had a change in leadership (pastor, committee chair, youth leader, finance secretary, etc.), now would be a good time to double-check your local church's leadership list. (This is the big excel spreadsheet you all fill out for me every year around Charge Conference time.)

You can pull up your “Leaders” list through your church’s login on the www.flumc.org website. Give me a call with any questions at (941) 371-6511 or email me at flumc-sw@flumc.org.



BILLING INFORMATION Monthly Reports



HELP WANTED & CLASSIFIEDS....

- **Part-Time Choir Director Needed**: First United Methodist Church of Ft. Myers. Has an opening for a part time choir director. Please call Michelle 239-332-0521 for more information.
- **Piano Needed**: Alva United Methodist Church is desperately in need of a piano for our Sanctuary. Our piano cannot be repaired. If you have one you are looking to get rid of, please call the office at Alva UMC at 239-728-2277 Monday – Friday 9am -12pm and speak with Bonnie.
- **Part-Time Youth Minister Needed**: Oceanview UMC located in Juno Beach, FL, just across the street from the beach on the east coast is looking for a part-time youth minister to coordinate youth activities, organize an already established team of volunteers, and pay special attention to the Spiritual growth of youth. For this 15-16 hour a week position we are looking for someone who can build a youth ministry that focuses on discipleship through building relationships, delegate responsibility and work toward empowering leaders. Please email your resume to oceanviewumc1@juno.com attention Rev. Betty Kniss or mail to Oceanview UMC, 701 Ocean Dr., Juno Beach, FL – Attention Rev. Betty Kniss. Questions may be directed to Rev. Betty Kniss at 561-626-2500.
- **Web Hosting Information Wanted**: Gulf Cove UMC in Port Charlotte is in the process of looking for a new web hosting company to host their web site and update their emails and is wondering who the other churches may be using. Please contact Dawn Tesauro at (941) 697-1747 or at gcumc@gulfcoveumc.com if your church can provide information.

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.

CALENDAR NOTES:

July 4 – Conference and District Offices will be closed

July 26 – New Clergy Luncheon, Location: River City Grill, Punta Gorda

August 11-12 – Willow Creek Leadership Summit, Location: Grace-Cape Coral

August 20 – DNA Coaching (Transformation TRAINING), Location: Christ UMC-Lehigh Acres (9am-11:30am)

August 20 – DNA Coaching (Transformation TRAINING), Location: First UMC-Wauchula (1:30pm-4pm)

August 23 – DNA Coaching (Transformation COACHING), Loc: Beach UMC-Ft. Myers Beach (9am-11:30am)

August 23 – DNA Coaching (Transformation COACHING), Location: Nocatee UMC (1:30pm-4pm)

August 30 – CLERGY TEAM MEETING – Cleveland UMC, Punta Gorda (9:30am-1:00pm)

This newsletter gives an overview of some of the activities of the South West District and the Conference. Please make a note of these events and encourage your lay ministers and church members to participate.