

Nexus

...a means of connection

The Nexus is the newsletter of:

- Indianapolis East District UMC
- Indianapolis West District UMC
- Metro Ministries, Inc.

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Hoosier United Methodists Approve Unity Plan

With shouts of joy and prayers of thanksgiving, members of both the South Indiana and North Indiana United Methodist Annual Conferences approved a plan to physically unite the two conferences into one new Indiana Annual Conference.

The South Indiana Conference members voted affirmatively yesterday 616 to 185 (or 77 to 23 percent) to unite with the North Indiana Conference. The North Indiana Conference members voted affirmatively on Friday, May 30, in West Lafayette 730 to 192 (or 79 to 21 percent) to unite with the South Indiana Conference.

Indiana United Methodist Bishop Mike Coyner of Indianapolis announced the vote results in the closing session of the South Indiana Conference this morning, Saturday, June 7, at the Indiana University Auditorium in Bloomington.

Coyner has called by North and South Indiana Conferences to attend a special session scheduled to be held at the Indiana State Fairgrounds on Saturday, Oct. 4. This session will finalize amendments, elect committees and begin plans for the first combined Indiana Annual Conference session scheduled to be held at Ball State University at Muncie June 24-27, 2009.

This concludes 62 years of Methodist annual conference sessions at Indiana University in Bloomington and 40 years of United Methodist an-

nual conference sessions at Purdue University in West Lafayette.

Coyner also will appoint a transition team to implement the design plans for the new Indiana Conference.



Features of the new annual conference, which was two-years in design, will include:

- Forming clergy into covenant groups and all 1,200 congregations into ministry clusters for the support and accountability to the mission of making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world;
- Dissolving the current 18 districts across Indiana and establishing five resource centers to support the work

of 10 districts; and

- Creating a new conference structure and establishing a new conference center in Indianapolis.

Currently, the North Indiana Conference is based in Marion. The South Indiana Conference is based here in Bloomington.

The only major amendments to the 50-page unity document, added youth and young adults to the discussion making process of the state-wide church and added more staff in youth and young adult ministries staff to the five resource centers across the state.

The last such structural change of this magnitude to The United Methodist Church in Indiana came in 1968, when the former Methodist Church and former Evangelical United Brethren Church decided nationally to become The United Methodist Church.

The United Methodist Church is the largest Protestant denomination in Indiana with 1,200 congregations and placed throughout the state's 92 counties. Methodists first established churches in Indiana in 1801. There are 225,000 United Methodists in Indiana.

In Indiana the denominations also is related to 3 hospitals, 3 universities, 3 children's homes, 6 residence facilities for seniors, 1 half-way house and 7 retreat/camps. All of these will be part of the new Indiana Conference.

For more news, log on to www.inareaumc.org.

Get Well Wishes and Prayer Concerns to...

- John Myrland
- Lloyd Baugues
- Pam Keith
- Nancy Blevins
- Ann Glass
- Mike Mather's son, Conor
- Bishop Coyner and his family
- Ted Cutrell

Our Sympathy to...

- The family of Rev. Noel Spencer (retired) on his death.
- The family of Rev. Fred Cox (retired), on his death.
- The family of Marion Thompson Garrison (surviving spouse of Bishop Edwin Garrison) on her death.
- Laura Jones, on the death of her mother.
- Ed and Patty Fisher, on the death of Patty's mother.
- Ted Blosser, on the death of his father.

Bishop Coyner has announced the following appointment changes in the Indianapolis East and Indianapolis West Districts:

Smith, Rebecca Lynn from Indianapolis: Maple Hill (IE) to Trinity Arcadia (IE), 7/1
 Woods, Kenneth J. from Whitestown (IW) to Carrollton (IE), 7/6
 Cottrell, Edward from no appointment to Maple Hill (IE), 7/6
 McMillen, Robert from Old Bethel (IE) to retirement, 7/1
 Fisher, Ed from Trinity Arcadia (IE) to Rockville: First (TH), 7/1
 Anyike, James from New Church Exploration to Indianapolis: Scott (IW), 7/1
 Sanders, Douglas from Worthington: Folsom Memorial (BL) to Lebanon: Otterbein (IW), 7/1
 Cress, Colin from Carrollton (IE) to Freedom (BL), 7/1
 Wells, Ken from Bartlett Chapel (IW) to Knightstown (RU), 7/1

Friendly Reminders:

- Please make sure your church has submitted the Report of the Annual Audit to the District Office as soon as possible. These were due on May 1st.
- With people moving and staff changing, please take a moment to make sure you have updated your contact information with the District Office.

Sierra Club Hoosier Chapter Recognizes Indianapolis Churches

Three United Methodist churches in Indianapolis were among several churches recognized by the Hoosier Chapter of the Sierra Club on June 19 for their efforts to protect the environment.

Epworth United Methodist, St. Luke's United Methodist and Broadway United Methodist showcased their "green" activities as the Sierra Club Hoosier Chapter released a faith appreciation report, "Faith in Action: Communities of Faith Bring Hope for the Planet." St. Luke's was one of 50 churches nationwide featured in the national Sierra Club report.

The three churches have formed green ministry teams that have worked to improve the environment through energy audits, educational programs, recycling, greening their grounds and buildings, and many other activities. Other churches recognized by the Sierra Club included Unitarian, Roman Catholic and Episcopalian congregations.

"We want to recognize the work that faith communities are doing to protect our planet for future generations," Sierra Club's local conservation programs coordinator Bowden Quinn told NUVO news magazine. "And we want to encourage other congregations to get involved."

Founded in 1892, the Sierra Club is a conservation and environmental activism organization that boasts more than 1 million members.

Here are some examples from each church's green ministries:

St. Luke's: Distributed 1,200 reusable shopping bags, set up a recycling center, offers classes and speakers on climate change and other environmental issues, provides green tips in the church bulletin, and encourages members to sign a pledge to care for God's creation.

Epworth: Conducted an energy audit and adopted energy efficiency measures to reduce energy use and save on utility bills, provides green living ideas in the church bulletin and newsletter, hosts an environmental movie series open to the community, and began recycling paper and some fish fry waste.

Broadway: Switched to environmentally friendly cleaning products that are certified by Green Seal, set up a paper recycling program, and offers green living tips on its website and publications.

Environmental concerns were present at the beginnings of the Methodist movement. John Wesley's emphasis on "cleanliness" came as he observed a land of

open sewers, impure water, unplanned cities, and smoke-filled air. In the mines and mills of the communities where he ministered, squalor and filth were everywhere, as was disease.

Today, environmental action is linked to moral and social justice concerns because the effects of global climate change are expected to have their greatest impact on the world's poorest people – those living in sub-Saharan Africa and Southeast Asia.

According to a report from the United Nations' Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, projected climate change-related exposures are likely to affect the health status of millions of people, particularly those in the developing world, through:

- increases in malnutrition and consequent disorders, with implications for child growth and development;
- increased deaths, disease and injury due to heat waves, floods, storms, fires and droughts;
- the increased burden of diarrhoeal disease;
- the increased frequency of cardio-respiratory diseases due to higher concentrations of ground-level ozone related to climate change

New Pastor Orientation

Metro Ministries, Inc. is hosting a Pastor Orientation for pastors new to Indianapolis East and West Districts on September 9, 2008, from 9:30 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. at the Districts Office. The event includes a variety of speakers from ministries throughout the two districts as well as a tour of the mission stations in the two districts. Reservations can be made by emailing Lisa Morris, lmorris@indymetroumc.org or calling 317-924-4140.

Abundant Harvest Yard Sale

Abundant Harvest UMW will hold their annual rummage/yard sale on August 21st and 22nd. We are located on the southwest corner of 79th and Ditch Road in Indianapolis. The hours of the sale will be Thursday at 8 a.m. until late afternoon and Friday 8 a.m. until 2 p.m.

McCordsville Family Movie Nights

McCordsville United Methodist Church will host its annual series of free outdoor movies on the lawn of the church grounds. Beginning in May, movies will start at dusk on the second Friday of each month and families are encouraged to bring their lawn chairs and blankets for comfortable viewing. In the event of inclement weather, movies will be shown in the church basement. Families can bring their own refreshments or enjoy popcorn, cotton candy and other treats for a nominal fee provided by various church organizations and committees.

Below is the schedule for the McCordsville United Methodist Church Family Movie Night:

Friday, August 8	The Wizard of Oz (G)
Friday, September 12	Finding Nemo (G)

Edgewood Christian Preschool

Edgewood Christian Preschool (formerly Edgewood United Methodist Church Preschool) is now enrolling for fall. Edgewood Christian Preschool is located on the south side of Indianapolis at 1820 East Epler Avenue.

Edgewood Christian Preschool offers Morning Preschool from 8:30 to 11:30 am as well as Afternoon Preschool from 1:00 to 4:00 pm. If you are interested in taking a tour of the facilities, or if you have questions about the school, please call Tracy at 784-8466. You can also visit the school's website at www.edgewoodumc-preschool.com.

Calendar of Events

August 17, 2008	<u>Indy West Operation Classroom Packing Party</u> at Chapel Hill UMC
August 23, 2008	<u>Vida Nueva Fiesta</u> at Vida Nueva
September 1, 2008	<u>Districts Office Closed</u> for Labor Day
September 9, 2008	<u>New Pastor Orientation</u>
September 11, 2008	<u>Metro Ministries Board Meeting</u> , 6:00 p.m.
September 21-23, 2008	<u>Clergy Spouse Refresher</u> at Brown County Inn, Nashville, IN
October 4, 2008	<u>Special Session Annual Conference</u> , State Fairgrounds
October 4, 2008	<u>Asian Festival</u> at Broadway UMC
October 12, 2008	<u>Indy West Operation Classroom Packing Party</u> at Speedway UMC
October 13-15, 2008	<u>Convocation for Pastors</u> , Columbus, IN
October 17, 2008	<u>Brightwood Annual Dinner</u> at North United Methodist Church
October 17-18, 2008	<u>UMW Conference</u>
October 23, 2008	<u>Metro Ministries Board Meeting</u> , 6:00 p.m.
November 1, 2008	<u>Lay Speaker/Servants School</u>
November 2, 2008	<u>Indy East Operation Classroom Packing Party</u> at Cumberland UMC
November 6, 2008	<u>Fletcher Place Annual Dinner</u> at Fletcher Place
November 6-7, 2008	<u>Training Event for Pastors of Larger & Full Time Churches</u> with Kennon Callahan
November 8-9, 2008	<u>Celebrating Small Strong Churches</u> with Kennon Callahan
November 15, 2008	<u>UMW District Leadership Event</u>
November 20, 2008	<u>Metro Ministries Annual Meeting</u> at Broadway UMC
December 6, 2008	<u>Indy West Operation Classroom Packing Party</u> at Plainfield UMC
December 12, 2008	<u>Fletcher Place Christmas Celebration</u> at Fletcher Place Community Center
December 23-Jan 4, 2009	<u>Office Closed</u>
January 9, 2009	<u>Epiphany Party</u> at Plainfield UMC
February 3-12, 2009	<u>Bishop Coyner's Holy Land Pilgrimage</u>
February 24, 2009	<u>Fat Tuesday Pancake Lunch</u> hosted by the Districts Office

Electronic Nexus Delivery Now Available

We all want to be good stewards of what God has given us, and today's technology gives us great opportunities to practice that stewardship. Choosing to have this newsletter delivered to you electronically not only conserves money spent on printing and postage, but also saves paper and delivery time. The Indianapolis Districts office is happy to be able to offer this option to you.

If you would like to receive the bi-monthly Nexus Newsletter by e-mail, please contact Katie Swisher at kswisher@indymetroumc.org to let the office know. The Nexus will be e-mailed as a PDF attachment to those who choose to receive the newsletter electronically.

How You Can Help

WHAT IS A PACKING PARTY?

At an Operation Classroom Packing Party, individuals and congregations come together to donate needed items for Operation Classroom partners across the world, and then prepare the items for shipment. With time for prayer, fellowship and service, it is a wonderful mission opportunity for Christians of all ages and experience levels.



WHAT SUPPLIES ARE NEEDED?

Student Supplies: Solar calculators, protractors, metric rulers, spiral notebooks, pens, new or gently used backpacks, educational posters for classrooms

Medical Supplies: First Aid items, children's non-gummy chewable multivitamins

Vocational Supplies: Tools (woodworking, gardening/agricultural, metalworking), home economics supplies (materials for sewing, cooking, etc.)

Scholarship Funds: \$75 per student. Donations of every level are gratefully accepted. For a detailed list of needs, please visit www.operationclassroom.org.

HOW CAN I PARTICIPATE?

Contact your local congregation's Operation Classroom or missions coordinator or your district's Operation Classroom coordinators.

Indianapolis West Coordinators

J.D. Miniear
jminiear@comcast.net
Don Griffith
drdongriffith@aol.com

Indianapolis East Coordinators

Tom Tillett - ttillet@ralis.com
Mona Morgan - Morggm@aol.com

Indianapolis East Packing Party

The Indianapolis East Operation Classroom Packing Party was held Sunday, July 13 at Emmanuel United Methodist church in Noblesville. This was their first time to host a Packing Party, and they did an excellent job—supplying workers and refreshments par excellence!

We had 45 workers from 7 churches and packed 150 boxes. We packed 67 Elementary YES Kits, 36 High School YES Kits, and 105 Health Kits. Packing slips were prepared by Rosemary Draga and Sylvia Abrell. Two electric typewriters were also included.

This Packing Party presented a challenge we'd never had before! The Lapel warehouse is completely full waiting to acquire a container to ship to Africa. Tom and Kathy Tillett graciously offered their garage to store our boxes until a container is found. We hope that this will happen soon because some of our October 4th work team supplies need to be shipped.

Brightwood Community Center Needs Volunteers

Do you, or someone in your church or workplace, have a few hours to give to Brightwood Community Center?

We are looking for individuals to sit at the desk and greet visitors and volunteers who visit or telephone Brightwood Community Center. Other clerical duties might be included to utilize the gift of your time. If you

think you might have time to give, please contact the Community Center or Debbie Hall, Board Secretary, at (317) 352-9017.

Drivers to the Tillett garage were Tom Tillett, Bob Evans and Lamar Ziegler. Because 5 of the October 4th work team are regular O. C. workers, the next Packing Party date has been changed to November 2 at Cumberland UMC--219 N. Muessing St., Indianapolis (317-894-3454).

Needs for the November Packing Party are blunt-tipped scissors, solar or dual-powered calculators, and individual pencil sharpeners. Items needed for Health Kits are toothpaste, bath towels and shampoo.

Thank you for your support of Operation Classroom during these 21 years! The people and churches of Liberia are very grateful for your support. It encourages them by knowing they have many United Methodist friends in Indiana--in addition, of course, to the practical things we send. Please continue to pray for Liberia and the October work team.

—Mona Morgan

Thank you in advance for helping us meet the needs of Brightwood Community Center, and in turn, the Brightwood area. Call soon! We need your friendly face and welcoming heart!

North Katanga Area Needs Bikes for Pastors

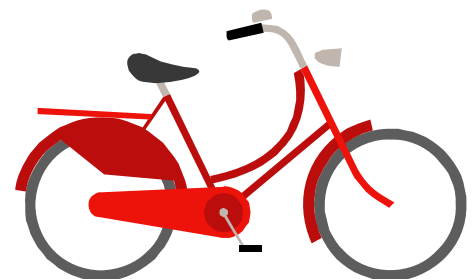
From the floor of South Indiana Annual Conference session, Pastor Bill Talbott of the Vincennes District challenged each pastor and congregation of the South Indiana Conference to purchase a bicycle for a pastor in the North Katanga Episcopal Area. (Democratic Republic of the Congo)

Bicycles in the Congo cost \$110. We buy them there to stimulate the local economy. To buy your bicycles send the check to the South Indiana Conference Treasurer, (1520 South Liberty Drive, Bloomington, IN 47403-5167) marked for Bicycles for African Pastors. Bicycles for Pastors is a General Advance Project of the North Katanga Conference.

The South Indiana Conference has been the major supplier of bicycles for pastors in the North Katanga and Tanganyika-Tanzania Conferences since 1995. Bicycles are distributed at annual conference and the

bicycle parking lot is a demonstration of the strength of the conference. Another 49 bicycles will be distributed this summer, a gift of Center United Methodist Church (Indy West District). Between now and next conference session, we'd like to have enough raised for 200 bicycles at each conference session, North Katanga and Tanganyika-Tanzania.

—Bob Walters, SIC



Asian Help Services

317-924-4827
 Fax: 317-924-4209
 Sungboon Baik,
 Executive Director
 baikahs@yahoo.com
 Web site: www.asianhelpservices.org

Brightwood Community Center

317-546-8200
 Fax: 317-546-8204
 Debra Grady, Executive Director
 Margaret Mayo,
 Administrative Assistant
 brightwood2410@aol.com
 Web site: www.brightwoodcc.org/index.htm

East Tenth Children and Youth

317-637-5144
 Jean Casmir Hill,
 Executive Director
 jcasmirhill@east10th.org

Fletcher Place Community Center

317-636-3466
 Fax: (317)636-3467
 Jessi Langlie, Executive Director
 jessi@fletcherplacecc.org
 Web site: www.fletcherplacecc.org

Vida Nueva United Methodist Church & Centro Familiar

David & Stacy Peñalva
 Telephone: 317-638-0796
 davidpenalva@vidanuevaumc.org
 stacypenalva@vidanuevaumc.org
 Web site: www.vidanuevaumc.org

**All Community Centers
 needs are on our website:
 www.indymetroumc.org**

Brightwood Community Day

Brightwood Community Center needs your help to provide backpacks and school supplies to children in the community. The Community Day will be August 7th, so any backpacks or supplies need to be at the Community Center no later than August 4th. 110 loaded backpacks were given away last year! This is a great way to get students off to a good start at school, and gives them momentum for successful I-STEP scores and subsequent promotion to the next grade.

Items needed for this effort are listed to the right. If you are interesting in contributing, you may either fill a backpack for a child or donate loose supplies (new please) to be filled by the Community Center. This is a great time of year to buy school supplies. Keep an eye out for sales in weekly store ads.

Any questions about this effort can be directed to Debra Grady at djsgrady@ameritech.net OR 317-543-5648.

Primary—Grades 1-3

Backpacks
 #2 Pencils
 Erasers
 Pencil Pouch
 Colored Pencils
 12" Ruler
 5" Scissors
 Glue Stick
 Elmer's 4 oz. Glue
 Wide Rule 1 Subject Notebook
 Composition Notebook
 Looseleaf Paper—Wide Rule
 Folders
 Crayons
 Markers

Intermediate—Grades 4-6

All of the above plus:
 Pens
 Highlighters
 Ruled Index Cards



Children enjoy computer time at Brightwood Community Center. (Photo from Brightwood Staff)

Asian Help Services Annual Festival

Asian Help Services is hosting their annual Festival on Saturday, October 4, 2008 at Broadway UMC, 609 E. 29th St. from 5:30 - 8:00 pm. Entertainment will include Traditional Asian Music. The food will be prepared by local Asian individuals and is always a wonderful treat.

Asian Help Services (a non-profit group) works with Asian clients throughout Central Indiana. A few of their services include, English classes, medical assistance, counseling, transportation, youth and parent workshops.

This festival is an annual event that encourages cultural sharing and raises funds for Asian Help Services.

Tickets for this event are \$25 each. If you cannot attend but would like to help finance the programs of Asian Help Services, a donation will be gratefully accepted. Please contact Sungboon Baik for information on purchasing tickets or making donations.

Sungboon Baik can be reached by calling Broadway UMC at 924-4827 or by e-mailing her at baikahs@yahoo.com.

Vida Nueva Fiesta

You are invited to a Fiesta!

Celebrate with Vida Nueva on Saturday, August 23rd at 10:00 a.m. The Fiesta is hosted by Metro Auxiliary will be held at Vida Nueva United Methodist Church, located at 2801 W. Washington Street in Indianapolis.

New Conference Transition Team Begins Work of New Conference

The newly appointed 14-member Indiana Conference Transition Team, selected by Bishop Mike Coyner, met for the first time in July at the Area Office in Indianapolis. The morning session of the meeting combined members of both the previous Imagine Indiana Design Team that brought the proposal to unite the North Indiana and South Indiana Conferences into a new Indiana Conference.

Members of the former team reflected with the new team members their dreams for the new conference and key elements of the plan. The Design Team reiterated the importance of congregations working together on the common goal of "making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world" with horizontal accountability rather than the tradition top-down process. They also said to listen to people, especially staff members of both

conference offices and the area office. As the conference offices begin to close down to form a new office, they said much grieving will occur. The same is true of long-time members of both conferences who have met and done conference business as usual both at Purdue and Indiana University sites for the past 40 to 60 years. A time of remembering the two former conferences will be incorporated into a worship service of the Special Session of the two current conference to be held Saturday, Oct. 4 at the Indiana State Fairgrounds in Indianapolis. The Transition Team will work through the first session of the new Indiana Conference scheduled to meet June 24-28, 2009 at Ball State University in Muncie.

The Rev. Cindy Reynolds, Warsaw District Superintendent, was elected chair by the new Transition Team. Coyner outlined the assignment of the Transition Team who will be

responsible for nominating members to the new Conference Council on Finance and Administration, Conference Trustees and naming people to the nominations, human resources, rules and sessions committees.

New members to the Transition Team and the process include: Al Brothers of Spencerville, the Rev. Herb Buwalda of South Bend, Beverly Calender-Anderson of Bloomington, Jim Coy of Evansville, the Rev. Brian Durand of Indianapolis, the Rev. Bert Kite of Carmel, Ashley Moreland of Fort Wayne, the Rev. Kaye Patton of Marion and Roger Summers of Fort Wayne. Members continuing from the Design Team beyond Reynolds include: the Rev. Ida Easley of Rushville, Kayc Mykrantz of Logansport, the Rev. David V.W. Owen, Executive Assistant to the Bishop and Ike Williams of Carmel.

Building Healthy Relationships Training Required for South Indiana Clergy

Building Healthy Relationships Training, introduced during the clergy session at the South Indiana Annual Conference, is required for pastors in the South Indiana Conference. Training will aid in increasing self-awareness so we can grow to better appreciate our differences and improve relations in and beyond our church walls.

There have been inquiries about accessing The Edge Advantage[®] as well as questions about receiving Continuing Education credit. Everyone must register for the program through the conference center by contacting Rev. Sharon White at

white@sicumc.org. There is a limit on the size of the classes and we need to monitor how and when people are registered. The conference will only cover cost for those who register through the conference office.

Those who participated in the pilot study DO NOT need to repeat the on-line study, but will need to participate in the workshop. Continuing Education credits (8 hours) will be given only upon completion of both the on-line study and the follow-up workshop. If you have other questions please contact Sharon White at the South Indiana Conference Center.

Supervisory Interviews Happening Now

Bill Keith and Ned Steele have started meeting with pastors in the districts for annual supervisory interviews. Each pastor should have already received a letter with interview information. If you have not received this letter, please get in touch with the Districts Office as soon as possible.

If you have questions about these interviews, or if you would like to schedule a time to meet with your district superintendent, please contact the Districts Office at 924-4140.

Required Parsonage Inspection for Mold

During the South Indiana Annual Conference session in Bloomington in June, an amendment to the Parsonage Policies (SIC Journal pp. 353-354) was approved by the annual conference session to require an inspection by churches of their parsonages for mold.

The amendment to the existing policies reads: "That an air-quality test for molds be conducted every other year in each parsonage and the results reported to the Charge Conference; and that if tests show excessive mold contamination, remediation is to start as soon as possible, with the pastoral family located to clean, temporary housing."

Reference to this amendment will be included in each SIC church's charge conference later this year. – e-HUM

Heartfelt Thanks from Brightwood Community Center

Brightwood Community Center gratefully acknowledges the various churches and individuals who have provided wonderful breakfasts and lunches for the Summer Camp program. The children and staff—and even the Seniors who have lunch and fellowship—were treated to a variety of meals. The BCC Board understands the monetary commitment and physical labor given on behalf of the children of Brightwood. We do thank St. Luke's UMC for providing the breakfasts. Board Member Lois Prevost tackled the challenge to coordinate lunches throughout the summer, making certain all dates were covered. Below are the churches/individuals who spearheaded the Summer Camp lunch program:

Jason May, Anita Mack, Bethel (Jean Ellis), Castleton (Beth Gilbert), Otterbein, Indpls. (Debbie Hall), Horizons of Faith (Holly Hardsaw), Lois Prevost, St. Andrews (Barbara King), St. Paul's (Rita Gaither-Gant), Lawrence (Jane Gravenstreter and Betty Potter), University (Betty Dotson), Christ-Westfield, (Ila Grinstead), Christ-Indpls. (Georganna Irish), Cumberland (Rae Wallis), and St. Luke's (Shelly Sutton).

September is United Methodist Open House Month

September is Open House Month for United Methodists. Does your church have a plan to reach out to your community during Back-to-school? If not, you will find three things (one each week) to help jump start your planning through the UMC Igniting Ministry program. As we all start moving into the new quadrennium, Igniting Ministry continues to reflect The United Methodist Church's commitment to live out Jesus' encouragement of welcoming strangers as honored guests into our churches.

GET READY easy tips and worksheets

Want to go from good to great on your welcoming? "Basic Welcoming" www.ignitingministry.org/pdfs/handbook4_welc.pdf (a free downloadable 100-page resource guide) helps you do just that – and is one of four parts of the updated Igniting Ministry Welcoming and Media Planner. "Basic Welcoming" gives your team tools to help assess where your welcoming efforts are today, and where you may want to make changes, based on helpful exercises like

this Walk-through (6C.15) by September.

"Comfort Checklist (6C.13)" looks at welcoming through visitor's eyes. #9: do you offer an information table? And there are 14 other questions to help you prepare.

– Igniting Ministry



Commentary: The Internet and the Lay Member to the Annual Conference Session

by Russ Phillips

We are in the midst of the information and technology age. Increasingly information is being transmitted via the Internet. This is also true as it regards our Conferences and the soon to be Indiana Conference. Anyone who is in a position of responsibility that requires decision-making based upon information is going to be at a distinct disadvantage, as noted below, if they do not use the Internet. This is certainly the case for the Lay Member of the Annual Conference Session.

The local church selects its officers and committee members for the following year usually in the period of August thru November. This includes selecting its Lay Member of the Annual Conference Session. This is a critical position that is unlike any other position in the local church. This individual has the responsibility of acting on a several million-dollar annual budget and other issues that impact the local church's operating expense. Another major decision this year was whether or not to move forward in becoming a statewide Conference.

Shortly after the Imagine Indiana Design Team published its February 25th Preliminary Report online (hard copies were not provided to Annual Conference Session members) questions and opinions were expressed on the North Indiana Conference's email discussion list known as "Nicemail."

Thus, a three-month "conversation" took place before the beginning of Annual Conference. This provided an opportunity to bring further clarity to the Report and to explain how the local church would be affected. Unfortunately, many lay members are either unaware of the opportunity to receive Nicemail (at no cost!) and/or do not use the Internet. It is my understanding that the South Indiana Conference does not have anything similar to Nicemail; however, all, regardless of Conference, may use it.

The Design Team received more than 100 questions regarding their Report. They responded to these questions and published online a Q&A, however, they did not distribute a hard copy to the members of the Annual Conference Session. Again, someone who does not use the Internet was at a disadvantage in not being able to access this.

With a joint special session of the two Conferences taking place October 4, 2008 and the Indiana Annual Conference session tentatively scheduled for June 24-28, 2009 it seems timely to become familiar with Nicemail. To only read the posts just go to <http://lyris.nicumc.org/read/?forum=nicemail> (also accessible from www.nicumc.org, click on "Email Lists"). A very simple registration process (your email address and setting a password) allows you to post to the list and to receive posts via email.

Throughout the year NICemail allows the lay member of the Annual Conference session to stay abreast of Conference life and evolving issues. In my opinion, it is essential that the lay member utilize NICemail (or whatever is similar in the new Indiana Conference). However, all laity has the opportunity to do so.

In 2004 this writer created and continues to administer what is now www.laityumc.org. This site is not sanctioned by the UMC or any of its Conferences or associated units. Its purpose is to further inform the laity of topics and issues that are not readily and conveniently available from other sources, particularly as it regards the North Indiana Conference and the soon to be Indiana Conference, as well as the UMC in general. Other websites that can be helpful are: www.nicumc.org, www.sicumc.org, www.inareaumc.org, and www.umc.org.

"Connection" is a term frequently used in our denomination and it can mean several things. However, in this context I think of it in terms of the lay member of the Annual Conference session being well informed for the decisions that must be made. The Internet and NICemail are instrumental in accomplishing this.

(Russ is a member of Fulton UMC in the North Indiana Conference and can be contacted at rbjrfulton@yahoo.com.)



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Clergy Spouse Refresher Coming Soon!

SEPTEMBER 21- 23 BROWN COUNTY INN - NASHVILLE, IN

This two day retreat is available for clergy spouses (active, retired, widow). A brochure (including registration information and forms) is listed at our website www.indymetroumc.org. **The deadline for registration is August 15th.**

This year's speaker is Janice True. Jan is married to Tom, currently serving as the Terre Haute District Superintendent. Together they have four children, three girls and one boy, and eleven grandchildren.

Jan enjoys being with family, walking, traveling and music—especially playing the piano. Her work has included that of a music teacher and a school counselor. For the past ten years, Jan has worked as an elementary school principal in Indiana.

Her church-related activities have included youth work, camping programs, choir director and organist. Jan has led retreats, workshops and conferences. With that background and her warmth and sense of humor, we are excited to have Jan lead this year's refresher.

Questions about the refresher can be directed to Pam Keith at 317-883-1972 or pamelakeith@sbcglobal.net.