

THE SNAKE RIVER EDITION
Oregon-Idaho Conference—The United Methodist Church
JANUARY 2012
Rev. Kim Fields— Assistant to the Bishop
Phyllis Ross — Administrative Assistant

FROM OUR ASSISTANT TO THE BISHOP

for SNAKE RIVER DISTRICT



Ah, the new year, a time when we all look forward with a clean slate to a new and a better year ahead. It is a time to set goals, to make resolutions, to make ourselves better.

For the past three years I have had the same resolution every year: to lose 20 pounds so I could fit back into my old pants. It was a good goal. I really wanted to achieve it. Yet, every year I failed. Despite my good intentions I failed to lose

the weight. Indeed, instead of losing 20 pounds each year I gained a couple of pounds. My pants continued to sit in my closet too tight to wear comfortably. All I had to show for my resolutions was a sense of failure and guilt.

Then midway through last year I tried a different tack. Instead of resolving to lose 20 pounds and setting myself up for failure and guilt again, I decided to try for smaller, more concrete goals that might help me to move toward my larger goal. At the time I had a goal of walking 8,000 steps a day. I decided to raise that goal to 12,000 steps a day. I also looked at my lifestyle and noted that I was eating too many sweets and so made the decision to limit myself to a sweet every other day and reduce the size of my helpings.

Now I wish I could tell you that I have lost the 20 pounds and am proudly wearing my old pants. I can't say that. But I have lost seven pounds and am moving in the right direction. I feel better about myself and now believe that maybe, just maybe, I will wear those pants again. And all it took was breaking down my big, apparently unachievable, goal into small achievable steps.

I share this because of something I have noticed during my travels from church to church. There are those who say our churches are floundering because they have no direction, no goals. That has not been my experience. Instead, I have found that way too many of my churches have big, unachievable goals which they fail to realize year after year, leading to guilt, depression and a sense of failure. I ask churches what their goals are and they answer, "We want to double our worship numbers" or "We want to bring in more young families with children." Some are even more specific stating measureable goals like: "We intend to add 20 members in the coming year" or "we hope to double the attendance of our children's Sunday school in 2012." These are all good goals, and the latter two are specific and measureable allowing those churches to know whether they have achieved them. The problem is that those goals, much like my goal to lose 20 pounds, are too big and general and lack a pathway to achieving them.

Perhaps instead of saying “We are going to add 20 members in the coming year,” a more practical goal might be to bring in 20 new members over the coming year by setting up a program to follow up on every visitor with a lay person visiting their home the next day with a church mug, with the pastor following up with a phone call after the second visit, and with an intentional program to get them involved in a small group after the fourth. Of course it is important to realize that simply adding members is not the real goal. Our real goal is to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. Still, adding members can be a step toward that goal and even that goal becomes more achievable if we break it down into even smaller steps.

In my experience goals are a good thing, but only if they are measureable, achievable and build incrementally toward a larger vision or goal. In addition, my experience is that such goal setting does not come naturally. Still, it is important, which is why the conference will be holding a series of workshops on setting goals and measuring them which will be held across the conference in January and February. I will be leading three of them in the Snake River District.

These workshops will be titled “Measuring Our Congregational Vitality for Success: Results, Measures, Goals and Strategies”. They will be designed to familiarize local church leaders with the goals and measures we are asking them to include in Section IV of the new church profile (these can be found on the conference website at <http://www.umoi.org/forms/category/4>). These measures meet the requirements for what the general church is asking us to do prior to this year’s general conference (www.umvitalcongregations.org) but more importantly we hope that as a result of what they will learn in the workshops local church leaders will be equipped not only to set the larger goals the general church is asking for and regularly measure their progress towards them but also to know how to devise incremental steps that enable them to reach the larger goals.

It is my hope that the pastor and two or three lay leaders from each church will attend one of these three hour workshops. Is attendance mandatory? No, it is not mandatory, but each church will be required to fill out the goals on the church profile and regularly report the measures that the general church is asking us to report. No doubt a church could fulfill the letter of the law and do that without the training we are providing at the seminar, but for most it would be like deciding to lose 20 pounds without deciding on the steps to get there. How much better to receive training on how to make use of the goals and measures we are asking for and, better yet, receive help in developing incremental steps to help achieve them. I look forward to seeing you in January or February.

May you have a blessed new year,

Kim

Measuring Our Congregational Vitality for Success Workshops:

Saturday, January 21 at St. Paul’s UMC, Idaho Falls from 1 pm to 4 pm

Saturday, February 4 at Twin Falls First UMC from 1 pm to 4 pm

Saturday, February 18 at Hillview UMC, Boise from 1 pm to 4 pm

BISHOP SHARES DISTRICT ORGANIZATION FOR JULY 2012

*by Greg Nelson
Director of Communications*

Bishop Robert T. Hoshibata has shared a plan of assignment that divides the Oregon-Idaho Conference churches into four districts to take effect on July 1, 2012. This follows the [vote of the Annual Conference](#) to move from a plan that organizes what have been five districts into four.

Paragraph 415.4 of the 2008 Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church calls for a bishop, “To form the districts after consultation with the district superintendents and after the number of the same has been determined by vote of the annual conference.”

Regarding the determination of the plan Bishop Hoshibata shared, “I wanted to make sure that the assignments are in concert with the mission of our annual conference, provide for effective administration, and are conducive to building relationships and mutual support of our ministries.”



For the time being each district will be known by the number of churches in it.

During the 2012 Annual Conference session, each district will have a time to gather and

form themselves as a new group of leaders. Among their tasks will be the selection of a name that represents the district as it moves forward. “I hope that all of us understand that we did not simply eliminate a district. Rather, in these new assignments, all of our churches are affected,” shared Hoshibata. “Each of

our churches now belongs with a different constellation of churches in one of 4 newly constituted districts. This provides us an opportunity to forge new relationships as we also strengthen relationships of the past; so we can all move forward on a journey seeking health and vitality. “

You can [click here to view or download](#) the list of churches that will be assigned to each district. The “56 District” consists of 56 churches in southern Idaho and the most eastern region of Oregon.

Aberdeen	Chubbuck	Jerome	Payette
American Falls	Cove	Jordan Valley	Pocatello
Ashton	Crossroads	Joseph	Richfield
Baker	Eagle	Kuna	Richland
Blackfoot-Jason Lee	Elgin	La Grande	Rupert
Boise-Amity	Emmett	Meridian	Shelley Community
Boise-Collister	Filer	Middleton	Shoshone
Boise-First	Fruitland-First	Nampa- First	Sweet
Boise-Hillview	Glenns Ferry	Nampa- Southside	Twin Falls
Boise-Whitney	Gooding	New Meadows	Union
Buhl	Hagerman	North Powder Community	Vale
Burley	Haines	Nyssa First	Wallowa
Caldwell	Idaho Falls – St Paul	Ontario First	Wendell
Castleford	Idaho Falls - Trinity	Paul	Wilder

THE URBAN PLUNGE

from a letter to Rev. Kim Fields

My name is Megham and I'm the Urban Education Manager at Denver Urban Ministries. We are an organization that grew out of a group of Methodist churches in Denver who saw unmet needs in the community. We provide emergency food assistance to over 1500 families each month; we provide job search assistance to over 600 people each month. We also provide rent and utility assistance to help prevent families from becoming homeless. My job is to educate the community about the challenges faced by those on the margins – those who experience homelessness, poverty, and hunger.

Our program is called The Urban Plunge. During an Urban Plunge, a group has the opportunity to serve a variety of organizations in the Denver area. We work with group organizers to determine the needs and interests of the group so that we can design a trip that fits the needs and interests of the group. We typically try to balance face-to-face opportunities with behind-the-scenes work to help groups see the variety of ways they can become involved. With every trip, we also include educational activities that help the group to understand the context and daily challenges faced by those they are serving. We have a poverty simulation game, a walking tour of homeless assistance agencies, and an opportunity to meet and have a discussion with someone who has personal experience with homelessness. We are working with some of our partners to develop a "Faith and Advocacy" component as well. While on the Plunge, groups sleep in church basements and shower at a local rec. center. The program costs \$180/person for a week-long event, \$100/person for a half-week, and \$65/person for a weekend; there is a one-time group registration fee of \$100. The cost includes arrangement of housing, showers, service sites and educational activities. Groups are on their own for food, transportation, and "fun day" activities. If desired, we can also provide resources to group leaders to facilitate the spiritual development of their group (bible studies, devotions, and activities to help reflect on and process the experience).

We strongly believe that understanding the systemic causes and the barriers to self-sufficiency faced by our neighbors is a vital component of the experience, which is why we incorporate these learning activities into every Urban Plunge and it is what we think makes our program different from the typical mission trip opportunity.

I would love to talk with you more about how we can get the word out to young adult, campus ministry, and youth leaders around the country about this experience. Please visit our website at www.denumurbaneducation.org.

Peace and Blessings,

Megham Freytag , Urban Education Manager



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www.denumurbaneducation.org

Today's needs...tomorrow's hope

VISIT THEIR WEBSITE FOR INFORMATION AND EXCITING OPPORTUNITIES



WHAT IF WE
RETHINK CHURCH?
WOULD YOU COME?

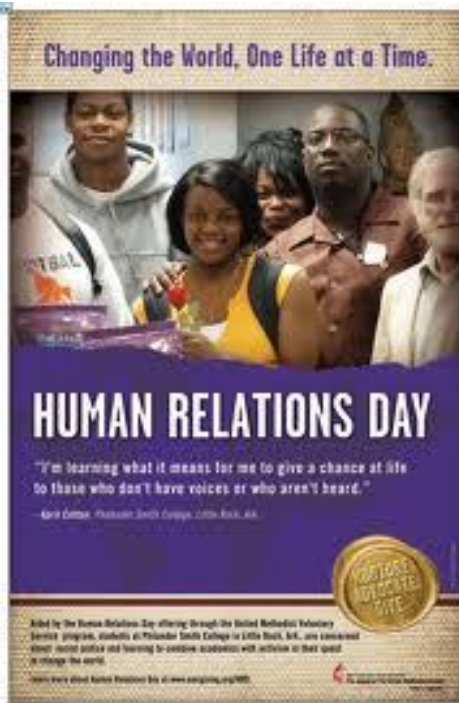
AMERICA'S SUNDAY SUPPER
a Rethink Church event

Honoring Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day
and Celebrating Human Relations Day

On **Sunday, January 15, 2012**, you are invited to participate in a community-by-community, nationwide conversation about our most pressing social issues in honor of **Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.** This is an opportunity for individuals to reach out to new persons and build community over a shared meal.

Inspired by the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., America's Sunday Supper invites people from all backgrounds to come together to share a meal, discuss issues that affect their community and highlight the **power each person has to make a difference!**

HUMAN RELATIONS DAY -- JANUARY 15



Your Human Relations Day offering supports vital community ministries that teach and advocate for justice, especially among people struggling to survive in the margins of society.

You may **order your free offering resources** for this Jan. 15 at toll free 1/888-346-3862. The email address is csc@umcom.org.

Some of the programs supported by funds from the offerings for Human Relations Day include:

- Youth Leadership
- HIV/AIDS/
- Youth empowerment/initiatives
- Restorative Justice
- After school and summer activities
- Prison ministries
- Senior Citizens Assistance
- Mental and Physical Health
- Affordable Housing

PEOPLE IN THE NEWS ***from Snake River District***

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE NEW OR-ID UMW PRESIDENT

Dixie Jacky -- One of our own!



I've been a life-long United Methodist, baptized in the Manson (Washington) United Methodist Church, confirmed in the Lake Chelan (Washington) United Methodist Church, and married in Pioneer United Methodist Church of Walla Walla, Washington. I joined Jason Lee Memorial United Methodist Church and the Jason Lee Memorial United Methodist Women after moving to Blackfoot, Idaho in 1971. I've served in my local organization of United Methodist Women as President, Vice President, Secretary and Circle Chair. I've served in the Snake River District United Methodist Women as Secretary, Vice President, and Nominations Committee member. At the Oregon-Idaho Conference level of United Methodist Women, I've served as the Secretary of Program Resources, Treasurer, and Secretary. In addition to work with the United Methodist Women I've served beyond the local church on the Snake River District Administrative

Committee and the Nominations Committee of the Oregon-Idaho Conference. I've been married to my husband, Dennis, for over 40 years and we have two sons, Eric and Christopher, two daughters-in-law, and 4 grandchildren. My hobbies are quilting, reading (I'm in 2 book clubs), playing bridge, and walking the dog. Currently, I'm making nightgowns for the layette kits of UMCOR-West and will be traveling with 8 others from my church to Salt Lake City to work for a week at UMCOR.

NICARAGUAN GRADUATING CLASS of DECEMBER 2011

The Nicaraguan Rural Development Agency has a non-governmental organization that was formed following a VIM trip to help people in a rural area of Nicaragua that was severely damaged by Hurricane Mitch. A nucleus of our team has been able to maintain contact with the village and over the years we've worked on several projects. The most ambitious has been providing two additional secondary teachers for the local school, making it possible for many more students to graduate.

The school year runs from February through November. Nearly every year we have had a small team from the



U.S.A. participating in graduation and doing fun and educational activities with the village children. Our

seventh class has just graduated making a total of almost 100 students completing high school! Many have gone on to vocational training and some have become teachers themselves.

We would like to have more people experience the joy of participating in the life of these Nicaraguan villagers by being part of a team. Donations can be made to Trinity UMC marked for NIRDA. Anyone wanting to learn more or wishing to participate in our efforts can contact Jill Ecklesdafer at 523-7719 or jackandjill@ida.net or Jim and Betty Anderson at 523-8272 or jimnbbetty@ida.net.

IN OUR PRAYERS

You are invited to lift up these churches and their leadership in prayer this month. Pastors may also mention them during their worship services.



Church	Pastor and family	Lay Leader	Date
Pocatello	Craig Strobel	Claire Kosmicki	Jan. 1-7
Richfield	Jeffrey Rickman	Cheri Ross	Jan. 8-14
Rupert	Pamela Meese	Peggy Gulbranson	Jan. 15-21
Shelley	Davey Lefler	Trish Simmons	Jan. 22-28
Shoshone	Jeffrey Rickman	Brenda Kerner	Jan. 29-Feb. 4

IN REMEMBRANCE

Wayne Hill, retired pastor, died December 11, 2011. He is survived by his wife Elizabeth (Betty); his children, Maxine Stone; Cheryl Hill - Tanquist; Gerry Hill; Pam Newman, and Amanda Trent, grandchildren and great-grandchildren. Reverend and Mrs. Hill served in the New England conference before coming to Oregon – Idaho in 1957. Reverend Hill was appointed to West Salem, Independence, Monmouth, Bend, Corvallis, Fremont, Pocatello and Oregon City churches before retiring in 1994.

A memorial service was held at Oregon City First United Methodist Church, 18955 S. South End Rd., Oregon City, Oregon, (503-656-3433), at 2:00 p.m. on December 30, 2011. Friends may contact Betty Hill – at 1110 Hood View St., Oregon City, OR 97045, (503) 655-3635, bethill@comcast.net.

Kitty Riddle, wife of retired pastor Earl Riddle, died December 24, 2011. In addition to her husband she is survived by her daughters, Marty Moretty and Janet Switzer; son, David Riddle; six grandchildren and two great-grandchildren. While a member of the Missouri East Conference, Earl served as a Chaplain in the United States Navy. After coming to Oregon, he and Kitty served at the Wesley Foundation in Corvallis, and the Forest Grove, Twin Falls and Caldwell churches. Earl served as Conference Council on Ministries Director (and equivalents) in the Oregon-Idaho Conference from 1968 until retirement in 1985.

A service of memory will be held Saturday, January 7, 2012, at First United Methodist Church, 1838 SW Jefferson St., Portland, Oregon, (503-228-3195), at 2:00 p.m. Friends may contact Earl Riddle at 12705 SE River Rd. #312-N, Portland, OR 97222. Friends may contact Earl Riddle at 12705 SE River Rd. #312-N, Portland, OR 97222

RETURN TO ACTS
ALIGNING. CLARIFYING. TRANSFORMING. SERVING.
MARCH 8-9, 2012

Boise First United Methodist Church
Cathedral of the Rockies
717 N. 11th St. Boise, ID 83702

Register by Jan. 15 to receive a discounted rate.
Register online: www.cathedraloftherockies.org/oili

Whether you are a pastor, lay staff member, or volunteer leader, plan to attend for ministry-specific workshops, dynamic speakers, and the opportunity to energize and enhance your ministry.

GUEST SPEAKERS

Sue Nilson Kibbey: Director of Connectional and Missional Church Initiatives for the United Methodist West Ohio Conference. Author of *Ultimately Responsible: When You're In Charge of Igniting the Ministry*.

Eric Geiger: Vice President of the Church Resource Division at LifeWay Christian Resources. Previous executive pastor of Christ Fellowship Miami. Eric has authored or co-authored several books including the best-selling church leadership book, *Simple Church*.



WHEN THE UNIMAGINABLE HAPPENS
Keeping Children Safe

Resources for Safety in our Congregations

- Remember the first General Rule of the United Methodist Church: [First, Do No Harm](#)
- Learn more about [Safe Sanctuaries](#)
- Download [Keeping Children Safe, Part 1](#) and [Keeping Children Safe, Part 2](#) from the *Ministry with Children Newsletter*
- Teach your families how to protect their kids from online predators with [CyberSafety for Families](#)
- Read [Penn State and the Church](#) and [Safe Sanctuaries—Relating to the 2011 Penn State Scandal](#)

Contacts

[Keeping Children Safe](#) - Melanie Gordon Leadership Ministries - mgordon@gbod.org

[Keeping Youth Safe](#) - Chris Wilterdink Young People's Ministries - cwilterdink@gbod.org

[Legal Concerns](#) - Joy Melton United Methodist Insurance - joymelton@bellsouth.net

GO CAMPING E-NEWS

Winter Snow Retreat:

There are two opportunities for youth groups to come to the Suttle Lake Winter Youth Retreat. Space is still available the weekend of Jan 27 - 29.

[Click here to read more and register ASAP](#) These events fill quickly!

More upcoming events:

[Dreaming Peace: Women's Dream Quest](#)

Trinity Episcopal Cathedral, Portland OR January 20 - January 21

[Write Your Life Story](#)

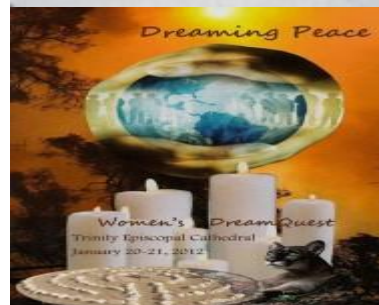
Alton L Collins Retreat Center, Eagle Creek OR
January 24 - January 25

[Watercolor Quilted Stole – making Retreat](#)

Alton L Collins Retreat Center, Eagle Creek OR
January 24 - January 26

[Go Green! Recycling Training for Churches](#)

Alton L Collins Retreat Center, Eagle Creek OR
January 29



EVENTS THIS MONTH

January 6 Colloquy Epiphany Party at Eagle 6 – 8 p.m.

January 14 Magic Valley CLD 9:30 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.

January 21 Upper Snake River Measurement Seminar 1-4 p.m. at St. Paul's

January 25 Retired Clergy Luncheon at Cottonwood Grille – 1:00 p.m.

THE SAGA OF THE SPECIAL BELL

at Nampa Southside UMC

by Gil Gillette

By now, it is probable that most folks who attend Southside have seen the big bell positioned midst the entrance to the church parking lot. If you have heard it as well as seen it, you know it has a distinctive and beautiful tone. It now serves as our church bell. It is over one hundred years old, and it has an uncommon history.

The bell was originally part of the equipment for Great Northern Railway steam engine number 1561, where it was mounted on top of the boiler between the stack and the sand dome. Engine No. 1561 was most likely built about 1904 by the Baldwin Locomotive Works at Philadelphia as part of a fleet of one hundred J-2 class "Prairie Type" 2-6-2s.



As a rumor the veracity of which I could never substantiate, our bell was transferred to a huge, coal fired steam Mallet, which were replaced by diesel-electric power during the early '50s, and scrapped.

In any case, at some time during the '50s the bell came into the possession of Dave Boyer, President of the Minneapolis, Northfield & Southern.

Dave kept it locked up in the store room of the diesel shop at the Glenwood Avenue Yard, west of Minneapolis, for more than a quarter-century.

Early 1982, the Minneapolis, Northfield & Southern was sold in its entirety to the Soo Line Railroad Company. I asked Dave what he intended to do with the bell he had so carefully guarded for so many years. He said, "I'm not sure. Why do you ask?" I answered that my church (Pilgrim United Methodist Church in Plymouth, Minnesota) had just completed a new sanctuary, complete with bell tower, and that we were looking for a bell to put in the tower.

Dave said we could have the bell, with one caveat – that I would promise him it would not be used for anything except a church bell. I promised.

No more than I had come into possession of the bell than a group of malcontents in Plymouth persuaded the township council to pass an ordinance that stated that church bells constituted noise pollution and could not be rung. Into the garage it went.

Dolores and I moved to Brownsville, Texas, then Denver before coming to Idaho. By 1994 I decided that the bell had been in storage long enough and some friends drove it out to Caldwell. Again it went into a storage unit.

In 2010 the trustees at Southside decided to provide a church home for the bell and Dave Gangwer came up with several designs. Early in 2011, Curt Crawford, with considerable help from others, finally finished the labor-intensive project of building a foundation and installing the bell. For me, this ended, on a positive note, a saga 29 years in the making.

Relieved that my moral obligation has been suitably discharged, and even more pleased that the grand old bell will enjoy a useful and much appreciated existence in future, I can now enjoy something at worship time that is even more ding ding-y than the antics of the back row of the choir.

Each time I hear the bell on Sunday mornings, I will give thanks that it serves a useful and even spiritual purpose, and I will give thanks for my good and faithful friends, here and in Minnesota, without whom such a grand outcome would not have been possible.

SCAM ALERT: CARD SERVICES

The Oregon Department of Justice has received a recent onslaught of complaints from Oregonians reporting repeated calls from telemarketers that use the name "Card Services" or "Account Services." These calls come from marketing firms that pass you off to a company promising to lower your interest rates for a fee. Many of them originate out of the country but appear to come from an Oregon area code, because they are using phone technology to spoof the caller ID. These calls are frustrating and intrusive. Unfortunately, the deceptive tactics employed by the callers also make them next to impossible to trace and hinder our ability to stop them.

If you are receiving these calls, check with your phone service provider to find out what blocking services they offer. The operations making these calls are ignoring the National Do Not Call Registry, and the Federal Trade Commission is actively involved. They have already filed several lawsuits and more are expected. For more information or to file a complaint, please call 1-888-382-1222 or visit www.donotcall.gov.

MARCH FOR HUNGER REMINDER

When did we ever see you hungry and feed you, thirsty and give you a drink? And when did we ever see you sick or in prison and come to you?' Then the King will say, 'I'm telling the solemn truth: Whenever you did one of these things to someone overlooked or ignored, that was me—you did it to me.'
(Matthew 25:37b-40.)

The March for Hunger has two events to highlight the month. First we will host a "hunger banquet" on March 24 at a place to be determined. This event will focus on our youth and young adults.

The second event will be an actual march to the capital building on March 31st. The time and route of the parade are still being worked out. Again, our focus is to bring attention to the number of persons who are hungry in Idaho. We will have music, speakers, and information on how each person can respond to end hunger in Idaho.

It is our hope that we can achieve two goals through this event. First, we can be part of the solution to end hunger in Idaho. This is also an opportunity to reach out to the un-churched persons in your church inviting them to be part of an alive and vital community of faith. I hope you will join us in this outreach ministry.

David Thompson,
Chair, March on Hunger

A LOOK AT YEAR-END FINANCES

by Greg Nelson Director of Communications

In the last two years the Oregon-Idaho Annual Conference has struggled to make expenses and income balance. Conference leaders have worked to keep expenses as low as possible and the position of Director of Connectional Ministries was eliminated. The Conference Council on Finance and Administration crafted a 2011 budget that was nearly \$500,000 lower than 2010 in an effort to reduce apportionment pressure on local churches and allow them to focus on ministry in the community.

As the end of 2011 approaches, **UMOI Editor, Greg Nelson** sat down with **Bill Mullette-Bauer, Director of Stewardship and Finance** to see where we are, what may be ahead for the conference, and how the power of connection can affect the future.

***UMOI:** As we come to the close of 2011 what is the financial state of the conference? How does that compare to last year?*

Mullette-Bauer: At the end of November we have received \$2,541,178 toward the total 2011 apportionment of \$4,165,090. At this time last year, we had received \$2,777,364 of \$4,638,462. The Council on Finance and Administration has been diligent about monitoring expenses after creating a rather austere spending plan in February. In that plan we anticipated spending about \$175,000 of the General Reserve Fund. If the current trend continues through the end of the year, that projection will be close.

***UMOI:** The conference reduced its budget for 2011 by nearly \$500,000. Has that lowered apportionments for 2011 and allowed churches to increase their percentage of payment?*

Mullette-Bauer: A reduction of some \$472,000 means that most churches saw a reduction in apportionment for 2011. However, a church with a growing ministry and budget may have seen an increase.

While the total amount received so far this year is about \$235,000 less than a year ago, the percentage received is about the same, 61.0% this year versus 59.9% last year. It would be simplistic to conclude that churches are paying the same percentage of a lower apportionment. That's one of the problems with looking just at averages. The data from individual churches does not indicate that to be true. Some churches have been able to pay more than previous years while others are facing new challenges.

***UMOI :** So less money coming in for a smaller budget gives us the same percentage. What key factors are you seeing that cause churches to hold back payment?*

Mullette-Bauer: I don't like using the term "hold back". I don't believe there are many, if any, United Methodist congregations who "hold back" their apportionments support.

There are a number of factors that are in play here. One of them is the current economic climate. It's a time marked by fear, and fear says to be cautious, and cautious says be careful what you give away. Another factor is that we have many churches that are too small to support the ministry they wish to have. A recent study concluded that a congregation needs an average attendance of 125 to support a full-time pastor. A third factor seems to be a lack of understanding about the connectional system and what the connection does. And, a fourth is the poor job we've done in teaching generosity as an element of discipleship.

UMOI: But if local churches are on the front line, shouldn't their local needs come first? How do they balance that?

Mullette-Bauer: I'm delighted that we've become clear that discipleship-making happens primarily in local congregations. I want to do everything I can to make sure that we have healthy vital congregations in every setting, changing lives and transforming communities. So, I'm not an advocate of killing the ministry of the local congregation so it can pay apportionments. As a pastor I was appointed to churches that were not paying 100% of their apportionments. Our strategy in those situations was to develop our ministry as we grew our apportionment giving. That's what I want to help our congregations do.

UMOI: So the balance is to value both local ministry AND the connectional support?

Mullette-Bauer: That's right. We shouldn't think of these things in opposition. Actually they support each other. The apportionment, or "Shared Ministry," includes ministries that help churches make disciples in the US and across the country.

UMOI: What impacts does having a budget that isn't funded have on the Conference? How do you deal with that uncertainty?

Mullette-Bauer: From my perspective, one of the greatest impacts has been the uncertainty that has limited our ability to develop long-term strategies. In these uncertain economic times, it feels like the pressure is always to make cuts. This has a negative effect on morale, both with the staff and with the wonderful volunteers who desire to be more involved in various ministries. Since 2008 the question each year seems to have been "what can we not do?"

UMOI: What's in your crystal ball for 2012?

Mullette-Bauer: I'm smart enough to know that being at 61.0% rather than 59.9% isn't statistically significant. But, as a person of faith, I'm also confident that we're moving in the right direction. I don't think it's realistic to think we'll suddenly move from the 73% apportionment payment we saw in 2010 to 100%. But I do believe that we can keep making great strides toward that goal.

UMOI: What have I forgotten to ask you?

Mullette-Bauer: A key thing I want to share is that the notion of the connection is critical to me. It means we function as a covenant community. It means we work together on things that are too great for any one of us to do alone. It means we support one another and help when one of us is having a hard time. In all probability we'll never reach 100% apportionment payment. That's because in any given year the odds are that one or more of our

churches will need a little bit of help. When we do our ministry at 73% of the total apportioned, that means that any church paying more than 73% of their share is helping out the churches that pay less than 73%. Some of our churches might say that's a lot to ask of them year after year. We've done an incredible job of controlling costs – the resolution of this gap is to increase the percent paid.

The 2012 budget is only a slight increase (less than 1.2%) over 2011. I think we're seeing the beginning of a trend to close our income gap.

Bill Mulette-Bauer can be contacted at Bill@umoi.org

WHERE IS OUR A2B THIS MONTH?

January 6 - Treasure Valley Colloquy

January 8 – Boise 1st UMC

January 10-12 – Cabinet Portland

January 14 – Magic Valley CLD, Crossroads UMC

January 20 – Upper Snake River

January 21 – Measurement Seminar, St. Paul's UMC

January 22 – Ashton UMC

January 27-31 – Western Jurisdictional Extended Cabinet

We welcome articles and information pertinent to your church. Please send them during the 3rd week of the month to be included in our newsletter.

***Snake River District
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