

News of the **MONTGOMERY-OPELIKA DISTRICT**

ALABAMA-WEST FLORIDA CONFERENCE of THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

March 2010

Open Hearts, Open Minds, Open Doors

1749 Platt Place, Montgomery, Alabama 36117
PHONE: (334) 239-7329 -- FAX: (334) 239-7364 EMAIL:

mtopds@knology.net

WEBSITE: www.themontgomerydistricts.com

Face Book: Montgomery Opelika District UMC

Rev. Ron Ball, *District Superintendent*

Linda Murphy, Administrative Assistant

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MARCHING TOWARD THE CROSS

As we move into the season of Lent, we recall that Jesus walked the road to Jerusalem and ultimately to the Cross knowing full well what awaited Him. Yet, He knew His purpose and was willing to go to any extreme, even the laying down of His life, to accomplish His purpose. Remember what Jesus said to Pilate on the night of His betrayal? "For this purpose I came into the world." Jesus marched toward the Cross with deliberate steps and a determined spirit. Nothing would move Him away from fulfilling His calling. Not even the voices of His friends who didn't understand what was happening. They only wanted Him to be "safe", but they didn't know that His safety and security were inseparably linked to His obedience. I wonder if we, the Church, could be distracted from fulfilling our purpose by well-meaning advisors, friends who don't understand, or the desire to do something significant only if we could be "safe".

There's an old hymn that contains the lyrics, "No there's a Cross for everyone, and there's a Cross for me." The Cross is the fulfillment of God's purpose through our lives. Jesus knew His purpose. Do we know and remember ours? John Wesley said that we have nothing to do but save souls. The Spirit nudges us toward God's purpose of the transformation of the world. Our heritage as United Methodists reminds us that Methodism began as a "movement" that brought transformation to a world that had been untouched by the saving and healing grace of God...long before we "grew" to be a denomination. The Bible stills calls us to "fulfill our calling" as we live into this purpose of transforming the world. But, we must remember that there is no salvation without sacrifice. As our Lord laid down His life for us, now we are called to make our bodies a "living sacrifice" so that the world may receive the Gift of God.

There is an old chorus we used to sing: "I have decided to follow Jesus...no turning back, no turning back. The world behind me, the Cross before me...no turning back, no turning back. Though none go with me, still I will follow...no turning back, no turning back." This little song attempts to capture the purpose for the Church. We are not here to protect or perpetuate ourselves. We are here to make ourselves a gift from God to a world that is perishing without the Life Jesus offers. And, Lent reminds us that the purpose we have been given is too urgent to delay, too needed to withhold, and too powerful to be defeated. It is time to become a "movement" again. The world is waiting. Come on go with me, let's follow Jesus...no turning back, no turning back.

Ron

MTOP March News

All clergy under appointment are invited to a day apart with Bishop Paul L. Leeland on March 8, 2010

Alabama-West Florida Conference Bishop's Day Apart
St. James United Methodist Church
"Our Calling to Fulfill"
Featuring Three Teaching Sessions with

Bishop Will Willimon

Cost is \$7, which includes lunch.

Please visit our website for more information.

Alpha Ministry Training

Starts: 3/13/2010

Cost: \$25.00

Start Time: 8:00 a.m.

End Time: 5:00 p.m.

Attachment: [Flyer - Montgomery 1st UM](#)

Location: Montgomery First UMC

Coordinator: Linda

Contact: mtopds@knology.net

Sign up now to attend the ALPHA Training event hosted
by the Montgomery-Opelika and Montgomery-Prattville Districts

SATURDAY, MARCH 13, 2010

FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH, MONTGOMERY

\$25 fee if you pre-register at

http://www.alphausa.org/PaymentGroup/Registration.aspx?payment_group_id=1000001467 ~ or

\$35 fee at the door

This is for everyone, clergy or laity, that may be interested in having the Alpha program at your church. Flyer is attached and registration is now available at the above link.

Early Response Training

Starts: 3/27/2010

Cost: \$25.00

Start Time: 9:00 a.m. End Time: 4:00 p.m.

Location: Brundidge UMC

Coordinator: Rev. Michael Lawler

Contact: lawlergeneva@aol.com

UMCOR Early Response Team Training will be held at [Brundidge UMC](#) on March 27, from 9-4 (CT).

The cost is \$25 which include a Disaster Response T-Shirt, Training Certificate, and Photo ID, a police check is required before certification.

Space is limited so please sign up early.

To assemble a Health Kit:

1 hand towel (15" x 25" up to 17" x 27")

1 wash cloth

1 comb (large and sturdy, not pocket-sized)

1 nail file or fingernail clippers (no emery boards or toenail clippers)

1 bath-size bar of soap (3 oz and up)

1 toothbrush (single brush only in original wrapper; no child-sized brushes)

1 large tube of toothpaste (4.5 or larger, expiration date must be 6 months or longer in advance of the date of shipment to Sager Brown)

6 adhesive plastic strip sterile bandages

All items should be placed inside a sealed one-gallon plastic bag. No money, notes, religious or political literature, or other items should be placed in the kits.

Montgomery Opelika District has four collection points for Health Kits:

- Brundidge UMC Epworth UMC (Phenix City, AL) Hatchechubbee UMC Woodland UMC

For additional information contact Rev Michael Lawler 334-735-3180

Please Pray for Us:

Rev. Alton L. Pitchford, retired United Methodist minister
Rev. Patsy Gibson, Bowen UMC, and her family



**Our Churches
Our District
Our Country
Our Nation**

You may also submit Prayer request for Clergy and Family on our website www.themontgomerydistricts.com

Secretaries Corner

Thank you soooooo much for getting the Local Church Year End Reports done! Yea! Our districts were a couple of the first ones to finish! I am so proud of you all!

While it is fresh on your mind you may want to keep a copy of that report handy and set up your record-keeping system to give you the numbers automatically for 2010. It would save you a lot of scrambling for info the first thing in January (and you could take time to enjoy the snow).

It's also time to up-date your leadership for your church on the database. If you do not have your username and password or if you have problems up-dating your information, call me at 334-239-7329 or 334-590-5493.

You do this on the Conference website at www.awfumc.org. Click on the blue button to the right at "church login" and enter your username and password. If you have not done this before, call me and I'll answer your questions while you are looking at it.

DATES TO KEEP IN MIND:

Saturday, March 13th — Alpha Ministry Training at First UMC, Montgomery. This will be led by the Alpha Ministry representatives and be the perfect opportunity for anyone in your church to have the training at a reduced rate! You need to sign up online using your charge card to pay for it in order to get the \$25 rate. If you register at the door, it will be \$35 per person. Rev. Ball has offered a \$10 rebate to the first 100 people to register. You will need to register online and pay the \$25 charge; then following your attendance at the event, he will reimburse you \$10.

March 19th-21st —

Conference Lay Speaker Training at Blue Lake

March 26th-28th —

Will Graham Celebration in Auburn, info on the calendar

Monday, April 26th — Second Joint Clergy Meeting at Aldersgate UMC, Montgomery at 9:00 am. Remind your clergy that they must have their reservation in the week before and that this is a convenient way to earn .5 CEU credits.

June 6th — 9th — Annual Conference 2010 - It is time to be sure your delegates are on the database and that their information is correct.

Last month we mentioned a special gathering for you! We would like to have a day for you to meet and enjoy a morning of fellowship with other secretary's, administrative assistants and office volunteers. We would have some goodies to blow our diets, some good information and lots of encouragement.

No one has contacted me concerning a particular day that would be best — maybe a Tuesday or Thursday???? I will not schedule this unless you want it so I will wait to hear from you – 334-239-7329 or mtptds@knology.net

At your service, Linda

**From The
Montgomery Opelika District**

**1749 Platt Place
Montgomery, AL 36117-7762
Phone: 334.239.7329**