



Benton United Methodist Church

The Benton Buzz
January – February 2006

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My First Mission Trip – by Georgia Graham

Volunteers from four churches in this area went together on this mission trip to Eastern Kentucky. Going on a trip like this for the first time was very exciting.

We left early on Sunday morning so we could get there in time for supper that evening. It was a great trip and the closer we got to the Appalachian Mountains the hillier and curvier the road got. Finally, we arrived at Frakes, KY a small town setting high up in the mountains.

This town and land was donated to the Methodist Church by a lady for mission purposes. We found our dormitories, unloaded our luggage, and headed for the dining room. Other people

from Ohio were already there, and we were busy getting acquainted with them.



United Methodist Volunteers in Mission

Each morning we had Sunrise Services overlooking the mountains. What a beautiful setting! We had prayer, singing, and instructions on what we were to do. Each person knew where they were going, and what they were going to do. I was lost in the middle of it all, but before the week was over I knew what it was all about.

A nurse from Cape and I went to the greenhouse to help. It was a quite a walk up over the mountain top and down the other side to get

there, but it was a beautiful walk. There were hundreds of plants to be re-set. Children were coming in on school busses to buy a small plant for their Mother's Day gifts. The greenhouse was also to educate the children on how to grow and plant their gardens.

United Methodist Churches from all over the U.S.A. send in Campbell soup labels. Those who can not work outside sit in the dorm and cut the soup labels to size. It takes many thousands of labels to get a new van, yet there were several of those vans around the community.

There was a dairy farm, orchards, and gardens to educate the people so they could learn to support themselves. The school system was educating the children so they could get an education and job skills necessary to support themselves.

My sister went with me one year; it was quite a surprise for her. Our work took us to the opportunity store. We hung up donated clothing, and many people came to buy the clothes. There was a Senior Citizen dining room in the old school, a library, a laundry room, and the store room where food was rationed each month. Other workers went out to work rebuilding houses, putting on new roofs, and building porches. It was surprising to see how much work was done in a week to rebuild the community.

This was a great spiritual experience. I pray that you will go on a Mission this year and become a part of what is going on with God.

Get Involved in Missions Yourself

Along the road to becoming your pastor, I have had the opportunity to join and lead mission trips throughout the United States and to many parts of the world. Whether it was helping people fix their houses before winter, clean-up after a hurricane, build a church, or paint a hospital, the experience was always more than could be imagined. Usually a blessing to those we helped but always a blessing to those who went.

This year you should seriously consider participating in a Volunteer In Mission (VIM) trip. There are immediate opportunities to be a weekend warrior in Mississippi helping with the clean-up after Katrina that is ongoing. This summer you could join a team going from Sikeston First UMC which is going to Costa Rica to work in a seminary – painting and laying tile, not preaching and teaching. Please talk with the pastor about this opportunity for you to be in missions for our Lord.

A Token of Appreciation

The Benton church is blessed to have a number of faithful, hard working members. Recently two plaques were presented to some of those special people. The plaques read:

Presented to
Dave and Karen Callaway
With Grateful Appreciation
Benton United Methodist Church
2005

Presented to
Scott and Alvina Mainord
With Grateful Appreciation
Benton United Methodist Church
2005

Thoughts from Rev. Bill Spencer

A sense of humor judges one's actions and the actions of others from a wider reference... It pardons shortcomings; it consoles failure. It recommends moderation. – *Thornton Wilder*

Friends, *Our Town* is the play for which Thornton Wilder is best remembered – and with good reason. It is a serious, probing, intriguing play. But he wrote many others – including my favorite one, *The Angel that Troubled the Waters*, included in a book of short plays I read once in a library in Rolla, Missouri. The above quote makes me think of Lincoln's words: "*Were it not for my little jokes, I could not bear the burdens of this office.*" Laughter is still a good medicine, and a merry heart is a continual feast. (Proverbs) Blessings on your day.

Light and Warmth from Rose Cottage, near the lake, on a fine, sunny day, Bill and Cheryl

Birthday Calendar

Recent and upcoming birthdays are:

Fred Graham – February 2

Denver Stuckey – February 10

Tim Davis – March 6 [Anita' s son]

Karen Callaway – March 9

Stephen Strobel – April 4

Dave Callaway – April 5

Kathy Graham – April 25

Karen Davis – April 25 [Anita' s daughter]

Andrea Heuring – April 28

Church Calendar

The **United Methodist Women** meet at 7:00 p.m. on the second Monday of each month. The next meetings are:

– February 13

– March 13

The **Church Council** will meet at 6:30 p.m. on Thursday, February 16th – Please join us in the fellowship hall as we discuss the business of our church. The Church Council meets on the third Thursday of each month.

Join us for **Wednesday Evening Fellowship** each week as we gather at **6:00 p.m.** for a light meal, a time of fellowship, and a lively discussion. We are alternating between a Bible study presented by one of our members and discus-

sion of a contemporary subject. Karen Callaway has been doing a great job of coordinating this activity and has presented several of the studies. This is a great opportunity for fellowship and learning.



Work Day February 15th

Join us Wednesday, February 15th at 5:00 p.m. as some needed insulation is added to the area in the back of the sanctuary. This

much needed project should be completed before the fellowship dinner that evening. If more is needed to be done, it may be scheduled the next afternoon before the Ad Council meeting.

Don't Be Too Big To Do Something Small

Jesus entered the world to serve. We can enter our jobs, our homes, our churches. Servanthood requires no unique skill or seminary degree. Regardless of your strengths, training, or church tenure, you can.

Love the overlooked. Jesus sits in your classroom, wearing the thick glasses, outdated clothing, and a sad face. You've seen him. He's Jesus.

Jesus works in your office. Pregnant again, she shows up to work late and tired. No one knows the father. According to water-cooler rumors, even she doesn't know the father. You've seen her. She's Jesus.

When you talk to the lonely student, befriend the weary mom, you love Jesus. He dresses in the garb of the overlooked and ignored. "Whenever you did one of these things to someone overlooked and ignored, that was me-you did it to me." (Matt. 25:40 MSG).

You can also...

Wave a white flag. We fight so much. "Where do you think all these appalling wars and quarrels come from?" asks the brother of Jesus. "Do you think they just happen? Think again. They come about because you want your own way, and fight for it deep inside yourselves." (James 4:1 MSG). Serve someone by swallowing your pride.

One more aspect of servanthood...

Every day do something you don't want to do. Pick up someone else's trash. Surrender your parking place. Call the long-winded relative. Doesn't have to be a big thing. Don't be too big to do something small. "Throw yourselves into the work of the Master, confident that nothing you do for him is a waste of time or effort" (1 Cor. 15:58 MSG).

From *Cure for the Common Life* © 2005, Max Lucado <http://www.maxlucado.com>

Computer Desks Received

A recent donation of two computer desks was received from Dave and Karen Callaway. These will be used to enhance the media center that is being added to the fellowship hall, and to help create a learning center environment for a PC lab and classes. If you have an interest in computer classes or using them for a program, please contact the church.



Special Music during Worship

Members and visitors who were in worship on Sunday, February 5th were blessed to hear special music provided by Jim McDonough. Jim is a friend to several in the congregation and is blessed with the talents of writing, playing, and singing. Accompanied by his guitar, Jim sang a wonderful song that he had written and an old favorite. Jim, you are welcome back any time!



Sign-Up for Church Camp!

It is time to register for a UMC camp now. There are a variety of great opportunities to enjoy a camping experience by attending one of our Conference's camps this year.

There are camps for all ages beginning with those who will be entering the Third Grade this fall all the way through high school graduates. Registration forms are available at the church office or you may register on-line at the camp website: www.MoCamps.org – Sign-up soon! There is a \$25 Early Bird Discount for applications received by April 15th and scholarships are available to support this important activity.

More on our Church Camps

Please see the poster and schedule of camping opportunities that is in the Sunday School room behind the sanctuary. Blue Mountain is a wonderful camping facility near Fredericktown and one that has been attended by some of our youth. There are other camps in Missouri that are a part of our Conference camp program, but Blue Mountain is a first class facility and it is the closest of the camps. See the article on page 3 for registration information and deadlines. Don't miss this chance to change your life! Jesus and your new friends are waiting for you.



Observing History

This month the Benton United Methodist Church is observing Black History Month with churches and denominations throughout our country.



In the last few months two icons of the Civil Rights Movement have passed

from the stage; Rosa Parks and Coretta Scott King. Their work has not been in vain, but it is up to all of us to see that the opportunity now open to all in this country is realized.

Delivering his *I Have a Dream* speech on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial, Dr. King knocked on the doors of the great vaults of opportunity of this nation. He pried those doors open to make the opportunities of this nation available to all. Do not let his dream die, and do not let that opportunity be squandered.