



# LIVING WATER

## Five Rivers District Office Newsletter

### News From Our District Superintendent Dennis Ackerman

Friends and Colleagues:

It is good to finally see the sun shining and feel the warmth of summer invading our lives. Even though this particular spring has brought a massive amount of allergy triggering pollen, it is still life-giving to see the colors of the earth bursting forth in new life and regeneration. We all know that the metaphor of spring has been used for centuries to give interpretation to the resurrection, but when you are living in the midst of the wonder of life pushing through harsh realities to overcome death, it is easy to remember why spring is so powerful in meaning.

I pray that you are experiencing such a life-giving spring of faith in your walk with Christ. Those of us who lead in the church, laity and clergy alike, know there are some very real and harsh realities that want to topple life and allow death to reign. But God's Spirit will not allow us to remain long in the arms of discouragement for we are the people of Pentecost. Daily we must allow the Holy Spirit to invade our souls with renewal, power and life. I do pray for this very thing for myself and for you as we together seek to do the work of ministry and build up the body of Christ.

A couple of encouragements for the summer:

- Take time away from your routine for rest and relaxation. Vacation is important to our well being. Even if you are unable to travel far, at least take time away and go fishing, read a book, visit loved ones, visit a museum, etc.
- Be in relationship with a small group of other Christians for the purpose of prayer, support, and accountability. It is important for our spiritual well being to have a circle of faith sharers who will help us grow in Christ and do the work of ministry.

I look forward to seeing many of you at Annual Conference. Please be in prayer for this gathering time of United Methodists. May we be open to God's leading as we make decisions regarding the ministry of our Conference.

In Christ

Dennis

Volume 6, Issue 6

June 2010

#### Inside this issue:

News from our DS	1
The Little Church That Could..."Abide"	2
Little Church cont.	3
District Calendar	4
Prayer Calendar, Clergy Birthdays	5
Safe and Sacred Training Available	5
Blue Mound UMC Pictures	6



## The Little Church That Could... “ABIDE”

By Marvé Ralston



Blue Mound UMC, note the new roof with all its slopes and gables.



“We are having fun and growing,” said Peterson. “We have been showing people we are not closed, we are not closing our doors, and we are bringing the Good News to the Blue Mound community.”



Pastor Dallas Peterson

Nestled in a small town consisting mainly of a gas station, café, bar and two churches is Blue Mound UMC. The church building was originally built in the late 1800’s. This past year it received a new roof and a new upstairs kitchen and fellowship hall. These are the tangible changes happening in this small congregation, part of the “fruit” so to speak. They have increased attendance by 40% and are more visible to the community as well. This is no small accomplishment in a town boasting 285 in 2008, with a growth of 2.8% since then.

Blue Mound UMC is led by Pastor Dallas Peterson and is part of a charge with Mound City UMC. The churches’ restoration both internal and external began in February of 2008. A small team of three couples began attending the ABIDE program for small church leadership initiative. The team consisted of Pastor Dallas and his wife Connie, Terry and Jackie Broyles, and Nathan and Krissy Beckmon. As Peterson says, “It was a small team, but mighty!”

The ABIDE program is based on “ABIDE” the single most important instruction Jesus gave his disciples related to their life mission.

“I am the vine, you are the branches. Those who abide in me bear much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing.” (John 15:5)

By abiding they would: glorify the Father, bear much fruit, and prove to be His disciples. (John 15:8)

The ABIDE program began in December of 2004, when a group of fifteen leaders from five denominations met to prayerfully explore what the Holy Spirit might be doing to create a renewal movement for smaller congregations. This development team became the Small Church Leadership Initiative (SCLI). ABIDE is their initial offering.

ABIDE teams are formed to establish spiritual and strategic continuity for fruitfulness. Teams consist of the pastor and three to ten lay persons from each church. Usually ten to twelve congregations participate and embark together on a 12-15 month journey to discover in faith and joy how to:

Abide in Jesus and love one another,  
Learn from the best teachers available,  
Prayerfully discern the leading of the Holy Spirit for their congregation's future,  
Trust each other to claim that future for God's glory and greater fruitfulness.

"The cost of the program is minimal," said Peterson. There is a \$250 program fee, transportation and motel costs. Bridges to the Future picked up the rest of the costs.

You cannot help but look at the small church membership at Blue Mound and realize that for members to roof the church, and build the new kitchen and fellowship hall, major sacrifices of both time and money were made.

The cost of the new roof was \$16,000, with almost half of the money raised by several members giving \$1,000 each and raising \$7,500, the balance being taken out of the general fund. A roofing company was contracted to complete the actual work on the steep and gabled roof.

Members completed the work on the kitchen and fellowship hall. They now have a bright upstairs space for church dinners and meetings that are also used by the community for reunions, etc.

Improvements to the parking area in front of the church were needed and completed. All these things make the church more visible and inviting to this small community. These changes are what attracted one woman, who has considered herself a United Methodist most of her life but had not been active for years. She actually thought Blue Mound UMC had been closed and now has been attending regularly for the past six months.

The church building is also being used for an after school program. Area children were bused from the Mound City grade school, which is 13 miles away. There is a program in place for the children from 4:00 to 5:00 PM. Parents or guardians provide transportation for their children's safe return to their homes. The after school program is a cooperative program with Federated Church, the other church in town which is right next door. This cooperative program has been good for the community and according to Peterson; both churches are active and increasing in members.

"We are having fun and growing," said Peterson. "We have been showing people we are not closed, we are not closing our doors, and we are bringing the Good News to the Blue Mound community."

For more information about the ABIDE program, call or e-mail the district office and we can send you a brochure or contact Evelyn Fisher, Topeka District Superintendent at [efisher@kansaseast.org](mailto:efisher@kansaseast.org). New groups will be starting up in 2011. This is a good time to begin planning if you are interested.

# JUNE 2010



**Save These Dates: (Please)**

*October 2nd  
we are planning a  
District Missions Fair  
details coming soon*

*January 8th, 2011  
There will be a District  
Leadership Training Work-  
shop*

**June 3**

North Incubator Group  
9 AM-5 PM, Countryside UMC

**June 9-12**

Annual Conference

**June 17th**

District Leadership Team  
6:30 PM, District Office

**June 24th-26th**

Bishop's Week at  
Mount Sequoyah

**June 27th**

Trailside Parish Picnic

**June 27th**

Mildred UMC's 100th Birthday  
District Superintendent to  
preach at 11:00 AM service

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30			

# District Prayer Calendar

June 6	Clearfield Rev. Lane Bailey (July 1st), Interim Lay Speakers in June
June 13	Louisburg Rev. Donna VotEAU
June 20	Greeley, Welda Pastor Bill Nelson
June 27	Uniontown-Redfield Pastor Joel Dunn



## Safe and Sacred Training Available in June:

**Iola Wesley UMC**, Tuesday June 1st, 1:00 PM at the church, 301 Madison and Buckeye. Laura Caillouet-Weiner will be leading the class. Please call Laura 620-496-8101 or the church office 620-365-2285 to register.

**Lawrence Central UMC**, Tuesday June 1st, 6:00-8:00 PM. Contact is Autumn Weiss at 785-856-5153 or autumn@sunflower.com. Childcare is available with advance notice.

**Blue Mound UMC**, Sunday June 6th, 2:00 PM. Trainer will be Pastor Gary Merritt. Please call Dallas Peterson at 913-795-2898 to register.

**Please download all necessary paperwork off the Kansas East website at [www.kansaseast.org](http://www.kansaseast.org) and have it filled out prior to attending any of the above training sessions. You will also need to bring 20.00 to the class to help cover the required background check.**

Gayla Rapp	June 7th
Kara Eidson	June 9th
Nick Woods	June 20th
Duane Kessler	June 25th
David Livingston	June 26th

**June Clergy Birthdays**



Wishing you a year filled with the same joy you bring to others.

## ***Cultivating Christian Growth***

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**WE'RE ON THE WEB!**

**WWW.5RIVERSDS.COM**



Kansas East Conference Mission  
Statement:

To connect and empower people  
and churches in living out the  
Gospel's call to invite, nurture,  
equip and send forth Disciples of  
Jesus Christ.



### **Happy Father's Day Dad!**

Stan Clark, my dad, retired K-State professor,  
who I asked you to pray for several years ago  
(thank you!)

In 2008 less than two weeks after celebrating his  
50th Anniversary, he suffered a bad fall off his  
tractor and had a burst fracture in his back. He is  
back on the tractor (yikes) and gets around well  
with a cane. There were sure days we couldn't  
imagine he would be doing so well.

Thanks again for the prayers! Marvé

Kansas Bishop Scott Jones

District Superintendent: Rev. Dr. Dennis Ackerman

Administrative Assistant, Newsletter Editor: Marvé Ralston

**District Mission:**

**To Cultivate Christian Growth**



**Blue Mound's new kitchen  
and fellowship hall (below)**



**Pastor Dallas and Connie  
Peterson outside Blue  
Mound UMC**