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Behold, I am doing a new thing... Cooperative Parishes are here!

by Dr. Randy Frye

I remember that November morning when each District Superintendent received a spread sheet from John Tate, our Conference Treasurer, detailing the impact of Direct Invoicing. I looked at the sheet in front of me, gazed at the column which indicated "total increase," and wondered, "What are these churches going to do?" Over the next few weeks I listened to the concerns of my colleagues and worried how I could help my churches. I must admit, there were moments when I felt completely helpless.

That changed during my quiet time on Monday, December 7, 2009. It was a moment I will never forget. Reading Isaiah 43, some very familiar words leaped off the page and became emblazoned in my soul; "See I am doing a new thing."

I had no idea what that "new thing" would be, but I knew God was at work. The anxiety I had felt for weeks literally disappeared in an instant. It was time to dream big and to step "out of the box."

That was the moment when the idea of Cooperative Parishes in the Johnson City District was born. My goal was simple and two-fold: reduce the financial stress that many of our churches are feeling and

create new resources of people and money that will enable churches to engage their communities in ministries they are not presently providing.

As a result, on June 23, 2010 we will have five new Cooperative Parishes: the **Greene County Parish** (Afton, Greenwood and Stone Dam); **Washington County Parish** (Asbury, Limestone, and McCarty); **New Hope Parish** (Mayberry, Mt. Wesley, and New Victory); **Johnson City Parish** (East Pine Grove Park, Otterbein, and West Market Street), and the **Carter County Parish** (Hunter, Slagle, St. Paul, and Watauga Point).

I looked at the sheet in front of me, gazed at the column which indicated "total increase," and wondered, "What are these churches going to do?"

"How is a Cooperative Parish different from the circuits with which most of us are familiar?" That is a question I have been asked many times. The most significant difference is that a parish is not just a collection of 3, 4 or 5 churches that have little in common except the preacher. Rather, it is one entity (a parish) that worships in different settings, but works together to reach their



community for Christ.

Connecting the churches together into a single entity is a Parish Council - representatives from each church who meet together to dream, plan, request permission, and implement parish-based ministries. Those ministries might be mission projects, special worship services, UMY programs, children's programs, Vacation Bible Schools, or Bible Studies, just to name a few.

Our Parish Councils have already begun meeting, spending one day in training with Dr. Julia Kuhn Wallace and working on their initial Parish efforts. I will be meeting with each Council for their monthly meetings, and they will be reporting their plans and dreams to their respective Administrative Boards for approval. It has been exciting to meet with PPR committees and Administrative Boards and watch this begin to take shape.

What excites me the most, however, is the leadership now in place for our Cooperative Parishes. This spring we projected the Rev. David Gass to become pastor of the Green County Parish, the Rev. Brandon Berg to become pastor of the Washington County 9.5

(Continued on page 7)

Randy's News & Views by Randy Frye



It is less than three weeks until Annual Conference. For five months I have been in countless meetings with

PPR committees, Administrative Boards, Finance Committees and pastors as we explored the issues facing our churches.

Everyone is concerned about the impact of Direct Invoicing. There are lots of questions about the possible new formula for our apportionments. Many churches had to lower their salaries because of the current economic situation,

declining membership, and uncertainties about the expenses they will be facing in 2011. It has been a challenge, to say the least. But I love challenges and I thrive on finding creative ways to address the issues that confront us.

Am I worried about the future? Not in the slightest! Am I wearing rose-colored glasses? Nope! Am I a hopeless optimist? Not exactly. I am, however, a person who absolutely believes in God's prevenient grace... that grace which goes before us... that grace which is at work even when we don't expect or recognize it. That is why the past five months, with all of their meetings, questions, concerns, and challenges have been five of the

most spiritually enriching and rewarding months I have ever known.

In his book, *The Way to Heaven*, Steve Harper shares these words:

"There is a way out of our problems. God has made the way! And by his prevenient grace he enables us to walk in this way if we choose to do so. Prevenient grace is not the whole story, but it is the beginning. It is not the bright light of day, but the first light of dawn. It is real light... light enough to see the hand of God and to reach for it."

(Continued on page 7)

The View From Down Here by John Wesley

"But if anyone causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him to have a large millstone hung around his neck and to be drowned in the depths of the sea. Matthew 18:6 (NIV)"

When the weather is good, Mom and I like to take a walk at lunchtime. Near our office are some woods. Members of Cherokee UMC are building a community walking trail there that is a really neat place to explore. My favorite kind of walk is the one where Mom lets me go wherever I want. I have her on a leash, and she just follows me wherever I go, even if I decide to stray off the trail a little. I do have "4-Paw Drive" after all.

One day this spring I headed off in a different direction than usual. Mom wasn't paying attention until we were halfway across this clearing in the woods. All of a sudden, she yelled at me to watch out where we were going. I was confused, because I didn't see anything to be afraid of. All I saw was the patch of beautiful, green, three-leafed plants all around us.

For some reason, Mom didn't think

they were that pretty, and hurried to get us to the other side of the clearing. Then she told me, "That was poison ivy!"

First, I looked around for my sister, whose name is Ivy, and for whoever was poisoning her. Then, I realized what she meant and told her she was being silly. Dogs don't get poison ivy! Mom said that may be true, but humans do. She pointed out that she was wearing sandals (is it my fault she doesn't know enough to wear real shoes in the woods?) and that I had just led her through a bunch of plants that could make her feet all itchy.

Well, it turns out Mom didn't get itchy feet, but she still taught me a lesson that day. She said that the Bible warns us about leading others astray. In fact, it says that it would be better to have a big rock tied around your neck and tossed in the ocean than to cause someone else to

sin. (I've heard of people doing that with puppies or kittens they don't want, and that's just wrong!)

The funny thing is, we may not even think what we are doing is wrong, and know it won't hurt us or our relationship with God. The things we say, the things we eat or drink, the way we interact with family, friends, and fellow church members, even the places we go might be sending the wrong message to someone whose faith isn't as strong or who might be tempted to go a step further and find themselves in real trouble.

I guess that from now on I need to be more careful about where I lead Mom. I sure am glad she didn't get itchy feet!



Local Missions † Did You Know...?

Did you know... that the Coalition for Kids in Johnson City has more than 300 disadvantaged and at-risk children and youth attending its afterschool and summer day programs for tutoring; opportunities for sports, drama, dance, and scouting; Bible Studies, warm meals, and leadership development?



Unicoi UMC offers a place for children to gather for creative activities, games, and spiritual as well as physical nourishment.
photo courtesy of <http://unicoiumc.org>

Did you know... that 65 children come to Unicoi UMC on Wednesdays and Fridays for Bible Studies, meals, crafts, and games as part of the Unicoi Hispanic Outreach?

Did you know... that last year Good Samaritan Ministries assisted 156,913 people with clothing, medical needs, job training, job referrals, rental assistance, and more than 2,536,000 pounds of food?

Did you know... that last year 638 children and youth attended summer camp at Buffalo Mountain, with 42 making first time professions of their faith while another 128 rededicated their lives to Christ?

Did you know... that approximately 55 students participate in the weekly activities at the ETSU Wesley Foundation with another 100 participating in their mission projects, intramurals, gatherings and Habitat work days, and in the past five years 12 alumni of the Foundation have entered into full-time ministry while 3 others are presently pursuing their seminary education?



Coalition for Kids is meeting the physical, emotional, education, and spiritual needs of children all across our region.
photo courtesy of <http://coalitionforkids.org>



In 2009 Good Samaritan's Food Boxes fed 1,577 people at Thanksgiving and 1,631 people at Christmas.
photo courtesy of <http://coalitionforkids.org>

Did you know... that \$64,215 - 40% - of the Johnson City District budget goes to support these and other life-changing ministries?

Did you know... that when we don't receive 100% of our District Askings we must cut our support of these efforts and that means they have to reduce the programs they offer and the lives that are changed by their work?



At Buffalo Mountain Camp, children and youth experience Bible Study, worship and nature in fun and exciting ways.
photo courtesy of <http://buffalomountaincamp.org>

What can you do to help? Are you willing to talk with your congregation, finance chair,



The Wesley Foundation at ETSU is a place where students can relax, study, and fellowship with their peers.
photo courtesy of Wesley Foundation on Facebook

treasurer, pastor - anyone who will listen - about your desire to see these ministries continue? Are you willing to give generously to your church so that ministry can continue, not only in your church and community, but throughout the Johnson City District?

We are here to help you! The Johnson City District Committee on Finance is willing to offer their time and resources to help each church in the district support these important ministries fully in 2010. Contact the District Office for more details.



In Mission Together † Czech Partnership News

The Partnership Continues by IMT Partnership Chair Betty Barton

We are now in our fifth year of partnership with the United Methodist Churches of the Czech Republic. I am excited about the growth our partnership has shown since we began in 2006, and about the possibilities for mission in 2010.

Our year is already off to a promising start. Throughout the early months of 2010, team members visited churches across the Johnson City District to share their passion for mission in the Czech Republic. As a result of those visits, we have several new recruits for this year's teams, and raised funding to support the partnership. To date, the generous people of the Johnson City District have donated over \$13,000!

We will send Vacation Bible School, English Camp, Sports Camp and Construction teams to the Czech Republic again this year. In April, our District Superintendent, Randy Frye and Tim Bracken, pastor of First UMC, Johnson City traveled to the Czech Republic to provide continuing education for Czech pastors during their annual Spring School.

But I am most excited about two new opportunities for us to be "In Mission Together" with our Czech

partners, a joint mission trip to Estonia and a mission project at Buffalo Mountain Camp.

In late June, a team of volunteers from the Johnson City District will be joined by a team of volunteers from the Czech District at Camp Gideon, a United Methodist Camp in Estonia. These teams will spend a week doing construction at the camp, as well as fellowship with Estonians and Russians present for youth camp.

In September, seven of our Czech friends will come to the Johnson City District to work on projects at Buffalo Mountain Camp. If you would like to volunteer to work alongside this team, contact us at the District Office.

I am amazed at the many ways God has blessed our partnership. Lives have been changed on both sides of the ocean. Czech participants have learned about Christ and opened their hearts to Him while American volunteers have found their faith strengthened and their commitment to Christ renewed. Friendships have been forged that flourish despite the distance between us and differences in language, culture, age, and experience.

Please join me in praying that this year's teams will enjoy safe and fruitful journeys, that more lives will be changed, and that God will be honored in all that we say and do.

Pray for our 2010 teams:

June 22 - 30:

Construction; Estonia

July 7 - 22; Vacation Bible School; Brno

July 9 - 18; Construction; Litoměřice

July 18 - 25; Softball Camp; Litoměřice

July 16 - 25; English Camp/Vacation Bible School; Sedlčany

July 16 - 25; Vacation Bible School; Tachov

July 23 - August 1; Softball/English Camp; Vimperk

July 23 - August 1; Softball/English Camp; Protivin

July 30 - August 8; Youth Bicycle trip; Plzen

August 28 - September 6; Construction; Buffalo Mountain Camp

September 23 - October 1: English Camp; Slaný



Rev. Tim Bracken and Dr. Randy Frye (second and third from left, standing) joined their Czech colleagues for a week of continuing education in April.

photo courtesy of Czech District UMC on Facebook

Meet Our Summer Intern † Ellen Shuck

Greetings! My name is Ellen Shuck, and I'm the summer intern here at the Johnson City District Office. I can't tell you how excited I am to be here! There's nothing like the feeling of knowing exactly where you are supposed to be (which I've found in college can be a rare feeling).

Speaking of college, allow me to introduce myself and tell you a little about how I ended up at the district office. I grew up in Rogersville, TN, where I am a member of Rogersville First United Methodist Church. My parents' names are Jim and Georgia (they are pretty much awesome). I have worked for GreenBank in Rogersville for 2 years.

After high school, I came to Johnson City to major in Accounting at ETSU. I am finally a senior! While at ETSU, I discovered a spiritual home and community at the ETSU Wesley Foundation unlike anything else I have ever experienced (big shout out to Jerry Everley!). I started serving as the worship leader in the fall, and I realized that nothing can compare to being in the ministry. As you can imagine, this led to an entire year full of confusion and discernment!

After taking a serious look at pastoral ministry and deciding it

wasn't for me, I began to consider other ways of serving the United Methodist Church in an accounting job or career. I contacted Dr. Randy Frye to ask him if there were any internships or jobs in ministry accounting available for the summer. I was so excited to hear that he and Betty Barton wanted me to spend the summer with them! When I came to talk to them about the position, I was greeted at the door by John Wesley, the Hospitality Director, and I felt the most peace I had felt about my major and this summer that I had felt in a long time.

I have already learned so much about the structure of the United Methodist Church, and I can't wait to learn more about the financial end of our branch of the Body of Christ. I can't imagine a summer job more rewarding than helping Betty look after our church's resources.

Included in my summer job duties is learning to perform an audit for previous years, understanding the budgeting for the district, and practicing my Microsoft Excel skills for accounting purposes. Dr. Frye has arranged for me to meet with employees of local church and conference offices that specialize in church finances. I also can't wait for



my first trip to Annual Conference!

Along with the best summer job ever, I'm looking forward to spending my summer with the Rogersville First United Methodist Contemporary Christian Dance Troupe, The RUMC choir, the new College and Young Adult Sunday school class, my family and friends, and my boyfriend (Caleb Frazier, a candidate for United Methodist ministry from Embreeville United Methodist Church). In my spare time, I love to read, knit, do crafts, and watch Andy Griffith.

I look forward to meeting you all as you stop by the office this summer. Thanks again to Dr. Frye and Betty for this opportunity to serve!



New King Tower

For more info: (423) 753-6678 or
buffalomountain@hotmail.com



Living Marketplace † Jobs, Events, Buy and Sell, Donate



Shady Grove UMC in Dandridge, TN seeks a full **time Youth Leader/Worship Leader**. Applicants should be passionate and fully committed to their walk with God. Previous experience and college education is preferred. Once employed, you would be responsible for coordinating our youth ministry and to lead worship at 2 Sunday morning services and participate in our evening contemporary service. Salary to be determined by experience. For job description and more information, visit www.sgumc.com or call 865-397-7453. Email resumes to admin@sgumc.com or mail to Shady Grove UMC, Attention SPR Team, 1675 Harold Patterson Road, Dandridge TN 37725. All resumes should be submitted by June 20.

Good Eats at Fairview UMC!

3rd Saturday Breakfast - June 19, 7:00 to 10:00 a.m.

Czech Mission Fundraiser/Supper Fri., June 25, 5:30 p.m.

[Fairview UMC](http://FairviewUMC) is located at 878 Highway 81N, Jonesborough. Come one, come all, come hungry!

Holston Clergy Spouse Annual Conference Luncheon:

Monday, June 14 at 12:30 pm at Waynesville UMC. Cost: \$12. Please contact the District Office to make and pay for your reservation.

Faith, Hope, Love in Action - School of Christian Mission:

July 22 - 24 at Colonial Heights UMC. Sponsored by Holston Conference United Methodist Women. Open to all Men, Women, Laity and Clergy, this event provides 1.5 CEU for clergy and credit toward Lay Speaker Certification. For more info go to www.holstonconferenceumw.com.

Needed: Good, Used Choir Robes for St Paul UMC, Elizabethton . If you have robes to donate, please contact Mike Pinner at 341-3667 or mikepnr@mounet.com.

Attention Youth Leaders/Directors/Mentors: Join your colleagues, volunteer and paid alike, at periodic lunch meetings for brainstorming, idea sharing, support, and fellowship. To get on the email list, contact Gary Ihfe at gary@wesleymemorialumc.org.

WESLEY THE MOVIE

What happens when a smart, talented young man desires to serve God... but is mostly driven by his fear of death and Hell? How is a conflicted heart torn by love and desire? And what happens when that heart finally discovers grace?

In this powerful true story, based directly on the private journals of John and Charles Wesley, we glimpse the private struggles of one man who would go on to found the Methodist movement - and another who would become one of the most prolific and beloved hymn writers of history. Together, they would transform the face of England with revolutionary ministries to the poor and downtrodden, creating a movement that laid the groundwork for the eventual abolition of slavery.

There is a new movie out about our very own, John Wesley. It has received rave reviews across the country. We are excited to announce it will play in the Tri-Cities, from **Friday, June 4 through Thursday, June 10 at Real to Reel Theater in Johnson City**. The ticket price will be for a first run regular admittance. The theater is willing to allow church groups to purchase a block of tickets or is open to alternative viewing times for your church groups.

To contact Real to Reel Theater about movie showing times or to get a block of tickets, go to www.realtoreeltheater.com, call (423) 282-2131, or (423) 747-4557. Don't miss your opportunity to see a wonderful film that tells the story of John Wesley.

To learn more about the movie go to www.wesleythemovie.com.



2010 Hands-On Project † School Kits for Liberia

School Supply Kits • Liberia • Mary & Herbert Zigbuo
Our Goal: 400 Kits

| | |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| 3 spiral notebooks (70 count) | 1 pack of blue or black pens (10 count) |
| 1 pack of pencils (10 count) | 1 small calculator |
| 1 small dictionary (new or used) | 1 12" ruler |
| 1 small Bible (new or used) | 1 medium or large poncho |
| 1 compass | 1 protractor |
| 1 pair of flip flops (size M - L) | |

Pack all items in a 2 gallon Zip-loc bag or secure plastic bag.

Please do not include items that are not listed, including personal notes, as workers at the depot will have to remove them before shipping. **Each kit MUST contain exactly what is listed above to make it through customs.** Deliver kits to your local church with a \$5 per kit donation for packing/shipping. **Do not put money in bag!**

Note to Pastors, Mission Chairs, Church Treasurers:

Please designate one person (or group of people) to deliver the kits your church collects to the Johnson City District Office June 7 - 10, 9:00 am to 5:00 pm. If at all possible, do not bring them before June 7, as we do not have long-term storage space available. We **MUST** have all of your kits by 5:00 pm on Thursday, June 10 as the truck will arrive early the next morning to pick them up.

Church Treasurers should write one check (payable to Johnson City District UMC with "School Kits" on the memo line) to cover the cost of all kits from your church. Send this check with the person(s) delivering the kits to the District Office. **NO CASH PLEASE!**

(Continued from page 1) Behold...

projected the Rev. Lon Tobin to become Senior Pastor of the Johnson City Parish with the Rev. Steve Butler as his associate. The Rev. Steve Burkhart is projected to serve as Senior Pastor of the Carter County Parish with Dr. Mike Pinner serving as his associate.

Those projections will become final at Annual Conference next month. Working with these clergy are some very gifted and enthusiastic laity who have already demonstrated the ability to dream, to take steps of faith and to work together as very cohesive teams.

Our five Cooperative Parishes are beginning to breathe and take on life. What they accomplish this year, I cannot say at this moment... but I'm looking forward to seeing ministries grow and lives change. Truly, God is doing a new thing in the Johnson City District!

(Continued from page 2) Randy's News...

Who would have thought that a lunch meeting at the airport Cracker Barrel in July 2009 would ultimately result in the formation of the Johnson City District Revitalization Team and the hard work they have already done? Who would have thought that a single spreadsheet, handed out at a November Cabinet meeting, would have spawned the creation of five new Cooperative Parishes?

Who would have thought that seemingly disconnected events here and there would have resulted in the projected appointments of the five new pastors coming to our district or the appointments of the four present pastors who will be working with those Cooperative Parishes? Yet God's prevenient grace was present in all of those situations, preparing us for the next chapter of our District's ministry.

Whether you are a pastor preparing to move to a new appointment, a church receiving a new pastor or a pastor returning for another year... there is always uncertainty as we come to Annual Conference and launch into God's future. In those moments when we wonder "why?" or "how?" and we feel those anxieties that are sure to follow, remember... God's prevenient grace. It is "light enough to see the hand of God and to reach for it." In the reaching God is sure to bless us again!

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www.jcdistrict.org

Upcoming Dates to Remember



| Date | Time | Location | Event |
|----------------|------------------------|------------------------------|--|
| June 4 - 10 | Check theater listings | Real to Reel Theater | Wesley The Movie www.wesleythemovie.com |
| June 7 - 10 | 9:00 am - 5:00 pm | Johnson City District Office | Hands-On Mission Kit Collection See Page 7 |
| June 13 - 16 | | Lake Junaluska, NC | Holston Annual Conference Watch online at http://holston.org |
| June 14 - 18 | | Johnson City District Office | District Office Closed |
| July 22 - 24 | | Colonial Heights UMC | Holston Conference School of Christian Mission www.holstonconferenceumw.com |
| August 1 - 4 | 7:00 pm nightly | Sulphur Springs Camp Shed | Sulphur Springs Camp Meeting |
| August 7 | 8:30 am - 2:30 pm | Munsey Memorial UMC | District Day of Discipleship |
| August 13 - 14 | | Cokesbury Center, Knoxville | Calling All Men http://callingallmen.net |