



## ***Monday Musings***

***December 21, 2009***

***Rose M. Blank***

***Conference Superintendent***

***Southeast District***

***319-986-2095***

Greetings,

Are you ready? I don't mean do you have all the shopping done, baking completed, cards sent, and all the just right presents wrapped. I mean are you ready? Is your heart ready to make room for the Christ child to be born within you? I've been reading a book this Advent season entitled *On the Way to Bethlehem* by Hilary McDowell. She approaches this season and its preparations from the perspective of a traveler who is getting ready for a long trip. There are matters to tend, of course, but they focus on letting go – not accumulating more, of stepping out in faith – not retreating into all that is familiar and comfortable. As I think about being ready, I not only ponder about my own readiness, but that of the churches who will receive people on that holy night. Some of these people may have never, until that moment, stepped foot inside a church. Perhaps this is the year he or she will come – either at your invitation or because the Spirit beckons them into a life full of hope and potential. Are you ready?

Following the birth of the Christ child, the gospel writer Luke proclaims: "In that region there were shepherds in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. Then the angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid; for see – I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah the Lord." (Luke 2: 8-10) Several years ago I remember reading an article about the shepherds. The author likened them to those who work the grave yard shift, or the ones who are the outsiders in our world today. Not your ordinary 'church-going folk.' Yet they were welcomed into the stable to bring praises to the newborn child.

How will you welcome those who may be today's shepherds? The ones who are not connected with the church? The ones who may have deep questions of life that causes them to search their hearts and lives for answers? Will we welcome them? Will we share the good news with them? Or will we wonder who they are and why are they here? Will we greet them with the joy and peace of the Lord? Or will we assume someone else will do that? Will we offer to them an invitation

to come and see this great thing that has happened? Are you ready? I pray it may be so.

We in the District Office pray that these wondrous days of Christmas offer time for you to reflect on this most amazing gift of the Christ Child. May his presence go with you on your journey into the New Year.

Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace and goodwill to all.

*Rose*

### *Upcoming Events*

**January 5-7, 2010** –“Hospitality: the unopened gift” is an event offered by the North Central Jurisdiction Town & Country/Urban Network. Registration deadline is December 18, 2009. For further information, contact:[williamballard@iowatelecom.net](mailto:williamballard@iowatelecom.net).

**January 18, 2010 – Southeast District Clergy and Spouses Winter Party** at Iowa Wesleyan College, Social Hall, Mount Pleasant, IA. Our entertainment this year will be the Broad Street Singers from Iowa Wesleyan College. Deadline for RSVP is January 7, 2010.

**January 31, 2010** – Southeast District Church Leadership Training Workshop will be held at First UMC in Mt. Pleasant, IA. Registration will start at 2:00 PM. The workshops will be from 2:30 PM to 5:00 PM. A brochure has been e-mailed to each pastor and each church in our district. To view the brochure, click here: [http://www.iaumc.org/console/files/oWebsite\\_Page\\_Files/Brochure\\_JQFRER7C.pdf](http://www.iaumc.org/console/files/oWebsite_Page_Files/Brochure_JQFRER7C.pdf)

**February 5-7, 2010** – Youth Strike for Christ 2010 is just around the corner. It will be at the Downtown Marriott Hotel in Des Moines and the Polk County Convention Center. We will have Kelly Croy, Inspirational Speaker, Bob Stromberg, Comedian and the band Harlend. Bishop Julius Trimble will be the guest speaker. Please visit [www.youthstrike.com](http://www.youthstrike.com) for more information and download registration forms. The early bird deadline is January 1, 2010.

**February 26, 2010** – For next “A Day Apart for Ministry Professionals”, our speaker will be Phil Jamieson whose topic will be about ministry and money. More details will be given later.

**March 29, 2010** – The Van Buren County Cooperative Ministries will present a reenactment of the Last Supper at the Farmington United Methodist Church (part of the Two Rivers Parish) on Monday, March 29, 2010, at 7:30 PM. Contact: Pat Shaw, Coordinator, at 319-293-3899 or by e-mail at [patshaw@netins.net](mailto:patshaw@netins.net).

### *Announcements*

**FROM THE DISTRICT OFFICE:** We are changing the format of Monday Musings beginning January 1, 2010. In our discussions with the District Superintendency Committee about the frequency and content of our communications, it was determined that we will send the Monday Musings twice monthly – the first and third Mondays of the month. We will continue to share other information with you as we receive it. We appreciate your ministries and hold you in prayer as we move into the New Year.

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The **Ministry Appraisal forms** were due in the Southeast District office on May 1. The Staff/Pastor Parish Relations Committees from the following churches have not yet submitted their forms:

Burlington, Grace  
Keokuk, Emmanuel

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