

Christ Is Rock in Changing Times

By Lisa Grant, Director of Connectional Ministries

Oh the times, they are a changin'...

In just two years, The United Methodist Church has moved from seven pathways for renewal to four areas of focus. Igniting Ministry has morphed into Rethink Church. We have five practices for fruitful congregations and three simple rules.

In Western Pennsylvania, we have moved through our *Believe Again!* plan for ministry to five areas of focus. We are shifting from a shotgun approach in mission to concentrating on conference-to-conference partnerships and highlighting six advance special projects with *Doorways to Hope at Home*.

In our churches, we develop disciple-making plans, look for ways to connect with the areas of focus, and strive to be faithful, fruitful and effective.

Whether we view the changes as good or bad, the challenge is clear. **We must “learn how to build the plane while flying.”**

It's hard to build a house on shifting sand, but our hope is built on Jesus Christ and I have seen Him in our denomination and in our churches in the people called United Methodists. It is a mystery, and our

hope – Christ in us. When we lose ourselves in Christ, we are swept up in the Spirit and grace continues to change us from glory into glory. This is the hope of 2 Corinthians 4:7-10. We are treasures in clay jars through which God's extraordinary grace is working.

We enable grace by going deep in soul-tending prayer, service, praise, learning and connecting in community. This is easily forgotten in the midst of causes and concerns that consume us. The church belongs to God. He will do the building in the same way God has always done – by relationship – one by one by one.

In a thousand ways the Spirit of God renews our connection to Christ: In a child loved, the neighbor helped, the grieving comforted, the ill encouraged, the stranger welcomed. In all that we do, renewal comes only when we have gone deep into God's presence so that the preoccupations, passions, and preferences of self fade away in the light of loving others whom God sends us.

We are doing so much right in Western Pennsylvania. Let's build on that. Let's go deeper!



Bible Study and Prayer

Join United Methodists throughout Western Pennsylvania in studying these Bible passages from the *Revised Common Lectionary* and praying for these ministries and persons:

July 4-10

Sixth Sunday After Pentecost - Green

Read: 2 Kings 5:1-14; Ps. 30 (UMH 762); Gal. 6:1-6 (7-16); Luke 10:1-11, 16-20

Pray for:

- ✠ Uniontown: Christ & Fairchance: Trinity UMCs, Connellsville Dist., Kelly J. Smith, pastor
- ✠ Homestead Park UMC, Pittsburgh Dist., Charles G. Jack, pastor
- ✠ New Castle: First UMC, Butler Dist., D. Edward Bailey, pastor
- ✠ Union City: First UMC, Erie-Meadville Dist., James W. Parkinson, pastor
- ✠ JUMP-Johnstown: First & Franklin Street UMCs, David R. Vaughn, pastor, Larry G. Rowe, associate
- ✠ Coraopolis UMC, Pittsburgh Dist., Amy R. Wagner, pastor

July 11-17

Seventh Sunday After Pentecost - Green

Read: Amos 7:7-17; Ps. 82 (UMH 804); Col. 1:1-14; Luke 10:25-37

Pray for:

- ✠ Brush Run UMC, Butler Dist., Gary C. Bailey, pastor
- ✠ Fredonia & Big Bend UMCs, Franklin Dist., John V. King, pastor
- ✠ Belmont UMC, Johnstown Dist., Keith A. Dunn, pastor
- ✠ Irwin: First UMC, Greensburg Dist., David S. Lake, pastor
- ✠ Hickory & Sabula UMCs, Indiana Dist., Harold (Butch) Brunner, pastor
- ✠ Bakerstown UMC, Pittsburgh Dist., Dennis W. Swineford, pastor

July 18-26

Eighth Sunday After Pentecost - Green

Read: Amos 8:1-12; Ps. 52 or 82 (UMH 804); Col. 1:15-28; Luke 10:38-42

Pray for:

- ✠ Charleroi: First, Monessen & Webster UMCs, Connellsville Dist., Kristi Berkebile, pastor
- ✠ Kane: First, UMC, Kane Dist., William R. LaVelle, pastor
- ✠ Delmont: Faith UMC, Greensburg Dist., Ronald W. Raptosh, pastor
- ✠ Lanes Mills UMC, Indiana Dist., Margaret (Maggie) J. Foreman, pastor
- ✠ Fox Chapel: Faith UMC, Pittsburgh Dist., Thomas J. Parkinson, pastor
- ✠ McMurray: Trinity UMC, Washington Dist., Mark A. Stewart, pastor
- ✠ Eldersville UMC, Washington Dist., B.T. Gilligan, pastor

July 25-31

Ninth Sunday After Pentecost - Green

Read: Hosea 1:2-10; Ps. 85 (UMH 806); Col. 2:6-19; Luke 11:1-13

Pray for:

- ✠ Bradford: First UMC, Kane Dist., Thomas R. Verner, pastor
- ✠ Unionville UMC, Butler Dist., W. Steve Morse, pastor
- ✠ Erie: First UMC, Erie-Meadville Dist., Terry L. Shaughnessy, pastor
- ✠ Sugarcreek Charge, Franklin Dist., David L. Parker, pastor; Harietta C. Serrins, associate
- ✠ Westmont UMC, Johnstown Dist., Kevin J. Rea, pastor
- ✠ Washington: First UMC, Washington Dist., R. Keith Simmons, pastor