It is a busy and exciting time in our partnership with Ganta Mission Station in Liberia. There is good news on some fronts and exciting possibilities on the horizon.

**First, here is some news.**

As of September 20 we have received pledges for 30 scholarships for students at Ganta Mission School. This will allow us to renew our support for students we supported last year. Of course, we would love to offer additional scholarships so we ask you to prayerfully consider whether your church will support a student for $200/yr. Contact Ed Rutenkroger for details about the process.

In addition, Ganta Mission School has completed initial set-up of the new Herbert Zigbuo Science Center with financial assistance and items provided by the NC Conference. The Center will need upgrades over time, but it is up and running and that is a big step forward for the school. School kits will soon arrive for many of the students at the school as well.

Ganta Hospital reports progress in both facilities and patient care. Here is a brief excerpt from a recent newsletter from Patrick Mantor about one of the improvements. “A few years ago, Ganta Hospital struggled to maintain a stock of essential drugs. It had gotten to the point where all prescribed drugs and medical supplies had to be purchased (by the patient or his/her family member) from local pharmacies in the town of Ganta. This situation compromised the hospital’s image in the communities and placed the health and well-being of our patients at risk.

During 2015, funds donated by the Government of Liberia through the Ministry of Health, medications from the NC Conference and Stop Hunger Now, and a grant from Global Health’s Imagine No Malaria fund helped to establish a Drug Revolving Fund at our hospital. Today, we have all prescribed drugs and medical supplies that our patients need; thereby, improving the image of the hospital and restoring the trust of our patients.”

**Now for the upcoming possibilities…..**
The mission outreach and disaster response center in Goldsboro is once again under the ownership of the NC Conference and is operating as MERCI. It has been a very busy place in September and will continue to be busy for the foreseeable future.

Here are some of the things that have been accomplished by leaders and volunteers during the month of September:

- Nearly 600 Cleaning Buckets (aka flood buckets) were checked for contents and sent to UMCOR for use in flood zones. We are continuing to receive more of these buckets as churches continue to respond to recent disasters.

- In cooperation with our partner Stop Hunger Now shipments of medical supplies, school kits, health kits, and birthing kits have been prepared for shipment to both Liberia and Sierra Leone. Partnership allow us to stretch your apportionment dollars and be good stewards while doing mission work.

- A trailer load of school kits and health kits has been prepared for delivery to the Robeson County Church and Community Center for use with those in need in this impoverished region of our own state.

- Approximately 1000 Christmas Boxes for project AGAPE have been received, processed, and packed for shipment to the Ngorno-Karabakh region of Armenia. We anticipate receiving and processing an additional 2000 boxes in October with shipment the first week of November.

In addition, plans are underway to upgrade the bathroom facilities at the warehouse, and a ramp in now available for loading containers. The Disaster Relief Committee and the Mission Team are making good use of the facility and rely heavily on volunteer workers.

Here are a few ways you can help with the work:

- Come to MERCI and volunteer a few hours of your time to assemble kits, process AGAPE boxes, or other mission activities. We already have work days scheduled (from 9:00 AM-3 PM) on October 1, October 8, October 13, and October 20. We are happy to add a day if your church can bring a group to help process AGAPE boxes during October.

- Each month throughout the year we plan work days on the first Saturday and third Thursday of the month.

- Churches and groups can also make health kits, school kits, birthing kits, cleaning buckets, sewing kits, or other UMCOR kits at their local church and arrange to get them to MERCI to help us maintain availability of these items. There is a constant demand both domestically and internationally for these items. Deliveris can be made any day since you can leave items in a shed just outside the entry gate to MERCI.

- Financial donations to help with shipping are always welcome. Contact Bill Haddock or Ed Rutenkroger for more details.

Ed’s contact info: 252-799-7499 or erutenkroger@nccumc.org.

Bill’s contact info: 910-262-3831 or revbillh@nccumc.org.

Elizabeth’s contact info: elizabeth.tyson@nccumc.org.
Next week Bill Haddock and Ed Rutenkroger will represent the NC Conference on an important follow-up conference call with UMCOR and Ganta Mission Station personnel. The conversation will surround the possibilities of a sustainable agriculture, food security, and nutrition program for areas surrounding Ganta Mission Station. If funded, the proposed project would impact thousands of people in the region.

At the beginning of November leaders from several Conferences throughout the United States will gather in Raleigh to discuss 50/50 partnerships in Liberia and ways in which we might work together to maximize the impact of our efforts. Rev. George Wilson (see photo) will be the lead representative from the Liberia Annual Conference will also be present. Ed and Bill will be joined by Jaye White to represent the NC Conference as they host this meeting.

Please pray that this gathering might be fruitful.

Food and Faith Initiative

In the previous edition of this newsletter we featured a program of the Conservation Fund called Resourceful Communities. That program includes a project called the Faith and Food Initiative which is supported by the Duke Endowment to address issues of food insecurity in rural North Carolina.

A group of leaders from our District recently met with representatives of the Food and Faith initiative to begin to form relationships and look at possibilities. It is now time to expand the conversation. Justine Post, Coordinator of the Food and Faith initiative, will be in Columbia (at Columbia Crossing - across from the rest stop) at 3:30 on October 12 to extend that conversation. We believe that this has the potential to open doors and increase availability of resources.

If your church operates a food pantry or if you participate with the Food Bank of the Albemarle or if you are interested in this area of ministry you are invited to attend this meeting along with any lay persons you would bring with you. Please respond to Rev. Gil Wise via email with a number attending so that we may prepare for you.

Food and Faith Initiative

By now, you've realized that you have and or your church has probably realized that you are in or near a place that is food insecure. USDA has clear definitions of food insecurity and northeastern NC has a number of such places despite the fact that we are a breadbasket of food.

We are blessed with land!! Some of this land is in urban areas and are empty lots owned by your local municipality. Sometimes farmers or homeowners have a quarter acre or more than can be used to raise food for people who are truly food insecure. And in some cases, churches have land that can be cultivated.

Church folks can take the lead and establish community gardens in your particular area. There is plenty of information about how to set up a garden. Go to the NC State/NC A&T cooperative extension website for wonderful resources.

There is grant money available through Duke Endowment and other grant making entities. And dare I say, I can give you anecdotal evidence of what works and doesn't work. Resources and resource persons are available. The Fall is the time to get ready. Plant a seed and see it grow. Seems that Jesus himself taught lessons about that process. That still preaches!

- Rev. Bill Haddock,
Pastor and Conference Mission Interpreter
A Little Missions Theology
- brought to you by Rev. Bill Haddock

After the first Trump - Clinton debate, there have been all kinds of evaluations of each candidate’s performance. One expert on body language explained how each candidate sent messages to us by the use of their hands or the expressions on their faces. I can certainly understand that. When I preach, I am intent on properly proclaiming God’s word. That intensity shows forth on my face - even when I’m trying to crack a corny one-liner.

But it’s not just in speech that we need to be mindful. Our actions, they say, speak louder than words. What are we showing if we shove a $5 donation to the homeless guy on the street - and never look the person in the eye? What if our body language shows our frustration and our exhaustion as we are doing some physical labor in the name of Jesus? Jesus himself got physically tired of the crowds - most of whom wanted something MORE from him.

Jesus had to pull himself away from those crowds on many occasions and spend some time with his Father. We would do well to remember to take care of our spiritual walk with the Lord as we grow weary of well-doing. Otherwise the very message of love that we are trying to convey becomes lost in our body language. Thankfully we have the model of our Lord who truly was God in flesh - incarnate among us. Incarnational theology is at the heart of what we are called to do as we reach out to God’s people to show forth the love of God.

Update on the Work in Windsor

As of today, September 27, the water that overflowed from the banks of the Cashie River in Windsor has receded. But the water brought great damage. Smelly mud. Mold and mildew. Water-soaked furniture. Damaged cars.

In Windsor, the entire downtown area which includes little shops and restaurants was completely engulfed by the effects of the flood. Small businesses are doing their best to clean up and rebuild. Homeowners were literally swamped over a large swath of land both in the town limits and out in the county around Windsor. In some cases, the business owner lost their business and their home. It is likely that Windsor will be called a disaster area in the near future which will allow residents to receive some government assistance down the road.

Right now, the United Methodist Church is providing assistance in a number of ways. The Disaster Response Committee of the NC Conference has two well-trained folks who are organizing a great deal of the work - the Reverends Ed Rutenkroger and John Dutton. Reverend Joan Fischer and Windsor UMC have offered great hospitality to the workers and to those most acutely affected by the flood. They are working closely with the Red Cross and Salvation Army to provide meals and housing for those most in need. The Windsor UMC also has opened its doors to receive work teams on the ground.

Flood buckets were sent in from the MERCI Center and Emergency Response Teams (ERTs) are being called in to help persons get their homes habitable. The DS is working diligently with the Bishop in making the case for some UMCOR assistance in the form of a grant which can be used to help with unmet needs.

Some of the money will be used to help any future teams that may be going in the area to work. It will take time for the homeowners to use the teams effectively and set up their homes in such a way that they can be allowed to live. Initial volunteers need to be ERT-certified, but the time will quickly come when other volunteers may come to work under an ERT.

In order to help, continue to pray for those who suffered property damage, those who are leading the UMC efforts, and those who feel called to help residents of Windsor tear out damaged property.
This week’s report from Nagorno-Karabakh.

- Submitted by Jaye White, Outreach and Mission Director for NCCUMC

Jaye is on a joint Mission Trip (WCUMC & NCCUMC) to Nagorno-Karabakh with Rev. Jane Leechford from Hertford UMC, NC Conference Mission Team Chair.

Friday, 09.23.2016
Painting of Thaddeus and Bartholomew (with Mount Ararat in the background) in a chapel in Khor Virap (a monastery located in the Ararat plain in Armenia near the closed border with Turkey). They were the two apostles who brought Christianity to Armenia in the first century A.D. Near this chapel St. Gregory the Enlightener was imprisoned in a pit for 13 years. Upon his release he converted King Tiridates III by healing the king of an incurable affliction through the power of God. The king then proclaimed Christianity the official religion of Armenia, making it the first nation to adopt Christianity as its official religion in 301 A.D.

Saturday, 09.24.2016
Visiting Project AGAPE’s Children’s Home. We didn’t speak the same language but we all understood the universal language of laughter. #Project365 #365PhotoChallenge #365PhotoProject

Sunday, 09.25.2016
Today included worshipping at Shushi Cathedral where a 91-year-old veteran of WWII greeted us, welcomed us to Karabakh, and invited us to his home to share a meal; visiting “We Are Our Mountains,” a sculpture in Stepanakert also known as “Grandma and Grandpa” and symbolizing the feet of the people firmly planted in the Armenian soil; and meeting with Archbishop Pargev Matirosyan, the Primate of the Diocese of Artsakh of the Armenian Apostolic Church.

Today included a visit with Governor Souren Khachatryan of the Kashatag Region, a tour of the Project AGAPE Hospital, and delivery of a cow to a family in the Cattle Project. The family then honored us by inviting us into their home to share tea, fruit and cakes.
“Prepare Your Minds for Action”

A no-longer used tractor idly sits in a field rusting away - no longer useful. A “work-horse” in its day; now only a relic. It deteriorated quickly once it stopped performing its duties.

Christianity is not all that different. We are called to action throughout the teachings of the Bible. Jesus said to “go and make disciples” in Matthew 28; James teaches of the importance of doing in James 2:17 when he says “… faith by itself, without accompanied by action, is dead”. Jesus calls for us to help those in need in Matthew 24:40 “Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me”. The apostle Peter in 1Peter 1:13 says “Therefore, prepare your minds for action…”.

These verses represent God’s countless calls for action. Yes, action; not passiveness. We are to pray, study, forgive, help, love, give, go, make disciples, etc. The lesson is that just as the abandoned tractor, when we stop serving the Lord, living as He requires, and doing, we die; not necessarily physically, but spiritually. The beauty of Jesus Christ is that we can actively serve Him regardless of our physical state. Through our minds and hearts, we can continue to take action, continue to intentionally love him, and be a vital part of the Body of Christ.

I Found Him…in a harvested field; the home of a once productive tractor.

Jeff Jenkins
Beacon District Lay Leader

(Taken from my Facebook Ministry: www.Facebook.com/IFoundHimMinistry)

ERT Update on Windsor, NC

On Sept. 28, Ed Rutenkroger, Beacon District Disaster Coordinator and Windsor On-Site Coordinator, reports:

Our ERT first team arrived today and opened up floors in one house to begin the drying process. Mid-afternoon they were moved to another house to remove flooring, baseboards, etc. and have cleared two rooms. They will return to the same house over the next 2 days. In addition, a one-day team will be here tomorrow and will work with Site Director, Tommy Gilbert, on several homes needing tarp. We will need other teams to return to some of these homes for ductwork removal and other under house work.

Since there are over 60 homes with identified storm and/or flood damage and in an attempt to get more teams, the NC Conference Disaster Response Committee is now asking for ERT-led teams. 27 of those homes have registered with UM Disaster Response as of this afternoon. The need for teams is great.

Bertie VOAD (Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster) met twice today. This AM to update one another and define roles. The PM meeting was specific to current housing needs. Red Cross (RC), CADA (Choanoke Area Development Association), and Catholic Charities are the primary contacts for this problem. We have 30 identified families that are displaced to hotels with limited RC assistance and only 10 identified rental units available in the county. Please be prayerful as we work together to keep all survivors safely sheltered for the short term and for a transition to more stable housing as soon as possible.

Cliff Harvell, Tommy Gilbert, Donna Brander, and Bill Haddock have been with us the past two days and we are grateful for their on the ground guidance and help. Many thanks to Rev. Joan Fischer and members of the Windsor UMC who are hosting teams and have been helping with intake paperwork, and many on-the-ground tasks.

Rev. Dennis Peay came on the 29th and is putting together a video to share with the District and for promoting the need for teams. Many thanks to Dennis for this effort!
Reap the Vision -

Reap the vision is a monthly column in the Beacon District Mission Newsletter sharing how the Vision of the Church is being walked out in our lives.

In the early 1900’s the Morton Salt Company developed an advertising campaign around their new product of free flowing salt. Prior to this new product salt had a tendency to clump when it became moist. This new product contained an additive that kept the salt from clumping even when moisture levels were high in the atmosphere. Therefore, “when it rains, it pours” helped to establish this new product as a national brand.

When it rains it pours has been a familiar saying that explained an understanding that misfortunes or difficult situations tend to follow each other in rapid succession or to arrive all at the same time. This imagery of misfortune has been fluid in my mind having watched the rain pour down in Edenton where roads were washed out and water lines disrupted. All this paled in comparison to the 17 inches of rainfall that brought major flooding to Windsor for the third time in the last 16 years.

Praise God that when it rains, it pours an abundance of support, volunteers and love extended to our family through you, the United Methodist Church. Already our congregation in Windsor UMC have reached out to their community providing flood buckets that have begun to arrive from around the region. Meals are being served out of the church. United Methodist Churches from around our District, the Conference and the world are sending support pouring out a blessing that is needed in Windsor.

There are more than things being poured out in Windsor. The presence of people being with others extending the love of Christ is the greatest gift that is being given. “When it rains, it pours.” And instead of misfortune, United Methodists are pouring out the love of Christ in a place that needs our presence more than any “thing.”

Reap the Vision,
Gil Wise, District Superintendent
The Beacon District of the North Carolina Conference
The United Methodist Church

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