

Digest?

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The Call

Digest

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Sadness, then hope: Jason Onks leads Buffalo Mountain Camp's recovery from a devastating flood.

October 2, 2012

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Why give on World Communion Sunday?

By equipping students, United Methodists equip nations



Overburdened hospitals are a result of neglected community preventative activities, says Hellen Dziwa. With help from a World Communion Scholarship, she hopes to change this reality in her native Zimbabwe. United Methodists celebrate

World Communion Sunday, one of six churchwide special Sundays, on the first Sunday in October.

"I am currently working in a hospital where the wards are always full with sick people," said Dziwa. "There is so much concentration on curative approaches, and I feel that if I am trained as a public health nurse, I will add ... to the few who can help (people who are well) to stay healthy."

Dziwa attends Africa University in Old Mutare, Zimbabwe, where she is pursuing a master's degree in public health. She wanted to study in the country and region of her origin to create positive change.

"My main aim is to keep people informed so they will be aware that most health conditions that keep people in hospitals can be prevented," she said. Some of these diseases include cholera, tuberculosis, malaria and HIV.

Dziwa works in the health industry as the acting matron

of Mutambara Hospital, where she supervises nurses. She ensures total nursing care for all patients and adequate coverage of all shifts.

She is an active layperson in her local church, serving as the deputy chairperson of the board of trustees.

Gifts to the World Communion Sunday offering equip racial and ethnic-minority students in the United States and international students to transform the church and communities. Offerings support:

- **World Communion Scholarships** (General Board of Global Ministries), with at least one-half of the annual amount for ministries beyond the United States;
- **Ethnic Minority Scholarship Program** (General Board of Higher Education and Ministry); and
- **Ethnic In-Service Training Program** (Higher Education and Ministry).

"I will be giving health education to the community," Dziwa said, "ensuring laws and regulations pertaining to public health are adhered to by the community.

"I will ensure global health by empowering people."

-- From UMCgiving.org; written by Larry R. Hygh, Jr.

How to give to World Communion Sunday: Write a check to your local church with "World Communion" on the memo line. Or send a check by postal mail to: GCFA, P.O. Box 340029, Nashville, TN 37203.

HOLSTON BRIEFS

Another opportunity to greet Bishop Mary Virginia Taylor has been scheduled for Sunday, Nov. 11, at State Street United Methodist Church in Bristol, Va. The welcome reception begins at 3 p.m., concludes at 5 p.m. For more information, call State Street at (276) 669-2101 or Lori Sluder at (865) 690-4080.

The annual Clergy Gathering will be held on Tuesday, Oct. 16, 12:30-4 p.m., at First United Methodist Church in Morristown, Tenn. The agenda includes meetings of Orders and Fellowships, a chance to meet new resident Bishop Mary Virginia Taylor, and a service of worship. No registration or fee is required. For more information, contact Sue Weber at (865) 690-4080.

Support United Methodist missions simply by visiting a web site every day during the month of October. "10-Fold" is an interactive global gathering that features United Methodist projects around the world supported by the General Board of Global Ministries and UMCOR. Each visitor can trigger a U.S. \$1 donation to the week's project, made by one of 10-Fold's sponsors. For more information, visit 10-Fold.org.

On Sunday, Oct. 21, many United Methodist churches will celebrate Laity Sunday. As we affirm our vows as members of the United Methodist Church, we promise to be loyal to Christ through prayer, presence, gifts, service, and witness. For more information and free worship resources, visit GBOD.org. ■

Onks leads Buffalo Mountain's comeback

The heavy rain that forever changed Buffalo Mountain Camp started at 6 p.m. on Sunday, Aug. 5.

Camp Director Jason Onks watched in awe as a fresh stream trespassed across his front yard and emergency workers rescued neighbors from their flooded homes. When the power in his house went out, it seemed to magnify the roar of water, of boulders and trees as they were unearthed and carried down the mountain.

By 9:30 p.m. the rain had stopped. But the event was just beginning for Onks, who has lived and worked at the United Methodist camp near Jonesborough, Tenn., since 2006.

"When I had a chance to look around, it was so devastating," he says. "I began to realize this was never, never going to be the same way that it was."

Today, there are signs of hope. Camp leaders recently learned that a federal agency, Natural Resources Conservation Service, will assist with clean-up of the eight landslides and Ramsey Creek. "That was \$250,000 of work we were going to have to do on our own," he says.

The new pool has been cleaned up and Washington County repaired the camp's main road. About 300 have signed up for volunteer work, and office staff member Tammie Richardson says donations arrive in the mail or online "every day."

Despite the possible loss of Allison Lodge and the closing of three cabins and the upper camp area, Buffalo Mountain Camp will be open next month to retreat groups, camp leaders have announced.

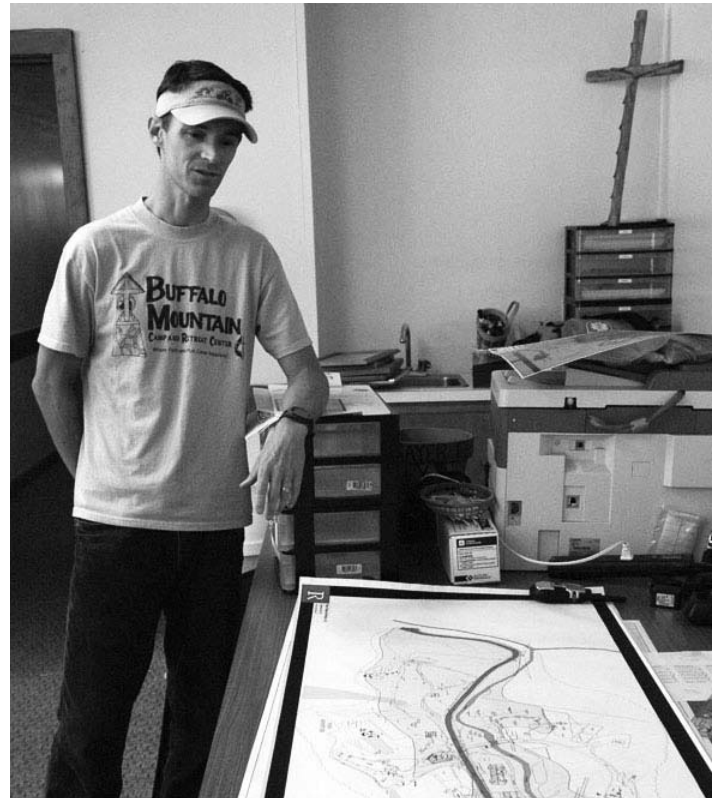
"We're going to have to be creative," Onks said. "This actually could be a great opportunity for us."

The directors of Holston's other camps – Wesley Woods, Dickenson, and Lookout – have been a "great resource" of ideas and support, Onks said. They met recently for

their traditional post-summer gathering to debrief and swap suggestions. The flood happened three days after Buffalo Mountain's last day of the summer season.

HELP BUFFALO MOUNTAIN

Churches are helping Buffalo Mountain Camp recover from the flood by donating money, organizing fundraisers, and volunteering. For more information, visit BuffaloMountainCamp.org or call Trish Patterson at (423) 928-2156. ■



Camp director Jason Onks looks over a map of flood damage.

"I'm very tired," says Onks, age 37. "There is a time of exhaustion after every summer season, anyway, so there's definitely a mental, physical, and spiritual exhaustion now."

Life at Buffalo Mountain has been depressing the last few weeks, he admits, "even more so without the sounds of activity. Without the people here, it's a little bit sad and incomplete."

The lowest point came a few days after the flood. "I remember looking around and there was so much to do, I just didn't know where to start."

He receives hope from the people who have offered donations, resources, and encouraging words in person and online. From one supporter, the camp director received comfort in the form of scripture from "The Message." He refers to the words from Isaiah 43 often:

Forget about what's happened; don't keep going over old history. Be alert, be present. I'm about to do something brand-new. ■