

UMW Mississippi River District Annual Meeting  
Hosted by Signal Hill United Methodist Church  
Saturday, September 12, 2009

By Edith Beach

Over 80 members of United Methodist Women gathered at Signal Hill on Saturday morning, September 12, to renew friendships, worship, learn and do mission work. Members brought contributions of toothpaste and brushes, as well as disposable razors, for Lessie Bates Neighborhood House. They donated men's deodorant and gift cards for Cunningham Children's Home. An offering of almost \$500 was taken for Lessie Bates Davis Neighborhood House.

The women heard from the conference president of United Methodist Women, Sally Smith, and from Carolyn Yockey of Normal, IL, who is a member of Women's Division and the General Board of Global Ministries. She told of her duties with both boards and the committees, and of the restructuring which will be taking place. Carolyn is on the committee which oversees the properties that Women's Division owns, and that entails quite a bit of travel. We certainly appreciate the 50 lay women who are willing to take their time and energy to serve on Women's Division. Mildred Jeffers of Trinity United Methodist Church in East St. Louis, a former director of Women's Division, was in attendance, and concurred as to the time and travel involved.

Lucille Stevenson, our district's representative to Cunningham Children's Home, showed a quilt that was donated by the Grafton unit and told how the quilts are given to each new child on admission to Cunningham. The children keep the quilts for their own.

William Kreeb spoke about the programs at Lessie Bates Davis Neighborhood House. Some state funding has been restored, so the after school program, the daycare, and the program to help elderly and disabled to remain in their own homes are continuing. Other programs have had to be cut down or combined, but Bill said, "Neighborhood House never gives up on a kid because the UMW has never given up on Neighborhood House." Bill invited everyone to come to the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary banquet on Saturday, November 14, at the Collinsville Gateway Center.

Special music was provided by our new Minister of Music, Diana Starr. Her solos, especially "Reach Out and Touch" were well received by the women.

Thanks to all the women who baked and/or contributed goodies for the coffee time, and who ushered, guided strangers, worked in the kitchen and helped in many ways.