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OUR CHANGING CONNECTION



On the floor of General Conference: Rebekah Miles, center, confers with fellow delegates Clef Vaughan, John Miles II, Mackey Yokem and Rodney Steele.
AUM PHOTO BY AMY FORBUS

2012 General Conference still sparking conversations

BY AMY FORBUS
Editor

The 2012 General Conference of the United Methodist Church ended on May 4. But thanks to the prevalence of social media and some significant changes the top governing body of the denomination made—or did not make—denomination-wide conversation continues.

Wrestling with structure

Delegates seemed to agree overwhelmingly that the UMC would benefit from a change in structure. The problem: They were unable to agree on how to accomplish change in a manner consistent with the rules set forth in the church's constitution.

After three restructuring plans—the Interim Operations Team/Connectional Table Plan, Plan B, and a plan put forth by Methodist Federation for Social Action—failed to gain support in the General Administration committee during the first week of General Conference, a group proposed Plan UMC, an option developed as a compromise among the plans that had been voted down.

Delegates approved Plan UMC, and in a subsequent vote sent it to the Judicial Council (the “supreme

court” of the denomination) for review. On the last afternoon of General Conference, the Judicial Council issued a ruling that declared Plan UMC unconstitutional.

“One of the lessons learned from the failure of the restructuring is that we must move forward together or we don't move forward at all,” said the Rev. Rodney Steele, Arkansas' first-elected clergy delegate. “Some of the voices who questioned the constitutionality of the proposals were left out of the group that did the final rewrite. Had they been included and listened to, we might have avoided the Judicial Council's ruling.”

Karen Millar, a lay delegate who served on the General Administration committee and participated in the development of the Plan B restructuring option, expressed disappointment with the end result, as well as with the timing of the ruling, which left almost no possibility of accomplishing further work before General Conference adjourned.

“Some of the language of the decision was pretty strong, like ‘Plan UMC by the General Conference came through a tortured course,’ and a couple of sentences later, ‘to render it constitutionally unsalvageable,’” she said. “I pictured the Plan UMC marked all up with a red pencil, like

an English teacher would do with a poorly written term paper.”

Millar is not among those continuing to work on possible restructuring plans, but like many active United Methodists, she will be following the developments over the next four years.

“Hopefully an acceptable plan will come to the 2016 General Conference,” she said.

Asa Whitaker, first-elected layperson and chair of the Arkansas delegation, reflected on some positive outcomes of what many saw as a frustrating General Conference.

“It was evident by the vote of the body [to approve Plan UMC] that conference delegates are ready for a change,” he said, adding that some structural changes did happen.

“We did see significant cuts in general agencies through reduction in staff and in the size of their individual boards,” he said. “Having served as a member of a General Board for eight years, I can personally attest to the need of doing just that.”

If blog entries, Twitter tweets and Facebook discussions in the weeks immediately following General Conference offer any indication, the restructuring conversation has developed its own momentum.

“Even bishops are writing about it... there's all this pessimism

because we didn't change the structure,” said the Rev. Michael Roberts, a first reserve delegate to General Conference. “But maybe by not changing the structure, we didn't distract ourselves with structural changes, and we can continue to focus on what's really important.”

Lay delegate Karon Mann pointed out that restructuring discussions require acknowledging the increasingly international reach of United Methodism.

“On the way home from General Conference someone tweeted a quote from the Dalai Lama that said, ‘Sometimes not getting what you want is a wonderful stroke of luck,’” Mann said. “Perhaps not passing a restructuring plan this year means that in 2016, restructuring proposals could be considered in conjunction with the discussions and legislation surrounding the worldwide nature of the United Methodist Church and the proposed global *Book of Discipline*.”

Worldwide presence

Serving as a subcommittee chair on the Judicial Administration committee, Steele noticed on an individual level the increased presence of delegates from outside

[See GC2012, page 6A]

Casting our nets

BY DEENA MARIE HAMILTON
Special Contributor

Opportunities for spiritual growth are everywhere, not just in the church. Through my participation in the esteemed sisterhood of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, I have experienced camaraderie that has helped me become more effective in ministry.

As our director of programming said recently, "Everybody knows about us and has seen how much we've grown and done. But when we cast our net, do we want to cast it wide or do we want to cast it deep?"

I believe that our chapter's reach is not just wide but deep as well. Through strategically planned service projects, we are able to facilitate life-changing experiences that not only benefit the people we help, but gives us a deeper level of understanding of how to help others. For me, being the chaplain and co-chair of the Social Justice and Human Rights committee of the Chi Eta Omega Chapter of Alpha Kappa Alpha has been extremely rewarding.

The Social Justice and Human Rights committee has formed a valuable partnership with the Arkansas Youth Advisory Board through a liaison at the Arkansas Department of Human Services. Through this partnership, we helped coordinate a life-changing experience at Heifer Ranch in Perryville for young adults transitioning out of foster care. Through the Global Gateway experience, youth were divided into "families" and put into simulated villages representing various developing countries. They had to live off of provisions that were provided to them. (And that meant no cell phones!)

Afterward, I went to the Heifer Ranch and spent time with the youth

to get a recap of what they experienced.

"Never in a million years would I have known that this is a way of reaching out because it actively engaged youth and encouraged leadership...y'all were out there with us," said Sedella White, president of the Youth Advisory Board. "This fosters active youth engagement, and it put us all on the same level." Casting our net in a new direction gave us all something valuable.

While re-visiting what my sorority sister said about casting not just a wider net but a deeper one, I also think about what Christ said to the disciples in John 21: 6, "Throw your net on the right side of the boat and you will find some." When they did, they were unable to haul in the net because of the large number of fish.

Christ made himself known to his disciples in very common ways. He went where the people were. He taught in parables. He got down on their level so that he could bring them to a deepened relationship with God and others.

We are in no way, shape, or form equal to Christ, and he must have realized our limited scope of comprehension. He was approachable and personable; that's evident when you read in the Gospels about his compassion for people.

He told his disciples where to cast their nets. They obeyed, and the bounty was plentiful. As I re-examine the ministry of Christ, I see that he actively engaged people authentically.

As Christians, are we going to emulate that passion or are we going to continue ignoring the cries of the needy?

As I look at what the ladies of the Chi Eta Omega Chapter have

done, I realize that the net has been cast wide and life-changing experiences have occurred to a point that these young adults can look beyond their circumstances and toward the future.

It serves as a wonderful template for me personally, as I continue on my Christian journey. Will I cast my net wide, or will it be deep? I don't know, but I must be obedient and just do it. Wherever I'm placed, I have a job to do for the Kingdom.

Christ didn't tell only the disciples to "follow me, and I will make you fish for people" (Matthew 4:19)—he's saying the same thing to us right now. All we have to do is be still and understand that he is God (Psalm 46:10).

What are we afraid of? Something wonderful? That's all it

will be: wonderful. I believe that helping someone else live a better quality of life will bring meaning to our own lives.

God will empower us, guide us, equip us and sustain us. But we have to be willing to actively engage with the people we are reaching out to. We can't just give "handouts," but must find ways to empower others.

So brothers and sisters, are we gonna cast our nets wide...or deep? Either way, God will always get the glory. And either way, we can't just sit around—we've got to do something.

I'm thankful for my Chi Eta Omega sisters for so many reasons, but in this case, I'm thankful to them for inspiring me to go out and be the church. Be blessed, and be empowered!

Hamilton can be reached at pinktitration14@gmail.com.



Deena Marie Hamilton

'God will empower us, guide us, equip us and sustain us. But we have to be willing to actively engage with the people we are reaching out to.'

EDITOR'S CORNER

BY AMY FORBUS



Remembering 'Miss Helen'

This issue of the *Arkansas United Methodist* contains the obituary of someone who helped form my faith.

Helen Baird Wilson—or "Miss Helen," as my parents taught me to call her—was a retired missionary who had served for many years in Bolivia. I feel awkward calling her "retired," though that was her employment status the entire time I knew her. Miss Helen may have left her missionary post, but she never retired from ministry.

I remember how she diligently provided transportation for friends who could no longer drive; how she maintained a steadfast presence of caring and kindness in our church and community; how her demeanor was never one of judgment, no matter who stood in front of her needing help.

Miss Helen believed in people, and in the power of God to work through individuals. For my high school graduation, she gave me a devotional book (*What About God? Now That You're Off to College*), some hosiery (I suppose she figured that every upstanding young lady needed some pantyhose!) and several other useful items for a teen in transition.

Occasionally during my four years at Hendrix, an envelope from Miss Helen would appear in my campus mailbox. It would contain a brief note of encouragement and a check. At times, the amount written on the check would be what I considered an embarrassingly large amount of money, especially coming

from the bank account of a retired missionary.

After freaking out, I would promptly write a thank-you note and use the money as wisely as I knew how. I have no idea how many other young people received such a measure of her generosity over the years, but I'm certain I was not alone.

The last time I visited with Miss Helen was far too long ago. It was at a meeting of the Arkansas Annual Conference in Russellville, and I was hanging out in the hallway, staffing a display table for my employer at the time. She was moving a little more slowly than I remembered, but she recognized me immediately.

"Ah-mee!" she called out, pronouncing my name the way she always did, as it would have been pronounced in Bolivia.

We spent a few minutes catching up, and I gave her a copy of a recent issue of the *United Methodist Reporter* national edition. I had written one of the feature stories that appeared in its pages, and she insisted upon having me autograph it for her.

Miss Helen was always one of my biggest fans, regardless of whether I'd done anything special. Because of my presence at General Conference, I couldn't attend her funeral. But I prayed that day and still pray now that she's cheering me on, watching from her seat among the great communion of saints.

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July 6	June 20
Aug. 3	July 17
Sept. 7	Aug. 22

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AN OCCASIONAL WORD from the Bishop

BY CHARLES CRUTCHFIELD

Dear Friends:

I have escaped from all the wordy, brilliant, wise, thoughtful, wordy (did I just say that?) post-mortems on the General Conference in Tampa into the gentle words of the naturalist and founder of the Sierra Club, John Muir. He wrote, "...*(E)very raincloud, however fleeting, leaves its mark, not only on trees and flowers whose pulses are quickened, and on replenished streams and lakes, but also on the rocks are its works engraved whether we can see them or not.*"

These gentle words remind us of the delicate intertwining of relationships in nature. Even the shadow of a passing cloud effects change. Have you ever been working in the hot sun and felt the relief, and the encouragement, of a cloud passing across the sun's rays? Your body responds with a bit of renewed vigor. It is intriguing to realize that

even so small an event makes a difference.

It is almost frightening to realize that compared to a cloud passing across the sun, we humans can have such a powerful effect on one another—for good or ill. The ancient Hebrews believed that a word once spoken could never be withdrawn. Once spoken, it is, to use the vernacular, "out there" forever. When a word is written, it takes on a life of its own. In our email, twitter, blogging age, a written word can never be erased.

On too many occasions I have heard an angry parent tell a child, "If you walk out that door you are no longer my son." Is there to be no hope for that child, no forgiveness, no redemption, no grace? On too many occasions I have heard a friend say to one who is grieving the death of a child, "God needed another angel in heaven." Is that the kind of God you want to serve, one who

inflicts pain and sorrow to satisfy some whim in heaven? I hope not. What sort of comfort is that? What you want is a God who will walk with you through the pain, because God knows the loss of a child. Our words have power.

Jesus prepared his disciples by saying, "Love one another as I have loved you." Paul wrote, "Let all you do be done in love." If the passing of a cloud can make a difference, think what one word of hope, or love or grace, or encouragement can make. Think of the impact of a life of Christ-like love lived out in word and deed.

Faithfully,

Charles Crutchfield

The last resort for renewal

BY WILLIAM O. "BUD" REEVES
Special Contributor

A wave of nausea passed over me as I sat at my computer. The messages were flying fast and furiously on Facebook. At 4:30 p.m. on the last day of the 2012 General Conference of the United Methodist Church, the Judicial Council (the "Supreme Court" of the UMC) had declared a massive restructuring proposal unconstitutional, according to the denominational constitution in the *Book of Discipline*.

I was just sick. This was the centerpiece of the whole conference. The Call to Action, proposed by the Council of Bishops two years ago, had been discussed and debated on every level of the church. It had been re-formed in the crucible of holy conferencing (aka legislative compromise). Then known as Plan UMC, it had passed the assembly two days earlier. Now it was moot, with no time to consider other alternatives



Bud Reeves

until General Conference meets again—in four years!

Some things were accomplished at General Conference, but mostly nothing much was changed. The budget of the denomination was lowered a bit, and (pending review by the Judicial Council) pastors will no longer be guaranteed an appointment simply because they are ordained.

Eight million dollars was spent to hold a world-wide conference of United Methodists which was supposed to be the most significant and far-reaching since the UMC formed in 1968. Rich Peck, a church journalist, described it as "a high-wire act a foot off the ground."

I was disappointed because the need for change is almost universally recognized. But that seems to be all we agree on.

I have noticed, in 30 years of leading churches through changes, that reform is often a "two steps forward, one step back" process. There are impediments to change. There are good people on both sides of any issue. Sometimes the best-laid plans simply don't work out.

Maybe it's providential that we now have four more years to think about broad systemic change in our

church. If the plan was unconstitutional, it is better to catch it now than to have it challenged and sunk later. In church politics as well as my personal life, I believe in Romans 8:28, "In all things, God works for good..." Maybe the failure of the Call to Action will return our focus to the place where reform really happens.

Reform, revitalization and revival do not come from the structures of the general church or annual conference. The life of the Body of Christ is in the local church. That's why the fundamental principle of the Call to Action was to dedicate the resources of the denomination for the next ten years to local church revitalization. My friend the Rev. John Miles, a veteran of the wars in annual and general conferences, gave this pearl of wisdom to his son and daughter, who were both clergy delegates: "General Conference and Annual Conference are sideshows. The center ring is the local church." (It is sort of a circus sometimes!)

I believe that the real focus of reform is even smaller. It happens first in the heart of a disciple. The Rev. Charlie Settle, who is retiring this year as a district superintendent,

APPOINTMENTS

The following pastoral changes and retirements have been officially announced as of press time on May 24.

To see appointments as they become official, visit arumc.org/appointments.

Confirmed appointment changes at Annual Conference (effective July 1):

- Bismarck UMC—Katie Pearce
- canvascommunity UMC Little Rock—Carter Ferguson
- First UMC Hamburg—Greg Comer
- First UMC Springdale (Associate)—Ramiro Lizcano

- Grace UMC Conway (Associate)—Reginald Russell
- Levy/White Memorial UMCs—Jimmy Mosby
- Lincoln/Cincinnati UMCs—Gary Lunsford
- McGehee/Arkansas City UMCs—Joe Head
- Norphlet/Centennial UMCs—Heather Clawitter
- Piggott/Wright's Chapel UMCs—Andy Newbill
- Portland/Dermott/Wilmot UMCs—John Sandine

Extension ministry appointment (effective July 1):

- Minister of New Church Starts/Path 1 Strategist—Bob Crossman

'[Reform] happens first in the heart of a disciple.'

—The Rev. Bud Reeves

said to the Little Rock Conference many years ago, "If you want revival in the church, draw a three-foot circle around yourself, and pray for revival within that circle." I have never forgotten that.

The purpose of systemic or structural reform on any level is to get the institution out of the way so the Spirit can flow through the ministries of the church and in the hearts of the people. The role of the denomination is to empower local congregations who can inspire individual disciples to be the hands and feet of the risen Christ in the world.

And now we approach our Annual Conference, somewhat shell-shocked. We will not be trying to change the *Book of Discipline*, so the constitutionality question will not arise. But some of the other questions still hover in the air. Will we be bold enough to continue the journey of reform that we have started, or will the forces of institutional inertia grind us to a halt? Will we be faithful to our mission and pursue that above everything else, or will we seek to preserve the status quo and accelerate our death spiral? Can a new

movement be born out of the old organization?

Just before General Conference, one of the presidents of a United Methodist general agency called for a "United Methodist Pentecost." If anything changes the church, only the Holy Spirit will.

After General Conference, I felt a little like the disciples must have felt after Good Friday—defeated, deflated, and in despair. Like Cleopas on the road to Emmaus, I could only say, "We had hoped..." But then the reality of the resurrection became apparent as Jesus stood among them. For forty days he ate with them and taught them again. Then he left, ascending into heaven, with the instruction to wait for power from on high. For ten days, the disciples waited—not passively, but actively, praying and worshipping. Then, on the morning of Pentecost, the wind began to blow...

Come, Holy Spirit!

The Rev. Dr. Reeves serves as senior pastor of First UMC Hot Springs. He can be reached at brobud@fumchs.com.

REFLECTIONS ON GENERAL CONFERENCE

The elimination of guaranteed appointments: Trust God!

BY RONNIE MILLER YOW
Special Contributor

As I sat in the plenary of the 2012 General Conference, my heart melted when I witnessed one of my fellow clergy go to the microphone and make a motion to reconsider guaranteed appointments. The General Conference clearly signaled by its vote that there was no need for further conversation.

My heart trembled as I heard sidebar conversations. I heard district superintendents say this was a good thing, because they would no longer be forced to find appointments for incompetent clergy.

How will elimination of guaranteed appointments fully address the issue of effectiveness when we have not developed or agreed upon any metrics? In a denomination that marks an annual decline, who



Ronnie Miller Yow

truly measures effectiveness or ineffectiveness, and by what measure? Is the district superintendent ineffective when his or her district is in decline? Is the bishop ineffective when his or her episcopal area is in decline? Are cabinets ineffective just as a pastor is ineffective when his or her church or churches is in decline?

If the measure of effectiveness is the same for all elders around the church no matter what office one holds, how many of us would truly be effective? Since we have no standard for effectiveness, it is my perception that the elimination of guaranteed appointments only gives a way for the church to be more discriminatory.

There are several issues the UMC must address as they relate to effectiveness, justice and our future. One danger of dropping guaranteed appointments: People of color and women are at risk of being further marginalized. It will be much easier for the UMC to say that there are no appointments for these members of our community. Finally, it is my perception that without guaranteed appointments, this time of economic strain almost forces the church into a posture to declare persons ineffective so that fewer and less prophetic persons will be considered for appointments.

Do we need more effective clergy? The answer to the question is absolutely yes! However, we already have mechanisms in place to help: Boards of Ordained Ministry. This board structure in the church needs to be re-examined. Boards of Ordained Ministry must take greater care for candidates

and clergy as they are approved for ordination and potentially placed on leave without an appointment.

As a church, we examine clergy and say they are fit for ministry. If we let scarcity in appointments and resources help determine fitness of clergy to serve, all of us are in trouble.

I do not mean to imply that we do not have incompetent elders in the church—we do! I believe every elder, no matter the office, is called to the same mission: to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. And in some cases, that mission simply goes unfulfilled.

But in my opinion, eliminating guaranteed appointment without eliminating itinerancy only further exacerbates our dysfunction as a denomination. Guaranteed appointment and itinerancy have been the twins which allowed United Methodist clergy to have clear ways to follow God's call to the mission field.

When we become elders, we commit to itinerancy: to go where we are sent. In the past, we have had some assurance that if the appointment did not "fit," there was a possibility to move to another, better-suited appointment—not at the expense of the church, but for the ultimate benefit of the Kingdom. With removal of the guaranteed appointment, how can cabinets and bishops expect clergy to commit to itinerancy without a hint of cynicism, mediocrity and mistrust?

I realize this decision of the General Conference makes many uncomfortable and may have some unknown and unintended consequences. With tiptoe expectancy, many await the verdict from the fall meeting of the Judicial Council.

However, maybe this elimination of guaranteed appointments is a good thing, because for too long many have put their trust in the system. As United Methodist clergy, we will now realize, if we haven't before, that the security of our appointment rests not in our system, but in our God.

As for me, the words of that old hymn come to mind:

I will trust in the Lord.

I will trust in the Lord.

I will trust in the Lord until I die.

The Rev. Miller Yow serves as national president of Black Methodists for Church Renewal, senior pastor of Wesley Chapel UMC Little Rock and chaplain at Philander Smith College. He was a clergy delegate to General Conference 2012.

A sacred space, and one who helped make it so

BY MICHAEL ROBERTS
Special Contributor

During General Conference I was blessed to have an extended conversation with a member of the Marshal and Page Team. In the midst of the conversation, he began to talk about the table in the middle of the room, the table upon which sacraments were consecrated and other liturgical acts of gathering took place.

He knew all about this table. He described the wood, how it smelled, what it felt like. How did he know these things? He knew because he had spent a lot of time there, early in the mornings, praying over this table, anointing it with oil, and consecrating the space for God's work each day. It was not part of his official duties, but an act of personal devotion.

In the midst of the conversation I called this table the altar, and was



Michael Roberts

gently corrected. The altar was at the front, higher, representing our offering to God and God's offering to us. Both the altar and the table, along with other furnishings used at the 2008 and 2012 General Conferences, were made of trees downed by Hurricane Katrina when it leveled the historic UMC conference center known as Gulfside Assembly. A team of craftsmen took broken pieces of wood and formed them into something beautiful to glorify God.

I learned how the marshals and pages rotate stations throughout the day. This particular page was told to report to the Center Table on the morning of May 3. I do not believe this was mere coincidence. He arrived right before the protest happened on that day. A group of people who felt harmed by earlier actions of the Conference moved to the center table as a recess was called. They cleared the table and set up for Communion.

During this time around the table, many tears were shed. Singing commenced. It was an act of solidarity and protest. It did not stop, however, as the session resumed. The chair had to end the morning

session early and clear the hall. Delegates vacated the room for lunch. Left were the protesters, a few bishops and this page.

Decisions had to be made. Would the marshals and pages have to move from a hospitality role to a security role? Would they have to start removing people whom they had been trained to welcome? Would the police be called?

This servant of the Conference stayed there, praying silently, not knowing what else to do. He watched as bishops began to engage protesters and talk with them in a spirit of love and concern.

It took time, but peace prevailed, and connections were made in the midst of hurt and harm. This servant, as he tells it, was able to witness God at work in the midst of this sacred and anointed space.

Later that day, I talked with veteran delegates who said that this protest was mild compared to those at previous Conferences. On this day, the people involved were empowered to meet the challenges before them. Scriptures were read, prayers were shared, points were made. When the delegates came back that afternoon,

they witnessed the end of a peaceful protest.

This page stood at the table through it all, a table that he alone had taken the time to bless through intimate connection. As I heard the story, I was inspired by his "behind the scenes" commitment.

He did not make the connection between his devotion and this outcome. As he told the story, he was not bragging, but trying to make sense of it all. I immediately made

the connection between his devotion and this peaceful outcome. I knew in my heart that his presence and prayers had made a difference. For this, I give thanks to God for this member of the Marshal and Page Team at General Conference—my friend, Justin Ledbetter.

Dr. Roberts serves as director of Connected in Christ and was the first reserve clergy delegate to General Conference 2012.



The Rev. Justin Ledbetter pauses for a moment at his post within the bar of General Conference.

AUM PHOTO BY AMY FORBUS

Epperson named to lead technology ministry

An experienced information technology professional with a United Methodist background has been named the director of the new Arkansas Conference Center for Technology, a position created as a result of the three-year study and visioning process known as Imagine Ministry.



Mark Epperson

Mark Epperson takes on this new role with the Arkansas Conference beginning June 1. He holds a Bachelor of Science degree in public administration from the University of Central Arkansas, and his professional background includes experience in both for-profit and non-profit organizations, including 11 years with Catholic Charities of St. Louis. As senior director of information technology, he provided leadership and vision through strategic planning, coordination and execution of technical operations with the goal of furthering the spiritual mission of the organization.

"I am very pleased to have Mark Epperson now on board," said Bishop Charles Crutchfield. "Mark brings a wealth of knowledge and experience that will enable us to move to the cutting edge of 21st-century technology in the Conference. He is a wonderful addition to our staff."

Epperson's background includes communicating with people who come from a variety of technological backgrounds, which he believes will prove an asset as he gets acquainted with how Arkansas congregations currently employ, or hope to employ, technology as a tool for ministry.

"I look forward to helping the church move forward with its technology initiatives and am excited about building new relationships throughout the Conference, as well as rekindling old ones," Epperson said. "I am so thrilled to be a part of this journey, and I know that God will be with all of us along the way."

A native of North Little Rock, Epperson grew up attending Lakewood UMC. He and his wife, Becky, and their three children now live in Cabot, where they are members of Christ UMC.

First class of circuit elders trained for service in 2012-2013

The new Center for Clergy and Laity Excellence in Leadership, along with district superintendents and district administrative assistants, completed in April and May the initial training of 95 elders for the role of circuit elder. Circuit elders are part of the Imagine Ministry plan, which was approved at the 2011 Arkansas Annual Conference. Their assignments will begin after this year's Annual Conference session.

The circuit elders will share responsibility with the district superintendent in assisting the local pastors and churches in a given geographic area. The district superintendents will then take on the task of serving as the Chief Missional Strategists for their respective districts, making pastoral appointments focused on the needs and characteristics of the mission field.

"The Arkansas Conference has taken a bold and significant step in continuing to address the mission field of each local church," said the Rev. Kurt Boggan, director of the Center for Clergy and Laity Excellence. "This work builds upon the ministry of many years of faithful clergy and laity addressing the mission field."

In September and October,

the recruitment and training of up to 40 congregational coaches will take place. Congregational coaches will be laity, and will work with the team of circuit elders, their district superintendent and local pastors in bringing resources for vitality to the local church. The Center for Clergy and Laity Excellence, Center for Technology and Network for Holiness will resource the districts and local congregations in strengthening the United Methodist connection and working to develop vital congregations.

Central District:

Maxine Allen, Heath Bradley, Clayton Bulice, Will Choate, Carolyn Doering, Hammett Evans, Dee Harper, Cindy Henry, Sieg Johnson, Nathan Kilbourne, Kevin Lyon, Bob Marble, Mark McDonald, Richard Mitchell, John Palmer, Michael Roberts, Ryan Rush, Todd-Paul Taulbee, Jeff Warrick, Brittany Richardson Watson, Ronnie Miller Yow

Northeast District:

Steve Cook, Brad Elrod, Ann Ferris, Don Hall, Tony Hill, Russell Hull, Randy Ludwig, Vaughn Marsden, David A. Moore, Bonda Moyer, Danny Partlow, Beth Perdue, Charles Sigman, Rodney

Steele, Paul Strang, Michael Sutton, Marilyn Webb, Heath Williams, Jeanne Williams

Northwest District:

Jaimie Alexander, Cherie Baker, Bobby Bell, Jim Benfer, Gail Brooks, Bill Buchanan, Kim Cloninger, Rex Dickey, Keith Dodson, David Freeman, Terry Gosnell, Donnie Hudson, Matthew Johnson, Dave Mack, Deanna McCormack, Steve Poarch, Craig Russell

Southeast District:

Monty Bell, David Bush, Chuck Coffelt, Greg Comer, Bryan Diffe, Kirk Doering, Jan Edwards, John Embrey, Pam Estes, David Fleming, John Fleming, JJ Galloway, Tandy Hanson, Joe Head, Sheila Jones, Daniel Kirkpatrick, Justin Ledbetter, Russell Moore, Edna Morgan, Mike Wilkie

Southwest District:

Bruce Bennett, Heather Clawitter, Paul Coy, Jim Cross, Bill Fish, Carroll Jackson, Steve Johnson, Fred Hunter, David Kassos, Larry Kelso, Jim Polk, LaVon Post, Buddy Ratliff, Bubba Smith, David Steele, Rob Walker, David Williams

MORE ARKANSANS AT GENERAL CONFERENCE

Arkansan commissioned to serve as missionary

Elizabeth Soard, an Arkansas Conference native, and her husband, Eric (pictured in background), were commissioned as United Methodist missionaries as part of an April 29 service at Palma Ceia United Methodist Church in Tampa, Fla., during the 2012 United Methodist General Conference.

The Soards serve through the General Board of Global Ministries, and are assigned as church planters and discipleship trainers in Tarime, Tanzania. The couple has felt the call to missions and for the past two years has volunteered with an orphanage and secondary school in Tarime, but the training and sending forth confirmed their calls into mission throughout the world. It was a symbolic experience of the call of the first disciples.

Elizabeth Soard is the daughter of the Rev. Bill Buchanan and is a candidate for ministry in the Central District of the Arkansas Conference. She feels called "to the people of Africa, to help develop programs for women and children, to be an example that women can be strong and respected as equals to men."

UMNS PHOTO BY PAUL JEFFREY



Teltow present at General Conference for Act of Repentance

Because of her involvement with the Native American International Caucus (NAIC), the Rev. Tammy Jo Teltow had the opportunity to attend General Conference as an observer. She currently serves as the NAIC's executive secretary, and is also the South Central Region chair-elect.

Teltow monitored the Local Church legislative committee and also attended the special service, "An Act of Repentance Toward Healing Relationships with Indigenous People."

Teltow, left, is pictured here with Bishop Rosemarie Wenner of Germany, president of the Council of Bishops. During the service, Bishop Wenner led the Council's affirmation to empower and support indigenous peoples who have been harmed and oppressed by the Church's actions.

At one point in the service, participants were invited to the center of the room to take a small stone as a reminder to multiply the work of repentance and healing in their own home conferences.

"Our work of repentance and healing is just beginning, not only through this observance, but... in our own homes, families, congregations, communities, relationships and employment," Teltow said.



COURTESY PHOTO

The Rev. Rodney Steele presents legislation that made its way to the floor of General Conference through a Judicial Administration subcommittee he chaired.

AUM PHOTOS BY AMY FORBUS



Lay reserve delegate Jay Clark asks a question related to changing the name of Lay Speaking Ministries to Lay Servant Ministries.



Bishop Charles Crutchfield, center, was among those bishops recognized at General Conference in advance of their official retirements later this year. Also pictured are Bishops Peter Weaver and Jane Allen Middleton.



General Conference delegates, volunteers and observers gathered on May 1 for the Arkansas Luncheon. Front row, from left: Gloria McAdoo, Sandra Mitchell, Bishop Charles Crutchfield, Deborah Bell. Second row: C.E. McAdoo, Mackey Yokem, Lynnette Whitaker, Pam Estes, Maxine Allen, Mary Vaughan, Rebekah Miles, Ronnie Miller Yow, Becky Dugan, Susan Ledbetter, Justin Ledbetter. Back row: Asa Whitaker, Todd Burris, Rodney Steele, Jay Clark, Karen Millar, Clef Vaughan, Michael Roberts, Karon Mann, Jim Argue, John Miles II, Paula Watson, Brian Swain.

GC2012 (continued from page 1A)

the U.S.

“Central Conference delegates were much more engaged than I’ve ever seen before,” he said. “Our legislative committee took time for translations and for responses as never before, and their influence was felt, even in the plenary.”

Like Mann, Steele foresees increased conversations in the coming years surrounding what it means to be a worldwide church.

“I believe we will see a more international *Book of Discipline* emerge, even if we have sections that are solely devoted to regions of the globe,” he said.

Reserve lay delegate Todd Burris filled in on the Church and Society A committee for Carole Teague, who was unable to attend General Conference. In a subcommittee discussion, he noted substantial theological differences among delegates from different parts of the world.

“In the debate about whether beliefs or practices can separate us from the love of God, grace was never mentioned,” he said. “The focus seemed to land more on salvation and less on God’s love. I don’t think the opinions in that room were shaped exclusively by

where people lived, but it did seem to be a factor.”

Social media influence

The explosion of social media since the last General Conference in 2008 meant that more delegates provided updates for those following the action from home.

While delegates deliberated in Tampa, they posted updates on Facebook and Twitter for the world to see, as did observers on-site and those watching via the live stream provided through umc.org.

“I was pleased and almost shocked by the number of ‘likes’ I would get [on Facebook posts],” Roberts said. “Just seeing how many people were keeping up with it from here in Arkansas was very interesting.”

Popular topics discussed on social media included denominational restructuring plans, the church’s statement on homosexuality and the elimination of what is commonly called “guaranteed appointment” for clergy in good standing.

Guaranteed appointment

Observers’ posts on Twitter gave some delegates their first

inkling that the elimination of guaranteed appointment had slipped through on a consent calendar—meaning it had been approved by such a large margin in committee that it would not come to the floor for debate.

Following this realization came a vote on whether to bring the matter to the floor for discussion; a majority of delegates opposed opening debate on the topic. Observers and delegates immediately voiced dissenting opinions online. At points like this one, Twitter carried some 1,200 tweets per minute bearing the hash tag #gc2012.

An amendment to the legislation ending guaranteed appointment outlines a process of review for elders who do not receive appointments. Referred to as the Mueller Amendment after its author, the Rev. Gary Mueller of the North Texas Conference, the amendment calls for each annual conference to convene an eight-person task force to guide the bishop and cabinet concerning elders who do not receive appointments. It also requires reporting as follows:

The cabinet will report the following information annually to the Board of Ordained Ministry executive

committee 1) which elders have not receive a full-time missional appointment and the rationale 2) which elders have not received an appointment for reasons of ineffectiveness and the steps which have been taken in the complaint process; 3) statistics by age, ethnicity and gender of elders who have not received a full-time missional appointment; and 4) learning that has been gleaned as appointment-making is carried out in a new way. This data will also become a part of the evaluation by bishops by Committee on the Episcopacy at the conference and jurisdictional levels pursuant to paragraph 524.3a.

By request of the General Conference, the Judicial Council will review the constitutionality of this approved legislation at its October meeting.

Recurring controversy

General Conference has in recent years seen debates surrounding the language in the *Book of Discipline* that declares homosexuality “incompatible with Christian teaching” (Paragraph 161F). The language has remained unchanged—despite this year’s effort

by two large church pastors, the Rev. Adam Hamilton of Church of the Resurrection in Leawood, Kan., and the Rev. Michael Slaughter of Ginghamburg UMC in Tipp City, Ohio, to replace it with language that made plain the current state of theological disagreement.

“We commit to disagree with respect and love, we commit to love all persons and above all, we pledge to seek God’s will,” the lengthy amendment said in part.

“In the end, I fell back and voted against it,” said the Rev. John Miles II in an interview with GC2012 Radio. “I did admire Adam and Michael for taking the risk of trying to cut through the division, and I was really surprised at the 47 to 53 percent vote.... That they were almost able to win is an extraordinary moment, and I’m sorry it was so conflicted.”

Following the vote that affirmed Paragraph 161F’s current language, protesters entered the bar of the Conference, prompting an early lunch recess. They remained there throughout the recess, singing and celebrating Holy Communion. After conversation with a handful of bishops, protesters agreed to leave the bar of the Conference peacefully



Clef Vaughan and the Revs. Rebekah Miles, John Miles II and Susan Ledbetter react to the news of Judicial Council Decision 1210, which declared unconstitutional the approved restructuring option known as "Plan UMC."



The Rev. Maxine Allen works a shift at her marshal's post beside an entrance to the floor of General Conference. Marshals and pages are volunteers selected from a pool of applicants, and receive compensation only through a love offering.



The Rev. C.E. McAdoo was among the Arkansas delegates recognized to speak on the floor of General Conference.



The Revs. Greg Gross of the Northern Illinois Conference and Brad Laurvick of the Rocky Mountain Conference serve Communion as part of a demonstration on the floor of General Conference. The protest followed a vote to retain the language in the Book of Discipline that declares homosexuality "incompatible with Christian teaching."

following a prayer at the start of the afternoon session.

"As I sat there [watching the protest], you just couldn't feel like you'd won," John Miles said. "You felt like you lost, and everybody else lost. It really, in the end, felt like a lose-lose proposition, and it was just sad."

"I had several friends who were part of the group, and I wanted to reaffirm my love for them and share the moment with them," said Jay Clark, a lay reserve delegate who was seated on the floor when the protest began. "I don't like protests, but I also don't like people to be hurting, and I don't like our church to be a part of the hurt and pain of so many people."

Within the Arkansas Conference, Quapaw Quarter UMC Little Rock, a member of the Reconciling Ministries Network, extended a statewide invitation to a May 23 service of healing "for all who feel hurt by the inhospitable action of the 2012 General Conference, particularly in regard to people of non-traditional sexual orientation."

Unfinished business

Slightly less than half—47.8 percent—of the 1,141 petitions submitted to General Conference

were not acted upon in the plenary session. Some died in committee for lack of time, while others were in line for consideration on the plenary floor, only to die for the same reason. New standing rules that declared a firm recess time of 9:30 p.m. and allowed General Conference to adjourn without dealing with every piece of legislation meant that for the first time, there was no guarantee that submitted petitions would receive attention.

Mann expressed disappointment that none of the half-dozen items the Local Church committee had planned to present ever reached the floor for a vote.

"Most discussion leading up to General Conference stated that our work was intended to redirect resources to increase vital congregations," she said. "Strategies to strengthen local congregations were not discussed on the plenary floor."

The Rev. Rebekah Miles, who served as a blogger on gc2012conversations.com, highlighted the problem of abandoned legislation in her April 29 blog entry, "Whose Voices were Silenced and Whose Were Heard?"

"I found a lot of good ideas that

were recommended by a subcommittee but were never considered by the whole committee simply because the time clock ran out..." she wrote. "I noticed a pattern. Major petitions sponsored by boards and agencies appear to have had a better chance of being considered than those by individuals, churches and annual conferences. It seemed to me, also, that petitions related to local pastors were disproportionately represented on the 'not-considered' list."

Arkansas influence

Several Arkansans can point to work that bore fruit at General Conference.

The Revs. Rebekah Miles and John Miles II saw their petition to amend Paragraph 162V of the *Book of Discipline* approved on the consent calendar. The new language reads, "We encourage hospitals, physicians, and medical clinics to provide access to primary healthcare to all people regardless of their healthcare coverage or ability to pay for treatment." The change stems from a promise they made to their mother, JoAnn Miles, on her death bed in 2009.

In his work on the Discipleship legislative committee, Asa Whitaker helped push through a significant name change that conveys broader opportunities for ministry: Lay Speaking Ministries will now be known as Lay Servant Ministries.

"[It] created quite a debate," Whitaker said. "I was able to join with a colleague from North Carolina to help shape the final language, which was ultimately passed."

Karon Mann, a member of the Women's Division Board of Directors, saw two years of work come to fruition when the General Conference approved legislation making United Methodist Women an autonomous organization within the United Methodist Church.

"It was affirming that General Conference supported these requests, which will structurally strengthen ties between local United Methodist Women members, the national structure and the ministries we support around the world," Mann said. "The changes also provide more flexibility to local, district, conference and jurisdictional United Methodist Women as they organize for mission."

Though he did not attend General Conference, the Rev. Charles Sigman of St. Paul UMC Jonesboro

saw the approval of a petition he submitted declaring Martin Luther King Jr. a modern-day martyr. (He submitted a similar petition in 2008 which granted Dietrich Bonhoeffer the same status.) Sigman believes Christians need to see present-day examples of those who faithfully serve God to the point that it costs them their lives.

"As a denomination, we now recognize the notion that there are ideals worth dying for," he said. "Today, we as Christians have very few, if any, conversations about those who have died for their faith. The Church needs these discussions to happen within a modern context."

Whitaker, the delegation chair, commended the entire delegation for its diligent work at General Conference.

"Each delegate and all four of our reserves took their job seriously and were eager to answer the call during legislative sessions," he said. "The Arkansas Conference can be very proud of the delegation and its impact throughout the entire event."

For more information on General Conference, visit umc.org, unitedmethodistreporter.com and gc2012conversations.com.

Philander Smith College names Moore as new president

Alumnus, Arkansas native returning to serve

Philander Smith College in July will welcome one of its own alumni back to campus to take the helm.

The college's Presidential Search Committee along with its Board of Trustees on April 27 announced that Dr. Johnny Moore, 44, will become the 13th president of the four-year, United Methodist-affiliated institution.

A 1989 graduate of Philander Smith College, Moore currently serves as executive vice president of Student Affairs at Tyler Junior College, Tyler, Texas.

After earning a bachelor's degree in mathematics at PSC, he completed a master's degree in mathematics at Arkansas State University and earned his Ph.D. in mathematics education at Florida Institute of Technology. He was a tenured professor at Indian River State College in Fort Pierce, Fla., before becoming the institution's Vice President of Student Affairs.

A native of Old Washington, Ark., Moore and his wife, Sequoyah, have a seven-year-old son, Johnathon, and a six-month-old daughter, Jayna.

Moore's official first day on the job will be July 1. He follows Dr. Walter Kimbrough, whose final day at Philander Smith was May 31 and whose first day as president of Dillard University in New Orleans is July 1.

In a written statement, the search committee thanked "the entire college family for its participation in the recent on-campus visits, as well as the preliminary meetings last December when the presidential profile was developed." The committee went on to thank Kimbrough for his assistance during the search process.

Moore met with the college's board of trustees during its official spring meeting on May 4, and was introduced to alumni

during Alumni Reunion Weekend events held May 3-6.

Founded in 1877, Philander Smith College has a rich legacy of providing an educational experience that embraces academic excellence, builds self-esteem, cultivates critical thinking skills and prepares students to be future leaders and advocates for social justice. Enrollment currently stands at 750 students.



Johnny Moore

PEOPLE OF FAITH

Townsend to coordinate Southwest District disaster response



Brad Townsend

Brad Townsend has been named disaster response coordinator for the Southwest District of the Arkansas Conference. He succeeds the Rev. Byron Mann, who with his wife, Janice, last year took on the role of Conference disaster response coordinator.

A member of Spring Hill UMC, south of Hope, Townsend describes himself as "always looking for ways to serve in the church and serve our Lord." One of those opportunities to serve came through the Manns' invitation to help build wheelchair ramps through a ministry known as Hands and Feet. As he got acquainted with them, Townsend began to learn more about the need for disaster response coordinators to be at the ready throughout the state.

He attended disaster response coordinator training at Mount Eagle Retreat Center in February before accepting this leadership position, and plans to continue taking advantage of additional training opportunities with the goal of being prepared for events that everyone hopes never happen.

"I really look forward to working with all of the people in the district, hopefully just in training," he said. "I think we could all do without natural disasters!"

Townsend and his wife, Devonna, have two daughters and are expecting a son this summer.

Arkadelphia teen recognized for outstanding volunteer service

Alexandria Hunter, a member of Manchester UMC Arkadelphia, was one of two Arkansas teens recognized at the 2012 Prudential Spirit of Community Awards ceremony in Washington, D.C.

Alexandria, along with 101 other top youth volunteers from across the country, received \$1,000 as well as personal congratulations from New York Giants quarterback and Super Bowl MVP Eli Manning at the 17th annual award ceremony and gala dinner reception, held at the Smithsonian's National Museum of Natural History.

A member of the Clark County 4-H and an eighth-grader at Goza Middle School, Alexandria packages party supplies into "birthday bags"

and distributes them to food pantries and a women and children's shelter so that families with little or no money can still celebrate birthdays.

"During these times of financial distress, for many families, having a birthday party is just not in their budgets," said Alexandria. "I wanted to help families celebrate together."

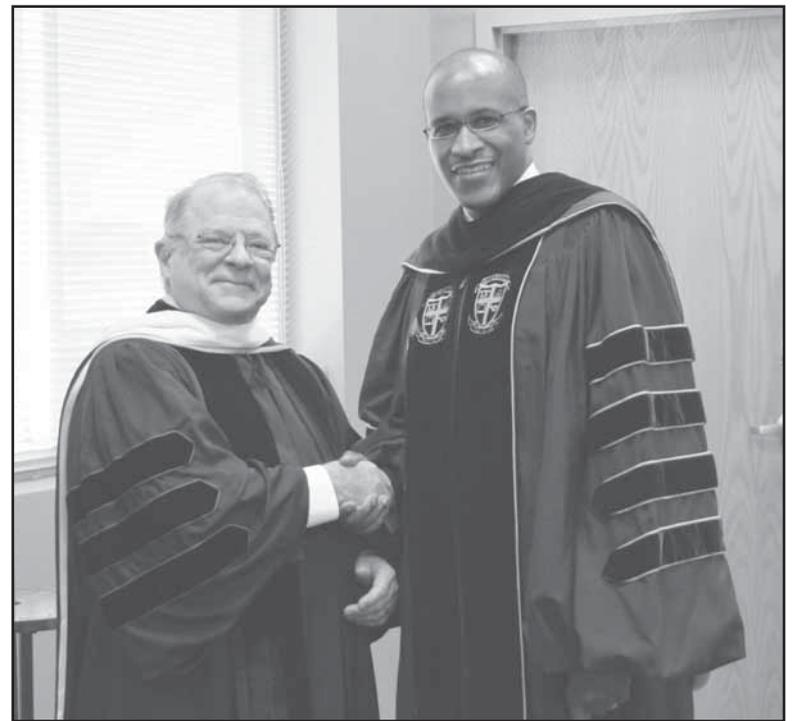
Alexandria fills the birthday bags with enough supplies for six partygoers, including plates, napkins, candles, drink mix, cake mix, frosting, candy and other treats. She enlisted the help of her 4-H club in assembling her first five bags, and then spoke to community groups and Manchester UMC about her project. As a result of sharing her

idea with others, she has received numerous donations of money and supplies, and so far has donated enough bags to ensure that the birthdays of 35 individuals do not pass uncelebrated.

"It is amazing how easily even a young person can make a difference," said Alexandria.

"No matter how small my project is, the effect it can have on just one person can be huge."

Bishop Crutchfield receives honorary doctorate from Philander Smith College



Philander Smith College president Dr. Walter Kimbrough, right, congratulates Bishop Charles Crutchfield on receiving an honorary doctor of humane letters from the college. The award was announced as part of the May 5 commencement exercises, which the bishop was unable to attend because of his presence at General Conference in Tampa, Fla. Upon the bishop's return, the two leaders took time to celebrate the honor.

AUM PHOTO BY AMY FORBUS



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Foundation offers matching gift for Arkansas' Imagine No Malaria effort

The Imagine No Malaria (INM) effort in the Arkansas Conference has received a "win-win" opportunity in the drive to eradicate malaria. A matching grant provided by the United Methodist Foundation of Arkansas will double the amount raised through local efforts, up to \$333,000.

Foundation president and CEO Jim Argue has committed the foundation to a dollar-for-dollar match for every dollar raised by local churches, Wesley Foundations and other ministries and missions of the Conference.

"The Imagine No Malaria effort is a perfect place for the foundation to commit its grant funds targeted for global UMC missions," Argue said. "We're impressed with the INM leadership, our partners beyond the

'Now is the perfect time for us to rejoice in the power of the United Methodist connection to change the world.'

—Jim Argue

UMC. I think our congregations will remember the enthusiasm for Nothing But Nets and respond generously to this next phase of the effort to eliminate malaria. The foundation is delighted to help our conference respond boldly to this initiative."

Arkansas was named at General Conference in April as one of twelve conferences to lead the denomination's fight to end malaria by 2015. The work involves several

action channels: prevention, education, communication, treatment and advocacy.

With the matching grant, local churches can double the effectiveness of their efforts to raise funds and have a continuing impact on reducing the death toll from malaria. In only six years, the death toll from malaria in Africa has been reduced by almost 50 percent—to fewer than 700,000 deaths per year—mainly through the efforts of

Imagine No Malaria and other faith-based and non-profit partners.

Argue has heard the concerns about the state of the economy or local needs hindering the enthusiasm for such a large local effort. But he believes Arkansas United Methodists will rise to the challenge.

"Now is the perfect time for us to rejoice in the power of the United Methodist connection to change the world, and to unleash our capacity to do God's work in dramatic ways around the globe," Argue said.

Local church mission groups such as United Methodist Women or United Methodist Men, as well as individuals, can take advantage of the foundation's matching grant by planning fundraising events, taking up special offerings or initiating

creative ways to educate members about malaria and the ease with which it can be prevented.

Attendees of the Annual Conference gathering in Fort Smith June 10-13 will see and hear stories about those affected by malaria. They also will have the chance to gain information and resources about how to begin raising awareness and funds in their churches and communities.

Materials will be available at the Imagine No Malaria display table and may be found online at www.imagenomalaria.org. To schedule an Imagine No Malaria presentation for your church, contact conference communications director Martha Taylor at mtaylor@arumc.org, 877-646-1816 or 501-324-8005.

COMING UP

Sleeths speak on creation care at Central UMC Fayetteville June 2 and 3

On June 2-3, Central UMC Fayetteville, 6 West Dickson Street, will focus on the care of God's creation with special guests Dr. Matthew Sleeth and his wife, Nancy. Dr. Sleeth is a former emergency room doctor, a nationally renowned speaker on the topic of creation care, the author of the book *Serve God, Save the Planet* and founder of Blessed Earth. Nancy is also an author and her most recently released book is entitled *Almost Amish*. Saturday morning, June 2, the Sleeths will lead a conference from 9:30 a.m. to noon at the Student Ministries Building Worship Center. The conference will focus on helping attendees make conscious choices to limit the impact of technology on our lives, keeping the Sabbath and deepening relationships with our families, friends and God. There is no fee or registration required.

Sunday morning, Dr. Sleeth will bring the message at the 9:40 contemporary service and the 11:00 traditional service. Nancy will speak to the youth during the 9:40 hour. For more information, visit blessedearth.org.

CORis performing at Trinity UMC Little Rock June 3

The United Methodist Church of the Resurrection Inspiration Singers (CORis) of Leawood, Kan., will be performing at 9 a.m. and 11 a.m., Sunday, June 3 at Trinity UMC Little Rock, 1101 North Mississippi. CORis has 27 singers, accompanied by 8 adults. CORis also has a small auditioned group of youth who will also offer music during the Solid Grounds coffee fellowship in Martin Fellowship Hall, on the east side of the Trinity campus, at 10:15 a.m. The group will also sing for the United Methodist Behavioral Hospital on Saturday, June 2 at 6:30 p.m. For more information, call 501-666-2813.

Healing Place day camp seeks volunteers for June and July sessions

Healing Place Ministries' Summer Youth Community Camp begins on June 18 and extends through July 13, 2012. Each week, 70 young people between the ages of 7 and 14 experience learning and fun from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Monday through Friday. Workshop topics include self-esteem, anger management, conflict resolution, first aid, nutrition, etiquette, bullying prevention and alcohol/drug abuse prevention. Recreational activities include archery, fishing (with a fishing derby on

Fridays), kick ball, soccer, basketball, volleyball, jump rope, hula hoop, relay races, crafts and freehand drawing. If you or your local mission team is interested in volunteering to improve life for at-risk youth from Jefferson County and surrounding areas, contact the Rev. David Morgan at 870-718-3324, or the Rev. Edna Morgan at 870-692-2400. Volunteers must be at least 16 years old.

St. James Golf Classic for Congo Wells Project June 16

The fifth annual St. James Golf Classic will be held Saturday, June 16, at StoneLinks Golf Course in North Little Rock. Organized by the Stepping Stone Sunday School class of St. James UMC, the four-person scramble starts at 8 a.m. and is open to all. The \$75 per player fee includes golf cart, greens fees, prizes and lunch by Famous Dave's BBQ. All proceeds will go to provide water wells in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. To date, the St. James Golf Classic has raised \$48,000 for water wells.

There are many ways to participate: as a hole sponsor, an actual or virtual player or as a door prize donor. For more information, contact Nicki Hilliard at 501-666-2311, or nhilliard@mac.com, or Jane Dennis at 501-681-9472 or janedennis@comcast.net. To register online, visit StJamesGolfClassic.org.

Bishop Crutchfield sermon to be broadcast statewide June 17

Bishop Charles Crutchfield, who is retiring in August, will preach one of his last sermons as an active bishop at 9 a.m. and 11 a.m. Sunday, June 17, at Pulaski Heights UMC Little Rock, 4823 Woodlawn. The message will be broadcast at 10:30 a.m. on KATV Channel 7. The morning includes a reception honoring both the Bishop and Karen Crutchfield at 10:00 a.m. In addition to Karen's work to support clergy spouses, she has participated faithfully in the music ministry at Pulaski Heights during her time in Arkansas.

Campmeeting revival at Salem UMC Benton June 17-24

The Rev. Carlton Cross and members of Salem UMC Benton invite all to the 2012 Salem Campmeeting revival, June 17-24 on the church grounds, 1647 Salem Road in Benton. The Campmeeting includes a different musical group performing each evening at 7:00 p.m., with a worship service following at 7:30. The Rev. David Bush, pastor of First UMC Stuttgart, will be the featured evangelist for the week, and the Rev. Mike Morey,

currently superintendent of the South Central District, will preach on June 24, which also is Homecoming Sunday and includes a potluck dinner.

People of all ages are encouraged to attend. Special activities for youth and a fun-filled learning experience for children will be available each night, as will a nursery for children ages 3 and younger. Refreshments will be served after each service.

The revival, established in 1838, now meets in an open-air arbor equipped with ceiling fans. Last year, the sawdust floor of the arbor was upgraded to concrete. Attendees are welcome to sit in the cushioned pews of the arbor or bring lawn chairs for the services, which include the singing of old-time music, preaching and fellowship.

For more information, including a listing of the musicians performing each night and a history of the Salem Campmeeting event and grounds, visit <http://arnet.pair.com/salemcamp>, or contact Lydia Cheatham at the church office, 501-316-2282.

White Memorial UMC homecoming June 24

On Sunday, June 24, 2012, White Memorial UMC Little Rock will celebrate Homecoming. The congregation extends a special invitation to former members of Twenty-Eighth Street UMC and friends to attend at either the 11:00 a.m. worship hour or the afternoon service at 2:30. Former members also are encouraged to volunteer to participate in the service at either time. Those who are willing to participate may contact Bettye Johnson at 501-663-4851.

Campmeeting at Davidson Campground July 27 to Aug. 5

Davidson Campground will hold its 128th annual encampment July 27 through Aug. 5, 2012. The 10-day revival includes daily services at 11:00 a.m. and 7:45 p.m. Attire is casual. An opening prayer service will be held on Thursday July 26, 2012 at 8:00 p.m., and the memorial and closing service will be on Aug. 5 at 11:00 a.m. Singing groups will perform each night starting at 6:30 p.m. The campground is located on Campground Road, 12 miles west of Arkadelphia off Arkansas Highway 26. Davidson is one of the oldest campmeetings in the nation, and the largest in Arkansas. For more details, visit davidsoncampground.com.

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Church near Air Force base reaches out to military community

BY KAYLEA HUTSON
Special Contributor

Prayer and food. Two simple provisions that can give comfort and support to someone in need.

For one church, the two items have become part of the foundation for reaching out to families living and serving within the Little Rock Air Force Base community.

In May, volunteers from Jacksonville UMC combined the two acts by providing a taco dinner, complete with a smorgasbord of homemade desserts, and approximately 225 prayer shawls for families attending the Deployed Airmen's Family Dinner.

It's all part of the church's military family outreach—a ministry organized in part by the spouses of retired military personnel and veterans, under the direction of the Rev. Naomi Rogers, associate pastor for military families.

Rogers said the church has a rich legacy with the base.

"It is fitting for our church to provide ongoing support for the families of active duty military on the base," she continued. "We want them to know that someone outside of the military cares for them."

Approximately 200 people

attended the Deployed Airmen's Family Dinner, including the families of those deployed overseas and members of the base command staff.

Organized by the base chaplain's office, the quarterly event not only offers a meal, but also brings together a variety of services a family member may need to use during a deployment.

The meal, provided by a local ministry or group, is served to those in attendance by members of the command staff.

Prayer shawl project

In preparation for the May outreach, Rogers challenged members of the church's prayer shawl ministry to create more than 200 shawls to give away at the meal.

Dotty Heckenbach said this was the biggest project the prayer shawl ministry team has undertaken since its formation in 2005. One member, who lives out of state, created more than 20 shawls for the effort.

Heckenbach said the effort was a "labor of love," from prayers over each stitch as the shawls are created, to the prayers given as a shawl is placed around the shoulders of a recipient.

"They are covered in prayers,"



The Rev. Naomi Rogers presents a patriotic prayer shawl to AMC Command Chief Andy Kaiser during the Deployed Airman Family Dinner, held May 1 on the Little Rock Air Force Base in Jacksonville, Ark. The event had a "fiesta" theme, complete with a taco meal provided by members of First UMC Jacksonville.

AUM PHOTO BY KAYLEA HUTSON

Heckenbach said. "It lets them know we care."

Lydia Baldwin received one of the church's prayer shawls when her husband, Joel, deployed last year. She said the purple shawl helped bring her comfort during a vulnerable, emotional time.

"This new church, who didn't know me, had people praying for me. It was very moving," Baldwin said. "It strengthened my faith. It's touching that someone cares so much."

Since receiving the shawl, Baldwin has become part of the First

UMC Jacksonville community, and helped with additional outreach efforts to the military community.

Challenge: more shawls

Rogers would like to challenge members of First UMC Jacksonville, along with churches throughout the Arkansas Conference, to create an additional 800 shawls, so more than 1,000 shawls can be distributed by Christmas.

She suggests using a "victory" pattern, with a red, white and blue

motif. The design and colors provide additional meaning to the shawls.

For more information about the prayer shawl ministry, and the church's outreach to the Little Rock Air Force Base, contact Rogers at naomi.rogers@gmail.com or 501-982-8176.

Hutson serves as director of children's ministries for St. James UMC Little Rock.

CLASSIFIEDS

PLACE YOUR CLASSIFIED in the *Arkansas United Methodist* for 60 cents per word, no limit. Call 501-324-8005 or mail to: *Arkansas United Methodist*, 800 Daisy Bates Drive, Little Rock, AR 72202; or email mtaylor@arumc.org.

Minister to Youth and Families - First United Methodist Church, Springdale is seeking an experienced full time Minister to Youth and Families of a large student ministry. Responsible for the vision and implementation of ministry to students from 6th-12th grade including Sunday morning youth worship, small groups, and a heavy emphasis on missions. Bachelor's Degree required. FUMC, Springdale is large church in a downtown area of a small city in Northwest Arkansas. Salary is negotiable. Please submit cover letter and resume to samantha@fumcwired.com.

Children's Ministry Coordinator - First United Methodist Church, Springdale is seeking a full time Children's Ministry Coordinator. Will work with the Minister to Children and Families to implement the vision of ministry to children from birth to 5th grade. Must be organized and able to create and manage a large network of volunteers. FUMC, Springdale is a large church in a downtown area of a small city in Northwest Arkansas. Salary is negotiable. Please submit cover letter and resume to samantha@fumcwired.com.

Choir Director and Children's/Youth Director - First United Methodist Church in Mtn. View has an opening for a choir director. This position will be responsible for two services on Sunday and special programs. The Sunday services are contemporary and traditional services. Preferred applicant needs to have the expertise in directing choir plus knowledge of contemporary and praise music. Use of a keyboard would be desired. Salary is negotiable.

In addition, FUMC in Mtn. View, Arkansas has a part time staff position open for a **Children's and Youth Director, K-12**. We are looking for a person that sees this position as a ministry and who will be guiding Children and Youth as they develop their relationship with Christ. The position will require working closely with the Pastor. It will require outreach to the congregation and creativity in developing his/her programs. Salary is negotiable. For energetic person or couple these positions could be combined. Please send cover letter and resume for either/both positions to First United Methodist Church, P.O. Box 74, Mtn. View, AR 72560. Questions may be directed to (870) 269-3252. Closing date June 6.

Home Study: Save \$\$\$ Christian Bible College, P.O. Box 8968 Rocky Mt., NC 27804 Phone (252) 451-1031; www.christianbiblecollege.org.

School of Christian Mission registration now open

Event set for Aug. 1-4 at Hendrix

The 2012 Arkansas Conference School of Christian Mission slated for August 1-4 at Hendrix College in Conway will focus on the issues of immigration, poverty, and Haiti. Participants will receive in-depth instruction about each of the topics through study, Scripture reading and the leadership of clergy and laity who are deeply involved in these issues.

The school is open to adults and children pre-kindergarten through senior high school students. Meals and housing are included in the registration fee and commuters are welcome to attend. A detailed brochure and registration forms may be found on the Arkansas Conference calendar, www.arumc.org/calendar. Once there, go to August 1 for information.

Disaster Response Academy Oct. 1-4 at Mount Sequoyah Online registration open

The South Central Jurisdiction's Disaster Response Academy will include four tracks: Basics of Disaster Response, Connecting Neighbors Training, Early Response Team Leadership and an Advanced Track for those who seeking additional or advanced training. The academy is set for October 1-4 at Mount Sequoyah Retreat & Conference Center in Fayetteville, Ark.

Details about the tracks, registration, and housing and meals, may be found at <http://scjdra2012.eventbrite.com>.

OBITUARIES

FAIRFIELD BAY

Delma Watson

Delma Kate White Watson, 87, of Fairfield Bay, passed away Monday, May 7, 2012, at St. Vincent Medical Center in Sherwood.

Born in Antioch (White County) on December 14, 1924, she was the daughter of the late Carl Benjamin and Fannie Mae (Pruitt) White. She was the wife of the Rev. Ellsworth Watson, a retired United Methodist minister.



Delma Watson

She had attended business college and worked as a secretary and in accounting. A member of the United Methodist Church and United Methodist Women, she played the piano at church services and also taught piano students for many years.

Survivors include her husband, the Rev. Ellsworth Watson; three daughters, Karen Witt of Cabot, Gloria Bridges of Paragould, and Judy Foley of Fort Smith; her sister-in-law, Thorvle Pickard of California; six grandchildren: Michael Bridges, Jason Shaffer, Kenneth Witt, Jerrod Shaffer, Michelle Dove and Alyssa Foley; and many great-grandchildren. She is also survived by other relatives and her many friends.

A funeral service was held Friday, May 11, at Holiday Hills United Methodist Church Greers Ferry, officiated by the Rev. Dan Brand. Pallbearers were Jason Shaffer, Jerrod Shaffer, Kenneth Witt, Joseph Dove, Bryce Pruitt and Michael Bridges. Honorary pallbearers were Don White, Sam White, Bill White and Charlie White. Interment followed in Antioch Cemetery. Memorials may be made to the Antioch Cemetery Fund, c/o Joe T. Belew, 535 Louie Pruitt Rd., Beebe, AR 72012.

HOT SPRINGS

Helen B. Wilson

Helen Baird Wilson, 90, passed away Thursday, April 26, 2012, in Hot Springs.

She was born Jan. 23, 1922, to George Porter Wilson and Gussie Shannon Douglass Wilson, who preceded her in death. Also predeceasing her were her brother, George Douglass Wilson, and her sisters, Emma Jean Wilson Kniseley and Mary

Jo Wilson McCorkle.

Survivors include her niece, Patricia Kniseley Warren of San Diego, Calif.; nephew, Edward W. McCorkle of Arkadelphia; grandnephews Miles Wilson Warren and John Philip McCorkle; and grandnieces Carrie Shannon Warren and Mary Lindsay White and their families.

After graduating from Hot Springs High School, she attended Henderson State University and graduated from the University of Kentucky in 1943 with a Bachelor of Science degree in medical technology. She also studied at Scarritt College for Christian Workers in Nashville, Tenn. She worked as a medical technologist in Hot Springs and temporary service with the Methodist Church, assigned to Fairbanks, Alaska and La Paz, Bolivia, in the middle 1950's.

She was commissioned as a missionary at the Little Rock Conference of the Methodist Church on June 5, 1959, and was assigned at that time to the Methodist Church of Bolivia, South America, as a medical missionary. She continued her service through 1975.



Helen Wilson

While in Bolivia she was appointed by the Bishop of the Evangelical Methodist Church to the Methodist Hospital and the Evangelical School of Nursing as medical technologist and teacher of laboratory and x-ray theory and technique. She served as a housemother, field treasurer for the women's program division and later for the world program division of the General Board of Global Ministries of the United Methodist Church. Her last term of four years was divided between serving as promoter of women's work on a national level and as administrator of the Central District with Headquarters in Cochabamba, Bolivia.

After her return to the U.S. and the boat lift of Cubans to Florida in May 1980, she assisted with their resettlement through the Church World Service Agency at Fort Chaffee, Arkansas until February 1982. Because of her varied experiences, she served on the interpreters list for the General Board of Global Ministries to interpret the mission program of the United Methodist Church in partnership with other Methodist Churches and institutions around the world.

Her mission in Hot Springs during her retirement included work with the Garland County Literacy Council, Garland County Jail Ministry and the Caring Place at First United Methodist Church.

She will be remembered for her greeting, "This is the day the Lord has made."

The family wishes to thank caregivers Stela Rusu, Linda Gower, the staff at Crown Trace Villa, St. Joseph's Mercy Hospital and Arkansas Hospice, along with Dr. William Wright and all of Wilson's medical care providers.

Memorials may be made to First United Methodist Church, 1100 Central Ave., Hot Springs AR 71901, or to a charity of your choice.

After a private burial in Greenwood Cemetery, a memorial service was held at First UMC Hot Springs on Monday, April 30, with the Rev. Bud Reeves officiating.

PARAGOULD

Roella Williams

Roella Alma Williams, 81, of Paragould passed away Saturday, April 21, 2012, at the Flo and Phil Jones Hospice House.



Roella Williams

She was born February 12, 1931, to Herman Earl and Dessie Jane Cole Williams. She was a homemaker and the wife of the Rev. Don Williams, a retired United Methodist minister.

She was preceded in death by her husband, her parents, two sisters and four brothers. Survivors include her daughters, Donna Roberta Williams of Paragould, Alma Rita Hastings of Beech Grove and Rhonda Gail Wicker of Tomball, Texas; a brother, Elvon Williams of Clever, Mo.; two sisters, Naomi Tritch of Marmaduke and Glenda Rothman of Jackson, Miss.; six grandchildren and seven great-grandchildren.

Funeral services were held Wednesday, April 25, at Heath Colonial Chapel, with the Rev. Zach Roberts officiating. Burial followed at Memorial Gardens Cemetery.

Memorials may be sent to First United Methodist Church, P.O. Box 667, Paragould, AR 72451-0667.

Dierks UMC women help Arkansas Hospice

The ladies of the Dierks quilting community responded recently to a request from Arkansas Hospice at St. Vincent's Hospital in Little Rock to make 47 lap quilts for hospice patients. The quilts were consecrated during a recent worship service at Dierks UMC.

Pictured are a few of the women who were part of the project: LaJenna Jones, Earnestine Moore, Bennie Faye Alsbrook, Sammie Winton and Sarah Anderson.



COURTESY PHOTO

"It is a wonderful ministry for these patients," said the Rev. Robert Lyons, the church's pastor.

McElroy UMC honors graduates with Baker Memorial scholarships

Since 2004, McElroy United Methodist Church Wynne has hosted an annual hamburger supper as a fundraiser for the Bob Baker Memorial Scholarship, which is given to the congregation's graduating high school seniors. This year, thanks to a



COURTESY PHOTO

successful fundraiser, a record number of seven seniors each received a \$500 scholarship.

The 2012 graduating seniors of McElroy UMC are: Jacob Bethell, Zac Brewington and Tyler Gaskin, who will attend Arkansas State University; Roland Biesinger, Aaron Merrill and Jenna Robertson, who will attend East Arkansas Community College; and Walker Mitchell, who will attend Henderson State University.

Hunger grant recipient develops kids' garden project



St. Mark UMC Pine Bluff/White Hall used a grant awarded last fall by the Conference Hunger Task Force to carry out a "Potted Garden Project" at the Boys and Girls Club of Jefferson County. Church members partnered with the club staff, a local Girl Scout troop, House of Levi and HOPE Community Coalition to make the event happen.

The project included a program presented by the local Cooperative Extension Agent, who taught the children about appropriate plant selection for a potted garden, gave plant care tips and answered questions. Each child then chose a vegetable to grow.

On planting day, each child received the requested vegetable plant, a pot, gloves, watering can, trowel and fertilizer. Parents who attended had an opportunity to participate in the planting process, as well. When harvest time comes, the children will enjoy a meal together that incorporates the foods they have grown.

COURTESY PHOTO

BOCS Breakfast Hosts

Dr. Joerg Rieger

Wendland-Cook Endowed Professor
of Constructive Theology

Perkins School of Theology
Southern Methodist University

7 a.m. Tuesday, June 12, 2012

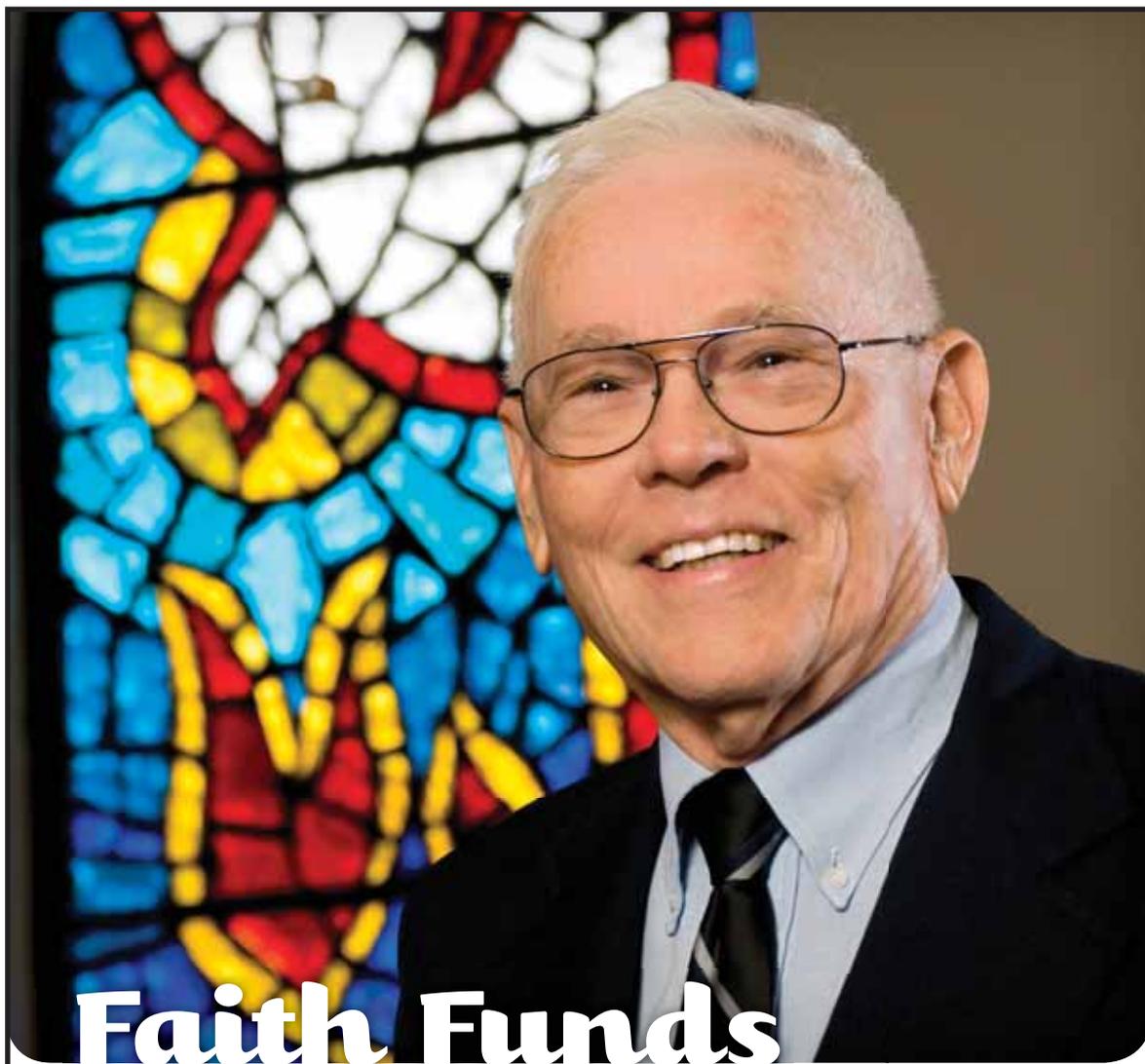
Goddard United Methodist Church

1922 Dodson Street — Fort Smith, AR

Tickets available online with
registration or contact

Doni Martin—fredoni@centurytel.net
or call 870.926.2107

Conference Board of Church and Society



Serving His Church Family Forever

Retired engineer Kenneth Brumley joined Wesley United Methodist Church when he moved to Conway 10 years ago to be near his daughter's family. Soon the entire congregation was family to Mr. Brumley. "My church is the focus of my life."

A lifelong Methodist, he teaches Sunday School, sings in the choir, and is past chairman of the Trustees for this congregation that averages 60-70 in services each week. Mr. Brumley spends most every day at Wesley UMC doing light maintenance tasks and working at their Bread Basket Food Bank that feeds 900-1,000 people a month.

"For my lifetime, I have extra income from an investment in a charitable gift annuity with the United Methodist Foundation," said Mr. Brumley. "But the best thing about having an annuity is that when I go, the money in my account is left to the church." Recently, he created a second gift annuity account with UMFA, further ensuring that the support he gives today to his church family can continue after his lifetime.

If you would like to learn more about how gift annuities can benefit United Methodist causes in Arkansas, contact UMFA Vice President of Development Janet Marshall at jmarshall@umfa.org or call her at the Foundation.



The United Methodist Foundation of Arkansas

5300 Evergreen Drive • Little Rock, Arkansas 72205

501-664-8632 • Toll free 877-712-1107 • Fax 501-664-6792 • www.umfa.org