



United Methodist Arkansas

May 2, 2008



Katie Meek (center) carries the Gospel during opening worship at the 2008 United Methodist General Conference in Fort Worth, Texas. UMNS photo by Mike DuBose

General Conference opens with 'resurrection hope'

■ Delegates from around the world gather

United Methodist News Service

FORT WORTH, Texas — On the 40th anniversary to the day of the creation of The United Methodist Church, and within 40 miles of where it happened, United Methodists from 129 annual conferences and 50 countries gathered at the Fort Worth Convention Center for the start of the 2008 General Conference.

Under the leadership of Marcia McFee of Truckee, Calif., and Mark Miller of Plainfield, N.J., co-music directors for the General Conference, more than 6,500 people filled the arena Wednesday night for a two-hour worship service.

The rousing worship featured praise bands, a full orchestra, choirs, music, prayers and Scripture in many tongues, and symbols of the Christian faith using ordinary elements of glass, wood, bread, fruit of the vine and water.

Bishops Gregory Palmer, Iowa Area, and Janice Riggle Huie, Houston Area, led the service of Holy Communion, with the Lords' Prayer being offered by each worshipper in his or her own native language.

Gathering around a table cast in the middle of the nearly 1,000 delegates



United Methodist Bishop Janice Riggle Huie, president of the Council of Bishops, preaches during opening worship at the 2008 United Methodist General Conference in Fort Worth, Texas. UMNS photo by Mike DuBose

seated on the arena floor, the gospel was read, the bread broken and the cup poured out.

The wood used to create the pulpit, the altar and the table was taken from the "hallowed grounds" of Gulfside Assembly in Waveland, Miss., noted McFee at the start of the worship service. Gulfside was completely destroyed by Hurricane Katrina in 2005.

Amid the pageantry, pomp and circumstance as bishops, banners and believers bedecked the arena, Huie's sermon sounded a clear call that, even in the midst of a world filled with AIDS, malaria, violence, global climate change and fear, United Methodists are called to live a life with hope — resurrection hope.

See OPENING, page 7

Church focuses on health, poverty, people, leaders

■ UMs called to reverse the pain and suffering of the world's poor

United Methodist News Service

FORT WORTH, Texas — Do United Methodists really want to welcome the poor and downtrodden into their midst? Or do they prefer those sitting in the pews to "look just like us?"

That question was posed by Bishop Felton May to delegates at General Conference during an April 24 presentation on four areas of focus that will guide the future work of the denomination's general agencies.

"Somehow, in our 40 years, pover-

ty became acceptable to us," he told the legislative gathering. "We permitted ourselves to join the rest of the world in complacency. But here, at our 40-year anniversary, for the love of God, The United Methodist Church declares, no more!"

That declaration drew applause from the delegates as May, who currently serves as the interim top executive for the United Methodist Board of Global Ministries, joined with the staff leaders of three other church agencies to explain the focus areas.

The four areas of focus are:
1) engaging in ministry with the poor;
2) creating new places for new people

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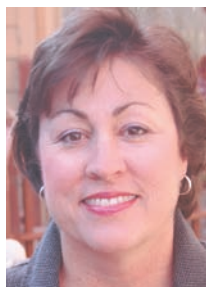


By Jane Dennis

Editor's Corner

Bless the children

Editor's Note: Jane is busy covering General Conference this week, so a trip to the archives is in order. This Editor's Corner was first printed Aug. 20, 2004.



Jane Dennis

We had a baptism at our house on Sunday afternoon. My 9-year-old was the officiant and the dolls wore matching royal blue winter coats which were pulled from the back of the closet and were only slightly too large. The water was pretend but the intent was full of seriousness.

I'm sure the inspiration came from the infant baptism we witnessed at church that morning. (And I thought they weren't paying attention.)

I was working on my computer (trying to wrap up this edition, in fact), when I heard the announcement sounded down the hall: "Ladies and gentlemen, we are going to have a bab-pa-tism!" Sidney proclaimed. "Will the family step forward?"

There was a rustling sound as everyone took their places. Then in a loud, booming voice, the "preacher" (Sidney) addressed the parents (in this case, Lindsey was doing double-duty as Mom and Dad):

"Will you keep the babies out of evil?" the preacher demanded to

know.

"Will you nourish them and help them grow?" she asked.

"Then I bless these babies in the name of God the son, God the father, and God the holy spirit," she continued.

"I bless these children and say they are bab-pa-tized."

At that moment, Lindsey switched roles and became the music leader. "Please turn to page 46 in your hymnal and we'll sing a song," she directed.

After singing several "Alleluias" with great gusto, the musical interlude was over, and those in attendance clapped heartily and whistled their approval as if they were at a rodeo or outdoor concert. (Some congregations are quite comfortable with clapping during worship, but it's been a while since I've heard much whistling in church!)

And with that, the "bab-pa-tism" was official.

I think they got it just about right. Avoid evil. Do what you can to help your children grow up with a "right" heart. Seek God's direction and blessings. These are solid principles to live by no matter what the age or calling, and regardless of whether you've been baptized or "bab-pa-tized."

Finance report emphasizes abundance over scarcity

United Methodist News Service

FORT WORTH, Texas — In a world that has embraced the "myth of scarcity" amidst a "culture of consumption," God offers abundant life through Jesus Christ — a spiritual truth that the church must live out and reflect in managing its own finances.

Speaking on behalf of the finance agency of The United Methodist Church, Los Angeles Area Bishop Mary Ann Swenson delivered that message April 24 to the 2008 United Methodist General Conference, the church's top legislative session.

"The idea that 'more is better' ... is an American idea that has spread around the globe, and it has become toxic," said Swenson, president of the board for the General Council on Finance and Administration. "It is a turbulent, muddy river that has flooded and polluted our ability to see the

abundance of what God has already given to us."

The 992 delegates are scheduled to vote on a churchwide budget on May 2, the closing day of the 10-day gathering. The proposed \$642 million spending plan would fund denominational ministries during the four-year period beginning in January 2009. For the first time in the church's history, the budget was developed around four primary areas of emphasis: cultivating principled Christian leaders, starting new congregations and revitalizing existing ones, engaging in ministry with the poor, and stamping out the diseases of poverty.

"Our God is an abundant God, who has given every gift needed to fulfill our purpose," Swenson said. That abundance, she said, should be reflected in the mission and ministry of the church.



Letters to the Editor

Progressives?

The accepted "Title Du Jour" for those who consider themselves the "Thinkers" of the church is "Progressives." It seems they believe themselves to have a monopoly on "thinking" and "progress" as they advocate change for a more "intellectually honest form of faith." Change of methods and means is indeed a necessity as the world changes, but truth always remains truth.

C.S. Lewis (no mean thinker himself, with his Oxford and Cambridge ties) stated it so eloquently: "We all want progress. But progress means getting nearer to the place where you want to be. And if you have taken a wrong turning, then to go forward does not get you any nearer. ... progress means doing an about turn

and walking back to the right road; and in that case the man who turns back sooner is the most progressive. When I have started a sum the wrong way (doing arithmetic), the sooner I admit this and go back and start again, the faster I shall get on. Going back is the quickest way on" (from "Mere Christianity").

Andrew Thompson (Arkansas United Methodist, "Gen-X Rising" April 4) said that when Christians ache for renewal of the church they always look back to a time when their forebears were living more faithfully, and he concluded, "That's the reason for the 're' in renew, revive and restore."

Now that's real progress!

Carolyn Elias
Hot Springs



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Volume 127 • No. 9 May 2, 2008

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The *Arkansas United Methodist* is the newspaper of record for the United Methodist Church in Arkansas. It is published twice monthly — on the first and third Fridays of each month, for a total of 24 issues per year.

Offices are located on the campus of Philander Smith College, 2 Trudie Kibbe Reed Dr., Little Rock, Ark. 72202.

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Change of address notification should be sent to *Arkansas United Methodist*, 2 Trudie Kibbe Reed Dr., Little Rock, AR 72202; or e-mailed to Karen Wilson at kwilson@arumc.org

Subscription price is \$15 per year (24 issues) or \$25 for 2 years (48 issues) for the print version and \$10 (1 year) and \$17 (2 years) for the online digital edition. Special rates offered to retired

clergy and surviving spouses of clergy. Send name, address, church name and payment to: *Arkansas United Methodist*, 2 Trudie Kibbe Reed Dr., Little Rock, AR 72202, or email kwilson@arumc.org.

Individuals may subscribe and pay for subscriptions online at www.arumc.org/aum. Both print and digital editions of the publication are available. For details, go to www.arumc.org/aum.

Signed letters and opinion articles reflect the views of the author and not necessarily those of the *Arkansas United Methodist* or The United Methodist Church.

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POSTMASTER: Send address changes to: *Arkansas United Methodist*, 2 Trudie Kibbe Reed Dr., Little Rock, AR 72202.

Periodical Class Postage Paid at Little Rock, Ark. USPS 012-236 ISSN 1080-2819

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Viewpoint

Dear Friends:

General Conference has begun. The end of the story is not yet written. By the time you read this, it will be moving toward a conclusion. The beginning has been inspiring, hope-filled, challenging and expectant. Real problems have been recognized and proposals have been articulated. Opportunities for mission and ministry have been identified and shared. Prayers for “holy conferencing” have ascended.

Underneath all the sermons, the speeches, the proposals from special



An Occasional Word from the Bishop

interest groups and over against the “hot-button” issue debates, the continuing drum beat is the call to “make disciples for Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.” Of course this takes many forms. One of the most exciting moments of the activities was Bishop Thomas Bickerton’s dramatic presentation on the power of the “Nothing But

Nets” campaign. Only \$10 will save a life in Africa from malaria by supplying a net for a child. Just think, \$10 for a life. (You will have an opportunity to support this at our annual conference or through your local church.)

It appears to me that the driving



Charles Crutchfield

mood of the conference at this point is to write a conclusion to the conference that is more about engagement with mission and ministry than about maintenance of the machinery.

We have much to do in our conference in the days ahead. There is no excuse for not making disciples of Jesus Christ or transforming the community in the name and spirit of Jesus Christ with the disciples we already have. I look forward to sharing that ministry with you.

Faithfully,

Charles Crutchfield



It takes a village (or a church) to raise a pastor

People within the United Methodist Church have had a general sense that the average age of clergy was steadily getting older. But findings published two

years ago by the Lewis Center for Church Leadership at Wesley Theological Seminary in Washington, D.C., showed just how dramatic the aging of clergy had become.



Andrew Thompson

We now have a mere 850 clergy under the age of 35. That’s a drop from more than 3,200 in 1985.

Besides presenting facts and figures, Lovett Weems and Ann Michel offer suggestions in their new book “The Crisis of Younger Clergy” (Abingdon Press) about how the church can deal constructively with the trends they represent.

Interestingly, they say that one reason commonly cited for the low numbers of younger clergy — attrition — is actually incorrect. The levels of satisfaction about life and ministry on the part of young clergy are “strikingly high.” Contrary to the perception that young pastors are “beleaguered, dissatisfied, and on the verge of dropping out of ministry,” Dr. Weems and Ms. Michel report that young clergy are fulfilled and positively challenged by ministry.

Young clergy do face some signifi-



Gen-X Rising

By Andrew Thompson

cant problems, and a good chunk of this book is dedicated to looking at these problems and suggesting solutions. But once young men and women enter into the ministry, they tend to be happy that they did so.

The flip side of the coin is that fewer and fewer young people are responding to the call to ministry in general. And this is the real source of the declining numbers of young clergy.

The ordained ministry was once the most likely destination of college graduates in the United States. Now the numbers are so low, clergy would not appear anywhere on a list of most sought-after professions.

Dr. Weems and Ms. Michel take it as a given that God has not stopped calling people into ministry. Rather, they say, “the dilemma is that the church is allowing so many younger persons to ignore God’s call.”

But why would this be the case? Why would the church allow God’s call to fall on deaf ears?

The reasons are complex. One area the authors do not attempt to cover is the changing view of the church in American culture in general. When a society becomes more secular — as ours undoubtedly is — then a changing view of what constitutes the “good life” is sure to follow.

The good life in an increasingly consumer culture is tied to salary, purchasing power and possessions. So the most prestigious professions are going to be those whose financial rewards are greatest.

Where Dr. Weems and Ms. Michel do hit the nail on the head is when they talk about the need for a culture of nurture and formation in the church. Personal involvement with youth, real appreciation of young people’s views and an atmosphere where God’s call is discussed and encouraged are all factors that affect whether or not a young person will be open to hearing God’s call.

Some years ago, Hillary Clinton wrote “It Takes a Village,” a book on raising children. The title refers to the

deep impact that people from all parts of society have on a child’s education and maturation.

Similarly, it takes a village to raise a pastor. Except that the village in question is the church! Every person with whom a child or teenager comes into contact could have an impact on that child’s ability to respond to God’s call.

“God is always calling persons to ministry,” Dr. Weems and Ms. Michel tell us. “However, all of us in the church are recognizing in a new way the need to work together to encourage and support persons in hearing and responding to this call.”

That means the next generation of clergy needs all of us, if we want them to have ears to hear God’s call on their lives.

[Andrew C. Thompson, an elder in the Arkansas Conference, is a doctoral student at Duke Divinity School. He can be reached at andrew@mandatum.org.]

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FOR HEAVEN’S SAKE By Mike Morgan



■ 2008 Laity Address

Invitation, personal ministry make disciples

United Methodist News Service

FORT WORTH, Texas — If the laity of The United Methodist Church want to reclaim the Methodist heritage of winning communities for Christ, they have to invite people to church, carry the name of Christ with them and claim a personal ministry.

That is the advice Lyn Powell, lay leader of the North Georgia Annual Conference, gave to the 992 delegates attending the 2008 United Methodist General Conference.

The denomination's top legislative assembly meets every four years, and the Laity Address is one of the highlights of the meeting. General Conference draws delegates from around the world to establish policies for the 11.5 million-member denomination.

Powell's April 24 Laity Address, titled "Disciples Transforming the World," challenged the lay people to reclaim spiritual gifts that would bring people to Christ. The New Testament considers adding new members to the church to be of utmost priority, she said.

Recognizing the 'clarion call'

While the central conferences — those areas in Africa, Asia and Europe — understand "the clarion call" and



are doubling their membership percentages, the church in the United States does not have a positive report, she said.

The United Methodist Church in the United States lost 55,000 members in 2007 and 70,000 in 2006, and 60,000 the year before that, adding to the annual decline in membership in the U.S. church since the 1970s, Powell said. Nearly 8 million people now belong to the United Methodist Church in the United States. There are 11.5 million United Methodists worldwide.

Why is there a decline in membership when there are unchurched and under-churched people surrounding every United Methodist church in the country? she asked. Why are 80 percent of the residents in most U.S. counties not meaningfully connected to a church? Why did 42 percent of the denomination's 34,398 U.S. churches



Lyn Powell delivers the Laity Address April 24 to the 2008 United Methodist General Conference. Powell is the lay leader of the North Georgia Annual Conference. The legislative assembly is convened once every four years. UMNS photo by Paul Jeffrey

not have a person join by profession of faith? she asked, citing a church statistic for 2006.

Powell cited the famous tag line of the comic strip character Pogo, who said, "We have met the enemy and ... they is us." She said, "Well, we have

met the answers to our questions, and they is us."

Equipping for ministry

The Apostle Paul brought people to Christ by preaching the gospel to anyone who would listen, she said. Church buildings and clergy and laity did not exist when Paul began his ministry, but with an understanding of the gospel, Paul established churches in town after town, and trained people for ministry.

"These designated pastors did not do ministry themselves; they equipped the laity to go out and do ministry," Powell said. The training, equipping and use of their spiritual gifts were so effective, that 2,000 years later Christianity is flourishing. "A few pastors could never have accomplished that alone. Only the laity, on fire for Jesus Christ, equipped by the pastors, could do such a thorough job of converting the known world to Christianity," she said.

Laity have lost the skills needed to engage the community and bring the entire community to Christ, she said. She noted a historic book of fiction called Gilead in which a nondenominational pastor talks about a group of 300 Methodists gathered by a river in the late 1800s. The church would throw open the windows to hear the Methodists singing and listen to the jubilant and spirited preaching.

Those Methodists at the river were not ordained pastors but 300 "committed, passionate lay Methodists, equipped by their pastors, who understood that it takes a whole congregation to win the community to Christ. The pastor cannot do it alone," she said.

Quoting Lovett Weems Jr., professor of church leadership and director of the Lewis Center for Church Leadership of Wesley Theological Seminary, Washington, D.C., she said a community must see itself in the church and if it does not, the church will begin to decline.

"If we are going to be 'Disciples Transforming the World,' then we have to get out in it," Powell said. "And who better to get out in it than the laity?"



United Methodists raise their hands in praise during opening worship for the 2008 United Methodist General Conference in Fort Worth, Texas. UMNS photo by John C. Goodwin

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General Conference Digest

FORT WORTH, Texas — A host of issues were highlighted in the first days of the 2008 General Conference, meeting here April 23-May 2.

■ **The General Council** on Finance and Administration, the church's finance agency, works with the 60-member Connectional Table to balance the mission needs of the denomination with the ability of local churches to fund the programs. Delegates learned that the two units are proposing a quadrennial budget of \$642 million. The spending plan is developed around the four Areas of Focus.

The budget is based on a formula in which, for every \$1,000 that is received in a congregation, \$854 remains in the local church, \$124 supports district and annual conference ministries, and \$22 goes to denominational ministries.

■ **Delegates joined** in a celebration of Katherine Commale, who at age 5 learned that a child dies of mosquito-borne malaria every 30 seconds. She launched an effort that raised \$40,000 for mosquito nets. The 7-year-old was part of a presentation by the Connectional Table.

■ **A lunchtime rally** was held April 24 near the Fort Worth Convention Center by some 300 United Methodists who oppose H.R. 4088, a bill focused on strict enforcement of immigration laws. The group also backs General Conference resolutions that seek immigration reform.

■ **The body heard** a report from the Judicial Council saying two paragraphs of the Book of Discipline dealing with the complex process of nominating and electing members of general agencies are in conflict and should be reconciled at this session of the General Conference. The Discipline is the denomination's book of law.

■ **A press conference** April 24 featured the Rev. Drew Phoenix, pastor of St. John's United Methodist Church in Baltimore. He said he took "steps toward wholeness" two years ago when he underwent surgery and hormone therapy to switch his gender from female to male. He was reappointed when Bishop John R. Schol said the 2004 Book of Discipline does not prohibit a transgender pastor from being appointed. General Conference



Katherine Commale, 7, who attends Hopewell UMC in Downingtown, Pa., smiles during a press conference following her introduction to the delegates of the 2008 United Methodist General Conference. The 7-year-old has raised more than \$40,000 for Nothing But Nets, an anti-malaria campaign supported by the people of The United Methodist Church.

will act on resolutions declaring that neither transgenderism nor transsexuality "reflects God's best intentions for humankind."

■ **The United Methodist Church** will receive a \$5 million grant to fight malaria and other diseases of poverty. The grant comes from the United Nations Foundation with help from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. Announcement of the grant came on World Malaria Day, April 25, the third day of the 2008 General Conference.

In making the announcement, Bishop Thomas Bickerton said the goal is to raise \$100 million. Each net costs \$10, and the effort has raised more than \$20 million since it began in 2006.

The bishop placed a \$10 bill for the campaign on the Communion table in the center of the arena. Delegates followed his lead and placed a total of \$13,530 next to his bill.

■ **Delegates from** affiliated autonomous Methodist churches, affiliated united churches and concordat churches were introduced to the body. Latin American/Caribbean delegates came from Puerto Rico, Ecuador, Costa Rica, Argentina, Dominican Republic, Bolivia, Panama, Brazil, Cuba, Uruguay, Chile, Peru and Mexico. Other countries sending delegates included the Philippines, Korea, India, Indonesia, Singapore, Myanmar, Hong Kong, the Republic of China (Taiwan) and Japan.

■ **The United Methodist Task Force** on Immigration sponsored a press conference at a Disciples of Christ church across the street from the Fort Worth Convention Center, where General Conference is being held. David Farley, pastor of Echo Park (Los Angeles) United Methodist Church, said the plight of immigrants is a "humanitarian crisis, a moral outrage and an affront to God." He told some 175 people attending the conference that more than 800,000 people are displaced annually.

■ **Outside the plenary** sessions, delegates and church officials reacted to word that a coalition of renewal groups had provided free cell phones to more than 150 African and

Filipino delegates to use during General Conference. Some expressed concern that the coalition was trying to sway the votes of the delegates.

A letter from the coalition announced the cell phone giveaway as a service that might be helpful to overseas delegates, while also suggesting the delegates consider a particular slate of members for Judicial Council. A coalition member said the phones were provided to give the delegates the same access to communications and materials as U.S. delegates.

During a April 26 plenary, delegates asked the 2009-2012 Commission on General Conference to create an ethics committee to review such matters.



Delegates and visitors to the 2008 United Methodist General Conference help load donated sweet potatoes for area hungry.

UMNS photo by John C. Goodwin

■ **Delegates, bishops,** general agency staffers and visitors helped load 40,000 pounds of sweet potatoes into trucks and other vehicles for distribution to area social service agencies that feed the hungry.

The "potato drop" was sponsored by the Society of St. Andrew, a national hunger-relief agency based in Virginia, and the Task Force on Hunger of the Central Texas Conference.

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PRIORITIES, continued from page 1 —

and renewing existing congregations; 3) stamping out diseases of poverty by improving health globally; and 4) developing principled Christian leaders for the church and the world.

John Wesley, the founder of Methodism, considered health and wholeness to be a matter of spiritual concern, and Larry Hollon, chief executive, United Methodist Communications, pointed out that “reversing the pain and physical suffering experienced by the world’s poor is a powerful, tangible method of serving as God’s witness.”

Jerome King Del Pino, chief executive, United Methodist Board of Higher Education and Ministry, admitted that stamping out disease is an “ambitious” notion. But, he said, church leaders “believe that by interconnecting the resources, capacities and skills of the entire United Methodist community, we can help to significantly reduce deaths caused by the diseases of poverty.”

Such work can be accomplished by creating and renewing congregations, according to Karen Greenwaldt, chief executive, United Methodist Board of Discipleship.

“Jesus calls us to bring more people to follow Christ to the cross ... to give their very lives for the gospel,” she said. “We do so because we have encountered God’s love — and our response compels us to move out to share the story of Jesus’ love with all kinds of people. These new Christians find healing for their broken lives and move to heal the brokenness of the world.”

Principled Christian leaders also are needed. “We live in a world that once had courageous Christian leaders, but now cries out for them — the kinds of women and men who are set apart to



Due to newspaper deadlines, this issue includes information about only the first four days of the 2008 General Conference. The May 16 *Arkansas United Methodist* will report on the remainder of the legislative session in Fort Worth, Texas.

show by example how to live faithfully in bold discipleship and to engage a world starving for the gospel,” Del Pino said.

“This focus area is not about recruiting pastors to occupy pulpits on Sundays — while that would be a critical and needed result,” Hollon explained. “Instead, it is about cultivating a whole new paradigm of leadership that can engage a culture that has evolved in its color, complexity and global interconnectivity ... and is no longer hospitable to the message of Christ.”

To achieve the denomination’s goals, the agencies will integrate their budgets around the four focus areas.

Among the goals on poverty:

- Increase by 25 percent service to the poor in the United States through the 102 existing mission institutions.
- Train and place 50 indigenous leaders with strategic mission partners in poor locales to respond to critical issues of importance to women and children.
- Develop five pilot projects to respond to poverty in Africa, Asia, Latin America and the United States.
- Train one advocate for the poor



United Methodist agency leaders celebrate following their April 24 address on the four new areas of focus for the denomination during the 2008 United Methodist General Conference in Fort Worth, Texas. Standing (from left) are Jerome King Del Pino, Karen Greenwaldt, Bishop Felton May and Larry Hollon.

UMNS photos by Mike DuBose

in every annual conference.

Goals for global health:

- Work with international partners to reduce by 66 percent malaria-related deaths of children under the age of 5.
- Develop opportunities for 60 percent of annual conferences to become involved with advocacy for health issues such as access to health care, disease, and infant mortality.
- Deploy 53 new missionaries for global health, along with medical missionaries, to Africa, Asia and Latin America.
- Expand by 20 percent programs designed to address substance abuse and related violence.

Goals for new and renewed congregations:

- Find people on the edge of society not now being addressed in United Methodist congregations.
- Start 400 churches outside the United States by the end of the year 2012.
- Recruit 1,000 new church planters to start 650 new churches in the United States, in partnership with annual conferences, targeting 50 percent of those to be racial and ethnic congregations.
- Develop 10 new intentional multi-cultural churches and revitalize

22 town and country and urban churches.

Goals for Christian leadership:

- Provide short-term mission experiences for 100 young people to explore and reflect on professional Christian service.
- Train 9,500 people in theology, church administration, evangelism, discipleship formation and mission outreach in Africa and Asia.
- Build a network of 100 prophetic pastors and lay members around the world and provide them with opportunities to work for social justice.
- Increase by 25 percent the number of candidates for ordained ministry who are under age 35.
- Increase by 20 percent the number of women senior pastors serving large-membership churches in The United Methodist Church.

“Now thousands — and soon we hope millions — of our brothers and sisters across the church are joining us in eschewing the status quo and embracing the discomfort of this bold new endeavor,” May said. “For the four Areas of Focus greet us as a challenge and an invitation to set aside our differences and get on with mission and ministry as co-laborers with Jesus Christ.”

Basketball games raise money for ‘nets’

FORT WORTH, Texas — Some delegates and visitors to General Conference attended a Nothing But Nets basketball tournament held by the Central Texas and North Texas conferences at First United Methodist Church in Fort Worth.

The tournament between the conferences began at the local church level last June. To participate, all players paid \$10 — the cost to buy and distrib-

ute one bed net to prevent malaria-carrying mosquitoes from biting.

Through proceeds of the basketball tournament and offerings, the two conferences have raised \$300,000 for Nothing But Nets.

Among those watching games on April 26 were members of Uganda’s Hope for Africa Children’s Choir, many of whom have been orphaned by malaria, HIV/AIDS and war.



Delegates from Nigeria pray over covenant cards they have signed during the 2008 United Methodist General Conference in Fort Worth, Texas. From left are Dan Zogimba Danjuma, Isa Audu Dunah and Nuhu G. Bulus.

UMNS photo by Mike DuBose

Young people call United Methodists to action now

United Methodist News Service

FORT WORTH, Texas — Six young people stood before United Methodists from around the world and challenged the church to listen, be bold and believe the church's future is in good hands.

At times, delegates to the 2008 United Methodist General Conference cheered and clapped in response to the multimedia presentation, which included videos, photos, drumming and singing.

The first-ever Young People's Address to General Conference was given by Becca Farnum, 17, of Mount Pleasant, Mich.; Kira Volkova, 24, of Kirov, Russia; Annie Arnoldy, 29, of Grand Junction, Colo.; Andrew Craig, 16, of Denver; Matt Lockett, 20, of Seattle; and Jason Rathod, 24, of Hastings, Neb. They were chosen by the Division on Ministries with Young People, Board of Discipleship, to speak to the denomination's top legislative assembly.



Kira Volkova, 24, of Kirov, Russia, helps give the first-ever Young People's Address during the 2008 General Conference.

Historically, the worldwide gathering has included only an Episcopal Address by a bishop and a Laity Address by a layperson.

"We have shared stories of persecution, homelessness, and what it means to be a young person in a world desperately in need of Jesus," said Lockett. "What you do with what you have heard is really up to you."

Setting an example

Farnum said young people set an example for the church to practice holy conferencing during the 2007 Global Young People's Convocation and Legislative Assembly in South Africa. She said rather than focusing

on personal agendas, the young people began listening to each other.

"It worked for the young people in Johannesburg," she said. "It can work for those of us gathered here in Fort Worth."

Delegates were challenged to resist "showboating and name calling."

"On the local level, we've started believing that we're so far apart on the major issues of the day that we can only find common ground in hosting potlucks and singing praise songs," Rathod said.

"What I know about the church is that it yearns for young people," said Arnoldy. "What I know about young adults is that they yearn for a place to belong. This seems like a pretty fruitful situation."

Vibrant possibility

"It takes courage to admit you are a Protestant Christian in the Orthodox society, where rituals and traditions can seem more important than personal relationships with God," said Volkova, a young adult pastor in Kirov, Russia.

"In Russian society, where many young people try to find happiness by drinking or drugs or smoking, The United Methodist Church offers a safe place where you can grow strong and find support and understanding."

Craig challenged delegates to be



Andrew Craig, 16, of Denver helps give the first-ever Young People's Address during the 2008 United Methodist General Conference. UMNS photo by Mike DuBose

"God's seeds of hope." The young people's addresses were emotional and personal. When Craig finished one segment of his speech, he sang "God will take care of you, through every day, o'er all the way. God will take care of you," to resounding clapping from the delegates.

Rathod said that when the church does its part to plant a seed, it can know "it will bear the Lord's fruit."

"Some say that this task is too great, that the church doesn't have the resources to make a big enough difference," he said. "But Scripture gives us a different message. It tells us to have strength and to 'be not afraid' because we can overcome any challenge."

Faith for young people is about interaction, the six young people said.

"Many voices, one call," Lockett said.

The six concluded their presentation side by side on the stage and said, "Believe in us. Believe that the future of the church is in good hands. We're ready. The time is now. Let us begin."

OPENING, *continued from page 1*

Preaching from Romans 8:18-28, Huie said that today, the word "hope" was becoming a "marshmallow word. It sounds soft. It looks sweet and appealing. Get it close to the fire, and hope melts off the stick and drips on the ground."

Hope, Huie said, is not only the theme of this 2008 General Conference, it is the "nerve center" of the Christian life.

"It is impossible to live without hope," she said. "Show me someone without hope and I will show you someone who is either dead or so desperate that they are capable of the most awful violence."

To counter this sense of hopelessness, we have our Bible, which the bishop said is nothing but a story of hope.

"The Apostle Paul paints hope on a cosmic canvas of salvation history," Huie said. "The focal point of the painting is the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

"Resurrection hope transforms lives and changes the future," the bishop said. "Tonight, through us, the people of the United Methodist Church gather around this table filled with resurrection hope.

"Hope is the nerve center of the Christian life," said Huie. "Love is the heart. Faith is the muscle. It is impossible to live without hope."

The bishop related stories of visits she made to local churches in Arkansas and Texas, the two episcopal areas she has served. On those visits, she often asked about the church's mission.

"I've lost count of the number of times I've heard this response: 'Mission? We just hope we can survive another year.'"

When Paul used the word "hope" five times in this Scripture, Huie said, "He was not describing a sweet, sappy kind of hope that evaporates in the noonday sun. He is not describing wishful thinking. He is describing the sure confidence of a future reality."

The bishop shared a poignant story she learned from Elizabeth McKee Gore, a United Methodist laywoman who works at the United Nations Foundation with the Nothing But Nets campaign to eradicate malaria.

While on a trip to Angola, Elizabeth met Esperanca Afonco, an 8-year-old girl. Esperanca was sick and in the hospital with both AIDS and malaria. The doctors had given her

only weeks to live.

Huie said that Elizabeth wrote about meeting Esperanca at the hospital. What struck her was that in the hospital, Esperanca's mother, Bela, had decorated the bed to look like it was fit for a Disney World princess. A pink bed net was draped over the bed, the dolls and the child.

Even Esperanca was pretty in a pink dress. All this in contrast to the drab surroundings of the other beds in other wards, filled with two or three to a bed.

The doctor asked Bela, "Why have you worked so hard to create such a lovely environment?"

The mother replied: "We have to have hope."

"Resurrection hope gives us the courage to stand beside the bed of a



Mark Miller, co-director of worship, leads singing during the April 23 opening worship celebration of the 2008 United Methodist General Conference in Fort Worth, Texas. UMNS photo by Paul Jeffrey

loved one with terminal disease," Huie said. "Resurrection hope overcomes the insults of institutional racism. Resurrection hope plants new seed when the rains finally come. Resurrection hope rebuilds homes and lives after a storm.

"We are no longer captives to fear. We are heirs to a new covenant — a new future."

And please, the bishop said to the church, do not forget Esperanca this week. In Portuguese, Huie said, "Esperanca means 'hope.'"

UM delegates receive message of hope

■ *Christians called to address the world's hungers with the hope of Christ*

United Methodist News Service

FORT WORTH, Texas — The 992 delegates and visitors attending the legislative assembly of The United Methodist Church were provided with a message of hope, reconciliation and a blueprint for Christian life.

In a prayer for the church and the rest of the world, Bishop Sharon Brown Christopher of the Illinois Great Rivers Annual Conference said people “in God’s human family” hunger for hope.

Hope was the theme of the Episcopal Address, delivered on behalf of United Methodist bishops to the 2008 United Methodist General Conference. That address, the Laity Address, along with a first-ever Young People’s Address, are highlights of this April 23-May 2 meeting, which brought delegates and visitors from around the



world together to discuss and handle matters for the denomination.

Christopher’s April 24 message at the Fort Worth Convention Center was filled with songs and provocative multimedia and multisensory images about how people received and experienced hope, gave hope and were transformed by encountering Christ and engaging in Christian community. The message allowed the delegates to experience hope rather than listening to the often-delivered message about the church.

“All around this world there is physical, mental and spiritual hunger for the bread of life,” she said.

There are various types of hunger — food, education, freedom, meaning

and purpose, and a relationship with God. But, “in the midst of the world’s hunger pangs we gathered here and connected around the world, are the church of Jesus Christ — The United Methodist Church — together with Christians with names and histories different from our own yet bound with us in common mission,” she said.

Christopher spoke of a church built just outside of a cemetery in Manila, Philippines, which offers hope and a future to the people, especially the children, who live in the tombs, and of a former addict in Nashville, Tenn., who met a United Methodist faith community, was transformed and is now transforming others.

She spoke of battle-scarred Richard Toby of Liberia, who risked his life to bring Christ to others during that country’s civil war, and of Candis Shannon of Fairbanks, Alaska, who was 31 years old when she lost her hearing as a result of meningitis. On video, Shannon talked about how she



Bishop Sharon Brown Christopher delivers the Episcopal Address during the 2008 United Methodist General Conference.

UMNS photo by Mike DuBose

found hope after participating in church worship services.

When people meet Jesus Christ, “relationships rent by class, race, political and ideological perspectives are mended and justice is restored,” she said.

Pension initiative needs millions more

United Methodist News Service

FORT WORTH, Texas — For many retired United Methodist pastors serving in Africa, the Philippines and Eastern Europe, retirement often becomes “a transition to homelessness,” said Barbara A. Boigegrain, chief executive of the church’s Board of Pension and Health Benefits.

Boigegrain made that statement in a video during an April 26 report from the Central Conference Pension Initiative to the 2008 United Methodist General Conference, the quadrennial meeting of the church’s top legislative body.

Bishop Benjamin Chamness, Fort Worth Area, told delegates the initiative has raised \$7.8 million but needs \$20 million to fully fund pensions for retired pastors in areas outside of the United States. He challenged delegates

to contribute to the fund while at General Conference.

Bishop John Innis, Liberia, also thanked United Methodists who have contributed to the initiative. Liberia started receiving quarterly pension payments in 2007 as the first pilot pension project. Innis reported the program is working even though many of the retired pastors can only be reached by walking six or seven hours.

“These retirees are so deserving,” he said. “United Methodists, God bless you. You saw a need, and you stepped forward.”

The United Methodist Church, directed by its 2000 and 2004 General Conferences, has been developing pension models to help pastors and church lay workers in annual conferences outside the United States retire with dignity, hope and an adequate income.



Above: Arkansas delegate C.E. McAdoo (left) looks on as delegate Joseph Daniels of the Baltimore-Washington Area addresses a session of the Local Church legislative committee of the 2008 United Methodist General Conference.

UMNS photo by Paul Jeffrey

Below: Arkansas delegate Rodney Steele (center) joins in a Judicial Administration sub-committee discussion. The first week of the quadrennial gathering being held in Fort Worth, Texas, included numerous sessions of the 13 legislative committees.

UMNS photo by Patrick Shownes



TRAVEL TO THE HOLY LAND...



Rev. and Mrs. Johnson with their daughter, Ashley, at Caesarea on the Mediterranean

... with REV. SIEGFRIED JOHNSON, Senior Pastor of First UMC Mountain Home, on an 11-day journey of a lifetime to the Holy Land, departing Little Rock on April 21, 2009. Having led a dozen trips with Educational Opportunities to the Holy Land and Greece/Turkey, Rev. Johnson — whose graduate studies focused on Hebrew and Semitic Literature/Archaeology — is an experienced tour leader. You will see the Sea of Galilee, Capernaum, Nazareth, Megiddo, the Old City of Jerusalem, Bethlehem, Masada, and much more. For details or questions, contact Rev. Johnson at sjohnsonfumcmh.org, or at (870) 425-6036.

ISLAND TIME

Missioners discover there are lessons to be learned from easy-going island lifestyle

By **JORDAN KENNEDY**

On March 8, I took off my watch for the first time in several years. I had no means with which to measure the word late. Rushing to complete a task was not necessary. The freedom that accompanied the simple task of removing my watch set the tone for an entire week, to be lived in a new way: on island time.

During spring break, I was one of 10 students from Hendrix College to travel to Eleuthera, a narrow island in the Bahamas. This week, however, wasn't intended for fun in the sun. Our week was meant to be spent serving the local people. Who knew that doing so could actually be so much fun? Who knew the fulfillment that could come with letting go one's own wants and needs in order to meet someone else's?

During orientation for this trip, we were advised to be flexible and release all expectations for our trip. I'm not sure any of us knew quite what that meant until we arrived in Nassau. Very quickly did we learn of this new thing called island time. On island time, flights leave early. People arrive late. Schedules are not important. As our guide Shaun Ingraham put it, "Our plan is to not have a plan."

Instead of handing us an itinerary the day we arrived, Shaun gave us his ear and his time. He spent the first two days getting to know us and asking lots of questions. Why did we want to spend our spring break doing work for other people? What were our interests? Our goals? There was no template for him to place our group within. Instead, he learned what our gifts were and then placed us within the community in locations we could best use those gifts.

Using gifts and graces

Shaun jumped on the opportunity to use five girls within our group who were artistically able. Being an art major, I am passionate about showing love and help creatively. I couldn't believe there was an opportunity for me to do that on this trip. Along with



Students from Hendrix College who participated in a mission trip to Eleuthera, Bahamas, over spring break learned to appreciate the pace and advantages of "island time" while designing and completing signs for local mission agencies.

four other girls, we spent two days creating a logo and painting two double-sided billboards. One billboard advertised the South Eleuthera Emergency Partners, a new local organization that provides volunteer fire truck and ambulance services. They also have plans to build a community park. This billboard enabled the organization to be advertised within the community, to locals and tourists alike and also to track their fund-raising efforts and progress. We also designed a logo that can be used in the future for letterheads and with public relations materials.

The second billboard advertised a new community research development center that provides meeting rooms, a museum, a space to display art and a research center. Other volunteer groups that come in are working on the building of this facility. Our sign advertised to the community that very soon they will be able to enjoy such a facility.

I left Eleuthera overwhelmed at the hospitality our group experienced. From the moment we stepped inside the mission house where we were staying, we were greeted with fresh

fruit and snacks. More important, though, than the physical signs of hospitality were the smiles and warm words that welcomed us into this town. Eleuthera is very different from the more popular, developed islands, such as Nassau. The land is completely unspoiled with no high-rise buildings or hotels. It is an impoverished area that relies completely on import from Nassau and shows years of hurricane damage amongst the land. Yet, on this island that lacks little material success are the friendliest and most content people I have ever met.

Sharing what's important

It was refreshing to meet a people whose happiness was not based on having the latest technical gadget or highest fashion. The people we encountered show their happiness the most when they are able to share the beauty of Eleuthera and all it had to offer; for them to say, "Welcome to our home. Stay a while Please make yourself comfortable."

We weren't treated as tourists in their land. We were treated as family. Shaun let us know that we weren't to feel like partners with the people of

Eleuthera as we served the community; we were to feel as brothers and sisters. Never before have I felt so welcome in an unfamiliar place. It is my hope that one day I can show even half the hospitality the men and women showed to our group.

While our week was full of hard work and laughter, beautiful water and delicious food, it is the way in which the people carried their life that made the biggest impression. They live day to day. They cherish the moments they have with each other. Their lack of many modern-day technologies doesn't stop them from getting jobs done, while realizing not everything can be accomplished in one day. They have created a balance.

Live the question

As Shaun told our group, "Live the question. It is so easy to be immobilized by the questions that lure in the future. What's the next step? Where will I go to school? How will I pay my loans? How will I get all this work done? But instead of being overwhelmed to the point of nothing being accomplished, actively live a life that is seeking answers to those questions. So don't just ask the questions, *live* the question."

That phrase rings so true in my life at the moment as I prepare for finals and summer activities. Since hearing that statement, the lens through which I view this world has changed. Tasks of the future don't seem daunting because I know I can actively work toward accomplishing them.

At times, I wonder what island time would look like in the states. I'm not so sure it would work. I feel confident there would be quite a few college professors with students who arrive 30 minutes late to class. Perhaps island time is better left in the Bahamas. What a sweet day it will be when if I get to return to that place. Until then, I will keep living the question ... and possibly rely upon my watch a little less.

[Jordan Kennedy, a Hendrix College junior, recently completed an internship in the Arkansas Conference communications office.]



Coming Up

The Hope for Africa children's choir will be on tour in cities around Arkansas this month. With performances earlier this week at Central UMC, Fayetteville and First UMC, Fort Smith, the remaining stops and performances include:

- First UMC, North Little Rock, 10:45 a.m. May 4;
- Salem UMC, Benton, 5:30 p.m. May 4;
- First UMC, Paragould, 7 p.m. May 6;
- First UMC, Jonesboro, 7 p.m. May 7.

For more information about the choir's itinerary and performance schedule, contact Keith Hoggard at Central UMC, Fayetteville, at (479) 442-1811.

First UMC, Little Rock, is partnering with the Clinton School of Public Service to bring Jim Wallis to Arkansas for a public speaking engagement at 4 p.m. May 14 at the Clinton School in Little Rock.



Jim Wallis

Wallis is a best-selling author, theologian, preacher, and international commentator on religion and public life, faith and politics. He is president and executive director of *Sojourners*. He is editor-in-chief of *Sojourners* magazine, whose combined print and electronic media have a readership of more than 250,000 people.

"The Great Awakening: Reviving Faith and Politics in a Post-Religious Right America" (HarperOne, 2008) is his latest book. His columns appear in major newspapers, including *The New York Times*, *Washington Post*, *Los Angeles Times*, and both *Time* and *Newsweek* online. He regularly appears on radio and television, including shows like "Meet the Press," "The Daily Show with Jon Stewart," "The O'Reilly Factor" and is a frequent guest on the network television and radio news programs.

The event is free and open to the public, but a reservation is necessary. Contact publicprograms@clinton-school.uasys.edu or (501) 683-5239.

The Gathering, an event for young single professionals at St. James UMC, Little Rock, was launched April 30. The next regular session will be held at 6 p.m. May 7, and will feature a video-based discussion of "The Jesus I Never Knew" by Philip Yancey. All young single adults are welcome. For details, call Jenni Duncan at (501) 217-6708.

The second annual Christian Music Festival is coming to Nashville City Park in Nashville, Ark., May 10. The all-day event is free and sponsored

by the Nashville Area Network 4 Teens, which includes the youth ministry of First UMC, Nashville. Among the performers will be Pocket Full of Rocks, Wavorly, Two Empty Chairs, Candlefuse, Ken Freeman, Deas Vail, Goesl's Parade. For more information, go to www.itickets.com/crossfest.html or call (870) 845-1109 or 845-7405.

The annual Mission Fish Fry at First UMC, Searcy, will be held from 5-7 p.m. May 14. Fish, hushpuppies, fries, dessert and all the fixing's will be served. Proceeds will support a July mission to Chinchá, Peru, where a team of volunteers from the church will help rebuild earthquake-damaged areas and work with the children's feeding ministry the church supports. Tickets will be available at the door, or may be purchased in advance at the church or from Peru mission team members. Tickets are \$10 for adults and \$5 for children.

Wesley Chapel UMC, Little Rock, will observe Women's Day May 18 during the 10:45 a.m. worship service. "Christian Women: Believing, Building and Bridging" is the theme.

Rebera Elliott Foston, M.D., founder and executive director of the Foston Institute for Holistic Mentoring, will be guest speaker. A doctor of both medicine and ministry who holds master's degrees in both public health and theological studies, Foston uses her gifts to train others how to minister more effectively to young people through holistic mentoring. A reception will follow the service. Sharon A. Richardson is Women's Day chairperson. The church is located at 1109 S. State St.

The first St. James Golf Classic will be held June 21 at StoneLinks Golf Course, 110 Highway 391 North at Faulkner Lake Road in North Little Rock. Hosted by the Stepping Stone Sunday School Class at St. James UMC, Little Rock, the four-person scramble will start at 8 a.m.

Proceeds will provide a water well and safe, clean water for a village in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The effort is part of the Arkansas Conference's Congo Initiative, which has a goal of installing 10 water wells. The cost to install each well is approximately \$6,000.

Cost to play golf is \$75 per person, which includes golf cart, greens fee, lunch and prizes. For more informa-

tion, contact Rick Layton at (501) 680-2359, Richard Phelps at (510) 786-0890 or Jane Dennis at janedennis@comcast.net.

Jay B. McDaniel, professor and chair of religion at Hendrix College, will present "One World, Many Faiths — Christianity and World Religions With a Special Focus on Islam," June 1-2 at First UMC, Rogers. The series of lectures will examine one of the world's most influential religions and its people.

Sponsored by the Lewis Lecture Series, the lectures and open discussions are planned for 2 p.m. and 7 p.m. June 1, and a luncheon program at noon June 2. All events are free.

McDaniel has written five books and edited three on spirituality in the age of consumerism, religion and ecology, religion and inter-religious dialogue, and learning other religions as a path to peace. McDaniel serves as director of the Steel Center for the Study of Religion and Philosophy at Hendrix. He is a member of the advisory board of the Center for Respect of Life and Environment in Washington, D.C.

The South Central Jurisdiction of the United Methodist Church will host convocation for archivists July 11-12 at Lon Morris College in Jacksonville, Texas. The Commission on Archives and History of the Texas Annual Conference is sponsor of the event. Archivists and church historians from across the jurisdiction are invited to attend.

Among the presenters will be Ted Campbell, professor at Perkins School

of Theology; Pam Cornell, archivist, Houston Academy of Medicine-Texas Medical Center Library; and Robert J. Williams, general secretary of the General Commission on Archives and History.

Cost is \$60 per person, or \$100 for two persons from the same church, with reservations required by June 22. For more information, call (905) 586-2494.

Make plans now to attend the Ben Few Camp Meeting Aug. 1-10. Scott Gallimore will be evangelist, with John Moore as song leader and youth director and Kathleen Dockery pianist. John Shirron will be memorial speaker.

"Ben Few is a hidden treasure," said Merlie Watson, a longtime camp participant. "The campground is a wonderful experience for all ages."

Methodist circuit rider Ben Few was one of the founders of the camp meeting, which is open to persons of all faiths and denominations. The campground, established in 1898, is located in Dallas County.

The first service will be at 7:30 p.m. Aug. 1, with daily services at 11 a.m. and 7:30 p.m. Special musical guests will perform at 6:30 p.m. each day. Daily activities include morning devotion, programs for youth and children and an adult Bible study. Meals will be available for purchase. For more details, contact Bill Shirron at (501) 794-322 or Charlotte Harrison at (501) 455-0138.

Trinity UMC, Little Rock, will host its third annual KAOS summer kick-off event for youth at from 4:30-7 p.m. June 8 at the church, Evergreen and Mississippi. Christian illusionist Jared Hall will be the special guest, along with music from Deas Vail. The event is free. For more information contact Jamey Bentley at jameybentley@sbcglobal.net.

Mission to Moscow

FALL MISSION TO MOSCOW

Sept. 25-Oct. 5, 2008

Quapaw Quarter United Methodist Church and Peacework are sponsoring a mission trip to an orphanage in Moscow, Russia, Sept. 25-Oct. 5, 2008. Interested persons or church mission groups should contact Rev. John T. Dill at (870) 833-2678 or jdpickle@sbcglobal.net for preliminary details.

Walking the walk

■ NYC mission experience combines education, mission and cultural diversity

Thirteen youth and four adults from Pulaski Heights United Methodist Church in Little Rock spent spring break in New York City sharing mission work, cultural diversity experiences and fellowship. They explored working together in interfaith and ecumenical environments at Church of St. Paul and St. Andrew (United Methodist).

The group worked with women at a homeless shelter, with teens questioning their sexual orientation who had been kicked out of their parents' homes, and with a food pantry where clients "shop" for their own groceries and run the store. In

a protest outside a restaurant that pays immigrant workers \$1.25 an hour, the youth were joined by young New Yorkers who shared their concerns as they peacefully cried out for justice.

They also visited the Church Center at the United Nations and learned about peace and justice going hand-in-hand and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. They also participated in a Bible study on justice led by David Wildman of the United Methodist General Board

of Church and Society. They visited the World Trade Center Memorial, becoming familiar with events that occurred when they were only age 7 or 8.

"Even though we didn't build a house or dig a foundation for a church, we were spreading Christ's love and building his church in a spiritual way," said Kate Trotter. "Many of my stereotypes were shattered on this trip. Now

I feel like it is my duty to share what I learned about Palestine, Israel and sweat shops."

"I learned that as Christians we must walk with both the charity foot and justice foot," said Anna Lee Pittman.

"Jermaine changed the way I perceive gay people. He had just come off the basketball court; he told us about his new *home* [the homeless shelter] from a client's point of view. I learned mission isn't always going to Mexico to build houses. Mission comes in many ways."

"It doesn't take building a house to help others," Tyler Adcock said. "I learned what charity and justice really are. Now that we know how to be passionate about mission work, we can

"I learned that as Christians we must walk with both the charity foot and justice foot."

— Anna Lee Pittman



Pulaski Heights UMC youth (from left) Caroline Ragon, Victoria Garrett and Rachel Garrett protest low wages while on a mission focusing on cultural diversity and justice issues in New York City.

put those ideas into practice."

"The women in the homeless shelter were smart, had jobs and were happy we were there," Kate added. "They sleep on cots the church provides."

"I have started looking into where my clothes come from and which stores use sweatshops," said Kate. "I saw love in the people we met and also in my fellow youth. My youth group is my second family. Maybe it was our goofiness walking down the street, singing songs and laughing."

"Many times when we get home,

the mission work is over," Olivia Holmes said. "With this type of experience, the work really began when we got home."

"The trip was about one-third education, one-third mission and one-third culture," according to Jay Clark, director of youth ministry at Pulaski Heights UMC. "I think it challenged us to think about what mission work is and what mission work could be. I was proud of our young people for doing something different and getting out of their comfort zones in some cases."

Atkins UMC opens doors for work team

■ Pennsylvania Baptists bunk at Methodist church while helping persons affected by tornado

ATKINS — A group of 20 volunteers from Emmanuel Baptist Church in Johnstown, Penn., made Atkins United Methodist Church their home the week of April 6-12. The group consisting of men women, and youth came to help victims of the February tornado rebuild their homes and lives

A core group from this church had made four trips to the Mississippi Gulf Coast following Hurricane Katrina, so they were organized and knew how to get a job completed. They brought a truck with food and supplies, a person to cook, and others with designated responsibilities.

While in Atkins, the workers refurbished four houses. Their tasks included completely reworking two bedrooms for one family and remaking a

bathroom and completing a water hook-up for another family. They also built a much-needed tool shed for a family and completely re-roofed another house. This group paid for all the repairs, roofing materials, paint and other items needed to complete the work.

Members of Atkins UMC provided a potluck supper for the group on Wednesday night of their stay. They were very appreciative of the food and thanked everyone who provided for and visited with them. Several commented they enjoyed the "Southern" food.

Following the meal, all were invited to stay for a devotional. Members of the group, including several teen-agers, shared their witness and told how the

experience has affected their lives. Several talked about believing God has a plan for their life and that this mission trip was part of that plan. One of the youths said she felt God used those who were willing and open to his plans.

Joe Kitchens, pastor of Atkins UMC, was contacted by Terry Knipple of the Johnstown church and asked about work in the Atkins area. Kitchens said there is still work to be done and invited the group to stay at the Atkins UMC. Since the church does not have shower facilities, arrangements were made with the Atkins School to use the school gymnasium located across the street from the church.

As one church member remarked, the Atkins UMC and the Atkins community were blessed by the presence of this group and grateful for their labor and Christian witness.

United Methodist ARCHIVES



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It Happened

Salem UMC, Benton, continues to support an extremely successful music ministry featuring a number of very dedicated, talented church members. Begun in late 2004, the Salem praise band, Joyful Noise, originally consisted of eight singers who performed to instrumental music on CDs as they provided special music for Salem's early Sunday service. It soon became evident that the congregation was blessed with a unique pool of contemporary musical talent. Currently, the music team includes 25 participants ranging from 14 to 78, with support from drums, piano, keyboard and guitars.

Joyful Noise leads Salem's 8:45 a.m. service with music that ranges from old standards to contemporary praise songs. The team produces many of its own arrangements and has written and performed both Christmas and Easter music productions and other original music. The group has performed at Ben Few, Salem and Davidson campgrounds, Camp Tanako and at churches throughout central Arkansas. In addition, Joyful Noise performs regularly at the state Department of Human Services' Arkansas Health Center. Their witness is available for special events throughout the local area. For more information, call (501) 316-2282.

Four Great Hours of Sharing again took place when the Amity, Glenwood, Norman and Langley United Methodist churches united during the Lenten season. The congregations led by pastors James Lybrand, Will Bradford, Charles Eudy and Lindsey Saenz shared fellowship, music, food and the uplifting message of Easter. Despite some bad weather, a total of 324 attended and \$1,825 was collected for the United Methodist Committee on Relief Tornado Relief Fund to be used in Arkansas. On the final night, worshipers received a surprise when the pastors formed a quartet and sang the old hymn "Come Thou Fount."



Arkansas professional church secretaries attending a recent conference in Dayton, Ohio, are (from left) Libby Gray, Fonda Kirkman, Cindy Parker, Connie Thomas, LaDonna Busby and Karen Branton



At West Helena UMC, Miss Arkansas Katie Bailey (right) is greeted by UMW vice president Jan Smith.

Greenwood UMC Youth performed a scripture-based, contemporary comedic skit about Solomon and his wives in the church's Open Door service April 20. Ariel Pate directed, with assistance from Judy Martin and Phyllis Keyes.

In other news from Greenwood, a Children's Sabbath celebration was held April 13. Children of the church participated with songs and skits depicting dilemmas in which children sometimes find themselves. Retired teacher and foster parent Susie Bunch spoke about "the Community Nurturing Our Children." Children's director Dana Higgins coordinated the event.

West Helena UMC United Methodist Women welcomed Miss Arkansas Katie Bailey as special guest at their recent annual salad supper. She entertained with several songs and spoke about the Miss Arkansas and



At Greenwood UMC, Grady McCain and Katie Baldrige are among the actors in a skit about Solomon and his wives performed during the April 20 Open Door service.

Miss America pageants and her platform on school violence. The church's Quilt Club gave her one of their throws made by first-time quilter Trish Bagley. A love offering was collected for Bear Creek Camp at Marianna. Bear Creek is the UMW mission project for the year.

In other news from West Helena, the church's youth hosted "Dancing, Devotions and Desserts" on April 13. The event featured a performance by the liturgical dance group Spirit Fire, from Gardner UMC, Hot Springs. The guest speakers were four students from the GreaterWorks ministry team stationed in Marvell. Each spoke of their call to the mission field. After the worship service, the youth and guests feasted

ed on a buffet of delicious desserts and punch.

Six professional secretaries from Arkansas were among the 250 persons attending the 26th Annual Conference of the Professional Association of United Methodist Church Secretaries (PAUMCS) April 17-19 in Dayton, Ohio. The Arkansans attending were Libby Gray of the Arkansas Conference office, Fonda Kirkman of the North Central District office, Connie Thomas of the Northeast District office, LaDonna Busby of the North District office and Karen Branton of the Central District office.

The conference provides continuing education and a supportive professional network to its members. The organization, established in 1982 under the General Council on Finance and Administration, fosters individual growth, professional development and spiritual enrichment for members from the United States, Russia and Africa.

Kirkman received recognition as a certified professional United Methodist Church secretary after attending the 2008 PAUMCS Institute at the Candler School of Theology at Emory University. Gray received recognition for renewing her professional certification, attained in 2005.

See IT HAPPENED, page 13



The Praise Band at Salem UMC, Benton, formed in late 2004, remains an integral part of the church's contemporary worship services.



Children at Greenwood UMC lead the church's recent Children's Sabbath observance.

Youth performing and visual arts camp taking applications

I Dream a World, a performing and visual arts camp for youth, is now accepting applications. Acting, poetry/rap, dance/movement, singing, improvisation, photography, songwriting, painting/drawing and set design are all part of the curriculum. Additionally, students may emphasize any artistic area that is of special interest to them.

Drama teacher Sara Cooke is the camp's executive director, and Lawrence Hamilton, acclaimed Broadway performer, is the artistic director.

The camp will be held June 9-28 at

Quapaw Quarter United Methodist Church, 1601 S. Louisiana, Little Rock, culminating in a performance for family, friends and the public June 27-28.

The cost of the three-week camp is \$500 per student. Full scholarships are available for income-qualified students. Transportation, lunch and snacks are provided. Any youth between the ages of 12-17 is invited to apply.

For more information and an application, go to www.qqumc.org/IDAW or call Shannon Wiggins at (501) 375-1600.



UMCOR's helping hands

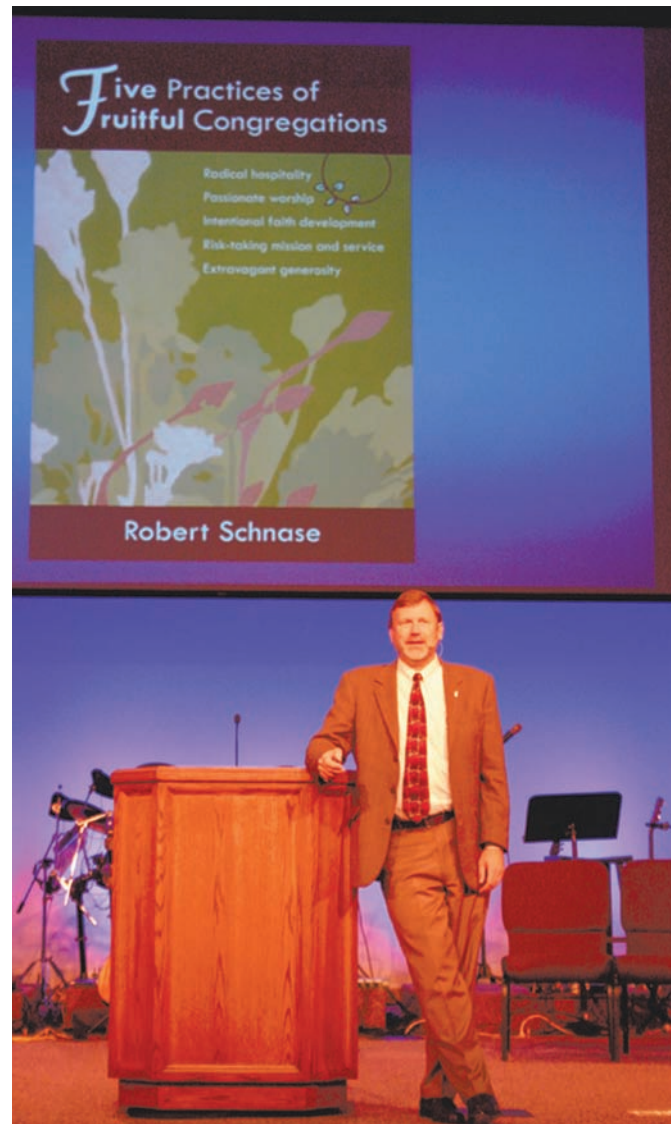
Fourteen members of First UMC, Forrest City, were mission volunteers for several days last month at the United Methodist Committee on Relief's Sager Brown Depot in Baldwin, La. The group included (front, from left) Donna Goza, Coy Laney, Lamar Bridges, pastor Keith Goza, Mike Molnar, Constance McDaniel and Sandy Cook; and (back) team leader Lee O'Bannion, Dot Mitchell, Betty Molnar, Pat Norsworthy, Lynda Bridges, Dwayne Couchman and Martha Couchman.

IT HAPPENED, continued from page 12

Hunter Whitehurst, a member of Boy Scout Troop 115 in Bono, received the Eagle Scout award in a recent ceremony at Union Grove UMC in Bono. He was presented the award by his father, Lynn Whitehurst.

For his Eagle project, Whitehurst built a large unit to house owls and large birds that has been placed at the Forest L. Wood Crowley's Ridge Nature Center. A junior at Westside High School, the 16-year-old is the son of Lynn and Marcia Whitehurst.

Recording artist and Gospel Music Association Hall of Fame member Ronnie Page presented a concert April 27 at Holiday Hills UMC, Greers Ferry. Page is celebrating 51 years in the gospel music profession, having started his career in 1956 with the Oak Ridge Quartet (later the Oak Ridge Boys). Along the way he spent some 20 years with the Church Wagon Gang gospel musical group. He hosted his own TV show in Nashville, Tenn., for 18 years while still performing with some of the nation's top gospel groups.



Checking the church's 'Vital Signs'

Missouri Area Bishop Robert Schnase (left) addresses more than 450 Arkansas clergy and laity at Vital Signs ministry event April 12. Sponsored by the Arkansas Conference and hosted by St. James UMC, Little Rock, the event focused on "Five Practices of Fruitful Congregations," which is also the title of Schnase's best-selling book. Schnase detailed his recommendations that churches practice radical hospitality, passionate worship, intentional faith development, risk-taking mission and service, and extravagant generosity. Dozens of workshops on myriad ministry topics were offered at the all-day gathering, along with worship and lunch.

Retired clergy to be honored in Conway

Arkansas' retired United Methodist clergy, their spouses and surviving spouses will be honored at a worship service at 10:45 a.m. May 19 at Greene Chapel at Hendrix College in Conway. A luncheon will follow. James Buskirk will deliver the sermon. Special music will be presented by the Handbell

Choir from First UMC, Heber Springs, Bill Mann and Lloyd Whitcomb.

The event is hosted by the Heber Springs church and Hendrix College. David W. Bush, pastor of Heber Springs First UMC, is founder of the annual event. For more information, contact Bush at (501) 362-2696.

Volunteers in Mission

This Volunteer in Mission listing includes mission opportunities offered by local churches and districts. Often there are openings on these mission trips and room for additional volunteers from elsewhere to join the team. For more information on any of these projects, contact the individuals listed or Don Weeks, Arkansas Area Volunteers in Mission coordinator, 18 Montagne Court, Little Rock, AR 72223; (501) 868-9193 or 681-2909; dweeks@arumc.org.

Arkansas: VIM Teams needed for tornado and flooding clean up.

Tornado Clean up:

- **Bryant/Benton.** Contact Kay Parda, (501) 944-2390.
- **Little Rock.** Contact Don Weeks (501) 681-2909.

Flooding Clean up:

- **Norfolk.** Contact Fire Chief Frank Baker — (870) 499-5527 office, (870) 499-5610 home, (870)405-0775 cell or Debbie Stanick — (870) 499-5954 home, (312) 972-0095 cell.
- **Oil Trough.** Contact Jackie Gregory, (879) 799-3231, (501) 412-7019 cell.
- **Calico Rock.** Contact Paul Seay, (870) 297-8878.
- **Augusta.** Judy Clark, (870) 347-5066, (870) 347-2216 home.



Immediate: Van Buren County, Ark., tornado recovery & rebuilding. Particularly need persons with carpentry and roofing skills. Don Weeks, (501) 681-2909 or dweeks@arumc.org.

Immediate: Urban restoration project in downtown Little Rock. Help expand the local mission of Quapaw Quarter UMC. Showers, kitchen & accommodation available. Betsy Singleton, (501) 375-1600 or revbsb@aol.com

Ongoing: Meru, Kenya, construction of two chicken houses. Sponsored by Heritage UMC, Van Buren. John Boster, (479) 474-1977 or bosterpools@aol.com, or the church, (479) 474-6424 or office@heritagevb.org.

Peace with Justice ministries to benefit from May 18 offering

Longer lines at food pantries, increased demand for gas vouchers, assistance with heating bills and overwhelmed, overstressed individuals needing friendly, caring faces — these are growing requests in communities all across Arkansas.

The Peace with Justice special offering on May 18 is one significant way Arkansas United Methodists are able to show support for ministries and programs that seek to serve those who face the greatest challenges and fight injustices regularly.

One dollar for every church member would make a huge difference in

the total amount of funds available for small grants offered through the Arkansas Board of Church and Society. Clergy and laity alike are called on to encourage members of local churches and church groups to give toward this special Sunday offering. Donors can be confident that gifts will have a far-reaching effect on the lives of Arkansans who are in great need.

Additionally, applications for Peace with Justice Small Grants will be accepted until May 15. Contact Susan Ledbetter at susanledbetter@hotmail.com or (479) 442-8633 for more information and an application.

State to welcome Congo visitors

Visitors from the North Katanga Annual Conference in the Democratic Republic of the Congo will be in Arkansas May 3-19. The six-member delegation will arrive in the state after participating in the 10-day United Methodist General Conference in Fort Worth, Texas.

The group's itinerary is being coordinated by Maxine Allen, the Arkansas Conference's minister of missions and ethnic ministries. Tours of central Arkansas, the eastern Arkansas Delta and northwest Arkansas are planned, with stops in many churches and sites along the way.

The Arkansas Conference is a global partner in mission with the North Katanga Conference, offering help to its pastor, churches and villages by drilling community water wells, providing bicycles for pastors and Bibles

and other supplies for churches, and supporting schools, medical clinics and other ministries. Ten Arkansas congregations are currently financial partners in the effort.

"Through this initiative we raised \$61,000 last year, with \$32,000 coming from the Central District which asked each member to give \$1 for the Congo," Allen said. "We also have three students on scholarship at Philander Smith College who are from North Katanga Conference."

The group's visit to the state is designed to strengthen relationships between United Methodists in Arkansas and the Congo and to develop new supportive relationships. For more information on how to get involved in the Congo Initiative, contact Allen at (501) 324-8000 or mallen@arumc.org.



Celebrating God's creation

Taking part in the Festival of God's Creation outdoor worship service April 20 at Two Rivers Park in Little Rock are (from left) Glenn Hersey, a pastor at St. Mark Baptist Church in Little Rock; Hiroyuki Ikawa from the World Peace Federation; and Cleifton Vaughan, associate pastor at Pulaski Heights UMC in Little Rock. Others participating were Sylvia Bell, pastor of St. Paul UMC at Maumelle, and James Maase, director of music at Pulaski Heights UMC, who led singing for the crowd of about 40. The group collected an offering of \$115 for The Nature Conservancy. The service was sponsored by Green Team at Pulaski Heights UMC. In addition, on the previous day, April 19, the church's Miles for Mission event raised \$7,700 to be divided between Harmony Health Clinic in Little Rock and Pulaski Heights UMC youth missions.

Calendar

MAY
 May 6-8: Basic Training "Boot Camp" for Church Planters (for pastors who are being appointed to a new church start), Mount Sequoyah Conference and Retreat Center, Fayetteville.
 May 8: Senior Adult Day Camp, Wayland Spring.
 May 27-31: Lifeguard Camp, Wayland Spring.
 May 30-June 1: Junior High Camp I, Wayland Spring.

JUNE
 June 3-5: God and Nature Camp, Wayland Spring.
 June 4-7: Hendrix-Lilly Summer Institute for high school youth, Hendrix College, Conway.
 June 6-8: Fishing Camp, Tanako.
 June 8-11: Arkansas Annual Conference, Hot Springs Convention Center, Hot Springs.
 June 14: Intro to Tying Flies Camp, Shoal Creek.
 June 16-18: Golf Camp, Tanako.
 June 16-18: Y.E.E. (Younger Elementary Extravaganza) Camp, Tanako.
 June 16-22: Arkansas Conference Council on Youth Ministries Youth Choir Tour.
 June 17-20: Beginner's Canoe Camp 101, Wayland Spring.
 June 17-21: Bishops' Week, "Ministering in the Hard Places," Mount Sequoyah Conference and Retreat Center, Fayetteville.
 June 23-27: Upper Elementary Camp, Shoal Creek.

June 30: Day Camp, Shoal Creek.
 June 30-July 3: Middle Elementary I Camp, Tanako.
 June 30-July 3: Junior High Camp, Shoal Creek.

JULY
 July 7-10: Advanced Canoe Camp, Wayland Spring.
 July 7-11: Junior High I Camp, Tanako.
 July 7-11: Music Camp, Shoal Creek.
 July 11-13: Jurisdiction Lay Speaking Ministries Conference, Mount Sequoyah Conference and Retreat Center, Fayetteville.
 July 14-18: Older Elementary I Camp, Tanako.
 July 15-19: South Central Jurisdictional Conference, Dallas, Texas.
 July 18-20: Middle Elementary II Camp, Tanako.
 July 19-22: Arkansas Conference Junior High Assembly, Philander Smith College, Little Rock.
 July 21-25: Junior High II Camp, Tanako.
 July 22-26: Arkansas Conference Senior High Assembly, Philander Smith College, Little Rock.
 July 24-26: Hands in Motion ASL (American Sign Language) Camp, Shoal Creek.
 July 27-30: Middle Elementary Camp, Shoal Creek.
 July 28-Aug. 1: Older Elementary II Camp, Tanako.
 July 28-30: Hunter Education Camp, Wayland Spring.
 July 31: Day Camp, Shoal Creek.
 July 31-Aug. 2: Junior High Camp II, Wayland Spring.

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Remember When

100 Years Ago
May 7, 1908: Dr.

J.D. Sibert is about laying the foundation of a new church at Wynne, Ark., the church to be modeled after the church at Brownsville, TN and to cost about \$18,000.



50 Years Ago

May 1, 1958: The congregation of the First Methodist Church in Springdale waited expectantly for the evening service on Sunday April 20. An announcement had been made previously that something of great consequence in the life of the church would transpire that evening. That night, seven young people made decisions for full time service in the ministry.

20 Years Ago

May 6, 1988: An adult Sunday school class from Bella Vista United Methodist Church is responsible for building, painting, and delivering a much needed book case to the Benton County Jail at Bentonville. The class and the church actively support prison ministries.

This special gift of love dries clothes

ATKINS — A gift of a new clothes dryer is the latest sign of love and concern that members of Perryville First United Methodist Church have showered on a family from Atkins which they “adopted” following the Feb. 5 tornado that destroyed much of the town and the family’s home.

The Perryville UMC adopted the Robertson family through Project H.A.L.O. (Helping And Loving Others), a volunteer assistance program created by Dover United Methodist Church. H.A.L.O. operates much like an “Angel Tree” at Christmastime, and strives to provide long-term assistance to persons in the Atkins area most affected by the devastating tornado.

Finding an affordable dryer had been a priority since first meeting the Robertson family, according to team leader Ida Rose.

“Their dryer was broken and they had been using a laundromat to dry their clothes,” said Rose.

Working closely with the family has been a humbling experience in light of all they have gone through, Rose said. “When you read about the tornado or see it on TV, it just isn’t the same.”

On the surface, items like a dryer might seem trivial, but Heather

Jernigan, the mother of four, says differently.

“The first day the group met with us they brought us a home-cooked meal and brought birthday presents for two of our children who had birthdays after the tornado,” she said. It is the small gestures that often mean so much, she added.

“We know they would fix everything if they could,” Jernigan said. “Just knowing someone is praying and trying to help really makes a difference.”

The family is currently living in the damaged house and hopes to settle their insurance claim soon and begin a new phase of their life. Jernigan and her four children hid in a tiny closet during the tornado.

“It felt like the house was picked up and shaken,” she said.

The older house suffered structural damage and the family has a long road of repair ahead. The Perryville group is making plans to help the family repair home and other property.

Members of the Perryville UMC team are pastor David Baker, Kate Cole, Greg Spinks, Melina Collins, Brenda Reeder and Rose. The team is supported by the entire church. Rose encourages anyone wishing to help families in Atkins to contact H.A.L.O. and partner with a family.



Heather Jernigan (left) proudly shows off her new dryer, while Ida Rose of Perryville First UMC celebrates the gift as well.

“Working with our family has inspired us to become more mission minded and to be aware of others’ needs,” Rose said.

There are still many families in the Atkins area that need long-term partnerships such as those offered by H.A.L.O. Groups interested in working one-on-one with a family can visit 7villages.com/halo, or email projecthalo@centurytel.net. Interested parties can also contact H.A.L.O. coordinator Heather Sprinkle at (870) 930-4424 or P.O. Box 1221, Dover, Ark. 72837.

Deaths

Fort Smith

KING JAMES COLLIER JR., 81, of Fort Smith, passed away April 11, 2008, in Fort Smith. He was the surviving spouse of Dorothy Markwell Collier, an elder and member of the former North Arkansas Conference until her death in 1998.

He was a member of First United Methodist Church, the National Association of Home Builders and the American Water Works Association for more than 50 years. He was the associate life director for the Greater Fort Smith Association of Home Builders. He retired from Arkhola Sand and Gravel after 33 years of service as a salesman. He was named Methodist Village’s Volunteer of the Year in 2005 and Fort Smith Volunteer of the Year in 2006. He also volunteered at Sparks Regional Medical Center in the ICU

waiting room. He was a University of Arkansas Big Red contributor for 11 years and a U.S. Army Air Corps veteran of World War II.

He is survived by his wife, Jean Jones Collier of the home; two daughters, Tricia Sloan of Freeport, Fla., and Jamie Garner of Fort Smith; one son, John Collier of Plano, Texas; two stepdaughters, Ronnie Jones and Brenda Elliott, both of Fort Smith; one aunt, Connie Clement of Fort Smith; five grandchildren, three great-grandchildren and seven stepgrandchildren.

A memorial service was held April 14 at First UMC, Fort Smith, with a private family committal at Roselawn Cemetery. Memorials may be made to First UMC, 200 N. 15th St., Fort Smith, Ark. 72901, or the Crisis Center for Women, 500 Lexington Ave. Suite A, Fort Smith, Ark. 72901.

Correction

Michael Morey is pastor of Christ of the Hills UMC in Hot Springs Village. The incorrect church was listed in a profile of Jurisdictional Conference delegates in the April 18 issue.

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SALEM UMC, BENTON, is seeking a full-time Christian Educator to work with all age groups. The right candidate should possess computer, organizational and people skills. Salary is negotiable. Send resumes to the church office at 1647 Salem Road, Benton, Ark. 72019.

MINISTER TO FAMILIES WITH YOUTH is wanted to serve growing youth group at 780-member First United Methodist Church, Rogers. He or she must have previous youth ministry experience with excellent organizational skills and a passion for discipling and leading youth. The ability to recruit adult volunteers and work with adult leaders is a must. He or she should have adequate computer skills to perform job duties and communicate electronically with youth and their parents. A full job description can be obtained from the church office. This position is full time, estimated at 40 hours per week or more, in accordance with program needs. Salary is competitive and will be commensurate based on experience. Contact: Mr. Alan Harris or Larry Wright or Dan Brown c/o First United Methodist Church, 307 W. Elm St., Rogers, Ark. 72756.

WANTED: Lead guitarist for 9 a.m. Praise Service. First United Methodist Church, Charleston, Arkansas. Pay DOE. (479) 965-7130.

DIRECTOR OF MUSIC MINISTRIES at First United Methodist Church in downtown Little Rock. An urban 1,200-member congregation seeks to employ a director for a bustling congregation in the heart of Arkansas’ capital city. Three Sunday morning services (one contemporary, two traditional); monthly Taize services; two adult choirs, children’s choirs, youth choir, handbells. Exciting possibilities in the heart of the city’s entertainment and business district. For information regarding congregation see: www.fumclr.org. Salary is negotiable, based on experience. Contact Search Committee Co-Chairs Tom Small and Ginny McMurray at tjsmall@swbell.net or vlmcmurray@sbcglobal.net or the Senior Pastor, Dr. Michael Mattox, at 723 Center St., Little Rock, Ark. 72201; (501)372-2256.

MUSIC DIRECTOR. Grace United Methodist Church, Conway, has an opening for a part-time Director of Music Ministries. Responsibilities include Wednesday night choir rehearsals, and worship leader for two Sunday morning services (one traditional, one blended). Experience with voice and hand bell choirs preferred. Please send resume to Grace United Methodist Church, 1075 Hogan Lane, Conway, Ark. 72034, or email to jlenderman@conwaycorp.net.

FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH of West Memphis has an opening for Education/Children’s Ministry Director. Salary is very competitive. Please call Senior Pastor Bob Burnham at (870) 735-1805 or email revburnham@sbcglobal.net for job description.

Camp Aldersgate opens a new door to camping

By JORDAN KENNEDY

Adding another chapter to its rich 58-year history, Camp Aldersgate in Little Rock on April 12 celebrated the dedication of a host of new facilities, including seven camper cabins, a health center and an ADA-accessible swimming pool and whirlpool with a bathhouse and pavilions.

The construction was made possible with a \$7 million grant from the Donald W. Reynolds Foundation, the largest gift in the camp's history. The Foundation also matched another \$1.4 million raised by the camp for the expansion project and its upkeep.

"We are very proud to be a part of this project," said Steve Anderson, president of the foundation, during the outdoor dedication ceremony conducted from the porch of the new health center.

The Donald W. Reynolds Foundation is a national philanthropic organization founded in 1954 by the late media entrepreneur for whom it is named. Headquarters in Las Vegas, it is one of the largest private foundations in the United States.

"Camp Aldersgate thanks the Donald W. Reynolds Foundation, our volunteers and construction team who have helped Camp Aldersgate be the best it can be," said camp director Sarah Wacaster. "While the facilities will help us grow in number over the years, they will more importantly allow us to better serve the needs of our campers now. These changes will

last a lifetime to those we serve."

Also taking part in the ceremony was Jerald McKie, a representative from the United Methodist General Board Global Ministries, based in New York. The camp is affiliated with the board's Women's Division.

Camp Aldersgate, a non-profit organization accredited by the American Camp Association, serves children and youth who have medical or physical conditions or development delays and their families, as well as senior adults, through educational and recreational opportunities. It is located on 120 wooded acres in west Little Rock. The camp includes a lake used for fishing and boating activities, handicapped accessible treehouse, ropes course, walking trails, pavilion and playground.

The new spacious and amenity-filled cabins will sleep 16 comfortably and include four toilets and three showers in each. That's a significant improvement from the old cabins that provided 12 campers cramped quarters and a single toilet and shower. Screened-in porches complete each new cabin.

The state-of-the-art health care center will be staffed 24 hours a day while camps are in session. In addition to medical care facilities, it includes sleeping quarters and a kitchen area for medical staff and "quiet rooms" that can be used by campers and staff.

"We have really made this facility homey," Wacaster said.

With swimming a favorite summer-



Beginning this summer, campers will enjoy the benefits of a new swimming pool laden with amenities and features to accommodate children and youth with special needs.

time camp activity, the pool is designed to allow maximum and increased camper use. The main pool features a beach type entry that allows some campers to be rolled in using an aquatic wheelchair. A second heated pool with whirlpool jets will provide a therapeutic option to campers.

Art work, including tile murals, animal sculptures and signage, is part of the new look of the camp as well.

Seeing the brand new facilities at

Camp Aldersgate brought tears to the eyes of one volunteer and the parent of a camper who has spent many days enjoying the camp and its programs. "Seeing kids come to camp for one week of their life is a blast," he said. "That's what Camp Aldersgate is all about" — bringing joy and happiness to the lives of children.

[Jordan Kennedy, a Hendrix College junior, recently completed an internship in the Arkansas Conference communications office.]



Camp Aldersgate Director Sarah Wacaster leads the dedication ceremony April 12 that unveiled seven new cabins, a health center and pool at the Little Rock facility affiliated with the Women's Division of the General Board of Global Ministries.

The Confessing Movement of Arkansas

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Union Baptist Church

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COST: \$10 Purchase tickets in advance via registration form in Pre-conference Journal packet, or use the form below.

Dr. Bill Bouknight, guest speaker

Retired United Methodist Pastor

Dr. William "Bill" Bouknight retired in 2007 after more than 40 years of pastoral service and leadership in Tennessee, most recently serving 13 years as senior pastor of Christ United Methodist Church in Memphis.



Dr. Bouknight will be reviewing and evaluating General Conference. As the coordinator for the Daily Report to the delegates, Dr. Bouknight will have a firm grasp of how the Conference will affect the United Methodist Church. It will be an informative and exciting breakfast!

● Telephone or e-mail reservations may be made by contacting Carolyn Elias at (501) 525-2944 or CarolynElias@msn.com. Phone and e-mail reservations should be made by June 4.

● Advance reservations to be paid by check or cash are required by Monday, June 2. For these reservations, please complete the following form and mail to Carolyn Elias, 117 Long Island Bay 9C, Hot Springs, AR 71913.

- Name _____
- Address _____
- City, State, Zip _____
- Phone _____
- Reservations for how many? _____ (Your reservations will be held at the door)