



# United Methodist Arkansas

May 16, 2008

## Delegation affirms work, direction of UMC

■ *Arkansas delegates assess legislative decisions of 2008 General Conference*

By **JANE DENNIS**  
*Arkansas United Methodist Editor*

FORT WORTH, Texas — The 10-day marathon legislative session known as the United Methodist General Conference once again put its 992 delegates to the test. Long days, late nights and intense plenary sessions were punctuated by inspiring preaching, moving ministry celebrations and visits by high-powered guests.

Once completed, the denomination's Book of Discipline and Book of Resolutions were tweaked and a road



map for the future was charted.

Members of the Arkansas Conference delegation, along with many church friends and family, were on hand to experience the once-every-four-years gathering that calls United Methodists everywhere to make disciples for Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

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Arkansas delegates J.J. Whitney (right) and Carole Teague try to get the attention of the presiding officer in order to speak to an issue during the 2008 General Conference in Fort Worth, Texas.

## General Conference acts on wide range of issues

■ *Highlights include choir performances, head of state visit and ministry changes*

*United Methodist News Service*

FORT WORTH, Texas — The 2008 United Methodist General Conference opened its legislative session on April 23 with a Communion service celebrated at a wooden table fashioned from trees destroyed by Hurricane Katrina.

For the next 10 days, delegates heard stirring speeches and sermons offered from a pulpit made of the same hurricane-damaged trees — taken from

the historic Gulfside Assembly retreat center in Waveland, Miss. Both the pulpit and the Communion table served as reminders of physical and spiritual storms and the common faith that links members of the 11.5 million-member church.

Under the theme “A Future with Hope — Making Disciples for Jesus Christ for the Transformation of the World,” the conference



Arkansas clergy delegate Tony Holifield listens to presenters.

began on the 40th anniversary to the day when the Evangelical United Brethren Church united with the Methodist Church to form The United Methodist Church. The theme was reiterated in the conference logo designed by Arkansas laywoman Polly Shafer.

The 2008 meeting ended on May 2 with a worship service led by Bishop Gregory Palmer,

the new president of the church's Council of Bishops, declaring hope for the church through the power of the Holy Spirit.

In between, the assembly approved a \$642 million denominational budget for the next four years and created a hymnal revision committee. It generally retained the church's stances on homosexuality, including the declaration in the church's Social Principles that homosexual practice is “incompatible with Christian teaching.” Delegates opened the door to significant structural changes as the church

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# Viewpoint

## Hendrix College and the UMC: an uncertain future

By **ANDREW C. THOMPSON**

When you read this, I will be on a mission trip in Peru. I will be there with a group of Hendrix College students, where we will be working with our Peruvian brothers and sisters to build up the ministries of the Peruvian Methodist Church.

This trip is sponsored by the Hendrix-Lilly Vocations

Initiative, a program created several years ago to offer students a greater opportunity to explore their calling in service and ministry. It is a powerful example of Hendrix's continuing commitment to the Church for the purposes of ministry and spiritual formation among its students.

I am both a Hendrix alumnus and an elder in the Arkansas Conference, and being able to participate in a trip such as this one makes my heart surge with hope for the future of Hendrix and the United Methodist Church of Arkansas.

But when I look at certain proposed changes to the Hendrix College charter that will go before the Annual Conference in June, my heart turns to breaking.

### A proposed change

When we gather in Hot Springs next month, the Hendrix Board of Trustees will propose amending the College's charter so that the number of clergy trustees from the Arkansas Annual Conference is reduced *by half*.

The proposal can be found on pages 35-37 of the *Pre-Conference Journal*. Currently the 42 members of the Hendrix Board of Trustees include 10 ordained clergy from the Arkansas Conference, in addition to the Bishop and the Conference Director of Ministries (who serve in an *ex-officio* capacity). The proposed changes to Article II of the Hendrix charter would reduce those 10 clergy to 5.

Alumni, particularly United Methodist alumni, might ask, "Why is such a change necessary?" After all, it will lead to an inevitable weakening of the church's relationship with the college.

The reasons are not altogether



*Andrew Thompson*

clear. But in a memo to Hendrix faculty and staff dated Feb. 18, Hendrix president Dr. Tim Cloyd wrote that during its winter meeting, the Board of Trustees "took important actions that will move the college closer to its goal of being recognized as a national leader in engaged liberal arts and sciences education."

In one of a series of subsequent points describing the Board's actions, the memo states, "Amended the Charter of Hendrix College to change the criteria for selecting 10 representatives of the United Methodist Church as Trustees. Currently, the 10 UMC representatives are required to be ministers in full connection with the Arkansas Conference of the United Methodist Church. Under the new provisions, five trustees will be ministerial members of the Arkansas Conference and the other five will be UMC lay or clergy members from Arkansas or other states. The amendment will be presented to the Arkansas Conference in June for ratification."

### Church/college relationship

If you follow the logic of the memo, Dr. Cloyd is saying that the step of eliminating Arkansas United Methodist clergy from the Board of Trustees is necessary in order to move the college toward its goal of national prominence. And although the amended language allows for clergy trustees from other areas, the likelihood of the five newly freed positions being filled by clergy over the long term is scarce.

For anyone who cares about the future of the relationship between Hendrix and the church, this proposal should cause great alarm. It also raises a number of questions:

Why would the college make this move now? Hendrix has seen tremendous growth in recent years, from the size of the endowment and student body to the expansion of building and academic programs. Those advances have been made with the full participation of 10 voting clergy members on the Board. Surely their presence has been some benefit to the college during that time.

What is the rationale behind reducing the number of clergy trustees by half? Is that simply an arbitrary figure? And if it is, do we really want to stake the future of the church's

See THOMPSON, page 4



## Editor's Corner

By **Jane Dennis**

## The world is watching

FORT WORTH, Texas — He stood for a long time, looking over the table stacked high with books about the church, John Wesley, being a better preacher and developing holy and healthy habits. Behind the table were dozens of shelves holding more volumes on even more topics. Rarely had he seen so many books in one place.

He moved to where several racks of clergy robes and stoles were hanging. He touched the flowing fabric and the colorful silk tassels and trim. He tried on a few robes, marveling at the choices and options.

He chuckled at the Texas cowboy hat bearing the conference logo and the gift set of Texas hot sauce.

He kept coming back to the section with Bibles in a whole host of languages.

Samuel Maishanu Sule was visiting the world's largest Cokesbury retail outlet, all 12,600 square feet of it, located in the Fort Worth Convention Center. The store was open for the 10 days of the 2008 United Methodist General Conference. For many it was



*Jane Dennis*

a fine store, yet just another Cokesbury, supersized.

But to Samuel, a pastor from Nigeria on his first visit to the United States, it was much more than a bookstore.

"I feel very proud for Cokesbury," he said. "What is here helps spread the Gospel and tells what the United Methodist Church is all

about."

It's not a hardship to drive to downtown Little Rock or to Mount Sequoyah in Fayetteville to shop in our Cokesbury stores for all sorts of tools and resources to help on our faith journey. But it sure is easy to take all that for granted, or to forget that the world is paying attention to our cross and flame symbol.

Samuel returned to Nigeria with his purchases of two books and two clergy robes — and a heart full of pride and appreciation.

I returned home to Arkansas with a better understanding of what it means to be part of a global church.

*[Jane Dennis has served as editor of the Arkansas United Methodist since 1988. She can be reached at [jdennis@arumc.org](mailto:jdennis@arumc.org)]*



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# Viewpoint

Dear Friends:

Every participant in the General Conference of our church carries away from the event impressions. Let me mention one. Our church is in the forefront of the battle against the diseases of poverty — malaria, HIV/AIDS and tuberculosis. In partnership with the United Nations Foundation, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and others, our church is committed to helping eradicate these dread diseases. Mr. Bill Gates Sr., the father of the well-known founder of MicroSoft, addressed the General Conference and announced that the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation would be contributing \$5 million to the Global Health Initiative of the United Methodist Church.

Many churches in our conference have given towards the Nothing But Nets campaign. Almost \$4 million of the \$20 mil-



## An Occasional Word from the Bishop

lion raised across the nation by the Nothing But Nets campaign has come from the United Methodist Church. A basketball was used in the report on our Nothing But Nets involvement. An annual conference made a bid to take the basketball home. The money would go to Nothing But Nets. When Mr. Gates announced the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation would match the highest bid, the bidding soared. The high bid was \$85,000. What does that mean? In the simplest terms it means that one basketball bought enough treated mosquito nets to save the lives of 8,500 children. Doubled through the generosity of the Gates Foundation, that equals 17,000 lives saved. Every

conference that made a bid was provided a basketball. Our early bid of \$3,000 meant that the basketball we bought will save 300 lives.

I will bring the basketball, signed not by NBA stars but United Methodist bishops, to Annual Conference, along with a basketball goal. I am thinking of asking for a rule change at conference. If you want to speak, you must first hit a free throw. If you hit the free throw, you get to speak. If you miss, you pay \$10 to Nothing But Nets and don't speak. I have a vision of a very quick conference and a lot of money



Charles Crutchfield


for mosquito nets ...

When we give to Nothing But Nets we are saving lives. When we dig water wells in the Congo, we are saving lives. When we support to the Bantu Carder Home for Abandoned Children in Kamina, Congo, we are saving lives.

The question is sometimes asked about the relevance of the church — “What good is the church? How does it make a difference?” If you lived in the Congo or Kenya, in Uganda or Nigeria or Mozambique you would not ask such a question. Here is another question: “Am I proud to be in a church that is saving lives and in so doing is transforming the world?”

You bet I am!

Faithfully,

*Charles Crutchfield* 

P.S. I am practicing my free throws ...

# Raising the shades and fighting for justice for children

By PAT BODENHAMER

Tony Compolo tells a story about a time he was in Port-au-Prince, Haiti. He was seated comfortably at a table next to the front window of the restaurant. As he was enjoying his meal he realized that he was being watched. Their noses pressed flat against the glass, three raggedy, dirty Haitian boys stared at the food on his plate. Their hair was rust-colored because of a lack of protein and they had the distended stomachs that give evidence of extreme malnutrition. Their eyes, riveted on his plate of food, were disturbing. The waiter, recognizing how upset he was, moved quickly to pull down the window shade. “Don’t let them bother you! Enjoy your meal!” he said.



Pat Bodenhamer

Isn't that what we all do? We all, at one point or another, try to “pull down the shades,” on the things that make us feel uncomfortable. As people of faith we should be committed to raising the shades on oppression and injustices that plague our poor and working families.

I am excited to be sharing with you my new extension ministry

appointment. As of March 24, I am serving in ministry with Arkansas Advocates for Children and Families. In my short time here I have been blessed and challenged every day. I again feel alive within my calling to serve God by being a voice for the “least of these.” I thank God for the United Methodist Church because she is the one who taught me to use my voice to make a difference.

I have taken on the daunting task of putting a human side on state tax, budget and economic policies impacting the least fortunate among us, as well as, sharing about the ways that Arkansas Advocates for Children and Families are bringing to light social injustices against children and families. Arkansas Advocates does research and data gathering on education, healthcare, juvenile justice, after-school programming, child welfare and tax policies. We then look at the research and work with agencies, coalitions and partners to develop a strategy to fight for fairness and equality. My prayer is that you will join with me by helping educate our United Methodist churches, ministers and laity on these important issues.

It is an exciting time to be in ministry, it is also a difficult time. We have thousands of children in our state who live in poverty. Many of these children go to bed hungry and do not have adequate healthcare or

education. If we are in the business of kingdom building let us not forget, “for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these.”

There are a couple of ways that you can help me to help children. First, inform your pastors and churches that I am available to preach, present programs, and meet with community organizations, elected officials and ministerial alliances on the issues that face children and families.

Second, invite your congregation and community to a special panel discussion, “Who Cares for the Children: The Role of the Faith Community in Child Advocacy,” to be held at 6 p.m. May 22 at the Kendall Center on the campus of Philander Smith College in Little Rock. The panel discussion will feature members from different faiths discussing the role of the church in child advocacy.

Third, encourage your congregations to read the newspaper, watch the

news and become knowledgeable on the different issues that Arkansans face every day. Just because it happens in a different part of the state doesn't mean that it doesn't affect them — injustice hurts all of us. And finally, pray for the children.

In the words of St. Teresa of Avila: “Christ has no body now on earth but ours, no hands but ours, no feet but ours. Ours are the eyes with which Christ looks at the world with compassion, ours are the feet with which Christ goes about doing good, and ours are the hands with which Christ blesses us with.”

I'm ready to be the active body of Christ. Will you join me?

[Pat Bodenhamer joined AACF as State Tax and Budget Outreach Director in March 2008. An ordained elder in the United Methodist Church, she previously served in local church settings as well as with the Arkansas Conference as Minister for Mission and Outreach. She can be reached at [pbodenhamer@aradvocates.org](mailto:pbodenhamer@aradvocates.org) or (501)371-9678 ext. 108.]

FOR HEAVEN'S SAKE By Mike Morgan



# Viewpoint

## Climate of religion in America is changing

*"In the end, the state of the Union comes down to the character of the people. ... I sought for the greatness and genius of America in her commodious harbors, her ample rivers, and it was not there. I sought for it in the fertile fields, and boundless prairies, and it was not there. I sought it in her rich mines, and vast world commerce, and it was not there. Not until I went into the churches of America and heard her pulpits aflame with righteousness did I understand the secret of her genius and power." — attributed to Alexis de Toqueville (1805-1859)*



Bud Reeves

Religion has always been at the heart of the American identity. Wise people still pay attention to the religious views of Americans. No one following the presidential campaigns this year can help but acknowledge the crucial role religion is playing in our national politics ... as it always has.

Recently the Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life published the most extensive survey ever done on religion in America.<sup>1</sup> Interviews with 35,000 adults were conducted across the country on every aspect of religious thought and practice. The religious and secular press covered the study's release back in March. (OK, so



### The Shepherd's Staff

By William O. "Bud" Reeves

it takes me a while to process some information!) The study contained some major insights for me.

First, the religious landscape in America is changing. Protestant Christians are nearly a minority group in our country now (51 percent). Catholics are losing members the fastest of any Christian group and now comprise 24 percent of the population. Arkansas is more homogeneous, with 79 percent of us being Protestants, 53 percent evangelical in outlook, and only 5 percent Catholic. One of the fastest-growing groups were churches that make high demands of their members in terms of belief, support, and service. The other growing group was the unaffiliated population — 16 percent of Americans have no connection to any faith.

One of the surprising findings was that 44 percent of adult Americans have changed religion or denomination since their childhood. Fewer and fewer people are going to their mama's church all their lives. We have known for years that there is very little "brand loyalty" to particular denominations any more. We can't depend on little United Methodists

staying that way.

Secondly, I have a concern that the changing religious landscape is leaving our young people behind. The Pew study found that 62 percent of adults over 70 are Protestant Christians, only 43 percent of adults ages 18-29 are. Young adults, however, make up a disproportionate number of those who are unaffiliated — 25 percent are unconnected. We are losing many of our young adults to the "no preference" category.

However, America continues to be a nation of high religious dynamism. Seventy-eight percent are Christians. Sixty percent rate religion as "very important," compared with a fourth of that in Western Europe.<sup>2</sup> Though religious diversity is growing, America is far from becoming "godless" to any great extent. Only 10 percent of our population has no religious interest whatsoever. This means that the fields are "white unto harvest." The interest is there if churches can reach out and offer the Gospel of Jesus Christ in a way that is relevant.

Finally, with the diversity of religions in America, it is amazing that we all get along. We see religious violence all over the world between dif-

ferent faiths and even sects within a single religion. We may have a heated discussion with someone, but we don't shoot people, burn their house, or send suicide bombers into their neighborhood over doctrinal differences. The wisdom of our founders who refused to establish a particular religion is still bearing fruit. Our religious liberty is a great blessing and one of the qualities that has made America a great nation.

While the Pew study purported to survey the religious landscape, I think we are seeing more of a climate change in American and world religion. We are heading into a world that is not like anything we have experienced before. Only the Gospel of Jesus Christ will stay the same. Everything else may go the way of flannel boards and "dinner on the grounds." When the climate changes, the dinosaurs die. The Pew study is further evidence that the dinosaurs of Protestant denominationalism (and Catholicism) are sick. We must evolve or die. I hope the day will never come when some ecclesiastical paleontologist will unearth the remains of the United Methodist Church and wonder what we were all about. May we stay aflame with the righteousness of Christ; that is the genius and the power of the church and America.

<sup>1</sup> [www.PewForum.org/ReligiousLandscape](http://www.PewForum.org/ReligiousLandscape).

<sup>2</sup> *Wall Street Journal*, March 1, 2008, 8A.

[William O. "Bud" Reeves is senior pastor of First UMC, Hot Springs. He can be reached at [brobud@fumchs.com](mailto:brobud@fumchs.com).]

THOMPSON, continued from page 2

relationship with Hendrix on a "good round number"?

Is this proposal an implicit tit-for-tat with the Annual Conference's decision to reduce apportionment dollars to Hendrix in order to equalize them with Philander Smith? Hendrix may have some justifiable frustration with the Conference over this issue, but if that is the case, is punitive action the best mode of engagement?

Perhaps most importantly, is this move by the Board of Trustees one step closer to the ultimate ending of the relationship between College and Church? Many in Arkansas, especially those like me who are both alumni and Methodist, desperately hope this is not the case. In Hendrix's Charter, the stated two-fold purpose of the

College is to operate an educational institution and to pursue the plans of the United Methodist Church in Arkansas. The nature of that mission has evolved over the years, but are we really ready to admit that it is now defunct?

A counter-proposal

Anyone paying attention has noticed the strain in the relationship between Hendrix and the Arkansas Conference in recent years. I regret that tension. But I also believe there is a way forward, so that the college can benefit and the mission of the church can be advanced. But it will take both patience and forgiveness on the part of both sides.

First, if both college and church

are going to win, the most important action is for the Annual Conference to reject the request of the Board of Trustees to amend the part of the charter that would reduce the number of Arkansas clergy. The reason is simple. The language of the proposal would weaken the college's relationship with not only the UMC in general, but with the Arkansas Conference in particular. And if our Conference is to have any role in the life of Hendrix College, it must be more than a token role.

Second, the Conference cannot simply say "no" without offering the Trustees some kind of counter-proposal. So the Conference should seek to constructively engage the college on what the possibilities are for a contin-

ued and vital relationship with the United Methodist Church. Along with this request should be a statement of good faith that expresses the church's desire that the relationship be enhanced.

Third, the Annual Conference should commission those clergy who currently serve as trustees to study the issue of church-college relations. They, after all, are in the best position to bridge the gap between the two. Such a task force could meet with various constituencies of both the college and the church. And hopefully they would not shy away from engaging the most difficult issues, those that represent the bulk of the existing tension.

See THOMPSON, page 5



# More Arkansas towns battered by storms

■ *Strong weather patterns keep UMs responding to weather-related disasters*

The list of Arkansas communities hit by tornadoes in recent months continues to grow — and United Methodist congregations are faithfully responding to those in need.

On May 2, multiple tornadoes blasted through Damascus, Bee Branch, the Greers Ferry area, Siloam Springs, Birdtown, Keo, Carlisle, Hensley, Parkin and Earle. The storms killed seven people, damaged or destroyed about 400 homes and knocked out electrical and telephone service for thousands of customers in 18 counties.

On May 10, Stuttgart became the most recent victim as a twister destroyed a large section of the city's commercial district and up to 200 homes.

Other towns across the state are still trying to recover from a Feb. 5 tornado outbreak that wrecked havoc and killed 13. These include Atkins, Cleveland, Clinton, Ash Flat, Highland, Mountain View, Zion, Melbourne, Junction City and Gassville.

Since that time, Arkansas' severe weather has included a foot-deep snowfall in February and widespread flooding triggered by heavy rain in March and again in April. The flooding has been blamed for five deaths.

"We have many homes damaged and trees down," said Jay Culpepper, pastor of First United Methodist Church in Carlisle. "Miraculously, no

injuries."

About 90 people, including workers and children at the church's day care, took shelter from the the midday storm in the church's basement, Culpepper said.

Hail and winds have ripped off roofs and toppled trees that downed power lines in many of the affected areas.

The Arkansas Department of Emergency Management has established Disaster Recovery Centers in the counties declared state disaster areas. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) is on site in those areas that have received federal disaster declarations.

United Methodist churches are working with community interfaith alliances and disaster recovery teams to provide services and assistance to persons affected.

Don Weeks, Arkansas Conference Volunteers in Mission (VIM) coordinator, is assisting with work teams that can help with cleanup and recovery efforts. He can be contacted at [dweeks@arumc.org](mailto:dweeks@arumc.org) or (501) 681-2909.

"Please continue to forward health kits and flood buckets to the Arkansas Rice Depot or Food Bank Network member organization," said Maxine Allen, Arkansas Conference Minister for Missions. "We have distributed all of the 1,000 flood buckets that we requested from United Methodist Committee on Relief last month."

Allen also released the names of local contact person that VIM teams may wish to contact to determine the best ways to help with recovery efforts. These include:



A home in Carlisle bears the scars of one of eight tornadoes that swept through Arkansas May 2. The storms killed seven people and damaged or destroyed about 400 homes. Photo by Patrick Shownes

**Carlisle:** Jay Culpepper, (870) 552-7789;

**Damascus:** (501) 335-7900;

**Earle:** Jim Thresher, (870) 215-3134;

**Greers Ferry:** Dan Brand, (501) 825-7301;

**Hensley:** Annette Cook or Gena Toslion, (501) 397.2180;

**Keo:** David Hoffman, (870) 357-2612;

**Stuttgart:** Andrew Robinson, (870) 672-1390 (cell) or (870) 673-1381 (office)

**THOMPSON,** *continued from page 4*

Finally, this task should be undertaken with the aim that the great 130-year relationship between Hendrix College and the Methodists of Arkansas will not only continue, but also grow in new and exciting ways.

These four steps represent a modest proposal that will allow the College to maintain its current level of clergy trustees while beginning the process of overcoming the mutual distrust that has led to the current situation. If it doesn't work, the Trustees can always come back to the Annual Conference in a year to propose reducing the number of our clergy again.

We shouldn't underestimate the

gravity of this issue. The Arkansas clergy who currently sit on the Board of Trustees at Hendrix represent something vitally important. They represent the church, which ultimately means they represent the continued presence of Christ within the institution. They also represent both the past history and the present living relationship of the college with the church. For those of us who think that relationship is worth saving, the time to act is now.

[Andrew C. Thompson is an elder in the Arkansas Conference and a doctoral student at Duke Divinity School. He also writes a column, "Gen-X Rising," that appears monthly in the Arkansas United Methodist.]

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**GENERAL CONFERENCE**, *continued from page 1*

works to address its increasingly global nature. And it tweaked the denomination's mission statement to read: "The mission of the church is to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world."

**The worldwide church**

The assembly reflected changing demographics, as membership has shrunk in the United States while growing in Africa and the Philippines and parts of Europe.

This gathering was less centered on issues confined to the United States than at previous assemblies. That was partially because 278 of the 992 delegates came from outside of the United States — 100 more than attended the 2004 session. It also was the result of proposals from a task force studying the global nature of the church.

Delegates approved 23 constitutional amendments that would make it possible to change the church's U.S.-centric structure to a more uniform global structure. The amendments must be ratified by a two-thirds vote of the aggregate total of annual conferences. A 20-member committee will bring recommendations to the 2012 assembly.

In separate action, The United Methodist Church in Côte d'Ivoire, the largest regional conference of the worldwide denomination with almost 700,000 members, received its full rights and responsibilities. As a result, United Methodists in the West African country, which has only two delegates at this General Conference, will receive significantly greater representation at future assemblies.

Delegates approved \$20 million for Africa University in Zimbabwe; \$10 million was already budgeted in apportioned funds, and \$10 million will be raised through World Service Special Gifts.

Delegates also approved \$2 million to help United Methodist theological schools in Africa train additional pastors.

**Budget**

The delegates approved a \$642 million denominational spending plan for the next four years built around four areas of focus for the immediate future:

- Developing principled Christian leaders.
- Creating new places for new people by starting new congregations and renewing existing ones.
- Engaging in ministries with the poor.
- Improving global health, especially attacking the killer diseases of poverty.

It was the first time the church has developed a budget on an outcome-

**About General Conference 2008**

**General Conference is the top policy-making body of The United Methodist Church. Church law provides for a maximum of 1,000 delegates — half clergy, half lay. A conference's representation is based on the number of lay members and clergy members in the annual conference with a guarantee of representation by at least one lay and one clergy.**

**The conference revises The Book of Discipline (book of church law) and Social Principles and adopts resolutions on current moral, social, public policy and economic issues. It also approves plans and budgets for churchwide programs for the next four years.**



*Head clergy delegate Rodney Steele concentrates on a presentation during a plenary session.*

based model, and church leaders celebrated the collaborative process used to reach a consensus among general agencies and other interests.

The budget is 4.8 percent higher than the spending plan for the 2005-2008 period.

**Guests**

U.S. President George W. Bush, a United Methodist, declined an invitation to speak, though he and first lady Laura Bush sent greetings.

Instead, another United Methodist head of state — Liberian President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf — delivered an address that was an assembly highlight.

"This is a special honor for me," she said. "I am the first African leader



*Arkansas delegates (from left) Karon Mann, Rebekah Miles and Asa Whitaker consider proposals during the 2008 General Conference.*

and the first female president to address the General Conference of The United Methodist Church." Her message included that "Liberia is on the way back" after years of civil war.

William H. Gates Sr., co-chair of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, thanked the denomination for being a partner in the Nothing But Nets campaign to eliminate malaria in Africa. More than \$20 million has been raised since the campaign began in 2006. The church recently learned it will receive a \$5 million grant from the United Nations Foundation with help from the Gates Foundation on other health initiatives.

**Homosexuality**

General Conference essentially upheld the status quo on sexuality issues.

In retaining its stance declaring homosexual practice "incompatible with Christian teaching," the assembly rejected a majority report from a legislative committee that recommended new language that faithful people dis-

agree on the topic but that "all seek a faithful witness." A 516-416 vote replaced the majority report with a minority report calling for retention of the incompatibility clause. A subsequent final vote of 501-417 made it official.

The assembly affirmed that all people are "individuals of sacred worth created in the image of God." Delegates also retained statements asking "families and churches not to reject or condemn lesbian and gay members and friends."

On the day after emotional debate and votes on many of the issues, approximately 250 advocates for full inclusion were allowed to walk silently through the aisles of the legislative gathering as an act of protest. Participants covered the Communion table with a black shroud to mourn the church's position in its Social Principles and the conference's actions that deny gays and lesbians the right to serve as clergy.

In other actions related to sexuality, the conference:

*See GENERAL CONFERENCE, page 7*



*Special guests at the Arkansas Luncheon held during General Conference were bishops and spouses with Arkansas connections, including (from left) Julia and Bishop Richard B. Wilke, Bishop Janice Riggle Huie, Bishop Charles Crutchfield and Karen Crutchfield, Valerie and Bishop Max Whitfield.*



**GENERAL CONFERENCE,** *continued from page 6*

● Asked the United Methodist Board of Church and Society to develop educational resources and materials on the effects of homophobia and heterosexism, the discrimination or prejudice against lesbians or gay men by heterosexual people.

● Continued the policy of not funding groups that promote the acceptance of homosexuality, but noted that funds also should not go to groups that violate church principles against rejecting or condemning lesbians, gays and friends.

● Retained language defining marriage as a relationship between one man and one woman.

**Legislative process**

The assembly received 1,564 proposals, 540 fewer than the number processed by the 2004 session, but the body had one less day to work. Former General Conference sessions lasted 12 days but took a day of rest at the midpoint on Sunday. This year, as a cost-saving measure, the assembly met 10 days, including Sunday as a work day.

The loss of the day of rest took its toll on the conference, however, and delegates voted to reinstate that day for the next assembly in 2012.

Delegates created a 24-member standing committee on faith and order to help bishops and the church reflect on matters of faith, doctrinal teaching, order and discipline. The group also will provide study materials upon the request of the bishops, the Connectional Table or General Conference.

The conference called for a continuation of a study authorized by the 2004 assembly on the church's ordering of ministry. The 28-member study group is to address the ordering of ministry, the separation of ordination and conference membership, and the streamlining of the ordained ministry candidacy process.

Delegates approved the creation of a hymnal revision committee and authorized it to bring a proposed hymnal to the 2012 General Conference. An additional group will investigate the possibility of an Africana hymnal that incorporates music and liturgy from Africa and other traditions.

**Constitutional amendments**

General Conference passed a number of amendments to the church's constitution, which now await action from annual conferences. All constitutional amendments approved by a two-thirds vote of General Conference must be ratified by a two-thirds affirmative vote of the aggregate number of voting

annual members.

Delegates passed a constitutional amendment that reduces from two to one the number of years a person must be a professing member of a local church before he or she can be a member of an annual conference.

Annual conferences also will vote on proposals that provide for newly created conferences to be represented at general, jurisdictional or regional



*William H. Gates Sr., the father of Microsoft founder Bill Gates and a co-chairman of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, spoke on the need to eradicate malaria worldwide*

UMNS photo by Mike DuBose

conferences on a non-proportional basis. The issue arose after the Côte d'Ivoire Conference was assigned two delegates for the 2008 General Conference.

One amendment would enable local pastors, associate members and provisional members to join ordained ministerial members in full connection in voting for delegates to General and jurisdictional conferences. To vote, local pastors must have completed the Course of Study or master of divinity degree and have served under appointment for two consecutive years immediately preceding an election. Only ordained members in full connection with an annual conference may be delegates.

If annual conferences ratify another amendment, then local churches, jurisdictional and General Conference, "organizations, groups, committees, councils, boards and agencies" will have to adopt ethics and conflict-of-interest policies. These policies will apply to both members and employees to help them "embody and live out our Christian values."

**Judicial Council**

Susan Henry-Crowe is the new president of the Judicial Council, becoming the first woman to lead the denomination's nine-member "supreme court." The other new leaders are Jon R. Gray, vice president, and Belton Joyner, secretary.

Henry-Crowe is dean of Cannon Chapel and religious life at Emory University. Gray returned to private

law practice in Kansas City, Mo., last fall after 20 years as a family court judge. Joyner, a retired member of the North Carolina Conference, is serving as an interim district superintendent.

Angela Brown of California-Nevada, Ruben Reyes of the Philippines, Kathi Austin-Mahle of Minnesota and Bill Lawrence of North Texas also were elected as new members. Beth Capen, New York Conference, and Dennis Blackwell, Greater New Jersey, will complete their eight-year terms in 2012.

**Social action**

Delegates urged U.S. lawmakers to ensure that immigration laws don't tear families apart, and they advocated for "full protection of all workers."

General Conference voted 416-384 for the United Methodist Board of Church and Society and the Women's Division of the Board of Global Ministries to continue as members in the Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice.

The assembly added a statement on abortion to the Social Principles offer-

that area.

The conference asked the Board of Church and Society to identify and publish on its Web site educational resources on stem-cell research. The resolution encourages pastors to use the resources to become informed about the use of embryonic stem cells for medical research and to offer these resources for study in local churches.

Noting that more than 400 people have been put to death in Texas since 1982, the assembly asked the

Texas legislature to end executions.

On the 100th anniversary of the Social Creed, delegates decided that a proposed new creed would serve the church better as a "companion litany." It has been set to music.

**Other items**

General Conference approved a full communion agreement with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, in which each church recognizes the other's ministry and mission, the authenticity of the other's baptism and Eucharist, and the interchangeability of ordained ministers.

The 40th anniversary of the founding of the denomination also marked the 40th anniversary of the dissolution of the Central Jurisdiction, a racially based structure, and the formation of the Commission on Religion and Race. The assembly also celebrated the 60th anniversary of the Advance and the 100th anniversary of ministry to Methodist men, the Social Creed and the Board of Pension and Health Benefits.

The assembly increased the retirement age of bishops from 66 to 68 and the retirement age of other ordained clergy from 70 to 72.

Concerned about finances, delegates approved a plan that will result in one less bishop in four of the five U.S. jurisdictions, beginning in 2012. The savings will be used to fund new episcopal areas elsewhere. The action will not affect the Southeastern Jurisdiction, which already elects one less bishop than the present formula allows.

People who join United Methodist churches henceforth will promise to be faithful in "their witness" as well as in their "prayers, their presence, their gifts and their service."



*Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, president of Liberia, addresses the 2008 United Methodist General Conference in Fort Worth, Texas.*

UMNS photo by Paul Jeffrey



*The Hope for Africa Children's Choir from Uganda sings during the April 29 morning worship service at the 2008 General Conference in Fort Worth, Texas.*

UMNS photo by Mike DuBose

ing "ministries to reduce unintended pregnancies" and to assist the ministry of crisis pregnancy and support centers that help women "find feasible alternatives to abortion."

Stating that Israel continues to violate international law by building a wall on Palestinian land, the conference called upon Israelis and Palestinians to uphold U.N. resolutions and International Court of Justice rulings.

Delegates called on United Methodists to divest funds from companies that support the government of Sudan in order to end the genocide in



## ARKANSAS, continued from page 1

There was no shortage of issues, plans and dreams for the church during General Conference. Here, several of the Arkansas delegates share thoughts about some of the key decisions.

**The worldwide church**

*Delegates opened the door to significant structural change relating to the global nature of the church and issues faced by the current structure that is often considered U.S. centric. A study commission will make specific recommendations in four years.*

**Rodney Steele:** "Part of what's making this an issue is folks don't know what it's going to look like when it's all said and done. But we've got to let go of our U.S. centric way of thinking. Statistics have proved this; we are seeing more Central Conference delegates and younger delegates speak up, and I think that's going to be an indication of things to come."

**Sarah Steele:** "With the decline in U.S. members and an increase in the Central Conferences, it's obvious that the United States is going to be in the minority eventually. I think at this conference we're realizing the day is going to come a lot sooner than people were thinking. People are realizing there is going to be a shift. ... The U.S. is going to have to wake up and say, 'It's not about us.'"

**Roy Smith:** "Part of what we did is we created a mechanism by which the study commission can think without being constrained by the way we've been organized in the past. Also, it allows us to make a very serious commitment ... so the Central Conference members can understand that we want to be a worldwide church, not just a U.S. church with some outposts around it."

**John Miles II (reserve):** "I think the most challenging and far-reaching issue we have is the this idea of a world church and the United States as a region of it. I really think the bishops intend good for this and they intend it to help us do some of our own debates on our own and let the world church handle others. But there's a deep suspicion from me and the evangelical side of the church that this is really just a ploy to allow the 'real' agenda of the more left wing of our American community to basically further get control of our denomination. And if that's the case, that's just going to be devastating. All that'll mean is fights just about as far as the eye can see."

**Carole Teague:** "I wish everybody could come to General Conference and see how worldwide we really are. I do think that so much of what we talk about is just about the United States church and about the United States. If you try to walk in the shoes of our

Central Conference delegates, that would be not very appropriate. And it's so time consuming and expensive for them to come here and listen to our business. I think we need to put our money where our mouth is, so to speak. ... I think for the sake of the church that needs to be done. ... So, maybe we should change the way we do General Conference."

**J. Harris Moore (reserve):** "The Africa Initiatives have really given us more global perspectives for ministry. We really are reaching beyond our local communities, beyond our borders. We are changing. I think a global change is coming."

**Karon Mann:** "It's been interesting to see the subtle changes, like going from the word 'Central' conferences to 'Regional' conferences, which is more meaningful, I believe. I think we've got a lot of thinking to do between now and the next General Conference about what [the Church] really wants that to look like as far as the United States is concerned."

**Four areas of focus**

*Delegates approved a plan proposed by the Council of Bishops to direct ministry efforts around four areas of focus: 1) leadership; 2) starting new congregations; 3) engaging in ministries with the poor; and 4) improving global health by fighting killer diseases.*

**Asa Whitaker:** "I believe the church was hungry for direction. We've sort of been lost in the wilderness, wondering where we were going next. The four areas of focus provide a guide of how we might progress as a denomination. I think the Arkansas Conference we will respond to that."

**Rodney Steele:** "These give a consensus of the direction of the church ... I think we're seeing a shift to a coordinated effort, a focused effort, and I think the bishops of the South Central Jurisdiction are helping lead the way. We have a lot to be proud of."

**J.J. Whitney:** "I'm encouraged by the bishops' leadership, the work on the global health crisis and the encouragement for churches to reach out to those in poverty around them. I'm excited about what we can do to be part of that. I think there are many things that can be done in Arkansas through the church."

**Karon Mann:** "While I believe the Arkansas Conference has a very strong mission and vision statement, I do think the four areas of focus that came out of this General Conference will be implemented in Arkansas because of the strong leadership we have in the bishop and at the cabinet level."

**Ministry study & changes**

*A study on the church's ordering of*



*The Arkansas Delegation to the 2008 General Conference included (front, from left) Carole Teague, Rebekah Miles, Asa Whitaker, Rodney Steele; (middle) J. Harris Moore (reserve), Karon Mann, Cleifton Vaughan, Stark Ligon (reserve), John Miles II (reserve), Sarah Steele; and (back) J.J. Whitney, Roy Smith, Karen Millar, Tony Holifield, Mike Morey (reserve) and C.E. McAdoo.*

*ministry is continued for four years. The 28-member study group is to address the ordering of ministry, the separation of ordination and conference membership, and the streamlining of the ordained ministry candidacy process. Some related measures passed at the 2008 conference.*

**Rebekah Miles:** "I'm thrilled about the legislation that passed to streamline the process leading toward ordained ministry. That's something some of us in this jurisdiction have been working on for four years. We voted to shorten the probationary process and make candidacy more friendly, and also give people a better chance to come to the process from campus ministries or other settings. We changed the language from 'probationary' to 'provisional' membership — and that matters to a lot of young clergy and candidates."

"We established a study commission, started by the Council of Bishops, and are recommending it have 25 percent people under age 35. That will completely change the discussion. With the last study group, I was the youngest

one on it, at 47, and then we had a 48- and 49-year-old. And we look old! But with 25 percent people under 35, that's going to make a big difference. None of the agency staff will be voting members; they'll have voice but not vote. There'll be a lot more local pastors and associate members than last time, and a good representation of deacons and elders. And it was also given the mandate to help continue to streamline the process. It'll be good. Streamlining the process is the No. 1 thing we can do to attract young persons to ordained ministry."

**J.J. Whitney:** "I am pleased the candidacy process was streamlined so that you only have to serve one year before you're eligible to start the candidacy process. We also changed the language from 'probationary' to 'provisional.' That's better language, more hospitable. We've just been more hospitable to that whole process. So I'm excited about that for young people because it's been on their hearts ... Beka Miles worked very hard on that legislation, and it paid off."

*See ARKANSAS, page 9*

**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, 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 [sjohnson@fumcmh.org](mailto:sjohnson@fumcmh.org), or at (870) 425-6036.



## ARKANSAS, continued from page 8

**Budget**

*Delegates approved a \$642 million denominational budget for the next four years.*

**Cleifton Vaughan:** “I was very pleased we were able to adopt a budget without any changes [from what was recommended]. I understand that was the first time that has happened. It showed the General Council on Finance and Administration had worked well with the agencies and the Connectional Table.”

**Roy Smith:** “I’m real excited that we reached a new level of fiscal responsibility. I think we were really trying to budget toward the four areas of focus and push ourselves to make priorities. That’s not easy. It’s a lot easier to just say, ‘Oh, just pay for everything.’”

**Karen Millar:** “We did a good job of holding to the proposed budget and not going over that. I think there was more accountability raised at this General Conference, accountability for our ministries, boards and agencies, and for bishops ... I think that goes back to trying to use our money wisely, and that translates right for people in the pews.”

**Sexuality issues**

*Delegates generally retained the church’s stances on homosexuality, including the declaration in the church’s Social Principles that homosexual practice is “incompatible with Christian teaching.” A solemn protest, or witness, by advocates for full inclusion was staged during the conference.*

**Rodney Steele:** “I know there are a lot of differences ... but I was proud to be a United Methodist when I saw the delegates’ responses during the witness. They chose to maintain the decorum and dignity that we need to honor Christ. It was a painful time, yet it was a time where everyone showed their dignity. I felt like people were trying to bear that as graciously as they could, under difficult circumstances.”

**Rebekah Miles:** “I think the homosexuality issue has really been hard this time around. The demonstration, with the black cloth placed on the altar symbolizing the brokenness of the church ... I think it’s hard to watch that and not realize we are broken. I think we’re broken, not just over that issue but a number of issues. It’s not a brokenness that’s easy to fix, but we think God and the Holy Spirit is strong enough, and Christ’s body is One even when it doesn’t look like it.”

**Sarah Steele:** “For me what was most painful was that the trust and sense of camaraderie that had developed in our committees and subcommittees all of a sudden disappeared. We were once again Camp A and Camp B. It really put a strain on the entire con-

ference. I’m fairly conservative but it still hurt me to see other people hurting. That really took an emotional toll.”

**J.J. Whitney:** “[The witness] was a painful experience for me, and I think for all of us, to see the protest and know we have not moved to even recognize our differences on these issues of gay persons in our church. So that was very painful. But I felt like the Council of Bishops want to continue the conversation, and that was a point of hope.”

**Carole Teague:** “I was hopeful that we would finally say that we agree to disagree, that we accepted the fact that there was disagreement ... The reason it’s upsetting to me is that I feel like it’s not an honest statement the way it is — and everybody knows. So I don’t see what the big deal is about it. But obviously it *is* a big deal. But I did think it would be the honest thing to do to say there’s disagreement but we’re talking.”

**Karen Millar:** “I thought it was good that we held to the Discipline in matters of homosexuality.”

**Asa Whitaker:** “I believe retaining the current language on homosexuality was the right thing to do. [The witness] was done with great anguish. It was a down moment of the whole General Conference when you realized ... that there were people in United Methodism in that room who felt passionate about this being changed, and once again their ideology didn’t prevail. Although that was painful, one still is bound to vote one’s conscience on how that part of the Discipline should read. So I’m perfectly happy with it. As far as I’m concerned, we’ll leave it alone the rest of our days.”

**Voting rights**

*Among the constitutional amendments passed was one that would enable local pastors, associate members and provisional members to join ordained ministerial members in full connection in voting for delegates to General and jurisdictional conferences.*

**Rebekah Miles:** “This will mean a big change, giving local pastors these voting rights. It’s still has to go through the voting process in the annual conferences and get a two-thirds aggregate vote, all of us together — but I think it’s going to get that. This amendment will actually change things a lot. I’m excited about it because I am seeing more of this kind of democratic impulse in Methodism.”

**John Miles II:** “I think it’s huge that local pastors are going to get to vote on General and Jurisdictional Conference delegates. I think that’s fair, I think that right, and I’m shocked that it passed. That is a *big* change, and I am tickled

to death.”

**Roy Smith:** “This is going to bring about a profound change in Arkansas — and it should be a welcome change. This is the kind of thing that will help us open up to a new way of doing and being the church.”

**Deacons**

*Pastors or district superintendents may now ask the bishop to give sacramental authority to a deacon if an elder is not present.*

**Rebekah Miles:** “We voted to give sacramental authority for deacons, not across the board but for those in missional need. I mean, you’ve got Lu Harding up there at Mount Eagle. She’s got to scramble around to try to get an elder to come in when she needs to serve communion. As a deacon, she needs to be able to have the capacity to do that, to serve the sacraments. Then there are those in prison ministry, homeless ministry ... They need to be able to baptize and have sacramental authority in light of missional needs.”

**C.E. McAdoo:** “The decisions regarding deacons and the issue of local pastors’ voting rights were good ones. The new Discipline is not going

to have anything too earthshaking or different, per se. I felt like we did a lot of cleaning up and improving language. I believe as good Methodists we ought to be able to live with it.”

**Cleifton Vaughan:** “Giving local pastors the right to vote on General and Jurisdictional Conference delegates is a very important issue. I think they should have a vote. They are part of the church, they’re part of the body.”

**Faithful witness**

*People who join United Methodist churches will in the future promise to be faithful in “their witness” as well as in their “prayers, their presence, their gifts and their service.”*

**Asa Whitaker:** “The addition of these words means we simply take seriously the idea of making disciples for the transformation of the world. We believe as laity we have that responsibility, and it was imperative to get some language into the Discipline that would put responsibility back on the laity. This does not mean laity are to stand on the street corner and hand out pamphlets, but witness to the faith in their daily lives.

## The Confessing Movement of Arkansas

invites you to BREAKFAST during Annual Conference

Monday, June 9, 2008, at 6:45 a.m.

Union Baptist Church

219 Gulpha Street, Hot Springs, Ark.

*(Use back entry adjoining parking lot behind Hot Springs Convention Center)*

**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)*



# Seminary next stop for 4 new Hendrix grads

CONWAY — Four of the newest Hendrix College graduates will be attending seminary in the fall, the most from a single graduating class in the college's recent history. Wayne Clark, Hendrix's chaplain, said it was the most during his 12 years at the college.

Amanda Brooks of Kent, Ohio; Andrew Fiser of Little Rock; and Katie Pearce of Springdale will be attending Vanderbilt University's Divinity School in Nashville, Tenn., beginning in the fall. Will Tanner of Malvern will be attending the Iliff School of Divinity in Denver. All four graduated from Hendrix during the college's May 10 commencement exercises.

"These are four outstanding students who had wonderful academic careers at Hendrix College," Clark said. "We're looking forward to watching them as they continue an exciting educational and spiritual path."

Fiser and Pearce both received the Turner Fellowship from Vanderbilt, which pays tuition, room, board and a stipend. Additionally, Pearce received the Butler Scholarship, which is awarded in Arkansas.

Pearce said she plans to return to Arkansas as a United Methodist pastor and elder upon her graduation from Vanderbilt. She said she chose to come to Hendrix because of its Lilly Vocations program, which helped her develop into a seminary student.

"My local church, family and friends at Hendrix, along with the college's faculty, have all helped me to discern some of the many facets of what God is calling me to do in my life," Pearce said. "I am really looking forward to three years of seminary at Vanderbilt Divinity School and whatever I do beyond that."

"I have found that the local church and communities of faith are essential to the process of becoming a Christian, so I plan to develop such communities at my most basic calling," she continued. "Seminary and the work beyond will hopefully enable me to explore how Christian communities can better

integrate justice seeking and peace making with faithful witness to Christ's life, death and resurrection."

Brooks said her calling to ministry came out of a strong desire to help others. She said she wants to teach following seminary, and eventually earn her doctorate.

"Similar to the majority of students heading to Divinity School, I have always felt a call to help others," Brooks said. "However, unlike a lot of students heading to Divinity School, my call has not been towards ministry, but rather to teach. I grew up with professors for parents and I've always had a love for education, whether it was learning or teaching."

Initially planning to attend seminary in Berkeley, Calif., Brooks said her decision changed after visiting Vanderbilt in February.

"I visited Vanderbilt and just fell in love with the campus and the overall

Vanderbilt atmosphere," she said. "Nashville is an amazing city and I can't wait for the experiences that Vanderbilt and Nashville have in store for me."

Tanner, who has been in the United Methodist Church since he was 10, has always wanted to teach, and Iliff is "the logical next step from Hendrix toward a future that will enable me to give back the cards in life I've been dealt."

"I know that this will not be an easy ride, and that earning a master's degree is more a testament to patience and perseverance than anything else, but I am prepared to face whatever challenges that I come across with an open mind and a strong work ethic," Tanner said. "I already have a strong drive to share the wisdom and experience of the faith traditions of such a fruitful plurality that exists in our world with many of my friends through long hours of conversation; now, with the blessing of a seminary, I might be able to support myself and my family through this great and abiding passion."

*"Seminary and the work beyond will hopefully enable me to explore how Christian communities can better integrate justice seeking and peace making with faithful witness to Christ's life, death and resurrection."*

— Katie Pearce

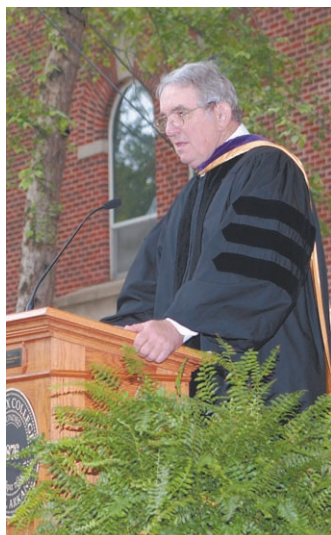
## 204 receive degrees during college's commencement exercises in Conway

CONWAY — Hendrix College conferred degrees upon 204 of its students during the college's 124th commencement ceremony May 10. U.S. District Judge William R. "Bill" Wilson, a Hendrix alumnus and a member of the college's Board of Trustees, was the commencement speaker.

In his remarks, Wilson told the graduates that preparation was, and would continue to be, the key to their future careers. He referred to Abraham Lincoln, who once said that if he was given eight hours to chop down a tree, the first six hours would be spent sharpening his ax.

Wilson also encouraged the students to utilize their intelligence while maintaining a level of honesty and integrity.

"All of you are smart," he said.



U.S. District Judge William R. "Bill" Wilson addresses Hendrix College graduates at the May 10 commencement ceremony.

"Most of you are very smart. A few of you are brilliant. But remember what a friend of Winston Churchill once said about him: 'His brains have gone to his head.'"

"You should always be the sort of person who an associate says, 'I would shoot craps with them over the phone,'" Wilson continued.

Wilson concluded his remarks by referred students to Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s famous "Drum Major Instinct" speech, delivered by King in 1968. In the speech, King discussed the virtues of being a

leader, telling those in the audience that, upon his death, he didn't want a long funeral, or it to be mentioned that he won a Nobel Peace Prize and hundreds of other awards. Instead, Dr. King said he wanted to be known as someone who gave his life serving others, and "if you want to say that I was



Jennifer Tate of Germantown, Tenn., the top graduate in the 2008 senior class at Hendrix College, carries the college's banner to open the commencement ceremony.

a drum major, say that I was a drum major for justice."

Wilson challenged the graduates with those remarks.

"We all want to be out front," Wilson said. "But it's a good thing if we channel that to the service of others. Wouldn't you like to be known as a drum major for justice?"

Wilson, a U.S. District Judge for the Eastern District of Arkansas, is a 1962 graduate of Hendrix College and a native of Waldron.

Jennifer Robin Tate of

Germantown, Tenn., carried the college's banner during the ceremony as the 2008 recipient of the Hendrix President's Medal. The President's Medal, first awarded in 1980, is the top honor given to a graduating senior at Hendrix.

Hendrix College, founded in 1876, is an undergraduate liberal arts college emphasizing experiential learning in a demanding yet supportive environment. Hendrix has been affiliated with the United Methodist Church since 1884.





The Bear Creek Camp Board of Trustees will host a barbecue dinner on the campgrounds at Marianna May 18. Festivities will begin at 3 p.m. with fun and games, including fishing off the dock, horseshoes, bingo, trivia and volleyball. Dinner will be served at 5 p.m. No tickets are being sold but donations will be accepted.

The Okolona Reunion Celebration is set for May 24 at Okolona UMC, 110 N. Harvell. Registration begins at noon, with a barbecue dinner served at 1 p.m. United Methodist Men of the South Central District will be preparing the barbecue pork and chicken, and members of the Okolona Charge will contribute a bounty of accompaniments.

The reunion program will be presented in the sanctuary at 2:30 p.m. Special music, testimonies and prayers of the faithful will be part of the program.

All events are free; love offerings will be accepted. Proceeds will go to replace the church roof damaged by recent high winds and rain.

Persons planning to attend are asked to contact Gracie Smith at (870) 274-3359 or Phyllis Rhoden (870) 274-3123.

The Battle of the Bands is coming up from 6-8 p.m. June 7 on the grounds of Levy UMC, 701 W. 47th St., North Little Rock. The event will feature Tri-Chord from Amboy UMC, North Little Rock; Grace Full Age from Sylvan Hills UMC, Sherwood; and Caleb's Mountain from New Life

Baptist Church, Benton.

The outdoor event is free, however participants may vote for their favorite band for \$1. Proceeds will go to the Amboy Community Food pantry. The band that raises the most money will be declared the winner.

In honor of its 30th anniversary, Arkansas Advocates for Children and Families will present an overview of the state of children in Arkansas, followed by a panel discussion on "The Role of the Faith Community and Child Advocacy." The event is set for 6-8 p.m. May 22 at the Kendall Center, Philander Smith College, Little Rock. Steven J. Copley, director of the Justice for Our Neighbors ministry, will be moderator.

Those planning to attend are asked to contact Nancy Leonhardt at nleonhardt@aradvocates.org or (501) 371-9678 ext. 103.

Des Arc First UMC will host a Celebration Sunday May 18 marking 150 years of ministry and the consecration of a new Christian Life Center. Bishop Charles Crutchfield will be the celebrant for the 11 a.m. worship service, and North District Superintendent Rodney Steele will be a special guest. Special music will be provided by the Celebration Choir, consisting of the Chancel Choir, Children and Friends, River Ringers Handbell Choir, Des Arc UMC Handbell Choir and Praise Team.

Lunch will follow the service. Memorabilia depicting the history of the church will be displayed, and com-

memorative items featuring the 150th anniversary and the Christian Life Center will be available for purchase. Pastor Tony Hill extends an invitation to all former pastors, members and friends of the church.

A Volunteer in Mission Team Leader Training event is coming up from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. July 12 at Sylvan Hills UMC, 9921 Highway 107, Sherwood. Cost is \$20, which will include lunch and training guide booklet. For more information contact Don Weeks, Arkansas Conference VIM coordinator, at (501) 868-2909 or Jim Rowland, pastor at Sylvan Hills UMC, at (501) 835-3410.

United Methodist Women of Mayflower UMC will host a fish fry from 5-7 p.m. May 31 at the church, Highway 89 and Grove Street. Proceeds will help Mayflower youth attend Camp Tanako this summer. The menu will include catfish fillets, hush puppies, pickles, cole slaw, french fries, a drink and dessert, all for \$8. Carry outs will be available. For more information contact Ruth Osborne at (501) 470-1332.

In other news from Mayflower, the church will celebrate United Methodist Women Sunday June 22. Guest speaker for the 11 a.m. service will be Dana Addison, director of development at Camp Aldersgate in Little Rock. Among the members participating will be UMW President Ruth Osborne, who will present a summary of this year's accomplishments; Vice President Carol Bales, who will

announce special awards; and Robbie Bowden, who will share the UMW Purpose.

The Salem Camp Meeting begins June 22 and continues through June 29. The annual outdoor revival was organized in the 1830s and has been held continuously every year since 1867. Services take place under the Salem Camp Meeting arbor, located on the grounds of Salem United Methodist Church, 1647 Salem Road, Benton.

Scott Gallimore, associate pastor at First UMC, Jonesboro, will be evangelist for this year's revival. Special music groups will perform each evening at 6:30 p.m. Ron Hall of First UMC, Hot Springs, will be song leader. Kathleen Dockery of Oaklawn UMC, Hot Springs, will be pianist.

South Central District Superintendent will preach June 29. A special children's program is offered nightly, along with a nursery. A reception follows each service. A potluck dinner is planned for 5:30 p.m. June 22.

Bill Shirron is president of the camp meeting board of directors. All are welcome.

The Prime Timers, a senior adult group at First UMC, Russellville, will be traveling to Mount Rushmore, the Badlands and Black Hills of South Dakota Sept. 20-28. A few open seats remain. A \$75 deposit will hold a seat, with the remainder due July 15. Total cost is \$750. For more information, contact Carol Shoptaw at (479) 968-1232.

## Training in disaster case management to be offered

The United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR) will offer training in Arkansas May 27-28 for persons who wish to serve as volunteer case managers when disasters occur.

The Disaster Case Management Training is offered free of charge by UMCOR, in cooperation with Catholic Charities, Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and other faith-based disaster organizations.

The 14 hours of training will be held at the Harry R. Kendall Health

Science and Mission Center at Philander Smith College in Little Rock. Lunch will be provided by Arkansas Conference of the United Methodist Church.

To register, contact Barbara Rigali at (501) 618-3493 or Barbara.rigali@dhs.gov.

Housing scholarships are available for participants who live more than 50 miles from Little Rock. Contact Maxine Allen, Arkansas at mallen@arumc.org for housing information.

## Mission to Moscow

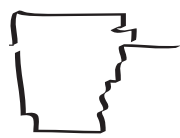
### FALL MISSION TO MOSCOW

Sept. 19-28, 2008

Quapaw Quarter United Methodist Church and Peacework are sponsoring a mission trip to an orphanage in Moscow, Russia, Sept. 19-28, 2008.

Interested persons or church mission groups should contact Rev. John T. Dill at (870) 833-2678 or jdpickle@sbcglobal.net for preliminary details.





## It Happened

Dany Partlow, Herschel Richardson and Stephen Dickinson, clergy members of the Arkansas Conference from the Northeast District, are congratulated for completing their master of divinity degree and graduating May 10 from Memphis Theological Seminary.

Fisher Street UMC, Jonesboro, the Craighead County Community Foundation and the Jonesboro Civitan Club are teaming up to purchase and distribute 100 fans to persons in need this summer in the Jonesboro area. The Foundation awarded a \$1,000 grant to the Civitan Club, which is partnering with Fisher Street UMC to handle distribution.

"Isn't it wonderful what can happen when we are willing to work with others to meet the needs around us?" said Larry G. Hunt, pastor at Fisher Street UMC.

St. Paul UMC, Searcy, held a balloon release May 4 as part of its Ascension Sunday observance. Two hundred balloons were released to commemorate the Ascension of Christ. On Friday and Saturday of the same weekend, the church held a rummage sale and raised \$1,180 to benefit

Jacob's House, a homeless shelter in Searcy.

Members of Marion UMC gathered recently for a program called "Standing on the Promises." Members of all ages were invited to write their favorite scripture on the floor of the new sanctuary before the carpet was installed. The first service in the new sanctuary is scheduled for the first Sunday in June.

First UMC, Jonesboro, presented the musical "Life School Musical" to a standing room only crowd on April 30. The story is set in today's modern school setting with Biblical teachings about faith, hope and love. The musical was staged by the Music Department at First UMC and featured all elementary age children's choirs, including the Tiny Tunes preschool choir that offered two musical selections under the direction of Janea Spades. Sean Pollock, music and worship director, and Sissy Cain, music assistant for youth and children's programs, served as co-directors, with Jeff Clack, technical director, providing set construction.

First UMC, Osceola, hosted a potluck luncheon following the Sunday worship service April 20 in honor of graduating high school senior Michael Bridges. Michael received gifts from the church and was awarded the Donnie Johnson Memorial Scholarship given by the Mary Ann Wilson Sunday School Class.

United Methodist Women of Holiday Hills UMC, Greers Ferry, hosted its annual Spring Salad Luncheon



Members of St. Paul UMC, Searcy, look on as balloons are released in observance of Ascension Sunday.

May 7. Members brought a salad of their choice and invited friends and neighbors. Awarding-winning oboist Hannah Cruse and her sister, Katie, who plays the piano, provided the entertainment.



Greenwood UMC recently hosted a four-part churchwide study on the Israel/Palestine conflict, inspired by the Arkansas School of Christian Mission course. Participants included (back, from left) Roy Walker, senior pastor David Hawkins, Mindy James, Mary Richardson; (center) study leader Ruth Oelrich, Betty Walker, Mary Sondra Webb; and (seated) Yvonne Quinlan and Jean Brandt

Greenhill UMC held Senior Recognition Sunday April 27. Graduating seniors honored were Dale Pace and Allison Pace, students at University of Arkansas at Monticello, and Nikki Young and Sarah Karnes, students at Monticello High School. The seniors received gifts from the congregation and were honored at a hamburger lunch following the morning worship service, which featured Rodney Wishard of Gideon International as guest speaker.



Greenhill UMC seniors recently honored include (from left) Dale Pace, Alison Pace, Nikki Young and Sarah Karnes.



High school senior Michael Bridges, a member of Osceola First UMC recently honored by the church, is joined by his parents, Linda and Garry Bridges, and grandmother, Shirley Bridges.



The children's choirs at Jonesboro First UMC recently staged "Life School Musical."



The high school seniors at Marion UMC were recognized May 4 during the 10:45 a.m. service. Afterwards, they were honored at the Senior Luncheon and given gift baskets from the church. Graduates include: Olivia Adams, Michael Altemus, Bubba Cooper, Reed Fogleman, Drew Green, Clay Knych, Michael Nelson, Casey Shireman, Dustin Stanfield and Mary Frances Vick.



# A PLACE all their own

## Huntsville church transforms former parsonage into a favorite youth hangout

HUNTSVILLE — What do you do with a church parsonage that is no longer in use?

That was the question facing Huntsville United Methodist Church after the congregation teamed up with Presley Chapel UMC, the other half of the two-point Charge, and purchased a new parsonage for their pastor.

At first the answer seemed simple. The old parsonage would be sold and moved off site, and the area could be used as a basketball court. But the cost of moving the building was prohibitive, so that idea was dropped.

Because there was a need for a gathering place for youth, especially after school and before and after athletic events, the church stepped out in faith and turned the old parsonage into a Youth Coffee House.

“The is not just any old broken down place, but a refurbished and up- to-date facility that rivals many coffee houses in much large cities,” said pastor Michael W. Topham.

The project quickly gained the support of the entire

community. The Starbucks Coffee Co. store in Rogers donated many bags of coffee to get the coffee house started. Individuals donated cappuccino machines and coffee makers, as well as blenders, smoothie makers and coffee cups by the dozens. The ladies of the church volunteered to bake cookies and donate treats for youth gatherings.

Wesley United Methodist Church in Springdale donated two computers. Three other computers were donated, along with networking devices and



The computer lab at the Huntsville UMC Youth Coffee House is a favorite place to hang out.



Coffee choices abound at the Huntsville UMC Youth Coffee House, formerly the church parsonage. The facility has become a favorite gathering place for young people from throughout the community.

software, creating a fully functional, Internet connected computer lab where the youth can do homework, check on their MySpace friends, and look up information when school is out and they need to get on-line.

In addition, a pool table was donated for the game room. Chairs and couches were donated to create a comfortable conversation space. A Prayer Room was set up for those who wish to be reflective. Church members have volunteered to staff the coffee bar and to be available when and if the youth need someone to talk to other than parents or friends.

“All of this was done by

the church members who desperately wanted some place just for the youth,” Topham said. “So far we have had as few as three youth in an evening and as many as 25 youth after home soccer games.”

The future plans and activities at the facility are in the hands of the youth, the pastor said. “It is a gift for them to use as they find the need. ... It is theirs, and they know it came from the hearts of people who care.”

The local Ministerial Alliance has met at the Youth House once already, and several other churches in the area have expressed a desire to support the ministry because it offers all youth in the community a safe place to gather.

So what do you do with an old parsonage? Turn it over to God and use it for His glory.

## UMs from Arkansas, India find connection

### ■ \$2 investment launches 75-year faith journey

In 1933, Laura Heist, a dedicated Methodist missionary to India, walked 10 miles to the remote village of Rabod. As she taught the Good News to the children sitting on the dirt floor, an eager, bright-eyed boy of 12 caught her attention. She asked if he would like to attend the Methodist Indian Boy’s Boarding School in a nearby city.

When she explained she would secure a scholarship from the Victory Sunday School Class of Grand Avenue Methodist Church in Hot Springs, Ark., the boy and his parents were overjoyed.

With an investment of \$2 a month, the Victory Sunday School Class made it possible for young Raiji Rathod to continue his education, find Christ as

his Savior, graduate from high school and receive a call to preach. He pursued college and seminary degrees in India and became the first Indian superintendent of the boarding school.

Raiji was granted further scholarships, enabling him to attend and graduate from Asbury Theological Seminary in Kentucky and earn a master’s degree from Princeton University.

He returned to India to build five city and 10 village Methodist churches, becoming a prominent leader in the Methodist Church in India.

Upon arriving in the United States in 1956, Raiji was determined to visit the Victory Sunday School Class that had sponsored him as a child. When he arrived in Hot Springs at 5 a.m., he

found the entire class waiting at the bus depot to meet and embrace him. Seventy-five years later, a picture of young Raiji still hangs on the wall of the Victory Sunday School classroom in Hot Springs.

During his lifetime, Dr. Rathod came to the United States 22 times in ministries for the United Methodist Church, including attending the historic 1968 uniting General Conference. He served as a member of the General Council on Ministries.

Dr. Rathod’s legacy — and that of Grand Avenue UMC’s Victory Sunday School Class — continued at the 2008 General Conference in Fort Worth, Texas. Four members of his family, including his son, son-in-law, grandson and granddaughter, served as a clergy



The 2008 General Conference provided an opportunity for a meeting between members of the Raiji Rathod family — son-in-law Solomon Christian, granddaughter Monica Christian, and son Samuel Rathod — and Pamela Estes (right), pastor of Grand Avenue UMC, Hot Springs. The church’s Victory Sunday School Class supported Rathod and his ministry for 75 years.

delegate, Judicial Council alternate member, speaker and page, respectively, at General Conference.

That \$2 a month mission investment in 1933 began an amazing faith journey for the Raiji Rathod family that continues today.







## Opposing state-run lottery

Anti-lottery amendment planners met with Bishop Charles Crutchfield May 8 in Little Rock to discuss strategies to defeat the proposed lottery amendment. The petition drive to put the proposed state constitutional amendment on the November General Election ballot is being spearheaded by Lt. Gov. Bill Halter. Among the United Methodists leading the opposition to the proposal are (from left) Pat Bodenhamer, an ordained United Methodist pastor and state budget and tax outreach director, Arkansas Advocates for Children and Families; attorney Scott Trotter, a member of Pulaski Heights UMC, Little Rock; Bishop Crutchfield; and Roger Glover, senior pastor of Dardanelle/Liberty Hall UMCs and state director of United Methodists Against Gambling. For more information contact Glover at (479) 229-3720 or lbbock@centurytel.net

## Pine Bluff minister garners recognition

Edna Morgan, a United Methodist minister who founded Healing Place Ministries in Pine Bluff, has been named Crime Victim Advocate of the Year by the state attorney general's office in Arkansas. Healing Place Ministries serves elderly crime victims in the Pine Bluff region with the help of a network of care providers.

Founded by Morgan and her husband, David Morgan, the ministry is housed at First United Methodist Church in Pine Bluff and funded with grants from the U.S. Department of Justice, the United Methodist Board of Global Ministries and the United Methodist Board of Discipleship.

## Singers recruited for mass choir at conference

Singers are being recruited to join the Mass Conference Choir that will led music at the opening worship service of the 2008 Arkansas Annual

Conference at 6 p.m. June 8 in Hot Springs. Contact Gail Hocott at (501) 225-9692 or directorgail@juno.com before the May 25 deadline.

## Calendar

### MAY

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.

## Remember When

### 100 Years Ago

May 14, 1908: A day and night was spent in Fayetteville. This is the best town in North Arkansas. For many years they have had no saloons, but they have had a steady and rapid growth. It is a city of excellent people, with modern improvements. A more desirable place to live would be hard to find.

### 50 Years Ago

May 15, 1958: The annual meeting of the Arkadelphia District of the Women's Society was held in the First Methodist Church in Arkadelphia with 115 members registering for the day. The session was under the gener-

al direction of Mrs. J.A. Gannaway, president of the district organization. At her invitation Mrs. Alvin Stone, vice president of the Little Rock Conference Women's Society, presided at the morning session.

### 20 Years Ago

May 20, 1988: A daylong celebration commemorating the 32nd anniversary for the charter of Wesley United Methodist Church in Russellville is planned for Sunday June 5. Activities include a pancake breakfast at 8 a.m., plus worship service, youth activities, recognition of past members, potluck dinner and dedication of stained glass windows.

## UM child care specialist earns accolades

Meredith O'Hara, who coordinates the Arkansas Conference's Child Care Liaison Project, has been named one of four Outstanding Early Childhood Professionals for 2008 in Arkansas by the state Department of Human Services.



Meredith O'Hara

O'Hara resources more than 100 child care programs operated by United Methodist congregations in Arkansas. She has organized training for quality, food programs and non-licensed programs. Previously just 14 percent of the state's

United Methodist church child care programs were Quality Accredited. Under her guidance, 30 percent of the congregations have achieved the milestone.

"She is truly a visionary in the world of children and we cannot begin to measure the passion she has and exhibits for excellence," said Diane Clark Vogler of North Little Rock, a United Methodist laywoman and early childhood education specialist.

O'Hara encourages each child care center to realize the importance of providing the best care possible. She strives to provide the most current and updated information possible about child care standards and practices.

## 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.

**July 25-28:** Sharp County, Ark., Ash Flat area. Northwest District Tornado Recovery Mission.



Home repairs. Marilyn Davis, (479) 442-0901 or (479) 575-3288 or mddavis@uark.edu

**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.



# Waldron UMC embraces Angel Food Ministries

■ *Ministry fills need in Scott County, according to pastor*

WALDRON — More than 8,000 pounds of food were distributed on a recent Saturday here through Angel Food Ministries, hosted by Waldron United Methodist Church.

Recognizing the need to provide quality food items at an economical cost for families on tight budgets, the church now operates the largest ministry of its kind in western Arkansas. Angel Food Ministries is a national non-profit, non-denominational organization that distributes food to those in need through local host sites across the United States.

The ministry fulfills a true need in the Waldron area and throughout Scott County, according to Robert Lyons, pastor of Waldron United Methodist Church.

“Scott County is quite remote,” Lyons said. “Most people have to drive at least 30 miles to find a reasonably priced grocery store.” As a result, the Angel Food Ministry “has turned out to be a big deal,” the pastor said.

In May, families placed orders for 300 “basic” units, each about 28 pounds, and another 200 special orders of about eight pounds each.

Orders are taken in advance for distribution one Saturday a month. Volunteers assist with filling orders and helping shoppers load them into vehicles. Frequently, more than \$10,000 in groceries, with a retail value of \$20,000, are purchased in a single day.

While the food distribution project is a ministry of Waldron United Methodist Church, volunteers from other area churches provide valuable assistance and support. Lyons credited Paige Bethel for her work as coordinator for Waldron’s Angel Food Ministries.

A variety of food, from steaks to vegetables and fruit and even delicious pies, can be ordered. Persons who wish to place an order may do so at Waldron UMC’s Fellowship Hall from 9 a.m. to 12 noon on Tuesdays and Thursday, or at Gifts of Faith on Main Street in Waldron from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Tuesday through Friday and from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Saturday. Cost of



Volunteers at Waldron UMC are ready to hand out pies through the church’s Angel Food Ministries.

a basic order is \$30. Special orders can be placed as well.

Lyons said the coordinators of Angel Food Ministries are “quite inter-

ested in partnering with United Methodist churches in Arkansas.” More information is available online at [www.angelfoodministries.com](http://www.angelfoodministries.com).

## Igniting Ministry grants available

Arkansas local churches are encouraged to submit applications for Igniting Ministry applications for the fall “Back to School” time period as well as Advent 2008.

Matching grants are available for churches interested in running the “Open Hearts, Open Minds, Open Doors” radio and television advertising, outdoor boards and cinema advertising. The grant application deadline is June 1.

Applications and other information regarding Igniting Ministry are available on-line at [www.ignitingministry.com](http://www.ignitingministry.com) or contact Martha Taylor,

Arkansas Conference communications director, at [mtaylor@arumc.org](mailto:mtaylor@arumc.org) or (501) 324-8005 or 877-646-1816 (toll free).

Igniting Ministry and welcoming and inviting training is available free of charge for any district or local church through the Conference Communications Office. Contact Taylor for details.



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**Thank you to the people of  
the United Methodist Church.  
God bless you all.**

### Correction

Dorothy Markwell Collier died in 1998. The year was listed incorrectly in the May 2 issue in the obituary for her surviving spouse, King James Collier Jr.

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## Classifieds

**PLACE YOUR CLASSIFIED** in the *Arkansas United Methodist* for 50 cents per word, no limit. Call (501) 324-8031, or mail to: *Arkansas United Methodist*, 2 Trudie Kibbe Reed Dr., Little Rock, AR 72202; or e-mail: [kwilson@arumc.org](mailto:kwilson@arumc.org).

**COLLEGE DEGREE/Home Study.** Save \$\$\$ Christian Bible College, P.O. Box 8968, Rocky Mt., N.C. 27804; phone (252) 451-1031; [www.christianbiblecollege.org](http://www.christianbiblecollege.org)

**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 resumé to the church office at 1647 Salem Road, Benton, Ark. 72019.

**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 resumé to Grace United Methodist Church, 1075 Hogan Lane, Conway, Ark. 72034, or email to [jlenderman@conwaycorp.net](mailto:jlenderman@conwaycorp.net).

**DIRECTOR OF ADULT DISCIPLESHIP** for large membership church. Responsible for adult Sunday school classes, short term studies, small groups, development, leadership recruitment and training. Bachelor’s degree in education or related field required. Experience in education or working with adults helpful. Salary commensurate with experience. Send letter and resume to Martha Barnes, [martha@fumcwire.com](mailto:martha@fumcwire.com), First United Methodist Church, 206 W. Johnson Ave., Springdale, Ark. 72764, or fax to (479) 751-4612.

**FIRST UMC IN MOUNTAIN VIEW** is actively seeking a Director of Youth and Children’s Ministries for grades K-12. Salary negotiable with benefit package offered. For more information or a job description, contact the church office at (870) 269-3252. Resumé requested by June 1, 2008. Resumé may be mailed to P.O. Box 74, Mountain View, Ark. 72560, or e-mailed to [fumcmv@mvtel.net](mailto:fumcmv@mvtel.net).

**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.

**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](mailto:revburnham@sbcglobal.net) for job description.

**WINFIELD AFTER SCHOOL** Care Director: 30 hours per week; compliance with state, local, church regulations, budget, staff, procedures, manuals etc. 20100 Cantrell Road, Little Rock, Ark. 72223; phone (501) 412-8118; [winpastor@sbcglobal.net](mailto:winpastor@sbcglobal.net); fax (501) 868-8902.

**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](http://www.fumclr.org). Salary is negotiable, based on experience. Contact Search Committee Co-Chairs Tom Small and Ginny McMurray at [tjsmall@swbell.net](mailto:tjsmall@swbell.net) or [vlmcmurray@sbcglobal.net](mailto:vlmcmurray@sbcglobal.net) or the Senior Pastor, Dr. Michael Mattox, at 723 Center St., Little Rock, Ark. 72201; (501) 372-2256.



## New book looks at Wesleyan Class-meetings

Arkansas clergy couple James B. and Molly Davis Scott of Eureka Springs have penned a new book, "Restoring the Wesleyan Class-Meeting." It follows on the heels of their 2007 work, "Restoring Methodism," which was the springboard for numerous seminars and group discussions which they led in several Annual Conferences.

"As we were conducting our research for 'Restoring Methodism,' it was clear that the Class-Meeting had been the heart of what had made Methodism one of the greatest movements of God since the first century," said James Scott.

And while they briefly mentioned the tradition of the Class-Meeting at the seminars they presented, almost without fail participants expressed "an overwhelming interest" in the Class-Meeting concept and wanted to know more, he said.

"The interest by both clergy and laity was followed up by a flurry of emails to our web site [www.christianconnexion.com], asking questions and seeking more information about the Class-Meeting," he said.

Consequently, the Scotts began more indepth research of Class-Meetings. Their 225-page book features 24 vignettes by Class leaders, Class members and those who lived during the time when Class-Meetings were commonplace.

"We hoped that the reader would experience a taste of the original Class-Meetings and the tremendous impact they had for 200 years," Scott said.

The Scotts explain in their book that "it is hard to say just one thing as a definition of the Class-Meeting because while it is simple in one regard, it has so many comprehensive aspects of dealing with the mind, the soul and the body." It has also been described as "the Christian man's opportunity to help his brother by telling how God has helped him."

The Scotts add that John Wesley "might have said that it is where one forms holiness of heart and holiness of life by making one's life and one's theology congruent with one another."

The Class-meeting has the potential of having continued relevance even in today's modern world, they contend.

"We do not believe that human nature has changed," James Scott said. "The Class-Meeting could have the same impact it had for 200 years."

"Restoring the Wesleyan Class-Meeting" (Provident Publishing, \$14.95) is available through Cokesbury bookstores.

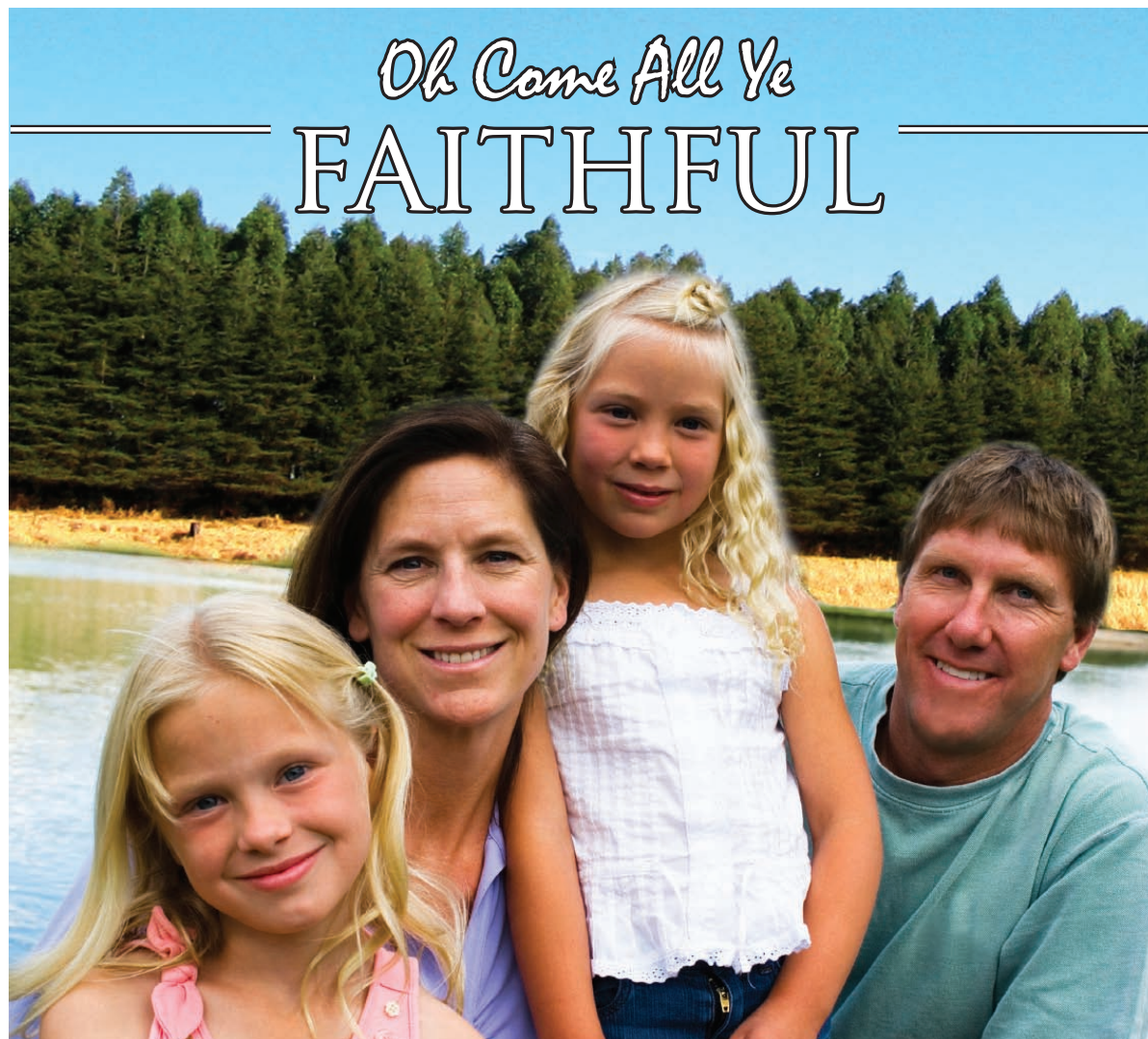
## Relief agency issues 100-Ton Challenge

*United Methodist News Service*

NEW YORK — The United Methodist Committee on Relief is challenging United Methodists to help farmers earn fair prices for their crops by participating in UMCOR's 100-Ton Challenge. The 12-month campaign encourages United Methodists to help increase the amount of fairly traded coffee, tea,

chocolate and snacks purchased through The UMCOR Coffee Project and its partner Equal Exchange, a 100 percent fair trade, worker-owned cooperative. UMCOR's 100-Ton Challenge will begin May 10 in observance of World Fair Trade Day and will end on May 9, 2009. The goal is to increase awareness about fair trade

in United Methodist churches everywhere and leverage fairly traded products to help promote better lives for farmers in Latin America, Africa, Asia and the United States. To order, call Equal Exchange at (774) 776-7400 or go online at <http://www.equalexchange.com/>. For more information, visit <http://new.gbgn-umc.org/umcor/>.



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