



United Methodist Arkansas

December 5, 2008



Andrew Fiser makes a friend during a mission trip to Tijuana, Mexico, sponsored by the Hendrix-Lilly Vocations Initiative.

Vocations program helps students hear call to serve

By **AMY FORBUS**
The United Methodist Reporter

As a high school student, Katie Goss Pearce had already sensed God calling her to ministry. So when she arrived at United Methodist-related Hendrix College in Conway, she hoped she'd figure out how to express that calling by melding it with her passion for social justice.

Things came together on a mission trip to San Antonio, Texas, where she worked with college chaplains and her fellow students at Travis Park United Methodist Church.

"Travis Park has a vibrant homeless ministry ... community meals, free showers, free medical and eye exams on Sunday mornings, a clothing closet and free hygiene products all available to the homeless community of San Antonio," Pearce said.

"I had never heard of this kind of ministry at a church. This experience showed me the possibilities, and proved to me that social justice and religion can be combined."

Pearce, who graduated from Hendrix in the spring, recently began

See *CALLING*, page 6

Tanzanian mission finds many ways to offer Christ

By **ANNE HOLCOMB**

Remember "The Ed Sullivan Show" and the man who would spin a series of plates on sticks, and by the time he got to the last plate he'd have to run back and get the first one spinning again, and so on. According to Charles and Karen Wiggins, United Methodist missionaries in Bunda, Tanzania, that is very much what it's like keeping their mission going.

The *Arkansas United Methodist* caught up with the Wigginses' recently at Mount Sequoyah Conference and Retreat Center in Fayetteville. They return to the United States every four years or so for family visits and to provide progress reports to the churches and other groups and individuals who support them. Charles Wiggins is a clergy member of the Arkansas Conference.

With the help (including prayer support) of hundreds of volunteers since their first trip to Tanzania in 2002, Charles and Karen have developed their mission site, *Maisha Na Maji* (Living Water), from one building



Karen and Charles Wiggins, members of the Arkansas Conference, are United Methodist missionaries to Tanzania. photo by Anne Holcomb

to a fenced mission station. There are now two wells, and what was a cornfield in the summer of 2005 has become a large, open-air meeting hall that serves as school, training area for sanitation and hygiene workshops, and group dining area. There is housing for Charles, Karen and their adult son, John, who manages the mission station, in addition to being a community

See *TANZANIA*, page 7

Economy's effect on church giving and budgets uncertain

United Methodist News Service

While praying for the best, United Methodist finance leaders are bracing for the possibility of less as they await giving results for the final two months of 2008 during one of the worst eco-

nomic downturns in U.S. history.

Preliminary data shows that giving through local United Methodist churches has stayed generally on target for the first 10 months of 2008.

See *ECONOMY*, page 2

INSIDE HEADLINES

■ From soldier care packages to innovative mission work, churches have plenty of 'Happenings,' page 9.

■ UMs honor bishops and applaud the work of the UM Foundation, page 10.

■ A golfing duo from Methodist Family Health brings home gold, page 11.

■ Black clergy and laity celebrate common ground, mission and ministry — and the future, page 12.

ECONOMY, *continued from page 1*

However, the full financial picture won't become clear until November and December — when local churches, regional conferences and the general denomination typically receive 40 percent of their annual income. Volatility in world stock markets began at the close of September.

While preaching faith over fear, finance leaders also are scrutinizing how they might make adjustments, even before the denomination's \$642 million, four-year budget takes effect on Jan. 1.

"This is the challenging time that people around this table need to make decisions," said Moses Kumar, chief executive of the denomination's finance agency, in a Nov. 20 presentation to the governing board of the General Council on Finance and Administration.

Kumar reported that collections for apportioned giving to support denominational ministries were actually \$3.7 million ahead of the same period last year. "Praise the Lord!" he said.

But almost in the same breath, he cited a November survey of regional church treasurers who project that offerings to support denominational ministries will be down overall in 2008. The survey indicates that only about half of the 23 U.S. annual conferences that paid 100 percent of their apportioned contributions in 2007 will be able to repeat that accomplishment in 2008. In all, there are 63 annual conferences in the United States.

"I don't believe the general church or the annual conferences have felt the full effect of the bad economy as of this date," said David Stotts, conference treasurer in Mississippi and president of the denomination's National Association of Annual Conference Treasurers.

"Apportionments as they come in are normally a month to a month and a half behind what is happening in the local church. It'll be January before we

know the impact of what's happening in the economy," Stotts told United Methodist News Service.

Last May, the United Methodist General Conference, which meets once every four years, approved the \$642 million denominational budget for the next four years based on projections for apportioned giving under regional formulas.

That outlook didn't look as realistic, however, as the board met Nov. 19-21 in St. Louis and reviewed the 2009 budgets of each of the denomination's 13 boards and agencies. If giving doesn't keep pace with initial projections, options discussed include using reserve funds and prioritizing ministries that leave some unfunded. The denomination has built its 2009-12 budget around four ministry priorities — ministry with the poor, eliminating the killer diseases of poverty, developing principled Christian leaders and a church growth initiative that includes starting new congregations and revitalizing existing ones.

"Not to be doom and gloom, but we do need to be cognizant of these economic times and be prepared as things play out in our role as stewards of the monies that are coming in," said board member Don Brown, as he chaired the committee that reviewed the 2009 spending plans.

Later, as the full board heard Brown's report, member Charles E. Moore Jr. suggested the council be more proactive in working with agencies to develop contingency plans. "I'm just really concerned that this economic situation is going to be deeper and longer than anything we've experienced in our lifetime, and I think we ought to be taking immediate steps," said Moore, of the church's Baltimore-Washington Conference.



Board member Dan Brown reflects a somber mood as the General Council on Finance and Administration considers possible challenges facing the United Methodist Church in light of the global economic crisis.

UMNS photo by Marta W. Aldrich

Submission guidelines

The Arkansas United Methodist welcomes contributions of stories and photographs related to the denomination and submitted in a timely manner by local churches, groups and individuals. Information may be edited for brevity and clarity. Always include information on a contact person who may be reached in case of questions.

Photographs may be submitted in print or digital format. We cannot use instant developing (Poloroid) photos or digital photographs printed on plain or photographic paper. Digital photos must have a minimum resolution of 200 and must be submitted electronically. We cannot guarantee that all photos submitted will be used.

Send stories, ideas and photos to: Arkansas United Methodist, 2 Trudie Kibbe Reed Dr., Little Rock, AR 72202, or e-mail to jdennis@arumc.org. For information, call (501) 324-8031.



By Jane Dennis

Editor's Corner

Keeping it simple

December can be such a crazy month, with so much going on and a full calendar of events and activities piled on a month packed with already busy days (times 4 for our family). I've come up with a new plan and approach. It won't be easy to follow. In fact, it could be downright difficult. My aim is to just ...

... keep it simple.

Yes, that's it. Simple is my new watchword, my new aim, my guide to life. Simple.

It's time to clear away the clutter and peel back unwanted layers that are weighing me down. (I'm thinking right now of shopping hysteria, rudeness, impatience and gimme attitudes as a few examples.) I want to simplify life by narrowing my focus to the essentials — what's really important. What can I do today that will make a difference to someone else? What can I do that will help me share with others the blessings God has showered on me? Hmm ... thinking of others. That's one simple step.

I want to express appreciation to



Jane Dennis

the people who bring joy, fun and laughter to my life, to those who are dependable, creative, loyal and kind hearted. It's far too easy to take these things for granted. Saying thank you is a simple thing that needs to be said and shown more often — and mean it.

I will not do things to impress others. Simple will rule the day and will trump flashy/trendy/look-at-me every time.

Daily I tell myself that I'm living a charmed life. I am lucky and blessed; I am loved. I rarely want for anything. I should really do more to bring happiness to others, to share my abundance, to brighten the way for those who walk in darkness, fear and uncertainty.

I may call that simple, but I know I need God to make it happen. My prayer is that God will bless this simple life and enable me to be a blessing to others. And may it be likewise for you.

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



Volume 127 • No. 23 December 5, 2008

Jane Dennis • Editor

Martha S. Taylor • Director of Communications
Patrick Shownes • Communications Coordinator

www.arumc.org

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

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

Telephone: (501) 324-8000 or (877) 646-1816 toll free.

Fax: (501) 325-1911.

E-mail: jdennis@arumc.org

Correspondence should be addressed to: Arkansas United Methodist, 2 Trudie Kibbe Reed Dr., Little Rock, AR 72202, or jdennis@arumc.org

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

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

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

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

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

Advertising is welcomed. For a rate sheet or more information, contact Martha Taylor at mtaylor@arumc.org or (501) 324-8005. While all advertising is reviewed before acceptance, it should not be considered endorsed by this newspaper or the Church.

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

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

Phone



(501) 324-8000 or
(877) 646-1816 toll free

Mail



2 Trudie Kibbe Reed Dr.
Little Rock, AR 72202

Fax



(501) 325-1911

Email



jdennis@arumc.org

Viewpoint

Dear Friends:

As I write this, it is two days prior to Thanksgiving. For Arkansans and for others the joy of Thanksgiving is made real and palpable by news of the return of the 39th Battalion from Iraq. As I thought of their return I could not help but think of Chaplain Wes Hilliard and Chaplain James Wainscott who have been deployed with the 39th. That led me to think of all the other chaplains, active and retired, who are members of our annual conference who have given, and are giving, so much of themselves in ministry to armed forces personnel and to hospital and institutional ministries in the name of the United Methodist Church and in the cause of Christ. In addition to the chaplains themselves, their families — spouses and children — have made significant



An Occasional Word from the Bishop

personal sacrifices for the Kingdom of God. I am so grateful to them going where I cannot go, doing what I cannot do, bearing a burden I cannot bear.

Two days before Thanksgiving I am thankful in spite of a poor economic picture, most of us will have more than enough to eat this week. I am thankful that local church food pantries and statewide organizations like the Rice Depot will be seeking to provide food for those who would otherwise be hungry. We have a fundamental responsibility and opportunity in a nation like ours to feed and clothe and house, and affirm the dignity and

value of those who are less fortunate. Generosity is often tested in economic recessions, but people of faith respond. Thank you for your caring and generous spirit.

Two days before Thanksgiving I am thankful to be living in a nation where the transfer of power is in the hands of the electorate, the ballot box, the laws of the land, and not in the hands of a lawless few. We enjoy the precious gift of democracy. And I am thankful.

Two days before Thanksgiving I am thankful to be a member of a church that has as its mission the



Charles Crutchfield

making of disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. I am thankful that our church is seeking to live out the motto of “Open hearts. Open minds. Open doors.” I am thankful to be part of a church that seeks to live by Wesley’s Three General Rules: *Do no harm. Do good. Stay in love with God.*

Two days before Thanksgiving I am thankful for God’s most gracious gift: Jesus Christ. As you read this, we will be in the season of hope and expectation, the Season of Advent. We celebrate that the home of God is with humanity. We celebrate the incarnation of God in Jesus Christ. We celebrate the love that knows no end. And I am thankful.

May the joy and thanksgiving of these days be yours.

Faithfully,

Charles Crutchfield



Lost influence of church reflected in lottery vote

By ROGER B. HOOK

Yes, the voters of Arkansas approved a state-run lottery. Like many in the United Methodist Church, and like Christians throughout the state, that reality saddens me. The arguments against the amendment to the state constitution to create a lottery are well known and of unquestionable substance. What then does it mean that Arkansans, along with surrounding Southern states, have all given lotteries the favorable nod?



Roger B. Hook

Though I do not know the answer to this question, there is something about voter-approval that causes me pause. The church — specifically the United Methodist Church, and in general all churches — has lost significant influence within society. Why?

I worry that our lost influence is directly related to the confusion of the church as to who we are. Speaking specifically about the United Methodist Church, we have spent recent years attempting to be all

things to all people. The word has resounded from one United Methodist congregation to another, and it has been out of desperation to turn around declining numbers. Tell us what you want us to offer, and we will make every effort to accommodate. Never mind that United Methodism has historically stood for clear and concise doctrine and theology.

I remember a time when there was no question as to who we were as United Methodists. The sign in front of our churches stood as a symbol of people who were committed first to Christ and the Biblical admonitions telling the people of God what their needs were. There was not an open door invitation to define our own needs and demand that God, i.e. the church, meet the self defined needs. We have truly become the “me” oriented society, and the church has fed the voracious appetite at the high cost of spiritual malnutrition.

One reality of the recent voter-approval of the lottery amendment is that the people within the Church supported it with their vote. Of the total membership of the United Methodist Church, I am certain that only a small percentage nodded favorably with their vote and I find some

solace in assuming only a few supported the amendment. My restless soul, my troubled heart stirs longingly, however, when I stare into the darkness of the church’s lost influence.

I recently received an e-mail from a lady who told me that she and her fiancé were moving to Beebe where I currently serve as a pastor. She wrote: “We want to know what you and your church have to offer us when we arrive in town.” I think she was asking about church programs. Perhaps she was asking something theological in nature. I do know this: she clearly was “church shopping.” It was about “my needs.” The inquiry was more secular in nature than spiritual.

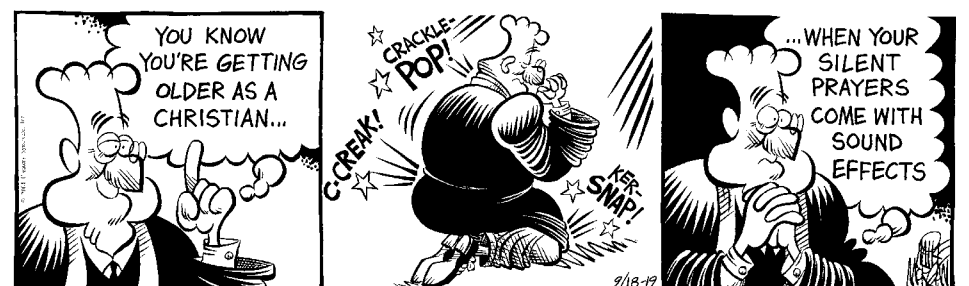
The e-mail reminded me of an experience when I was the pastor in another town. The congregation had several schoolteachers who were mem-

bers. One of them, an active, committed member, was concerned about her husband’s spiritual journey. Interestingly, her husband and I became close friends. One particular conversation remains with me today because he commented that “the church in town that was growing was the church that had the ‘best show’ in town.” I wonder, have those of us who love the United Methodist Church, those of us who have given our lives in service to this beloved church, those of us who possess a solid ecumenical spirit, those who are the gatekeepers, have we, out of our desperation for numerical prosperity, out of our desperation for church prosperity, focused on offering everything *but* Christ?

Somehow, I suspect that the church that offers Christ, first, foremost and

See HOOK, page 4

FOR HEAVEN’S SAKE By Mike Morgan



Viewpoint

Reclaiming Sabbath as Lord's day might aid our faith

"Closed Sunday for God, family and friends." That sign hangs on the door of Pino's Italian Restaurant in Henderson, N.C.,

each and every Sunday. I saw it for the first time as some fellow churchgoers and I drove up to Pino's on a recent Sunday, hoping to dive into some lunchtime lasagna.



Andrew Thompson

But here was a restaurant whose owners gave their workers (and themselves) a break on Sunday, so they could devote their time to worship and rest.

The sight of a business in the service sector of the economy closing for Sunday nowadays is rare. Restaurants, grocery stores and department stores aren't supposed to close on the weekends. When else can they take advantage of a customer base that has the time off to do serious shopping?

The profit motive dictates that stores should be open as long as it is economically advantageous to do so. Some grocery stores stay open 24 hours a day because they know they can get enough business during the nighttime hours to justify paying their



Gen-X Rising

By Andrew Thompson

workers and the electric bill.

Surely little old Pino's could make a pile of money serving pasta to hungry families after church on Sundays. But that sign hangs on its door every single week, forcing potential patrons to go elsewhere.

An economist might tell Pino's owners that they're being foolish. But for the church, Pino's decision says something quite different.

Closing for God, family and friends on a day that there is money to be made shows faithfulness and discipline to God's gift of Sabbath.

It shows faithfulness because it embodies the Old Testament teaching in the Ten Commandments about Sabbath-keeping: "Remember the Sabbath day, and keep it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work. But the seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord your God" (Exodus 20:8-10).

The Scriptural teaching on Sabbath indicates that it is both a day to remember God's creative work and a day to allow rest for people and animals alike. While Jews rightly regard

the original Sabbath as Saturday, Christians have long identified it with Sunday — "the Lord's day."

Christians tend to take the Ten Commandments as serious moral teachings that we are expected to follow. We would never consider explaining away murder, adultery or stealing. But the powerful influence of the capitalist economy has knocked Sabbath-keeping down to a second-class status. So any business owner willing to forgo profits to observe Sabbath is not only making a faithful witness to the larger church; he is showing a high degree of discipline as well.

United Methodists often fret over the declining numbers in the American church. Yet we also tend to be highly resistant to adopting the very practices as a church that could set us apart from the world. We live in an "anything goes" culture that holds up individualistic pleasure-seeking as the pinnacle of the good life. But what alternative does the church offer to the spiritually hungry, when the best expression of our ethic is "Open

Hearts. Open Minds. Open Doors.?"

We tend to do a good job of reflecting the broader cultural values of consumerism, individualism and personal autonomy. We don't do so well when it comes to the faithful Christian discipline for which the early Methodists were famous.

I stand self-condemned on this point. See, I thought nothing of driving to Pino's to enjoy a lunch with friends that Sunday. But if I hadn't been stopped by that sign on the door, my choice would have forced a whole restaurant full of employees to work on a day that God says they should rest.

Sabbath-keeping would not transform the church overnight. But if we want to reclaim the idea of the church as a set-apart community, it's not a bad place to start.

Observing the Sabbath might mean sacrificing some extra profit. It might mean choosing not to shop or not to go out to eat one day of the week. But it would also mean exhibiting a great degree of faithfulness and discipline as God's church in the world.

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

© 2008 United Methodist Reporter, reprinted with permission.



Letters to the Editor

Alarming

During the Catholic priest sexual abuse scandal I do not recall any reports of priests physically abducting young boys and dragging them into a dark back room to molest them. No, what they did was use their authority and persuaded their victims that the activity was acceptable in God's sight. They told their victims that God loved them, and that they loved them, and that what they wanted to do was not really wrong in God's sight.

They lied to their victims, and Mr. Thompson Murray is perpetuating the same lie. His article in your Sept. 5, 2008, issue entitled "Homosexuality: The Issue That Will Go Away" should be alarming to every Christian who believes in an absolute right or wrong. The thing that is most troubling is

that this man is in a position to influence young minds, since he is the director of the Wesley Foundation campus ministry at UALR. Since he is bold enough to publish his views in the *Arkansas United Methodist* newspaper, one can only imagine what he is telling those young students in private.

Mr. Murray claims that he has some insight into the views of young people concerning the homosexuality issue and that it is a "fading issue" for them. I have no doubt that Mr. Murray is instrumental in shaping the views of the young people in his charge; I know he is not telling them the truth about what the Bible reveals concerning God's attitude toward sex between people of the same sex. It was the desire of the men of Sodom to have homosexual relations with the

two angels that lead to the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. Later on we were given God's law which prohibits homosexual relations, along with incestuous sexual relations and sexual relations with animals. God's word concerning the issue of sex between people of the same sex is consistent throughout the Bible, calling it "detestable" and an "abomination."

There is no way to interpret the Bible to make a case that homosexual relations are acceptable in God's sight. And, God says that only He declares what is right, not man. Isaiah 45:19

It is a shame that our General Conference did not resolve this issue forever and continues to allow it to come up.

*Jim Dunlap
Memphis, Tenn.*

HOOK, continued from page 3

always, will hold more respect and influence within a culture made up of people searching for meaning in life. That meaning is offered by God to all in Christ. The aspect of the recent election that worries me most is the lost influence. Christians, and certainly United Methodists, may vary as to the "why" of our lost influence. We cannot, though, disagree that the lottery vote sends a message to the church.

United Methodists, amid our theological debates, share in common our calling to "go into the world" and offer Christ. May the distaste of an unfavorable vote serve to unite us with clarity. May we offer Christ first, and may we offer Christ always. And, if I might so pray, may we find who we are as United Methodist in the Christ.

[Roger B. Hook is pastor of First United Methodist Church in Beebe.]

UMs celebrate partnership, lives saved in Côte d'Ivoire

ABIDJAN, Côte d'Ivoire — United Methodists from two continents joined hands and voices to celebrate a week-long campaign that provided malaria-fighting bed nets and other services for thousands of Côte d'Ivoire's most vulnerable children. A few hundred United Methodists in the Côte d'Ivoire Conference joined with a 35-person delegation from the denomination's Texas Conference in a service of celebration on Nov. 16. Leaders of both conferences expressed thanks for the partnership that bore fruit during an integrated health campaign in the West African nation.

"Our team is exhilaratingly exhausted," said Cynthia Harvey of Texas as she delivered the sermon. "Vaccines have been given, vitamin A distributed, and long-lasting insecticide-treated nets have been lovingly handed out by our team from Adiake to Bassam, Agboville to Alepe and to Dabou. My brothers and sisters, lives have been saved."

Tailgaters promote 'First and Ten' for Jesus

CHARLOTTE, N.C. — Fans are used to seeing all sorts of things at tailgate parties but there is one happening at the Carolina Panthers' stadium with a new twist. "First and Ten," a ministry of First United Methodist Church in Charlotte, invites the faithful to take time for some Sunday worship before they go inside. The group offers pews, music and mementoes, plus newcomers say it's nice to see something more wholesome going on before games.

"The church is about being in relationship with people," says Ann Self. "This gives us an opportunity to plant a little seed of faith ... in a simple fun way. We are responding to the changing needs of the area we serve."

Va. woman creates ministry from prison experience

SALTVILLE, Va. — Long after the homemade cookies were gone, Sarah Taylor kept thinking about the message of love that came with them. It was 2002, and she was serving time at Fluvanna Correctional Center after making what she calls "bad choices." A woman from Kairos Prison Ministry gave her a bag of cookies. When Taylor asked, "Why would you give this to me?" the woman didn't miss a beat. "Because we love you and Jesus loves you. We are praying for you, praying that you will find God here," she said. For the inmate who doubted God and painful-



Sarah Taylor

ly missed her family in Saltville, the gift of homemade sweets packed a powerful message.



Marie Akissi Arriko hangs an insecticide-treated mosquito net in her home in Agboville, Cote d'Ivoire.

UMNS photo by Mike DuBose

ly missed her family in Saltville, the gift of homemade sweets packed a powerful message.

Today, she is back in her hometown, leading her small congregation in baking thousands of cookies so other inmates will get the same message. "It's a powerful ministry," said Taylor, 43, a member at Quarry United Methodist Church. "I've seen stone-cold ladies turn to a pillar of tears over a simple gesture. They really change."

United Methodist Publishing House reports declining sales

NASHVILLE, Tenn. — The United Methodist Publishing House reported a \$3.2 million shortfall in sales for the first three months of the 2008 fiscal year, even though revenue for the fiscal year ending in July was above budget and expenses were down. The current economic climate has had a "detrimental impact" in the fiscal year beginning Aug. 1, said Neil Alexander, president and publisher.

Alexander expressed concerns about meeting budget targets in 2009 when the board of directors for the Publishing House met Oct. 27-29 in Nashville. "Economists expect consumer spending to continue to fall at an accelerated rate, and early surveys of churches suggest both shortfalls in giving and cutbacks in spending," Alexander said, noting that other religious publishers and retail organizations report similar cutbacks.

However, several publications and multicultural curriculums are experiencing positive responses and high usage. Among the most popular titles are Bishop Rueben Job's "Three Simple Rules" and Bishop Robert Schnase's "Five Practices of Fruitful Congregations." The board reviewed initiatives under way including a new line of Christian fiction slated to debut in the fall of 2009. A new biblical



News Digest

translation called The Common English Bible will be published beginning with the New Testament in the fall of 2010, with the complete Bible available in the fall of 2011.

Hill Harper challenges church to mentor youth

LOS ANGELES — Hollywood actor Hill Harper issued a challenge to 300 people attending the second annual "Season of Thanksgiving Fund-raising Gala 2008" of Holman

United Methodist Church. Best known as Dr. Hawkes on "CSI: New York," Harper was keynote speaker at the Oct. 30 event. He challenged the African-American church community

to show leadership in mentoring the community's youth and creating green businesses.

"Historically speaking, we were the innovators when it came to green technology," he said. He also advised youth that "purpose is extremely important to me" but that people often lose sight of their purpose. "Is there something on your heart that you're not doing?" he asked the attendees. "As we grow older, we cease to have the courage to go for them (dreams)."

The church began the gala event two years ago to highlight and promote the United Methodist apportionment system for supporting denominational ministries. "We try to take some aspect of what apportioned dollars go to and try to highlight that in some way," said Henry Masters, pastor of Holman. "We tailored it around apportionments and the mission they are used for, but also around the season of Thanksgiving." All proceeds from ticket sales go to pay the church's apportionments.

Business & Professional Directory

To inquire about advertising here, call (501) 324-8006

COUNSELING

The Counseling Centers

Bob Edwards
D.Min., LMFT

Individual concerns,
relationship problems

(501) 223-8727

CHARTERED BUS



OUACHITA COACHES

Serving Arkansas safely since 1983
New Luxury Coaches • Air Conditioned
Restroom Equipped • VCR Equipped

800-782-2877

STAINED GLASS



Serving
Arkansas
with Quality
Stained Glass
since 1973

Churches ♦ Residential ♦ Commercial
(501) 758-8641

WATTS: 1-800-791-SOOS ♦ FAX (501) 758-8655
P.O. BOX 13452, Maumelle, AR 72113

COUNSELING

Daily Bread Counseling Center, LLC

Christ-Centered Counseling

GARRY D. TEETER
Licensed Professional Counselor
National Certified Counselor

Call for confidential appointment

501-847-2229

1-877-847-2229 (Toll Free)

www.dailybreadcounseling.com



CHURCH FURNITURE

Quality Furniture at an AFFORDABLE price

FORDYCE CHURCH FURNITURE INC.

Solid Oak & Pine Pews • Pulpit Furniture • Cushions & Upholstery

P.O. Box 572, Fordyce, AR 71742

toll free 1-800-748-9778 phone (870) 352-2567 fax (870) 352-2070

email lindsey@fordycechurchfurniture.com

CALLING, *continued from page 1*

working toward a Master of Divinity degree at Vanderbilt Divinity School, and is a certified candidate for ordained ministry in the United Methodist Church.

The Hendrix-Lilly Vocations Initiative “Vocation and Integrity: A Call to Wholeness” offers opportunities for students to seek out their life’s calling.

Chosen from a pool of more than 400 applicants, Hendrix is one of 88 church-related, liberal arts colleges awarded grants from the Lilly Endowment to establish Programs for the Theological Exploration of Vocation (PTEV).

The primary objective of PTEV, according to the Lilly Endowment’s Web site, is “to identify and nurture a new generation of highly talented and religiously committed leaders for church and society.”

Looking strictly at the numbers, Hendrix-Lilly appears to be accomplishing that goal.

More seminary interest

Before the initial \$2 million Lilly grant, Hendrix saw one or two graduates head to seminary straight from Hendrix each year, said JJ Whitney, Hendrix-Lilly Vocations Initiative Program coordinator and assistant chaplain.

That number began to increase when Hendrix-Lilly launched during the 2003-2004 academic year. Now it has more than doubled. And on a campus with just 1,100 students, those numbers represent a noticeable portion of the student body.

“With the additional 5 [from the class of 2008], over 20 students have headed to seminary in four years,” Whitney said. “In addition, 40 graduates in the last four years have expressed interest in seminary in the

near future — many are taking time to pursue Peace Corps, non-profit work, youth ministry, family priorities — and have used Hendrix-Lilly programs as part of the discernment process.”

Hendrix plans to throw more resources behind that upward trend. The Lilly Endowment awarded the college a follow-up “sustaining grant” for 2006-2009, funding the program in cooperation with the school’s budget, which now covers half of the programming and administration costs.

And on Oct. 7, Hendrix announced that the program will continue beyond 2009. It will be funded in perpetuity thanks to a \$1 million gift from the Fort Smith, Ark.-based Miller Foundation, organized by United Methodists Bob and Nadine Miller.

The Hendrix-Lilly Initiative is wide-ranging, beginning with high school students who attend the week-long Summer Institute for worship, study, service projects and shadowing clergy in the Little Rock area.

Rachel Kincannon attended the Lilly Summer Institute twice in high school.

“I was starting to feel a call to ministry but was fearful of admitting it to family and friends,” she said. “It was instrumental in making me more open to hear God’s call and answering it.”

Now a Hendrix student, Kincannon participates in a variety of programs connected to Hendrix-Lilly. “I’ve been to far away places and experienced those communities, and I’ve experienced a smaller community right here at Hendrix. But in all that, I’ve learned who I am, why I am called, why I want to say yes — and have developed lasting friendships that support me in that ‘Yes.’”

Andrew Fiser thought for years that he would commit his life to service



As a participant in the Hendrix-Lilly Vocations Initiative at Hendrix College, Katie Goss Pearce (left) sorts food on a mission trip to San Antonio, Texas.

through the Marine Corps. But late in high school, when military options didn’t work out as he had expected, “[It] helped me discern rather bluntly that my path led elsewhere,” he said.

That was the beginning of a new vocational search. “I chose to attend Hendrix College because of how I was drawn to the discernment opportunities with Hendrix-Lilly,” Fiser said. And through the next four years, his path veered dramatically from his original plan.

“I now find myself called to leadership as an elder in the United Methodist Church as a Christian pacifist,” said Fiser, who graduated this spring and began classes at Vanderbilt Divinity School this fall. “It has been quite a journey!”

Not just future clergy

Hendrix-Lilly programs encourage students to view their college years as a time for discernment and reflection,

and the Vocations Initiative is not limited to those pursuing a calling to ordained ministry.

Hilary Stine, a 2008 graduate, is not sensing a call to ordination at this point in her life, but still values her experiences in the program.

“The folks at Hendrix-Lilly were the first to really help me see ministry as a career option, through their ministry exploration group, as well as an internship I did at a local Methodist church,” Stine said.

She currently works in the college’s admissions office, and enjoys telling prospective students the impact that campus religious life has had on her.

“I am still discerning exactly what I want to do in life,” said Stine, “but what I have learned from Hendrix-Lilly is that I can make a difference doing whatever I choose to do.”

[Amy Forbus is an alumna of Hendrix College.]

Reprinted with permission of the United Methodist Reporter (www.umportal.org).

Students reflect on calling

■ “For now, I have chosen not to attend seminary, and I am very satisfied with that choice. Although it has been hard to explain to people that I am not going into ordained ministry, I believe I can make a difference as an active layperson in the church and in the community. Everyone is a minister in their own way.... As long as I am making a conscious effort to make the world a better place, I am living out my calling.” — *Hilary Stine, recent graduate*

■ “My mother heard about a Methodist Church downtown that was doing new and amazing things. We started going to Quapaw Quarter United Methodist Church and then joined when we felt God leading us there. Quapaw Quarter and its influencing me to go experience Hendrix-Lilly saved my life vocationally. It is a great example of how the local church and academic institutions can work together to firmly establish a sense of vocation in the church!” — *Andrew Fiser, recent graduate and current seminary student*

■ “I started out at Hendrix planning to be pre-med, and answering my call to ministry didn’t cause me to abandon passions for health care. I wanted to combine that passion [with] a call to ministry in God’s kingdom. I would like to be a chaplain at a hospital or rehab institution. But if there is one thing I’ve learned at Hendrix, it is not to close any doors because God can sure open them. So I’m excited to see where my ministry will go.” — *Rachel Kincannon, current student*

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.

Jan. 24-Feb.1: Costa Rica, construction, sponsored by Rogers Central UMC. Les Oliver, les@cumcrogers.com.

Jan. 9-18: Santiago, Chile. Construction work and painting at LaEsperanza, a sheltered workshop for adults with disabilities. First UMC, Texarkana. Patty Morel, (870) 772-3404 or pattytk@aol.com

Feb. 1-7: Rio Bravo, Mexico, construction, sponsored by Jasper UMC. Larry Acton, (870) 420-3969.

Feb. 7 -15: Costa Rica, construction, sponsored by Bryant First UMC, Heber Springs First UMC and Jonesboro First UMC. Kay Parda, (501) 366-1828 or kay@fumcbryant.org.

Feb. 8-15: Rio Bravo, Mexico, construction, sponsored by Northwest District United Methodist Women. Larry Acton, (870) 420-3969.

Feb. 21-March 1: Costa Rica, construction. Larry Acton, (870) 420-3969.

March 1-9: Costa Rica, construction. Larry Acton (870) 420-3969.



March 21-28: Shiprock, N.M., working with the Navajo Indians, sponsored by Calico Rock UMC. Paul Seay, (479) 970-0696.

May 23-31: Salud Y Paz, Guatemala, medical mission, sponsored by Pulaski Heights UMC, Little Rock. Doctors, nurses, dentists, pharmacists, anesthesiologists and other willing helpers needed. Gwen Efird, Gwenefird@att.net.

New and ongoing: “This Ole Church” VIM mission project. Help restore and repair churches in the Arkansas Conference. Teams will be painting, weather proofing, general repairs, landscaping and other jobs. Teams DO NOT do roofing, plumbing or electrical. The church that asks for teams will provide housing, help prepare meals and provide showers. The teams will supply their food, the materials, tools and labor. Any church can apply for help through their District Superintendent. Teams can sign up by contacting Don Weeks at dweeks@arumc.org.

Churches that have asked for teams: First UMC De Queen. David Williams, pastor; St. James UMC, Lonoke, David Scruggs, pastor.

TANZANIA, *continued from page 1*

liaison, general repairman and computer guru. Their house has a thatched roof over metal, which Charles says acts as insulation as well as a much-needed sound barrier from the rains.

There are two guest cottages that sleep eight each, with thatched roofs in the works. Gravel paths, bricked walkways and grassy areas have all been added by volunteers, as have the banana and papaya trees within the compound. With every group of visitors and volunteers, the mission and the work keep expanding.

Charles laughs that people are forever commenting on how well designed the compound is and how smoothly it functions, because he and Karen only gave the most casual instructions to the groups of volunteers who built the different parts.

“Someone would ask, ‘Hey, where do you want this wall to start?’ and we’d say, ‘Oh, over there a little ways ... or maybe a little more the other direction.’ We’d just eyeball it. But the place really works well together. It has amazing feng shui.”

This is just one example of God’s ongoing and active presence around the mission.

One of the newest developments is a *maktaba* — Swahili for library — the first ever in Bunda, and it has created much excitement. People all over Arkansas collected 30,000 books and raised the money to have them shipped to Bunda. It costs about \$8,000 to ship a 20-foot container to Dar Es Salaam (Haven of Peace), the largest city in Tanzania, plus another \$6,000 for it to go by truck from there to Bunda. The books left the United States in March and arrived in Bunda by mid-June — the shipping container literally jammed full. As the missionaries discovered, 30,000 books do not catalog themselves overnight. And while Karen has plowed through several thousand, there are thousands more to go.

Many of the local people have never been around books before, so the concept of borrowing from a library is totally new. Karen’s plan is for library patrons to read and use the books there in the library, without taking them off site, for the first three years, and then see how things have progressed.

Karen says it is an amazing thing to see the children’s reaction to books. For them to be able to touch them, turn the pages and see the pictures in them has been an eye-

opening experience for her and for them. One boy was practically beside himself with urgency and excitement as he copied a picture from a book to take home with him. The subject matter? The inside of the human body. He was fascinated by what humans look like inside and wanted to share the knowledge with his family.

Other recent bright spots the Wigginses’ shared include praying under a tree, literally, at the relatively nearby village (located by GPS about 30 miles from Bunda via 20 miles of bad road and 10 miles of no road) of Kabainja. The people “made church” by putting up tarps on poles near one of the few trees in the area to provide shade. They sang, they prayed, Charles preached — and baptized 72 people. He says it was incredibly moving to see the people being baptized so pleased and authentically joyful, as though they had just received the best present in the world.

He also says he is constantly amazed at how happy the people there seem to be. Christianity’s radical message offers them hope and a God whose presence they can feel, in part, through the kindness and help from Maisha Na Maji, which helps sustain them better in a harsh environment than living in fear of insatiable pagan gods ever could.

When asked what they need most, Charles replies without hesitation, “Prayers. Have to have prayers. We feel your prayers. It’s amazing.”

As to financial requirements, there are always needs. While there are groups within large churches that help provide funds, the mission has no single, primary source of funding. Almost all the money for the compound has come from small United Methodist churches in Arkansas. Beyond that, Charles and Karen have only their retirement pensions — not enough to



Children from Bunda, Tanzania, celebrate the opening of their first library, a project of United Methodist missionaries Charles and Karen Wiggins.



The brand new Bunda Public Library is open for business.

live on in the United States, but by Tanzanian standards, they appear wealthy. Even so, they can stretch it only so far.

“It’s really ministry by getting out of God’s way and bumping into the right people,” says Charles. God does indeed provide, and help comes from:

- Sequoyah UMC and Central UMC in Fayetteville, along with other northwest Arkansas churches that helped provide shelves for the library.

- Henderson UMC, Little Rock, raised money two years ago for one of the now-existing guest cottages, and this year is helping with the school (see below).

- Central UMC, Fayetteville, raised \$1,300 to start a chicken project for AIDS orphans to help them become self-sustaining. The orphans have learned to maintain some of the chickens for meat and keep others for egg production. Proceeds from sales go to purchase school uniforms and supplies.

- Additional help comes from Cornerstone UMC, Jonesboro, and United Methodist churches in Cherokee Village, Heber Springs, Green Forest, Goshen and Winslow; Sardis church at Bauxite; St. James, Fayetteville; Grace, Rogers; an ecumenical group in Gravette; and many individuals.

Charles and Karen Wiggins are enormously grateful.

What can money help provide and what can on-site volunteers do?

- The school needs its own space so it can be a school full time — with storage space. Henderson UMC in Little Rock donated \$8,000 for the building’s foundation.

- Another guest cottage to sleep four, with a private bath and its own kitchen area, which would allow small groups that come to stay for several months to have some privacy and independence.

- Help in the library.

- Build and paint church in Kabainja and other places.

- Plant trees.

- Make bricks.

- Teach sanitation and hygiene workshops.

- Help develop AIDS awareness program.

- Help with maintenance and repair of local non-sponsored orphanage.

- Bring along with you in extra luggage helpful items that would be too costly to ship: brass plumbing supplies, medical supplies and good quality tools.

“One of the most important things you can do as a volunteer is simply being there and allowing God to work through you,” muses Charles. “As soon as volunteers step off the plane, the majority of work is done because the people here are so incredibly amazed and grateful that anyone would come all the way and spend money and time on them. It’s not the souls you save, it’s the people you get to know and help. Those are the souls you save.”

Asked what he most wanted people back home to know, Charles reflects and then sums up: “We’ve never been happier. Never been poorer but never richer. Never had less but never had more. We’re where we know God wants us to be. And that is such a relief, such a stress-free lifestyle. We get infected with the same enthusiasm everyone there has — you’re doing what God wants you to be doing, when you die you go to be with Jesus, so what’s the problem?”

There is much work to be done at Maisha Na Maji, much joy to be shared, much life to be lived. To find out more about how you personally can become involved, contact Charles Wiggins at revwigg@mac.com or Karen Wiggins at mamaafrica@mac.com.

[Anne Holcomb is a freelance writer who lives in Little Rock and is worship leader and director of youth and children’s ministries at Quapaw Quarter United Methodist Church.]



Coming Up

Jan Silvious, author of "Smart Girls Think Twice," will be guest speaker for a Women's Smart Day conference from 7-8:30 p.m. Jan. 9 and 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Jan. 10 at First UMC, 201 S. Hill St., El Dorado.

Early Bird workshops at 5 p.m. Friday include cooking, watercolor 101, scrap booking, needle arts and more, prior to the first sanctuary session at 7 p.m. The weekend event will include a total of three teaching sessions with Silvious, time for worship and prayer, as well as friendship, fellowship and laughter. Various lunch options available Saturday. Cost is \$20 per person. Child care available.

For details or to register, contact Pat Odom at (870) 862-1341 or pat.fumc@suddenlink.net.

St. James, UMC, Little Rock, will offer a Service of Light and Hope at 5:30 p.m. Dec. 13 for those experiencing loss, grief or sadness during the holidays. Janet Breen, LPC, program coordinator/counselor for Kaleidoscope for Kids, will be guest speaker. Through music, prayers and liturgy, the service will focus on hope and peace and include the opportunity for persons to light a candle in remembrance of a loved one, or to ask for "light" in a particular situation of loss or pain. A time of fellowship, along with information on the grief process and time with chaplains for those who so desire, will follow.

The 11 p.m. Christmas Eve service at Pulaski Heights UMC, Little Rock, will be televised live on KATV Channel 7. Additional traditional services on Dec. 24 are planned for 12 noon and 8 p.m., along with a 6 p.m. contemporary service.

A Service of Hope and Healing will be held at 3 p.m. Dec. 21 for those grieving due to illness, loss of a loved one, loss of a job, divorce or any circumstance that causes one to feel left out of Christmas joy for any reason.

In other news from Pulaski Heights UMC, mission teams will be bound for Guatemala and Louisiana in 2009. All are invited to join the teams.

The Guatemala mission will be May 23-31. General surgeons, eye surgeons, nurses, surgical nurses, anesthesiologists, doctors, dentists, dental assistants, pharmacists and all willing helpers are needed to help in a clinic. The cost to participate is \$1,400 per person. A planning meeting is scheduled for 6 p.m. Jan. 22.

A team of 10 will travel to the United Methodist Committee on Relief Sager-Brown Depot in Baldwin, La., Nov. 8-13 to work with the denomination's disaster response program. Volunteers will prepare relief kits and supplies for shipment from the warehouse to disaster areas around the world. Local clean-up and construction work also may be available in the Louisiana area that week for those interested. The \$205 per person fee covers lodging, food and registration.

To learn more about either mission trip, contact Gwen Efird at (501) 666-8446 or gwenefird@att.net.

The 24th annual Christmas Road to Bethlehem will be hosted by Bethlehem UMC each night in December. The road features 37 displays telling the Christmas story. The displays are lighted from 5-11 p.m. and can be viewed from vehicles driving along the road. To find the Road to Bethlehem, travel east on Highway 31, 10 miles north of Lonoke or 10 miles south of Beebe.

In addition, programs of worship and special music will be presented at the Bethlehem church at 7 p.m. Dec. 14-20. Refreshments will follow.

This year's display and events are presented in memory of Jeaneane Nipper, one of the original organizers of the Road to Bethlehem and chairman for 23 years.

The Chancel Choir at Western Hills UMC, Little Rock, will present a Christmas cantata, "Noel — Night of Everlasting Love," at 10:45 a.m., Dec. 21 at the church, 4601 Western Hills Ave., followed by a Celebration of Christ's Birthday. Christmas Eve services are planned for 6 and 11:30 p.m. Dec. 24.

The West District will hold its winter youth retreat, with the theme "Rhythm of Life," Dec. 19-20 at Shoal Creek Camp. Leyden will be musical guests. Snacks will be available for purchase, with proceeds going to Youth Service Fund. Cost of the retreat is \$30. For details, contact the district office at (479) 783-0385.

Children ages 4 years through 5th grade are invited to attend the Children's ADVENTure from 3-5 p.m. Dec. 7 at Little Rock's First UMC, 8th and Center streets. Children will make Christmas ornaments, sing, mix and drink hot cocoa, and learn more about

Advent. That evening, the church will host food, fellowship and caroling at its annual "Round the Table Carol Sing" from 5-7 p.m. In addition to a potluck dinner, the event includes a canned food drive for Gaines House and St. Francis House.

On Dec. 14, the children's choirs will present the musical "Once Upon a Christmas Light" during the 11 a.m. worship service.

"Christmas on Center Street" will be presented at 2 p.m. Dec. 21. Featured will be First UMC's Chancel Choir, Ensemble, V.O.I.C.E.S. youth ensemble and members of the Arkansas Symphony Orchestra. Donations will be accepted with proceeds benefiting First Church Ministry of Music and the Arkansas Foodbank Network.

Christmas Eve services include a 5 p.m. family service of communion and carols and 10:30 p.m. candlelight communion service.

For details on all these events, call (501) 372-2256 or visit www.fumcl.org.



Reunion visit

Retired United Methodist pastor William P. "Bill" Connell (seated) and his wife, Joyce, of Bella Vista were visited Nov. 20 by clergy friends Ben and Marie Jordan and Guy and Loretta Whitney. Jordan (right) was superintendent of the Paragould District in the mid-1970s while Connell served First UMC, Paragould. Connell was a member of the conference Board of Ordained Ministry during the time that Whitney (left) entered the United Methodist ministry in 1980, and he and Jordan served as mentors for Whitney. Jordan is now retired and lives in North Little Rock. Whitney is senior pastor of First UMC, North Little Rock, which was also a pastorate served by Jordan. The Connells, who served in the former North Arkansas Conference for 40 years before retiring in 1991, have friends across the state.

Women's Day January 10, 2009 A women's conference In El Dorado!

Hear popular author
& Women of Faith speaker
Jan Silvious
in each of four services:
Friday 7-8:30 pm
Saturday 9-10:30 am
Saturday 11 am-12:30pm
Saturday 2:30-4 pm

Only \$20

Plus FREE workshops (4pm & 5pm) and an "Early Bird" worship service with Jan for those who can come on Friday.

Start your year off right by spending a Saturday with the girls...at church, in jeans!

We'll hear a great speaker, sing together and laugh 'till it hurts. Our goal will be to smarten up God's way; has anything else ever worked?

To find out more, register your group or buy tickets contact

Pat Odom via phone: 870-862-1341

E-mail: Pat.fumc@suddenlink.net



It Happened

Matt Mosler, co-host of the "KARK 4 Today" television show, brought his message of encouragement to a group of more than 100 youth and adults on a recent Sunday night at Cabot UMC. Brothers Ben and Cody Van Scyoc lead the group in worship music and performed several songs. Mosler, a syndicated columnist, speaker and singer, is the director of Beautiful Feet Inc., a ministry intended to inspire, encourage and motivate others to fulfill their ministry by becoming all God created them to be. Mosler sings and speaks to groups throughout the South, conducts revivals, retreats and concerts for churches, schools, corporations and civic groups.



Matt Mosler addresses a youth gathering at Cabot UMC.

"The North District is indeed proud of the Horseshoe Bend UMC congregation."

St. Mark UMC, El Dorado, recently sent boxes of supplies, games and snack foods to all the soldiers from Union County serving in Afghanistan and Iraq. The congregation plans to continue sending other goodie boxes periodically until all the soldiers come home. Christmas cards are being sent this month as well.

Nancy Mulhearn and Mark Lasater, executive director and Steering Committee chair of Ozark Mission Project, respectively, recently traveled to

Hot Springs to receive the Arkansas Gerontology Society Outstanding Intergenerational Volunteer Group Award. The award was presented for providing volunteer services to individuals who are 65 or older.

Since 1986 OMP has brought youth groups together in Arkansas for weeklong work camps. Family groups go into communities to serve low income, handicapped and older Arkansans.

"This award is accepted on behalf of the thousands of hours of volunteer service by thousands of youth and adults who have improved the quality of life of community families," Mulhearn said. In addition to meeting these needs, OMP has also given future generations numerous opportunities to experience the gift of giving.

First UMC, Camden, is supporting the churchwide Nothing But Nets and other mission efforts in a big way. On Malaria Awareness Day in April, the church mission team presented



Ozark Mission Project executive director Nancy Mulhearn (left) accepts an award from Susan Kuehner of the American Association of Retired Persons.



Joining in the presentation of the North District Flying Pig Award are (from left) Judy Butterbrodt, Evan Butterbrodt, Kathryn Randall, Aric Armstrong, Sara Bainbridge, Nancy Cameron and Nancy Sprague.



Members of St. Mark UMC, El Dorado, prepare to mail care packages to military personnel from Union County stationed in Iraq and Afghanistan.



Liz and Bobby Witherington of Hamburg speak to a member of First UMC, Crossett, following a presentation on their recent trip to Russia.

educational displays and materials to the congregation, which subsequently donated more than \$3,400 to the cause. As a result, 346 insecticide-treated mosquito nets were purchased and sent to sub-Saharan countries to combat the spread of malaria. Additional funds for Nothing But Nets were collected by youth during an exhibition basketball game and by children attending Vacation Bible School.

Additionally, in a five-month period, Camden First UMC youth reached their goal of \$5,000 to purchase an ark of animals for Heifer International. Heifer International volunteer Emilie Vest came to Camden to meet with the UMYF members and accept their donation.

Preparations are under way for a January mission to Rio Bravo, Mexico, hosted by the Camden

church. Volunteers will build a *casita* for a local family. Currently, pastor Buddy Ratliff and his wife, Terry, and 12 church members have committed to the Mexico mission project.

Bobby and Liz Witherington of Hamburg were guest speakers at the annual fall salad supper Oct. 19 hosted by United Methodist Women of First UMC, Crossett. The

Witheringtons recently returned from their third trip to Russia organized by Peaceworks, a global, nonprofit organization that focuses on projects that promote peace. They were accompanied on their most recent trip by retired United Methodist pastor John Dill of Benton, who serves as global coordinator for Peaceworks.

While in Russia, their work centered on Orphanage 105, which houses children ages 7 to 18. The Witheringtons described the children as well supervised and well behaved, with some having emotional impairments. The children live at the orphanage until they have to leave at age 18. Most of the boys then enter the military and many of the girls, with no means of support, are driven to prostitution, according to the Witheringtons.



Youth at Camden First UMC proudly present a \$6,000 gift to Heifer International, one of the congregation's successful mission projects this year.

Annual Bishops' Club gathering garners support for Foundation

More than 120 friends and supporters of the United Methodist Foundation of Arkansas attended the 23rd annual Bishops' Club luncheon Nov. 14 in Little Rock and heard from guest speaker Bishop Janice Riggle Huie of Houston. Bishops' Club members make annual gifts that make possible the ministry of the Foundation.

Huie, who served as episcopal leader of the Arkansas Area from 1996-2004, is currently assigned to the Texas Annual Conference. Earlier this year she completed a term as presi-

dent of the denomination's Council of Bishops.

Foundation President and CEO Jim Argue Jr. reported that the Foundation serves as trustee for more than 450 endowments and trusts with assets of more than \$107 million. He also said \$2 million of the \$3.5 million goal has been raised for the UMFA Seminary Scholarship Fund. Six scholarship recipients have completed studies and are serving Arkansas churches, while another seven persons are currently attending seminary and have pledged to return to Arkansas.



UM Foundation President Jim Argue (second from right), welcomes special guests to the 2009 Bishops' Club Luncheon: (from left) United Methodist Bishops Charles Cruchfield, Janice Riggle Huie and Kenneth W. Hicks.

Foundation unveils new web site

The United Methodist Foundation of Arkansas has unveiled a retooled Web site that features updated and expanded information and new organization and navigation, as well as a new design. The Web address www.umfa.org remains unchanged.

"We want to give donors, potential donors, local churches and professional advisors an expanded view of the United Methodist Foundation of Arkansas," said UMFA President and CEO Jim Argue Jr. "With our new content management system, we'll be able to make frequent changes to keep current news on the site.

Some new features at the site are:

- Resources. This includes a Gift Calculator that can create personal gift illustra-

tions and tax calculations, downloadable UMFA brochures, and will and estate check lists.

- Faith Funds Video. United Methodist leaders and supporters tell about the Foundation's support of United Methodist ministries throughout the state.

- News & Events Section. Photos and stories about current events at UMFA.

- FAQs. Answers are provided to frequently asked questions from donors, local churches and professional advisors.

UMFA is fifth in assets among the 52 United Methodist Foundations in the country. Founded in 1963, the Foundation is responsible for over 500 trust accounts that have combined assets in excess of \$90 million.

Deaths

Montgomery, Texas

KATHERINE ECHOLS BARGER, 92, surviving spouse of United Methodist pastor Lyman Tilden Barger, died Nov. 13, 2008, at Montgomery, Texas.

She was born Jan. 14, 1916, in Monticello, Ark. She married Rev. Barger while at Dyess Colony, Ark., in 1938. Her husband's career included pastorates in northeast Arkansas and more than 20 years in the military, most of them as an Air Force chaplain. After her husband's untimely death from cancer in 1966, Katherine, who was living in Monticello, moved in 1974 to the Little Rock area to pursue training as a nurses' aide. She spent the next several years employed at Arkansas's Children's Hospital in Little Rock. She was living in Little Rock when a stroke in 2000 necessitated her move to Texas.

Surviving are six children and their spouses, Lyman Echols Barger of Panama City, Fla.; Sue Katherine "Sam" Barger of Little Rock; Jan Barer Cohen and husband Kevin of Plumpton, England; Tilden Barger and wife Stephanie of Minneapolis, Minn.; and Tim Barger of Minneapolis, Minn.; and five grandchildren. She is also survived by three brothers and two sisters and their families.

A graveside service was held Nov. 19 at Oakland Cemetery in Monticello.

Black Rock

PARK TAYLOR CRAFTON, 15, of Black Rock, died Nov. 16, 2008, at Jonesboro. Born July 8, 1993, in North Little Rock, he was a ninth-grade student at Black Rock Junior High, was a member of the Black Rock United Methodist Church, and had a close affiliation with the Paragould First Baptist Church.

He is survived by his father and stepmother, Tim and Sheila Crafton of Jonesboro; his mother and stepfather, Clyda and Mark Massey, of Black Rock, pastor of Black Rock, Lynn and Powhatan United Methodist churches in the Northeast District; his grandparents, Wayland and Shelba Crafton of Paragould, and Clyde and Leila Park of Hope; his step-grandparents, Mike and Della Ginger of Jonesboro and Donnis Massey of Jonesboro; one sister, Tarry Crafton of Black Rock; four step-brothers and their spouses, Jordan Greenway, Brian and Beth Greenway, and Jed Massey, all of Jonesboro, and Eli and Becky Massey of Columbia, S.C.; two step-sisters and their spouses, Kate and Billy Hensley and Arla and Jason Jones, both of Jonesboro.

Funeral services were held Nov. 19 at the Mitchell Funeral Home Chapel, with burial at Greene County Memorial Gardens.

UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE® (All Periodicals Publications Except Requester Publications)		
1. Publication Title Arkansas United Methodist		2. Publication Number 1 2 2 3 6
4. Issue Frequency Semi-monthly		3. Filing Date Oct. 9, 2008 (revised)
5. Number of Issues Published Annually 24		6. Annual Subscription Price \$15.00
7. Complete Mailing Address of Known Office of Publication (Not printer) (Street, city, county, state, and ZIP+4®) 2 Trudie Kibbe Reed Dr., Little Rock, AR 72202-3770		Contact Person Martha Taylor Telephone (include area code) 501.324.8005
8. Complete Mailing Address of Headquarters or General Business Office of Publisher (Not printer) 2 Trudie Kibbe Reed Dr., Little Rock, AR 72202		
9. Full Names and Complete Mailing Addresses of Publisher, Editor, and Managing Editor (Do not leave blank)		
Publisher (Name and complete mailing address) Arkansas Conference, The United Methodist Church, 2 Trudie Kibbe Reed Dr., Little Rock, AR 72202-3770		
Editor (Name and complete mailing address) Jane Dennis, 2 Trudie Kibbe Reed Drive, Little Rock, AR 72202-3770		
Managing Editor (Name and complete mailing address) Jane Dennis, 2 Trudie Kibbe Reed Drive, Little Rock, AR 72202-3770		
10. Owner (Do not leave blank. If the publication is owned by a corporation, give the name and address of the corporation immediately followed by the names and addresses of all stockholders owning or holding 1 percent or more of the total amount of stock. If not owned by a corporation, give the names and addresses of the individual owners. If owned by a partnership or other unincorporated firm, give its name and address as well as those of each individual owner. If the publication is published by a nonprofit organization, give its name and address.)		
Full Name	Complete Mailing Address	
Arkansas Conference, The United Methodist Church	2 Trudie Kibbe Reed Dr.	
Non-Profit Organization	Little Rock, AR 72202-3770	
11. Known Bondholders, Mortgagees, and Other Security Holders Owning or Holding 1 Percent or More of Total Amount of Bonds, Mortgages, or Other Securities. If none, check box <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> None		
Full Name	Complete Mailing Address	
12. Tax Status (For completion by nonprofit organizations authorized to mail at nonprofit rates) (Check one) The purpose, function, and nonprofit status of this organization and the exempt status for federal income tax purposes: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Has Not Changed During Preceding 12 Months <input type="checkbox"/> Has Changed During Preceding 12 Months (Publisher must submit explanation of change with this statement)		
13. Publication Title Arkansas United Methodist		14. Issue Date for Circulation Data Below October 3, 2008
15. Extent and Nature of Circulation		Average No. Copies Each Issue During Preceding 12 Months
		No. Copies of Single Issue Published Nearest to Filing Date
a. Total Number of Copies (Net press run)		11,207
		10,300
(1) Mailed Outside-County Paid Subscriptions Stated on PS Form 3541 (Include paid distribution above nominal rate, advertiser's proof copies, and exchange copies)	8,491	8,215
b. Paid Circulation (By Mail and Outside the Mail)	1,657	1,610
(2) Mailed In-County Paid Subscriptions Stated on PS Form 3541 (Include paid distribution above nominal rate, advertiser's proof copies, and exchange copies)		
(3) Paid Distribution Outside the Mails Including Sales Through Dealers and Carriers, Street Vendors, Counter Sales, and Other Paid Distribution Outside USPS®	N/A	N/A
(4) Paid Distribution by Other Classes of Mail Through the USPS (e.g. First-Class Mail®)	N/A	N/A
c. Total Paid Distribution (Sum of 15b (1), (2), (3), and (4))	10,148	9,825
d. Free or Nominal Rate Distribution (By Mail and Outside the Mail)	464	316
(1) Free or Nominal Rate Outside-County Copies included on PS Form 3541	59	59
(2) Free or Nominal Rate In-County Copies included on PS Form 3541	N/A	N/A
(3) Free or Nominal Rate Copies Mailed at Other Classes Through the USPS (e.g. First-Class Mail)	24	24
(4) Free or Nominal Rate Distribution Outside the Mail (Carriers or other means)		
e. Total Free or Nominal Rate Distribution (Sum of 15d (1), (2), (3) and (4))	547	389
f. Total Distribution (Sum of 15c and 15e)	10,695	10,224
g. Copies not Distributed (See instructions to Publishers #4 (page #3))	512	76
h. Total (Sum of 15f and g)	11,207	10,300
i. Percent Paid (15c divided by 15f times 100)	94.88%	96.09%
16. Publication of Statement of Ownership <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> If the publication is a general publication, publication of this statement is required. Will be printed <input type="checkbox"/> in the Dec. 5, 2008 Issue of this publication. <input type="checkbox"/> Publication not required.		
17. Signature and Title of Editor, Publisher, Business Manager, or Owner		Date
		Nov. 17, 2008
I certify that all information furnished on this form is true and complete. I understand that anyone who furnishes false or misleading information on this form or who omits material or information requested on the form may be subject to criminal sanctions (including fines and imprisonment) and/or civil sanctions (including civil penalties).		
PS Form 3526, September 2007 (Page 2 of 3)		



Jessie Davis and partner Shelton Walker recently took top honors in a golf tournament.

MFH duo brings home golfing gold

Jessie Davis, a student at Methodist Family Health's Therapeutic Day Treatment School in Little Rock, and Day Treatment director Shelton Walker brought home the gold medal recently in the Arkansas Special Olympics Golf Tournament at Longhills Country Club in Benton.

Bud Buskin, superintendent and co-owner of Longhills Golf Course, had asked Jessie to compete. In order to participate, though, he needed an adult partner. Since no one in his family plays golf, Jessie asked his parents if "Mr. Shelton" could fill in. Walker, a golf enthusiast, readily agreed.

Although interested in golf, Jessie had never played. He was, however, eager to meet the challenge. His par-

ents purchased used golf clubs for practice sessions during school recesses and after school. Walker purchased two additional golf clubs to give Jessie a competitive edge.

On tournament day, as the duo participated in the warm-up sessions with the other players, Jessie showed off his newly acquired skills by hitting the ball farther than his mentor.

The Davis-Walker team played their best but did not realize how well

until the end of the tournament. Walker confided to Jessie that hopefully they would get a medal. Neither realized that it would be a gold medal. Once the gold medal announcement was made, Jessie's mother, Mary Davis, cried tears of joy for her son.

"Jessie was focused, eager to be coached and dedicated to learning the game of golf," Walker said. "I could not be more proud of his accomplishments."



Remember When

100 Years Ago

Dec. 3, 1908: The presence and service among our conferences of Jno. R. Pepper is an untold blessing. He is himself a living example of what a layman can be and do, and the inspiration of that example and of his speeches at the conferences is telling upon our laymen. We long ago said in these columns, when the Laymen's Movement first took form, that this is the most significant thing that has happened in the church for a generation.

50 Years Ago

Dec. 4, 1958: The Grand Avenue Church, Fort Smith, has moved to a new location in the same city and has changed the name of the church to Wyatt Memorial Methodist Church.

The changing of the name was in honor of Rev. Charles B. Wyatt, a former pastor.

20 Years Ago

Dec. 2, 1988: The Camp Aldersgate annual meeting for 1988 was held Nov. 17 in the camp dining hall, and among the highlights were an address by retired minister Dr. James B. Argue of Little Rock and a host of award presentations. Freddie Nixon of Russellville served as mistress of ceremonies and introduced the Roll of Honor award winners for 1988 — Julia Wilke and James Whitehurst, both of Little Rock.

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: mtaylor@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

FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH, LITTLE ROCK, is seeking a part-time (approximately 10 hours per week) Music Associate for Contemporary and Alternative Worship. Responsibilities include musical preparation for and leadership of a weekly contemporary service on Sunday mornings and oversight of music for a monthly Taizé service. Rehearsals and meeting leadership are also expected. For a complete job description, please contact the church. To apply, please submit a cover letter, resumé and at least 5 professional references to: Contemporary & Alternative Worship Search, Jon C. Peterson, Director of Music Ministries, First United Methodist Church, 723 Center St., Little Rock, AR 72201, or by e-mail: jpeterson@fumcl.org. Review of applications will begin on Dec. 15, 2008, and will continue until filled.

FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH in West Memphis is seeking a full-time Youth Director. Contact Bro. Bob Burnham at revburnham@sbcglobal.net or call (870) 735-1805.

Kitchen Equip. & Supplies
Buy at our prices and Save
1-800-482-9026 or 228-0808
AIMCO EQUIPMENT CO.

Feed a Hungry Child This Christmas.

It's easy. Give "Simple Pleasures" gourmet rice, soup, chili mixes or gift baskets as gifts and help feed children like Allyssa this Christmas. Visit www.ricedepot.org and start shopping today.

Arkansas Rice Depot
hunger no more
3801 W. 65th Street, Little Rock, AR 72209
501-565-8855 • www.ricedepot.org

Nothing But Nets

Send a Net. Save a Life.
What better way to celebrate Christmas?

For each \$10 gift, a bed net is given to families living in Africa where malaria claims the lives of as many as 3,000 children a day. It's just one way United Methodists are stamping out killer diseases across the globe.

How to give:

- Make a donation on-line at www.arumc.org OR
- Complete the form below and send it with your gift to: Arkansas Conference Treasurer, Advance #982015, P. O. Box 2941, Little Rock, AR 72203-2941.

Donor Information
Mr./Mrs./Ms (circle one)
Name: _____
Spouse's name: _____
Address: _____
City: _____
State _____ Zip _____
Email: _____
Phone: _____

Each bed net is \$10 x _____ (number of nets) Total: _____

I would like to honor or remember a loved one with my gift(s).
Please send an acknowledgement card(s):

in honor of OR in memory of

Please notify the following person(s) of my gift:

Mr./Mrs./Ms (circle one)
Name: _____
Address: _____
City: _____
State _____ Zip _____
from _____
(list exactly how it should appear on the card)

Learn more. Get involved.
Go to www.NothingButNets.net

THE ARKANSAS CONFERENCE
The United Methodist Church
Using Our Gifts Wisely

www.arumc.org
877.646.1816 tollfree or 501.524.8005



Bishop Felton E. May addresses those assembled Nov. 1 for the first conferencewide gathering of black clergy and laity in Arkansas since 1972.

UMs focus on future of black churches in state

More than 185 persons affiliated with historically black United Methodist churches in Arkansas worshipped together, prayed, sang and confrenced together Nov. 1 at Philander Smith College in Little Rock.

“Crossing the Jordan on to Dry Land: An Arkansas Conference Gathering of Black Clergy and Laity” was the first assembly since 1972 that united black church leaders around a single emphasis — the needs and

direction of predominately black United Methodist churches, their members and clergy.

“Crossing Jordan was the beginning of a conversation,” said Maxine Allen, Arkansas Conference minister of mission and ethnic ministries. “We expect to — and have already begun with ‘Crossing’ — inspire, energize and empower these congregations and pastors to move from maintenance to mission ... and to provide a catalyst for low performing churches and pastors to move to the next level. Always the goal is to make disciples for the transformation of the world.”

Retired Bishop Felton E. May was among the presenters, filling in for guest speaker Erin Hawkins, general secretary of the General Commission on Religion and Race, who was unable to attend. A follow-up event is being planned for May 9.

Core groups contributing to the effort are the conference Committee on Religion and Race, Ethnic Local Church Concerns Committee and Black Methodists for Church Renewal.



South Central District Superintendent Chester Jones (left) joins in the worship celebration of “Crossing the Jordan.”



Opening worship, led by Danita Page, brought participants to their feet as “Cross the Jordan” got under way.

EMBRACE OUR
Tradition
OF
Christmas

CONNECT TO A CHILD



Christmas is a time for families to gather together in loving celebration. Sadly, many children suffer from abuse, neglect and abandonment, and for them, Christmas has no joy. Years ago, families would come to us and take a child home with them for Christmas. Today, that loving gesture isn't possible, but that spirit remains alive through your generous giving. This Christmas, please consider joining in our tradition of helping children by connecting to a child.

Please send your Christmas donations to:
Methodist Family Health Foundation
P.O. Box 56050
Little Rock, AR 72215

(501) 661-0720

To donate online, visit www.methodistfamily.org.



The management company of:
Methodist Children's Home • Methodist Behavioral Hospital • Arkansas CARES