



United Methodist
Arkansas

December 19, 2008

Every knee shall bow ...

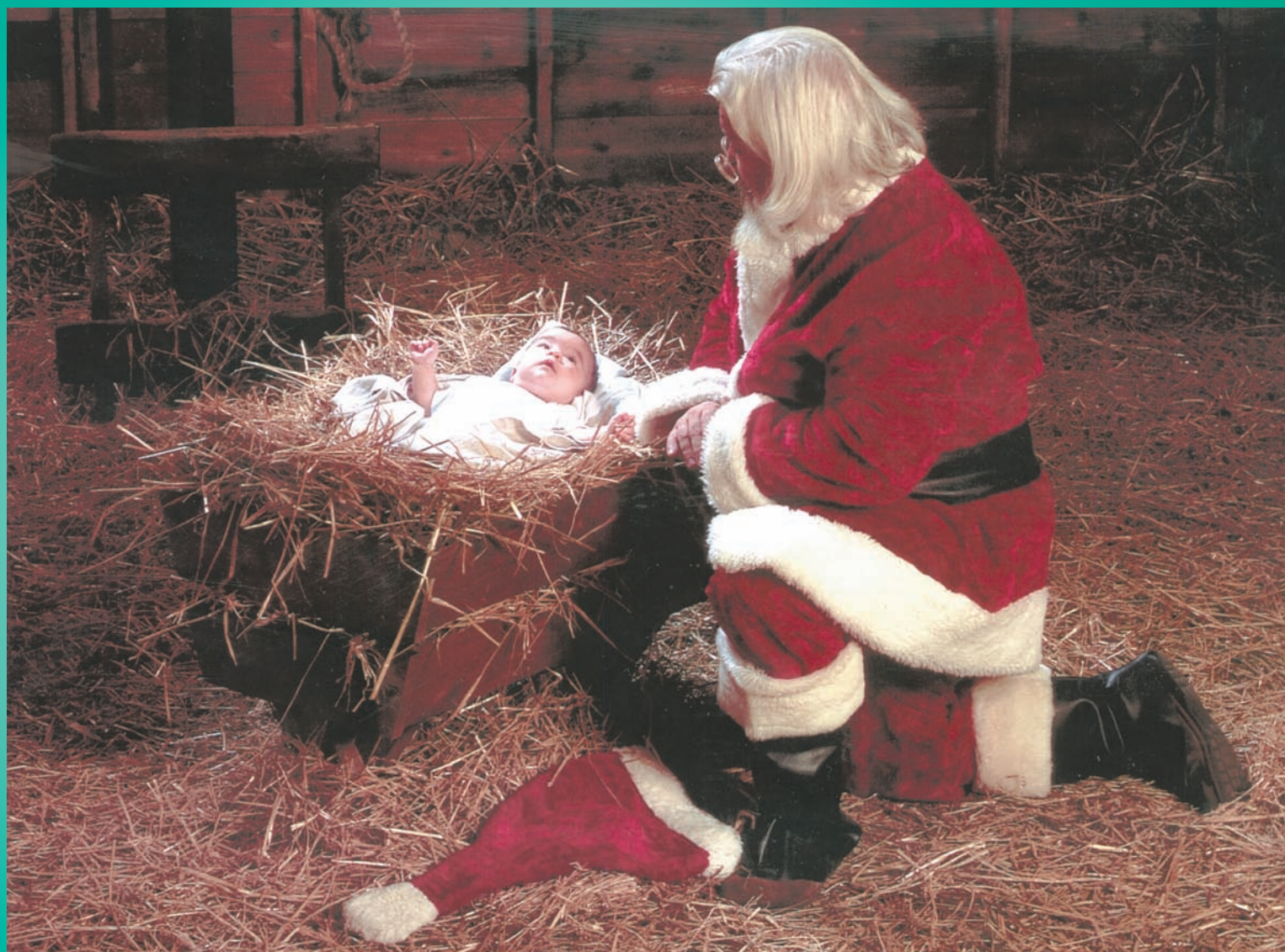


photo courtesy Alternatives for Simple Living

May the light of the baby Jesus, our savior and redeemer, illuminate your path, now and forever.

— Merry Christmas from the staff of the Arkansas United Methodist & Arkansas Conference Communications



Editor's Corner

By Jane Dennis

Keeping Christ in Christmas

I hope you will join me, dear Christians, in remembering that Christmas is a celebration of the birth of Jesus Christ, not a gift-giving free-for-all or a contest to see who can get, or give, the most “stuff.” It’s not about pricetags or designer labels or who has the biggest present under the tree.



Jane Dennis

Let’s welcome and lift up Christ this Christmas season, and keep Him at the center of our home and work and any kind of celebrating we do. It’s a little sad that we have to be reminded of this, but amid the secular commercialization of this very special holy day, we do.

We can honor Christ in the ways we plan and prepare for the holidays, how we treat each other and how we live all year long. Here are a few suggestions and ideas I’ve gathered that could help keep the joy in Christmas — and Christ, too.

- Many of the best things about Christmas are free. Seek out those things and share them as a family.

- Give of yourself, not just “stuff.” Give the kids coupons that promise a chance to bake cookies with Mom or Dad, an opportunity to choose the menu for dinner or an hour of playing games together.

- Instead of exchanging expensive presents, have a family potluck dinner and gift exchange. Each family mem-

ber brings a gift that costs less than \$5. It should be suitable for any member of the family. One person reads the Nativity story from the Gospel of Luke aloud. Every time he or she reads the word “the,” everyone passes his or her gift to the person on the right. At the end of the story, each person opens the last gift they were passed.

- Give alternative gifts. Give 25 percent of what you spent last year to the needy or favorite mission project.

- Celebrate family and community: Schedule time for fun and relaxing together. Put it on your calendar and make it top priority.

- Steering the family’s focus toward the needs of others and how your family can render service. Help everyone to develop an attitude of gratitude instead of always wanting something more. Talk about ways to share the season’s joy with others. Instead of wish lists, make a list of ways to practice generosity. These might include helping someone with shopping, decorating or baking. Or choose a volunteer project you can work on together as a family. Keep the TV turned off as much as possible to avoid commercials.

Merry CHRISTmas to you all!

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



Letters to the Editor

Disparaging remarks

I cannot remain silent after reading a venomous attack on the person and ministry of the Rev. Thompson Murray in your recent “Letters” column.

Rev. Murray is a clergyman called of God, and that call includes having the courage to speak truth as he sees it affecting the United Methodist Church.

I respect anyone’s right to express his views on the issue of homosexuality — any any other issue — but making disparaging remarks against the life and work of the person with whom one disagrees is contrary to my understanding of the

teaching of Jesus.

Anne Crofood Queen
Morrilton

Speak up

I read that busses in Washington, D.C., have ads that proclaim there is no God. As many churches as there are, we don’t have to be short on publicity for God and country. I don’t know how much it costs, or even how to find out about it, but I’d like to see a statement on the busses saying something like, “God is Holy ... God is Forever.” It would say something for the church.

Billie Graff
Springdale

Viewpoint

Dream’s dust-covered pulpit a reminder to preach Gospel

By VIRGIL C. BELL

Last night I had a dream, no ordinary dream, but ordinary in one way. I dreamed I was being appointed to a church. Nothing new here. I’ve been appointed over 60 years as a United Methodist minister. But this was different. In my dream I went to see the building. I saw one item — the pulpit. I can still see the dust and cobwebs that covered this piece of furniture. It was evident that no minister had stood here recently preaching the Gospel.



Virgil C. Bell

Was God trying to tell me something?

In my 62 years as a pastor, did I preach the Gospel — the Good News? In my dream I said, “My first sermon

here I am going to preach Christ at the center: 1) for deliverance; 2) for growth; 3) for positive living.” People need deliverance from the prison of sin, hate, unforgiveness, addiction, etc. People need to grow and they can be like Jesus. Christianity is not “do not’s.” To follow Christ is to “do” — do believe, do love, do give, do witness for Christ.

That’s it! A dream? Is God speaking only to me, or does he want this shared? By preaching the Gospel, men and women are saved. If that is true, we need to pay attention to our preaching.

The birth of Christ is the best news the world has heard. I pray that we would share Christ with the world with love in the power of the Spirit. We of all people are blessed. To be called to ministry to share the best news ever heard by us “earthlings.”

[Virgil C. Bell is a retired United Methodist elder of the Arkansas Conference who resides at Methodist Village in Fort Smith.]



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Viewpoint

Rebelling against racism

By HEATH BRADLEY

After the election of Barack Obama as president, the owners of the Faubus Motel in Huntsville, Ark., replaced the national flag with a confederate flag in protest. They claim that is has nothing to do with race. The flag, they say, is a sign of rebellion against what they see as a “Marxist” president.



Heath Bradley

If they did not want to be seen as racists, though, then they made a poor choice in their sign of protest. The confederate flag has taken on an especially racist meaning in our country since the end of World War II. It was a symbol of opposition to civil rights, and it has become a primary symbol of several white supremacy groups in the South.

So, regardless of the Vandivers’ stated purpose, flying a flag which has become a racist symbol in the last 50 years at a motel named for one of the country’s most well-known segregationists, in opposition to a president-elect who just happens to be black, will, understandably, be interpreted by most people as a racist statement.

Besides, the use of the flag in the past half century by racists cannot really be seen as a distortion of its original meaning, but rather as a restriction and intensification of it. The facts are this: In the 1860s the confederate flag was a symbol of protest, at least in part, against a federal government that tried to keep people from owning African-American people as property. In the 1950s it was a symbol of protest, at least in part, against a federal government that tried to keep states from denying African-Americans equal education. Now the flag is being flown to protest a federal government that will be headed up by a person who just happens to be an African-American. And we are not supposed to read any racist meaning into it?

The confederate flag is, though, a very complex symbol. Many people have worn it on shirts, flown it in

their front yard, put it on their trucks, and never personally intended it in a racist manner. For some it stands for state’s rights, independence, courage, rebellion, Hank Williams, the “good ole boy” way of life (thanks to “Dukes of Hazzard”), or our Southern cultural heritage. It has become a very, very multifaceted symbol. But it has always represented a cultural heritage where African-Americans were for a long time not considered full human beings. Many of us would like to separate the meaning of the flag from this part of the history, and some apparently can in their minds, but most of us cannot. There may be some contexts in which flying a confederate flag might be appropriate. However, flying it at the Faubus Motel for the purpose of protesting a president who is African-American is not one of them.

As the pastor of Huntsville UMC and Presley Chapel UMC, I have asked my congregations to write letters to James and Linda Vandiver, owners of the Faubus Motel, asking them to take down the confederate flag. I have asked them to take it down, in person, and in writing. Maybe United Methodists from all over the state could write letters to them, “speaking the truth in love.” The address is Faubus Motel, James and Linda Vandiver, Hwy. 23 South, Huntsville, Ark. 72740.

I’ll be honest: I doubt it will work in getting them to take it down. I would love to be pleasantly surprised, of course. But, regardless, it will do some good. It will remind them — and us — that working toward racial reconciliation is at the heart of the biblical vision of God’s kingdom. Overcoming racism is not just a politically correct agenda, it is a kingdom-minded mission.

The last book of the Bible gives us a vision of the kingdom of God in its heavenly fullness: “After this I looked, and there was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, robed in white, with palm branches in their hands. They cried out in a loud voice, saying, ‘Salvation belongs to our God who is seated on the throne, and to

Overcoming racism is not just a politically correct agenda, it is a kingdom-minded mission.



An Occasional Word

from the Bishop



Charles Crutchfield

Dear Friends:

I was in the state Capitol today. It is beautifully decorated. There were choirs of children and youth taking turns singing in the rotunda. A group of 40 or 50 third- and fourth-graders dressed in red sweaters, each one wearing a Santa-style stocking cap, was singing their hearts out. Voices so sweet and pure and clear singing “Deck the Halls” were accompanied by the flashing of dozens of cameras as proud moms and dads looked on — preserving this Kodak moment for posterity.

On my way out of the Capitol, there was a high school girls’ chorus — young women with lovely voices and captivating, vibrant smiles radiating the glory of the season, their music touched with grace and beauty.

Music to make the spirits soar. Radiant faces reflecting hope and the promise of tomorrow. Grace and beauty and expressions of faith. Children and youth filled with life and vitality.

It made my day.

We have much to worry about

these days, but one thing we know. God has sealed the hope in our hearts with the gift of the Christ-child. The ancient dream of “Peace on Earth” will be realized. Through him the “kingdoms of this earth shall become the kingdoms of our God and of his Christ.” Because one child was born, our destinies are insured.

I am concerned about the uncertainty caused by economic crisis. I am concerned about the chaos and anxiety created by the easy violence that roams the world. I am concerned about all the issues that occupy our newspapers and televisions. But of one thing I am confident. Of one thing I have no doubt. God’s love transcends all my worries. Christ is born.

It is enough.

Have a wonderful, sacred Christmas.

Charles Crutchfield



the Lamb!” (Rev. 7:8-10) God is lifted up when ethnic boundaries are broken down. We pray every Sunday, as Jesus taught us, for God’s kingdom to come “on earth, as it is in heaven.” This is a prayer, in part, for racism to cease; for Jesus’ self-giving love for all people to so fill our lives that there is no room left for fear-based and hate-filled prejudice.

Our responsibility and privilege as followers of Jesus is to let God use us, the church, to be a sign and foretaste of God’s coming kingdom. So, pray the prayer, write a letter. It may not change the owners of the Faubus Motel. But it might change you.

[Heath Bradley is pastor of the Huntsville and Presley Chapel United Methodist Churches.]

FOR HEAVEN’S SAKE By Mike Morgan



Viewpoint

'Getting' Christmas: it's not about material things

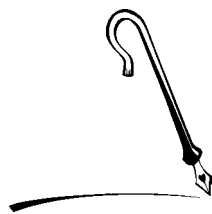
I am a student of language. I notice words, partly because I speak and write vocationally. It is always interesting to me how people use language and how the use of language is constantly changing.

Lately I have noticed that people have been talking about "getting Christmas" as an expression for purchasing presents. Sometimes they say they want to make sure someone "has Christmas," meaning a person receives food and presents for Christmas Day. This is often the expression in connection to Angel Trees and other acts of compassion for the needy: "Make sure these children have Christmas." Or, "We're getting Christmas for this family." I have heard parents say they are "buying Christmas" for their children.

I am not being a Scrooge. I applaud and encourage anything we can do to help the poor at Christmas or any other time of year. But it strikes me as odd to refer to the purchasing of food or presents as "getting Christmas." Surely Christmas is not contained in anything material; it is a spiritual event. "Having Christmas" means more than receiving gifts. And to think that we can "buy Christmas" for anyone is absurd.



Bud Reeves



The Shepherd's Staff

By William O. "Bud" Reeves

What does it mean to "get Christmas," not in terms of material gratification, but in terms of understanding the spiritual import of the Nativity of Christ? Get this:

(1) God is with us. The birth of Jesus means that God the Almighty Creator became flesh in a newborn human. Matthew cited the prophecy of Isaiah in proclaiming, "All this took place to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet: 'Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel,' which means, 'God is with us.'"¹ He who made the human condition became one of us in order to redeem us. The Christ event is not a matter of a super-spiritual man developing his God-consciousness to teach the world. Jesus was God from the moment he was conceived in Mary's womb. The pre-existent, eternal Creator became the creature. The Gospel of John gives witness: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ... And the Word became flesh and lived among us."² The Good News is, he never left. God

is still with us.

(2) The birth of Christ calls us into community. What a strange community it was! Unmarried parents,³ assorted animals, the lowest of laborers (shepherds), the highest of society (magi) — all were drawn to this stable in Bethlehem. Jesus continued as a man to call all sorts of people, from Pharisees to publicans, to follow him. The early church was a motley crew of Jews, Greeks, women, merchants, and slaves. The church today is a worldwide mixture of nations, ages, races and economic conditions. The common thread is none of those things. What we have in common is Jesus — our love for him, our faith and hope in him. The church is not an affinity group; it is a community of faith. What that means is that Christianity is never done alone. It is a group enterprise. As fallible and frustrating as the church can be, it is still the Body of the Bethlehem Babe.

(3) There is a plan. God had Bethlehem in mind before he said, "Let there be light." His entry into the world in human form was planned and executed by divine action. The

result of the plan is the salvation of planet earth. The "Gospel in miniature" says, "For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life."⁴ The promise is for life abundant now and life glorious forever. The plan was set into motion in Bethlehem, but the star cast a shadow of the cross on the manger. It was not finished until Jesus said so on Calvary. Because the plan was accomplished, we can live with purpose, meaning, joy, hope, and peace no matter what our economic, political, or personal situation might be. We call this salvation.

Do you "get" Christmas? It's not about the material things, though even the material things can give witness to the spiritual reality. Christmas is about a God who is with us, who calls us into community, and who gives us a plan to transcend the world he entered. If you get this, you will receive the blessing you need this Christmas. "Glory to God in the highest!"⁵

¹ Matthew 1:22-23.

² John 1:1, 14.

³ According to Luke 2:5; Matthew 1:24 has them married.

⁴ John 3:16.

⁵ Luke 2:14.

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

Sign on to speak up for the 'least of these'

■ Arkansas advocacy group lobbies for a more balanced state tax system

By PAT BODENHAMER & STEVE COPLEY

Have you been to the store lately? The holiday rush is in full swing. We are preparing for family and friends to receive gifts, we are loosening our belts for that extra piece of homemade candy and yes, some of us are preparing for the upcoming legislative session. Our state Capitol is in constant motion. New senators and representatives are being taught the ropes, budgets are being heard, and policies are being written. The holiday season is definitely here.

As we are preparing for all these exciting and life changing events, let us not forget some not-so-pleasant realities that we deal with on a day-to-day basis. The reality is that families are struggling more than ever just to make ends meet. The reality is that thousands of children are going to bed hungry tonight. The reality is that many of neighbors are wondering how they are going to keep their homes warm this winter. The reality is that life is hard for families.

In this season of preparing, let us prepare for the future of tax policies in Arkansas. It is crucial that our state legislators begin to look at ways to help our tax system become more fair and balanced. Arkansas Advocates for Children and Families believes whole-

heartedly that together we can encourage our legislators to enact fairer and more balanced tax policies. We also believe that together we can find ways to help our lower income families step up out of poverty.

Arkansas Advocates for Children and Families is working tirelessly to convince our state legislators to establish a State Earned Income Tax Credit. This one effort, on a federal level, has been called "the best anti-poverty, the best pro-family, the best job creation measure to come out of Congress."

Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or needing clothes or sick or in prison, and did not help you? He will reply, 'I tell you the truth, whatever you did not do for one of the least of these, you

did not do for me. — Matt. 25:44-45

Please read and prayerfully consider signing the "Call to Fairness" statement. By signing this statement, you have called our legislators to look at the hard issue of tax fairness. Thank you for caring about your neighbors and your willingness to stand with us during these difficult economic times. Together we can move mountains. Let's join together to help families thrive not just merely survive.

Please send the sign on information to pbodenhamer@aradvocates.org or call (501) 371-9678 ext 108. After you sign, please save Jan. 6 to attend a press conference in which we unveil the Call to Fairness. The press conference will be held at 10 a.m. at the

See SIGN ON, page 7

Penny Project uses pocket change to enact change

BIRMINGHAM, Mich. — If you ever thought your pocket change was merely an annoying collection of coins with little value, you're not alone. Fourteen-year-old Jamie Hinz used to think the same thing. Then, she and members of her youth group at First United Methodist Church in Birmingham, Mich., learned that a few pennies can profoundly change lives, especially the lives of people in Africa infected with HIV/AIDS.

"A penny is worth a lot," Hinz says. Beginning in the summer of 2005, the youth group launched The Penny Project — to raise 23 million pennies that symbolically represent the 23 million people in sub-Saharan Africa with HIV/AIDS. The money has gone to help people half a world away.



Members of the youth group at First United Methodist Church in Birmingham, Mich., sort some of the 23 million pennies collected as part of "The Penny Project." UMNS photo by Jon Kaplan

Faithful son leaves \$2 million to small rural church

BLAIRSVILLE, Pa. — John Ferguson was a simple man. He drove an old pickup truck, lived in a trailer without running water and kept to himself. It came as a bit of a shock, then, when the 71-year-old farmer died and left more than \$2 million to a small rural United Methodist church that his mother faithfully attended before her death in 1983.

Everyone at the church knew someday the family's inheritance would come to the church, but no one knew how much money was involved, said Jason L. McQueen, pastor of Hopewell United Methodist Church in Blairsville, Pa.

"We had our jaws in our laps for a couple of weeks," McQueen said of the 80-member congregation.

Large Korean Methodist Church built on prayer

SEOUL, Korea — The spiritual foundation of the largest Methodist church in the world begins in a small dark room in the basement where two church members pray continuously 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Bishop Hong-Do Kim believes in the power of prayer and says the church's success is based on the "saving blood of Jesus Christ."

Kumnan Methodist Church has a membership of 120,000 and baptizes 2,000 people every year. More than 90 associate pastors and 800 Sunday

News Digest

school teachers help Kim "harvest souls for Christ," said Kim. "I depend on the grace of God and the power of the Holy Spirit."

The 10-story church lies in the middle of Seoul but began as a tent church with 10 members in 1957.

Interpreter debuts digital magazine in January

NASHVILLE, Tenn. — The 2009 January/February issue of *Interpreter*, the ministry magazine of The United Methodist Church, will debut as a digital magazine in addition to the printed publication.

"People are using media today in so many different ways and there are so many different forms of media. It's necessary to provide

information in multiple channels," said Larry Hollon, top executive of United Methodist Communications, which publishes the magazine.

Hollon said digital media is an important and growing form of communication. "*Interpreter* online reflects this transition."

The first *Interpreter* of 2009 will be the 53rd volume of the award-winning magazine. Published six times a year, each issue includes a cover package of features providing ideas and resources addressing an area of interest or concern to local churches.

To enroll, go to the online subscription form and please have the church's customer number and online password; e-mail csc@umcom.org; or fax (615) 742-5499 or (615) 742-5494. For questions, contact customer service at (888) 346-3862.

Church economic advisers assess recession's impact

NASHVILLE, Tenn. — The United Methodist Church faces significant challenges in 2009 under a U.S. recession, but financial leaders project a recovery to begin in the latter months of the new year. An economic advisory committee of the denomination's finance agency — made up of economists, financial analysts, researchers and church leaders — gathered Dec. 5 in Nashville to assess the church's financial status.

"Each recession is unique, so predicting the duration of the current recession is inherently difficult," said Don House, an economist and committee member from College

Station, Texas. "We have a better understanding of what policy measures are required at the federal level, and we believe there is a clear intention among policymakers to implement effective measures."

Christmas Eve special reflects meaning of Jesus' birth

NEW YORK — Music and reflections about the meaning of the birth of Jesus Christ are highlights of a Christmas Eve television special from the National Council of Churches. "Voices of Christmas," which will air at 11:35 p.m. EST on Christmas Eve on the CBS television network (check local listings), also celebrates 100 years of Christian ecumenism in the United States by spotlighting some of the NCC's 35 member denominations, including the United Methodist Church. Bishop Sharon Rader is one of the speakers during the program.

A music segment features the Christmas Eve choir at First United Methodist Church in Dallas.

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Stopping at a teepee displayed at the Museum of Native American Artifacts in Bentonville are First UMC XYZ members (from left) Susan Kennedy, Vivian Todd, museum owner David Bogle, Erin Bogle, Juanita Fryer, Jan Venters and Mary Shores.

■ Bentonville XYZers meet monthly

Native American museum trip inspires

By **BEN HINES**

BENTONVILLE — Approximately 50 XYZ members of First United Methodist Church here met recently for a lunch and trip to Bentonville's Museum of Native American Artifacts. Xtra Years of Zest (XYZ) is a group composed of retired persons that meet once a month for a noon meal and then visit sites of interest in the area.

The museum, owned and operated by David Bogle, taught us so much about the original inhabitants of this area beginning from 1200 BC. That truly was taking us way back into the past. Our walk through the museum began with the Paleo Period, then the Archaic Period. These periods mostly were about hunting using darts and spears. They hunted mostly deer and buffalo and had to be fairly close to

thrust the spear into the animal. There is quite an extensive display of the arrowheads of that time. The primary shape and carving is surprisingly similar throughout the ages.

We then viewed the Woodland Period 850 BC, during which fanning began. This brought about infighting for land and tribes were then formed. Bow and arrow hunting began and life was the forming of farms and hunting grounds. This lasted until 900 AD.

The Mississippian Period, 900-1650 AD, is the last period of Indian living solely in our area. They improved on their hunting and farming implements and the pottery that was found from that time shows some advanced techniques and marvelous artistic designs. The fine condition of the pieces tells us that they were more than just ele-

mental utensils. These are called "Quapaw Pottery." One needs to view the "Head Pots"; they are extraordinary.

The tour ended in a room filled with many Indian artifacts, including clothing with fine beads and quillwork. The time it must have taken to sew on all those beads or to create a vest made out of porcupine quills does tell us that living back then was surely simplified — meaning: no TV to wile away the time.

After our tour, XYZ members ate lunch together and enjoyed the fellowship of fine friends. It was a day to consider that we still have much to learn and more to do in this life.

[Ben Hines, a retired United Methodist pastor, coordinates the XYZ program at First UMC, Bentonville.]

Prison ministry reaches out to those feeling forgotten

United Methodist News Service

In a maximum-security prison on the outskirts of a major city, some inmates had not had a visitor in more than a quarter century of incarceration until members of a nearby United Methodist church stepped in.

A pen pal ministry and visitation are among just a few of the prison outreaches to forgotten men at Riverbend Maximum Security Institution by members of Christ United Methodist Church in Franklin, about 17 miles south of Nashville.

Church members exchange letters with inmates like Joe Collins, who is six years into a 17-year sentence and coordinates the pen pal program inside Riverbend. "I talked to a guy who hadn't had a visit in over 16 years," Collins said. "Now he gets regular cards, and his pen pal and her husband come out every few months and visit him. His quality of life has gone through the roof."

Inmate Bill Pelfry looks forward to letters from the outside and the occasional visit. "Most of us don't like ourselves. We need someone to instill some kind of love in us. ... Give us some hope," said Pelfry, whose pen pal became his first visitor in 27 years.

Dennis Rogers says writing to Pelfry has been therapeutic for both Pelfry and himself — helping Rogers through a recent divorce. "I was sort of in a pity party when I started the letter, but I realized how this man would give

anything he had to be doing what I was doing and be free," Rogers said.

The pen pal program grew out of an outreach started by Jerry Nail, 65, a real estate agent and member of Christ UMC who has been involved in prison ministry for nearly eight years.

Nail visits Riverbend at least two days a week and says he actually feels closest to God when ministering to inmates inside prison walls.

The prison is a comfortable place for Nail now, but it wasn't years ago when Nail's only passion was Disciple Bible Study. The curriculum developed by United Methodist Publishing House is designed for small groups and emphasizes not only Scriptural study and prayer but putting faith into action.

Nail had been an active Disciple student for several years when a former pastor mentioned that the study was being taught and learned enthusiastically in jails in North Carolina. Nail remembers that day clearly and a subsequent calling from God. "A voice said, 'That's where I want you. I want you in prison.' It was almost a 'Who, me?' reaction."

Lonely existence

Like most people, Nail was surprised to learn that hundreds of men



Joe Collins is serving a 17-year sentence at Riverbend Maximum Security Institution in Nashville, Tenn., where he helps coordinate a pen pal program with members of Christ United Methodist Church in nearby Franklin.

and women behind bars in his own community have little family support and long for contact with the outside world.

Today, however, many are interacting on a spiritual level with members of Nail's home congregation. They run weekly Bible studies at Riverbend and invite inmates of all faiths to participate.

In addition to Bible study, volunteer clergy offer regular Wednesday morning Communion and Sunday morning worship services. More than a dozen Riverbend residents have joined Christ church, and many tithe their meager wages — some earning as little as 17 cents an hour. "Once a month we get a bunch of state checks. They're from 3 to 8 dollars," said Nail. "It's not some-

thing you're gonna run the church with except the spirit behind it would run any church."

The relationships don't end when a prisoner is released. Church members partner with newly released inmates to help them find housing, employment and other basic necessities. The church invests \$1,000 per ex-con to assure a successful re-entry into society.

Changing lives

Approximately 70 percent of prisoners eventually find themselves incarcerated again, but the prison ministry offers a life-changing opportunity for inmates, according to Riverbend Warden Ricky Bell. "They were on the street. Unless they had family, inmates just didn't have any help," Bell said.

After spending 17 years in prison, Marcus Hamilton says he's grateful to church members for providing an instant support system after his release. "It's just so many things you have to do that normal, everyday people already have ... like a driver's license, ID, insurance, finding themselves a job."

Nail emphasizes that God is a god of forgiveness and likes to echo the saying of a prison chaplain about the men served by the ministry. "They made some extremely poor choices," he acknowledged, "but it would be terrible to be judged by the worst thing you ever did in your life for the rest of your life."

San Diego church mourns jet crash victims

SAN DIEGO — A United Methodist parishioner who died when a military jet crashed into her San Diego home was remembered as a devoted Christian, wife and mother. Young Mi Yoon was killed in the Dec. 8 crash, along with her 2-month-old daughter, Rachel, 15-month-old daughter, Grace, and Yoon's mother, Suk Im Kim, said Kevin Lee, associate pastor of Korean United Methodist Church of San Diego. Dong Yun Yoon, the husband and father, was at work when the fighter jet crashed into the

neighborhood while returning from a training exercise to Marine Corps Air Station Miramar. The pilot ejected safely.

Lee and Daniel Yonkak Shin, senior pastor at the San Diego church, visited Dong Yun Yoon at his sister's house on Dec. 8, along with several church members.

"We just hugged each other and cried and cried for a long time," Lee said. "We had a brief worship service, and gave him words of comfort from Scripture."



Arkansas chaplain honored

Wesley Hilliard (third from left), senior pastor of Heritage United Methodist Church, Van Buren, currently deployed in Iraq with the Army National Guard, was recently honored by fellow chaplains and ministers at the base in Tallil on his last Sunday there, Dec. 7. After more than a year in Iraq, Hilliard is slated to return with other members of the 39th Infantry and will be back in Arkansas by Christmas. This photograph was shared with the Arkansas United Methodist by Jacob Morris, a member of Bearden's First UMC, who is also stationed in Tallil. He writes: "While my missions have carried me all over the country, I always had the blessing of making it back to my camp. And when my schedule allowed, I made it to church out here. ... Brother Hilliard's service has been a blessing to so many in our community and he has left a lasting impression on countless lives around the world."

SIGN ON *continued from page 4*

state Capitol in the Old Supreme Court. We hope you will bring a busload from your church! May 2009 bring hope for the hopeless.

A Call to Fairness

As people of faith, why should we be concerned about tax policy? Tax policy is not only an economic issue but is also a moral and faith issue. Many of the faith traditions are concerned about how society treats "the least of these" in our midst. There are references in many of our traditions to concern for the poor, the least and the powerless. All people are created in God's image and therefore deserving of just treatment.

Therefore, we agree that concern for the poor is deeply rooted in the various faith traditions of the people of Arkansas. This concern for the poor calls us to challenge the realities which create and maintain poverty.

We agree that the tax structures in Arkansas are regressive in nature and have a far greater negative impact on the poor and middle income than any other segment of society.

We agree that this constitutes an economic injustice which must be exposed and challenged by people of faith.

We agree that any change to the tax structure falls upon the leaders of state government. We urge them to take action to enact a fair and just tax structure for the common good of all Arkansans.

Information needed: Name, Address, Telephone Number, E-mail Address and Faith Tradition.

I agree to:

Be on a sign on sheet

Contact my legislator

Subscribe to an email contact list

Attend the press conference on Jan. 6 at 10 a.m. at the state Capitol Old Supreme Court Room

Be contacted about a speaker

[Pat Bodenhamer is state budget and tax outreach director with Arkansas Advocates for Children and Families. Steve Copley is director of Justice For Our Neighbors. Both are ordained United Methodist pastors.]

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)

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Spouse's name: _____

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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:

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Name: _____

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(list exactly how it should appear on the card)

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



www.arumc.org
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It Happened

UMW Circle 5 at First UMC, Magnolia, continued the tradition this year of making gifts for the shut-in and homebound members of the congregation. Members have spearheaded the gift-giving project for the past nine years, making both fun and practical gifts. UMW members from other circles also contribute handcrafted items that are included in the monthly gift package to homebound members.

This effort is one of the many mission projects of the church's UMW, a Five-star Unit led by Alma Jean Tuberville, president.

Shiloh UMC, Paragould, recently participated in the Common Table at Mission Outreach of Northeast Arkansas. The Common Table project allows groups to cook, serve and have dinner with residents of the mission and others from the community, many of whom are homeless. Mission Outreach serves more than 26,000 meals a year from its soup kitchen. Shiloh members served almost 100 persons the night they volunteered.

Greenwood UMC United Methodist Women welcomed a large crowd of tasters for its annual Tasting Tea Dec. 7. In addition to food prepared for sampling, recipe books, chocolate candies and cookies were offered for sale. A silent auction was a new feature this year. The event funds mission projects locally and globally.

In other news from Greenwood, the Team Christ children spelled and defined the love of Christ with their production "The Christmas

County Spelling Bee." Directed by children's minister Dana Higgins, the Celeste Clydesdale creation, with musical arrangement by David T. Clydesdale, was performed Dec. 7 during the Open Door contemporary service.

In addition, the Team Christ children's float entered in the 2008 Greenwood Christmas Parade won a cash prize for Best Non-Profit float.

The congregation of St. Paul UMC, Malvern, said, "Thanks" to its veterans by hosting a fellowship meal in their honor Nov. 2. The veterans and their families shared photographs, uniforms and other memorabilia. Recollections were as far back as the Civil War antecedent of one member. A lot was learned about these men as they shared their stories. District Superintendent Chester Jones attended and added his memories to those of



Members of UMW Circle 5 at First UMC, Magnolia, pose by the Ruth Fountain in the church's courtyard. The group includes (from left) Mary Alice Colquitt, Bonnie Adcox, Sheri Baggett-McMinn, Becky Kincaid, Melanie Allen, Linda King, Bonnie Flurry, Miriam Leman (not pictured: Brenda Langford, Amy Williams and Roberts Watts).



Members of Shiloh UMC, Paragould, prepare a meal for the Common Table ministry.

Wallace Hall, Jud Bats, pastor Dooley Fowler, Al Rogge, James Crowder, Jerry Clark, Paul Crow, Kermit Baker, Danny Dunlap and Ken Henry. Wayne Jackson, who had been a member of Merrill's Marauders during World War II, was unable to attend.

United Methodist Women of Marmaduke UMC sponsored their annual Christmas bazaar Dec. 6. A large variety of crafts, holiday items, backed goods and candies were offered for sale. Shoppers also enjoyed a chili lunch.

Youth from Sylvan Hills UMC, Sherwood, held a Parents Day Out Dec. 6 and kept 34 children busy and entertained while parents had a free night to go shopping, to dinner or a movie, or just home to relax. The children ranged in age from 8 months to 10 years. The event raised \$319, which was designated for the Angel Tree program where the youth were helping this Christmas.

Summer interns sought at Board of Church and Society

United Methodist News Service

Ethnic young adults have until Feb. 1 to apply for a summer internship with the United Methodist Board of Church and Society in Washington.

The Ethnic Young Adult Summer Internship program is for young adults, ages 18-22, who have an interest in exploring issues of public policy, social justice advocacy and social change. Applicants must represent the five ethnic caucuses of The United Methodist Church: African, Latino/Hispanic, Asian, Native American and Pacific Islander.

Sponsored by the Inter-Ethnic Strategy Development Group and administered by the United Methodist Board of Church and Society, interns will work in social justice placements in the U.S. capital from June 1 to Aug. 1, 2009.

For more information, including applications, contact Neal Christie at nchristie@umc-gbcs.org or by calling (202) 488-5611.



Children involved in Team Christ ministries at Greenwood UMC present "The Christmas County Spelling Bee."

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.



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Coming Up

The annual Clergy Women's Retreat for members of the Arkansas Conference is coming up Jan. 4-6 at Mount Eagle Christian Center near Clinton. "From Surviving to Thriving: Honoring Your Call" is the theme of the retreat, which will offer participants time for connecting with one another and reconnecting with God, resting their bodies and finding inspiration for the soul.

Registration deadline is Dec. 30. Cost is \$50 per person. For more information, contact J.J. Whitney at whitney@hendrix.edu.

McCabe Chapel UMC, North Little Rock, is partnering with Alternatives Unlimited Tutoring Inc. to offer free tutoring services for the children in the North Little Rock area. Tutoring for students in grades 3-8 will be offered at the church, 1523 N. Pine St., from 3:30-6 p.m. on Monday, Tuesday and Thursday each week. Snacks will be served. Monthly progress reports will be provided.

For more information, contact Deena Marie Hamilton, pastor, at (501) 375-8078 or rev.deenamarie@gmail.com.

Quapaw Quarter UMC, Little Rock, will host a special Christmas worship service featuring Sanctus at 6 p.m. Dec. 21 at the church, 1601 S Louisiana St.

In other news, Quapaw Quarter UMC will explore race and the church during a monthlong series of events titled "Dare to Reconcile" in February. Special events will include a Faith in Film series dedicated to racism, guest preachers each week and a daylong workshop to begin a dialogue throughout Central Arkansas. The month will explore how the church should fight racism and encourage dialogue. For more information, or to get involved, contact Harold Hughes at (501) 612-0902 or hhughes@arkansasonline.com

Benton First UMC will hold A Service of Light in the Midst of Darkness at 6 p.m. Dec. 20, recognizing that for many Christmas is a bitter-sweet time of year, a time of grief and of remembering. The service — which will include special music, scripture, silent reflection and healing prayer — will be led by associate pastor Garry Teeter, assisted by Greg Taylor and members of the church's Stephen Ministers. The church is located at 200 N. Market St.

Green Forest UMC will host a Chrysalis Hoot for youth beginning at 6 p.m. Jan. 2. The event will feature great music, a guest speaker, food and fellowship. All teens are welcome, whether they've attended a Chrysalis Flight (similar to the Walk to Emmaus for adults) or simply want to learn more. For details, contact Brooke Coffey at (870) 480-6361 or brooke.coffey44@gmail.com.

Youth of the Central District will gather to "pRaise the Roof" from 5:30-8:30 p.m. Jan. 18 at Lakewood UMC, North Little Rock. The annual gathering will include music by several bands, worship and fellowship. pRaise the Roof is sponsored by the Central District Council on Youth Ministries.

Memphis Theological Seminary is focusing January term courses on areas of evangelism and mission. Some of the courses offered are:

- "Evangelism and Short-Term Mission Trips," Charles McCaskey

- "REvangelism: Retooling, Refueling, Reclaiming the Church's Disciple-Making Directive," Michael Qualls

- "Theories and Topics in Modern Missiology," Misoon Im

- "Christian Dialogue with World Religions," Angel Santiago-Vendrell

- "African American Religious Personalities," Andre Johnson

The goal is to broaden the knowledge of these areas for ministers and lay leaders and successfully prepare them for future ministry. In addition, this is an excellent opportunity for ministers to earn continuing education credits by auditing a course.

MTS is approved by the University Senate of the United Methodist Church to provide higher education for Methodist clergy who seek ordination, and is accredited by The Association of Theological Schools in the United States and Canada and by The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools. The student body is about 40 percent United Methodist, many of whom travel from Arkansas, Mississippi and North Alabama Conferences, in addition to the Memphis Annual Conference.

Classes start Jan. 5 and are held at the MTS campus at the corner of Union Avenue and East Parkway in Memphis. For more information, contact the Admissions Office at (901) 458-8232, or go online to www.MemphisSeminary.edu.



Cornerstone Kids, participants in the children's music ministry at Cornerstone UMC, Jonesboro, prepare to entertain church members at the third annual Glorious Giving Market in November. Church member Danny Jones rings a bell in recognition of the purchase of a gift supporting a mission. The tree beside Jones was decorated with ornaments representing mission support. Church members raised nearly \$9,000 through the project.

Cornerstone's Glorious Giving Market focuses on mission

For the third consecutive year, members and friends of Cornerstone UMC, Jonesboro, have taken advantage of the opportunity to give gifts out of the ordinary at Christmas. The Glorious Giving Market provided a vehicle for people to purchase gifts for family and friends while they support a number of missions. For example, some chose to support Heifer Project by purchasing livestock in the name of a family member or friend.

In all, the Glorious Giving Market garnered nearly \$9,000 in mission support.

From 10 a.m. until 3 p.m., interested area residents "went to market" to find out about seven different missions and to offer financial support to missions of their choice. They received cards to send to friends or relatives indicating gifts have been given in their honor to particular missions (in lieu of Christmas gifts).

Patricia Harlan, who leads the church's Glorious Giving Market ministry, points out that such gifts really exemplify what Christians should focus on during Christmastide ... keeping Christ in Christmas and spreading the word of Christ while giving help and hope to the less fortunate.

The missions included Heifer International; La Esperanza in Santiago, Chile; One Book Foundation in Tanzania, Africa; United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR); True Light Methodist Church in Sredneuralsk, Russia; Children's Vision International in Bogota, Columbia; and Arkansas Methodist Family Health.

In addition to the mission booths, a number of other activities were included in daylong activities. There was a café serving a variety of foods, a bakery and a casserole booth that offered home-baked items as well as frozen casseroles.

Entertainment was provided by the Cornerstone Kids. Youth at the church sponsored a petting zoo and a variety of games for young children, and a number of church members presented a live nativity scene. A Christmas tree was decorated with ornaments, and each time mission gifts were purchased throughout the day, ornaments were added to the tree and a bell was rung.

United Methodist ARCHIVES



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Contact:
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or beehill@tcworks.net or
Marcia Crossman at (501) 327-3512
or mcrossman@conwaycorp.net

Deaths

Little Rock

BETTIE MAE DILLON RIGGIN, 92, of Little Rock, surviving spouse of United Methodist pastor Robert Louis Riggin, passed away Dec. 14, 2008, at the Hot Spring County Medical Center in Malvern.

She was a born in Tide, Ark., in Ashley County on July 23, 1916. She was a resident of Little Rock since

2004 and a former resident of Portland for many years. She was a homemaker and a member of the Portland United Methodist Church and United Methodist Women. She served as an officer in the former Little Rock Conference United Methodist Women and was president of the former Monticello District United Methodist Women. She served as Worthy Matron of the Order of Eastern Star, Chapter 591 of Portland.

In addition to her husband, she is preceded in death by her parents, Thomas Martin and Gertrude Lee Morman Dillon, and three brothers and one sister.

She is survived by a daughter, Ann Ashcraft of Jones Mill; three sons, Dale Riggin of Benton, Don Riggin and wife, Dee, of Little Rock, and Dean Riggin and wife, Barbara, of Mabelvale; 15 grandchildren, 14 great-grand children; and nine great-great-grandchildren.

A memorial services was held Dec. 16 at Portland UMC, with burial in the Wilmot Cemetery. Memorials may be made to Camp Aldersgate, 2000 Aldersgate Road, Little Rock, AR 72205, or to Methodist Family Health,



Bettie Riggin

1600 Aldersgate Road, Suite 200, Little Rock, AR 72205.

Camden

LOUELLA HUGHES MILLER, 99, of Camden, widow of United Methodist pastor Marion W. Miller, died Dec. 3, 2008, at Oak Ridge Nursing Home in El Dorado.

She was born in Camden on Sept. 27, 1909, to James Carr and Della Lee Carter Hughes. She was a 1935 graduate of the University of Tennessee School of Nursing.

She served in the U.S. Army Nurses Corps from 1944 to 1964, including more than five years in Japan, Guam and Germany. During her tenure of service she received the World War II Victory Medal, American Campaign Medal, Army Occupation Medal (Japan), Korean Service Medal, United Nations Service Medal, National Defense Service Medal, Armed Forces Reserve Medal, and Army Commendation Medal.

She also has the distinction of being the first graduate of Fairview High School in 1927. She was a devoted member of Fairview UMC, Camden.

She and Rev. Miller were married in 1967. He preceded her in death in 1995.

She was preceded in death by her parents; four sisters, Lacie Velma Hughes, Flora Ann Hughes, Edith May Wells and Phonie Jean Williams; and two brothers, John Floyd Hughes Sr. and Norlis Cole Hughes. She is survived by two sisters, Dorothy Lee White of Benton and Della Maude Tomlinson of Camden; a step-daughter, Marion Barnes; and step-grandchildren Ted Barnes and Carla Fish.

Funeral services were held Dec. 6 at Fairview UMC, with burial in Memorial Park Cemetery.

Young clergy leadership forum coming up in February

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Jan. 16 is the deadline to apply to attend the 5th annual Young Clergy Capitol Hill Leadership Forum, sponsored by the United Methodist General Board of Church and Society (GBCS). The forum will be held Feb. 8-11 at the historic United Methodist Building, next door to the Supreme Court and across the street from the U.S. Capitol.

Annual conferences are urged to send up to two persons, age 35 and under, who may be either elders or on an elder track, and serving a local church full-time.

The Young Adult Clergy Leadership Forum will provide creative and participatory ways to teach the Social Principles of The United Methodist Church in congregations.

There will be an opportunity for

conversation with Jim Winkler, GBCS chief executive. GBCS advocacy staff will discuss key legislative issues being debated on Capitol Hill. Representatives of other social justice organizations will describe their activities.

There will also be worship in the historic Simpson Memorial Chapel at the United Methodist Building, and time to network with other young adult clergy from across the connection

Registration is limited to 50 persons. Registration fee is \$100. Attendees or their conferences are responsible for covering travel expenses to and from Washington, D.C. GBCS will pay hotel, meals and program costs in Washington, D.C.

For more information or to register, contact Clayton Childers at (202) 488-5642 or cchilders@umc-gbcs.org.

Forced migration tops human rights violations

NEW YORK — While the world observed the 60th International Human Rights Day on Dec. 10, increasing waves of forced human migrations were cited by international humanitarian agency Church World Service as a major violation of human rights in the 21st century. John McCullough, a United Methodist pastor and the agency's executive director, said the increase in large groups of peo-

ple being forced from their homelands and dispersed "is by and large the result of human actions, whether due to conflict or climate change."

During their combined Nov. 11-13 General Assembly, CWS and the National Council of Churches approved a resolution calling on all member churches to renew their commitment as Christians to the advancement of human rights.

Calendar

JANUARY

- Jan. 4-6: "From Surviving to Thriving: Honoring Your Call," Arkansas Conference Clergy Women's Retreat, Mount Eagle Christian Center.
- Jan. 10-15: Perkins School of Youth Ministry, Highland Park UMC, Dallas.
- Jan. 17: "Total Impact: Connected in Christ and the United Methodist Way" training seminar, Searcy First UMC.
- Jan. 24: "Total Impact: Connected in Christ and the United Methodist Way" training seminar, First UMC, Malvern.
- Jan. 31: "Total Impact: Connected in Christ and the United Methodist Way" training seminar, Heritage UMC, Van Buren.

FEBRUARY

- Feb. 7: "Ministry in Color: Team Leadership Using the Birkman Method," Connected in Christ training seminar, Searcy First UMC.
- Feb. 21: "Weaving a Web of Connections: Using Internet Technology for Effective Ministry," Arkansas Conference event, Philander Smith

College, Little Rock.

- Feb. 21: "Ministry in Color: Team Leadership Using the Birkman Method," Connected in Christ training seminar, First UMC, Malvern.
- Feb. 27-March 1: VERITAS 2009, Arkansas Conference youth event, Hot Springs.
- Feb. 28: "Ministry in Color: Team Leadership Using the Birkman Method," Connected in Christ training seminar, Heritage UMC, Van Buren.

MARCH

- March 6-7: Arkansas Conference Children's Choir Festival, Lakewood UMC, North Little Rock.
- March 7: "Transformational Ministry Planning," Connected in Christ training seminar, Searcy First UMC.
- March 14: "Transformational Ministry Planning," Connected in Christ training seminar, First UMC, Malvern.
- March 21: "Transformational Ministry Planning," Connected in Christ training seminar, Heritage UMC, Van Buren.

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.



People of Faith

After more than a century of living life to the fullest, Roxye Pence Crutcher is continuing her journey at a vivacious 104 years young. She is a longtime member of Joiner United Methodist Church.

Mrs. Crutcher was recently recognized as the oldest patient of HealthSouth Rehabilitation Hospital of Jonesboro, where she recently recuperated from a broken hip. Mrs. Crutcher has worked hard to maintain a positive spirit, a strong body and motivated sense of accomplishment.

She was born Oct. 28, 1904, in Griffithville, Ark., entering the world with a strong will to live — and live long. With one sister and four brothers, she grew up surrounded by the love of family and developed a desire for helping others. She attended Arkansas State University and taught primary school for four years in a small, three-room schoolhouse.

On Oct. 28, 1926, she married Edward Brent Crutcher from Joiner, Ark. The couple left Griffithville to farm cotton, corn and soybeans on an inherited Frenchman's Bayou plantation passed down from his grandmother. Mrs. Crutcher still lives on the family farm with her daughter, Jane Williamson.

Mrs. Crutcher served as organist for the Joiner United Methodist Church for 70 years, just retiring from the organ bench two years ago. During her years at the Joiner Church, she also was a member of United Methodist Women and a Bible study group and was accompanist for the church choir.

Stephen Copley, director of the Justice for Our Neighbors program and an ordained elder in the Arkansas Conference, was elected to serve as a delegate to the General Assembly of



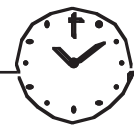
Roxye Pence Crutcher, 104 and a faithful member of the Joiner UMC, is joined by (standing, from left) her niece, Betty Pence East, a member of Covenant UMC in Cordova, Tenn.; her great-niece, Paula Howerton, a member of Marion UMC; and her daughter, Jane Crutcher Williamson, also a member of Joiner UMC.

the National Council of Churches of Christ in the USA and Church World Service representing the United Methodist Church. Elections were held during the 2008 General Assembly Nov. 11-13 in Denver. He will serve for the 2008-2012 quadrennium. The General Assembly meets annually and is comprised of member communions.

Copley was also elected to serve on the Ecumenical Networks Committee. The purpose of the committee is to help the National Council of Churches build relationships with and among current and emerging local, state, regional, national and global manifestations of the ecumenical movement and to establish and maintain active, on-going, multifaceted, collaborative networking processes.

richest collection for research on global Methodism in the world," said Robert Williams, who became the commission's chief executive in 2006. Located for 26 years on the bucolic campus of Drew University in New Jersey, the Commission on Archives and History oversees denominational treasures in 16,000 square feet.

To Williams and his staff, it's all about reclaiming the denomination's past to point it toward the future. "We just don't do history for nostalgia's sake," he said.



Remember When

100 Years Ago

Dec. 17, 1908: Rev. Frank Barrett has been kept from moving to his new charge at Asbury, Little Rock, by the acquisition of a new daughter to the parsonage family, and his pulpit was filled last Sunday by Dr. W.F. Wilson and Mr. Samuel Warr of this city.

50 Years Ago

Dec. 16, 1988: Manchester United Methodist Church, Arkadelphia, has been engaged in a Christmas toy project for underprivileged children. Member Ron McCaskill was the ring leader in creating more than 200 handmade wooden toys, doll cribs, stick horses, etc. Church members assisted in making dolls for the cribs and other accessories. Some of the toys will be donated to the United

Methodist Children's Home and others will be distributed through the Free Christmas Store, a combined effort of area churches, civic organizations and businesses. The Rev. Stan McKinnon is pastor.

20 Years Ago

Dec. 18, 1958: The Christmas season was opened Wednesday night, December 10, at Hendrix College, Conway, with the lighting of the campus Christmas tree. Dr. Marshall T. Steel, president, turned on the lights on the tree. A Christmas story was read by Dr. Richard E. Yates, professor of history. Other holiday activities included a dance Saturday, December 13, and a Christmas dinner and the Concert Band's Christmas concert on Tuesday, Dec. 16.



Milestones

Winfield UMC, Little Rock, marked its 140th anniversary Dec. 7. The celebration included an early morning breakfast gathering, worship led by Bishop Charles N. Crutchfield and a churchwide luncheon.

The Winfield church was organized in 1858 by a group of Methodists, many of whom were members of the Little Rock Station church, now known as First United Methodist. The first pastor was Benjamin O. Davis.

The first church building was erected in 1871 at 12th and Spring streets. After several moves, the congregation settled at 16th and Louisiana and constructed large church building designed by noted architect Charles Thompson. The church name honors Augustus

Winfield, the seventh minister of the congregation.

When the church was 45 years old, it was the first Methodist church in Arkansas to have a membership of 1,000. Membership eventually reached 3,000, and by 1948, Winfield was the largest Methodist Church in Arkansas. Among its pastors were Marshall T. Steel, who later served as president of Hendrix College, and Paul Galloway, who went on to be elected bishop and later served the Arkansas Area.

In 1988, the congregation relocated to west Little Rock, merged with the Mountain View church and built a new church building on Highway 10. The current pastor, David Bentley, is the 50th pastor to serve Winfield UMC.

Got a Methodist question?

United Methodist News Service

MADISON, N.J. — What is a circuit-rider? If you don't know, you can find the answer at www.gcah.org. Just click on the "UMC History" link.

The United Methodist Commission on Archives and History is beefing up its Web site — not only to help answer random queries, but also to provide quicker access of the denomination's historical information to scholars, church bodies and the person in the pew.

"We claim that it's probably the

Correction

A story in the Nov. 21 *Arkansas United Methodist* about the conference communication plan included an incorrect address for the Arkansas Conference web site. The correct web address is www.arumc.org.

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THE ARKANSAS UNITED METHODIST wants to know about your church's ministry successes, special events and noteworthy happenings. Send news to: Arkansas United Methodist, 2 Trudie Kibbe Reed Dr., Little Rock, AR 72202, or email jdennis@arumc.org.

Feb. 15 deadline to apply for Peace with Justice grants

■ *Special Sunday offering supports ministries for a 'disarmed and secure world'*

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Feb. 15 is the deadline to apply for a Peace with Justice grant from the United Methodist General Board of Church and Society (GBCS).

Funding for this program is generated through the Peace with Justice Special Sunday offering of The United Methodist Church. One of six Special Sundays in the denomination, Peace with Justice “witnesses to God’s demands for a faithful, just, disarmed

and secure world.” The Special Sunday will be observed on June 7 in 2009.

Peace with Justice grants are awarded annually. In 2008, awards totaled \$51,000.

Grant applicants must be either a United Methodist or other affiliated organization, or an ecumenical group working with and through at least one United Methodist agency or organization.

Forms may be obtained by contacting Donna Brandyberry at (202) 488-5641 or dbrandyberry@umc-gbcs.org, or Mark Harrison at (202) 488-5645, or mharrison@umc-gbcs.org.

Triplets arrive in time for Christmas

■ *UM pastor takes fast route to double size of family*

United Methodist clergywoman Betsy Singleton Snyder and her husband, U.S. Rep. Vic Snyder (D.-Ark.), of Little Rock welcomed not one, not two, but three baby boys into their family Dec. 9.

Named Aubrey, Wyatt and Sullivan, the babies weighed 3 pounds, 15 ounces; 4 pounds, 10 ounces; and 4 pounds, 15 ounces, respectively. They were delivered by caesarean section at a Little Rock hospital.

The triplets, who are expected to remain in the hospital for obser-

vation for about three weeks, were also welcomed by big brother Penn, 2.

News of the triplets’ arrival was shared from the floor of the U.S. House of Representatives Dec. 10 by Arkansas representatives Mike Ross, Marion Berry and John Boozman. Vic Snyder, a former member of the Arkansas Senate, has served Arkansas’ 2nd Congressional District since 1997.

Rev. Singleton Snyder, an elder and member of the Arkansas Conference since 1989, is senior pastor of the 350-member Quapaw Quarter United Methodist Church, located in downtown Little Rock.

United Methodist mobile advertising campaign tested in Pittsburgh

United Methodist News Service

PITTSBURGH — The United Methodist Church is testing a new mobile advertising strategy from now until Christmas Eve in the Pittsburgh area, incorporating text messaging and outdoor advertising as a way to woo a younger audience.

More than 40 billboards and transit

shelter ads aim to reach thousands of commuters and pedestrians. The ads invite people to text a keyword such as “BELIEVE” to a designated number.

Other ads will be delivered to subscribers of 4INFO, an ad-supported text message information service. The ads feature messages of hope and prompt recipients to text a keyword

such as “BELIEVE” to a designated number. In response, they receive a longer message inviting them to attend a United Methodist church and giving them an opportunity to learn how to find a church in their area or get more information about the church.

Some of the text message ads incorporate text shorthand — for example,

“God is F2T. CW2CU Xmas,” which translates “God is free to talk. Can’t wait to see you Christmas.”

“We especially hope to bring more young people into our churches, and that means reaching out in new and innovative ways that are relevant to our target audience,” said Bishop Thomas Bickerton.

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.

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