



# United Methodist Arkansas

January 23, 2009



Theresa Hoover UMC members (from left) Anthony Rogers, Earnest Washington, Franklin Wagner and Shannon Dodson work to fix up the new Harmony Health Clinic in Little Rock as part of the Martin Luther King Jr. community service challenge. photo by Jane Dennis

## UMs honor King with special events, community service

■ Churches host volunteer projects and ecumenical events, join parade

By JANE DENNIS  
Arkansas United Methodist Editor

United Methodists across Arkansas celebrated Martin Luther King Day Jan. 19 by worshipping together in ecumenical settings with friends and neighbors and by engaging in community service projects. Others participated in a celebratory parade and hosted worship services and a mission fair.

This year, the day set aside to honor the slain civil rights leader preceded the Jan. 20 inauguration of President

Barack Obama. As a result, the Presidential Inaugural Committee invited citizens, and particularly those in the faith community, to make the holiday “A Day On, Not a Day Off.” The nationwide call to service encouraged those who were on school or work holiday to seek out meaningful ways to serve their communities.

Several dozen volunteers from Theresa Hoover United Methodist Church in Little Rock accepted the challenge and spent several hours Monday working at the newly established nonprofit Harmony Health Clinic. The clinic offers free medical and dental care to poor and uninsured

See MLK DAY, page 7

## Inauguration inspires hope, awe for United Methodists

United Methodist News Service

United Methodists were among the throngs of people who descended upon the nation’s capital to witness the inauguration of Barack Obama as the 44th president of the United States of America.

When Obama placed his hand on the 148-year-old Lincoln Bible and said, “I do solemnly swear,” he became the first African American to ascend to the highest office in the land and added another layer to the foundation laid by the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr.

Michelle Gilstrap, 17, came to

Washington with a group from Cascade United Methodist Church, Atlanta. She told her mother that she wanted to attend the inauguration because “Barack Obama is the George Washington of our generation.”

The significance of the day leaves Bishop Gregory Palmer “breathless and feeling like I’m walking on air.”

“It is unbelievable that this is happening, and I am so grateful to be a witness to it,” said Palmer, president of the United Methodist Council of Bishops. “The barrier of race has been removed from the highest office in the

land.” He urged prayers for the president and Congress as they face the challenges ahead.

Obama’s inauguration carried a collective significance for people of all races, but its significance was also different for each individual in attendance and watching worldwide.

“This is the meaning of our liberty and our creed — why men and women and children of every race and every faith can join in celebration across this magnificent mall, and why a man whose father, less than 60 years ago, might not have been served at a local

restaurant can now stand before you to take a most sacred oath,” Obama said.

‘Hope over fear’

Obama provided an assessment of the country’s standing and his vision for the future.

“Today I say to you that the challenges we face are real,” he said, addressing a crowd estimated at more than a million on the National Mall in front of the Capitol. “They are serious and they are many. They will not be met easily or in a short span of time.

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# Bishop's 33rd letter to King notes 'unforgettable' milestone

■ *Election of nation's first black president brings hope of equality for all*

United Methodist News Service

Editor's note: Each year, United Methodist Bishop Woodie W. White writes a "birthday letter" to the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. about the progress of racial equality in the United States. Bishop White was the first chief executive of the United Methodist Commission on Religion and Race.



Bishop Woodie White's 33rd annual letter to the late Rev. Martin Luther King Jr., celebrates the election of the first black American as president of the United States.

UMNS video image

Dear Martin:

I began writing you on the anniversary of your birth in 1976! But until now, I have not written a letter when I've been as consumed with joy as I am today. Joy beyond description!

On the evening of April 4, 1968, when your tragic death was announced, I was at a point of total devastation. Millions joined in a community of grief. It was as though time itself had ended. Hope disappeared, and utter bewilderment took its place.

On the evening of Nov. 4, 2008, just four decades later, when it was announced that Barack Obama had been elected the 44th President of the United States — the first black American to be so elected — there was utter joy! Thousands cheered in Grant Park in Chicago, as did millions more across America. We wept unashamedly, men and women, people of all ethnicities and creeds.

Martin, it was an unforgettable moment! Even as I write, it is difficult to contain the joy or hold back the tears. You would understand.

As I watch President-elect Obama, a senator from Illinois, giving press conferences, announcing members of his Cabinet or speaking to an urgent matter facing the nation, it still seems like a dream. But it is real. America has elected a black man to what is considered by many the most influential political office in the world!

It seems only yesterday that black people were battling for the opportunity to vote. Many died seeking that right. State by state, it eventually changed. But scarcely anyone glimpsed a future when a black man would be elected president of the nation.

Those days of marches and protests were aimed at simple but important goals: to eat at a lunch counter, to try on a garment before you purchased it, to attend a school in the neighborhood where you lived, to

be hired for a job for which you were qualified, and yes, to exercise the most fundamental right of citizenship, to vote.

We sought to be accepted, and to be treated as a person and a full citizen in our own nation.

If you could see him, Martin, you would recognize that Mr. Obama is a man of unusual gifts, grace and character. He announced his intentions to seek his party's nomination on a cold January morning, in front of the state capitol in Springfield, Ill., the state he represented in the Senate.

Springfield, you will recall, was the site of two days of rioting in 1908. White mobs had burned the homes and businesses of black residents, causing thousands to flee the city. Eight people — black and white — were, tragically, killed.

That event prompted leaders to convene a meeting in New York City and resolve that a new organization was needed to address the nation's racial ills. The result was the formation of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People.

The organization will observe the 100th anniversary of its founding in the same year the nation witnesses its first black president take office!

The election of Mr. Obama is much more significant than the transfer of power from one party to another. Its significance goes beyond the current economic crisis, in which Americans are looking to government for direction and leadership.

This election will impact an area that has been at the heart of America's failure as a nation. I believe it will bring to an end the dying ideology of "they."

American racism is grounded in an often unspoken declaration of innate inferiority and superiority. It is based

See LETTER, page 4



By Jane Dennis

## Editor's Corner

### Inspiration for new year

Mind-boggling is one way to describe the Internet, that monster of networking and information, learning and sharing that connects anyone with a computer and modem. I still have a hard time really and truly comprehending how it all works; how I can send an email to someone in Europe or Africa as quickly as I can email someone a few blocks away.

When I'm searching for information or when one of my children is gathering background material for a paper or report, I envision all the libraries around the world inviting us in to peruse their shelves, with nearly all their books and other content being open and available. With a few clicks it's entirely possible to get very close to doing just that.

I use the Internet for a lot of things, including occasional shopping. When items aren't available locally, one can almost always find a place to purchase what's needed on the Internet. So far (crossing fingers), I've not had any negative experiences when it comes to shopping and/or



Jane Dennis

buying online.

Not long ago, I discovered that Cokesbury wasn't able to locate enough copies of the book our Sunday School class wanted to study, so I turned to online mega bookseller Amazon.com. As I was considering various new and used copies of the book, I happened to click on the

"Shopping Cart" icon before I had placed any orders. This message popped up:

"Your cart is empty, but it lives to serve. Give it purpose. Put something in your shopping cart."

What an inspiring message, not only for online shopping but for everyday living! If your cart (or heart) is empty, fill it up. Give it purpose. Load it up and share with someone else.

If a virtual shopping cart can "live to serve," surely we Christians can, too.

*Live to serve ...* I believe that's a fine mantra for a new year.

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# Viewpoint

Dear Friends:

In the early days of World War II, Winston Churchill was confronted by admirals who did not want to risk their ship of war in the Mediterranean Sea. Churchill growled, "Battleships are made to go under fire."

We are bombarded with:  
recession/depression,  
wars and rumors of war,  
domestic violence,  
crime in places high and low,  
neighbors squabbling,  
communities squabbling,  
the legislature squabbling,  
Congress squabbling,  
nations squabbling,



## An Occasional Word from the Bishop

and worst of all,  
churches squabbling.

Is there any good news?

Yes! Christians were born to go under fire. In the face of a difficult economy, our response is to be generous, as God has been generous with us. In the face of international and/or domestic violence, our response is to "do justice, love kindness, and to walk humbly with God." We are called to act in the spirit of Christ with compassion

and understanding and forgiveness in the face of anger and squabbling.

We are to be islands of peace in a world all too hurried and harried. Difficult as these days are, we know we do not face them alone. We know that the living faith we live will make all the difference. We know that the values that last and that sustain are the



Charles Crutchfield

values of our living faith in Jesus Christ as the Savior of the world.

A long time ago, on a hill just outside Jerusalem, God and the power of evil went to war. Evil hurled every weapon in its arsenal into the battle — mockery, lies, greed, hate, even death. Yet the victory belonged to God. As it was then, so it is now. We possess a faith tested, tempered, and proven in times tougher than these.

Followers of Christ were born to go under fire.

Faithfully,

Charles Crutchfield



# Obama election: leaving segregated world behind

*We have come over a way that with tears has been watered,*

*We have come, treading our path through the blood of the slaughtered;*

*Out from the gloomy past, till now we stand at last*

*Where the white gleam of our bright star is cast.<sup>1</sup>*

By MAXINE ALLEN

I never thought that I would see the day that a black man would become president of the United States of America. I grew up in a segregated Little Rock. Both of my parents worked to make ends meet for the five children in my family. When I was very small one of my father's many part-time jobs was at Sterling Department Store. My mother had to draw an outline of my feet to purchase shoes, as black people could not try on shoes or clothing in Little Rock department stores.

In this 1950s and '60s racially segregated culture, I attended all-black Stephens Elementary and Dunbar Junior High School. At the all-black schools I had friends, and more importantly, had a social life filled with Beta Club, choir, Drill Team and Dance Team. In the 10th grade my parents decided that I should not go to the all-black Horace Mann High



Maxine Allen

School, but because of my academics I was better off attending Little Rock Central High. After all, we lived less than a mile from the school and Mrs. Daisy Bates was a close family friend who assured my parents that I had the "temperament" to deal with Central.

There was no such thing as a school bus in the 1960s. You either rode the city bus or you walked. When I was in the ninth grade I got put off the city bus because I refused to give my seat up to a white man. The bus driver just pulled over on the Seventh Street side of the state Capitol and ordered me and my friends Doris and Glenn off the bus because we were "uppity Nigras." I didn't tell my parents until I was an adult about that incident.

Most days a group of us would walk to school, that is, if the white male students would let us. Some days we ran both to and from school to avoid the cursing and rock throwing that took place.

Even in the hallways of Central, black students were regularly tripped, pushed, shoved and spit upon without any recourse or even advocacy most of the time. Little Rock Central and traveling to and from school became my private hell. I often prayed to the God I learned about at White Memorial Methodist Church to give me a sign that at some point in time some justice might come out of our situations. Finally! I graduated from Little Rock Central High in 1968 having been one of two black students on the yearbook

staff and barely able to hold on to my Beta Club rating. A "B" average was important as my parents did not allow "C's" in their household.

Even in the midst of the Civil Rights struggles of the 1960s, I never thought that I would see a black president. When we heard Dr. King's speech, that has become known as the "I Have A Dream" speech, I only knew of the present nightmare of my existence at Central High School in a non-culturally sensitive Little Rock.

While at Central, I joined the local cast of a group called "Up With People"<sup>2</sup> whose mission included eliminating racism in the United States. Following rehearsal one Saturday, the integrated cast went to eat at a local restaurant where we were promptly denied service because we had a "mixed group." When Dr. King was killed in Memphis, this same "mixed group" provided music at a local memorial service. In our idealism few of us believed that the dream of judging people by the content of their character would ever

be realized.

This week, when Barack Obama becomes the president of the United States of America, he becomes not just the president of black America, but the president of all America. It's the America where we are still recovering from the ravages of Katrina, Rita and Gustav; the America where children of all hues go to bed hungry; the America where women's wages are still only make 80 cent of the dollar that males receive; the America where homelessness is decried but funding is not allocated to help people out of poverty; and where health care is not a mandatory benefit to all. This is the America that Barack Obama will preside over.

As for me, I'll be at home watching on my television, for tears still come each time I think about this day that I thought I would never see in my lifetime.

[Maxine Allen, an ordained elder in the Arkansas Conference, is minister of missions and ethnic ministries.]

<sup>1</sup> Lift Every Voice and Sing, Johnson & Johnson, UMH 519  
<sup>2</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Up\\_with\\_People](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Up_with_People) and <http://www.upwithpeople.org/index.php?id=33>

FOR HEAVEN'S SAKE By Mike Morgan



# Viewpoint

## The United Methodist Way: hope for transformation

Last fall I was part of a retreat for pastors organized by Connected in Christ, the leadership development program for the Arkansas Conference, and attended by the bishop and district superintendents of Arkansas. About 40 pastors gathered to have an extended conversation about our United Methodist identity and focus. It seems that one of the problems over the last few decades has been that we have been unsure about who we are and what we stand for. This lack of focus on our vision and mission has been a contributing factor in our decline as a denomination.



*Bud Reeves*

In 2004, about a third of our bishops in the United Methodist Church changed, and with this new group of bishops came a desire to re-examine and re-prioritize our life together as a church. There began to be conversations about “the United Methodist Way,” trying to articulate our vision and mission more effectively. This retreat was an outgrowth on a statewide level of this national conversation that is going on in United Methodist Churches across the country right now.

I was encouraged to see this happening. We live in an age in which



### The Shepherd's Staff

By William O. “Bud” Reeves

large institutions — governments, universities, churches, etc. — are struggling. It takes the nimbleness of a movement to respond to the rapid changes we see going on all around us. In order to survive the 21st century, the United Methodist Church is going to have to take on the qualities of a movement again — as it was in its beginning. I am encouraged because the energy for this conversation began with our top leaders — the bishops of the church. However, for it to be effective across the denomination, it must be worked out in the context of our local churches. That’s where the movement happens.

Two of the resources in this conversation are Bishop Reuben Job’s book, “Three Simple Rules,”<sup>1</sup> and Bishop Robert Schnase’s book, “Five Practices of Fruitful Congregations.”<sup>2</sup> Job’s book is an update and discussion of John Wesley’s General Rules (Do no harm. Do good. Stay in love with God.). These are becoming the groundwork of our Methodist lifestyle again. Schnase’s book looks at five qualities that are present in excellent congregations (radical hospitality, passionate worship, intentional faith

development, risk-taking mission and service, and extravagant generosity). These are not new strategies for growth, but they are effective and easily understandable.

With the conversations about the United Methodist Way having started in the Council of Bishops and filtered through the annual conferences, it is now time for the discussion to happen in the local churches. Use these resources (both of which have auxiliary study materials) to start the conversation in your church. I am using both books as bases for sermons this winter and spring. They can help a church capture a vision of being Wesleyan. They can help re-cast an existing vision. They can help us become more missional. They can help a good church become a great church.

Churches of every size and situation with the cross and flame on their wall have the same DNA. We just need to remember who we are. I have believed for years that our United Methodist “way” is the message our culture longs to hear — a gospel of grace, forgiveness, service, and mission. We just have to communicate

our message in a way that is relevant to the hurts and hopes of the culture we live in, not to rely on formulas that worked (or didn’t) in previous generations.

We ended the pastors’ retreat last fall in a way I had never ended a pastors’ retreat before. With three days of frank and honest discussion behind us, and some new directions calling us forward, our leader stood up with tears in his eyes and called the group to prayer. Not an organized worship experience, he just called us pastors to get on our knees and cry out to God for the future of the United Methodist Church, for our individual churches, for our families, and for our colleagues. And we did! It was an awesome, awkward, vulnerable and compelling breakthrough of the Holy Spirit.

That, too, thrilled my soul. It gave me hope. It may be the only way this lumbering institution we call the United Methodist Church will ever become a movement again and survive the cataclysmic changes we are now experiencing in the world. Let’s fling ourselves — heart, soul, mind and strength — into the arms of God and trust God to light the fires of transformation, in us and in the world.

<sup>1</sup> Reuben Job, *Three Simple Rules* (Nashville: Abingdon, 2007).

<sup>2</sup> Robert Schnase, *Five Practices of Fruitful Congregations* (Nashville: Abingdon, 2007).

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### LETTER, continued from page 2

on the claim that one’s race is the determinative factor in ability and achievement.

But today, Americans can no longer assert that “they” are unable to hold this position or perform that role. The reality has always been that while a specific individual may or may not be able to achieve some goal, a blanket assessment on a group of persons is blatantly unfair and totally inaccurate.

Neither can it be held that the white community is monolithic in its race attitudes. The truth is, it has never been that way, even when it appeared to be so.

President-elect Obama’s election is the result of the votes and support of persons of broad racial and ethnic diversity. He shattered fundraising records for a political campaign. He set records for numbers who attended

his campaign rallies. He won votes in geographic areas where his political party has traditionally been defeated.

It can no longer be said that “they” won’t vote, support or accept a person because of race or color. Some will or will not; but “they” is no longer descriptive or normative.

That said, it would be naïve to conclude that racism and bigotry in America are dead. They are very much alive.

Racism dies hard. But its grip in the minds and hearts of Americans, Martin, is not as deep or as broad as you experienced.

We need to still challenge every



In remembrance of the late Rev. Martin Luther King Jr., retired United Methodist Bishop Woodie White pens an annual letter in advance of the civil rights leader’s Jan. 15 birthday.

UMNS photo courtesy of the Library of Congress

expression of injustice, bigotry and racism in individuals and institutions. Mr. Obama’s election should encourage us to continue rather than end these efforts!

On a personal note, Martin, I must say a word about our buddy, Joe Lowery, who was among the first Civil Rights leaders to endorse Mr. Obama’s candidacy. He often appeared to be a lone voice crying out in the wilderness. But as he campaigned for Mr. Obama across the nation,

it seemed like a Moses-Joshua moment, with the Rev. Lowery, 87, urging and supporting the new leadership of Mr. Obama, 47.

Joe will offer the benediction at the swearing-in ceremonies of Mr. Obama as president of the United States of America. It will be a moving moment!

Though this letter is far longer than I expected, I have not said all that is on my heart. But I am mindful that this moment of joy and celebration was made possible by what you and so many others did and said.

In so many ways, Martin, we are a better nation, a better people than you left. Not perfect, but better. And in some ways, the nation is moving beyond The Dream!

Thank you and happy birthday, Martin.

We are overcoming!  
Woodie

[Retired Bishop White is bishop-in-residence at Candler School of Theology at Emory University in Atlanta.]



## News Digest

### Tennessee ash spill creates concern for area churches

HARRIMAN, Tenn. — Swan Pond United Methodist Church is one of four United Methodist congregations located within a few miles of the billion-gallon spill that came from the Tennessee Valley Authority's Kingston plant, a coal-burning facility in Roane County. The 300-acre disaster was the subject of a U.S. Senate Environment and Public Works Committee hearing Jan. 8. It has been reported that the spill covers an area several times larger than that of the 1989 Exxon Valdez oil spill.

"It's heartbreaking. It's tearing us all to pieces," said Brenda Hendrickson, who attends the Swan Pond church. "The workers, the equipment, the trucks — it's the only way it can be cleaned up, but it's disrupting our lives."

### Convocation inspires pastors to build bridges

HOUSTON — United Methodist pastors of African-American congregations left a national gathering inspired to turn walls of obstacles sideways and make them bridges for reclaiming God's promises. "Building Bridges Into the Future" was the centering point for the nearly 400 participants at the Convocation for Pastors of African American Churches, sponsored by the United Methodist Board of Discipleship.



Geraldine McClellan of Gainesville, Fla., addresses nearly 400 participants at the 2009 Convocation for Pastors of African American Churches in Houston. UMNS photo by Eleanor L. Colvin

While worship services breathed new life into their spirits, the daily plenary sessions provided practical tools for ministry. Retired United Methodist pastor Zan Holmes of Dallas assured the pastors that they are prepared to build bridges because "the God that we serve is a bridge-building God."

### United Methodists look to assist civilians in Gaza

NEW YORK — United Methodists are trying to assist with meeting the ongoing need for aid to civilians caught in the war zone of the Gaza Strip. They also are concerned, with other humanitarian organizations, about the effect the ongoing confrontation between the Israeli military and Hamas-led Palestinian government is having on medical care in Gaza.

Alex Awad, a missionary with the United Methodist Board of Global Ministries who is based at Bethlehem Bible College, told United Methodist

News Service the college has five students from the Gaza Strip. "We have also been in direct touch with friends and relatives in Gaza," he wrote in a Jan. 12 e-mail message. "What they tell us is all the same: they have no food, no water, no electricity, and they are afraid for their lives."

### Report shows collapse of Zimbabwe health system

NEW YORK — The collapse of the health care system in Zimbabwe puts the entire region of Southern Africa at risk, according to a new report by Physicians for Human Rights. "Health in Ruins: A Man-Made Disaster in Zimbabwe" places the blame for that collapse and the current cholera epidemic upon Robert Mugabe's government.

Released Jan. 13 in New York and South Africa, the report contains findings from a four-person team that visited Zimbabwe in December. The findings, the preface states, "should compel the international community to respond as it should to other human rights emergencies."

The Zimbabwean government "has taken the country backwards, which has enabled the destruction of health, water and sanitation—all with fatal consequences," the report's preface says. Zimbabwe's life expectancy, at 34 years for males and 37 years for females, is the lowest in the world.

### Faith leaders call for increase in U.S. minimum wage

WASHINGTON — Faith leaders across the United States have joined a national effort to increase the federal minimum wage to \$10 by 2010. The United Methodist Board of Church and Society is among a group representing 11 denominations and national faith organizations signing a letter of support to end "poverty wages" and lift the economy by raising the minimum wage.

The letter from Let Justice Roll calls on the 111th Congress "to raise the minimum wage and join us in bringing needed economic security to our families, our communities and our country." According to the coalition, nearly

400 faith leaders from across the country are supporting the \$10 in 2010 campaign.

### 100-ton fair trade challenge reaches halfway mark

NEW YORK — The United Methodist Committee on Relief's 100-Ton Challenge has made it over the halfway mark. As of Dec. 31, United Methodists had purchased 56.5 tons of fair-traded coffee, tea and snacks through Equal Exchange. The 12-month challenge, which began last May, encourages United Methodists to increase the amount of fairly traded products purchased through The UMCOR Coffee Project and Equal Exchange. The purchases allow small-scale farmers to earn fair prices, invest in farm improvements and improve their communities. Churches, individuals and organizations are encouraged to help UMCOR meet its 100-Ton goal before the challenge ends on World Fair Trade Day, May 9.

When coffee is bought through the Equal Exchange's Interfaith store at <http://interfaith.equalexchange.com>, a portion of the sales goes to support small-scale farmers in Latin America, Africa and Asia through UMCOR's Sustainable Agriculture and Development Program.

### Black College Fund director pens letter to first lady

NASHVILLE, Tenn. — A letter to incoming first lady Michelle Obama, written by Cynthia Bond Hopson, director of the Black College Fund at the United Methodist Board of Higher Education and Ministry, is part of a collection of letters that form the basis of "Go, Tell Michelle: African American Women Write to the New First Lady," released Jan. 16.

The collection of letters, from African-American women across the United States, relays hopes, dreams, prayers, fears and aspirations for Michelle Obama. The collections were gathered after Obama was lampooned in cartoons and accused of being un-American. Her treatment compelled Barbara A. Seals Nevergold and Peggy Brooks-Bertram, co-editors of the book, to solicit African-American women "to send her a special message, grounded in our common ancestry and in the belief that our daughters have not only been inspired by her accomplishments but empowered by her example."

Hopson's prayer for Michelle Obama is "when you are tired, you will listen to your heart and rest and renew yourself," and "when you don't please everyone, you will understand the futility of even trying and you will trust the scriptures and lean not to your own understanding, but trust the author and finisher of your faith with all that concerns you."

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# If you had 15 minutes with President Obama ...

## ■ *United Methodists consider a word with the president*

*United Methodist News Service*

If given 15 minutes to speak with the first African-American U.S. president, many United Methodists would spend part of the time with their heads bowed in prayer.

Then they would like a word with him about poverty, terrorism, the economy, racism, torture, climate change, abortion, immigration and genocide — just to mention a few issues on the hearts and minds of United Methodists.

“If I could have 15 minutes with President Obama, I think I would first ask if we could pray together and would pledge to him I would be in daily prayer for him and his Cabinet,” said Margie Briggs, United Methodist certified lay minister at Calhoun and Drake’s Chapel United Methodist churches in Missouri. “I would ask him to share with me his plan of action for the poor, especially children living in poverty, so all might be covered by health care and have the chance to rise above poverty by earning a living wage. And then I would ask how I could help.”



*Douglas Waite*

Douglas Waite, a U.S. Navy chaplain and captain stationed in Hawaii, would try to be a pastor to him and encourage him to keep up regular devotions and to worship with his family as often as possible.

“Concerning important issues, I could think of nothing more important than keeping us safe from attacks of terrorism from our enemies,” Waite said.

### Keep your promises

After pastoral words of encouragement, Bishop Robert T. Hoshibata, of the church’s Portland (Ore.) Area, would tell Obama: “Do not disappoint us!”

“I ask that you hold to the commitments you made to us: for a government that honors and respects the diversity of the people of this nation and of the world; for an administration that supports and defends the Constitution and the freedoms it guarantees; of a world that is committed to conversation, dialogue and negotiation before turning to war and violence; for opportunities not just for a select few,

but for the many; for leadership willing to serve the common good, not just benefiting a few.”

Erin Hawkins, top executive of the United Methodist Commission of Religion and Race, said she would remind Obama of his historic speech on race when he spoke of the march for a more equal, caring and prosperous America.

“As you take office President Obama, how do you plan to continue that march — how will you engage this country in seeing that establishing an African American in the White House is not proof that we in the U.S. are living in a post-race society?”

The high numbers of persons of color in jail, of African-American women infected by the HIV virus and of disadvantaged people of color denied basic health care is proof the United States is not living in a post-race society, she said.

### Help for the poor

William Abraham, a professor of Wesleyan Studies at Perkins School of Theology in Dallas and a native of Ireland, said he would urge the new president to find a way to give the poor a better future.

“In Ireland, I was brought up in a family where we were deeply dependent upon the state — my father was killed in an accident when we were small, and aside from help from the church, we got help from the state,” Abraham said. “I think it is absolutely crucial that the state strike a balance between meeting the immediate needs of people and doing it in a way that is going to construct a future for them whereby they will be full, responsible citizens in the community.”



*William Abraham*

Jim Winkler, top executive of the United Methodist Board of Church and Society, would ask Obama to keep his doors open to United Methodist leadership and to the National Council of Churches.

“I would assure him the people of The United Methodist Church are praying for him as he begins what is perhaps the toughest job in the world,” he said. “I would urge him to unambiguously reject torture by the United

States, work proactively to address climate change, abolish the practice of presidential ‘signing statements,’ place the needs of the poor at the top of budget and tax policies, act as a fair and impartial broker of peace between Palestinians and Israelis, and engage in dialogue with ‘enemies’ of the United States.”

### Address social issues

Robert Renfroe, pastor at The Woodlands United Methodist Church, Woodlands, Texas, would use the time to ask Obama a question: “Mr. President, if it’s true, as you stated when interviewed by Rick Warren, that you do not know when human life begins, why not err on the side of caution?”



*Joy Moore*

The unborn are at great risk in this country, he said, where “there is a one in five chance that a fetus’ existence will be terminated by an abortion.”

He would ask the president to “appoint Supreme Court justices who will allow the states and the people a voice in this matter. And, please, use your position and your charisma to speak to what’s best in us — the desire to protect human potential and life itself.”

Maxie Dunnam, chancellor of Asbury Theological Seminary, Wilmore, Ky., would ask Obama not to compromise on human rights, the environment, the lives of millions of babies each year, the health and medical care of children, the values of a Judeo-Christian culture, the place of America in the international community and “the most positive dynamic of our nation’s life by thinking that religion and politics don’t go together.”

“We within The United Methodist Church are committed to contributing a prophetic, healing faith that will not claim God’s blessings for all our national policies and practices, as though God is always on ‘our side,’” Dunnam said. “Rather, with one of your favorite presidential mentors, Mr. Lincoln, we worry a lot and pray earnestly as to whether we are on God’s side.”

Joy Moore, dean at Duke Divinity School, Durham, N.C., would want

Obama to use his leadership in the world to make the case against genocide in places such as Sudan.

“As long as the international community permits mass killing and rape, it emboldens the Mugabes (president of Zimbabwe) of the world to act with impunity, believing that they have nothing to lose,” she said.

Both Sandra Cabrera, pastor of Elmwood United Methodist Church, Dallas, and Judith Siaba, with the church’s Northern Illinois Annual Conference, would ask Obama to pass a just immigration law.

“This country came to be and became what it is on the back of immigrants,” said Siaba, who works in the conference office on congregational development. “Young children who have been brought to this country have a right for higher education. We need to change the law so that they can contribute to our society by getting a good education.”

“Our immigrant people are 40 million hard-working people, brave, strong, enterprising, intelligent and people of faith, who started a journey of faith by fleeing poverty and the lack of resolve due to the constant socio-economic problem of Latin America,” Cabrera said.



*Maxie Dunnam*

“I would ask when and how the rights and contributions of the people can be acknowledged and resolved while society wants them to become invisible? What will be your strategy and your plan to work with Mexican leaders for a just and a dignified proposal to resolve the immigration problem in both countries?”

### American dream

Obama is “the reincarnation of the American dream,” Abraham said.

“The American project is a theological project from beginning to end, and the president is a critical figure in the civil religion of the United States,” he said. “I would love to hear him reflect on that.”

“It is very clear that this man comes out of a very robust wing of Christian tradition, and he is very serious about his faith,” he said. “I think his faith makes a lot more distinctive difference to his politics than he is letting on.”



Theresa Hoover UMC volunteer Lisa Midkiff smooths the sheetrock mud in a room at Harmony Health Clinic in Little Rock.

## MLK DAY, continued from page 1

patients in Pulaski County. However, the clinic building on Roosevelt Road is in need of renovation. Church volunteers, along with others from the community, ripped out old carpet and floor tiles, smoothed sheetrock mud, painted walls and spruced up landscaping.

United Methodist Women at First United Methodist Church in Morrilton hosted a Mission and Servant Fair. The event concluded with a program featuring former Arkansas Razorback football player Freddie Burton and his sister Daisha Burton Nelson, both graduates of Morrilton High School. More than 160 persons attended.

"We had 17 nonprofit organizations that set up displays telling what their mission was and how they served others and how you could volunteer to help them carry out their mission," said coordinator Emma Carruthers.

In planning the event, UMW

members considered King's legacy. "Martin Luther King was for all, and he was a servant," Carruthers said. "This event was not about money; it was about volunteering your services."

At least two United Methodist congregations participated in the 25th annual Dr. Martin Luther King Parade in downtown Little Rock, hosted by the Little Rock Branch of the NAACP. Members of Quapaw Quarter United Methodist Church marched in the chilly Monday morning event and tossed candy to those along the route.

Members of First United Methodist Church in Benton participated in the parade as well, carrying a church banner and signs declaring the importance of community unity and cooperation. Senior pastor George McCoy and other church members on their motorcycles lead the way for the Benton United Methodists.

The Benton church also hosted

the Benton Unity Service Jan. 17 as part of the community's Martin Luther King celebration. "We're Better Together" was the theme of the service, which included an ecumenical choir made up of representatives from various churches. A communitywide meal preceded the service.

Winfield United Methodist in Little Rock hosted its third annual MLK celebration service Jan. 18, in partnership with St. Paul United Methodist at Maumelle. Former St. Paul pastor Mark Norman was guest preacher.

"We have felt like it's real important to provide something for the west Little Rock community in recognition of Martin Luther King," said Winfield pastor Jan Edwards.

The service honors "a man of faith and what he gave for the freedom of everyone," Edwards said. It's important to remember and "appreciate his vision and his dream," she said.

## INAUGURATION, continued from page 1

But know this, America — they will be met."

The new president also told those assembled on the mall and those gathered around televisions that they had "chosen hope over fear, unity of purpose over conflict and discord. On this day, we come to proclaim an end to the petty grievances and false promises, the recriminations and worn-out dogmas, that for far too long have strangled our politics."

Albert Sampson, pastor of Fernwood United Methodist Church in Chicago, has been among the masses on the National Mall before. He attended the 1963 rally where King gave his famous "I Have a Dream" speech and was a speaker at the Million Man March in 1995.

Sampson, who was ordained by King as a Baptist minister before becoming United Methodist, called President Obama's address "an international message" with a personal touch. "His words were packaged to go around the world like a boomerang," he said.

The idea that America will extend its hand if others unclench their fists was a powerful notion to this advocate of nonviolence. "According to God, you'll get more when you open your hand than you will with your fist

closed," Sampson said. "We've got to find other strategies for handling our differences. That's one of the key things he was saying."

Larry Pickens, pastor of Northbrook (Ill.) United Methodist Church, and his wife Debra were among the ticket-holders seated in front of the podium area during the inauguration. Afterward, they went to Capitol Hill United Methodist Church, where meals were being served to the community.

Pickens said he thought the president's speech "set the right tone," and he was particularly interested in his suggestion of openness to the Muslim world if there was a desire to relate to the United States in a peaceful way. "I thought that was a very important message for him to send," he added.

The occasion gave Pickens "a renewed sense of not only the power of this nation, but the ability this nation has to do right." He believes this sense will be the theme of Obama's presidency.

Everyone working together

Robert Besser, pastor of Wesley United Methodist Church in Beaumont, Texas, found Obama's speech and the inauguration "awesome and wonderful." The speech, emphasizing the past, present and



Eric Plunkett, a United Methodist from Chicago, and his nephews Jonathan and Trey watch the inauguration of President Obama in Washington. UMNS photo by Jay Mallin

future, "was the best part" of the day, he said.

As he watched the inauguration on a Jumbotron screen, Besser paid particular attention to Obama's call to work together without divisiveness and his assertion that there would be sacrifices to get the United States moving in another direction.

"But like our forefathers and ancestors in the faith and in the country who were able to make it happen, we have that same spirit," Besser said, "and if we work together, we too can move forward in our country's future together."

As the great-great-grandson of a slave and a Native American, Larry Hygh Jr., a United Methodist communicator from the Los Angeles area, called the inauguration "a great time for me personally." Hygh had preached the night before at Mount Vernon Place United Methodist Church in

Washington, and challenged his listeners "to go forth and change our communities."

"I am feeling this overwhelming joy at our first African-American president being inaugurated," he said. "Hopefully, it will not be business as usual. Hopefully, we will get some change for our country."

'Once in a lifetime'

Herman L. Fraser, 60, member of Abyssinia Baptist, Harlem, N.Y., brought an ecumenical group to Washington for the inauguration. They arrived at Asbury United Methodist Church in Washington at 5:30 a.m. Jan. 20 and made it their home for the day.

Fraser said he "just wanted to be in Washington, D.C., today." He knew he "could not get near Barack Obama but just wanted to be in the same place. It was a once in a lifetime experience. I do not think we could have found a church as warm as this one. They just welcomed us in."

Christine Christian-Roy, a member of St. Charles Borromeo and St. Ann's Catholic Church, Nyack, N.Y., watched the inauguration from the sanctuary of Asbury Church. She said she cried throughout the entire inauguration. "I never believed I would live to see this day."

"Anything can happen now but our president cannot do it by himself. We need to forget the big I's and little you's." She really liked what Obama said about "working in the daylight and being honest and everyone needs to go back and start at their community."



A young man watches the inauguration of President Obama in Washington. UMNS photo by Jay Mallin

# Web ministry in spotlight at Feb. 21 training event

“Weaving a Web of Connections: Using Internet Technology for Ministry” is a training event slated for Feb. 21 at Philander Smith College in Little Rock.

Hosted by United Methodist Communications (UMCom) and the Arkansas Conference Office of Communications, the one-day training event is ideal for pastors, staff, members and volunteers. It will cover the basics of Web ministry and introduce many free or low-cost tools to develop a dynamic Web

presence, “so every local church can fulfill the mission of the church to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world,” according to event coordinators.

“We offered the first ‘Weaving a Web of Connections’ in 2007 at Mount Sequoyah,” said Martha Taylor, Arkansas Conference director of communications. “There are others being offered around the country but this will be the most convenient for Arkansas local

churches to attend.”

Cost is \$75 per person, which includes a full day of interactive presentations from seasoned Web and Internet technology practitioners, a comprehensive handout packet, a continental breakfast, catered lunch, two snack breaks and almost eight hours of networking, ideas, sharing and vital Web ministry best practices, tools and tricks of the trade to jump-start local church Web ministry.

Participants are eligible for

C.E.U. credit as well.

Registration deadline is Feb. 15. Space is limited to 100 participants. For more information or to register, contact Cheryl A. Hemmerle, UMCom technical training specialist, at (888) 278-4862 toll free, or send an e-mail to [training@umcom.org](mailto:training@umcom.org).

To learn more about this and other Web ministry training events, online courses and networking opportunities, visit our Web ministry website, <http://web.umcom.org>.



Summer Institute, a free event for students who may be struggling with God’s call in their lives, is coming up June 8-12 at Hendrix College in Conway.

Sponsored by the Miller Center for Vocation, Ethics and Calling (formerly the Hendrix-Lilly Vocations Initiative), the Institute is a weeklong program designed for high school youth (entering their junior year to finishing their senior year) to explore a call to ministry in the United Methodist Church.

Leading the event will be Wayne Clark, J.J. Whitney and Vicki Sutton of the Miller Center, and Rod Hocott, Arkansas Conference Minister of Youth Ministries.

Youth will hear call stories from ministers; shadow clergy for a day (youth, music, outreach, children and family, pulpit); learn the meaning of ordination and the differences between the orders of deacon and elder; participate in Bible study around the subject of call; do volunteer work at churches and agencies; take a spiritual gifts inventory; visit the conference office; and end the week in a worship service with communion and anointing. Students will also have an opportunity to swim, go bowling, watch movies, and play.

While free, the event requires participants to apply. Deadline is May 8. For more information, contact Whitney at [whitney@hendrix.edu](mailto:whitney@hendrix.edu) or (501) 450-4591.

Jerome Ringo, noted environmentalist and advocate for clean energy, will speak at Theresa Hoover UMC, 4000 W. 13th St., Little Rock, at

7 p.m. Feb. 8. Ringo, the first African-American elected to serve as chairman of the National Wildlife Federation’s Board of Directors, is currently president of The Apollo Alliance, a coalition of labor, environmental, national security, civil rights and business leaders fighting to make America independent from foreign energy in 10 years.



Jerome Ringo

Ringo is a member of the Green Group, a member of *Newsweek’s* Environment and Leadership Council and serves as an advisor to the Sundance Channel’s “The Green.” In 2007, he was invited to serve on the National Parks and Conservation Association board.

Ringo’s visit to Arkansas is co-sponsored by Black Community Developers Inc., Methodist Federation for Social Action, Black Methodists for Church Renewal and Arkansas Chapter of the U.S. Green Building Council.

For more information, contact either Charles Vann at [cvann@aristotle.net](mailto:cvann@aristotle.net) or Thompson Murray at [thompsonwmurray@gmail.com](mailto:thompsonwmurray@gmail.com) or (501) 580-7787.

Very often families need the help and support of the congregation to effectively respond to a family crisis involving an addiction. A workshop for addiction ministry responders is

planned for Feb. 23-25 at Mount Sequoyah Conference Center in Fayetteville. Participants from across the South Central Jurisdiction will learn how to equip clergy and laity for effective healing ministry.

Guest speakers will include Bishop Felton E. May, Gerrit DenHartog and Brian Gould.

A recent survey of 24 United Methodist congregations in eight states revealed 32 percent of the 2,133 respondents had a close family member with an alcohol problem and 18 percent with a drug problem. There are more than 1 million United Methodists in the eight states of the South Central Jurisdiction and tens of thousands of family members, friends and neighbors needing hope and life-affirming solutions for those afflicted and immediately affected by addiction and substance abuse.

This model conference will prepare laity and clergy leadership at the local church, district and conference levels for how best to engage congregations in addiction intervention, treatment and recovery ministry.

CEU credit and limited scholarships are available; call (866) 944-3330 for details. For more conference information, registration and the schedule go to [www.mountsequoyah.org](http://www.mountsequoyah.org), send an email to [programs@mountsequoyah.org](mailto:programs@mountsequoyah.org), or call (800) 760-8126. Mount Sequoyah Conference Center is located at 150 N.W. Skyline Drive.

Hamburg First UMC will host revival services March 8-11, with Jimmy Dell of Phoenix, Ariz., as guest evangelist.

A former entertainer and recording

artist for RCA Victor, Dell has toured with Johnny Cash, Paul Anka, the Everly Brothers and others in concerts throughout major cities of the United States and Canada. Since giving his life to Jesus Christ in 1964, he has been used by God to communicate the gospel to young and old alike.

An evangelist in the Church of the Nazarene, he is a popular speaker at schools, camp meetings, retreats and revivals. He is the author of “God’s Grace,” a book that chronicles his life story, including his family experiences, music career and other challenges and how God’s grace ultimately changed his life.



Jimmy Dell

Services at Hamburg are planned for 10:45 a.m. and 6:30 p.m. March 8 and 6:30 p.m. March 9-11. All are welcome.

For more information, contact David Moore, pastor, at (870) 853-5417 or [d\\_@hotmail.com](mailto:d_@hotmail.com)

Volunteers are needed for the Appalachian Trail Ministry at Bastian, Va. Retired United Methodist pastor John Shafer and his wife, Judith, will lead a Volunteer in Mission team to the May 22-29.

The work will include preparing food for travelers along the trail and helping with transportation and other needs.

For more information contact the Shafers at (870) 628-1282 or [j2shafer@yahoo.com](mailto:j2shafer@yahoo.com).



# Camp Tanako declared tobacco and smoke free

■ Policies of other Arkansas Conference camps vary

By JANE DENNIS  
Arkansas United Methodist Editor

The Board of Trustees of Camp Tanako, the Arkansas Conference's outdoor ministries facility near Hot Springs, has declared the camp to be a smoke-free, tobacco-free environment. The policy went into effect Jan. 1.

Tobacco products will not be allowed on the camp grounds, said camp director Terry Everitt.

"This policy fits into the health initiative of the Conference," Everitt said. "There are so many issues involving second-hand smoke. We want to promote healthy living."

The camp has long had a no-smoking policy in its buildings, with smoking only permitted outside in designated areas. "But the people who smoke ... well, everybody around them knows they smoke," Everitt said.

There had been complaints about certain areas of the camp being littered with cigarette butts, Everitt said. "It was a nuisance for everybody," not to mention an expense, he said. "We had to pay people to clean up the cigarette butts."

Tanako, like many of the United Methodist regional camps in Arkansas, has a program schedule filled primarily with summer camping programs for children and youth. But adults also use the facilities for church retreats, special events and other activities. The new policy will apply to all persons who step foot on the grounds, including visitors, trades people and employees, Everitt said.

"I know some people are not going to like it, but we want to present the best possible role model for our kids," Everitt said.

Other camp policies

Other United Methodist camps in Arkansas have yet to go tobacco-free

to the extent that Tanako has.

"We have a no-smoking policy," said Ike Mohr, director of Bear Creek, a district camp, near Marianna. "But it's hard to enforce. We still find butts on the grounds."

Smoking is not allowed in the buildings at Wayland Spring district camp at Imboden, said director Bob McMillon. "We're used more for church retreats and that sort of thing, involving adults," he said. "So ours would be a policy similar to what most local churches have."

"We do not allow smoking," said Shoal Creek camp co-director Mardell McClurkin. The district facility near New Blaine is "for children and we don't want butts all over," she said.

However, she noted that an exception was made in 2005 when the district camp was used to temporarily house a large number of adults who fled Hurricane Katrina. Smoking was allowed in designated outdoor areas.

For children and youth

While Mount Eagle Christian Center, a conference facility located near Clinton, urges campers and visitors to help maintain a smoke-free environment, smoking is permitted in limited designated areas outside the buildings. Even though Mount Eagle is a year-round retreat center used heavily by adults, smoking "is not a problem here," said director Lu Harding.

Harding, a staunch environmentalist, applauds the new Tanako smoke-and tobacco-free policy. She would also like the Conference Committee on Outdoor Ministries to address the issue.

"When it comes to our children and youth, we definitely need to make our camps smoke free," Harding said.

As a Christmas project, members of the Mary Ann Wilson Sunday School class of First UMC, Osceola — (from left) Sissy Abbott, Mary Lou Ross, Wade Dyche, Mary Beall and Betty Clare Winston — assembled food items for Christmas baskets that were given to 35 needy families in the area.



## It Happened

A "Breakfast with Santa" was held Dec. 13 at Salem UMC, Benton. Guests were served pancakes, fresh fruit and bacon prepared by members of the Open Door Sunday School Class. There were also croissants, donuts and other pastries. Santa (Dan Allbritton) and Mrs. Claus (Susan Allbritton) visited and took photographs with the children. Conductor Ed Kubler helped the children operate a large toy train while favorite Christmas tunes were played.

The event was sponsored by the church's Nursery Team, which is part of the Family Life Committee. The tickets were \$5 for each child and \$20 for a family of five. More than 140 guests were present and over \$700 was raised to benefit the nursery renovation and improvement project at Salem UMC.

Members and friends of St. Paul's UMC, Harrison, gathered recently for a dedication service for the church's new parking facility. The new parking area provides additional handicapped-driver designated parking slots and additional parking near the entrance to the sanctuary.

In other news from St.



Salem UMC, Benton, welcomed a host of children, such as Gabby Seymore, to the church for "Breakfast with Santa."

Paul's, United Methodist Women were recently honored upon completion of their year of service to church, community and world.



(Above) United Methodist Women at St. Paul's UMC, Harrison, were recently honored by the church.

(Right) the St. Paul's congregation celebrates the completion of new parking facilities.



### Attention happy couples

The Marriage Encounter-United Methodist weekend scheduled for February 13-15, 2009 is fast approaching. Don't miss this great Valentine's gift for your marriage. Please call or email now for information. 479-876-5371 or [plgier@yahoo.com](mailto:plgier@yahoo.com). Register at [www.encounter.org](http://www.encounter.org)



# Interreligious efforts recognized with annual award

By FRED MARTIN

Just as King Solomon and Hiram, King of Tyre, exchanged messages of good tidings before construction began on the Temple, Steve Copley shares with the Arkansas Annual Conference good news that much interreligious work within our area is on-going and should not be un-noticed.



Steve Copley

Each year at Annual Conference, the Arkansas Conference Commission on Christian Unity and Interreligious Concerns recognizes accomplishments and awards plaques to a church and an individual for taking giant steps in helping establish dialogue in various areas and working with individuals within their community.

The award presented at 2008 Annual Conference went to Perryville UMC for its work as a congregation to welcome people from other faiths and countries. The Perryville congregations has participated in a weekly Bible study at Heifer Ranch that had people attending who were Mennonites, Presbyterians, Lutherans, as well as other denominations. Members also participated in the Perry County Alliance of Churches with those from

## ■ Applications sought for awards from Commission on Christian Unity and Interreligious Concerns

the Baptist, Assembly of God, Roman Catholic and Reformed Catholic traditions.

Gloria Thompson Rankin of Morrilton, president of the Conway County and state Church Women United, received the 2008 individual honor. She also assisted her mother in reactivating the Conway County Church Women United, which has women of many denominations, Catholic, Presbyterian, Baptist Nazarene, Methodist, Assembly of God and African Methodist Episcopal Church.

Copley, chair of the commission, notes many who attend Annual Conference witness the award presentations but may lack the knowledge of work within our conference and how individuals and churches may share this information with others through this commission.

Copley points out the 2004 Book of Discipline (Section 1902) refers to the work of this commission: "The General Commission on Christian Unity and Interreligious Concerns shall exercise its ecumenical leadership role in seeking to fulfill two major responsibilities in the context of the search for the unity of the human community and the renewal of creation:

■ To advocate and work toward

*the full reception of the gift of Christian unity in every aspect of the church's life and to foster approaches to minister and mission that more fully reflect the oneness of Christ's church in the human community;*

■ *To advocate and work for the establishment and strengthening of relationships with other living faith communities and to further dialogue with persons of other faiths, cultures and ideologies.*

"Each spring, our committee searches for churches and individuals to fill out a report indicating steps they take to reach across religious barriers," Copley said. "Before next year's Annual Conference, we will accept nominations for these awards and recognize one in each category during our business session. Our committee hopes to hear from many who are reaching out this year."

Two years ago, Quapaw Quarter UMC's Harold Hughes received the individual award because of his work in the Little Rock area, which continues today.

"For the fifth consecutive year, we will march in the Martin Luther King Parade," Hughes reported. "Quapaw Quarter UMC is the only predominately white United Methodist congrega-

tion that I know of that participates annually in this event sponsored by the NAACP.

"We have joined the Interfaith Hospitality Network, a program of 13 local churches to help homeless families back to jobs, homes and stability," he continued. "I am excited about an ecumenical workshop on race to take place on Feb. 14. As we see a backlash against immigrants, African Americans and Muslims in this country, it is vital that we in the faith community be the strong voice in the public arena against such bigotry."

There is "great satisfaction," Hughes said, "in discovering how similar we are to those of other traditions and in the cooperative spirit that can get things accomplished in the spirit of ecumenism. We may follow different paths and call our Creator by different names, but we all believe in Micah's 'requirement' to act justly, love kindness and walk in humility with God."

Applications for Arkansas Conference Commission on Christian Unity forms prior to the 2009 Annual Conference will soon be posted online at the conference Web site, [www.arumc.org](http://www.arumc.org), and available through district offices and local churches.

[Fred Martin, a member of First UMC, Corning, is a member of the Conference Commission on Christian Unity.]

## Calendar

### JANUARY

Jan. 24: "Total Impact: Connected in Christ and the United Methodist Way" training seminar, First UMC, Malvern; Michael Roberts, (501) 324-8016 or [mroberts@arumc.org](mailto:mroberts@arumc.org).

Jan. 31: "Total Impact: Connected in Christ and the United Methodist Way" training seminar, Heritage UMC, Van Buren; Michael Roberts, (501) 324-8016 or [mroberts@arumc.org](mailto:mroberts@arumc.org).

### FEBRUARY

Feb. 7: "Ministry in Color: Team Leadership Using the Birkman Method," Connected in Christ training seminar, Searcy First UMC; Michael Roberts, (501) 324-8016 or [mroberts@arumc.org](mailto:mroberts@arumc.org).

Feb. 13-15: United Methodist Marriage Encounter, Bentonville; Karen & Phil Gier, (479) 876-5371 or [plgier@yahoo.com](mailto:plgier@yahoo.com).

Feb. 21: "Weaving a Web of Connections: Using Internet Technology for Effective Ministry," Arkansas Conference event, Philander Smith College, Little Rock; Martha Taylor, (501) 324-8005 or [mtaylor@arumc.org](mailto:mtaylor@arumc.org)

Feb. 21: "Ministry in Color: Team Leadership Using the Birkman Method," Connected in Christ training seminar, First UMC, Malvern; Michael Roberts, (501) 324-8016 or [mroberts@arumc.org](mailto:mroberts@arumc.org).

Feb. 21: "Strengthening the Family" workshop, Healing Place Ministries, First UMC, Pine Bluff; Edna Morgan, 870-535-0101.

Feb. 27-March 1: VERITAS 2009, Arkansas Conference youth event, Hot Springs Convention Center, Hot Springs; Brandon Bates, (501) 753-6186 or [bbates@lakewood-umc.org](mailto:bbates@lakewood-umc.org).

Feb. 28: "Ministry in Color: Team Leadership Using the Birkman Method," Connected in Christ training seminar, Heritage UMC, Van Buren; Michael Roberts, (501) 324-8016 or [mroberts@arumc.org](mailto:mroberts@arumc.org).

### MARCH

March 6-7: Arkansas Conference Children's Choir Festival, Lakewood UMC, North Little Rock; Lisa Hester, (501) 860-3093 or [LPHester@juno.com](mailto:LPHester@juno.com).

March 7: "Transformational Ministry Planning," Connected in Christ training seminar, Searcy First UMC; Michael Roberts, (501) 324-8016 or [mroberts@arumc.org](mailto:mroberts@arumc.org).

March 14: Confirmation Day with the Bishop, Pulaski Heights UMC, Little Rock; Rod Hocott, (501) 324-8008 or [rhocott@arumc.org](mailto:rhocott@arumc.org).

March 14: "Transformational Ministry Planning," Connected in Christ training seminar, First UMC, Malvern; Michael Roberts, (501) 324-8016 or [mroberts@arumc.org](mailto:mroberts@arumc.org).

March 9-13: Small Church Leadership Institute, Mount Sequoyah Conference & Retreat Center, Fayetteville; Bob Crossman, (501)324-8012 or [bcrossman@arumc.org](mailto:bcrossman@arumc.org).

March 21: "Transformational Ministry Planning," Connected in Christ training seminar, Heritage UMC, Van Buren; Michael Roberts, (501) 324-8016 or [mroberts@arumc.org](mailto:mroberts@arumc.org).

March 21: "Strengthening the Family" workshop, Healing Place Ministries, First UMC, Pine Bluff; Edna Morgan, 870-535-0101.

March 27-29: Caring for Creation Workshop, Mount Sequoyah Conference & Retreat Center, Fayetteville; (800) 760-8126.

## 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](mailto:dweeks@arumc.org).

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



Volunteers, cooks and drivers needed. John or Judith Shafer, (870) 628-1282 or [j2shafer@yahoo.com](mailto:j2shafer@yahoo.com)

**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](mailto:kay@fumcbryant.org).

**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 Efirid, [Gwenefird@att.net](mailto:Gwenefird@att.net).

**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 Navajo Indians, sponsored by Calico Rock UMC. Paul Seay, (479) 970-0696.

**May 22-29:** Appalachian Trail Ministry, Bastian, Va., sponsored by South East District.

**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](mailto:dweeks@arumc.org).

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

# Youthful voices to sing out at Children's Choir Festival

The 2009 Arkansas Conference Children's Choir Festival is scheduled for March 6-7 at Lakewood United Methodist Church, 1922 Topf Road, North Little Rock.

Bevan Keating, assistant professor of music at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock, will serve as festival clinician. Keating is the director of choral activities and voice area coordinator at the university and has conducted numerous choirs in Canada and the United States. In addition to leading choirs, Keating has conducted several opera productions and large orchestral and chorus works.

In existence for more than 30 years, the festival is for children in grades 3-6 who have been preparing five pre-announced anthems, along with praise songs and hymns at their local churches, usually through the school year.

"This conference program is a wonderful opportunity for preparing children in many areas of church leadership," said festival coordinator Lisa Hester of Benton. It can also be "an excellent way for planning and scheduling the children for singing in their home church, as the songs are chosen with the liturgical calendar in mind," she said.

Hester also considers the festival weekend a learning experience for persons responsible for "nurturing, leading and teaching the children, as the clinicians have brought teaching ideas which help us along our faith and teaching journey."

For more information, contact Hester at LPHester@juno.com or Cecilia Kelly, Arkansas Conference minister with children and families, at ckelly@arumc.org.



## Remember When

100 Years Ago

**Jan. 28, 1909:** Galloway Notes — Friday morning our chapel service was led by our new presiding elder, Rev. Galloway. He made an earnest, instructive talk. Saturday afternoon a private recital was given by some of the piano and voice pupils. This was greatly enjoyed, especially the playing of our little girls, Horton and Katharine Williams.

50 Years Ago

**Jan. 29, 1959:** Seven persons from the Arkansas-Louisiana Area were among the 72 commissioned at the closing session of the annual meeting of the Board of Missions at Buck Hill Falls, Pa., on Friday evening, January 23. These included Rev. and Mrs. Edward G. Matthews of Calico Rock and Arkadelphia, Arkansas ... and Miss Mary Joyce Harton of Camden.

20 Years Ago

**Jan. 20, 1989:** The Rev. Jeanie Pope and Greg Burton will exchange marriage vows at 4 p.m. Feb. 11 at Lakeside United Methodist Church in Pine Bluff. A reception in the church fellowship hall will follow the service. Friends and relatives are invited to attend. Ms. Pope is pastor of the Good Faith United Methodist Church in Pine Bluff.

## Deaths

### Searcy

JULIA ANN ROSS ERNEST, 88, surviving spouse of United Methodist pastor Lester Lewis Ernest, passed away Jan. 3, 2009, at her home in Searcy. She was born Feb. 22, 1920, in McRae, to Columbus Dee and Sidney Exum Ross.

She is survived by two daughters and one son and their families: Rebecca Ann Ernest Gross and husband, William, of Searcy; Deborah Lewis Ernest Webb and husband, Greg, of Searcy; and Robert Stanley Ernest and wife, Donna, of Batesville; five grandchildren, one step-grandchild, seven great-grandchildren and many good friends.

She was preceded in death by her husband, who served in the former North Arkansas Conference from 1966 until his death in 1984; one son, Ross Lewis Ernest; four sisters, Olga Vandiver, Exum Daniel, Norma Bajorsky and Jimmie Ross, and her parents.

Julia Ernest was a loving mother,

homemaker and United Methodist pastor's wife, having served with her husband at charges in Griffithville, Moorefield-Southside, Grace-Searcy, Rector and Hazel Edwards Memorial-Newark.

She was a charter member of St. Paul United Methodist Church in Searcy, the United Methodist Women, and the Wesley Sunday School Class, which she often taught.

Services were held Jan. 6 at St. Paul United Methodist Church in Searcy, with interment at Weir Cemetery in Beebe.

**Greenwood UMC** is currently seeking a part-time (3/4) Youth Pastor to continue to grow a large and energetic youth ministry. The Youth Pastor must have the ability and heartfelt desire to love, nurture, minister and grow in faith with the young people and their families in the church and the community. We are seeking a strong Christian who is an energetic, self-starter capable of developing new programs. The Youth Pastor will also provide outside activities for the youth. Housing is provided. Greenwood UMC staff works from a team perspective, and the successful candidate will have ongoing collegiality, support, and opportunities for continuing education. For more information or to send in your resumé contact: David Hawkins  
P.O. Box 548  
Greenwood, AR 72936  
drhawkins05@yahoo.com  
479-996-6397

## Submit applications by Feb. 15 for Healthy Congregation Award

Applications for the Holy Healthy UMC Healthy Congregation Award are now being accepted. The application deadline is Feb. 15. All Holy Healthy congregations will be recognized during the 2009 Arkansas Annual Conference in June.

The recognition program was developed by the Conference Health Ministries Task Force to promote healthy ministries, activities and programs in and with the congregations of the Arkansas Conference. The program is sponsored by Arkansas Conference Health Ministries Task Force and Methodist Le Bonheur Healthcare of Memphis, Tenn.

The conference's Holy Healthy ini-

tiative is designed to facilitate and recognize intentional health ministries, healthy activities and health programs that promote the spiritual, physical, emotional, social and community health of the Arkansas Conference, its United Methodist congregations and the communities they serve throughout the state of Arkansas.

Application forms and participation requirements are available online at the conference website, www.arumc.org. Inquiries may be directed to John Wilcher, 226 E. Edwin Circle, Memphis, Tenn. 38104-5909; john.wilcher@gmail.com or (901) 516-0864. Completed applications must be postmarked by Feb. 15.

## Classifieds

**PLACE YOUR CLASSIFIED** in the Arkansas United Methodist for 50 cents per word, no limit. Call (501) 324-8005, 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.christian-biblecollege.org

**MUSIC DIRECTOR** needed for Bull Shoals United Methodist Church. Duties include coordinating with accompanist, weekly choir rehearsal, directing and practicing Easter and Christmas Cantatas, working with pastor, church groups and others who plan special services throughout the year. Please send resume and availability to Ann Manley, United

Methodist Church, P.O. Box 210, Bull Shoals AR 72619

**ACCOMPANIST NEEDED** for Bull Shoals United Methodist Church. Duties include weekly choir rehearsal, playing and accompanying choir at Sunday Service, Easter and Christmas Cantatas, being available to play for weddings and funerals, and accompanying any special music during service. Please send resumé and availability to Ann Manley, United Methodist Church, P.O. Box 210, Bull Shoals AR 72619

**WANTED: FULL-TIME YOUTH DIRECTOR** for a large church. Please send resumé to: First UMC, 215 N. Missouri St., West Memphis, AR 72301; or email a.johnson\_11@yahoo.com, or call Bro. Bob Burnham at (870) 735-1805.

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# Plenty of love to go around

■ UMW members at Mountainside UMC embrace special friends

HOT SPRINGS VILLAGE — Many United Methodist Women members at Mountainside United Methodist Church have found a new outlet to ply their mother and grandmother skills. Since 2007, the UMW members have developed a special mission outreach with B.A.R.B.S. Place and its residents.

B.A.R.B.S. (Babies, Adults Recovery Based Services) Place is a division of Quapaw House Inc., providing a residential facility primarily for pregnant women, parenting women and adolescent females with substance abuse problems. The program provides a safe and secure facility that allows children to reside with their mother while she is in treatment.

The program also includes a Chemical-Free Living Center, which offers supervised outpatient treatment with individual and group sessions. The services are provided to assist the client in making the transition from residential treatment to independent living.

The center is located in Hot Springs adjacent to the Linden Street Child Care Center. Clients are provided with on-site child care to meet the needs of the children and to ensure uniform standards of care for the development of the children.

Mountainside UMW has donated clothing, bedding and services for free haircuts. Members also took on a project to decorate one “pod” — four



Mountainside UMW member Kay Mitchell enjoys her “grandmother” time with two young children at B.A.R.B.S. Place in Hot Springs.

bedrooms — at the center. They painted walls, furnished bed linens, spreads, curtains, etc., to help make the rooms more cheerful and comfortable for the residents.

UMW President Lynda Boone teamed up with a friend to “adopt” a room at B.A.R.B.S. Place. They named their team the “Grandmaw Group” from Mountainside.

“Our plan is to paint it, set it up and maintain that room on an ongoing basis,” Boone said. She challenged other UMW members to team up with each other to adopt rooms. To date, the Mountainside UMW members have spruced up four bedrooms.

During the year, UMW members also held a baby shower for the residents and furnished disposable diapers,

baby wipes, clothing, blankets, small toys, baby bottles and much more.

Each year at Christmas the Mountainside UMW members give the adult residents gift bags containing toiletry items, such as combs, toothbrushes, toothpaste, shampoo, deodorant and hand sanitizer. They also give each adult resident a journal, a daily thought calendar and a \$25 Wal-Mart gift card.

The children living at B.A.R.B.S. Place with their mothers, are given age-appropriate Christmas gifts of their own.

“It warms our hearts to know that we are able to make a difference in their lives, especially during the Christmas season — a time for giving, for love, and hope for the future,” said UMW member Mary Pullen.

This year for Christmas, Mountainside UMW not only gave gifts to the 11 children and gift bags and \$25 Wal-Mart gift cards to each of the 17 adult residents, they hosted a special Christmas brunch for the residents. They showed up with breakfast casseroles, muffins, breakfast breads, donut holes, fruit kabobs and Christmas candy.

As the residents entered the dining room, they were greeted by the Mountainside women singing “We



Mountainside UMW member Cathy Echols serves brunch to a few of the older children at B.A.R.B.S. Place.

Wish You a Merry Christmas.” In return, they received lots of hugs and thank-yous from each of the residents.

UMW Vice President Suzanne Norwood began the morning with a special Christmas prayer and blessing. As the residents enjoyed their Christmas feast, the UMW members enjoyed spending time with the children.

“It touched my heart to play the role of Grandma for a short period of time when the mothers so graciously shared their children with me,” said Kay Mitchell.

“There is nothing more gratifying than seeing these happy little faces, especially at Christmas,” said Lynda Boone. “And to know we made a difference in their lives was truly rewarding for each of us.”

## ‘This Olde Church’ identifies in-state VIM projects

This Olde Church is a new approach to mission outreach that puts Volunteers in Mission (VIM) to work close to home.

Developed last fall by Arkansas Conference VIM coordinator Don Weeks, This Olde Church aims to revitalize United Methodist churches in Arkansas. Local churches are invited to request that a VIM team lend a hand with small repairs to the church and grounds. The work can be general repairs, interior or exterior painting, weatherproofing, cleaning, yard work, landscaping, construction of handicap ramps, etc. Teams are not permitted to do roofing, electrical, plumbing, heating and air and foundation work.

“As I’ve traveled around the state,

I’ve visited many smaller country churches,” Weeks said. “And I soon realized what bad shape some of them are in.”

Pairing workers willing to do the labor with churches in need right here in Arkansas made sense to Weeks.

The host church is asked to provide a place for the VIM team members to sleep, a place for them to eat, and a place to shower. The team then brings its own food, bedding and any tools and materials they’ll use for the church project.

“This is what we do when we go to Mexico or other places to do VIM work,” Weeks said.

There is no age limit on who can be part of a VIM team, Weeks said. “I’m thinking we’ll see some teen-agers on teams this summer,” he said, “and that’s great!”

*This Olde Church “will show that we care about our churches all over Arkansas and we want to help them if we can.”*

— Don Weeks

Churches requesting assistance must first complete a This Olde Church application form and submit it to their district superintendent. If approved, the request is forwarded to Weeks, who matches needs with VIM teams who’ve expressed interest in helping.

The first churches to learn about the program and request assistance are First UMC, DeQueen, and St. James

UMC, Lonoke.

“I think over a period of time we can get some of these churches looking better,” Weeks said.

He also predicted that the program would result in some new partnerships among congregations that may not have known each other or worked together before.

“It’s a connectional thing,” Weeks said. “It will show that we care about our churches all over Arkansas and we want to help them if we can.”

For more details about This Olde Church, contact Weeks at (501) 681-2909 or [dweeks@arumc.org](mailto:dweeks@arumc.org). Application forms are available in the Volunteers in Mission section of the Conference Web site, [www.arumc.org](http://www.arumc.org).