



United Methodist

# Arkansas

February 20, 2009

## Ice storm recovery continues

■ Winter weather leaves homes, businesses, lives disrupted

By JANE DENNIS  
Arkansas United Methodist Editor

The ice that coated much of northern Arkansas in late January has disappeared, but residents are still dealing with the destruction of property and disruption to their lives that the winter storm left behind.

As of Feb. 18, electrical utilities had yet to be restored to some rural parts of the state, particularly in the northeast. Businesses without power have been temporarily shuttered; paychecks have ceased in some instances. Reserve food supplies stored in freezers had to be tossed out. Homes have been damaged or rendered powerless when ice-coated limbs crashed into and pulled away utility boxes from the homes, leaving the homeowners with sizeable repair costs.

“If you didn’t have homeowners insurance — or what insurance you had wasn’t enough — and the power supply got pulled away from your house, and you’re off from work a week, and all your food spoiled ... then you’re in a heck of a pickle right now,” said Maxine Allen, Arkansas Conference minister for missions.

Weeks after the storm, some United Methodist churches are still staging

See RECOVERY, page 2



Members of Elm Springs United Methodist Church gather following a ground-breaking ceremony for a new building in November 2006. The Connected in Christ leadership program helped guide the church in growth, making the expansion possible. photo by Kaylea Hutson

## Connecting in Christ, looking to future

■ Conference ‘Connected in Christ’ effort impacts Elm Springs church

By KAYLEA HUTSON  
Special to the Arkansas United Methodist

Five years ago, Carl Palmer, pastor of Elm Springs United Methodist Church, received a simple request — for his church to join Connected In Christ, the leadership development program of the Arkansas Conference.

The concepts surrounding CIC were not new; Palmer had used some

of the techniques in past ministry positions. However, this time, he said, CIC provided him with tools needed to form a team of visionary volunteers, ranging in skills, ages and backgrounds.

Those individuals, along with other leaders in the church, established a vision plan for the church, which came to fruition over the course of the past five and a half years.

### The initial team

As the leadership of Elm Springs UMC began to explore being a part of CIC, Palmer said he approached form-

ing the Vision Team like the adage used by countless brides.

“We wanted something old, something new, something borrowed, something blue,” he explained. “We wanted someone who had experience, who had seen different things throughout the years.

“We also wanted someone who was ‘borrowed’ or had gained experience at other churches. By someone blue, we wanted someone who was a deep thinker, using the Birkman method,” he said.

During the three-session CIC team

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## Editor's Corner

By Jane Dennis

### Believing in the future

Count me as a fan of National Public Radio's "This I Believe" series. Have you heard it? The program is a revival of a 1950s radio segment hosted by legendary newsman Edward R. Murrow. Good ideas, grounded in simple truth, don't fade or lose their luster, do they? We revive them over and over again.



Jane Dennis

For "This I Believe," Americans from all walks of life talk share their personal philosophies and talk about their core values. It's a celebration of the power of thought and deeply held belief. As Murrow explained in his introduction: "In this brief space, a banker or a butcher, a painter or a social worker ... will write about the rules they live by, the things they have found to be the basic values in their lives."

Obviously, listening to the program, not matter who the speaker is, you can't help but think about your own values and beliefs and those things that are *really, really* important.

So it'll come as no big surprise that I've been contemplating what I really and truly believe. Here goes:

I believe ...

... God loves us and wants us to love each other.

... in the Golden Rule: "Do unto others as you would have them do to you."

... children are our greatest gift and our greatest responsibility (and that's true whether you're a parent or not).

... words are powerful; use them with care.

... grace is a miraculous and marvelous gift that should be humbly accepted and should make a difference in how we live our lives and how we treat others.

... in endless possibilities.

... when one chapter ends, another begins.

Hold that last thought. I am an eternal optimist. I have no fear of what's behind the next door or over the next bridge. God is with me — and with you — every step of the way; everything will be OK; no need to fear. I know there will be new challenges and new opportunities in future, and I find that exciting. It's all good. God made it that way.

I'll let you in on something: one chapter in my life is closing. After 21 years as editor of this historic publication, I have made the decision to retire. The time is right to step back, take a breather and begin another chapter. It won't be immediate, but a little later this spring. I look forward to a few more opportunities to visit with you here in this space, in this little corner. And we can reminisce about this hugely significant chapter in my life, which I've shared with so many of you, and the new chapter and challenges that are just ahead.

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

## UMCOR backs Eco-Palm Project

More than 300 million palm fronds are harvested each year for the U.S. market — most of them for Palm Sunday or church-related events. Traditionally, palms are harvested without regard to their quality as workers are paid by contractors for large floral export firms for the quantity of fronds delivered, rather than the quality. This means up to 50 percent of harvested fronds are wasted.

The United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR) is partnering with the University of Minnesota to build support for the Eco-Palm Project, which helps sustain forestry, protect local jobs and preserve the livelihoods of small-scale farmers by ensuring fair wages.

The Eco-Palms are harvested by workers trained to gather fronds in a way that allows the palm to continue to grow. Workers are paid based on the quality of the palms they harvest, rather than the quantity, which helps limit the amount of fronds taken from the forest. Community members sort and package their own palms, ensuring that more of the wages paid goes to those who harvested them.

To support the Eco-Palm Project, churches may purchase Eco-Palms for worship services on Palm Sunday. March 2 is the deadline to order. For details, go online to [www.ecopalms.org](http://www.ecopalms.org) or call the University of Minnesota at (612) 624-7418.

## RECOVERY, continued from page 1

centers and feeding stations for volunteers and displaced families. The Cherokee Village church and Fairview church near Mountain Home are among those still hosting volunteers, according to Allen. Griffin Memorial UMC in Paragould provided meals on a daily basis for an extended period, as well. Neighboring churches helped out by sending shipments of food and water.

Allen said long-term care committees in the affected areas have begun to organize and plan for the future.

The Arkansas Conference is "still soliciting funds for both UMCOR [United Methodist Committee on Relief] and our Conference disaster fund, Allen said, "and we're still working with Arkansas Rice Depot and the Arkansas Foodbank Network to get food and supplies to affected areas."

While most schools have reopened, children enrolled in supplemental food programs play a critical role in many families' survival. "We really have a need for more food," Allen said, "because many of the kids need to take home extra food in backpacks. Their families are not eating unless they bring it home with them from school."

Across the state, VIM teams are being disbursed. Mount Sequoyah Conference and Retreat Center at Fayetteville and Mount Eagle Conference Center near Clinton, both United Methodist facilities, are housing volunteers.

Part of the Arkansas Conference response will be to offer local church preparedness training, "which will



Members of Cornerstone UMC, Jonesboro, loaded a truck with relief supplies and delivered it to Griffin Memorial UMC, Paragould.

assist congregations and parishioners in preparing and understanding what they need to do to prepare for the next disaster, whether it's a tornado, fire, hurricane or an earthquake," Allen said.

Here are some ways to help:

■ VIM teams that wish to assist with recovery efforts should contact Don Weeks at [dweeks@arumc.org](mailto:dweeks@arumc.org) or (501) 868-9193.

■ To schedule local church preparedness training, contact Maxine Allen at [mallen@arumc.org](mailto:mallen@arumc.org) or (501) 324-8045.

■ Give money. Make checks payable to "Arkansas Conference," designate Arkansas Disaster Fund No. 703, and place in your local church offering plate or send to: Treasurer, Arkansas Conference, P.O. Box 2941, Little Rock, Ark. 72203.

■ Donate food or make a contribution to your local food pantry or a statewide food distribution program such as the Arkansas Rice Depot or Arkansas Foodbank Network.



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# Viewpoint

Dear Friends:

I was speaking with a friend from Chicago yesterday. The conversation went something like this:

*She: How are you doing these days?*

*Me: I am well, but a lot of our people are suffering because of the storms.*

*She: Those storms last spring were really bad in Arkansas.*

*Me: I was speaking of the ice storms.*

*She: What ice storms?*

*Me: The storms two weeks ago that sent a third of our counties into federal disaster relief status. The storms that shut off electricity across the entire northern third of our state. The storms that stranded thousands of people and left them without water, power, heat or food. The storms that caused incredible*



## An Occasional Word from the Bishop

property damage and tragically killed a number of our Arkansas neighbors.

*She: (Apologetically) I am so sorry. I did not know. I had not heard. I am so sorry. What can I do?*

Ice storms that come in the midst of presidential inaugurations and wars in the Middle East and tragic economic downturns are just not sexy enough to capture more than a few minutes in the national scheme of things. One could get a bit miffed and even cynical about the national media coverage of our natural and human disaster. One could. But one shouldn't.

Once again we have the oppor-

tunity to be the church. God did not send the ice to punish us, or to show divine displeasure with Arkansans. The weather patterns brought the ice. But we have been given the opportunity to be the church and to respond to our neighbors no matter who they are with our love and compassion and physical help. I shall never forget what our pastor at Marmaduke said after the tornado struck that small community: "A tornado does not know Methodist, or Baptist or Catholic. We will help our own and we will



Charles Crutchfield

help rebuild the community."

There have been teams at work clearing downed wood. There are feeding stations. There are emergency shelters. Even though as I write most of the crisis has passed, the healing still needs to take place. Homes need to be rebuilt. Lives need to be made normal. Spirits need to be restored.

We who know the healing power of Jesus Christ are in a unique position to help. Your contribution to the Arkansas Conference Disaster Relief Fund, your volunteer work on a VIM team, your prayer and love in the name of Jesus Christ has made a difference, will make a difference.

I'm proud of you.

Faithfully,

*Charles Crutchfield*



# Do we dare take the next radical step for God?

By DON ROBINSON

Radical. We react nervously to this word in the context of drastic or sweeping change. Even the word *change* seems radical to many of us, a mandate to think and do differently, to reinvent our already unwieldy and fragmented existences, to leave our comfort zones. Even the thought of associating with a radical personality is ... radical. Most of us strive to at least present the appearance of stability, dreary as that may be, to avoid having to defend an adventurous spirit. And yet, as United Methodists we are tasked to engage in radical hospitality by Bishop Robert Schnase in his book "Five Practices of Fruitful Congregations."

In this writing, Bishop Schnase defines, outlines and gives examples of the concept of radical hospitality based on the "... *desire to invite, welcome, receive, and care for those who are strangers so that they find a spiritual home and discover for themselves the unending richness of life in Christ.*" Schnase addresses the church



from the perspective of children, the handicapped, mothers with infants, and the elderly, and how a church looks, smells and feels. He engages our imaginations with illustrations relating to the efforts of fruitful congregations. He also makes note of churches that are happily exclusive of others with their desire to welcome limited to guests that look and act like the

occupying congregation. His ideas reach well beyond "each one, bring one."

As pastors and congregations unpack and interpret the contents of Schnase's book, taking ownership as intended, we might well imagine the inclination to at least look around

and acknowledge newcomers. More members will greet visitors, ask for names and addresses, and perhaps extend an invitation to dinner. Some will respond remembering what it was like as first-time visitors, making known the way to restrooms and sharing worship bulletins and hymnals. Someone will benefit from anything anyone does as a display of hospitality. Is this radical enough?

Even more radical is to consider personal invitations to our local, regional, and national leaders and their families, not only as welcomed guests, but also as leaders of a worship service, speaking to their own experiences as outsiders. How do we do that? Research has demonstrated that almost everyone is but a few phone calls away from anyone else. Not knowing someone personally is no longer reason enough. An aunt, the sheriff, a librarian, an attorney, a computer programmer, someone each of us knows has second or third-hand contact with anyone we would like to invite. An invitation to an entire scout troop, not only to attend worship service, but to prepare and serve the congregation a meal (yes, allow them to serve). Almost everyone wants to feel needed and useful, particularly in an unfamiliar environment. If radical

is the objective, contact the warden of a prison with an invitation to work release prisoners. Nothing says radical hospitality more than a busload of orange jump-suited worshippers lining the front pews during worship service and nothing says caring more than a visit with, or tangible support to, the families of inmates. A follow-up note to each inmate creates a door to a spiritual home.

Think tomorrow, a year from now, and 10 years from now with the desire to invite, welcome, receive and care for those who are strangers, or for that matter, those who are not. Think teachers, the homeless, mail carriers, preachers, medical professionals, and yes, even Bishop Schnase.

[Don Robinson is pastor of the Pullman Heights and Gum Springs churches in the South Central District.]

## FOR HEAVEN'S SAKE By Mike Morgan



# Viewpoint

## Recession-proof faith built on peace, hope, courage

From the network news to the coffee shop, our attention has been focused lately on the economy, and the crisis is far from over. The jobless rate continues to climb; business failures abound; the media continue their panic-inducing barrage of opinion. Fear and anxiety are as high as I have seen in 30 years of pastoring. Working people are worried about their livelihoods; retired people are anxious about their accumulated assets; we're all concerned about the future. The government is spending unprecedented amounts of money to revive the economy, and we pray deeply that their answers will work. But will they?

Recently a brother in Christ asked me if there was any response we could make as a church to the crisis around us. Could we get people together — even community-wide — and let them hear a message of faith for these times? He said he had several friends that were really hurting. I suspect he was, too.

What can we say? Does our faith speak to an economic recession? Absolutely! It's in times like these that people of faith need to tell the truth. Above all, we need to share the Good News of Jesus Christ with a fearful and anxious culture. As the govern-



Bud Reeves

ment wrestles with an economic stimulus package, we need to offer a spiritual stimulus package that will counter the fear and depression that is pandemic in the land. We need to remind people how to recession-proof their faith and triumph through the trouble.

A spiritual stimulus package is rooted in our relationship with God. In the midst of trouble, God gives us **PEACE**. No matter what storm swirl around us, we can have a center that is calm and connected. The internal witness of faith is not dependent on outward circumstances. We know that God will include us in his providential care, and that we will receive what we need. (The trick here is to discern the difference between wants and needs.) In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus pointed out that the birds of the air and the flowers of the field were under God's care, and we, being much higher up on the food chain, are also. So he said not to worry and to focus our lives on God; the rest will come: "Strive first for the kingdom of God and God's righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well."<sup>i</sup> Therefore Paul (whose life certainly had its time of crisis and hardship) offers us a way to find peace: "Do not worry about anything, but in every-

thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."<sup>ii</sup> Not always easy, but profound in its simplicity.

Grounded in God's peace, we can look to the future with **HOPE**. The amazing truth is, the current reality is not reality. Ultimate reality resides with God in a realm that is untouched by the troubles of this world. When we struggle and get knocked around by life, we can depend on the future promise of God. Again, the Apostle puts it wisely: "We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed ... So we do not lose heart. ... For this slight momentary affliction is preparing us for an eternal weight of glory beyond all measure, because we look not at what can be seen but at what cannot be seen; for what can be seen is temporary, but what cannot be seen is eternal."<sup>iii</sup> We can live in that hope.

Grounded in peace and looking forward in hope, we can walk with **COURAGE**. The Psalmist sang, "Be

strong, and let your heart take courage; wait for the Lord!"<sup>iv</sup> Strength, courage, and faithful patience will carry us through the panic.

Courage is the ability to act on principle despite our fears. Nobody is saying these are not scary times. But we are saying that hardship and fear do not have to change how we fundamentally behave in the world. Love, faithfulness, compassion, justice — these are not values that rise or fall with the economic indicators. In fact, the hard times we may experience are opportunities to show our true selves to the world in a way that makes a powerful witness.

This is a stimulus package that will make a difference. It won't kill a lot of trees to publish; it is communicated best by word of mouth. It won't cost billions of dollars to implement; in fact, the price has already been paid on the cross. All it requires is for us people of faith to remember who we are, whose we are, and why we are here — to love one another and to make disciples for the transformation of the world. It's good news that is profound in its simplicity, immune to economic conditions, and relevant for eternity.

<sup>i</sup> Matthew 6:33.

<sup>ii</sup> Philippians 4:6-7.

<sup>iii</sup> II Corinthians 4:8-16 (excerpts).

<sup>iv</sup> Psalm 27:14.

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



## Letters to the Editor

### Un-Christian attack

It was communion Sunday today at the United Methodist church I attend, and I feel like I am able, at last, to write with less vituperation a letter that I had intended to write since the Dec. 5 issue of the *Arkansas United Methodist* was published. In that issue, a lengthy letter was published in which the character and ministry of Rev. Thompson Murray was called into question. I was deeply disturbed at the writer's *ad hominem* and specious attack on Rev. Murray and at the writer's use of unfounded innuendos. But I was even more deeply disturbed that the *Arkansas United Methodist* published what I

consider to be a libelous and decidedly un-Christian personal attack.

As I said, it helps me frame this letter today having received the sacrament of communion. I do not want to name here the writer of the letter or simply rant about your publication's poor judgment in publishing the letter. Instead, I want to counter the Dec. 5 letter by expressing my profound admiration and respect for Rev. Murray. I am a professor at UALR, and during the years that Rev. Murray has overseen the Wesley Foundation here, I have seen commendable positive change. The UALR Wesley Center serves our campus by reaching out to both students and faculty, by provid-

ing food and fellowship for students who often can't afford decent meals, and by serving as what I regard as the central force of community on our campus.

Rev. Murray's ministry is the single best example of a Christian ministry I have experienced in my lifetime. He spreads the gospel through example, service to others, and remarkable openness to those who are lost, those who are different, those who, like me, crave a loving and caring community. I was raised in the Presbyterian Church and attended Macalester College, a Presbyterian college. My grandparents, though, were devoted members of the Methodist Church. It

was only after experiencing Rev. Murray's ministry that both my wife and I decided to become United Methodists. I must say, however, that the attack on Rev. Murray in your publication left me feeling disappointed at and discouraged by a church publication that, I had hoped, would never descend to publishing an attack on a decidedly humble, intelligent, caring, Christian, and effective minister.

I do hope that one of your reporters will visit the Wesley Center, interview students and professors who gather there, and strongly retract the letter of Dec. 5.

Michael Kleine  
Benton



## Publishing House feels impact of economic downturn

NASHVILLE, Tenn. — The United Methodist Publishing House is experiencing its greatest sales decline in 20 years, causing it to slow down its work on revising The United Methodist Hymnal as well as take other cost-saving measures.

“At the United Methodist Publishing House, we’ve seen the largest drop in year-to-year sales performance in more than 20 years,” said Neil Alexander, publisher and president. “Our polling of local church leaders reveals that they are extremely cautious about spending for resources given current conditions and are often coping by reusing materials or simply doing without.”

The Publishing House receives no general church apportioned funds. The difficult global economic climate has affected the Publishing House, causing a shortfall of 12 percent in this fiscal year and a reduction in the value of investment reserves of 25 percent.

## Universities, churches to attract more Methodist students

ARLINGTON, Texas — United Methodists are known for their commitment to higher education, having launched many U.S. colleges and universities in the 19th century.

For generations, most of the students were from Methodist families. That is no longer the case because the relationship between United Methodist churches and affiliated institutions of higher education has faltered over the years. While 122 colleges and universities are affiliated with the church, some critics say they became secularized in the 20th century and now resemble non-church institutions. Many local churches fail to welcome college students in their area or even encourage their young people to enroll at the schools.

To help reclaim the relationship, university staff and clergy will be invited to participate in jurisdictional events held by the United Methodist Board of Higher Education and Ministry through March.

## U.S. clergy not trained on sexual issues, report says

NASHVILLE, Tenn. — Seminaries in the United States are not adequately preparing future clergy to deal with sexuality issues, according to a new study, despite ongoing debates about sexuality within their denominations.



A customer shops at the Cokesbury store in Nashville, Tenn. Due to the current financial crisis, the United Methodist Publishing House is instituting cost-saving measures that include closing the Phoenix and Aurora, Ill., stores and reducing staff and hours at other locations. UMNS photo by Mike DuBose

The study, titled “Sex and the Seminary: Preparing Ministers for Sexual Health and Justice,” reported that sexuality courses are largely absent from most seminary curricula and degree requirements. Sexuality is about more than homosexuality, which has been debated within The United Methodist Church for decades, said Traci West, professor of Christian Ethics and African American Studies at United Methodist-related Drew Theological School, Madison, N.J. West, who leads sexual ethics seminars, participated in the sexuality study.

“The range of issues is so broad in the ways in which sexuality touches our lives,” West explained.

## Servant or Sucker resource to help churches minister to poor

NASHVILLE, Tenn. — Ministry with the poor is one of four long-term areas of focus for The United Methodist Church. Many people who want to reach out do not know the best way to provide assistance. “Servant or Sucker? Wise and Compassionate Ways to Help the Poor,” a new resource from United Methodist Communications, provides a five-session, small-group DVD-based study that helps viewers discern appropriate, Christ-centered actions when it comes to addressing poverty on a personal or organizational level.

The study includes information on the realities of poverty; a poverty tour; interviews with those who are homeless or poor; interviews with those who have helped and those who have been “suckered” and steps toward being an effective servant. The resource can be used by churches, civic and community organizations and individuals. Produced by EcuFilm, “Servant or

Sucker?” is available for \$39.95 from United Methodist Communications and can be ordered by visiting the Web site ([www.ecufilm.org](http://www.ecufilm.org)), calling toll free 888-346-3862 or e-mailing [csc@umcom.org](mailto:csc@umcom.org).

## ‘Enough for All Creation’ theme of ecumenical event

ALEXANDRIA, Va. — Participants at the Seventh Annual Ecumenical Advocacy Days will learn how to advocate for policy change on issues such as climate change, migration and poverty during the March 13-16 event. United Methodist Bishop Charlene Kammerer of the Virginia Annual Conference will be featured speaker at the lunch meeting March 14 of United Methodists attending the event.

Kammerer is a member of the Council of Bishops taskforce revising the historic 1986 document and pastoral letter, “In Defense of Creation,” that addressed the dangers

of nuclear weapons. She will discuss the broader scope of the revision expected to address threats such as pandemic poverty, ecological degradation and a world awash in weapons.

Sponsored by the ecumenical Christian community, including the United Methodist Board of Church and Society and the Women’s Division of the United Methodist Board of Global Ministries, the goal is to strengthen the Christian voice and mobilize for advocacy on a wide variety of U.S. domestic and international policy issues.

For more information, contact Clayton Childers, at [cchilders@umc-gbcs.org](mailto:cchilders@umc-gbcs.org) or by calling (202) 488-5642, or Molly Keane at [info@advocacydays.org](mailto:info@advocacydays.org) or by calling (202) 386-6397. A downloadable brochure is available at [www.advocacydays.org](http://www.advocacydays.org).

## Police chaplains bring church, community together

KIRKWOOD, Mo. — Clergy from several denominations formed “The God Squad” after a local contractor entered a city council meeting last year and killed five people. David Bennett, pastor at Kirkwood (Mo.) United Methodist Church, leads the Kirkwood Police Chaplains who are on call for the police department each week.

“They are working to enhance community and race relations, and to reduce the tension and do proactive things,” Bennett said.

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# Longtime Little Rock Cokesbury manager retires

■ *Sam Albright steps down after 35 years with UM Publishing House*

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

Sam Albright would probably make a joke about it, but he is indeed considered an “institution” in the Arkansas Conference. However, with very little fanfare, the longtime manager of Little Rock’s Cokesbury Bookstore retired at the end of 2008.

Albright is a 35-year veteran employee of the United Methodist Publishing House and its Cokesbury retail division. He opened the downtown Little Rock store in 1979 and served as its manager until 1989, when he was lured to Dallas to manage the Cokesbury store there. After 10 years, he returned to his home state in 1999 and once again took the reins of the Little Rock Cokesbury.

“I started part time at the Dallas Cokesbury store while I was attending Perkins,” Albright recalled. “I came back to Arkansas and served the Bearden/Thornton Charge for a year. During Pastors’ School — back in the day when they would send representatives from the Dallas store with a display for the school — a friend of mine was running the display and said the store manager position in Dallas was open, would I be interested?”

First stop: Dallas

Albright began his bookselling career managing the Dallas store,



Longtime Little Rock Cokesbury store manager Sam Albright makes book recommendations during the 2007 Arkansas Annual Conference.

**Yvonne Armstrong has been named manager of the Little Rock Cokesbury store, following the retirement of Sam Albright. She has been employed by United Methodist Publishing House at the Little Rock store for 14 years.**

which had two locations, from 1973-79. He then got the opportunity to open the brand new Little Rock store in 1979.

“The biggest change I’ve seen — and there are several changes in the culture, I suppose — is in the way that

people feel toward denominations,” Albright said, speaking to the *Arkansas United Methodist* from his lake home in Hot Springs. “There’s not the same denominational loyalty that there was when I was growing up in the church. That changed the way we did business; we had to expand beyond working strictly with denominations.”

The Internet is the other major change that has affected the bookstore business. “I built my career on running a brick and mortar store,” Albright said. But the ease and convenience of the Internet competes with brick-and-mortar stores, he said. “That’s still a struggle the Publishing House is coping with.”

Sharing knowledge & expertise

Working directly with local churches was the “fun” part of the job, Albright said. “Churches are not used to buying, say, paraments or choir robes or pew cushions on a regular basis. So when those kinds of needs come up, they need some expertise to come in and make sure they are getting quality products. That’s what I enjoyed most — sitting across from church committees and discussing various options of ways to enhance the worship experience.”

Albright’s customers are likely unaware that he served on the prestigious Good Books Catalog committee for the Publishing House. The committee meticulously scoured all forthcoming publications and selected “the very best in religious publishing for an upcoming year,” he said, and featured the products in a

catalog. “It was the foremost religious catalog in the country because of the care that went into the selections.”

Loyal customers

Customer loyalty has been a hallmark of the Little Rock store, which is one of the smallest as far as square-footage in the Cokesbury system, yet one of the highest producing stores, Albright said. As a result, “the staff in Arkansas feels a great deal of responsibility toward the churches in Arkansas,” he said. “The churches are extremely loyal to the store. ... You can’t go out and buy that kind of loyalty — you have to earn it over the years.”

United Methodists in Arkansas will miss Albright’s dry wit and playful humor, shared particularly during Annual Conference when he made book recommendations and joked with church leaders and bishops. (Who could forget his Annual Conference presentation of a United Methodist toe ring to Bishop Janice Riggle Huie?)

Albright believes in laughter — and if there’s one thing he learned in his long career it’s that “we take ourselves too seriously.” That’s why he always enjoyed a good joke directed at a bishop or picked on overly serious clergy friends.

For now he’s enjoying retired life, and his goals no longer have to do with sales figures and purchase orders. “My goal in retirement is to not wear a shirt that has a collar or a button on it, except when I have to go to a funeral,” Albright quipped.

So far, so good.

## Dinner, dancing and drumming, for a good cause

The 10th Annual African Potluck Dinner, Drumming and Dancing will be held from 5-8 p.m. Feb. 28 at First United Methodist Church, Eighth and Center streets, Little Rock. Admission is free, with donations and a silent auction benefiting Arkansas Hospice’s African Partner, Seke Hospice Program in Zimbabwe and the Arkansas Conference Congo Initiative in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

For more information contact Liz Parkhurst at eparkhurst@comcast.net. The event is sponsored by Little Rock First United Methodist Church, Hoover United Methodist Church and Wesley Chapel United Methodist Church.



A youngster tries his hand at drumming.

## Methodist Family Health joins with Kaleidoscope Grief Center

Methodist Family Health, a statewide ministry serving children and youth and affiliated with the Arkansas Conference, has welcomed Kaleidoscope Grief Center to its “continuum of care.”

Kaleidoscope Grief Center, located at 1501 N. University Ave., Suite 680, in Little Rock, has served critically ill and grieving children, teens and their families for more than 15 years. The center provides education, therapeutic and recreational services, grief support programs and traditional counseling. Methodist Family Health’s Counseling Clinic has moved to the North University site.

“I am excited about our new relationship with Methodist Family Health,” said executive director Joan Gates.

“Kaleidoscope Grief Center’s bereavement counseling and peer support groups compliment existing services provided by Methodist Counseling Clinic. I am happy to be incorporating Kaleidoscope into a respected family focused organization dedicated to the wellness of Arkansas’ children and families,” she said.

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**CONNECTED**, continued from page 1

training, participants undergo a 298-question personality assessment, known as the Birkman Method, which analyzes the individual's productive behaviors, underlying needs, stress behaviors, career interests and organizational focus and ranks those areas into one of four color groups: red, yellow, blue and green.

The analysis provides individuals with information on how to best use their strengths and growing edges when working in a team setting.

The Birkman testing served as a crucial resource, Palmer continued, because it helped the Elm Springs Vision Team learn how to function not as individuals but as a united team.

Additionally training, including the Total Impact: "Connected In Christ" and "Transformational Ministry Planning" sessions, empowered the team to imagine big dreams for the church and its potential ministries, he said.

"We had a great passion, and a great desire [for growth], but we lacked vision and direction," Palmer said. "CIC helped us match the passion with vision and direction."

Palmer said the first Vision Team consisted of two reds, and one each, green, yellow and blue. The mixture of styles and personalities helped provide balance to the meetings and planning sessions.

#### A foundation for the future

In the first year, the Vision Team met each Sunday prior to the weekly Sunday school and worship services. After a few initial meetings, the team decided to conduct a congregational survey in order to find out the congregation's attitudes concerning growth and its outlook towards the future.

The survey also contained demographic-related questions to help the leadership team develop a "picture" of the congregation — including information about average household income, style of music listened to, and distance people drove to attend services at Elm Springs.

Palmer said the team was surprised to learn that a majority of the congregation had a "regional" reach, with less than 2 percent of the congregation living within 6 miles of the facility. A growing number of members traveled more than 10 miles to attend services.

The survey also indicated that a majority of those surveyed expected the church to double in size — in both worship and Sunday school — within the next five years.

"They were forward looking and had an attitude for growth," Palmer said.



Carl Palmer, pastor of Elm Springs United Methodist Church, leads members of the congregation in prayer during the ground-breaking ceremony for their new facility in November 2006. The congregation moved into the building on Easter Sunday 2008.

photo by Kaylea Hutson

#### The right people, the right time

After several meetings, the Vision Team began to discuss the potential for forming a second worship service.

"Experts say you need to have six to nine months to form a new worship service," Palmer said. "The CIC team wanted to start it on Easter Sunday — and we were five to six weeks out."

Palmer said the team wanted to put aside what the experts thought, and instead grow a second service because they believed God would bless the service, and the average weekly attendance on Sunday was nearing 100.

To prepare for the service, the Vision Team told members of the plan to start a new service. They also printed 200 postcards advertising it, and encouraged regular attendees and members to invite up to four non-churched friends to the service.

The team set a goal of having a

minimum of 30 people at the service if it were to continue after Easter Sunday. Thirty-six people attended the service.

"It was our first real goal," Palmer said. "It showed us, 'Hey, we can do this.'"

#### Envisioning the future

After the Easter service, the team began to turn their other dreams into goals. To help them achieve their plans, they developed benchmarks to reach their objectives.

Because one of the initial dreams included placing an emphasis on children and youth, one of the first goals included hiring a part-time director of Christian education once the average weekly attendance reached 125.

When the attendance reached an average of 150 each week, the team recommended forming a Building Committee.

Palmer said the team expected it to

**To find out how your church can become part of the Connected In Christ program, contact Michael Roberts, director of Connected in Christ at [mroberts@arumc.org](mailto:mroberts@arumc.org) or (501) 324-8016.**



The new worship center for Elm Springs UMC was completed in time for the 2008 Easter services.

photo by Kaylea Hutson

take up to three years to meet those first three goals. Instead, attendance grew and the team was ready to advocate the formation of the building team within 15 months.

#### Building a new facility

In October 2005, Vision Team members came together and began to sketch what a new facility might look like.

Palmer said the concepts, some drawn on the back of napkins, contained many similarities — a tangible unity in designs. Things progressed and the team hired an architect to develop the plans.

A year later, in November 2006, the congregation held the ground breaking for the new building.

On Easter Sunday 2008, approximately four years after the congregation established the second worship service, they moved into their new building.

Palmer said the CIC training helped the team establish a focus, which has transformed the ministries of the church to fit within a set of strategic areas: reaching, teaching, sharing, caring and worship.

"Slowly we have orientated every group within the church to fit within one or more of these areas," Palmer explained. "We really haven't said 'no' to anything, but it's caused every group to re-examine their purpose and re-connect with the goals of the church."

#### Looking ahead

Palmer said the congregation is once again re-evaluating its dreams and goals for the future.

"In 2003, when we established this plan, we anticipated it taking seven to 10 years," he explained. "We accomplished everything in five years."

"We're ahead of the curve, but we ran so fast, so far, that we left some long-term visioning [behind]. We need to step back and assess our future."

Palmer said this might include forming a new Vision Team that will reflect the demographics of the new congregation, along with establishing new dreams and benchmarks for future growth and ministries.

"A lot of churches know the first step, but they don't know how to take the next step," Palmer said. "CIC provided the tools [to create] manageable, obtainable, step-by-step goals, with benchmarks and action points for the future."

*[Kaylea Hutson is the communications assistant at Siloam Springs UMC and a freelance writer for The Herald Leader in Siloam Springs.]*



## Coming Up

St. James UMC, Little Rock, will hold a Navajo Taco Dinner March 8 sponsored by the church's mission team to Shiprock, N.M. All are welcome.

Lorena Lynch, a Navajo with the Four Corners ministry in New Mexico, will be guest speaker. She will talk about what it was like to grow up Navajo and become a Christian, what the needs are on the reservation for Christian mission, what Four Corners Ministry has done in the area, and what cultures and traditions Navajos give up in order to follow Christ.

Tickets are \$10 for adults, \$5 for children (optional hot dog plates available). Make reservations with team co-leader Glen Duncan, (501) 455-1432, or the church, (501) 217-6700.

The North Central and North Districts will jointly host a Lay Speaking School March 20-21 at Mount Eagle Christian Center near Clinton. Persons in all districts are invited to attend.

Courses will include the Basic Lay Speaking Course, led by Bill Buchanan; Advance Lay Speaking: You Can Lead in Stewardship, led by Barbara Clark; and Advance Lay Speaking: You Can Lead in Worship, led by Joe Linam.

Cost is \$55. Registration deadline is March 13. For more information, call (501) 723-4580 or email [lu@mounteagle.org](mailto:lu@mounteagle.org) or [northcentralds@conway-corp.net](mailto:northcentralds@conway-corp.net).

Representatives of eight seminaries will meet with Hendrix College students and interested members of the United Methodist community from 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. Feb. 25 in the Hulen Ballroom on the Hendrix campus.

The event is open to persons interested in attending seminary or careers in the ministry or in more information about participating seminaries.

Schools with representatives attending include: Asbury Theological Seminary, Candler School of Theology, Duke Divinity School, Iliff School of Theology, Perkins School of Theology, United Theological Seminary, Vanderbilt Divinity School and Wesley Theological Seminary.

For more information, contact J. Wayne Clark at (501) 450-1263 or [clark@hendrix.edu](mailto:clark@hendrix.edu).

Grady UMC will host its second annual Soup-Sermon-Salvation-Supper Lenten dinner series, beginning at 6 p.m. Feb. 26 and continuing each

Thursday through April 2. This year's theme is "Table Fellowship with Jesus." The event is free and open to the public. Each night will include a soup supper, special music, message and Holy Communion. Guest preachers are:

**Feb. 26:** Travis Jackson, pastor Bailey Chapel UMC;

**March 5:** John Shafer, retired United Methodist pastor;

**March 12:** Robert Scott, pastor, Damascus Missionary Baptist Church, Grady;

**March 19:** Roger Armstrong, pastor, Sulphur Springs UMC;

**March 26:** Beth Perdue, pastor, Rowell Circuit;

**April 2:** Glenn Pettus, pastor, Dumas UMC.

Lee Zuehlke is pastor at Grady.

"Have a Heart Sunday," a benefit for Kaleidoscope Grief Center, a Methodist Family Health program, will be held from 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. Feb. 22 at Outback Steak House, 105 Markham Park Drive, Little Rock. Proceeds will benefit Camp Healing Hearts 2009, a family-oriented grief camp for children ages 5-18 and their families. Tickets are \$25 adults and \$10 children, which includes a meal and fun-filled entertainment such as clowns, magicians and other activities. For more information, call (501) 978-5437 or (877) 357-5437 toll free.

The Central District and Methodist Family Health are sponsoring a workshop for pastors, youth workers and children workers on how to identify, intervene, refer and continue to care for troubled children, youth and adults. "I Want You to Get the Help You Need" is set for 12:30-3 p.m. March 3 in the Kendall Center on the campus of Philander Smith College in Little Rock.

Staff from Methodist Family Health will discuss how to recognize at-risk behavior, offering help, identify those who should be referred to professionals, know who to call for assistance, and making a referral while communicating continued care. There is no charge for the workshop but registration is requested. Contact Karen Branton at [kbranton@arumc.org](mailto:kbranton@arumc.org) or (501) 324-8022.

## LR congregation addresses troublesome economic issues

People Helping People, an innovative program for local people struggling with current economic problems, will be introduced at 11:45 a.m. March 1 at Pulaski Heights UMC, 4823 Woodlawn, Little Rock, immediately after morning worship services.

Experts in professional fields, both from the church and the community, will offer counseling and assistance for church members and others in the community. Church membership is not required for participation.

Church member Nancy Milbourn and others are developing the People Helping People program to assist those facing job loss, reduction in income, loss of homes and income-related

stress. Assistance with seeking new employment, help with management of income changes and support for other struggles will be offered, according to associate pastor Jeff Hampton.

"This will be the first of several meetings offering assistance to the community," according to Hampton. "At the inaugural meeting a survey will be taken of participants' need, assuring effectiveness for follow-up sessions."

Confidential reservations may be made by contacting Nancy Milbourn at [namilbourn@comcast.net](mailto:namilbourn@comcast.net) or by calling the church at (501) 664-3600. A light lunch and child care will be provided, free of charge.

## Local church communicators invited to network via new group

A new Local Church Communicators Network is being formed in the Arkansas Conference. An initial meeting is planned for April 18 at St. James United Methodist Church, 321 Pleasant Valley Dr., Little Rock.

"As part of the Vital Signs event, we are planning an organizational meeting of the new Local Church Communicators Network," said Martha Taylor, director of communications for the Arkansas Conference. "Get in on the ground

floor as we form a new network for sharing resources, information and training."

Any local church communicator is welcome — full time, part time, lay, clergy, paid or volunteer. Additional information will be included in the Vital Signs brochure.

To learn more or to volunteer as a member of the network's organizational team, contact Taylor at [mtaylor@arumc.org](mailto:mtaylor@arumc.org) or (501) 324-8005 or (877) 646-1816 toll free.

## Music, games, Q&A on tap for Confirmation Day with Bishop

Confirmation Day with the Bishop is slated for March 14 at Pulaski Heights United Methodist Church, 4823 Woodlawn St., Little Rock. With the theme "Claim the Name," activities begin at 9:30 a.m. and conclude at 3 p.m.

Cost is \$10 per person if registration is received by Feb. 27; \$15 after that date. Registration may be submitted online at [www.arumc.org/claimthename](http://www.arumc.org/claimthename) or via mail.

Recording artist Celia Whitler will be special guest. Bishop Charles Crutchfield will welcome confirmands

and meet to discuss faith issues and answer questions about the church, the ministry of the bishop and just about anything else. Participants will be treated to music, fellowship, games and lunch.

A mission offering will be taken for Nothing But Nets, a worldwide effort to provide insecticide-treated bed nets to families in Africa as protection from disease-carrying mosquitoes.

For more information, contact Rod Hocott at [rhocott@arumc.org](mailto:rhocott@arumc.org) or (501) 324-8008, or (877) 646-1816 toll free.

Camp Aldersgate is seeking volunteer van drivers for its Seniors Day Out Program. Drivers are needed on Thursdays once or twice a month. Pick up is between 8-10 a.m. and dropoff between 1-3 p.m. The camp bus is provided and no CDL is necessary. Drivers must be between 25 and 72 years old. For more details, call Tess Hardin at (501) 225-1444 ext. 239.



The Mature and Methodist (M&Ms) senior adult group from Mena First UMC, recently sponsored a luncheon honoring Mena native Paul Gray Jr., the 2008 Arkansas Teacher of the Year. In addition to that honor, Paul and his wife Beth were the recipients of a National Geographic Society trip to Antarctica as an award for Paul's selection as an outstanding geography teacher.

Paul and Beth traveled aboard the ship M.S. National Geographic Endeavour. They shared a PowerPoint presentation of the sights and sounds of Antarctica that were very much enjoyed by the large crowd of attendees.

Paul grew up in Mena and is a geography and international relations teacher at Russellville High School, where he is the chair of the Social Sciences and Humanities Department. Beth is a professor of emergency administration management at Arkansas Tech University in Russellville.

Gary Harrison is pastor of the Mena Church, and M&M coordinators are Flora and Bill McChristian.

## It Happened

United Methodist Women's Sunday was celebrated Feb. 1 at First UMC, Monticello, with UMW members conducting the morning service and forming an all-ladies choir. Lay Speaker Beverly Boyd of Pansy presented an inspiring message. After the service, UMW members served a soup luncheon, with the \$500 collected going to UMW mission projects. During the service, the local officers were acknowledged and Special Recognition Pins were presented to Lanier Carson and Faye Chandler.

Chickalah UMC presented a Living Nativity Dec. 19 at the Chickalah Community Center. Participants included Doug Hensley, Larry Johnson, Bud Choate, Ariel Finkenbinder, Ellie Kate Wilburn, Abbie Wilburn, Jack Wilburn, Amy Heifer, David Berge, Barbara Johnson, Tryl Choate and Vicki Hensley. Costume coordinator was Pat

Finkenbinder.

According to one member, it was the first Living Nativity display she could remember in the community. Plans are already under way to stage the event in 2009.

Marvell UMC honored its oldest active member, Nina Lucille Keath Schaffhauser, during the Nov. 16 morning worship service, on the occasion of her 99th birthday. After the congregation sang a rousing "Happy Birthday," the honoree, a member of the choir, complimented them for following her directions to practice their singing since last year's performance. Schaffhauser was honored Nov. 15 with a party at the church hosted by five generations of her family.

Salem UMC, Benton, recently installed a new digital moving sign atop their existing lighted unit. The

addition was made possible with a matching grant from Igniting Ministry, a United Methodist churchwide hospitality and welcoming program that is part of United Methodist Communications.

"This is by far the cheapest way to get a highly visible digital display without building a complete new sign," said church member Richard Bondurant. To qualify for the grant, the congregation studied demographic and church statistics for its area and committed to participating in "inviting church" training. In addition, the sign includes the "Open Hearts, Open Minds, Open Doors" slogan.

"This effort is part of a four-year growth program utilizing direct mail, communitywide events, programs that serve existing needs, visibility signage, a welcoming attitude and communication training," Bondurant said. The emphasis is on "inviting our neighbors to share our faith, our fellowship and our service. There is a new spirit in this 150-year-old community of believers, and the sign is only one of many changes to come."



Longtime Marvell UMC member Nina Schaffhauser celebrates her 99th birthday with pastor Kirk Doering.



At Chickalah UMC, participants in the Live Nativity include (from left) Popcorn the donkey, Ariel Finkenbinder, Ellie Kate Wilburn, Abbie Wilburn, Jack Wilburn, Amy Heifer and David Berge.

## PSC to host Religious Emphasis Week

Philander Smith College will hold its annual Religious Emphasis celebration Feb. 22-26, beginning a worship service at 10:45 a.m. Feb. 22 at Wesley Chapel UMC, Little Rock. Chaplain Ronnie Miller Yow, pastor of Wesley Chapel, will deliver the message.

Other special events include:

- Marjorie L. Kimbrough of Atlanta, Ga., author and lecturer, will speak on "Womanist Theology" at 11 a.m. Feb. 24 in the Kendall Center.

- H. Beecher Hicks, senior pastor of the 6,000-member Metropolitan Baptist Church in Washington, D.C., will preach during the 7 p.m. service Feb. 24 at Wesley Chapel. A graduate of the University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff, Hicks has been the church's pastor for 27 years.

- Ash Wednesday services at 7 p.m. Feb. 25 will feature Elder Charles Harrison Mason Patterson of Pentecostal Temple Church of God in Christ in Memphis, Tenn., the great-

grandson and namesake of the founder of the Church of God in Christ,

- Debra Matthews, admissions associate at Memphis Theological Seminary, will be the featured speaker at the college's chapel service at 11 a.m. Feb. 26 at Wesley Chapel.

- A ministry and seminary fair will be held from noon to 2 p.m. Feb. 26 in the Student Union. Representatives from area seminaries and schools of theology will be on hand.

- Living Legends Banquet will honor community and religious leaders for their legacy of leadership. C.J. Duvall, senior pastor of Theresa Hoover UMC, Little Rock, will be the keynote speaker for the 7 p.m. event Feb. 26 at the Kendall Center. Tickets are \$25 per person (tables of 10 are \$250) and are available by calling (501) 370-5344.

For more information about Religious Emphasis Week activities, call (501) 370-5344.

## PUBLIC COMMENT ON REACCREDITATION REQUESTED

Hendrix College is seeking comments from the public about the College in preparation for its periodic evaluation by its regional accrediting agency. The College will undergo a comprehensive evaluation visit March 30-April 1, 2009, by a team representing The Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools. Hendrix College has been accredited by the Commission since 1924. The team will review the institution's ongoing ability to meet the Commission's Criteria for Accreditation.

The public is invited to submit comments regarding the college to:

Public Comment on Hendrix College  
The Higher Learning Commission  
30 North LaSalle Street, Suite 2400  
Chicago, IL 60602

Comments must address substantive matters related to the quality of the institution or its academic programs. Comments must be in writing and signed; comments cannot be treated as confidential.

All comments must be received by Feb. 27, 2009.



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## People of Faith

Toni Lindsey of Mena, a high school senior and a member of the Arkansas Conference Council on Youth Ministries, recently received a Good Samaritan Award from the General Commission on United Methodist Men. She was honored for participating in five mission trips with First United Methodist Church of Mena. She has twice worked in a Kansas City homeless shelter, volunteered at the Sager Brown United Methodist Committee of Relief center in Baldwin, La., and a World Hunger Relief Farm in Waco, Texas. She has also participated in tornado-relief efforts in Dumas. In addition, the busy teenager served on the West District Council on Youth Ministries.



Toni Lindsey

The Good Samaritan Award was created by United Methodist Men to honor young people age 12-21 who demonstrate the attributes of the Good Samaritan described in Luke 10:25-37. Recipients must be a United Methodist or registered with a youth-serving agency related to a United Methodist Church and nominated by adults familiar with the youth's service.

The congregation also presented its pastor, Gary Harrison, with a Cross and Flame Award. That award honors men and women who have given at least five years of service to Scouts or

other youth-serving groups.

Not content with two awards, the 500-member congregation also received a Shepherd Church Charter Recognition for sponsoring Boy Scout Troop 92. That award is presented to churches that provide outstanding scouting or youth-mentoring ministry to their communities.

Robert Crossman, Arkansas Conference minister for new church development, will be among the speakers at a March 24-27 Church Leadership and Effective Management conference hosted by Leadership Nexus and held at First UMC, Arlington, Texas. The lineup of more than 25 speakers and leaders includes Bishop Robert Schnase, Bishop Mike Lowry, Jim Moore, Anna Workman, Bill Lawrence, Bill Lazor, Len Wilson and many others.

Retired United Methodist pastor Ed Matthews will be a recipient of the Father Joseph H. Blitz Award presented by Just Communities of Central Arkansas at a March 5 event in Little Rock. The award is presented to persons recognized as champions for justice and equality for all. In addition to Matthews, awards will be presented to Wendell Griffen and Ted Holder.

Tickets are \$50 per person, with proceeds supporting the youth and community programs of JCCA. The gathering will be held from 5:30-7 p.m. at the Darragh Center at the Main Library, 100 S. Rock St. The Central Arkansas Library System is a co-sponsor.



Members of the Gentlemen's Club of Ashdown (in front) were recently joined by members of the Ashdown High School Panthers basketball team.

## Church teams up with school

### ■ Gentlemen's Club models positive behavior for youth

Pastor Jim Cross and members of the Ashdown/Richmond Charge are supporters and chaperones for the Gentlemen's Club at Margaret Daniel Primary School in Ashdown, which meets weekly.

Once a month club members meet with Coach Flanigan and members of the Ashdown Panther basketball team. The gentlemen were recently recognized at a home game and invited to a pre-game meeting, locker room talk and the game. Members of the club sat behind the team during the game.

Throughout the year, the churches have found numerous ways to partner

with the school district. They fed the faculty members of the six campuses, sponsored a Youth Night with a former Razorback as the speaker, provided numerous meals for the football teams and helped organize the Ministerial Alliance for a fall youth rally at the stadium. Cross, along with nine other volunteers from the church, continue to participate in the "Good Morning Program" where they greet students in the mornings and spend time reading and eating breakfast with students at Margaret Daniel Primary.

By their actions, Ashdown youth of all ages are witnessing discipleship through the outpouring of love and concern shown by the Ashdown/Richmond Charge under Cross' leadership.



Ashdown pastor Jim Cross sits down with two members of the Gentlemen's Club.

## Calendar

### FEBRUARY

- 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
- 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
- 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.
- 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.

### MARCH

- March 7: "Transformational Ministry Planning," Connected in Christ training seminar, Searcy First UMC; Michael Roberts, (501) 324-8016 or mroberts@arumc.org.
- March 7-8: Arkansas Conference Children's Choir Festival, Lakewood UMC, North Little Rock; Lisa Hester, (501) 860-3093 or LPHester@juno.com.
- March 9-13: Small Church Leadership Institute, Mount

- Sequoyah Conference & Retreat Center, Fayetteville; Bob Crossman, (501) 324-8012 or bcrossman@arumc.org.
- March 13-15: Arkansas Conference Clergy Spouse Retreat, "More Tools for Life: How NOT to be Clueless About Arkansas Conference Benefits and More," Mount Eagle Christian Center.
- March 14: Confirmation Day with the Bishop, Pulaski Heights UMC, Little Rock; Rod Hocott, (501) 324-8008 or rhocott@arumc.org.
- March 14: Crossing Jordan Movement event, Philander Smith College, Little Rock, 10 a.m.-3 p.m.
- March 14: "Transformational Ministry Planning," Connected in Christ training seminar, First UMC, Malvern; Michael Roberts, (501) 324-8016 or mroberts@arumc.org.
- March 20-21: Lay Speakers School, Mount Eagle Christian Center.
- March 21: "Transformational Ministry Planning," Connected in Christ training seminar, Heritage UMC, Van Buren; Michael Roberts, (501) 324-8016 or mroberts@arumc.org.
- March 21: "Strengthening the Family" workshop, Healing Place Ministries, First UMC, Pine Bluff; Edna Morgan, 870-535-0101.
- March 21: Vacation Bible School Training, First UMC, Jacksonville.
- March 27-29: Caring for Creation Workshop, Mount Sequoyah Conference & Retreat Center, Fayetteville; (800) 760-8126.
- March 30-April 3: Volunteer Work Week, Mount Sequoyah Conference & Retreat Center, Fayetteville.

## 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.

**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. Volunteers, cooks and drivers needed. John or Judith Shafer, (870) 628-1282 or jzshafer@yahoo.com

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



**Oct. 17-31:** Ghana, Africa. mission trip, sponsored by Jacksonville First UMC. John Clark, jclark@brownjanitorsupply.com.

**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.



Mike Morey (right), pastor of Christ of the Hills UMC, Hot Springs Village, congratulates representatives of United Methodist Outreach — Bill Llewlyn, Doug Baber, Nancy Blevins and Larry Hatfield — for being recipients of a grant from the church through its dollar-a-week drive.

## Dollar-a-week drive at Christ of the Hills UMC helps many

■ Spare dollars add up to \$25,000 for four agencies that serve the community

HOT SPRINGS VILLAGE — For the past seven years, Christ of the Hills United Methodist Church has promoted “Dollar A Week Giving.” Parishoners are encouraged to give \$1 each time they participate in worship, as a means of honoring God.

These single dollar bills are tallied and at year’s end a local charitable organization is selected as recipient. Local organizations are invited to submit funding proposals for a one-time project outside the regular budget.

Some previously funded projects have included supplying Jackson House in Hot Springs with a new kitchen, supplying Teen Challenge with heating and air conditioning and a new roof for the dormitory and buying a new van for the Arkansas Rice Depot to deliver food statewide.

In 2002, the first year of the program, a total of \$10,000 was collected. The total has grown each year, and at the end of 2008, Christ of the Hills members were delighted to distribute a total of \$25,000 to four different groups:

■ Project HOPE Food Bank, Hot Springs. The new food bank serves persons on Hot Spring and Garland counties. Educational program also assist families in preparing and purchasing food, stretching budgets and learning other related life skills. A donation of \$8,500 will be used to purchase a forklift for the facility.

■ B.A.R.B.S. Place, Hot Springs.

A division of Quapaw House, B.A.R.,B.S. Place is a residential treatment center for pregnant and parenting women suffering from the disease of addiction. The facility includes a licensed child-care center that provides care to more than 100 infants and toddlers, many of whom come from low-income families. A gift of \$8,500 will be used to purchase a commercial stove and dishwasher to improve the kitchen facilities.

■ Charitable Christian Medical Clinic, Hot Springs. Serving those who can least afford the cost of a doctor’s appointment or a prescription and have no health insurance, Medicaid or Medicare, the clinic served more than 8,500 people last year. Licensed physicians, nurse practitioners, pharmacists and many other professionals and volunteers donate their and expertise. A donation of \$5,500 will be used to replace the computer server and supply new chairs in the waiting rooms.

■ Methodist Outreach, Hot Springs. For more than 40 years, the Outreach has been assisting people and families in Garland County who are in need by providing food, clothing, shelter and other items. Proceeds from a volunteer-run thrift store benefit the program. In 2008 the Outreach program met the needs of 1,000 families, consisting of 1,200 individual adults and 1,400 children. A donation of \$2,500 will go to purchase materials to construct work and storage areas and make racks to store and display donated items. In addition, a special Christmas Eve offering totaling \$1,093 was donated to purchase food for their food bank.

## Hendrix seeks nominations for annual recognition awards

CONWAY — Hendrix College is accepting nominations for its annual Steel-Hendrix Awards.

The Mary and Ira A. Brumley Award recognizes outstanding Religious Education, and the Ethel K. Millar Award honors outstanding Religion and Social Awareness. Awardees will be selected by the Steel-Hendrix Committee, and the awards will be presented in the 2009-2010 academic year.

The college is also accepting nominations for the Youth Minister of the Year award, which will be given during the 2009 Arkansas Annual Conference. This award is given to an outstanding youth minister, director, or counselor. Full time or part time, paid or volunteer youth workers who have

exemplified outstanding leadership are eligible. Nominees should be a member of and work in a United Methodist Church in Arkansas. They must be involved with the connectional system and participate in district and conference youth events and be intentional on “making Disciples of Jesus Christ” through missions, Bible studies, outreach, evangelism and Christian fellowship. Nominees must also have participated in some type of continuing education in the area of youth ministry.

Nominations for all awards should include a letter detailing the individual’s career highlights and reason for nomination. Nominations can be submitted to J. Wayne Clark, Hendrix College, 1600 Washington, Conway, Ark. 72032, or emailed to [clark@hendrix.edu](mailto:clark@hendrix.edu). Deadline is April 3.

## Remember When

100 Years Ago  
Feb. 18, 1909:



Sunday was spent in Malvern with Rev. T.J. Norsworthy. They claim a population of about 4,000. There are several large saw-mills, chair and door factory, the famous Malvern press brick company, two banks, good business houses, two academies, and plenty of nice churches. Our church and parsonage are well located and a credit to the liberality of the town.

50 Years Ago

Feb. 19: 1959: Sunday morning February 15 at the First Methodist Church in Texarkana, Arkansas — Dr. Arthur Terry, pastor, had two of the choir members come down during the Invitation Hymn to dedicate themselves to Medical Missionary Work for two years in Vellore, India, at the Vellore Christian Medical College. They were Dr. and Mrs. Robert Hart Chappell. Dr. Chappell is the son of a well known Methodist minister, Dr. Clovis Gillham and Cecil Hart Chappell.

20 Years Ago

Feb. 17, 1989: The Rev. Mike Mattox and members of Sequoyah United Methodist Church, Fayetteville, recently received word from fellow member Lennie Hache that she arrived safely in West Africa Jan. 3 to being service as a United Methodist missionary in Sierra Leone. A registered nurse, Hache will be setting up a much-needed health clinic in Taiama.

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**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](mailto:a.johnson_11@yahoo.com), or call Bro. Bob Burnham at (870) 735-1805.

**REQUEST FOR ELECTRICAL BIDS.** McRae United Methodist Church, McRae, AR in need of rewiring sanctuary and classrooms. Must be licensed, insured and bonded. For more information call (501) 882-3843, (501) 605-2255 or (501) 239-0916.

**MINISTER TO CHILDREN AND FAMILIES:** First United Methodist Church of Hot Springs, Arkansas, 2,200 members, in quality of life location seeking leadership to continue and grow an excellent children’s ministry. Full-time position, beginning June 1, 2009. Christ-centered theology, relational skills, appropriate education, demonstrated record of excellence, strength in empowering volunteers for ministry required. Salary commensurate with experience. Job description available on website. Resumés or inquiries addressed to: First United Methodist Church, 1100 Central Ave., Hot Springs, AR 71901. Web: [www.fumchs.com](http://www.fumchs.com). Phone: (501) 623-6668. Fax: 501-623-2293. Email: [brobud@fumchs.com](mailto:brobud@fumchs.com).

**PART-TIME ORGANIST POSITION** open at First UMC Bryant. Send resumé to: Clif Jones, Minister of Music, 508 N. Reynolds Road, Bryant, AR 72202.

# Veteran volunteer quilts for kids

FAYETTEVILLE — Seven years ago, Kerri Vollmer, program coordinator for Methodist Outpatient Counseling Clinic in Fayetteville, received a call from Fayetteville resident Vallie Cole. Vollmer had no way of envisioning the impact this one phone call would have on the children receiving services from the Methodist Children's Home.

Cole offered to make quilts for each child housed in either Therapeutic Group Homes and Foster Care Homes located in Northwest Arkansas. As a United Methodist and member of Trinity United Methodist Church, Fayetteville, Cole was aware of the Children's Home through the annual Christmas Campaign and other resources within her church and community. Her insightful suggestion was ideal for the transitory lifestyles that often surround children in this special population.

Using vibrant colors along with uplifting and cheerful designs, each child leaves with a beautiful individualized quilt that not only gives physical warmth and comfort but also a sense of security and well-being.

"Vallie is awesome, and her quilts are loving gesture for our kids," Vollmer said. "Often, people give toys and these are sincerely appreciated, but the quilts are so specialized and unique. There are no two that look alike. Many of our children are in DHS custody, and having tangible items that many take for granted is especially important. Our children can say this



Vallie Cole of Fayetteville tirelessly makes quilts for every child who receives services from the Methodist Children's Home of Northwest Arkansas.

quilt is mine, made especially for me."

During December 2008, Cole dropped off seven quilts, and within a week she was back with five more. She also made a generous financial donation for the Northwest Arkansas homes. When she waved good-bye to Vollmer, she was off to make pillows along with tote bags that attach to walkers for hospice patients.

Cole, a native of Bloomington, Minn., moved with her husband to Fayetteville more than 35 years ago to enjoy a warmer winters. Cole, a nurse, worked at the Veterans Administration Medical Center until retirement. However, her retirement was not traditional. Cole, a natural nurturer, needed to reach out to others so joined the Busy Bee Cooperative Extension Homemakers Club. She put her extraordinary seamstress talents to work in the community and became known as a tireless philanthropist.

She has donated more than 172 twin-size quilts to charitable organizations, including the Methodist Children's Home. Recipients of her bigheartedness include the Arkansas Baptist Children's Home and Families in West Fork, Fayetteville Women's Shelter and Lifestyles. She began her philanthropy work at Salvation Army making quilts and clothing. Cole also makes "teaching dolls" for Arkansas Children's Hospital. Teaching dolls are plain white cloth dolls used by medical personnel to help children understand the procedures and surgeries they face.

Five years ago, Cole was featured in "Creative Kindness: People and Projects Making a Difference and How You Can Too," written by Nancy Zieman, host of the public television series "Sewing with Nancy." Cole was described as Volunteer Extraordinaire. The book explained the keys to her volunteer efforts and life as retired, resourceful and resilient.

Cole suffers from arthritis and fibromyalgia, but this does not slow her volunteer efforts. Even with the grief and sadness caused by the deaths of her husband and three children, Cole continues to serve others. When asked what keeps her so motivated and upbeat, she answered without hesitation, "My life is about caring for others. I started babysitting at age 10 and then I chose a caring profession — nursing. Caring is what I do, and I can not imagine life without caring."

## Clergy spouse retreat set for Mount Eagle

The 2009 Arkansas Conference Clergy Spouse Retreat is just ahead March 13-15 at Mount Eagle Retreat Center near Clinton.

The theme will be "More Tools for Life: How *Not* to be Clueless about Arkansas Conference Benefits and More." All clergy spouses — male, female, active, retired — are invited.

Special guests and topics will include: Josie Martinez of Chicago, with the General Board of Pensions, keynote speaker, available for individual consultations; Sandy Smith, Ph.D. in nursing ethics, medical insurance and wellness benefits; and Tony Hilliard, attorney, "Estate Planning: It's Not Just for Old People (or Rich Ones)." Massage therapist Trish Oberhouser of Russellville will offer massages and facials. There will also be worship, singing, crafts, hiking, labyrinth walks, games, fishing and more. All events are optional; rest and relaxation take precedence.

Cost is \$90; scholarships are available. Registration deadline is March 1. The retreat is underwritten by the United Methodist Foundation of Arkansas.

# Mission to Guatemala

## Greenwood UMC sends team to Central America

Four missionaries from Greenwood United Methodist Church — Mindy James, Wendi Dungan, Kerri Underwood and associate pastor Zach Underwood — traveled to Monjas, Jalapa, Guatemala during December and January with about two dozen other United Methodists from First United Methodist Church, Russellville.

The agricultural setting underscored the difficult daily existence of those in the area surrounding Monjas. But as James stated, "their focus is on family, on working hard, on God. I expected sadness. I found happiness."

The party took along luggage filled with Vacation Bible School supplies for activities in the village of Monjas, where they taught about 100 children each day. Special emphasis was given

to serving the residents of Shadow of His Wings orphanage for girls.

The orphanage, which is a non-denominational mission supported solely with donations, houses girls who have been placed by Guatemalan courts because of abandonment, neglect, malnourishment or other abuses.

The missionaries gave personal attention to the girls, in addition to painting the interior and exterior of the lower level of the off-campus school building. They also performed construction work around the compound.

"God opened my eyes to things that we take for granted," Dungan said. "We felt so welcomed by the community. The experience was different from what I imagined. I have a better picture of the big picture."



Greenwood UMC members (from left) Wendi Dungan, Kerri Underwood and Mindy James, along with associate pastor Zach Underwood, are joined by girls from Shadow of His Wings Orphanage in Monjas, Jalapa, Guatemala.