



United Methodist Arkansas

March 20, 2009

Conferences to consider change in church structure

■ *Arkansas clergy and laity to voter on constitutional amendments in June*

United Methodist News Service

United Methodists meeting in this year's annual sessions will vote on 32 proposed constitutional amendments, many of them related to the denomination's structure as a global body.

Delegates to the 62 U.S. annual conferences and the 73 conferences in Africa, Europe and Asia will consider 23 amendments approved earlier by the 2008 United Methodist General Conference, the denomination's top legislative body. The amendments, proposed by the Task Force on the

Worldwide Nature of the Church, are for the creation of regional conferences to establish a uniform denominational structure.

The legislation would make it possible to create a U.S. regional conference in the future. Each annual conference would belong to a regional conference that will be able to organize into jurisdictional conferences if the amendments are passed by the 2009 annual conference sessions.

The remaining nine amendments are related to church and conference membership; annual and jurisdictional conference composition, including boundaries; inclusiveness of the

See AMENDMENTS, page 12

Settle appointed West DS

■ *Pine Bluff pastor to head west in June*

Charles T. Settle, senior pastor of First United Methodist Church in Texarkana, will join the Arkansas Conference Cabinet in June.

Settle will be appointed superintendent for the West District, according to Bishop Charles N. Crutchfield. The new appointment will be effective at the conclusion of this year's Annual Conference, slated for June 14-17 in Rogers.



Charles Settle

The West District, with offices in Fort Smith, includes 68 churches and more than 14,000 United Methodist members over a seven-county area.

Robert C. "Bobby" Bell, who has served as West District superintendent since 2002, is expected to take a leave from full-time ministry due to health reasons. Bell will remain in the Fort Smith area, according to the Office of the Bishop, and will work in the area of new church starts and new

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Web works

Rich Carvell, a member of Cornerstone UMC, Jonesboro, concentrates on taking notes and gathering ideas during the "Weaving a Web of Connections: Using Internet Technology for Effective Ministry" training event last month in Little Rock. Sixty participants joined in the special event, hosted by the Arkansas Conference and United Methodist Communications. See story, page 7.

Newspaper gets new editor

■ *Dennis steps down after 21 years at helm*

Arkansas Democrat-Gazette religion reporter Heather Hahn has been named editor of the *Arkansas United Methodist* and will begin work on the newspaper this month. Hahn has 11 years of reporting and editing experience at newspapers in Texas, Louisiana and Arkansas.



Heather Hahn

"We are excited to have Heather take up the editorial reins at *Arkansas United Methodist*," said Martha Taylor, director of communications for the Arkansas Conference of the United Methodist Church. "Her excellent writing skills, her curiosity about United Methodists in Arkansas and

her enthusiasm for the job make her

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INSIDE HEADLINES

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■ *After being closed for three years, Waltreak UMC is open and filled with people again, page 10.*

■ *Arkansans are part of 2009 SpiLiRa youth event planning team, page 12.*



Editor's Corner

By Jane Dennis

Thank you, friends

Green. I was very green and inexperienced when I started my new job as editor of this publication in January 1988. But I was also bubbling over inside with excitement about the challenges that lay ahead and the rich tapestry of the church that continued to be revealed to me over the next two decades.



Jane Dennis

standing and acceptance. You will be in my heart and with me forever.

I've been thinking of all the amazing people who have touched my life through this job (really, it's been my ministry), and the assembly of saints of the church I've known. I am blessed, truly blessed. Thank you, friends.

Thank you.

Yes, this is my farewell column as editor of the *Arkansas United Methodist*. But let me remind you: I'm not falling off the face of the earth, just moving on to conquer new mountains.

Peace to you, my friends. See you on new mountains.

[After today, Jane Dennis can be reached at janedennis@comcast.net.]

There has never been a shortage of stories, topics and content. I found so much to write about and so many stories to tell. It has been a privilege to share with you, dear reader, and to have this little space to pour out my heart and soul. I will be forever grateful for the time spent here and the wonderful people of faith all over the state who have given me love, under-

DS, continued from page 1

church development.

Settle, 61, joined the former Little Rock Conference in 1973 as a probationary member and was ordained an elder in full connection in 1974. He has served Texarkana First (associate), Grady/Trinity, Sardis, Murfreesboro/Japany, Carlisle First, Pine Bluff Wesley, Hope First and Pine Bluff First. He has served the 1,150-member Texarkana church since June 2005, marking his return 30 years after he started his ministry and served his

first appointment as associate pastor there.

Currently, the Arkansas Conference appointive Cabinet, led by Bishop Crutchfield, includes Phil Hathcock, Central District; Sara Bainbridge, North District; Rodney G. Steele, North Central District; Kurt Boggan, Northeast District; Mackey Yokem, Northwest District; Chester Jones, South Central District; Dennis Spence, Southeast District; and David Prothro, Southwest District.

Center releases episcopal survey results for South Central Jurisdiction

WASHINGTON — Last fall clergy and laity in conferences of the South Central Jurisdiction of the United Methodist Church were invited by the jurisdiction's College of Bishops to complete a survey on realigning episcopal areas in 2012 to accommodate one less bishop. The results of the survey, compiled by the Lewis Center for Church Leadership of Wesley Theological Seminary, are now available, along with other information provided to the bishops for their work. The report is available at the Lewis Center Web site, www.churchleadership.com/research/default.htm.

Submission guidelines

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

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

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

UMs grapple with impact of economic recession

United Methodist News Service

The rising U.S. unemployment rate is having an impact on churches, as well as the communities they serve.

But the economic crisis also is pushing many United Methodist congregations into new areas of mission as they try to offer services — ranging from assistance with food and housing to career counseling — to families dealing with job loss.

According to figures released March 6 by the U.S. Department of Labor, 651,000 more jobs were lost in February as the unemployment rate surged to 8.1 percent from 7.6 percent the month before.

Reporting those statistics, the *New York Times* noted that, "In key industries — manufacturing, financial services and retail — layoffs have accelerated so quickly in recent months as to suggest that many companies are abandoning whole areas of business." More than half of the roughly 4.4 million jobs eliminated since the recession began have disappeared in the past four months, the *Times* said.

The collapse of the automobile industry has particularly affected churches in Michigan and Indiana. Major automakers reported a continuing decline in vehicle sales in February,

to their lowest level in 28 years.

Being frugal

In Michigan, where the current unemployment rate of 10.6 percent is the highest of any state, other industries have had layoffs as well, including Whirlpool. First United Methodist Church in St. Joseph, where Whirlpool is the community's largest employer, has had a "frugal" budget for some time, using targeted fundraisers for programs like vacation Bible school. But the church's commitment to both local and global mission remains.

In Indiana, the downturn has affected auto workers in Kokomo and those laid off from recreational vehicle manufacturing jobs in the Elkhart area. Trinity United Methodist Church in Elkhart is involved with food relief and provides assistance with employment and financial issues. The church has sponsored "Networking Nights" to connect laid-off workers with representatives from area educational institutions.

In Illinois, residents of Peoria were dealing with the fact that Caterpillar, a major employer, has been trimming its labor force. First United Methodist Church there has brought together

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Viewpoint

Dear Friends:

I went to church twice last Sunday. A “free” Sunday is fairly rare for me, so I took advantage of it and was blessed by hearing two different but very well prepared, thoughtful, biblically and theologically articulate sermons delivered by two different pastors in two different churches. The music in each service was also well prepared. The hymns sung were appropriate to the sermon and the season of Lent. They were also sing-able! The services were both well planned.

I was challenged and moved by the worship experience. Neither church was full, but for the great “spring forward daylight savings time Sunday” I thought them fairly well attended.

(I’d like to introduce a bill in Congress that would start daylight



An Occasional Word from the Bishop

savings time on a Saturday morning!)

The question is, however, why should anyone of us make that kind of excuse — daylight savings time — for our not packing our sanctuaries with people every week? There may be all manner of reasons, but fundamentally, the issue is with us. We just don’t invite our friends and neighbors to join us for worship. Every year or so someone will reveal the results of a poll that indicates the reason people join and attend worship in churches is that “someone invited me.”

The poll will also reveal that the pastor’s influence is not paramount

in drawing people into church.

Good programs that touch human need, spiritually and physically — from Bible studies and thoughtful sermons to daycare and yoga classes — staffed by willing, knowledgeable volunteers, invite the first time guest to return and finally put down roots.

Another significant element, often overlooked, is the DNA of a church. A first-time guest will catch it almost immediately. Is this a place of joy and expectation and hope-filled faith, or is this a place of internal strife and depression and fear? Is this church a



Charles Crutchfield

place of welcome? The two churches I visited were places of joy and hope and faith. They were good places to worship the God of grace who gathers us in arms of love.

I invite you to invite others to join you in your worship this Lenten Season as we move toward the greatest celebration of our faith on Easter Sunday morning. Your presence in worship will be a witness to others and will be an inspiration to your pastor. It will be a time of spiritual nourishment for you. It will also be so for those you invite to join you.

I hope to see you in church (somewhere) on Sunday, with your guest in tow.

Faithfully,

Charles Crutchfield



U.S. has power to do good; now is the time to go to work

By LARRY PICKENS

A spirit of hopefulness, pride and joy permeated the atmosphere of Inauguration Day Jan. 20, and 2 million people had gathered to see what is great about our nation.



Larry Pickens

Witnessing the inauguration of Barack H. Obama as the 44th president reminded me of the awesome power that is inherent within our system of constitutional democracy. But what was more significant, as the president took the oath of office, was that our power is not merely military or political in nature; our nation

also has the power to do significant good around the world.

The palpable spirit generating throughout Washington on Inauguration Day was the spirit of the cloud of witnesses, who also gathered to celebrate the first African-American president in this nation’s history.

This day came in the backdrop history of slavery and segregation. It came in the reality of too many dreams deferred. It came in the midst of financial crisis and corporate greed. It came as we face the reality of two wars, political strife and religious intolerance around the world. Nonetheless, the hope of the day was seen in the eyes of the children and youth. It was the spirit of “yes, we can.”

Through the charge to “pick ourselves up, dust ourselves off, and

begin the work of remaking America,” the new president challenged our nation to move forward and reach for our destiny.

As a local church pastor, I worked with other clergy who witnessed the leadership ability of our new president when he was a community organizer in Chicago. He engaged our churches and solicited our ideas. What is exciting about President Obama is that he really understands the experience of the common man and woman; this is a president who “gets it.” At this moment in our nation’s history, his experience will make him more resilient and open to the problems, hopes and dreams of all Americans.

President Obama has also envisioned a new way forward as it relates to the Muslim world. He signaled clearly that we are not at war with Islam. He called for “a new way forward, based on mutual interest and

mutual respect.” This is a significant message to the world as we counter terrorism and distinguish that offensive from our respect of Islam and the benefit of living in the common values of all communities, despite our theological and ideological differences.

Change is in the air, but the aegis of the change that we anticipate is not inherent in what President Obama or Congress does. It is a change that is created by our initiative and volunteerism. It is the change that will be spawned in our churches, synagogues and temples.

We are the change that is anticipated. The inauguration was a great start. Now it is time for every American to roll up his or her sleeves and begin building a new reality.

[Pickens, the pastor of Northbrook (Ill.) United Methodist Church, and his wife, Debra, attended the inauguration ceremony.]



Letters to the Editor

On the team

I want to extend my best wishes to Jane Dennis and commend her expertise as editor of *Arkansas United Methodist* newspaper for 21 years. During my 25 years of work for the Arkansas Conference, I was fortunate to be a part of the United Methodist

newspaper team with Jane. It was a pleasure to work with such a talented writer and creative designer.

Jane’s commitment was to help the church tell its story statewide and globally. Well done thy good and faithful servant.

Laura Organ Morris
North Little Rock



FOR HEAVEN’S SAKE By Mike Morgan



Viewpoint

Can we learn ministry with time-share Christians?

Does anybody give perfect attendance pins any more? Cokesbury still sells them, but I haven't seen them around in years. When I was a child, perfect attendance pins for Sunday School were all the rage. Our family would stop on vacation to attend Sunday School and church, bringing home a bulletin so we would not interrupt our quest for ecclesiastical bling to hang on our chest. I don't

remember how many I got, but I remember a little ladder-like concatenation dangling from my shirt, a source of not-so-humble pride that I had achieved — at least in Sunday School — a measure of perfection.

I'm afraid the perfect attendance pin has gone the way of the dodo. Our culture has changed. Nobody stays in town enough to get perfect attendance any more. Few push their kids (or themselves) to attend Sunday School or church while away. Indeed, the reason people are away is often because their kids are involved in Sunday morning activities.

The church is not the only organization affected by inconsistency of attendance. Robert Putman, in "Bowling Alone," chronicled the decline of attendance at civic club meetings by 58 percent. Family dinners happen with 33 percent less regularity. People have friends over to their home 45 percent less than in the



Bud Reeves

20th century.¹ There are still plenty of people around. Where are they getting together?

In the *Circuit Rider* magazine, Gil Rendle, who writes on congregational and pastoral excellence, wrote an article characterizing the new reality of "Time-Share Christians."² In former days, church members were "pew-renters." They had a place in the congregation, and they showed up nearly every Sunday. I still have adults tell me which pew in the church they sat on every Sunday growing up.

Nowadays many church members, especially younger ones, are more "time-share." Like the owners of a time-share vacation home, they want the experience without the commitment of full ownership. They are committed to the church as a valuable part of their lives, perhaps even committed to the practice of Christian discipleship, yet they do not buy into the whole package of frequent attendance, committee service, pledge cards — in other words, all the things that kept the church going back in the days of perfect attendance pins.

Rendle identifies the culprit as decreasing discretionary time. With all of our time-saving technology, we have less time than ever before. Our work week has expanded, not

reduced. Particularly for families with children, their myriad of activities has spilled over into Sunday mornings. Our kids — who have precious little discretionary time themselves — participate in sports, scouting, arts and music programs, all of which are good, but none of which used to happen on Sundays.

How can we respond to this "large cultural shift?"³ It is tempting to put on the prophetic mantle and rail against the societal trends, the commitment of parents, the breaking of the Sabbath, etc. But what benefit does that bring, besides alienating already stressed-out people? It is doubtful that a diatribe will change the schedule for the soccer tournament this Sunday. What we have here is a condition of the times, an environment in which we must learn anew how to do ministry. Conditions require learning, not fixing. We would simply fix the problem if we could, but since we can't, we need to figure out how to offer Christ in a different context.

One of the changes Rendle suggests is to shift the paradigm of ministry from membership to participation. Following the lead of some civic groups who have loosened their attendance requirements, the church could

experiment with new ways of delivering the ministry that was once confined to Sunday School and church on Sunday. Faith communities that are making this shift are having success with home groups, online Christian education, weekday studies, hands-on missions, and ministries with children and youth apart from Sundays. It's not that we don't love Sunday School; but that is only one dish at the potluck. A successful ministry in our century has to spread a smorgasbord of options.

As we experiment with these new realities, we must be "steady in purpose, but flexible in strategy."⁴ We know what our mission is: to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. The message never changes, though the medium might. We have Good News that will change lives, something you can't buy as an "app" on an I-phone or find on a sports field. We need to offer this gift hospitably, not to demand that the world come to church and become like us, but to reach out into a stressed-out, anxiety-burdened, time-warped, sin-broken world with the only love that will save the day.

¹ Robert Putman, *Bowling Alone* (Simon and Schuster, 2000), *PreachingToday.com*. Though now almost a decade old, the trend has not reversed.

² Gil Rendle, "Welcoming 'Time-share' Christians," *Circuit Rider*, November/December 2008, 14-16.

³ Rendle, 15.

⁴ Rendle, 16.

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

ECONOMY *continued from page 2*

members and community and social agencies to act as a clearinghouse for those needing assistance.

Other churches around the country have made the current economic crisis a specific mission focus. Cokesbury United Methodist Church in Knoxville, Tenn., has a free ministry called NETWORK that offers job seekers in the community access to services such as resume preparation, coaching for interview skills, networking opportunities, and crisis and financial management.

Roswell (Ga.) United Methodist Church has more than 140 volunteers on a team of hiring and recruiting professionals who meet with job seekers twice a month through the church's job

networking program. Mission commitment

Despite the recession, church leaders from the local to national levels have seen evidence that the denomination's members remain committed to mission.

Officials of the Women's Division, United Methodist Board of Global Ministries, were pleased that their core constituency — United Methodist Women — more than met their pledges for 2008. By the end of the year, the division had received \$16.5 million in mission giving, about \$3,000 above the total amount pledged.

Welcoming those results, Harriett Olson, the division's chief executive,

said it is a "critical time" for sustaining the mission institutions and programs that assist women, children and youth. To ensure the commitment to mission, the division has cut its 2009 operating budget by 10 percent.

In Tipp City, Ohio, Ginghamburg United Methodist Church took its regular Christmas miracle offering for its Sudan Project just one day after General Motors closed its automotive plant in nearby Dayton. Despite that economic blow, the offering raised \$725,749 — part of the nearly \$4 million Ginghamburg has raised since 2004 for its Sudan work with the United Methodist Committee on Relief.

United Methodists were reminded that the church's ministry is needed more than ever during tough economic times in a February message signed by the president of the Council of Bishops, chairman of the Connectional Table and chairman of the table of general agency executives.

"It is a prophetic reminder that our destiny as a worldwide community and a global church is interwoven with complex bonds of prosperity, security, dignity and justice," the three leaders said. "We reclaim anew Jesus' teaching, 'as you (cared for) the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me' as an urgent appeal for how we can live today."

News Digest



Civil rights pilgrimage takes visitors to 'sacred ground'

MONTGOMERY, Ala. — Hearing the personal stories told by civil rights heroes — while standing in the same churches that sheltered them from angry mobs and gave them courage to fight for equal rights — was “a profound experience” for one United Methodist leader. Jim Winkler, top executive of the United Methodist Board of Church and Society, was one of more than 30 who joined U.S. Rep. John Lewis (D-Ga.) on a congressional civil rights pilgrimage to Alabama March 6-8.



Children lay a wreath March 7 at the Civil Rights Memorial in Montgomery during the annual congressional civil rights pilgrimage to Alabama. UMNS photo by Kathy L. Gilbert

United Methodists join rally against foreclosures

WASHINGTON — As a community organizer in Kansas City, Dale Shotts has firsthand experience of the effects of home foreclosures on families and neighborhoods. “People are losing their homes because our nation has made a god of excessive profits, and we have not listened to the voice of real prophets of many faith traditions,” declared Shotts, who is director of social justice ministries at St. Luke’s United Methodist Church and a leader of “Communities Creating Opportunity” in Kansas City.

Shotts was among the clergy and foreclosure victims riding the “Recovery Express” bus caravan, which made an eight-city cross-country tour March 6-10 before joining a rally and prayer service on Capitol Hill in Washington. The caravan and rally was sponsored by PICO, a national network of faith-based community organizations working to revitalize neighborhoods in 150 cities and 17 states.

Cuba visit brings changes to covenant

LAKELAND, Fla. — The United Methodist Florida Conference’s long-standing relationship with the Methodist Church in Cuba will continue, but there will be some changes. That was the message from meetings in Cuba in late February between Florida Bishop Timothy Whitaker, Cuban Methodist Bishop Ricardo Pereira and officials from the Cuban religious affairs office.

“The (Cuban) government has made it clear that it would like the relationship ... to continue,” Whitaker said after returning from a three-day trip to island nation. “They understand the historic nature of this relationship ... At the same time, the structure of the relationship is definitely going to change,” he added.

Zimbabwe: ‘serious humanitarian crisis’

HARARE, Zimbabwe — Zimbabwe is in a “serious humanitarian crisis” with villagers surviving on wild berries and appealing for food aid that is not coming, the head of Christian Care in the southern African country has charged. Forbes Matonga, the national director of Christian Care, which distributes food for UNICEF in Zimbabwe, said in a March 5 statement that food security “remains particularly precarious” for Zimbabweans.

Faced with these challenges, it is not enough, it is not adequate to look east or west or to the hills for answers but to look up to the Lord and stand still and know that he is God,” said Matonga, a United Methodist whose aid group is a member of the church-backed Action by Churches Together International alliance.

United Methodists increase fair trade purchases

NEW YORK — United Methodists everywhere have demonstrated their support of fair trade through the Eco-Palm Project and UMCOR’s Coffee Project. With the 100-Ton Challenge heading into its final months, continued fair trade purchases are encouraged to help UMCOR meet its goal, according to the United Methodist Committee on Relief.

The support of local churches in coffee and cocoa purchases makes UMCOR the single largest partner for sales with Equal Exchange. United Methodists increased fair trade purchases by 19 percent from 2007, collecting more than \$1.3 million in sales.

Find-a-Church provides free advertising

NASHVILLE, Tenn. — The redesigned www.Find-A-Church.org option on www.umc.org provides United Methodist churches with a free online profile. It is a chance for churches of any size to build a positive image, present opportunities and attract newcomers at no charge. The Find-A-Church directory receives approximately 280,000 hits a month and churches can reach anyone searching for a church home. For more information about updating profiles, contact United Methodist Communications at FAC@umc.org or (800) 251-8140.

Russia mission event highlights youth

SAN DIEGO — The importance of youth and young adult ministry held center stage at the 2009 consultation of the United Methodist Russia Initiative March 5-7.

Fourteen students and young professionals brought a spirit of newness and a sense of continuity to the 27-member delegation from Russia and

Ukraine and to the 140 U.S. participants that attended the consultation, sponsored by the California-Pacific United Methodist Annual Conference. The Russia Initiative includes Ukraine, Moldova, and Belarus, and is part of the United Methodist episcopal area of Eurasia. It is sponsored by the United Methodist Board of Global Ministries.

“Student ministry is still the heart of the mission in our city,” said Iryna Pynch. “It is an ecumenical Protestant work, but some of us have joined The United Methodist Church and are hoping soon to have a church of our own.”

Christians send letter to Obama on climate change

WASHINGTON — Thousands of Christians sent President Obama a letter on March 11 expressing their commitment to limiting the future impacts of climate change. The letter, released by the National Council of Churches Eco-Justice Program, focuses on climate change as a moral issue that demands immediate, effective and just action. Over 10,000 people signed the document.

“Climate change is no longer just a Sunday morning conversation for Christians and communities of faith,” noted Cassandra Carmichael, the program’s director. “People understand that climate change will continue to impact not only God’s Creation, but all of God’s people, particularly those living in poverty around the world; this realization is calling people and communities to action.”

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CONCERNS OF THE HEART

By MARY KAY LIEBLONG

Special to the Arkansas United Methodist

Several hundred people of all ages worship at Cabot United Methodist Church on any given Sunday. Throughout the week many more pass through the church doors in the form of Bible study groups, volunteers, Child Development Center children and staff, church staff, community groups, families visiting the Food Pantry and many others.

In the past, it was safer to be in an airport or jogging at the Cabot Community Center than being in the Cabot sanctuary or Family Life Center worshipping. Why? Because the airport and the local community center were equipped with Automated External Defibrillators (AED) and the church was not.

But all that's changed.

Cabot UMC now owns not one but two AEDs. The AED is a medical device for use by trained laypersons that reads the heart rhythm of a person having a heart attack and can restart the normal rhythm if needed by means of a defibrillator until emergency personnel arrive. Once only available in hospitals, AEDs are now found in

many places where large numbers of people gather.

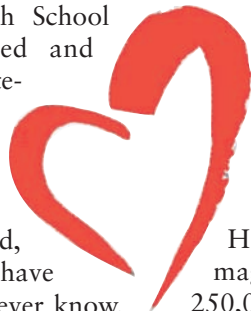
This past year AEDs have made headlines. Most notable, in the Little Rock area, was the incident where a Little Rock Parkview High School basketball player collapsed and died. His mother, in a statement to the *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette*, said, "We feel like if the machine (AED) had been there when Anthony (Hobbs) collapsed, then perhaps there could have been a chance ... we will never know, but the fact that it wasn't there didn't give him the opportunity."

Arkansas Specialty Orthopaedics has since donated AEDs to many schools in the Little Rock area. The Cabot schools are equipped with AEDs also.

In 2000, a Disciple I class at Cabot UMC challenged members to do something, to step forward in faith, to listen to God's voice. A Health Ministry was formed and a generous donor made it possible for the church to purchase stethoscopes and other blood pressure

monitoring equipment. For many years now, several nurses and other medical personnel in the congregation have been available to take blood pressures on the first and third Sundays each month. They have also helped church members in other health-related matters. Each year since 2000, this ministry has served between 275-350 persons.

According to the American Heart Association (*Circulation* magazine 2005), an estimated 250,000 persons die annually from sudden cardiac arrest *before* they reach the hospital. Most victims experience ventricular fibrillation — a quivering of the entire bottom part of the heart that normally is the hardest at pumping blood to all areas of the body. Typically, only 5 percent of Sudden Cardiac Arrest (SCA) victims survive. Early defibrillation with an AED can increase this survival to as high as 74 percent. For every minute of delaying defibrillation, chances for survival drop 7-10 percent. Early defibrillation is a critical link in the American Heart



Association's "Chain of Survival."

This past fall, the Cabot church purchased its first AED and training device. Church leaders decided that a second AED located near the Family Life Center was needed as well. Donations covered the purchase of both AEDs. The units are placed outside the sanctuary entrance, visible in any direction, and outside the Family Life Center in the Sunday School hallway.

All Cabot UMC staff members participated in a Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) class that included use of the new AEDs. The CDC staff also was trained in CPR and AED use. Other members of the church also signed up to take the class, and a total of 42 persons are now trained in CPR and AED use. Recertification training will be offered every two years, as recommended by the American Heart Association.

In addition, the congregation has a goal of having all ushers, Sunday morning nursery workers and at least one person in each Sunday School class certified in CPR and AED use.

[Mary Kay Lieblong is director of communications for Cabot UMC.]

Environment gets top billing for May 2 conference

A major "Green Conference" on the environment and the church is slated for May 2 at Pulaski Heights United Methodist Church in Little Rock.

"For the Least of These Our Brethren: Faith, Justice, and the Environment" will feature an all-star line-up of speakers and leaders.

Keynote speakers will be Rabbi Larry Troster, Rabbinic Scholar for Green Faith, environmentalist, activist, theologian and author; and Matthew J. Sleeth, author of "Serve God, Save the Planet: A Call to Christian Action," executive director of Blessed Earth.

Troster's life and work exemplifies the fact that fostering inter-religious dialogue is crucial for promoting sustainable environmental theory and action. A leading figure in religious environmentalism, Troster has been a leading Rabbinic Scholar for many environmental organizations — primarily working in the area of environmental theology.

Sleeth is considered one of the most important voices within the contemporary context of Evangelical environmentalism. In "Serve God, Save the Planet," his medical expertise couples with his devotion to caring for all of the earth in a way that overcomes simplistic dichotomies between

human-centered and nonhuman-centered approaches to ethics. He demonstrates that perhaps the best way to work for the well being of the earth is to care for our hurting neighbors.

A host of special guests will lead more than 16 breakout sessions. They include:

- Professor Courtney Hatch of Hendrix College will discuss global health, climate change and the current environmental crisis;
- State Rep. Kathy Webb will provide a legislative update;
- Pulaski County Judge Buddy Villines, on public policy
- John Roberts, with Regional Waste Management, on recycling and the community;

■ Martha Jane Murray, with the Clinton Foundation's Climate Change Initiative, Achieving Social Environmental Justice Through an Employer-Based Energy Benefit Program;

■ Annice Steadman, Central High School, science instruction in public schools;

■ Professor Bobby Williamson of Hendrix College, Biblical basis for environmental stewardship;

■ Malik Saafir, pastor of Theresa Hoover UMC, Little Rock, "Giving Voice to Social Justice";

■ Julie Hendrix, with Sustainable Alternatives, local resources for justice and the environment;

■ Hendrix Professor Jay McDaniel, eco-theology and inter-religious dialogue;

■ Sylvia Blain, with Local Food Initiative, local food systems;

■ Shelley Green, Arkansas Earth Institute, voluntary simplicity, practicing ecology in our daily lives;

■ Hendrix College professor Aaron Simmons, the religious community and political activism;

■ Watershed Project founder Hezekiah Stewart, caring for outcasts;

and

■ Joe Sundell of the Sierra Club, no-coal power plants.

Bill Bradlee with Interfaith Power and Light will lead the closing session. A climate scientist, Bradlee spent much of 2007 bicycling 5,000 miles across the United States giving public talks on global warming. His passion is helping people understand environmental issues and then make changes that will create a healthy environment for current and future generations.

The conference is sponsored by the Green Faith Alliance of Central Arkansas, composed of more than 80 people from nearly 30 houses of worship and organizations who view environmental preservation as a stewardship issue for people of faith.

Cost is \$40 per person; \$25 for students. Registration includes lunch prepared by Chef Shane Henderson and featuring food grown by local farmers. Checks should be made payable to "Environmental Conference" and sent to: Pulaski Heights UMC, 4823 Woodlawn, Little Rock, Ark. 72205. For more information, call (501) 664-3600. All are welcome.



Weaving a Web of dynamic new connections

By MARTHA TAYLOR

Using the analogy of the Internet as a 21st century campfire where people gather to share their stories, 60 individuals from Arkansas and six other states explored Web ministry during a seminar on Internet technology Feb. 22 at Philander Smith College in Little Rock.

“Weaving a Web of Connections: Using Internet Technology for Effective Ministry” was hosted by the Arkansas Conference. Cheryl Hemmerle, technical training specialist for United Methodist Communications, was the lead trainer for the event, while communications specialists from other conferences led sessions on Web ministry, user-centered design, welcoming the seeker and best practices for Web ministry.

Participants were asked to consider the Internet as a campfire where people gather to tell stories, meet others and form relationships. And it is quite a campfire.

According to a 2007 Pew Internet survey, there are 1.4 billion Internet users and 75 percent of adults in the United States are online. Of those, 64 percent use the Internet for faith-related activities. Those figures were compelling enough to motivate Chandra Adams of Geyer Springs United Methodist Church, Little Rock, to launch their first Web site.

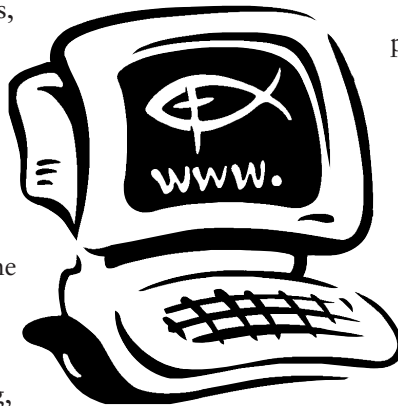
“We have not had a Web site

before,” said Adams, the secretary/treasurer for the church. “Learning how people read Web sites differently than print and the practical tips on what to include on the Web site were very helpful.”

Just three weeks after the training, Adams launched the church’s Web ministry and their new Web site, www.geyerspringsumc.org. To celebrate, church members were given stickers with the Web address, a kiosk was set up where members could see the site online, and the pastor blessed the new ministry during worship.

“It was easy,” said Adams. And while she acknowledges that many of their current members may not

■ *Training event helps local church folk see new possibilities for Web- and Internet-based ministry*



use the site, Adams is pleased that Geyer Springs has joined the growing number of Arkansas United Methodist churches that are using the Internet to attract visitors.

For those who are not quite prepared to join the digital community, Hemmerle recommended that local churches update their Find-A-Church information located on the national United Methodist Church Web site, www.umc.org. The Find-A-Church function on the Web site is one of the most visited pages of the entire national site, according to Hemmerle. Find-A-Church features have been



Cheryl Hemmerle, technical training specialist for United Methodist Communications, leads a “Weaving a Web” event in Little Rock.

expanded so local churches can share more about themselves, upcoming events and their ministries.

“Weaving a Web of Connections” trainings are scheduled throughout the United States. For a list of face-to-face sessions or to take a self-guided, online training entitled Web Ministry 101, go to www.umcom.org and click on “Training.”

[Martha Taylor is director of communications for the Arkansas Conference.]



Stephen and Deb Webb of Adamsville UMC in the Memphis Conference are deep in thought as they take in ideas at the “Weaving a Web” training event in Little Rock.



Glenn Pettus, pastor of Dumas First UMC, takes notes in preparation for launching Web- and Internet-based ministries at his church.

(From left) Frances Ross and Alex Ross of Prescott First UMC and Chandra Adams of Geyer Springs UMC, Little Rock make plans for new Web ministries at their churches.



Linda Rogers (right) of North Pulaski UMC, Jacksonville, and Mary Blassingame of Mission UMC, Fort Smith, take in a wealth of information about Web ministries at the “Weaving a Web” training event.

It Happened

Winfield UMC, Little Rock, broke ground for a fellowship hall and additional educational rooms during a special service March 15. The day began with a men's breakfast and program by Bob Crossman, Arkansas Conference minister for new church starts. Central District Superintendent Phil Hathcock led the special service on the church grounds at 9:15, which included a plethora of hard-hats and shovels for turning the first spadeful of dirt and the dedication of a new church sign as well. The morning was also filled with two worship services, fellowship time and Sunday school.

Murfreesboro UMC welcomed Kathy Dillard Conley of Blytheville as a special guest speaker for its first Women's Day Apart. Conley led an all-day program with the theme "Answering God's Call." A delicious luncheon served by church members was one highlight of the day.

The Chancel and Handbell choirs of St. Paul UMC, Little Rock, hosted



Roger Rasico, director of youth and young adults at St. Paul UMC, Little Rock, is joined by his nephews Hunter and Cole Nicholas at an event marking his 10-year anniversary at the church.



Melba and Ed Ainsworth were recognized by First UMC, El Dorado, for their service to church and community.

their annual pancake breakfast Feb. 21 at the church. This event has served as a fundraiser for these ministries for more than 50 years. With a menu of pancakes, bacon and sausage, the event raised more than \$900. United Methodist Women also hosted their annual Country Store that offered homemade baked goods for sale to benefit ongoing missions.

On March 1, St. Paul UMC, Little Rock, celebrated the 10th anniversary of Roger Rasico's ministry as director of youth and young adults at the church. Rasico began his ministry in 1998 after being a youth counselor for two years. A brunch was held in his honor, with a continuous slide show featuring pictures from various youth and young adult activities over the years. The honoree was also given a love offering from the congregation as an expression of appreciation for his service to the church.

March 15 was designated as United Methodist Women's Sunday at First UMC, El Dorado. Associate pastor Pam Brule preached both services and UMW members served as ushers. Worship at the 10:30 sanctuary service



Children at Winfield UMC, Little Rock, dig in at a ground breaking for a new addition to the church.



Pancakes were plentiful at the annual pancake breakfast hosted by the church choirs at St. Paul UMC, Little Rock.

was led by Circle members and included a memorial to those women who passed away during the past year, as well as the presentation of the Special Mission Recognition Award. Thanks to a private donation, the UMW pre-

sented two awards this year. Ed and Melba Ainsworth were both recognized for their generous contributions of time and resources not just in the church and community but throughout South Arkansas.

People of Faith

Patrick Shownes, communication coordinator for the Arkansas Conference Office of Communications, has been selected one of 23 National Trainers for Web Ministry training events, online courses and networking forums in 2009 by the Nashville, Tenn.-based United Methodist Communications.



Patrick Shownes

and brightest Web and Internet technology practitioners in the denomination. Each has extensive hands-on experience in Web ministry from a local church, district, conference, regional, general agency or other United Methodist Church organization perspective.

They will be leading more than 12 live training events; three ongoing classes and forums; and more

than 30 customized, instructor-led online courses in Web ministry that will empower learners to launch a website with many Web ministry components in as little as four months.

"We are pleased that Patrick was chosen to be part of the national team of communicators that will be training local church leaders across the country in website and internet technologies," said Martha Taylor, Arkansas Conference director of communications. "Patrick has done a great job

with the new conference website and has assisted many local churches with their technology questions. His skill with audio and video production was evident during last year's annual conference."

Selected from more than 100 applications, the national trainers will work together with Cheryl A. Hemmerle, technical training specialist for United Methodist Communications, and other Web and Internet technology staff.



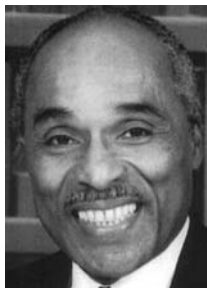
Coming Up

Silver Hill UMC will hold a dedication of the recently completed extension and new fencing for Silver Hill Cemetery, Easter Sunday, April 12, at 9 a.m. preceding worship. The cemetery was established in the early 1900s by original settler families in the (at that time) new community of Silver Hill.

All interested persons are invited to attend the dedication, to be led by current pastor Leon Dixon. For those unable to attend the 9 a.m. dedication, members of the congregation will open the church between 2 and 5 p.m. for the convenience of all who may wish to visit the cemetery in its beautiful wooded setting.

United Methodist Women of Searcy First UMC will host the 24th annual Ladies Lenten Brunch at 10 a.m. April 3 at the church, 304 N. Main St. Guest speaker will be Lu Harding, director of Mount Eagle Christian Center, a conference retreat center located in Stone County. Tickets are \$12 and are available by calling (501) 268-5896 by April 1.

Bentonville First UMC will welcome Zan Wesley Holmes Jr. for a one-day event April 19 focusing on discipleship. This event is part of the Zoe Ann Haynes Celebration Ministries, an outreach program started last year to bring nationally recognized Christian speakers to northwest Arkansas.



Zan Holmes

Holmes is pastor emeritus of St. Luke Community UMC in Dallas. He is widely recognized for his role as narrator of the Disciple Bible Study. He taught at Perkins School of Theology for 24 years, served in the Texas House of Representatives, and has been recognized as one of the "invisible giants" of the civil rights movement.

Holmes will make presentations at 9 a.m. at the Old High Middle School, 406 NW Second St.; 11 a.m. First UMC sanctuary, 201 NW Second St.; 4:30 p.m. Celebration Dinner, First UMC Hines Hall; and 6 p.m. First UMC sanctuary

Oak Forest UMC and Fellowship Bible Church in Little Rock are continuing their ministry partnership by

opening a free dental clinic as an expansion of the free medical clinic, Shepherd's Hope, sponsored by the two congregations.

Established in July 2006, Shepherd's Hope is a primary medical care clinic that serves the working poor who do not have health insurance.

The Oak Forest congregation is buying a house at 2402 S. Tyler, located next to Shepherd's Hope at 2404 S. Tyler and adjoining Oak Forest's property. Fellowship Bible members will help renovate the house and recruit dentists to volunteer one evening a week.

A Cowboy Supper from 6-8 p.m. March 20 at Oak Forest UMC will be a fundraiser for the new clinic. The menu will include barbeque brisket, pork and beans and baked potatoes. Participants are invited to wear cowboy hats and bandanas.

"Together, with God's help, our free dental clinic will become a reality," said Oak Forest pastor Russ Breshears.

For more information, call (501) 663-9407.

St. James UMC, Little Rock, will hold a Princess and Pirate Party benefit from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. April 4. Tickets are \$10, and each child must be accompanied by an adult. Participants will get to jump in a palace, dig for treasure, walk the plank, make a tiara or eye patch, and enjoy tea party goodies or pirate grub. For reservations, call (501) 217-6708. Proceeds will benefit mission efforts planned for the fall, including a Gulf Coast post-hurricane rebuilding project and work on the Navajo reservation at Shiprock, N.M.

Crosspoint will be in concert at Western Hills UMC, Little Rock, at 6 p.m. March 29. All are welcome. The church is located at 4601 Western Hills Blvd.

Applications are currently being accepted for the 2009 Local Pastor License School, to be held June 5-7 and July 24-Aug. 1 at Mount Eagle Christian Center near Clinton. An application with details about fees, requirements and lodging can be found online at www.arumc.org.

The Little Rock Chapter of the International Thomas Merton Society will hold its quarterly meeting from 2-4 p.m. March 22 at the Central

Arkansas Library System Main Library, West Conference Room, 100 Rock St., Little Rock. The meeting will include a viewing and discussion of the documentary film "Merton, A Film Biography."

The group's purpose is to promote a greater knowledge and study of the life and writings of Thomas Merton, one of the most influential religious figures of our time. For details, call (501) 224-1306.

Kaleidoscope Grief Center, a Methodist Family Health Continuum of Care program, is now accepting applications for its Camp Healing Hearts, which will be held May 15-16 at Camp Aldersgate in Little Rock.

Camp Healing Hearts is for children ages 5-18 and their families who have lost a loved one. Camp Healing Hearts provides a safe environment where children and their families can develop coping skills both individually and within a community of others. The work of play encourages a new sense of normalcy and allows children to find a voice for their grief.

To register for the free camp, contact Janet Breen, (501) 978-5437 or janetbreen@kaleidoscopekids.org for an application. Applications may also be obtained from the website www.kaleidoscopekids.org. Registration deadline is 4 p.m. April 16.

Langley UMC will hold revival services at 6 p.m. March 30-April 3. Music will be provided by Kathleen Dockery, director of music at Oaklawn UMC, Hot Springs, and Lindsey Saenz, pastor of Langley UMC.

The schedule of guest pastors includes:

- Paul Coy, Christ of the Hills UMC, Hot Springs Village, March 30;
- Terry Chapman, First UMC, Mena, March 31;
- Gail Baldwin, Bismarck UMC, April 1;
- Chris Hemund, Mountainside UMC, Hot Springs Village, April 2;
- Glen Harris, Amity UMC, April 3.

In addition, a special communion/healing service is planned for 2 p.m. April 1, with Bobby Bell, West District superintendent, as guest preacher.



United Methodist Women from Searcy First UMC — (front) Peggy Burkett and Nona Wilkerson, and (back) Sharon Carder, Sally Davis and Irene Gray — are among those making plans for the 24th annual Ladies Lenten Brunch April 3.

Langley UMC is located on Highway 84 in the Langley community. For more information contact Saenz at lindsey.saenz@gmail.com or (479) 243-0999 or (520) 240-03365.

The Way of the Cross, a commissioned collection of art by Randall M. Good that depicts the 14 Stations of the Cross, is returning to Blue Moon Gallery, 718 Central Ave., Hot Springs, March 23-April 25. Good will be a special guest for Gallery Walk from 5-9 p.m. April 3 and also April 4-5. He will be on hand to discuss and explain the collection

For more information, call (501) 318-2787 or go online to www.BlueMoonArtGallery.com

United Methodist ARCHIVES



Bailey Library
Hendrix College
Conway, Ark.
(501) 450-1370

arkmethodist@hendrix.edu

OPEN:
Thursdays 9:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Or by special appointment.

Contact:
Mauzel Beal at (501) 336-9321
or beehill@tcworks.net or
Marcia Crossman at (501) 327-3512
or mcrossman@conwaycorp.net

Waltreak comes to life again as newest UM church in state

The newest church in the Arkansas Conference is Waltreak United Methodist Church in the West District.

The newly organized congregation held a dedication service March 1 with 125 persons as witnesses. West District superintendent Robert C. "Bobby" Bell participated in the service. He delivered the dedicatory prayer and presented the Waltreak congregation with a check from the Conference to help with expenses of starting the new church.

Larry Pat Milliard, who has been serving the Hartford/Midland Charge in the West District since 1990, has been appointed to the new work at Waltreak.

The Waltreak church is part of a larger endeavor by the United Methodist Church to plant a church a day in the United States and a church a month in Arkansas. Milliard attended the New Church Leadership Institute in Fayetteville in February. The goal of the institute is to prepare ministers for



West District superintendent Bobby Bell (right) offers a prayer and blessing on the ministry of Waltreak UMC and pastor Larry Pat Milliard.

planting new churches.

At the dedication, Milliard spoke on the subject "Where There is No



Worshippers gather at Waltreak United Methodist Church for the first service held there in more than three years.

Vision the People Perish." Following the service, the crowd enjoyed a meal of elk chili, Cajun gumbo and Waltreak chili. Several guests from Waldron UMC and other churches in the area were on hand to show their support as well. Guests also came from Little Rock, Hot Springs, Fort Smith, Paris and Danville.

The original Waltreak church was closed more than three years ago and the building was unused except for elections. Erected in 1953 with funds provided by the estate of Jennie and

John Buchanan, the church was a place of worship in the Waltreak community until lack of attendance forced its closing.

Under the leadership of Milliard, initial plans are to have worship services at 10 a.m. each Sunday, as well as Sunday School classes for children in preK-6 and grades 7-12. Choir and youth will meet Wednesday evenings. Plans are to have music in the churchyard once a month as soon as weather permits. Leaders have volunteered to work in these ministry areas.

Methodist LeBonheur earns accolades

Methodist Le Bonheur Healthcare, the Memphis, Tenn.-based health system, has again been named among the Top 100 Integrated Healthcare Networks in the country, according to Verispan, the nation's premier rating system.

Hospitals making the Top 100 list had to meet critical success factors and have the ability to operate as a unified organiza-

tion in eight categories. The categories are functional integration, integrated technology, contractual capabilities, outpatient utilization, financial stability, services and access, hospital utilization and physicians.

"It is gratifying to see Methodist Le Bonheur Healthcare ranked among the best healthcare systems in the country," said Gary Shorb, president and chief exec-

utive officer of Methodist Le Bonheur Healthcare. "This speaks volumes about the dedicated employees we have at Methodist Le Bonheur and to the solid working relationship we have with our physicians. All of our efforts to improve service, enhance technology and maintain community-wide access are focused on giving outstanding care to our patients."

EDITOR *continued from page 1*

the perfect fit."

Jane Dennis, nationally recognized editor of *Arkansas United Methodist*, announced her retirement in February after 21 years of service. A reception in her honor is being planned for April 22.

"Jane has been a tremendous asset to the church in Arkansas for more than 20 years," said Taylor. "We will miss her personally as well as her writing and editorial skills."

Taylor added that Dennis will work with Hahn during the transition period and that readers can look forward to reading Dennis' work as she will continue to write occasionally for the paper on a freelance basis.

Hahn earned a master of science degree in journalism from Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism and a bachelor of arts degree from Austin College in Sherman, Texas. She began her career

as a copy editor at the *Galveston County Daily News* in 1998. Hahn started working as a religion reporter in 2000 at the *News-Star* in Monroe, La., and joined the staff of the *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette* in 2004.

Her writing has been recognized with awards for feature writing and education writing from the Louisiana-Mississippi Associated Press Managing Editors, the Education Writers Association and the Louisiana Press Association. She and her husband, Michael, live in Little Rock.

Hahn's first day as *Arkansas United Methodist* editor was March 16. She may be reached by email at hhahn@arumc.org or by phone at (501) 324-8000 or toll free at (877) 646-1816. Article submissions may also be sent to Hahn at Arkansas Conference, 2 Trudie Kibbe Reed Drive, Little Rock, Ark. 72202.

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.

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 j2jsafer@yahoo.com



Oct. 9-16: Shiprock, N.M., construction and community service, sponsored by St. James UMC, Little Rock. Glen Duncan, duncan7400@sbcglobal.net or (501) 551-1951.

Oct. 17-31: Ghana, Africa. mission trip, sponsored by Jacksonville First UMC. John Clark, jclark@brownjanitorsupply.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. Nurses to work in surgery including pre, post op and operating room are urgently needed. Gwen Efird, gwenefird@att.net.

Sept. 20-26: Texas Golden Triangle area, post-hurricane rebuilding, sponsored by St. James UMC, Little Rock. Jenni Duncan, 501-217-6708 or jenni@stjames-umc.org.

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.

Deaths

Hot Springs Village

LINDA CLAIRE FOX, 67, associate pastor of Village United Methodist Church in Hot Springs Village, died on March 11, 2009, after a courageous two-year battle with cancer.

She was born July 29, 1941, in Crossett, to John Benjamin Posey Jr. and Virginia Guthrie Posey. She was a 1963 graduate of Hendrix College, majoring in speech and drama. While at Hendrix, she was selected to Who's Who in American Colleges and Universities, was a member of Cardinal Key, honored as a year-book beauty for four years and won numerous awards for acting in dramatic productions.

After raising four sons, she returned to school and received a master's degree in Christian education from Garrett Evangelical School of Theology in Evanston, Ill. In 1997, she was ordained as a United Methodist deacon and joined the Louisiana Conference of the United Methodist Church. She worked for many years at University United Methodist Church in Baton Rouge. She also held a position with the Louisiana Conference Office of the United Methodist Church, served on the Arkansas Area United Methodist staff as minister with children and families, and served three years as associate pastor at Christ of the Hills United Methodist Church, Hot Springs Village. During the past three years, until her death, she served as an associate pastor at Village UMC.

Linda loved life, her family and her church work. An avid nature person, she loved her flower gardens and was delighted each time she experienced a nature sighting, whether a deer, an unusual bird or an expanse of wildflowers. Throughout her life, especially during her bout with cancer, she exhibited her brave nature and strong faith in God through her work and witness. The sight of her preaching, while sitting in a wheelchair, wearing a sequined baseball cap to cover her hair loss from chemotherapy treatments, will be a lasting memory for many



Linda C. Fox

members of the congregation at Village UMC. Her ability to face tremendous adversity with a positive attitude and a beaming smile was an extraordinary example for all who knew her.

She was preceded in death by her mother, Virginia Guthrie Posey; grandson Andrew Ryan Fox; and nephew John Benjamin Posey IV. She is survived by her devoted husband of almost 46 years, Dr. James Nicolas Fox; four sons, James Nicolas Fox Jr. and wife Pennye of Baton Rouge, La., Jon Guthrie Fox, of Mobile, Ala., Robert Andrew Fox and wife Kristen of Charlotte, N.C., and William Benjamin Fox of New Orleans; her father, John Benjamin Posey Jr. and wife Olivia Bingham Posey of Crossett; one brother, Dr. John Benjamin Posey III and wife Victoria of New Orleans; and four grandchildren.

A celebration of her life was held March 16 at Village United Methodist Church. Memorials may be made to Village UMC or Hendrix College.

Belleville

JOE GRAMLING, 71, of Belleville, a local pastor serving Havana United Methodist Church, died March 10, 2009, at Chambers Memorial Hospital in Danville.

Survivors include his wife of 34 years, Eleanor Jean Martin Gramling; three sons, Bobby Chick and wife Pam, and Billy Chick and wife Wilma of Hartman, and Paul Gramling of Maumelle; one daughter, Tina Scott and husband Allen of Benton; one brother, Jim Gramling and wife Debra of Paragould; two sisters, Ima Shipman of Paragould and Betty Holland of Adrian, Mich.; and 11 grandchildren and 12 great-grandchildren.

Services were held March 12 at Western Yell County Church of Christ, with burial in Hartford Memorial Park at Hartford.



Remember When

100 Years Ago

March 25, 1909: First reports of calamities are often exaggerated as to the extent of injuries to life and property, but not so the first startling, painful news, "Brinkley has been destroyed by cyclone, thirty people killed and 150 wounded." We may never learn the exact number of the killed and wounded and can hardly expect a correct statement of the full loss in property destroyed; but after one week it is believed fifty were killed and not less than 250 wounded, while the property loss is variously estimated at \$600,000 to twice that amount, with very little tornado insurance held by any. Many believe that appalling calamity caused devastation the most complete and extensive ever witnessed in our state.

50 Years Ago

March 26, 1959: Amboy Methodist Church of North Little Rock announces plans to build a new sanctuary. The congregation has voted approval of the sale of \$38,000 in Broadway Plan bonds to finance the project. ... The new unit will provide worship and church school space for 250 people.

20 Years Ago

March 17, 1989: The annual pie supper at White Hall United Methodist Church (Forrest City District) on Feb. 25 resulted in proceeds of \$950, which will go to the Building Fund. John Hedden served as auctioneer. This follows on the heels of a barbecue in December which raised about \$1,000. The Rev. Bennie Harmon is pastor.



Calendar

MARCH

- 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.

APRIL

- April 3-4: Family Campout, Mount Eagle Christian Center.
- April 18: "Strengthening the Family" workshop, Healing Place Ministries, First UMC, Pine Bluff; Edna Morgan, 870-535-0101.
- April 18: Vital Signs, Lakewood UMC, North Little Rock, ministry training event for clergy and laity; (501) 324-8011 or (877) 646-1816 toll free.
- April 20-24: Camp Aldersgate Clean Up Week; (501) 225-1444.
- April 22-23: John & Marjem Gill Annual Preaching Workshop, with Renita Weems, Hendrix College, Conway; (501) 450-1263 or clark@hendrix.edu.

MAY

- May 5-7: New Church Boot Camp, Mount Sequoyah Conference & Retreat Center, Fayetteville; Bob Crossman, bcrossman@arumc.org or (501) 324-8012 or (877) 646-1816 toll free.
- May 7-9: "From Detours to Destinations: Worship, Music and Preaching" Worship Boot Camp, Mount Sequoyah Conference & Retreat Center, Fayetteville; Bob Crossman, bcrossman@arumc.org or (501) 324-8012 or (877) 646-1816 toll free.
- May 15-16: Conference UMW Spring Spiritual Growth Retreat, Camp Tanako.
- May 16: "Strengthening the Family" workshop, Healing Place Ministries, First UMC, Pine Bluff; Edna Morgan, 870-535-0101.

JUNE

- June 5-7: Local Pastor Licensing School, Part A, Mount Eagle Christian Center.
- June 7-10: Conference on Ecumenical Mission, Mount Sequoyah Conference & Retreat Center, Fayetteville.
- June 14-17: Arkansas Annual Conference, Hammons Convention Center & Central UMC, Rogers.
- June 22-28: Arkansas Conference Council on Youth Ministries Youth Choir tour.
- June 23-28: Family Folklore Camp, an intergenerational event with arts and crafts, music and folklore, and a trip to the Ozark Folk Center in Mountain View, Mount Eagle Christian Center.

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.

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. Resumes or inquiries addressed to: First United Methodist Church, 1100 Central Ave., Hot Springs, AR 71901. Web: www.fumchs.com. Phone: (501) 623-6668. Fax: (501) 623-2293. Email: brobud@fumchs.com.

HAMILTON UNITED METHODIST CHURCH, located approximately 12 miles south of Carlisle, is seeking a Christ-centered, creative self-starter to develop and lead a Christian education/activities program for children and youth, ages 2 to 18. The compensation is \$500 per month, a portion of which can be used to cover travel expenses. Resumes should be sent to Martha McCaskill via email, martha@roddymc-caskill.com, or mailed to: Martha McCaskill, 16 Pointe Clear, Little Rock, AR 72212.

PART-TIME YOUTH DIRECTOR for medium-sized church. Please send resume to: Vilonia UMC, 1112 Main Street, Vilonia AR 72173; or email to: viloniaumc@windstream.net; or call Pastor Belinda Price at (501) 952-9894 by April 10, 2009.

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

ASBURY UNITED METHODIST CHURCH, a 900-member church in West Little Rock, is searching for a Worship Leader for our Contemporary/Praise and Worship service. This part-time person needs to have a strong faith in Jesus Christ and a passion for leading people in contemporary worship. A background in contemporary praise and worship music is essential, with a music degree preferred. The ability to put together arrangements for vocalists and instrumentalists is vital. He or she needs to have a knowledge of United Methodism and be able to work well on a staff team. Asbury has a well-established group of musicians who make up the praise team. The ability to lead and relate to a diverse group of lay volunteers would be an asset. If interested, please send resume and cover letter by email to Rev. Bryan Fink at bryan@asbury-lr.org or by mail to: SPR Committee, Asbury United Methodist Church, 1700 Napa Valley Drive, Little Rock, AR 72212. Deadline for applications is April 15, 2009.

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Arkansans have a hand in July SpiLiRa youth event

SpiLiRa (pronounced *Spee-Lee-Rah*), short for Spiritual Life Rally, will be held July 13–17 at the University of Missouri in Columbia.

A South Central Jurisdiction-sponsored youth event, SpiLiRa is held once every four years and is open to all junior and senior high youth.

Rachel Goodwin of Little Rock, a member of the Arkansas Conference Council on Youth Ministries, is one of two youth co-conveners for the 2009 event. Rod Hocott, conference minister with youth and young adults, is an adult co-convener.

The rally will include five days of worship, music, concerts, small

groups, 25 workshops and special events. Musical guests will include The Katinas, Group 1 Crew and Super Chick. Puppeteer/comedian Taylor Mason will also perform.

Cost is \$290 per person if registration is received by May 1.

Details and registration information are available online at www.spilira.org, on the SpiLiRa 2009 Facebook group page, or by contacting Goodwin at r.emmaline.13@gmail.com or Hocott at rhocott@arumc.org.

The Arkansas Conference is making arrangements for a bus to provide transportation to the event. For details, contact Hocott at (501) 324-8008, (877) 646-1816 toll free or rhocott@arumc.org.

UM youth raise more than \$970,000 for the hungry

United Methodist News Service

COLUMBIA, S.C. — United Methodist youth teamed up on Super Bowl Sunday with young people across the United States to raise more than \$9.7 million in goods and dollars to fight hunger and poverty in their local communities through the 2009 Souper Bowl of Caring.

Nearly 12,520 churches, schools and businesses participated in this year's campaign, including about 2,357 United Methodist congregations and more than 20,000 United Methodist youth who have so far raised

\$971,771, said Caroline Stephens, director of church relations for the nonprofit Souper Bowl organization.

Since the campaign's launch in 1990, young people have raised more than \$41 million for soup kitchens, food banks and other charities in communities across the world.

During or following worship on game day, youth and young adults in all 50 U.S. states stand at the doors of their churches, collecting \$1 or a can of food from each person walking by. In 2008, United Methodists gave more than \$830,000 to the Souper Bowl of Caring.



AMENDMENTS, *continued from page 1*

church; representation of newly created conferences at general, jurisdictional and central conferences; the judicial council; episcopal elections; fiduciary responsibility; and clergy participation in the election of delegates to general, jurisdictional and central conferences.

"Amendments may be debated, but may not be amended," said L. Fitzgerald Reist II, secretary of the General Conference.

Voting on changes to the church's constitution occurs in the year following General Conference to provide annual conferences with time to familiarize themselves with the proposed amendments, he said. "This is an attempt by the General Conference to be flexible and respond more appropriately in a rapidly changing world," Reist added.

All constitutional amendments must be approved by a two-thirds vote of the total number of voting members of all annual conferences worldwide. The Council of Bishops is expected to announce the results during its 2010 spring meeting.

Bigger voice for clergy

If annual conferences approve proposed constitutional amendment 19, deacons, associate members and provisional members may join ordained ministers in full connection in voting for clergy delegates to general, jurisdictional and central conferences.

To be eligible to vote, local pastors

must have completed the course of study or master of divinity degree and have served under appointment for two consecutive years immediately preceding an election.

Another proposed amendment would allow lay people on the committee on investigation to vote on matters of ordination, character and conference relations of clergy.

The annual conference is the "basic unit" of the church, according to the denomination's Book of Discipline. It may include an entire state, part of a state or even parts of two or more states.

During the annual conference gatherings in the United States, Africa, Europe and the Philippines, one-year appointments of all conference clergy members are announced. New deacons and elders are ordained, candidates for ordination approved, special projects and ministries recognized and budgets are set. A bishop presides over each annual session.

U.S. conference changes

In 2007, delegates to the North and South Indiana Conferences voted to merge, an action that was approved by the North Central Jurisdictional Conference in 2008. The new Indiana Annual Conference will have its first conference session June 25-28 in Muncie.

Delegates to the 2008 Northeastern Jurisdictional Conference approved



A highlight of the 2008 Arkansas Annual Conference was the baptism of Sadie Joy Ledbetter, daughter of United Methodist pastors Susan and Justin Ledbetter. Arkansas UM clergy and laity will meet June 14-17 in Rogers for the 2009 conference.

specific plans for the creation of two new annual conferences from the uniting of six conferences from the New York state portions of Wyoming and Troy along with all of the churches in Western New York and North Central New York.

The Pennsylvania portion of the Wyoming Conference will join the Central Pennsylvania to create a new conference in Pennsylvania, and the Vermont portion of the Troy Conference will become part of the New England Conference. The effective date for the change is July 1, 2010.

Annual conference members from

Central Pennsylvania and Wyoming are expected to vote on a recommendation that the new Pennsylvania conference be named the Susquehanna Annual Conference, which is the name of river that winds throughout much of the conference boundaries.

Arkansas gathering

United Methodist clergy and laity from across Arkansas will gather for the 2009 Arkansas Annual Conference June 14-17 in northwest Arkansas. Anticipating more than 1,000 persons to attend, the conference will be held at the Hammons Convention Center and Central UMC in Rogers.