



United Methodist Arkansas

April 17, 2009

College chaplain named to head national group

■ *Miller-Yow now chairs black caucus*

By Heather Hahn

Black Methodists for Church Renewal Inc., has elected Ronnie Miller-Yow, as national board chairman and president.

In that role, he will oversee the national black caucus' advocacy work within the United Methodist Church.



Ronnie Miller-Yow

"Part of our mission statement says that we are to be called to be agitators of conscience for the church."

Miller-Yow said. "We want to raise those issues

that address concerns of social justice throughout the church and equality for all."

Nearly 400 registered members of Black Methodists for Church Renewal elected Miller-Yow at the group's 42nd annual meeting, held March 25-27 in Pittsburgh. He will serve a one-year term, with the potential of being re-elected up to four years.

Miller-Yow also serves as pastor of Wesley Chapel United Methodist Church and chaplain of historically black Philander Smith College in Little Rock. He will be ordained a full elder at the Arkansas Annual Conference in June.

See Miller-Yow, page 10

Mission offers more than memories



In 2004, the Arkansas United Methodist Conference's Volunteers in Mission program decided to build a new church for the congregation of La Iglesia de la Restauracion in Alajuela, Costa Rica. Since then, some 200 volunteers have worked on the project, replacing the rickety tin building shown in the inset with the two-story structure shown below.

Main photo by Patrick Shownes/ Inset photo courtesy of Kay Parda

■ *Building Costa Rican church changed lives*

By Heather Hahn

Five years ago, the tiny Methodist congregation in Alajuela, Costa Rica, was worshipping in a rusty tin, one-room building beside a coffee field.

Today, because of the volunteer labor of Arkansas United Methodists, the Costa Rican worshippers can sing God's praises in a two-story brick sanctuary and study Scripture in a separate, colorfully decorated Sunday School building.

Twenty-three Arkansans traveled to Costa Rica in early February to mark the completion of the bulk of their construction project with a dedication service.

They celebrated with a congregation that has expanded along with their facility — from fewer than 40 people in 2004 to now more than 120 regular worshippers, including several young families.

La Iglesia de la Restauracion (which means the Church of the Restoration) still has plenty of potential for further growth. That coffee field is now rapidly being

See Costa Rica, page 6

For greater good, Christians advised to think greener

■ *Church conference deals with climate change threat*

By Scharmél Roussel

Reducing consumption was the shared message from keynote addresses and workshops at the second annual "Caring for Creation" Conference.

By curtailing how much stuff they use, people and organizations can reduce carbon emissions and other waste, preparing for a more sustainable environment for future generations of God's children.

"Scientists have long called earth the 'Goldie Locks' of planets," said Robert McAfee, administrator for Repower Arkansas who opened the conference. "It's not too hot, not too cold."

However, he said, the thin, fragile layer of atmosphere is becoming thicker with trapped heat. A hotter earth doesn't just mean less ice at the poles but also more erratic weather patterns — and that can be devastating for the world's poor.

The conference on March 27-29, at the Mount Sequoyah Conference and Retreat Center in Fayetteville, called on Christians to take seriously the threat of

climate change.

Eighty-four people from Arkansas, Oklahoma, Texas, Nebraska, Missouri, Virginia, South Dakota, Louisiana, Washington and Washington, D.C. attended the conference.

Global warming is a fact, McAfee stressed. RePower Arkansas is part of the Governor's Commission on Global Warming initiatives, which seeks to increase energy efficiency, the use of renewable energy sources and provide the stimulus for economic growth

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INSIDE HEADLINES

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■ *A Cinderella Story Ministry helps girls get new gowns and slippers for the big dance, page 9.*

■ *Get earthy Lu Harding, director of Mount Eagle Christian Center, shares conservation tips, page 10.*

Editor's Corner

A light bulb goes on

Last spring, I had the privilege of traveling to Haiti to report on the mission trip of a group of Presbyterians, mostly from El Dorado.

The group, led by the remarkable 91-year-old Frances Landers, braved two days of air travel and a bone-rattling drive into Haiti's remote southwestern mountains to visit schools funded by Landers' Haiti Education Foundation.

For more than 25 years, Landers had raised money from Christians (including United Methodists) across the U.S. to build elementary and secondary schools in rural Haiti where previously there had been none.

The nonagenarian expected this trip, her 43rd to the Caribbean nation, would be her last to the land she had grown to love.

We were in the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere, where nearly half the population is illiterate and the average life span is less than 58 years.

The streets of Port-au-Prince, the nation's capital, were inundated with sewage. A few weeks before our visit, the city had seen riots over the rising cost of food. I had never before encountered such poverty.

The lush, green mountains where the Haiti Education Foundation-supported schools stand are far more tranquil and far cleaner.

Still, in a place where most people live in wooden shacks with tin roofs, I knew that our accommodations were positively luxurious.

We stayed in a concrete guesthouse



Heather Hahn

operated by the Episcopal Diocese of Haiti near two of the schools. The house had a fairly reliable electrical generator, and it powered in each room, a single, compact fluorescent light bulb.

I laughed when I saw those familiar, curlicued bulbs.

Even in this beleaguered country, I thought, people are making an effort to go green.

Of course, those light bulbs made a lot of economic sense.

Fluorescent bulbs use between one fifth and one third of the energy needed by their incandescent counterparts, and they last eight to 15 times longer.

I found those light bulbs illuminating in more than just the literal sense. I realized that looking for ways to conserve energy isn't just about saving money or even saving polar bears in the Arctic (as majestic as they are). It's about saving people — particularly the poor.

Just months after our trip, four powerful storms — including two hurricanes — pounded Haiti in quick succession, leaving behind death and devastation.

Global warming doesn't cause storms. But climate scientists have found that rising ocean temperatures help make tropical cyclones more intense and ultimately more destructive to the people in the storms' path.

This issue focuses on both United Methodist mission work and church efforts to better care for the environment. The two are deeply connected.

And if people in Haiti can find ways to be more energy efficient, then surely we can too.

Reception to honor former editor Jane Dennis

Special to the Arkansas United Methodist
A reception will be held April 22 in honor of Jane Dennis, editor of the Arkansas United Methodist for over 20 years. Jane announced her retirement in February.



Jane Dennis

The reception will be from 4:30 pm to 6 pm in the Philander Smith College Library con-

ference room. Philander Smith is at Chester Street and Daisy L. Gatson Bates Drive in Little Rock.

Those who are able to attend should R.S.V.P. by April 20 to Martha Taylor at mtaylor@arumc.org.

For those unable to attend the reception, an online guestbook has been opened for friends to wish Jane well, share a fond memory or send a word of thanks for her service to the United Methodist Church in Arkansas.

The online guestbook is located at www.arumc.org/guestbook.

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 (Polaroid) photos or digital photographs printed on plain or photographic paper. Digital photos must have a minimum resolution of 200 dpi 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 hhahn@arumc.org. For information, call (501) 324-8037. The next deadline is April 22.

Services planned to help victims of violence heal

Special to the Arkansas United Methodist

For the fourth year, Healing Place Ministries will have memorial services where loved ones and other interested citizens can remember victims of homicide and other related violent crimes.

The Area Agency on Aging of Southeast Arkansas as well as the Sixth and Eleventh Judicial Districts Prosecuting Attorneys' Victim Witness Divisions are co-sponsoring the services.

The first service will be at 3 p.m. April 26 at First United Methodist Church, 200 W. Sixth St. David F. Moseley, the senior pastor, will deliver the message of hope.

Pine Bluff Mayor Carl Redus or his representative plan to attend with other city officials.

The second service will be at 11:30 a.m. April 28 inside the Kendall Center of Philander Smith College, Chester Street and Daisy L. Gatson Bates Drive in Little Rock.

The Rev. Ronnie Miller-Yow, Philander Smith's chaplain and pastor of Wesley Chapel, will deliver the sermon.

Little Rock Mayor Mark Stodola and a representative from North Little Rock Mayor Pat Hays are among those who plan to attend.

The gatherings coincide with National Crime Victims' Rights Week, April 26 to May 2.

The National Association of VOCA Assistance Administrators and the Office of Victims of Crime help provide funding for similar services across the country.



Edna Morgan

The theme for this year's observance is "25 Years of Rebuilding Lives: Celebrating the Victims of Crime Act."

At each service will be a wall featuring the names of the past years' homicide victims in

Pulaski, Jefferson and Lincoln counties. A crime survivor will provide a testimonial at each service. Representatives from crime victim service agencies as well as consumer protection and prevention agencies will attend.

Last year, 73 homicides occurred in Pulaski County, and 19 in Jefferson County.

"We hope to raise awareness about crime victims' rights and the services available in our communities," said Edna Morgan, crime victims' chaplain with Healing Place Ministries.

"We want victim survivors to know they don't have to go through this alone."

The Pine Bluff-based group aims to provide education to the community through workshops that address wholeness of body, mind and spirit. A main focus of the ministry is crime victims' advocacy.

To learn more about Healing Place Ministries, visit www.healingplaceministries.com.



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Martha S. Taylor • Director of Communications
Heather Hahn • Editor
Patrick Shownes • Communications Coordinator

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

Fax: (501) 324-8018.

E-mail: hhahn@arumc.org

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

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2 Trudie Kibbe Reed Dr. Little Rock, AR 72202



(501) 324-8018



hhahn@arumc.org

Viewpoint

Dear Friends:

The last notes of the Easter trumpets have died away. The pungent odor of Easter lilies has cleared the sanctuary.

The sanctuary will not seem so full as it did on April 12. There is an understandable “let down,” a kind of post-Easter depression that churches and pastors often feel. Perhaps that is the reason the Sunday following Easter is often called, “Low Sunday.”

I am always reminded on Low Sunday of the faith journey of Elijah. You can read it in the Book of I Kings beginning in the 17th chapter, and continuing into the Book of II Kings.

You remember the story of Elijah and his contest with the

An Occasional Word from the Bishop



prophets of Baal. Elijah trusts God, has faith in God and wins a stunning victory for God over the prophets of Baal. And they, for their trouble, all die.

But in the aftermath of his victory, Elijah flees into the wilderness, fearful for his life. He speaks of being the only one left who will follow God. He is in a true “blue funk.”

He is ready to crawl under a bush and die. The story ends as Elijah rediscovers his faith in God. He finds anew his trust in God. In that faith and trust, he finds the strength to carry on

as a prophet.

I think Elijah briefly forgot that this Kingdom of God business, this prophet business was not about him.

Remember he said, “I alone am left... .” But, paraphrasing, God said, “I’ve got thousands who have not bowed down to Baal.”

Being a prophet — speaking for God — is about God, not about Elijah.

Elijah was not alone, not as long as he had faith in God. Our faith is not




Charles Crutchfield

in the great natural forces of the universe, the earthquake, wind and fire. Our faith is not in armies or rulers or money. It is in God. Faith makes a difference.

The “Low Sunday” lesson in a time of depression or recession is that you are never alone if you trust the God who knows the way out of the tomb, the God who inspires others not to bow to Baal or to mammon or to the lesser gods of our world, the One who will hold you close to a loving heart, the God who bathes you with a divine grace.

It matters who you trust. It matters in whom you place your faith.

Faithfully,

Charles Crutchfield 

Holy Land pilgrimage brings Gospels to life in unexpected ways

Earlier this year I was fortunate to travel to Israel with Bishop Charles Crutchfield and people whom he had ordained while he has served as our bishop.

Thanks to the cooperation of our tour company, Educational Opportunities and a generous grant from the United Methodist Foundation of Arkansas, the ability for the pastors to make the significant trip was enhanced. What a privilege for this to be my first trip to the Holy Land!

My expectations were high. Still, I was not prepared for the power of the experience.

While traveling, I purchased a book by Bargil Pixner titled, *Jesus Throughout Galilee According to the Fifth Gospel*.

The author shares his extensive knowledge of the customs, geography and archaeology in the Holy Land. The information he shares about the land itself help to open the contents of the four Gospels.

We spent time at holy places and churches where so many of the major events of Jesus’ life occurred. It was important to visit the Church of the Nativity, the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, the Garden of Gethsemane and the other stations on the Via Dolorosa.

However, I found that some of the ordinary places were the most profound. On the first morning after we arrived, we were near the Sea of Galilee with our guide, Tsippi Setal. We



Roy P. Smith

walked up a narrow dirt road up into an area called the Valley of the Winds. The only sounds were the singing of the birds and the wind. In that moment, time was frozen. This could easily have been a road that Jesus and his disciples used

while making their way to Jerusalem.

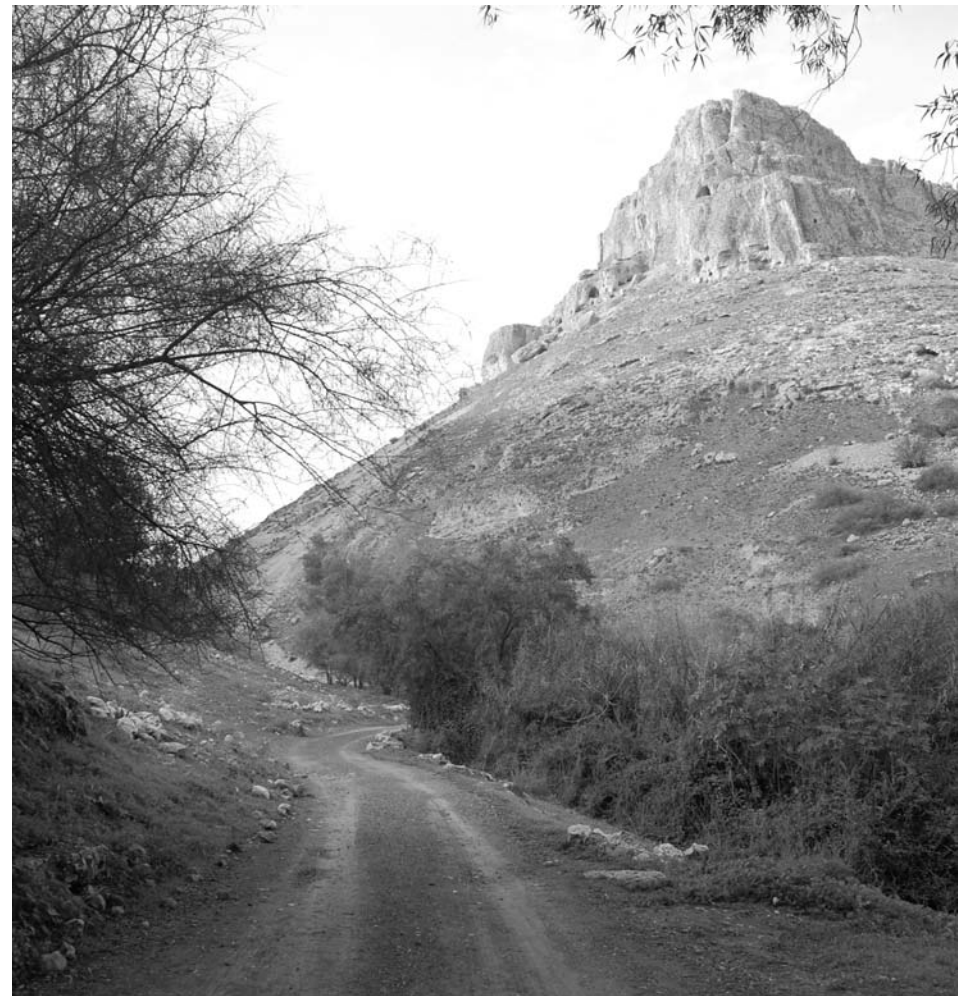
As I write this reflection, it is Palm Sunday evening. As Holy Week begins, I read Mark’s account of that last week. Each year for me the events of Holy Week come alive. I have read the story countless times yet each year it is fresh and new. How can there still be surprises in a story so familiar?

Pixner is right. There is really something about the place. For me there is a new understanding of how the events and places of Holy Week fit together. Perhaps seeing is believing.

What an important gift it is to see and to believe.

The real Power comes when our seeing and our believing can transform us to live more like our Lord and Master as we follow his footsteps in a mission and ministry.

Roy P. Smith is the director of ministries and assistant to the bishop for the Arkansas Conference of the United Methodist Church. He can be reached at rsmith@arumc.org.



A dirt road winds its way through the Valley of the Winds near the Sea of Galilee. The path is reminiscent of the roads where Jesus walked with his disciples.

Photo by Alexandra Holland

FOR HEAVEN’S SAKE By Mike Morgan



Viewpoint

To stay relevant, churches need 'traditioned innovation'

My cell phone recently died, and of course the only alternative from my cell phone company was an upgrade to new hardware.

I had been thinking about one of the new generation of phones that does everything but wash your dishes. When I mentioned that to the young salesman, he opened the door to a wonderland of technology that I had never considered. In a matter of minutes, I was the proud owner of an "iPhone," the latest best thing.

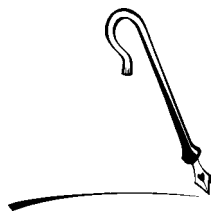


Bud Reeves

After taking it home, I realized what this new technology was going to cost me, what a steep learning curve it would take to master it and the fact that I didn't really want to do most of what my iPhone could do. The next day, I returned the technological beast for a simpler phone.

It was another vignette in the ongoing battle between innovation and tradition. I use as much technology as I need, realizing that there is much I don't care to investigate. To the extent that it is possible, I like to avoid change.

In the church, there is a similar conflict whether you're talking about worship, leadership, theology, social



The Shepherd's Staff

By William O. "Bud" Reeves

justice or church programs. The "seven last words of the church" — "We have always done it this way" — competes with the mantra, "The future is about leading change."

Historically the church has been on the forefront of social change: education, health care, abolition of slavery, temperance, civil rights and other movements have been championed by Christians.

Faith-based organizations like The Salvation Army and Habitat for Humanity have set the standard. But in the last 25 years, the church has become more the conservator of tradition, resistant to change, and social entrepreneurs have increasingly operated in the secular realm. Have we become irrelevant?

Dr. Greg Jones, dean of Duke Divinity School, writing recently in *Faith and Leadership*, proposes a way beyond the conflict. He calls for a return to the Christian notion of "traditioned innovation." It is not necessary to choose between the two poles of preserving tradition or leading change.

We can conserve the wisdom of the past and embrace the future.

Traditioned innovation is the story of Scripture. Jesus rejects not one sentence of the Law, yet he calls people to a new life in God in Matthew 5:18. Paul was proud of his Jewish heritage, yet he counted it worthless compared to knowing Christ in Philippians 3:3-7.

The problem is not tradition; it's traditionalism. Theologian Jaroslav Pelikan's famous distinction is, "Tradition is the living faith of the dead; traditionalism is the dead faith of the living." Tradition gives depth to life and may be constantly applied in new situations. We do not need traditionalism — that's slow, hardening death. Neither do we need change for change's sake — that's chaos.

What we need is transformation — the preservation of timeless wisdom and values through constant, purposeful innovation. That's how we survive.

Jones writes, "Transformative change, rooted in tradition and the preservation of wisdom, cultivates the adaptive work that is crucial to the ongoing vital-

ity and growth of any organism, Christian institutions included."

I just returned from a trip to the Holy Land. Many of the amazing sights there are in layers. Because of the periodic destructions of the cities, structures are built on the rubble of earlier structures. Many of the holy places and churches had layers from the Roman, Byzantine, Crusader, Ottoman and 20th century periods. They were archeological parables. Each new expression of piety was built on the foundation of the old.

We need new expressions of faith to carry the wisdom of the ages, but we still need faith to be newly expressed, or the church will be left in the rubble of history. Being true to our tradition does not mean that we are dead; it can be the core of our life together.

As I write, it is Holy Week. As you read this, you have celebrated the resurrection on Easter. There is no time in our Christian year more rich in tradition, yet none more transformational, either. We are resurrection people, called to spread the Good News of the risen Lord to new generations of people in constantly changing circumstances. With a strategy of traditioned innovation, we will be more effective in our witness and more true to our calling.

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

Former physician makes environment his patient

United Methodist News Service

In just two years, J. Matthew Sleeth has addressed church and civic groups almost 800 times.

His message is always one of faith, always focused on caring for the earth and all that is upon it.

Sleeth will be one of the keynote speakers at "For the Least of These Our Brethren: Faith, Justice and the Environment," a conference May 2 at Pulaski Heights United Methodist Church in Little Rock.

Sleeth, now in his 50s, came to this commitment just a few years ago, while on vacation, on an island.

"My wife and I were sitting outside in the nighttime, breeze blowing and this island had no cars, didn't have light pollution, didn't have the noise pollution," he recalled.

"It was just absolutely beautiful. And Nancy asked me a question that was really to change my life, which was 'what did I think was the biggest problem in the world?' And I said that the world is dying.

"There aren't chestnuts on Chestnut Street. There aren't elms on Elm Street. There are no caribou in Caribou, Maine. There are no buffalo in Buffalo, New York. You can go on and on. And I don't

think that anybody can suppose that those changes can continue indefinitely."

At the time, Sleeth was an emergency room physician, and chief-of-staff at a hospital in Maine. The family had prestige, money and security. Then he examined the human-made illnesses of creation.

"My diagnosis is that we have really approached this gift of creation and the earth as something just to supply our wants, and to be made profit off of to the extent that we're not thinking about generations to come beyond us," he said. "And the diagnosis is, I think, pretty dire if we don't change."

His wife, Nancy, agreed. "We feel like it's our calling to help the church become not just an agent for change," she said, "but to become leaders of the environmental movement."

This concern was something the Sleeths felt deeply — enough for them to reassess and to change their entire lifestyle.

"I realized that I was really being called out of medicine, which was really difficult for me to accept because I loved it," Sleeth said. "And to go kind of on faith into a ministry that didn't really exist."

The Sleeths attend a United Methodist Church. Matthew Sleeth said the church has the theology to address environmental problems.

"I would like to see the United Methodist Church have leadership both from grassroots up and from the top down," he said.

His 2006 book is titled *Serve God, Save the Planet* and has another book planned called *God is Green*. The Sleeths' teen daughter, Emma, has written *It's Easy Being Green: One Student's Guide to Serving God and Saving the Planet*.

Nancy Sleeth has a book coming out with Tyndale Publishers called *Go Green, Save Green*, based on the myriad ways she has found to be kind to creation.

The Sleeths are sometimes called "tree huggers."

"I can't think of anything I'd rather be called now," Matthew Sleeth said. "The symbol of the Lord is the tree. It occurs on the first page. It says that trees were put here to be beautiful. It's the first aesthetic that we're given in the Bible."

J. Matthew Sleeth will speak at a conference at May 2 at Pulaski Heights UMC, 4823 Woodlawn Drive. The cost is \$40 per person; \$25 for students. To learn more, call the church at (501) 664-3600.



Don Weeks, the minister of the Arkansas conference's Volunteers in Mission, helps unload food from the Arkansas Rice Depot for families affected by the tornado that struck Mena on April 9. Weeks was among about 35 United Methodist Early-Response team members who operated the One-Stop for Disaster Relief on April 14 at St. Agnes Catholic Church in Mena. The group unloaded two semi-trailers of different items from Rice Depot and then re-loaded the left-overs afterward.

Coming Up

The Healing Place Ministries and the Victim Witness Office will co-sponsor a free workshop on "Elder Abuse."

The seminar will be from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. April 30 at Area Agency on Aging, 709 E. Eighth Ave., Pine Bluff. Continental breakfast and lunch will be provided.

The speaker will be Angela DeLeon of Bridgeport, Connecticut. DeLeon is the founder of the People's United Bank Masters Program, which is nationally recognized for helping senior citizens with crime prevention.

The training will cover the most prevalent types of elder abuse and how to provide appropriate referrals for the victims.

Registration is limited to 50 people, and the deadline is April 23. To sign up, call Edna Morgan at (870) 535-0101 or e-mail healingplacem@sbcglobal.net.

Second Baptist Church, 222 E. Eighth St., Little Rock, will host a conference titled "A Faithful Response to Global Warming" from 1 to 4 p.m. April 23. Among the sponsors are the Interfaith Alliance and Christian Coalition of America. To sign up, call Ellen McNulty at (870) 329-1396.

The North Central District Council on Youth Ministries will have its spring rally for youth in the seventh through 12th grades from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. April 25 at Grace UMC, 1075 Hogan Lane, Conway.

J.J. Whitney and Kondwani Phwandaphwanda will speak. The District Council on Youth Ministries and Wesley Foundation Band will perform. The cost is \$16. Youth are also requested to bring a canned food item, money for the Youth Service Fund and \$10 for a bracelet that provides formula for babies in Zambia.

To learn more, call Fonda Kirkman at (501) 329-5141.

Rushing Memorial UMC, 302 Benton St., Chidester, will have its

spring revival at 6 p.m. April 26 and 7 p.m. April 27-28. Howard Childs, retired UMC minister, will be the guest preacher. To learn more, call the church at (870) 596-2859.

First UMC in Jacksonville, 220 W. Main St., will host the IBLA Foundation grand prize piano and voice winners at 7 p.m. May 3.

The competition takes place each summer in Ragusa, Sicily, and the winners of this international competition spend the next year performing at Carnegie Hall in New York, Tokyo Opera City Hall, The Tchaikovsky Bolshi Hall in Russia and other locations.

To learn more call, Phil Fredric, director of music and worship arts at (501) 982-8176.

Philander Smith College will have its 14th annual Golf Tournament on May 15 at Rebsamen Golf Course. Check-in is at 7-7:45 a.m. and shotgun start time is at 8 a.m.

The four-person scramble is \$400 per team. Registration deadline is May 8.

To sign up, call Andrea Marshall at (501) 370-5392.

Quapaw Quarter UMC, 1601 S. Louisiana St., Little Rock, is taking applications for performing and visual arts camp "I Dream a World" on June 8-27.

Any youth who is 12-17 can apply. Acting, poetry/rap, dance/movement, singing, improvisation, photography, songwriting, painting/drawing and set design are all part of the curriculum. Students may also emphasize any artistic area that is of special interest to them. Broadway star Lawrence Hamilton will return as artistic director.

The camp costs \$500 per student, but full scholarships are available for the income qualified. Transportation, lunch and snacks are provided.

For an application, visit www.qqumc.org/IDAW or call Robby Matthews at (501) 375-1600.

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 24: District Superintendents' Seminar, Mount Sequoyah Conference & Retreat Center.
 June 24-27: Bishops' conference "Connecting Health and Faith ... Our Call to Action," Mount Sequoyah Conference & Retreat Center, Fayetteville.



Paul Smith

All singers are invited to participate in a new format for an All-Conference Choir that will sing during worship services June 14 and June 16 at Central UMC in Rogers.

Paul B. Smith, professor of music at John Brown University, will lead the choir. Before coming to JBU, Smith was principal conductor of choral music at Anderson University, Anderson, Indiana. He continues to serve as guest choral and vocal clinician for numerous choral events in many states. He is a former president of Arkansas National Association of Teachers of Singing.

Rehearsals will be at 3 p.m. June 7 and 4 p.m. June 14 at Central UMC, 2535 West New Hope Road, Rogers. Singers are asked to bring their own choir robes for services.

To join the mass choir, call Les Oliver at (479) 636-1630 or e-mail les@cumcrogers.com.

The Widow's Mite Award is given each year at the Arkansas Annual Conference. It is presented to a church that is served by a local pastor — full-time, part-time or student — or an associate member of Annual Conference.

There are no set rules for deciding which church deserves this award. It may be a church whose average atten-

dance has increased markedly over the past year, has been active in missions projects, has made a significant impact in the local community, disproportionate to its size or done something else out of the ordinary.

The executive committee of the Arkansas Fellowship of Associate Members and Local Pastors will select the winners. The award will be presented during Annual Conference in Rogers in June.

Nomination sheets are available at www.arumc.org under resources. The deadline is May 15. Completed nominations sheets can be e-mailed to Gary Lunsford at glunsford@cox.net.

Henderson UMC, 1300 W. Baseline Road, Little Rock, will have a piano concert by Charles Stanley at 3 p.m. April 26. Donations will help retire the debt on the church's Family Life Center. To learn more, call the church at (501) 455-2209.

The United Methodist Women of Highlands UMC, 371 Glasgow St., Bella Vista, will have their annual Flea Market from 7 to 11 a.m. May 16 in the church parking lot. To learn more, call Joyce O'Neil at (870) 876-2755.

The deadline for the next edition of the Arkansas United Methodist is 5 p.m. April 22. Mail submissions to editor Heather Hahn, Arkansas United Methodist, 2 Trudie Kibbe Reed Drive, Little Rock, AR, 72202, or e-mail information to hhahn@arumc.org.

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Calendar

APRIL
 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 4-6: Clergy Golf Retreat, Mount Eagle Christian Center & Mountain Ranch Golf Course Fairfield Bay; contact David Baker at lynn2david@windstream.net
 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



Lou Riley, a member of First UMC in Jonesboro, prays during a worship service at El Peje Youth Camp, southeast of San Isidro de El General. During the February mission trip, Arkansas United Methodists did construction on an outdoor worship center at the camp.

Photo by Patrick Shownes



The view looking out the sanctuary balcony window at La Iglesia de la Restauracion, the Church of the Restoration.

Photo by Patrick Shownes



Arkansas United Methodist volunteers share a prayer with a Costa Rican family whose home they visited while helping with Rice and Beans Ministries. The United Methodist ministry provides food to impoverished families in the mountains of southeastern Costa Rica. On every mission trip, United Methodist volunteers look for activities to do in addition to construction. The Arkansans worked with Rice and Beans Ministries on their February trip.

Photo by Patrick Shownes



Costa Rica, continued from page 1

overtaken by a bustling subdivision.

But even as the Arkansas mission volunteers helped enlarge the church, many say they found their own Christian faith enlarged as well.

"It's like any mission trip," said Kay Parda, a volunteer who has been involved in the building project from the beginning.

"Initially you are excited to go because you think you are going to make a huge difference because you can build something. ... But that's not really it. When you go, it's personal. It's a life-changing experience in so many ways spiritually."

The project has even inspired one of the volunteers to change careers.

Rhonda Cooper, then cook and custodian at First United Methodist Church in Bryant, joined a team from the church on a mission trip in February 2008.

Cooper is a member of Mount Vernon Baptist Church in Benton, but she was eager to join the effort after hearing the excitement from First UMC members about their mission experience.

While in Costa Rica, Cooper did everything from mixing concrete to hauling blocks as she helped with the construction of the church's bathrooms.

"It allowed me to see a side of myself that I've never seen before," Cooper said. "Even though that wasn't a huge impact on the world, I realized I had the ability to make a little bitty start."

When she returned to Arkansas, she told Parda, who at the time was minister for missions and outreach at First UMC in Bryant, that she planned to leave her custodial work and pursue her lifelong dream of becoming a registered nurse.

She now is studying nursing at Ouachita Technical College in Malvern and will graduate as a licensed practical nurse in December.

"It was during that trip that I really felt like I had enough faith in God to believe that He would see me through it," Cooper said. "He showed me that I could leave the United States and do something that was out of the box for me. He used that mission."

If God is willing, she said, she hopes to one day serve on medical missions.

The building project began with a Volunteers in Mission training session in Little Rock in March 2004. Parda was among the 32 people who attended.

She said she could immediately sense the Holy Spirit at work among the group. Only a few hours after meeting her classmates, Parda knew she wanted to share a mission trip with them.

Don Weeks, the Arkansas conference's minister of Volunteers in Mission, challenged the class to do just that and "get on-the-job training."

He hoped that after serving on a mission team together, the classmates would return to their home churches and lead people from their congregations to join the endeavor. The class accepted Weeks' challenge.

Most of the class already had participated in projects in Mexico and elsewhere in the United States.

To try something new, the class set its sights on Costa Rica.

In January 2005, the group embarked on its first exploratory trip to Costa Rica to scout out which projects the mission team could take on. After dropping by the Methodist Center in Alajuela, the group's first stop was the tin building where La Iglesia de la Restauracion then worshiped.

"There were four gothic columns out there, and some concrete block work where someone had started construction," Weeks recalled. "One of the things we talked about is that this is a good example of a mission team that probably start-



Shelia Reddig of First UMC in Jonesboro, admires the artwork in a Sunday School room painted the previous week by a team of volunteers led by Les Oliver of Central UMC in Rogers.

Photo by Patrick Shownes

A member of La Iglesia de la Restauracion, which means the Church of the Restoration, prays at the dedication of his church's recently completed two-story sanctuary, which was largely built by Arkansas volunteers.

Photo by Patrick Shownes



Map courtesy of GoVisitCostaRica.com

Costa Rica fast facts

- Population: About 4.25 million people
- Size: Slightly smaller than West Virginia
- Religions: More than 76 percent Catholic, 13.7 percent Evangelical
- Government type: Democratic republic
- Currency: colon, which currently exchanges at around 564 per U.S. dollar.

Source: CIA World Factbook

ed a project and never finished it. Everybody got to thinking we'll finish the job — we'll build this church."

Methodist missionaries from the United States established the Evangelical Methodist Church of Costa Rica on April 26, 1917. To this day, the church remains independent from the United Methodist Church with its own bishop and General Board.

The Evangelical Methodist Church of Costa Rica, which has about 8,000 members, is more conservative than its North American mother church, and as its name implies, more evangelical.

Worship services often reflect the influence of the Pentecostalism prevalent in Latin America. The music tends to be lively and upbeat, and parishioners are not shy about clapping to the rhythm and raising their arms heavenward in praise.

Larry Acton, senior pastor of Jasper United Methodist Church and one of the mission team leaders, said what really excited him about the project was that La Iglesia de la Restauracion was ideally positioned to draw more people to faith in Christ.

Alajuela is Costa Rica's second largest city with about 220,000 people, and La Iglesia de la Restauracion is near a major airport in the booming subdivision of Tuetal Sur.

Acton is a retired Volunteer in Missions director for the Oklahoma Conference, and he led the 2004 training session that launched the Costa Rican effort.

He worked with Heber Springs architect and fellow mission leader Jimmy Hudspeth in designing a church building that would be no mere concrete-block chapel but a church that would suit the multiple needs of its suburban congregation. He estimates that the main church building is at least 1,500-square-feet.

"This is the biggest United Methodist mission project ever undertaken by volunteers for the Costa Rican Methodist Church," Acton said.

Altogether some 200 people from Arkansas have participated in the project. The endeavor also has attracted workers from out of state, including Oklahoma, Tennessee and Alabama.

Since the project began, Acton has led eight teams of volunteers. On seven of those visits, the congregation invited him to preach in Spanish — a language he knows well.

In sharing the Word and establishing a relationship with the Costa Rican Christians, Acton said he "sensed family and our oneness in Christ."

Les Oliver, the minister of music and worship at Central UMC in Rogers, took his church's mission team to help with the project in January.

While there, the 19-member team painted the Sunday School classrooms in bright yellow and scenes of animals and nature.

Oliver said Central's mission team members have traveled to more places than he could count.

But this trip was the first time he couldn't speak the language of the people he was serving. At the church's Sunday worship service, he experienced a mini-Pentecost.

"I sat in that worship service and did not understand a word," he said. "But knowing that the Holy Spirit is moving through the congregation, it's almost as though language was no barrier. It was electrifying."

A mission trip lets people focus completely on God for a week, Parda said. Groups have devotions each day.

"You're out there for God to use," Parda said. "It's the best vacation you'll ever take, believe me."

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 j2jshafer@yahoo.com



James UMC, Little Rock. Jenni Duncan, 501-217-6708 or jenni@stjames-umc.org.

May 23-31: Salud Y Paz, Guatemala, medical mission, sponsored by Pulaski Heights UMC, Little Rock. Doctors, nurses, dentists, pharmacists, anesthesiologists and other willing helpers needed. Nurses to work in surgery including pre, post op and operating roomare urgently needed. Gwen Efird, gwenefird@att.net.

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

July 12-17: Mission United Methodist Church needs workers to serve at the Healing Hands Ranch, an aftercare ministry of Deaf Prison Ministries Network in Willis, Texas. Volunteers needed for construction, painting, grounds maintenance, electrical, general cleaning. Dee Mathes at (479) 430-6568 or the Rev. U. Wasington at (479) 782-0612.

Ongoing: "This Ole Church" Volunteers in Mission project. Help restore and repair churches in the Arkansas Conference. Teams will be painting, weather-proofing, doing 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.

Sept. 20-26: Texas Golden Triangle area, post-hurricane rebuilding, sponsored by St.



Charles Sigman, senior pastor of First UMC in Newport, washes the feet of parishioner Jean Boyce at a worship service on April 8.

Photo courtesy of First United Methodist Church in Newport

He Is Risen!

In the church calendar, no other time better captures the drama and joy of Jesus' death and Resurrection than the week stretching between Palm Sunday and Easter.

United Methodists across the state marked the sacred week with a variety of events ranging from the whimsical — Palm Sunday petting zoos and Easter egg hunts — to the holy — foot-washing services and sunrise worship.

Here are the handful of photos we were able to include of these special traditions.



More than 25 children perform A Tale of Three Trees, under the direction of Jada Huff and Kris Miller, on Palm Sunday at Concord UMC in the Furlow community of Lonoke.

Photo courtesy of Concord United Methodist Church in Lonoke



Anne Lee Parker crouches beside donkey at Sunday School at Marion UMC. The children visited the burro from Circle R Ranch and learned about Jesus' triumphant entry into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday.

Photo courtesy of Marion United Methodist Church



Weston Jenkins, 2, finds just the treat he was seeking at the Easter Celebration for the Children at First UMC in Wynne. The youngsters hunted eggs, played an egg-toss game and joined in a tug of war.

Photo courtesy of First United Methodist Church in Wynne



Men at Primrose UMC dramatize the Last Supper as part of the original program, Not My Will But Thine Be Done. The Palm Sunday play, written and directed by music director Jean Atkins, depicts the events of Jesus' life starting with the Last Supper and going through the Passion and Resurrection.

Photo courtesy of Primrose United Methodist Church in Little Rock

Butterfly ministries helps girls come out of cocoons

■ *And dress up for prom and birthday celebrations*

By Heather Hahn

On a recent Saturday morning, United Methodist women played fairy godmother to more than 50 girls.

Inside First United Methodist Church in North Little Rock, volunteers transformed Sunday School classrooms into mini-boutiques where the young women could choose among rows of sequined and ruffled formal gowns.

The volunteers also worked their magic on the fellowship hall where the teens could browse through tables of accessories to find matching shoes, purses and jewelry. Representatives from a local cosmetology school were also on hand to offer makeup and hair tips as well as coupons for future appointments.

"It's the best day I ever had," said Amy Cabrera, as she was getting her first makeover. "I get my own dress, and I get to have lots of fun with my sister."

The elementary school student had selected a simple black frock to wear to church, while her older sister, Herendira, picked out a hot pink gown for Hall High School's prom in Little Rock. The younger sister said the event provided her with the first dress she had ever owned.

Butterfly Community Ministries, a nonprofit group that works with the local Hispanic community, co-sponsored the dress giveaway on March 28 with First UMC.

Most of the ministry's board members are also members of the North Little Rock congregation.

The event's goal was to help families struggling in the bad economy by offering teens free dresses for their prom or other special occasions. More than half of the participants came in search of outfits for their quinceanera — the traditional Hispanic coming-of-age celebration for 15-year-old young women.



Amy Cabrera, left, gets her first makeover from Ember Hardridge, a student at Lee's School of Cosmetology in Little Rock. Lee's School was among the Arkansas businesses that volunteered to join in a formal dress giveaway at First United Methodist Church in North Little Rock.

Photo by Heather Hahn

Mary Hoey, the ministry's executive director and a former associate pastor at First UMC, began planning the gathering seven months ago after hearing about a similar event in Chicago.

"The times the way they are, I felt we needed to offer something to young women wanting to take part in proms," Hoey said. "We don't want anyone to do without participating in an important event in their life if we can help them."

Church members donated some 200 new and gently used dresses, many worn only once to a school dance years ago. But the event soon grew to be far more than a one-day clothing closet.

Claire Hawn, a Butterfly Community Ministries board member, said she was amazed by the number of businesses willing to donate their services.

Florists gave away coupons for free wrist corsages and boutonnieres.

Manicurists offered to paint the participants' nails. Both Lee's School of Cosmetology and Arkansas Beauty School in Little Rock also offered coupons, and Lee's students even came to the event to share their expertise.

In addition, a representative from the League of United Latin American Citizens was on hand to act as an interpreter and distribute information about the group's scholarship program.

First UMC members with a knack for sewing also were available to do dress alterations on site.

"It's so exciting to see the expression on their face when they find the dress," Jackye Krebs, one of the seamstresses.

"And then if they're lucky enough to find the shoes and the bag too, it's just like Christmas all over again."

Hoey spread the word about the event through Spanish-language media,

and the giveaway drew families from as far away as Rogers and Bentonville. A family from Oklahoma attended after reading about the event while on spring break in Arkansas.

For many of the participants, the event was not just a free shopping excursion but also a chance to create treasured family memories. An aunt brought her niece, a grandmother her grandchild and a father brought his daughters.

Church member Joyce Perez said she was particularly touched by the delight in one father's expression when his daughter twirled around to show off the gown she had selected.

"It reminded me of when I went prom shopping with my dad," Perez said. "It was very neat just to see the beam he had."

Lourdes Vasquez brought her niece Aurora from Memphis to pick out a dress for her quinceanera.

"This is a huge help," Vasquez said. "Now is not a good time to be buying dresses."

Estefani Rios, a senior at Parkview High School in Little Rock, agreed. She came with her 9-year-old sister, Ashley Murguia, to select the perfect prom dress. Her sister meanwhile found a dress for her sister's high school graduation.

"I think this was a good opportunity," Rios said as she walked over to learn more about the LULAC scholarships. "I think it's going to help my parents' budget a lot."

So many dresses were left over from the March 28 gathering that Hoey decided to have an encore on April 7. About 20 teens came this time, and each was able to take home two dresses.

"It is just amazing to me the reception we've gotten," said Hoey, who hopes to make the giveaway an annual event. "People are so grateful."

To learn more about Butterfly Community Ministries, visit butterflycommunity.org.

Day without lunch can boost the United Methodist fight against malaria

■ *Event benefits initiative Nothing but Nets.*

Special to the *Arkansas United Methodist*

NASHVILLE — The people of the United Methodist Church are marking the lead up to April 25, World Malaria Day, with a renewed call to members and friends to support Nothing But Nets.

The grassroots anti-malaria effort allows anyone, for \$10, to send a life-saving bed net to a family in Africa.

Bed nets protect children and their families from the bites of malaria-infected mosquitoes.

"Malaria is a crisis that is threatening many of God's children across the globe," said Bishop Thomas Bickerton, referring to malaria's rank as Africa's leading killer of children under age 5. "Insecticide-treated mosquito nets are the

most scientifically proven way to stop its spread."

Bickerton, chairman of the United Methodist Church's Global Health Initiative, joins with the people of the United Methodist Church in urging everyone to forego a lunch out, and to direct that \$10 savings toward the purchase of a bed net.

"We're asking people to 'skip a lunch, send a net, save a life,'" said Bickerton.

Dubbed "To Lunch or Not to Lunch?" the campaign highlights how \$10, the cost of lunch, is all that it takes to provide a potentially lifesaving bed net to an African family. A \$10 donation at www.umcnothingbutnets.org covers the cost of the bed net, its distribution and education on its use.

New downloadable resources are available on the Nothing but Nets Web

site. They include a bulletin cover, door hanger, Web banner, poster and postcard.

Inspired by a column by sportswriter Rick Reilly, Nothing But Nets' founding partners include the people of the United Methodist Church, Lutheran World Relief, the United Nations Foundation, the National Basketball Association's NBA Cares and *Sports Illustrated*.

To date, Nothing But Nets has raised \$25 million, enabling the distribution of 2.5 million bed nets.

Seven-year-old Hannah Skelton of Caldwell United Methodist Church in Caldwell, N.J., raised \$400 for Nothing but Nets after she learned of the plight of children in Africa from her pastor, the Rev. Jeff Markay.

"He told us kids were dying," she said, "and I really wanted to help."

Hannah emptied her piggy banks

and then scoured the house to find spare coins when her parents promised to match whatever she could raise.

Then she began calling family members and friends to ask if they could help her raise money for nets.

When Hannah took the money to the bank and shared her story with the bank teller, she got \$10 more.

Hannah is continuing her quest to raise money and says she will continue to give through her allowance.

Says Hannah: "I am trying to get everyone in Africa to have a mosquito net."

The Arkansas Conference has given more than \$169,000 to Nothing But Nets since 2007.

To learn more or make a contribution to Nothing But Nets, visit the Conference Web site at www.arumc.org/donate_now.php.



Outgoing chairwoman Cheryl Walker (center) prays over the Rev. Ronnie Miller-Yow as he begins his term as head of Black Methodists for Church Renewal, Inc.

Photo by United Methodist News Service

Miller-Yow, continued from page 1

He takes on his new role at a time when the number of predominantly black United Methodist congregations is dwindling.

Between 2005 and 2008, 111 black churches shut their doors nationwide, said Cheryl Walker, Miller-Yow's immediate predecessor as board chairwoman and a staff member on the General Board of Discipleship.

Walker hasn't yet confirmed the most recent statistics from 2008, but she estimates there are now slightly more than 2,300 black churches.

In Arkansas, Miller-Yow said, there are now 27 predominantly black United Methodist churches, but only a handful have more than 100 members. More than half, he said, have fewer than 50 members.

Miller-Yow wants to help reverse that trend and also the declining numbers in the United Methodist Church overall.

"So many of our churches, especially African-American churches, are in decline," he said.

"We are thinking about what we can do to strengthen our church. Our theme of our last meeting was 'A New Church for a New Day.' We have to really engage the community before we can strengthen our churches."

Overall, the United Methodist Church has about 444,000 black members, including recent immigrants from the Caribbean and Africa.

Miller-Yow plans to encourage lay members and pastors to visit black churches that are thriving and bringing in new disciples to see what ideas they can bring back to their home congregations.

"The type of networking that Black Methodists for Church Renewal provides is one of the many advantages I see," Miller-Yow said.

Walker said Miller-Yow brings a much-needed dynamic, young voice to the group's leadership.

At 35, he is one of the youngest leaders of the group since it began in 1967 — a year before the Methodist Church and Evangelical United Brethren Church merged to form the United Methodist Church.

"I think he brings a lot of energy and enthusiasm," Walker said. "And I expect

he'll bring new young adults in."

Miller-Yow is already bringing new young people to the church in his role as chaplain at Philander Smith, a United Methodist institution. Now he said half of those who attend his services at Wesley Chapel, on Philander's campus, are students.

He also works to help those with a call to pastoral ministry to discover their "gifts and graces."

Walker said new black clergy are particularly needed.

"We've got to get back to growing our own preachers," she said. "We've let that fall by the wayside in the last few years."

Miller-Yow quotes President Barack Obama, saying that the black church is moving from "the Moses Generation to the Joshua Generation." But he also notes that the two generations still have much to teach other.

"We are talking about how do we walk together, the young and old?" he said. "We want to be a truly inclusive church."

Miller-Yow formerly served as the board chairman of the South Central Jurisdiction of Black Methodists for Church Renewal. He continues a long tradition of Arkansas leadership in the group.

At the same meeting he was elected to the national board, two other Arkansans also were named board members — I. Malik Saafir, associate pastor at Theresa Hoover UMC in Little Rock, and Deborah Bell, director of community development for the United Methodist nonprofit group Black Community Developers.

Pamela Crosby, executive director of Black Methodists for Church Renewal, said Miller-Yow brings the experience and energetic spirit needed in his new role.

"BMCR is poised to make greater strides for Black Methodism and the United Methodist Church," Crosby said. "BMCR's Board of Directors is anxious to begin this new quadrennium under his leadership."

To learn more about Black Methodists for Church Renewal, visit www.bmcrumc.org.

Caring, continued from page 1

through "green-collar" jobs.

In a 2004 study of scientific journals with 928 peer-reviewed articles based on the research, no scientists disagreed with global warming as scientific fact. McAfee presented evidence and illustrations of the causes, manifestations and impact of increased carbon dioxide in the atmosphere and the subsequent change to global temperatures.

"The Arctic ice is melting," McAfee said. "The permafrost is disappearing. Methane gas that was previously trapped in ice for centuries is now bubbling up from lakes. The first mammal species — a freshwater dolphin in China — has been lost to global warming."

The carbon concentration level is now at 387 parts per million, higher than ever before in history, he said. At the current rate of increase, carbon levels will be at 600 parts per million by 2050.

If the trend continues, scientists agree, the earth will be "past the point of no return" by 2020.

McAfee added that the average carbon emissions per person were 4.7 tons per year in 2004. Averages were 4 tons in China, 11 tons in Russia, and 20 tons per person in the U.S. However, when melting ice raises sea levels, people in Bangladesh and similar economic circumstances suffer the most. The largest polluters are the least affected.

The United States is the largest gas consumer — 14 billion liters per day, more than the rest of the world put together, according to McAfee's charts. Most of the oil comes from foreign sources. Offshore drilling in the U.S. would result in an insignificant amount of output and would not be worth the effort and expense, McAfee explained.

McAfee, whose doctoral thesis was in climatology, advocates wind and solar energy. He said the U.S. has more solar potential than Germany and Spain, which now get 15 percent of their power from solar collection.

"The cheapest barrel of oil is the one not used," said Ray Anderson, author of *Midcourse Correction* and a United Methodist from Atlanta. As founder and chairman of Interface Global, Inc., Anderson made a commitment 14 years ago to do zero harm to the biosphere, and the company is halfway there. Interface Global is a manufacturer of modular carpet.

Using nature as a model, Anderson in the 1990s began manufacturing climate-neutral carpet that reuses everything in a life-after-life-after-life cycle. Nothing is wasted. Everything is remanufactured as something else.

Anderson's leadership changed the mindset of the corporation. Today the company is experiencing increased sales and earnings, showing that going green can be profitable. Interface is a global company with sales in 110 countries. It attracts and keeps the brightest graduates from the best schools, Anderson claimed. Other companies visit Interface to study its business model.

"A skeptical visiting industrial engineer stopped a forklift operator in our warehouse one day," Anderson told the group. "She asked 'And what do you do here, young man?' He replied, 'Ma'am, every day I come to work to save the earth.'"

"We need to start planning for billions of people to show up for dinner."

— Mark Matlock, systems ecologist

Companies usually measure success by numbers of factories and smokestacks, Anderson explained. In contrast, Interface measures success by how many smokestacks are shut down through use of alternative wind and solar technology. Consequently, the company's eco-footprint has been cut in half. All companies must do this by 2050 to avoid catastrophe, Anderson said.

To create a truly sustainable environment, the world's wealthier nations will need not only to generate less waste but also produce more food.

Marty Matlock, a systems ecologist and ecological engineer with the Division of Agriculture at the University of Arkansas at Fayetteville, said the world must increase food production by as much as 50 percent by 2050.

More intensive agriculture will be needed to feed an increasing population at the same time that water supplies are diminishing.

Educating young women about birth control may control population growth where water supplies will be most scarce, he said, but the ethical question of forcing Western culture on others is problematic.

"We need to start planning for billions of people to show up for dinner," he said.

John Hill, director of economic and environmental justice at the United Methodist General Board of Church and Society in Washington, D.C., urged conference participants to put their faith in God's abundance not worldly materialism.

"We have been on the super highway of growth, development and greed," Hill said.

"As a society, we are now stuck in congestion with turmoil and anxiety. We are at a crossroad."

This is the time to get off the super highway of consumption, he said. Christians need to grab the wheel, and change directions to seek the path of a larger truth so that we treat people in Africa like brothers and sisters and not like mission projects, he said.

"The plight of the poor, and the plight of the planet are connected," Hill said. "We know climate legislation will cost more. But doing nothing costs more for the earth."

He added: "We are called to talk to people who don't agree. We are called to transform, not conform."

Peter Illyn, founder and executive director of Restoring Eden, encouraged conference participants to go beyond changing light bulbs, adjusting the thermostat and recycling.

Illyn is an advocate of a "Belly-Button Christianity" concept, in which all people have a God-given connection to the earth.

"The earth is the Lord's and everything in it," Illyn quoted from scripture. "It's that simple."



It Happened



The Quilters of Texarkana Fairview United Methodist Church recently presented a handmade cross quilt to Barbara Gilbert, the church's senior pastor. Pictured from left are Beadie Kindler, Dorothy Garner, Babs Gordon, Jeannette Hinton, Gilbert, Becky Greathouse, Hazel Copeland and Maurine Towns.

Photo courtesy of Fairview United Methodist Church in Texarkana



Members of the Leachville United Methodist Church's Sunshine Sunday School class and other members hosted a pancake supper for the Buffalo Island American Cancer Relay for Life. The event was held at the fellowship hall of the church March 6. The annual Relay for Life will be held June 26 at the Leachville City Park.

Photo courtesy of Leachville United Methodist Church



Members of Mountainside United Methodist Church in Hot Springs Village released about 70 balloons, which carried the message: "And now these three remain: faith, hope, and love. And the greatest of these is love. GOD LOVES YOU!" on April 5. Bishop Charles Crutchfield preside over the church's 10th anniversary services at 8:30 and 10 a.m. April 19.

Photo courtesy of Mountainside United Methodist Church

Forty-one Hendrix College United Methodist Youth Fellowship Leadership Scholars traveled to Fort Smith for their spring retreat in March. The students spent Saturday night at St. Scholastica Monastery in Fort Smith where they worshiped and attended vespers with the nuns.

The group also participated in a program on spiritual discipline. As part of their retreat, the students broke into 10 groups and spoke during the Sunday morning services of 10 Fort Smith area churches.

At the worship services they discussed Hendrix Religious Life, and assisted with the services by leading prayers, participating in drama, sharing special music, leading children's sermons and assisting with Communion. Participating Fort Smith area churches included: Woodlands United

Methodist Church, Faith UMC, First UMC, Goddard UMC, Grace UMC, Journey UMC, Mission UMC, St. Paul UMC, Wesley UMC and Greenwood UMC in Greenwood.

David Orr, senior pastor at Fort Smith United Methodist Church, said the students "were present, upbeat, personable, and remarkable. They represented themselves, Jesus Christ, and Hendrix College in a most impressive way."

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

PART-TIME Music Director and/or Accompanist needed for United Methodist Church in the lovely Ozarks lakeside community of Bull Shoals, Arkansas. Duties for Director include coordinating with accompanist, weekly choir rehearsal, directing & practicing Easter and Christmas Cantatas, working with pastor and others who plan special services throughout the year. Salary \$6,000-\$7,000 annually. Duties for Accompanist include weekly choir rehearsal, playing and accompanying choir at Sunday Service, Easter and Christmas Cantatas, being available to play for weddings and funerals, and accompanying any special music during service. Salary \$4,000 to \$5,000 annually. Positions may be combined for a total PART-TIME salary of \$12,000. Please call Ann Manley, (870) 431-8758.

FAIRFIELD BAY UMC seeks to hire a Choir Director and a pianist. Both positions are open immediately. Compensation depends upon education and experience. Send Resume and salary requirements to: Fairfield Bay UMC, 765 Dave Creek Parkway, Fairfield Bay, AR. 72088.

HEBER SPRINGS UNITED METHODIST CHURCH is looking for a part-time organist. Duties will be practice on Wednesday nights and the 8:25 & 10:55 worship services on Sunday morning. You can send your resume to Jayson Jones, Chair of SPRC. JJdealer@Suddenlinkmail.com or call Mr. Jones at (501) 362-8211.

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@roddymccaskill.com, or mailed to Martha McCaskill, 16 Pointe Clear, Little Rock, AR 72212.

FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH of Little Rock seeks a part-time (approx. 15 hours per week) organist/accompanist. Duties include Wednesday night rehearsals, 8:30 & 11:00 worship services on Sunday morning, special services & rehearsals. Resumes may be submitted to Jon C. Peterson, Director of Music Ministries at jpeterson@fumcl.org. For more information call (501) 372.2256. Review of applications is ongoing until filled.

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



A meditation bench behind Kaetzell Lodge at Mount Eagle Christian Center offers a breath-taking view of the Arkansas wilderness in winter. Lu Harding, the director of the center in Clinton, works to preserve Mount Eagle's natural beauty and help Arkansas Christians better appreciate and care for creation.

Photo courtesy of Lu Harding

Outdoors minister hopes to make stewardship second nature

Lu Harding has made it her mission to teach the state's United Methodists about better earth stewardship. The ordained deacon and former youth minister was named the director of Mount Eagle Christian Center in Clinton in 2000 — the same year the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry created a professional certification in camp and retreat ministries. After completing the three-year certification program at Drew University's Theological School in Madison, N.J., Harding now puts her training to use at the 1000-acre Christian center.



Lu Harding

How did you first get interested in earth stewardship?

[At Drew University's Theological School], a lot of the emphasis was on environmental stewardship. Camp and retreat centers, of course, are the ideal places to educate people because they are connected to the outdoors. ... We really focused on the spirituality of camp ministries.

So much of that was loving and respecting God by caring for all of God's creation and helping young people relate to God through nature. But you must be really careful to separate pantheism from panentheism.

What's the difference between pantheism and panentheism?

Panentheism is the idea that everything that is, is in God, is within God's boundaries, because God created it all. So we don't worship the rock, we worship the Creator of all. Pantheism would say God is in the rock.

How did you go from working in youth ministry to outdoor ministry?

I was the youth minister at St. James United Methodist Church in Little Rock for many years. One of the most powerful experiences that we had was a high adventure trip. We went to eastern Tennessee, and we did rock climbing, rappelling and backpacking.

There were no outlets for your hair dryers and curling irons. We only took what was essential. We hauled our own water. We spent 12 days getting to know

each other better, living together in Christian community. Taking kids out of their everyday environment and putting them back into God's natural setting did a lot for their spiritual well-being. That's when I began to realize that outdoor ministries can be very

powerful.

You helped build the 2,800-square-foot log home that also serves as the center's office. What was that like?

It was an amazing experience because it gave me the experience as a general contractor that I would need as we built other facilities at Mount Eagle. This was a small project, and I could make mistakes here and learn from them.

We built a log house with more than 300 volunteers, many of them preachers who have a lot more skill [at construction] than you might think. The minute we got the fireplace hole closed up, we moved in. We had no inside interior doors and no heating or cooling system in the middle of February, but I was so excited to get in there.

You had the goal of making Mount Eagle energy efficient. What are some of the ways you do that?

It's probably the only log house in the world that has an attic fan because log cabins don't have attics. We actually modified the plan and put an attic over the bedroom area. We closed off that section.

The attic fan is vertical and then it pulls the hot air out in the summer just by the natural way heat rises and goes on outside.

We have covered front porches and ceiling fans. We heat with an outdoor wood-fire water stove, so our heating is basically free. We have lots and lots of trees, and we have enough dead stuff that falls naturally that our wood-fire water stove burns scrap wood. It heats water. Tubes take the hot water into the house

and go through a radiator, and blower blows it and it comes through the duct work just like central heating would.

All of our buildings have compact fluorescent light bulbs. My husband hates them, but we use them.

What do you do at Mount Eagle to teach better stewardship?

When our guests come to Mount Eagle, they are expected to participate in our earth stewardship. It's very clearly stated. We're probably the only place in the world that makes you take your trash home with you. People are asked to reduce, reuse and recycle.

We don't use paper products except for toilet paper and paper towels in the kitchen. We use cloth napkins and we ask people to reuse them.

So when the issue became how do you remember your napkin, we put Scripture passages on clothespins. Everyone picks a clothespin and they put it with their napkins. And when their napkins get dirty after two or three meals, they can get a new napkin. But the longer they keep them, the less water we have to use.

We only use ceramic coffee mugs. We don't use water bottles ... We give people a water glass — which is plastic — and they are asked to keep it all day.

We compost. Everybody has to scrape their plate into our compost bucket, even the bishop. We separate meat from everything else, and our compost pile goes into our organic garden.

Rhodes College students came about four years ago, and built us a recycling center so when your group leaves, you put all your stuff in the same big container, and we take it out there and sort it ourselves.

By the time guests have recycled everything they can and composted all their food scraps, then they don't have very much trash.

Why go to so much trouble to reduce trash?

Our theological take on that is that we want to be good neighbors.

Mount Eagle has almost 3,500

guests a year. They could be creating a lot of trash, and as a part of the community of Van Buren and Stone Counties, what right do we have to send more to the landfill than the people who live there?

How does conservation fit into your Christian faith?

As a Christian environmentalist, I think Scripture is so full of reasons to care for creation. The Hebrew word for 'dominion' in Genesis 1:28 means to care for and love.

I use the example that when my children would create a drawing, I would take it and lovingly put it on the refrigerator.

Every time I saw it, I would think about them and how cool is that? But why would I not have the same respect for this earth that God has created? Every time I see it, I should think about God and say, 'Thank you.'

How can we be better stewards in our everyday lives?

My goal this year is to get every United Methodist to carry a ceramic mug to every meeting. That would just so help with reducing waste.

Some of the things we do are not going to make a giant difference.

But the United Methodist Church and the faith-based community are large enough that our little bit will make the difference.

What is your favorite part about living on Mount Eagle?

The rush — the sheer joy — of seeing creation in all seasons. I saw my first wild turkey in full feather, strutting. He was doing his little dance for some hens out there. Man, I was expecting a Pilgrim to come out.

Just last week, on a warm day, I was walking outside and counted six different kinds of wild flowers.

They're little, simple things that remind me that in spite of all the chaos in our world, God is still in control.

To learn more about Mount Eagle, visit www.mounteagle.org or call Lu Harding at (501) 723-4580.