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Constitutional matters

Most amendments prove unpopular with conference voters

HEATHER HAHN
Editor

After more than an hour of debate, voting members of the 2009 Annual Conference overwhelmingly rejected proposed constitutional amendments related to the worldwide nature of the United Methodist Church.

Thirty-two proposed amendments to the United Methodist Church's constitution were major topics of discussion at this year's Annual Conference, held June 14-17 in Rogers. The theme for the conference was "Transforming the World."

More than 550 members (the conference term for delegates) weighed in on the amendments, which were referred to a vote by Annual Conferences worldwide after last year's General Conference in Fort Worth. Members include laity and ordained elders and deacons.

To be ratified, an amendment requires approval from a two-thirds majority of all voters. Each Annual Conference submits its totals, and then the totals are tabulated for the aggregate number.

Rodney Steele, who led this state's delegation at the General Conference, introduced the amendments and stressed that if ratified, they would have a profound



Delegates consider legislation during the 2008 United Methodist General Conference in Fort Worth, Texas.

UMNS Photo by Mike DuBose

impact on the church.

"Constitutional changes are foundational changes," said Steele, the district superintendent of the North Central District based in Conway.

"It's not like a house where you're redecorating a room or even remodeling. It's like going through a house and removing the bricks all the way down to the foundation, and pulling the foundation out. You're re-pouring and refilling the foundation."

Most of the discussion centered on the 23 proposed amendments dealing with the formation of regional

conferences in the United States and overseas. If passed, regional conferences would replace the "central conferences" that now serve the church outside the United States.

Arkansas Conference members voted down these amendments by margins of 4 to 1.

Steele said the idea behind the "regional conference" designation was to help the church be less U.S.-centric and more globally minded.

Amendment supporters, Steele said, believe the regional conferences will provide more parity of representation among the different geographical

regions of the worldwide denomination.

But opponents contended that the impact of the amendments, at this point, is unclear and too many details won't be known until the General Conference takes up the proposals' enabling legislation in 2012. Opponents also said the amendments would create a layer of unneeded bureaucracy.

Some expressed worries that the regional conferences would have too much autonomy, leaving many issues

[See AMENDMENTS, Page 8A]

Ministry helps keep families together

HEATHER HAHN
Editor

At 22 and fresh out of college, Robyne Stout suddenly found herself with two active little boys to rear.

Stout's sister had long struggled with substance abuse, and Stout's 7- and 6-year-old nephews, Deshawn and Mario, were at risk of growing up in the state's foster-care system. Stout was determined not to let that happen.

But like most recent college graduates, she had barely any

furniture or savings. She had a job but certainly none of the clothes, bedding and toys two growing boys need.

That's when members of St. James United Methodist Church in Little Rock came to the family's rescue. The church provided Stout with a living room set, dresser, bunk bed for the boys and washer and dryer.

"I am just so happy they came into my life," Stout said. "Everything has been working out because God

had a plan from the beginning — no doubt about it."

St. James UMC's foster care ministry reunites children in state custody with their families by providing household basics. For the past year and half, the ministry has provided furniture, clothes, food and toys for some 60 families and individual children.

Church volunteers have helped bring stability to the lives of Hurricane Katrina evacuees and have set up

house for newly independent 18-year-olds who have graduated out of the foster-care system.

It's a ministry that state officials say they'd love to see replicated by churches across the state. According to the Arkansas Department of Human Services, some 3,500 of the state's children are in foster care on any given day.

The vast majority of those

[See FOSTER CARE, Page 18A]

How to be single and fabulous

DEENA MARIE HAMILTON
Special Contributor

As a young adult, and even more so, as a young adult pastor, I have heard the phrase time and time again, "You're such a pretty girl, when are you getting married?" Many of my older clergy colleagues have said in comfort, "I'm sure that the right guy will find you." But in my mind my response to this statement is "Tell me where to go so that I can be found by the right guy."

With all jokes aside, I have been a woman that has suffered from the delusion that so many women suffered from. The delusion is of the perfect wedding to the perfect man, and we trot off to Camelot to live happily ever after. The perfect man or situation is not out there. That's just not realistic.

People have always admired what I have done with my life as well as how I have help others reach beyond the horizon to bigger and better things, but they always said, "I just don't understand why you're not married?"

I used to wonder that too, and through some horrible break ups and misconceptions, I realized finally after dating for these past 10 years that maybe it's just not meant for me to be married.

While I have watched countless numbers of my single friends galloped off to get married, I am reminded of something that Paul wrote in his first letter to the Corinthians that has given



Deena Marie Hamilton

being shielded from oh great Brother Paul? Earlier in the passage Paul is telling us singletons to stay as we are. If you are married, then don't seek a divorce, but if you are single, don't look for a spouse because married people have to deal with issues that we singletons don't. (1 Cor 7: 26-28). Paul goes on to say in the passage that unmarried people are more concerned about the affairs of the Lord and living lives pleasing to Him.

Being about the business of the Father just sets us up for the right purpose in our lives to attract the right people, in the right place, and at the right time. So what Paul is telling us in his letter to the Corinthians is for our own good. Being single does not restrict us but frees us to live our lives to the fullest. Our lives don't begin when we're married. Our lives begin when we accept Christ into our lives.

I know that sounds so hard to believe at times because I know all too well the single blues. The feeling of

me comfort. In the seventh chapter in the 32nd verse he states, "I would like for you to be free from concern."

And the million-dollar question is what concern am I

loneliness and wondering if there is anything wrong with you can be consuming. I have to be honest...I've dipped into times of self-pity. I have cried and indulged in a pint of Ben and Jerry's ice cream. I have fluctuated between singleton bliss and old-maid mania.

But for now on, I'm just going to settle on living life like it's golden. I'm living by Paul's advice because there's nothing else better to do. I don't have to worry about asking someone if I want to go on some extended trip to Europe. I don't have to ask permission to go shoe shopping. I won't have to ask if it's in the budget to buy some new jewelry.

It's just what it is, and it's all good.

And from this day forward, I will be single and fabulous.

Deena Marie Hamilton is the senior pastor of McCabe United Methodist Church in North Little Rock. She can be reached at rev. deenamarie@gmail.com.

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Letters To The Editor

I want to congratulate you on the new newspaper that is forthcoming! I can't wait to read the first edition when it comes in July.

We United Methodists in Arkansas will be much better served by the change in publication frequency and the exposure to the wider "audience" of the United Methodist Reporter. Thank you for making the switch!

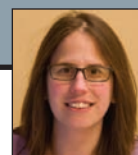
*Michael L. Mattox
Senior Pastor*

First United Methodist Church in Little Rock

I missed Annual Conference! I was in the hospital. I am now home being cared for by Home Health Nursing. We as clergy are most blessed by wonderful insurance coverage by people who care. I am most grateful to those who provide for us.

*Doyle Berckfeldt, Elder
Batesville*

FOR HEAVEN'S SAKE by Mike Morgan



EDITOR'S CORNER

BY HEATHER HAHN

Living in connection

The lines of worshippers moved slowly, but the air pulsed with excitement.

The sanctuary reverberated with the choruses of familiar hymns like "One Bread, One Body" and "Fill My Cup, Lord."

As people gradually made their way to the bread and grape juice, many gave surreptitious waves to friends sitting in the pews. A few even broke away briefly to give a long-unseen friend a quick hug.

At Annual Conference, the celebration of the Lord's Supper during opening-night worship was less a time of reflection than of reunion.

The atmosphere seemed absolutely right for the sacrament we usually call "Communion."

The service offered a sense of connection not only with God but also with all the Christians around me. I found the joy of the service exhilarating.

It was a fitting way to begin a four-day event devoted to celebrating the connectional nature of the United Methodist Church.

This was my first Annual Conference, and I kept finding signs of that connection throughout the gathering.

I heard it in the thunderous rendition of the great Charles Wesley hymn "And Are We Yet Alive," that opened the Conference as it has Methodist annual meetings since John Wesley himself instituted the custom in the 18th century.

I saw it in the familiar way United Methodists from different parts of the state greeted each other.

I heard it in the buzzing exchange of ideas around the booths in the lobby.

I especially saw it in the passionate floor debates over the proposed amendments to the United Methodist constitution.

People clearly had strong differences of opinion on the measures, with many of the conservatives on one side and liberals on the other.

But after the vote, fellowship among representatives of both sides continued as it had before. People broke bread together and celebrated with equal fervor the worship for commissioning and ordination that followed.

That's refreshingly different from some of the church disputes I've covered as a religion reporter where it seems the only talking people now do with each other is through their lawyers.

These past few months, I have felt extremely privileged to have a front seat to see United Methodist ministry in action, and that was especially true at Annual Conference, where I met for the first a number of pastors and lay leaders I had only previously spoken to on the phone.

I also garnered a number of story ideas that I hope you'll see realized in these pages in the coming months.

Please stay tuned.



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Travel abroad reveals spiritual truths



BUD REEVES
Special Contributor

It was an interesting spring for Karen and me.

For 30 years, we had not been out of the country except for a couple of mission trips to Mexico and a couple of border crossings into Canada. Then in the space of three months, we had the opportunity to make two transatlantic trips — one to the Holy Land with a church group, and a long-awaited family vacation to Scotland and England. Both trips were wonderful.

I think getting over jet lag twice has cured us of the traveling bug for a while, although there are places I would like to revisit, and there are other places I'd still like to go.

So within the space of a few weeks, I walked where Jesus and John Wesley both walked. Talk about a double mountaintop experience! Those moments were the fulfillment of two of my life's dreams. Suffice it to say my "bucket list" is now two items shorter.

As I have reflected on these trips, several insights have occurred to me:

(1) History is a lot more interesting in person. It's one thing to read about it in a book (even the Bible) or to see pictures or video, but really being in a location adds a depth to history that cannot be expressed, only experienced. To be in a boat on the Sea of Galilee, to walk the Via Dolorosa in Jerusalem, to touch the pulpit where Wesley preached or to stand in the chambers where kings and queens once engaged in the intrigues of English history — it makes the stories



Bud Reeves

come alive.

If the key to history is personal contact, how much more important is the human touch for our ministry?

(2) Our spiritual icons were single-mindedly focused on their mission. Though I knew this, it became apparent in an even more powerful way by being on location. Jesus and John Wesley were both focused on the Kingdom at the expense of everything else, even their lives if necessary. To accomplish what they accomplished in the environment in which they operated is simply incredible, except that it was all a God thing.

Neither Jesus nor John Wesley compromised just to please the crowd. They didn't "make nice" with people. They were lousy politicians. But they were great Kingdom-builders. Their love was fierce; they told the truth and let the chips fall. I believe that's why we follow them today.

Are we more interested in pleasing people than God?

(3) The environments of change are harsh and hostile. First-century

Palestine was no picnic; neither was 18th century England. There was poverty, oppression, suffering and despair in every quarter.

The vested interests of the powerful were arrayed against the visionary and the Spirit-led. The stories of Jesus and John Wesley are stories that include opposition, conflict and sacrifice. We have become so comfortable in the church that we avoid the sacrifice it takes to be God's people in a broken and sinful world. But that's exactly when the big movements of the Spirit occur.

What would it take to pry us out of our comfortable pews and pulpits to take Christ into the streets?

(4) The reason we remember Jesus and John Wesley today is because of the quality of their followers. Without the apostles and their proclamation that turned the world upside down, Jesus would have been another tragic chapter in the history of failed messiahs. As it was, generations of devoted disciples — led by the Spirit — took the Gospel across the planet, often losing their lives in the

process.

Without the circuit riders, Methodism would not have survived Wesley's death. But because they sacrificed homes, families and health to spread the good news of God's grace, today the spiritual descendants of Wesley number in the tens of millions.

These journeys back to my spiritual roots left me wondering: Am I doing all I can to serve my God? Am I "pressing on toward the goal for the prize of the heavenly call of God in Christ Jesus?" (Philippians 3:14)

Can I make a difference with my life that will create a lasting contribution? What will the legacy of this generation be — in the church and in the world? Will anyone ever visit our churches because the story of our faithfulness makes it inspiring just to be there?

Maybe we should all be wondering...

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Worship should dance for God

MARY FAITH MILES
Special Contributor

Something resonates when Christ's body becomes one in voice when "praying the prayer He taught us to pray."

Regrettably, the passion merited by the prayer is too often lacking in our one voice. One Sunday morning, a 3-year-old girl sat behind me, joyously echoing the congregation: "Our Father..." "OW-ER FODDER..." "Who art in Heaven..." "HOOARD IN HEAVENDS..." "Hallowed be thy name..." "HALO-WED BE TIE NAME..."

That child was not aware that she was alone in her exuberance. In contrast, if the holy zeal of a young woman (or man) of my generation causes her to stand out in a congregation, she knows it.

The church is like a pink sea anemone swaying in the ocean's current. Picture all but one tentacle as rigid and stiff while the one continues to dance with the water. When a church cares more about how the cross is carried down the center aisle than it cares about the One who carried the cross for our sins, we feel like the lone tentacle. This anxiety doesn't foster fearless praise of our Creator.

Before traditional worshippers



Mary Faith "Zoe" Miles

get offended or contemporary worshippers become too comfortable, I want to make two things clear. First, music in contemporary worship services quicken my desire to dance before

the Lord. When the congregational movements are limited to sitting down and standing up, my yearnings to praise God are restrained due for fear of judgmental glances from my brothers and sisters in Christ.

Secondly, my message to traditional worshippers is not to lose your traditional prayers, hymns and responses. They're partially why I'm still Methodist. Remember to rejoice when you bring in the sheaves!

Let your vocal inflection match your inner repentance "when [you] confess that [you] have not loved [God] with your whole heart." Really hear the Good News because it's the best news you'll ever know.

The reason why so much anxiety surrounds being the lone tentacle is because my generation of believers spends so much energy being set

apart in the world. We are commanded not to conform to earthly ways, and we're mostly happy to oblige.

When we enter into the church, though, we come not to be different but to be at home — home sweet home. It is the place where it's okay to be childlike, dancing before our dear Abba with our spiritual siblings.

It's not supposed to be a place where we continue our battle against the flow. We get that enough outside in the dark.

I can sit all high and mighty, pointing fingers all day. The truth is our beloved Savior deserves more passion from all of us. He asks us to be children because He knows that, like the little girl behind me, they are not intimidated by their setting but enthralled by His beauty.

Let's all be children in awe of new life, new words and new songs in our spirits that must be hoisted to the God's throne. Only when we all join in a passionate worship can our sea anemone dance.

Mary Faith "Zoe" Miles is a junior at Oklahoma City University in Oklahoma, a United Methodist institution. She can be reached at mmiles.stu1@okcu.edu.



The Northwest District Children's Choir, under the direction of Denni Palmer, sings "You Never Let Go" at the opening worship service of the Arkansas Annual Conference at Central UMC in Rogers. Pictured clockwise from far left are Jeff Blackwood, Gretchen Palmer, Mollie Hardin, Carly Perrine, Lindsey Duncan, Julia Johnson, Kirsten Palmer and Amelia Johnson. Most of the children, ages 6 to 9, attend Elm Springs UMC.

By Heather Hahn

For the best view of Annual Conference, try the lobby

ERIC VAN METER
Special Contributor

Annual Conference 2009 marked the end of my first decade as a United Methodist pastor. I suppose such a milestone should have set me to reflecting on what I’ve been a part of these past ten years. At 35, I should be able to look back on my most recent Conference with a certain mellowness, if not wisdom.

Maybe I should. But I can’t. Not after all that I heard in the lobby.

The lobby (or in other venues, the balcony) is where the really interesting stuff happens at Conference. The reports and ballots and other floor proceedings certainly have their place, but to me they take a backseat to the human connections that happen on a much smaller scale, often in the lobby.

This year, I devoted much of my time to such connections, especially



Eric Van Meter

with several college students who had come as delegates or observers. I heard them ask dozens of pointed questions about the way we do things.

What are Robert’s Rules of

Order? Why do we spend so much time on them?

Why all the fuss about these constitutional amendments?

How are the appointments made? Does the way we do it really work?

Where are all the young people? Is there anybody else here that’s even close to my age?

What does “All Means All” really mean?

Why does every argument boil

down to money or sexuality?

These are simple questions, at least on the surface. At times, I caught myself giving the simple answers that I received when I asked similar questions during my first visits to Annual Conference. Perhaps that’s what I should be doing: giving stock answers to help educate our young adults and hoping that they’ll incorporate into The Way We Do Things.

Perhaps. But I think the former is an insult to their intelligence, and the latter a false hope. They don’t need information or indoctrination to understand what’s going on — or to ask penetrating questions.

Does making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world really boil down to membership numbers and organizational speeches?

Most of us would answer with a

resounding “No! Of course not!” Before we do, however, we should probably weigh our answers against our actions. According to some of the young adults I heard in Rogers, the two don’t necessarily match up.

One college student I talked with several times kept repeating, “I just don’t get what’s going on here.” Rather than take his confusion as a sad example of our failure to teach, I think we should recognize the rare — maybe even prophetic — opportunity he’s providing us with.

I think my house is clean until someone comes to visit. Then, when I look at it through their eyes, I notice every cobweb, every carpet stain, every dust bunny. It makes me uncomfortable. But it also makes me want to get things in order.

The message I heard over and over in the lobby of this year’s Annual Conference is that many of us—from

young to youngish to virtually ancient — are looking for an understanding of church that lies somewhere beyond the politics and resolutions. We are looking, both at Annual Conference and in our routine lives, for a way to live that’s less about managed efficiency and more about community.

Given the size of the Annual Conference body and the deep differences of opinion some of us hold, real community might be too much to ask of the group. Maybe. But I can’t understand the gospel without it, and I can’t stop searching for it, even at Annual Conference.

So if you need me, I’ll be in the lobby.

Eric Van Meter is the director of the Wesley Foundation at Arkansas State University in Jonesboro. He can be reached at astatewesley@yahoo.com.

Trust can restore the Church

ROGER HOOK
Special Contributor

There is an uneasiness in the United Methodist Church. It’s something that’s hard to put your finger on, but it’s there.

Those most familiar with the Church can sense it. Some have described it as an anxiousness within. The tell-tale sign of the Church’s insecurity is revealed in an obsession with the future.

If somehow the Church can reinvent itself theologically, or, in ways that it worships, or, if somehow it can come up with just the right evangelistic technique, or, the perfect day and time to do Church things, well, then we can settle down, relax and rest in the assurance of the future of the Church. In the meantime, the Church follows every path to the latest secular “model” of success only to discover a short time later that it’s back where it started, or worse.

I long for the day when the Church feels comfortable with itself again because that will be the day when the Church regains a much-needed influence in our fast-paced society. Who can deny the decadence of society? Who can, with a straight face, question the reality that people no longer turn to the Church for guidance?

The voice of the Church’s influence is losing volume rapidly, and the Church is contributing to the downward spiral of the volume arrow

by trying to be all things to all people in all places. Heck, the Church even

talks about people as its consumers and the Gospel as a product. It’s no wonder there is confusion and the inevitable loss of credibility.

Evidence of the Church’s loss of influence occurs every Sunday of the year.

This is the day the tournament begins. You see, not so many years ago tournament planners — those who set up softball, basketball, tennis and all other sporting tournaments — wouldn’t even consider Sunday morning as a start time. Today it is commonplace for huge adult softball tournaments to begin early on Sunday morning and require the entire day to complete.

This holds true for sporting events involving children and youth of all ages. This is but one example of many, many others that stands as a glaring reminder that Sunday morning is no longer in the thought processes as the time for worship and Sunday School. I recognize there are other times when families and individuals can worship, and I hope they take advantage of such worship services. Nonetheless, historically, Sunday morning and Wednesday nights have been set aside for church time in American society.

Interestingly, Wednesday night is still recognized as church night.

Will the Church ever regain self-respect and feel comfortable with itself? Will there be a day of regained influence in the lives of people? Will those who still turn to the Church for spiritual guidance find it within the Church? The answer is a resounding “yes.” That is, if those of us in the church relearn to trust each other again. In some ways, the gene of trust seems to have been removed from human DNA and replaced with hostility.

The expressions of hostility can be heard while standing in line at the grocery store, traveling in slow-moving traffic, engaging in theological debate, listening to political campaigns, standing in your own front yard and looking for a place to sit for morning worship. As a society, we struggle to extend trust to professionals like teachers, physicians, Christian ministers and politicians.

How about we rethink our trust, or lack thereof, accorded others? And, why not let it begin within the walls of the Church? Trusting our sisters and brothers in the Church by treating them kindly and loving them explicitly will create a natural atmosphere of ease. And that is the best kind!

Roger Hook is the senior pastor of First United Methodist Church in Beebe. He can be reached at BroRogerHook@fumcbb.org.



Ronnie Miller-Yow, chaplain of Philander Smith College and senior pastor of Wesley Chapel UMC in Little Rock, celebrates with his wife, Shantella, and his parents, Floyd and JoAnne, after his ordination as an elder. Miller-Yow delivered the benediction at the end of the service, urging believers to take the Gospel “from the White House to the poor house.”

Photo by Heather Hahn



Kara Wilkins of Wesley UMC in Little Rock lights candles in honor of the saints who passed away this past year. The ritual was part of the Service of Commemoration and Holy Communion that opened Annual Conference.

Photo by Heather Hahn



2009 EPISCOPAL ADDRESS

BY CHARLES N. CRUTCHFIELD

Bishop Charles N. Crutchfield delivered the following episcopal address on June 15 at this year's Annual Conference.

As I begin I want to say how pleased we are to be returning to the Arkansas Annual Conference for the 2009-2012 quadrennium. You have been so gracious and kind to us, we really feel very much at home here. It is a special privilege to serve in partnership with you in seeking to build God's Kingdom here in Arkansas.

And some really good things are happening as we do church in Arkansas. You have cared about others. There have been 1,154 volunteers from 41 churches involved in Volunteer In Mission projects. Additionally, hundreds more of you were involved in responding to the ice storms in North Arkansas and the tornado in Mena. VIM teams have been in Mexico, Peru, Haiti, Kenya, Guatemala, Tanzania and Chile, on the Texas and Mississippi Gulf Coast and New Orleans; as well as Shiprock, N.M., and White Pine Cone, Ariz.

You have continued to support the Russia Initiative and our relationship with the North Katanga Annual Conference in Congo. Incidentally, as a part of my required renewal leave, Karen and I will be spending three weeks in the Congo this summer teaching, and working and sharing with pastors, spouses and orphan and abandoned children.

I will be teaching at our university in Kamina. We will be sharing your contributions towards water wells, scholarships, Bibles and the Children's Home. There are two wonderful paintings on silent auction that will go toward the spouses' water well project. Bid it up!

A significant number of the churches in Arkansas have or will participate in the Central Conference Pension Initiative. This effort to raise a \$20 million pension endowment for our pastors and spouses outside the United States who have no pension support in retirement is critical. In the places where the church is growing most rapidly, some pastors in retirement are reduced to begging for subsistence. We have raised \$107,696.95 in gifts and pledges in Arkansas. Thank you.

Connected in Christ, in addition to six clergy retreats, nine team-training seminars for clergy and laity,

has instituted over 100 coaching contacts with pastors and congregational teams. Twenty-three churches and 94 laity have participated in the events directed toward emerging smaller congregations. To date, 189 pastors and congregations have completed the core process. Over half the participating churches are larger in worship attendance than when they began the process.

We are creating new places of worship for new people. As the appointments are read for this year there will be five new church starts: West Memphis, West Little Rock, Waltreak, Siloam Springs and a very creative second campus for Wesley, Russellville. Last year you gave birth to three new congregations: Argenta in North Little Rock, a Vietnamese language congregation in Van Buren, and a Spanish language congregation in Fort Smith. In 2006, there were six new congregations.

We have taken some risks, and we had two of our recent attempts close. Three are growing, but more slowly than hoped. The others are doing very well. All of these new churches are attracting new people, younger people and more diverse people with the Gospel of Jesus Christ. We will continue to start new churches because in so doing we are

and by 132 in baptisms.

To you, to me, but more importantly to God, this is simply unacceptable. God expects better of us. This business of growing the Kingdom of God is not about trading members, it is about fulfilling our mission to create disciples of Jesus Christ. At a minimum, if we are not doing that, we are not being the church.

We are all aware that in 2009 we are presented with a different economic picture and that there have been staff reductions and salary freezes and budget reductions. I certainly understand that. The Council of Bishops has requested that bishop's salaries be reduced and returned to the 2008 level. The cabinet has instituted a reduction in salary to the 2008 level. The conference office and Vision Team have curtailed expenditures for this year and reduced their budgets by almost \$300,000 for the 2010 fiscal year.

I am concerned about our response to our shared mission and ministry — our apportionments. This group of funds reflects an additional commitment to ministerial support beyond local church salaries, e.g. insurance and pension support for retired pastors. In addition, it supports the conference program, like



Pastors of the new Arkansas United Methodist congregations stand next Bob Crossman, at far right, minister of new church starts and secretary of the Annual Conference. The Arkansas Conference is planting five new churches this year.

Photo by Heachter Hahn

making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

That being said, it is apparent that we are not doing as well as we should. In 2008, we were down in membership by 839. We were down in worship attendance 1,353. We dropped in professions of faith by 78

our Wesley Foundations, Camp Aldersgate, the coordination of the program and missional work of the Annual Conference program, and is the basic support for the worldwide mission of the church.

From 2004 through 2008 apportionment asking rose \$1.2



Bishop Crutchfield delivers fifth episcopal address before the Arkansas Annual Conference. Beside him is the crozier, a symbol of the bishop's pastoral office.

Photo by Heachter Hahn

million. Our response was an increase in giving of about \$400,000 over a five-year period. Consequently, we have dropped from a 96 percent payout to a 90 percent payout. The extraordinarily good news is that the vast majority of the churches in the conference have responded magnificently. Two smaller churches provided help to two other churches by paying part of their apportionment. What a generous and gracious connectional act on the part of L'Eau Fraiz and Oakley Chapel Churches.

Over the same five year period we have been able to raise salaries and compensation for all local church staff \$5,748,361, or about \$1.15 million dollars a year. I would assume that this also represents hiring additional staff, which would be responsible for additional programs.

Sadly, some staff members have now been released in the face of the economics of the day. We were, however, as a conference able to raise over the last four years \$62,833,748 for capital fund drives in local churches. The total expenditures for salaries and compensation, church program, and church operating expenses, rose in the four years 2005 to 2008 approximately \$9 million. The total expenditure was \$300,991,854 for all four years, not including our apportionments.

This is what we spend on the local church. When I match what we spend on ourselves, not the apportionments, but what we decide to spend on ourselves, against our record in evangelism I am deeply concerned. In 2006 we spent \$61 million on ourselves and grew by 501.

In 2008, we spent \$64,109,864 on ourselves not counting \$14.6 million in capital funds raised against a loss of 839 members.

Too many numbing numbers. They are a blur. The point is, we can raise and spend a lot of money and still lose far too many members. It is clear that money is not, and never is, the real issue in building the Kingdom. Stewardship is a critical spiritual issue. Yet, the deeper challenge, the real issue before us is how we "do church" in the 21st century.

Was it the now deceased Grateful Dead lead singer, Jerry Garcia, who said "If you remember the '60s, you weren't there," or was it someone else, maybe Robin Williams? It doesn't matter. I do remember the '60s.

In seminary we were going to save the world and bring in the Kingdom of God through the wonders of pastoral counseling. If only we could all be like Carl Rodgers, it would be a snap: "I hear you saying. . . ." It was only upon my first appointment that I realized pastoral counseling, unless you do it full-time, was simply one tool, to be very carefully used, among many tools for a pastor.

In the early '70s, there was "Key '73" — a renewal effort launched with great fanfare across the church. It was a program/process to revitalize the church. In the mid-'70s, it was the Lay Witness Mission. Then the Emmaus/Cursillo movement came to life.

[Continued on Page 6A]



The bishop and Arkansas United Methodist military chaplains bless phone cards that chaplains will distribute to U.S. servicemen and women far from home. Those who attended Arkansas Annual Conference donated more than \$1,500 to the United Methodist Endorsing Agency phone-card program, providing more than 3,600 free minutes for military personnel.

Photo by Heather Hahn

Accompanying all the above was interest in liturgical renewal. First, there would be folk music in the church. Sunday morning would sound like outtakes from a Peter, Paul, and Mary or Kingston Trio recording session. A host of sermons were preached with Simon and Garfunkle’s “Bridge Over Troubled Water” playing in the background. The extension of this would become the “contemporary/ blended/ emerging/ liturgical” worship movement of today.

Each of these programs/ movements/techniques (and many others we could begin to name) in its own way sought and often succeeded in making a contribution to the life and health of the United Methodist Church. Each, not an end in itself, but a tool for the time, taking advantage of a particular opportunity, a unique historic moment, and speaking to a very real existential need in the life of the church.

Seven years ago this conference was born. The strategic initiatives document, the structure of the conference and the structure of the conference staff served as unifying

elements in the process of merger. Seven years later we know there is not going to be a divorce. And seven years later we now need to ask the question is this the best way for us to DO church in Arkansas.

As we enter the 21st century we are claiming and articulating and defining what it is to be the church with a very simple definition of our mission: To make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

The fortuitous and providential intersection of our concern for disciple-making and a renewal of interest in and commitment to the Wesleyan theology of grace, the United Methodist Way — “Do no harm. Do good. Stay in love with God” — calls us in the first decade of the century to ask the question. If our task is to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world, and our tools are the Wesleyan theology of grace and the connectional system, then how ought the churches in our conference be about the business of doing/being the church in Arkansas in the 21st century?

We cannot do church as we did

in the fifties or sixties. This is a more complex and nuanced world. One thing I do know, ministry is not about the past, it is about the future. “The uniquely Christian emotion is hope. Easter still presses us on toward a future where God is already at work.”

Our mission is not to fight to stay the same, but to recognize the needs of the future today. I saw an ad in an airport that said, “In five years, 50 percent of the new companies in business will be dependent on technology that is not yet invented.” That will preach.

So, why not use our renewed interest and focus on the Wesleyan Way to empower and engage laity and clergy alike in a renewal of the church? Why not yoke our theology and our mission? John Wesley would allow us to do no other.

Let us be serious about re-examining all that we do, and the way we do it, even taking a hard look at our sacred cows in a thoughtful prayerful manner. Let us be driven by our faith and not our fears. Let us be driven by our hopes and not our doubts. Let us be driven to be the church that Christ has called us to be, to be the church that makes disciples for Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

UMCom, United Methodist Communications, has launched a new ad campaign to “Rethink Church.” Well, I like that, we need to rethink church so that we can REDO church.

To that end, I need to tell you what I have already done. I have made a decision to appoint a group of seven to nine persons to a steering committee that will guide us through a process of examining what we need to do to be the church in Arkansas. This ad-hoc group will determine and guide a process that will enable us to examine as an Annual Conference how we should be shaped and formed for ministry in the future. In appropriate ways, the steering group will call upon and involve the already established structures of the conference, both official and unofficial, from CFA to UMW, from BMCR to the Vision Team, from laity

and clergy involved in United Methodist Way events to the Board of Ordained Ministry – perhaps even the kitchen cabinet — to aid and help focus on how we should position ourselves for tomorrow. How can we be nimble, effective, good stewards of our resources, and stay focused on our ministry?

I have tentatively secured the services of the Rev. Gil Rendle as a consultant to help guide us through this process. Dr. Rendle was for many years a senior consultant with the Alban Institute, has served as a consultant to the SCJ College of Bishops and the Council of Bishops of the United Methodist Church as well as with a significant number of annual conferences. He is an expert in dealing with congregational and conference systems issues, and is a United Methodist minister.

I have secured funding for this project from outside the annual conference budget through a grant from the Arkansas United Methodist Foundation. There will be no apportionment dollars spent. An official progress report will be made

to the 2010 Annual Conference. Whatever proposals ideas, insights, grow out of the process will be before you for reflection, discussion and response prior to the 2011 Annual Conference.

I recognize that this is not our ordinary way of doing our business. Everything is not neatly tied up with a bow. What I have done has not gone through five committees and three layers of bureaucracy.

I have no preconceptions on where we will end up. Conclusions are not fore-ordained by instructions to the committee, which is precisely the point. This business is too serious. This is Kingdom-building business. This is making-disciples-of-Jesus-Christ-for-the-transformation-of-the-world business. I have no assumptions except the assumption that at the end of the process we will be prepared to be the 21st century Church which we need to be, ...no... we must become!

As I close, let me ask for your prayer, for the conference, for our efforts in evangelism and for our future together. Thank you.



Cindy Yokem, the wife of Northwest District Superintendent Mackey Yokem, at left, presents Karen Crutchfield, the bishop’s wife, with a gift from Arkansas clergy spouses for the North Katanga Clergy Spouses Water Well in the Democratic Republic of Congo. As of June 23, the Arkansas Conference has raised \$10,674.58 for the clergy spouses’ well project. When she and Bishop Crutchfield visit Congo later this year, Karen Crutchfield plans to personally present the funds to the wife of the North Katanga bishop.

Photo by Heather Hahn

Calling teens to come together

United Methodist teens from across the country will come together on the campus of Philander Smith College later this month for National Youth Harambee.

The gathering, sponsored by Black Methodists for Church Renewal, Inc., takes its name from a Swahili word that means “let’s come together.”

The event aims to celebrate and nurture the gifts and willing hearts of black, Hispanic and other ethnic minority United Methodist youth.

This year’s theme takes its inspiration from today’s social media — “God’s Grace and MySpace.” It targets for youth ages 12 to 18 prepared to understand how their space fits with God’s grace.

Besides music, drama, dancing, food, prayer and Bible study, youth will have opportunities for creative expression, mission work as well as youth-led worship and activities.

The goal is to equip youth in becoming better students and better Christians in a fun way. Particular emphasis is placed on developing leadership and interpersonal skills.

Organizers hope youth leave with the ability to participate in lively classroom discussions and to develop creative ministry that fits with their lives.

National Youth Harambee will be July 16-19 on the campus of Philander Smith College in Little Rock. Registration costs \$200.

To learn more, contact Sarita Robinson, Arkansas Harambee coordinator, at (501) 590-4595 or srobi19@lsu.edu.

General secretary shares his thoughts on mission future

HEATHER HAHN
Editor

Edward W. Paup gave up all the authority and prestige of the bishop's office in hopes of better serving the United Methodist Church.

After 12 years on the Council of Bishops, Paup resigned his post last August before becoming the top executive of the United Methodist General Board of Global Ministries — the church's international mission and relief agency.



Edward Paup, general secretary of the General Board of Global Ministries, preaches at the first night of worship at Annual Conference. The crowd at the service overflowed the sanctuary at Central UMC in Rogers and filled more than half of the church's chapel. In a sermon titled "The Holy Kiss of the Connection," he urged worshippers to be "living invitations to others to a relationship with Jesus Christ."

Photo by Heather Hahn

His departure marked the first time in the 40-year history of the denomination that an active bishop left the episcopacy to serve a churchwide agency.

"It was not required that I do so," Paup said. "But I thought it was really important to make that statement. ... To carry the title of a retired bishop and now a general secretary seemed to me to unfairly set the table for the other general secretaries."

Paup spoke about that decision and his current work with the *Arkansas United Methodist* during the 2009 Annual Conference.

At the invitation of Bishop Charles Crutchfield, Paup preached at the first two evening worship services of the Arkansas Annual Conference. This was the only Annual Conference

he planned to attend this year. His sermons dealt with the connectional nature of the church on the first night and the denomination's commitment to the world's poor on the second night, which featured sacred music from around the globe.

Paup now oversees the largest agency in the United Methodist Church with nearly 400 staff members at its New York headquarters and around another 1,000 serving in missionary service around the world.

"Every day brings new opportunities, he said. "It could involve, for example, visiting leaders from churches in other parts of the world. Some occasions, it could be bishops from Africa or Asia. It could involve ecumenical leaders. For example, just recently, I had in my office the general secretary for the All Africa Conference of Churches."

Since becoming general secretary in September, Paup has hired an outside firm to audit the agency. The final report will be issued early this month, he said.

The economic crisis has forced a number of denomination's to cut back on their overseas work. *The Tennessean* reported that this year the number of Southern Baptist missionaries would drop from 5,656 to about 5,200.

Paup expects his agency will likewise cut back, merging some program units together.

"We're still going to have our presence in the field [overseas]," he said. "But the way in which that presence in the field is supported out of the central offices will change."

But he also is looking at ways the United Methodist Church can expand its outreach to the poor. He announced during his second-night

[See PAUP, Page 15A]

The Arkansas Conference of the United Methodist Church wishes to recognize the following churches for worship attendance growth in 2008.

CATEGORY 1: CHURCHES WITH 4-24 IN ATTENDANCE

District	Church Name	Pastor as of Dec. 2008	2007	2008	Growth
West	Altus	Alex Flores	14	22	8
North	Valley Springs	David M. Smith	17	24	7
Southeast	Chambersville	Mark Rivers	13	20	7
Northeast	Sedgwick	R. Marilyn Neal	16	22	6
Southeast	Wilmot	Terrie Lynn Bunnell	12	18	6
Southwest	Lakeside-Camden	James E. Harris	12	18	6
Southwest	Valley Grove	James J. Fort	8	14	6

CATEGORY 2: CHURCHES WITH 25-49 IN ATTENDANCE

District	Church Name	Pastor	2007	2008	Growth
Southwest	Bearden	Andrew Wayne Hughes	19	45	26
North	Shirley	Ruth Ann Landon-Mueller	15	30	15
Central	Sweet Home	Barbara A. Douglas	30	45	15
Southwest	Foreman	Oren K. Golden Jr.	35	48	13
Northwest	Morrow	John M. Moore	19	32	13
North	Oak Grove	Stephen Waggoner	24	36	12
Southeast	Brasfield	David Swift	39	49	10

CATEGORY 3: CHURCHES WITH 50-299 IN ATTENDANCE

District	Church Name	Pastor	2007	2008	Growth
West	Clarksville	David R. Hanshaw	225	280	57
Northwest	Elm Springs	Carl D. Palmer	147	200	53
West	Charleston	Mary Susan Hilliard	113	148	35
Southwest	St. Mark, El Dorado	Rebecca Searcy Wiseman	20	50	30
North Central	Bethlehem	Toby Austin	27	55	28
Central	Wesley Chapel	Ronnie L. Miller-Yow	123	150	27
North Central	Lonoke, First	Stephen Brizzi	111	136	25

CATEGORY 4: CHURCHES WITH 300-1,400 IN ATTENDANCE

District	Church Name	Pastor	2007	2008	Growth
Northeast	Jonesboro, First	John P. Miles	806	919	113
Northeast	Cornerstone, Jonesboro	Thomas Toombs	430	483	53
South Central	Sardis, Bauxite	John Jeffery Jones	364	412	48
Northeast	Paragould, First	Tom M. Letchworth	366	406	40
Northwest	Bentonville, First	Rex Dickey	520	554	34
Northwest	Central Rogers	Carness Vaughn	538	569	31
Northwest	Bella Vista, First	David Fleming	376	405	29

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■AMENDMENTS *Continued from page 1A*

up to individual regional conferences — not the General Conference.

John Miles II, senior pastor of First United Methodist Church in Jonesboro, was among those who spoke out against the amendments. As a General Conference delegate last year, Miles said he was inspired by interactions between United Methodists from the U.S. and those from the developing world, especially Africa.

“To in any way lessen the impact of the developing world on our church, I think is a huge mistake for our denomination,” Miles said. “It has been stated here that the church in the developing world is growing like something you’d see in the Book of Acts. We need Africa as much as Africa needs us.”

Pam Estes, senior pastor of Grand Avenue UMC in Hot Springs, argued the restructuring is needed because now a good portion of General Conference is devoted to issues that solely concern the United States.

“We are a global church,” Estes said. “But when we meet in the United States and say this is the General Conference’s business and so much of it is only ours, we are lying to ourselves. It would be far better for us and the mission of the church if we were to deal with issues of a particular cultural, contextual issues that are ours in the United States of America, and that we would gather in a truly global way [at General Conference].”

Sarah Steele, Rodney Steele’s daughter and a youth delegate to last year’s General Conference, agreed with Estes that the quadrennial meeting often is unfair to United Methodists from overseas.

But she quickly added her worry that the proposed measures could damage the connectional nature of the denomination.

“My concern is that if we become a regional conference in the United States, we will become, frankly, so self-centered that we will forget our connection with other conferences,” she said. “Something has to change with that. But I am concerned if we do something too soon without defining that change, it would be a mistake on our part.”

Other amendments up for vote

Conference members also rejected by a vote of 363 to 196 a proposed amendment that would broaden the church’s definition of inclusiveness.

The church’s constitution at

present bans exclusion “because of race, color, national origin, status or economic condition.” The proposed amendment removes all distinctions and adds the phrase that “we are in ministry to all.”

A number of people at Annual Conference showed their support for the measure by wearing round, pink stickers that said, “All means all.”

When he introduced the amendment, Rodney Steele, though, expressed his concern about what the change would mean for the last sentence of the constitution’s inclusiveness passage. With the removal of the words “race, color, etc.,” the last sentence would read: “In the United Methodist Church, no conference or other organizational unit of the Church shall be structured so as to exclude any member or any constituent body.”

“As I read it and understand it, it means anybody in the church can go to any committee and vote in any Annual Conference,” Steele said. “Any criteria [for those roles] could be determined as being exclusive.”

Tony Holifield, senior pastor of Central UMC in Fayetteville, spoke against the change because of what it might mean for one of the church’s most contentious ongoing debates.

“If ratified, I believe this amendment will indeed seriously compromise our church’s biblical and disciplinary position on the homosexuality issue, he said. “[That position] while seeing all persons as being of sacred worth considers the practice of homosexuality incompatible with Christian teaching.”

Holifield and other pastors also objected to the proposal because they said it would undercut their traditional role in determining who was ready for the vows of church membership.



Pam Estes, senior pastor of Grand Avenue UMC in Hot Springs, speaks in favor of an amendment to form regional conferences in the United States and overseas.

Harold Hughes, a lay member of Quapaw Quarter UMC in Little Rock, was among those wearing a sticker. He said he supported the measure because lists by their nature are generally incomplete.

“If you are like I am, when you head to the grocery store, you always leave something off,” Hughes said. “You are not being inclusive when you are making lists of who is and who is not welcome in the church.”

A majority also voted against an amendment to require “all official organizations, groups, committees, councils, boards and agencies of the United Methodist Church” to adopt ethics and conflict of interest policies.

A slim majority also turned down an amendment to allow newly created conferences to be represented “on other than a proportional basis.”

Only six of the proposed amendments garnered majority approval from conference voters.

- They were:
- Amendment 8, which adds gender as a category for non-discrimination to a section of the constitution.
 - Amendment 9, which assures the minimum number of delegates for Jurisdictional Conference.
 - Amendment 15, which defines Annual Conference membership
 - Amendment 17, which allows laity on the Committee of Investigation to vote on matters of ordination, character and conference relationship of clergy.
 - Amendment 19, which allows local pastors to vote on General, Jurisdictional and Conference delegates.
 - Amendment 22, which assigns Bermuda to the Northeast Jurisdictional Conference.

Exact vote tallies for the 32 amendments are available at www.arumc.org/ac09

Faith experience



Five women walk the labyrinth after a session on the ancient prayer path at Annual Conference. For the first time, the conference had a Prayer and Spirituality Room where those at the event could attend presentations on different spiritual disciplines and talk to God in a quiet place apart from the hustle and bustle.

Photo by Heather Hahn

JESSICA COWART
Special to the Arkansas United Methodist

The Prayer and Spirituality Room adjacent to meeting rooms and displays at Annual Conference served as a resource for local churches and a place to take a few minutes in the day to be with God in a special way before going back to meetings.

“Most every church dedicates a space to prayer,” said Bill Buchanan, pastor of Salem United Methodist Church in Conway and chairman of the Conference Spiritual Formation Committee.

“Different visual, auditory and tactile ways to experience prayer are available in this fantastic room; so we can plant seeds for people to take back to their local churches.”

Inside the room, seven separate centers offered experiences to help bring faith to the body in a physical way and bring relationship into an experience with God.

“There is no order to the room; experience it as you want to do,” said Harriett Akins-Banman, associate pastor at Pulaski Height United Methodist Church in Little Rock. “As uniquely as God has made each of us, so uniquely are there ways to pray.”

In the contemplative prayer area were Bibles, icons to hold and sample prayers.

The prayer wall was a place where visitors recorded their prayers and nearby was an area to read the prayers and writings of others. A jar was placed in the center of the room for prayers too personal to post.

People remembered their baptism at a fountain with rocks and running water, and took a shell from the bowl to keep. The creative prayer area held clay, markers and paper, as well as scripture verses. In one corner was the purple and white outline of a labyrinth, which served as a prayer path.

More than 40 people met the first morning of Annual Conference to learn how the ancient pattern of the labyrinth become a way for Christians of all ages to put real life into words through the power of the Spirit.

“The labyrinth is not a maze,” Akins-Banman said. “It contains a single path that leads to the center. There are no tricky turns — we get enough of those in real life. The walk becomes a metaphor for the path or journey of life, a mirror for where you are in your life that touches sorrow and releases joys.”

Later in the Conference, Buchanan held a session on lecto divina — or sacred reading — as a basis for prayer, a way of experiencing God’s presence in the Scriptures.

“The Bible is not just a place to read God’s word,” Buchanan said. “It is a place to encounter God and have God encounter you.”

Helen Stegall, associate pastor at Christ of the Hills in Hot Springs Village, held a workshop on prayer and creative expression.

Each participant made a magazine collage in mandala form, a meditative creation that comes from the space where the spirit moves the hands and the heart.

Stegall was the leader of the effort to bring the Prayer and Spirituality Room to Annual Conference.

She first encountered a traveling spirituality center at a Presbyterian church in Denver when she was in seminary.

“They shared how to set up the center and it resonated with me immediately,” Stegall said. “I love this way to incarnate the faith experience.”

Akins-Banman and Stegall are available to help set up similar rooms for local churches. To learn more, e-mail hakinsbanman@phumc.com or helenstegall@cohumc.com.

Other action taken at Annual Conference:

- Bishop Charles Crutchfield announced plans to appoint a steering committee of seven to nine people, who will spend the coming months examining Arkansas Conference operations. The committee — with the help of a consultant, Rev. Gil Rendle — will look for ways the conference can be better stewards of resources and more effective in ministry.
- Conference members unanimously passed by a voice vote the 2010 budget of \$13,775,606, down by 3.34 percent from this year.
- Members, also by a voice vote, defeated a resolution to urge the General Board of Church and Society “to focus on Gospel-centered issues that would unite our church, such as affirming marriage and families, defending human life, speaking out for persecuted Christians around the world, espousing virtuous living and a virtuous society, and advocating ministries that help the poor, the homeless and the sick.” Bob Sanders, now pastor of St. Andrew UMC in the South Central District, had submitted the resolution.
- Membership stands at 137,979, down 839 from the previous year. Worship attendance stands at 54,774, down 1,353 from 2007. The average weekly Sunday School attendance stands at 86,422, up 1,111.

More Annual Conference information,
photos, and videos are available at

www.arumc.org/ac09

Technology keeps connection alive

JESSICA COWART
Special to the Arkansas United Methodist

Two men in suits walked down a corridor at the John Q. Hammons Convention Center to a session at Annual Conference.

One looked to his companion and said, “There was a post on Facebook last night that said basically what you just told me. I want to know more.”

Yes, technology was at work during the Annual Conference, helping people gather opinions – and lunch buddies. Texting, Twitter, Facebook and WiFi played a part in communicating this June in Rogers, though most people were still talking the old-fashioned way.

“Technology is a tool, not a revolution,” said Eric Van Meter, director of the Arkansas State University Wesley Foundation. “Social media is just another tool to connect, and Annual Conference is still about getting together to see each other in the flesh.”

Jason Molitor of the Henderson State /Ouachita Baptist Wesley Foundation said Facebook allows his

friends to get past the basic updates on what they are doing.

“That means conversations we have when we are together face-to-face are deeper,” Molitor said. “We get to the meatier issues of life.” He created a Facebook group called Spotted Owls for the “endangered species” of young clergy in Arkansas.

Both Molitor and Van Meter used Facebook and e-mail to stay connected with their ministries back home. As they discussed whether many people were using technology during the Conference sessions, a young man broke into the conversation asking if either one of them had a password for wireless access. Van Meter paused to e-mail it to him.

Keeping up with friends from seminary on Facebook has made Adam Kirby of Central High School in Little Rock more aware of what is going on nationally in United Methodism.

“I may not join their groups,” he said, “but I hear what is happening in conferences other than our own.”

Brock Patterson, whose new appointment is to start a church in

west Little Rock, used his Blackberry quite a bit during Annual Conference.

He created a Facebook page for the new church because that was something he could set up himself and complete quickly. During Annual Conference, several people who are helping him with the new church were voting by e-mail on a church logo, rushing to meet a printing deadline.

Mark McDonald, pastor at First United Methodist Church in Jacksonville observed he wasn’t the only person on a cell phone during the sessions. “Technology allows me to follow Andy James’ updates on the Conference and other Methodist news,” he said. “I check Facebook status and follow the responses others make. Really, technology helps the connection all year long because it is easier to stay connected with other churches and other pastors.”

But McDonald does not believe technology is a big force influencing the decisions made by the Conference during the sessions.

“It might make a difference in a vote if enough people were tweeting at the same time,” he said, “but I don’t think we are there yet.”

The Conference through experienced and fresh eyes

JESSICA COWART
Special to the Arkansas United Methodist

The 2009 Arkansas Annual Conference brought together experienced veterans and newcomers to the church gathering.

For retired pastor Joel Cooper of Conway, the June event marked his 67th time to attend Annual Conference in Arkansas. Carolyn Gray, a lay member from First United Methodist Church in Jacksonville, was a first-time participant.

The yearly get-togethers are about more than church business. They have been meaningful to Cooper’s ministry.

Now 90, Cooper was licensed to preach at 14. After seminary in the early 1940s, he began attending Annual Conferences.

“I was impressed by the great preachers who were invited to our Annual Conference back then,” he

said. “It was an inspiration to me to try to learn how to preach. And I was impressed by the old preachers with long beards who were retiring. We called them the old war horses... very impressive men.”

As the years moved forward, Cooper got to know his fellow members better, and the Annual Conference became a time to meet with an ever-widening circle of friends.

“During the war years and after, the social climate had a lot to do with us taking in new members hand over fist,” Cooper said. “We were growing quickly as a Conference into the late ’50s and early ’60s. Maybe we were more focused on getting people to profess their faith in Jesus Christ during those years. But I don’t think we were as mission-minded then as we are now.”

He said Bishop Charles

Crutchfield’s episcopal address on June 15 indicated frustration with the continued loss of membership and attendance.

“The bishop was trying to inspire us to more dedicated effort in winning people to Jesus Christ,” Cooper said.

New to Annual Conference but not to the church, Gray is a lifelong Methodist who has served on many committees at her local church.

She characterized her first Annual Conference as interesting and exciting.

“I didn’t expect all the meetings to be so informative,” she said. “I think everyone should be able to come to Annual Conference at least once so they could learn all I’m learning and be happier about their apportionments. I’ve learned United Methodists are doing things in the right direction — things that help people.”

A retired high school teacher, Gray printed out all 80 pages of the Pre-Conference Journal and spent hours before she arrived reading and talking with others at her church to prepare to cast her votes during the Conference.

She said a meeting for first-time delegates on the first day of Annual Conference might be a way to help new members get up to speed and answer their questions.

Gray plans to share what she’s learned about the connectional ministries church with her Sunday School class and her entire church.

“I want us to think about how we can get involved in some of the things the United Methodist Church as a whole does,” she said. “Annual Conference also has helped me make decisions about where I want to put my personal efforts.”

While Cooper and Gray got

different things out of the gathering, both found inspiration in the conferencewide choir that sang during the opening-night worship service.

“When I first started coming, we didn’t have the big choirs,” Cooper said. “I am always moved by the raising of voices for ‘And Are We Yet Alive’ that begins the Conference. My father, Rev. W.E. Cooper, often said he would like to die at an Annual Conference with all the ministers singing.”

Gray has no doubt that the Holy Spirit was present when the choir sang at the opening worship service.

“With the services at night and devotionals in the morning there are lots of chances to feed your spirit at Annual Conference,” she said. “I really liked the part of the devotional Tuesday morning about being God’s hands and feet and heart. It’s true. We have to be God for other people.”



Newly commissioned provisional members are, from left, Robert Cloninger, Robert Lyons, Greg Comer, Nathan Kilbourne, Joe Head, Lynn Kilbourne, David Hoffman, Carter Ferguson, Ben Johnson, Terry Chapman, Jeanne Williams, Heath Williams, Brittany Richardson, Heath Bradley, Candace Barron, Allen Crum, Gail Baldwin, Melissa Thomas and Dawn Spragg.



Newly ordained elders are, from left, Randy Ludwig, Beth Perdue, J.J. Galloway, Brad Elrod, Belinda Price, Sue Howe, Dee Harper, Carl Ownbey Jr., Angie Gage, Zach Roberts, Ronnie Miller-Yow and Brian Timmons.



2009 Cabinet

Back (L to R): Mike Morey, Rodney Steele, David Protho, Charles Settle, Kurt Boggan, Phil Hathcock, Dennis Spence. Front (L to R): Mackey Yokem, Bishop Charles Crutchfield, Chester Jones.

At the worship service on June 16, Bishops Charles Crutchfield and Felton E. May participated in the commissioning of 19 provisional members, the ordinations of 12 elders and the ordination of two deacons. The Arkansas Conference also received one associate member. Crutchfield, during the Annual Conference, also welcomed two new district superintendents to the cabinet — Mike Morey and Charles Settle.

Through the years, many changes have occurred in the process of becoming a United Methodist minister, in part to accommodate the many different kinds of ministry in which a person is called, various journeys of Christian faith and diverse stages of life.

Here is a brief explanation of different types of clergy.

Deacons are ordained to a “lifetime ministry of Word and Service to both the community and the congregation...”

Elders are ordained to a “lifetime ministry of Service, Word, Sacrament and Order.”

Provisional members, who are commissioned, have achieved a certain level of accomplishment for ordination. They have a commitment to ministry and the intention to enter full Conference membership.

Associate members are local pastors who have met the educational, age and Board of Ministry requirements for itinerant ministry.



At a service on July 15, the Arkansas Conference recognized 11 retiring pastors and their spouses. Those who could attend are pictured above. (L to R) James and Peggy Lann; Wayne and Doris Clark; Charles and Linda Thompson, Bob and Carol Hager; Roger and Louise Glover; William Paul and Paulette Woolley; and Sam and Brenda Albright.



Newly ordained deacons are Janice Subrink and Helen Stegall.



Gary Lunsford is the newly received associate member of the conference.



L'eau Fraiz UMC in Hot Springs was named the Arkansas Conference Church of the Year in Category 4, which includes churches with 4 to 24 in attendance. Pictured from left are Nancy Cooper; Dale Diffie, senior pastor, and Carol Clark.



Pottsville UMC was named Arkansas Conference Church of the Year in Category 2, which includes churches with 25 to 49 in attendance. Pictured on the front from left are David Austin; Margaret Austin; Diana Qualls; Debby Harris; and Millie Bryant, senior pastor. Pictured on the back row are Sue Tucker, Ray Tucker, Lloyd Qualls, Larry Harris and Jay Bryant.

A dinner on June 16 recognized United Methodist churches of the year from each of Arkansas' nine districts. Each district named three or four churches for the honor.

Of these churches, four (one in each size category) received the distinction of being named state church of the year.

Bob Crossman, minister of new church starts and the Arkansas Annual Conference secretary, told the church pastors and members gathered that they were being honored for a variety of reasons.

Some have explosive children or youth ministries; some have celebrated a "miraculous number" of baptisms; some are attracting a large number of new people to worship.

"You are here because you are a healthy church," Crossman said. "You are here because great things are happening."

His main message to the churches was "Don't stop!"

"We can't rest until every pew in every church in every town is full."

CHURCH OF THE YEAR



Elm Springs UMC was named Arkansas Conference Church of the Year in Category 3, which includes churches with 50 to 299 in attendance. Pictured from left are Carrie Hardin, Denni Palmer and Carl Palmer, the senior pastor.



First UMC in Jonesboro was named the Arkansas Conference Church of the Year in Category 4, which includes churches with 300 to 1,400 in attendance. Pictured from left are Barbara Hall; Scott Gallimore, executive pastor; Ellen Pollock; John Miles II, senior pastor; Janet Agee; Patty Soward, care ministries pastor; Woodie Sue Herlein and Judy White.

2009 Arkansas Conference Ministerial Appointments

Central District Philip L. Hathcock, Superintendent

AMBOY.....David C. Ashcroft
ASBURY-LR.....Bryan Fink
Associate.....Nathan Kilbourne
Associate.....David M. Moore
BETHEL (CE).....Thomas Babington
FAITH.....Susan Howe
FAITHSPRING.....Brock Patterson
GARDNER MEMORIAL.....Richard S. Mitchell
Associate.....John O. Alston
GEYER SPRINGS.....Deanna L. McCormack
HENDERSON.....Kevin Lyon
HIGHLAND VALLEY.....Daniel R. Kirkpatrick
Associate.....Regina E. Gideon
HOOVER.....C. J. Duvall
Associate.....Ismail M. A. Saafir
HOPE KOREAN CHURCH.....Ohyeoun Kim
Associate.....Billy Howard Cox
HUNTER.....Melvin Moss
JACKSONVILLE FIRST.....John Mark McDonald
Associate.....Charles Watt
LAKEWOOD.....Richard Lancaster
Associate.....Marcia Dodd
Deacon.....Cynthia Henry Russell
LEVY.....John Wedaman
LITTLE ROCK FIRST.....Michael Mattox
Associate.....Donna Hankins-Hull
Deacon.....Mary Jane Cole
Deacon.....Adam Kirby
MABELVALE.....Robert Marble
MAUMELLE FIRST.....Luke Conway
Associate.....Zeke Allen
Associate.....Wayne Jarvis
Associate.....Peter Weber
MCCABE CHAPEL.....Deena Marie Hamilton
MOUNT PLEASANT.....Mary N. Jones
NEW HAVEN-LR.....Norma Gillerson
NLR FIRST.....Guy M. Whitney
Associate.....James W. Choate
Associate.....R. Leon Gray
Deacon.....Mary Hoey
NORTH PULASKI.....Carol S. Goddard
OAK FOREST.....Russell D. Breshears
Deacon.....Amanda Moore
PRIMROSE.....Clayton Bulice
PULASKI HEIGHTS.....Victor Nixon
Associate.....Harriett Akins-Banman
Associate.....Andrea E Allen
Associate.....Jeffery Bernard Hampton
Associate.....Lynn W. Lindsey
Deacon.....Gail Hocott
Deacon.....James Scott Moore
QUAPAW QUARTER.....Thompson Murray
Associate.....Elizabeth Anne Holcomb
SAINT ANDREW-LR.....Carol Ann Blow
SAINT JAMES-LR.....Fred Haustein
Associate.....Clark Atkins
Associate.....John Embrey
Associate.....William J Sardin
Associate.....Gregory Schick
Deacon.....Jenni L. Duncan
SAINT LUKE-LR.....Pauleen Ann Harrison
SAINT PAUL MAUMELLE.....Reginald Russell
SAINT PAUL-LR.....Blake Russell Bradford
SWEET HOME-LR.....Barbara A. Douglas

SYLVAN HILLS.....Beverly Watkins
TRINITY-LR.....N. Robin Moore
Associate.....Mary Candace Barron
TRINITY-NLR.....Gerald Meeks
WESLEY CHAPEL/PHILANDER SMITH/DUNCAN ..
.....Ronnie L. Miller-Yow
Associate.....Betty Scull
WESTERN HILLS -LR.....Sylvia Nosic
WHITE MEMORIAL/MARKS CHAPEL
.....James Lee Scruggs
WINFIELD.....Janet T. Edwards

North District Charles T. Settle, Superintendent

1ST CIRCUIT.....Steve Long
.....James D Wheeler
ALPENA/BERGMAN.....Les Bailey
ANTIOCH/HARMONY.....Michael Bolin
ASH FLAT/EVENING SHADE.....Larry Morris
BALD KNOB/RUSSELL.....Treva Mills
BATESVILLE FIRST.....David Steele
BEEBE.....Roger B. Hook
BRADFORD/PLEASANT PLAINS
.....William P. Mills
BULL SHOALS/YELLVILLE....Nicholas C Lascaro
CALICO ROCK/SPRING CREEK....Roger A. Crum
CAVE CITY/BEAR CREEK....Lloyd Blake Langston
CEDAR GROVE (S).....Aline McCracken
CEDAR GROVE(N)/PLEASANT RIDGE
.....Donald Cremer
CENTRAL AVENUE.....Paul Seay
CHEROKEE VILLAGE.....Bob Burton
.....Kay Burton
Associate.....Jimmy Anderson
CLINTON.....Vaughn Marsden
CORINTH/POWELL’S CHAPEL...Robert Kegerize
DAMASCUS.....William Grothe
DIAMOND CITY/OMAHA.....Mace P. Straubel
EVERTON/VALLEY SPRINGS.....David M. Smith
FAIRFIELD BAY.....John E. Walls
FAIRVIEW.....James F. Snow
FORREST CHAPEL.....Loye Vern Mason
GRIFFITHVILLE/DOGWOOD/ELLIS CHAPEL
.....Billy D Wise
GUION.....Matthew Sullivan
GUM SPRINGS.....Jim Bradberry
HARDY.....Brien Hall
HARRISON FIRST.....John D. Darnall



Arkansas United Methodists join in the second annual Holy Healthy 5K run/walk at Annual Conference.

By Heather Hahn

HARRISON SAINT PAUL/BELLEFONTE/VALLEY VIEW.....Mark Donald
HAZEL EDWARDS MEMORIAL/OIL TROUGH
.....Brian K. Pruett
HEBER SPRINGS.....Thomas Toombs
Local pastor.....Kathy DeBusk
HIGGINSON.....Elton Hughes
HOLIDAY HILLS.....C. Daniel Brand
HORSESHOE BEND/WISEMAN...Nancy Cameron
JASPER.....Larry M Acton
JUDSONIA/KENSETT.....Paul C. Draper
LESLIE/MARSHALL.....Ellis Edward Warren
MAMMOTH SPRING/CAMP.....Paul Skinner
MCRAE/GARNER.....Paul Hill
MELBOURNE/BETHESDA/CUSHMAN
.....Terry Sager
MOOREFIELD/OAK RIDGE....Lavon Bloodworth
MOUNT PLEASANTHarold Moore
MOUNTAIN HOME.....Siegfried Johnson
Associate.....Randy D. Ludwig
MOUNTAIN VIEW/ST. JAMES.....Steven Johnson
NEWPORT FIRST.....Charles Sigman
OAK GROVE.....Stephen Waggoner
OXFORD.....Bobby Coleman
PANGBURN/MOUNT PISGAH.....David Doyle
QUITMAN.....David Caswell
ROSEBUD.....Kathy DeBusk
SAINT PAUL.....Mary Susan Hilliard
SALEM/VIOLA.....James T. Rowland
SEARCY FIRST.....Davis E. Thompson
Associate.....Charles Dee Harper
SHARP/ASBURY.....Jerry Lumpkin
SHIRLEY.....Ruth Ann Landon - Mueller
SIDNEY.....Robert Ernest
SOUTHSIDE.....James T Pierce
STONEY POINT/FLOYD.....Robert Mark Quick
TUCKERMAN/SWIFTON.....William N. Steele
UMSTED MEMORIAL/EMORY CHAPEL
.....Jimmy J. Mosby
WESLEY/NORFORK.....Sara J. Gotschall
WILD CHERRY.....Marty Sanders

North Central District Rodney G. Steele, Superintendent

ADONA.....Frankie Reynolds
ATKINS/BELLS CHAPEL.....Danyelle E. Ditmer
BETHLEHEM/PROVIDENCE.....Toby Austin
CABOT.....Stephen Coburn
Associate.....Richmond P. Meadows
Associate.....Raymond Vining
CARLISLE.....Jay Glenn Culpepper
CENTERVILLE.....Lana Gartner
CHICKALAH/OAK GROVE.....Larry Johnson
CHRIST.....Aubrietta Lynn Jones
.....Jeffery Warrick
CLEVELAND/OVERCUP.....Josh Allen
CONCORD.....Julia Beth Turner
Deacon.....Cecilia Kelly
CONWAY FIRST.....Charles Murry
Associate.....Deidre Jo Roberts
CROSSPOINT.....Tammy Garrison
DANVILLE/TRINITY.....Thomas Sullinger
DARDANELLE/LIBERTY HALL....James A. Benfer
DES ARC.....Michael W. Topham
DOVER.....Joshua M. Ditmer
EBENEZER.....Andrew L. Balenton

ENGLAND.....Ryan Allen Rush
GRACE.....Sara Cole Pair
.....Shane Pair
Associate.....Greg Comer
GRAVEL HILL-SAINT PAUL/BRIGGSVILLE
.....Steve Lawrence
GREENBRIER.....John Farthing
Associate.....Donna Bennett



Michelle Goodson, an adult volunteer at Central UMC in Rogers, laughs with Connor Smith, a rising junior at Bentonville High School, at the young adult coffee during Annual Conference.

Photo by Heather Hahn

HAMILTON/HUMNOKE.....Roger E. Glover
HAVANA.....Paul Ed Seay, Jr.
HAZEN/DEVALLS BLUFF.....Everett Isom
HEBRON.....Roger Crouch
HICKORY PLAINS.....Deborah D. Harrison
KEO.....Charles Perry
LONOKE FIRST.....Stephen Brizzi
LONOKE SAINT JAMES.....David Scruggs
MAYFLOWER.....Ronald G. Grigsby
MORELAND.....James Shinn
MORRILTON.....Gerald Collins
MOUNT CARMEL/GRAHAM CHAPEL
.....Thomas E. Lukas
MOUNT TABOR.....Jason Sutfin
MOUNT ZION.....William Paul Woolley
NAYLOR.....Luke Parker
NEW ZION/MOUNT ZION.....Johnnie Davis
OAKLAND.....Mark Matthews
OLA/PLAINVIEW.....Floyd Ray
OLD AUSTIN.....H. Eugene Parker
PERRYVILLE.....David E. Baker
PLUMERVILLE.....William Dane Womack
POTTSVILLE.....Mildred F. Bryant
RUSSELVILLE FIRST.....Thomas Frase
Associate.....Gail Cole Baldwin
Associate.....Robert E. Woody
SALEM.....Jaimie Jack Alexander
SOUTH BEND.....Garren Earle Hagemeier
SPRINGFIELD/MALLETOWN...Austin Coleman
VILONIA.....Belinda Price
WARD/SIXTEENTH SECTION
.....Wesley Howard, Jr.
WESLEY-CONWAY.....David D. Hoffman
WESLEY-RUSSELVILLE.....David Scroggin
WYE.....LaNita Anne Daniels

Northeast District W. Kurt Boggan, Superintendent

AUGUSTA/TUPELO.....Judy Wilson Clark
BAY.....Angela Gage
BEECH GROVE.....Frankie Glenn Hicks
BLACK ROCK.....Mark B. Massey
BLYTHEVILLE FIRST.....Donald L. Hall, Jr.

BROOKLAND.....James Wainscott
CAMPGROUND.....George Edward Harris
CHERRY VALLEY/VANNDALE.....Jim West
CHRIST UNITED.....John Snyder
CHRIST WAY.....Herschel L. Richardson, Jr.
COLT/FORREST CPL/MADISON...Melvin D.Mann
CORNERSTONE.....William Christopher Cooper
 Deacon.....Rebecca Boggan
CORNING.....Donna Alberts
DELL.....Marilyn Webb
EARLE.....James Robert Wilson
ELI LINDSEY.....John Stoll
ELLIS CHAPEL.....Dixon Platt
FARM HILL.....Jerry A. Hall
FISHER STREET.....Nancy M. Rainwater
FORREST CITY FIRST.....Keith Goza
GRIFFIN MEMORIAL.....Michael Sutton
HARRISBURG FIRST.....J. Beth Perdue
HICKORY RIDGE.....Robert DeBaun
HOXIE.....Michael Winberry
HUGHES/WIDENER.....Patricia Litts
IMBODEN/SMITHVILLE.....Bob J. McMillon
JONESBORO FIRST.....John P. Miles, II
 Associate.....R. Scott Gallimore
 Associate.....Patty Sue Soward
LEACHVILLE.....Douglas Criss
LEPANTO/JOINER.....Janice Williams
MANILA/COMMUNITY.....Jerry Pentecost
MARION.....James Steve Wingo
MARKED TREE.....Ron C. Williams
MARMADUKE.....Lynn McClure
MARS HILL.....Don Joe Hewett
MAYNARD.....Thomas Dellinger
MCCRORY.....Charlotte Staggs
MONETTE.....Jerry W. Reed
MOUNT CARMEL.....Clarence Edward Pruett
NETTLETON.....Harmon B. Whitehurst
New Church Start - West Memphis.....Gary Tobar
NEW HAVEN.....TBS
OSCEOLA.....Bill Lindsey Fish
PARAGOULD FIRST.....Tom M. Letchworth
 Associate.....Benjamin C. Johnson
 Associate.....Jeff Weaver
PARKIN.....William Joe Head
PIGGOTT FIRST.....John Sandine
PLEASANT GROVE.....Heath Williams
POCAHONTAS.....Rockey Earl Starnes
RAVENDEN.....Danny Roark
RECTOR.....Velda Bell
ROCK SPRINGS/RAMER’S CHAPEL
.....H. Mark Trout
ROSEWOOD.....David Moose
SAINT PAUL.....Beth Ann Waldrup
SCHUGTOWN.....James Kjorlaug
SEDGWICK.....Marilyn Neal
SHILOH.....Larry D. Hughes
TRUMANN/TYRONZA.....Charles Cooper
WALNUT RIDGE.....Steve Cook
WARREN’S CHAPEL/WOOD’S CHAPEL
.....Dan Morrison
WEINER.....Dan L Walker
WEST MEMPHIS FIRST.....David F. Moseley
 Associate.....Sheila M. Jones
WHEATLEY/SALEM.....Terry Mann
WHITE HALL.....Stephen Anderson
WILSON/KEISER.....Gary Yarbrough
WYNNE.....Edward Wyers

Northwest District
G. Mackey Yokem, Superintendent

ARKANSAS KOREAN MISSION.....Young Jin Kim

BELLA VISTA FIRST.....Sara S. Bainbridge
BELLA VISTA HIGHLANDS.....Rex G. Darling
 Associate.....J. Michael Callahan
BENTONVILLE.....Rex Dickey
 Associate.....Don Bortell
 Associate.....Ben Hines
 Associate.....Susan Ledbetter
BERRYVILLE/SHILOH.....Rebecca S. Wiseman
.....Stephen Wiseman
BETEL/WESLEY.....Ramiro Lizcano
 Associate.....Kenneth R. Lee
BLAND CHAPEL.....David E. Mack
DECATUR.....H. Franklin Cook
ELKINS/TUCK’S CHAPEL.....Lon N Hudson, III
ELM SPRINGS.....Carl D. Palmer
EUREKA SPRINGS.....Stanley Wade Adams
FARMINGTON.....Justin Ledbetter
FAYETTEVILLE CENTRAL.....J. Anthony Holifield
 Associate.....Steve K. Pulliam
 Associate.....Cleifton Samuel Vaughan
FAYETTEVILLE SAINT JAMES.....Charles White
FAYETTEVILLE SEQUOYAH.....Robert C. Russell
 Associate.....James D. Johnson
 Deacon.....Donnie J. Huie
FAYETTEVILLE TRINITY.....Terry M. Gosnell
GENTRY.....Charles Gary Ashcraft
GOSHEN.....Dewey Dykes, III
GRAVETTE/SULPHUR SPRINGS.....Alex Flores
GREEN FOREST.....Donnie Hudson
HARMON.....J. Michael Callahan
HUNTSVILLE/PRESLEY CHAPEL
.....Heath R. Bradley
LINCOLN/CINCINNATI.....Andy Newbill
LIVING WATERS AT CENTERTON/HIGHFILL/
SPRINGTOWNBlake A. Lasater
 Associate.....Lee Benjamin Myane
MORROW.....John M. Moore
PEA RIDGE/BRIGHTWATER...Matthew I. Daniels
PRAIRIE GROVE.....Matthew H. Johnson
ROGERS CENTRAL.....Carness Vaughan
 Associate.....James Dell Keith
 Deacon.....J. Lester Oliver
 Deacon.....Dawn Spragg
ROGERS FIRST.....David Bentley
 Deacon.....H. Cathy Caudle
 Deacon.....Sandra Wanasek
ROGERS GRACE.....Harry T. Cross
ROGERS OAKLEY CHAPEL.....Brian Timmons
SILOAM SPRINGS.....Randy H. Rowlan
SILOAM SPRINGS NEW CHURCH START.....
.....Rob Williams
SPRINGDALE FIRST.....Britt Skarda
 Associate.....Michael I. Felder
 Associate.....David C. Freeman
 Deacon.....Judith S. Van Hoose
VINEY GROVE.....G Randall Nix
WEDINGTON.....Joseph W. Hall
WIGGINS/WINSLOW.....Gary B. Lunsford

South Central District
Chester R. Jones, Superintendent

AMITY.....Glen Dale Harris
ARKADELPHIA FIRST.....Carroll D Jackson
 Associate.....Carla Ray Thompson
BENTON FIRST.....George W. McCoy
 Associate.....William F. Cato
 Associate.....Garry Teeter
BETHEL.....Albert Marlar
BISMARCK.....Heather Spencer
BRYANT FIRST.....Todd-Paul Taulbee
 Associate.....Lynn Cross Kilbourne

CENTER GROVE(Grant County).....James Bacon
CHRIST OF THE HILLS.....Walter L. Smith
 Associate.....Paul B. Coy
 Associate.....Patrick O. Henry
 Associate.....Helen Stegall
CONGO.....Polly Burton
DIAMONDHEAD.....Michael S. Fikes
FAITH/MORNING STAR.....Mark R. Williams
FRIENDSHIP.....Robert Reid
GARDNER.....Bruce T. Howard
GLENWOOD/DAISY.....William Charles Bradford
GRAND AVENUE.....Pamela Jean Estes
GURDON.....Gregory A. Burks
HAVEN.....Clyde Hughley
HOLLYWOOD.....Deborah Perry
HOT SPRINGS FIRST.....William O. Reeves
 Associate.....Teresa Holt
 Associate.....John P. Miles
 Associate.....Carl A. Ownbey
 Associate.....John S. Polk
KEITH MEMORIAL/L’EAU FRAIZ...Dale L. Diffie
LANGLEY.....Lindsey Saenz
LEOLA/MOORES CHAPEL.....Elizabeth Stegall
MALVERN FIRST.....Lavon Post



Sara A. Bainbridge, left, formerly North District superintendent, congratulates J.J. Galloway and Galloway’s mother, on Galloway’s ordination as an elder.

By Heather Hahn

MANCHESTER.....George T. Whitney
MOUNT CARMEL.....Bob Warford
MOUNT IDA/JOPLIN.....Thomas DeWeese
 Associate.....Terry Scott
MOUNT ZION.....Carla Ray Thompson
MOUNTAINSIDE.....Chris Hemund
 Associate.....Dennis E. Horvath
NEW SALEM.....Donald H Robinson
NORMAN.....James Michael Smith
OAKLAWN.....Fred W. Hunter
OKOLONA/CENTER GROVE/TRINITY
.....Richard Wilkins
PARKVIEW/NEW HOPE.....Douglas Edwards
PINEY GROVE.....Robert David Jones
 Associate.....Rose A. Poag
PLEASANT HILL.....Vince Crawford
PULLMAN HEIGHTS/GUM SPRINGS
.....Wanda Murray
SAINT ANDREWBob W. Sanders
SAINT PAUL/ADKINS MEMORIAL
.....Clarence Fowler
SALEM BENTON.....Denman L Gillett
 Associate.....Randy Dale Reed
SARDISJohn Jeffrey Jones
SHERIDAN.....John Andrew Fleming
SHOREWOOD HILLS/MAGNET COVE/ ROCKPORT
.....Robert C. Clark
TRASKWOOD/EBENEZER.....TBS
VILLAGE.....Charlie E McAdoo
 Associate.....Curtis Norman Carter

Southeast District
Dennis Spence, Superintendent

ALMYRA/HUNTER’S CHAPEL....Ted Edmondson
ALTHEIMER.....Fred Arnold
BAILEY CHAPEL.....Travis Earl Jackson
BAYOU METO/LODGES CORNER.....Judyth Ross
BRINKLEY/BRASFIELD.....James L. French
CARTHAGE/HUNTER’S CHAPEL/TULIP/ WAVERLY
.....James E. Batts
CLARENDON/HOLLY GROVE.....Donald Lewert
CROSSETT.....Russell R. Moore
DEWITT/ST. CHARLES.....Larry Martineau
DUMAS/TILLAR.....Lester Glenn Pettus
EUDORA/PARKDALE.....Chyrl Savage Slocum
EXTRA.....Bonnie Carol Moore
FORDYCE FIRST.....Hammett Evans
GILLETT/DELUCE.....Charles Coffelt
GOOD FAITH CARR.....Walter Michael Wilkie
GOOD HOPE/NEW EDINBURG....John H. Kidwell
GRADY/TRINITY.....Lee Alan Zuehlke
GRAND AVE-STUTTGART...George Edward Rook
GREENHILL/LACY.....J. Donald Johnson
HAMBURG FIRST.....David A. Moore
 Associate.....Bonnie Carol Moore
HAMPTON/HARREL/FAUSTINA..Harry J. Hamner
HAWLEY MEMORIAL/WESLEY...Jason Ferguson
HEBRON.....Maurice Caldwell
HELENA FIRST.....Carolyn Doering
HERMITAGE/WAGNON.....Marty Reep
HUMPHREY.....George Edward Crumbly, Jr.
KINGSLAND/CHAMBERSVILLE.....Mark Rivers
KYNETTE.....Kennis Key
LAKE VILLAGE/MONTROSE.....Tyrone Hill
LAKESIDE.....Jim Brooks
 Associate.....Alicia Bobo Frye
LIVINGSTON CHAPEL.....Lawrence O. Taylor
MARIANNA/BEAR CREEK CAMP..Gordon Mohr
MARTIN’S CHAPEL.....Melissa Maskell
MARVELL/LEXA.....Kirk Doering
MCGEHEE/ARKANSAS CITY....Mary Love Loftis
MCGEHEE WESLEY.....Barton Bynum
MONTICELLO FIRST.....William Alfred Eason
MT. OLIVE/BETHEL/WILSON CHAPEL...L.T. Marks
MT. OLIVET/PROSPERITY/UNION...Garry E. Wiles
NEW HOPE.....Danny Dunlap
PALESTINE/TRINITY-WARREN...Charles W. Cauley
PINE BLUFF FIRST.....David Fleming
 Associate.....Edna Morgan
PLEASANT GROVEGene White
PORTLAND/DERMOTT/WILMOT...Terrie L. Bunnell
REDFIELD.....Mary F. Welch
RISON/MOUNT CARMEL.....James R Stone
ROCK SPRINGS/WILMAR/MT.PLEASANT/ANDREWS
CHAPEL.....Hardy Peacock
ROE.....Joe E. Glover
SAINT FRANCIS.....Jonah Wayne Smith
SAINT JAMES.....Henry Wilkins
 Associate.....Linda K. Duncan
SAINT LUKE.....James Edward Conn
SAINT MARK.....James R. Bell
SCRUGGS CHAPEL.....John W. Love
SHERRILL.....William Ferguson
SPARKMAN/DALARK/BETHLEHEM
.....S. Royce Savage
STAR CITY FIRST.....Bryan R. Diffie
STUTTGART FIRST.....David W. Bush
SULPHUR SPRINGS.....Roger Armstrong
WABBASEKA.....George Mitchell
WALLER’S CHAPEL/FT. HILL/ZION
.....Boyd F. Savage, Jr.

WARREN FIRST.....Gary Maskell
WATSON/MT. TABOR.....Walt Lowe
WESLEY CHAPEL/TAYLOR CHAPEL
.....William J Thompson
WEST HELENA/ELAINE.....Richard P Rogers
WHITE HALL.....Johnna J. Galloway

Southwest District
David F. Prothro, Superintendent

ASBURY.....Michael P. Daniel
ASHDOWN/RICHMOND.....James H. Cross
AVERY’S CHAPEL/BRUCE MEMORIAL/MIDWAY
.....Jimmy Keith Teeter
BEARDEN/THORNTON...Andrew Wayne Hughes
BELL CHAPEL/RED HILL.....Larry E. Goza
BRADLEY.....John Braden
BUENA VISTA/STEPHENS.....Cedric R. Walters
CAMDEN FIRST.....Henry Andrew Ratliff
CENTER/CENTER POINT.....Robert B McCoy
CHRIST.....J. David Kassos
DELIGHT/ANTOINE/SMYRNA...James T. Henderson
DEQUEEN FIRST/GILLHAM....David S. Williams
DIERKS/GREEN’S CHAPEL.....Robert D. Partlow
DODDRIDGE/OLIVE BRANCH...Walter L. Burnett
DUMAS MEMORIAL/MARYSVILLE.....Pat Odom
EBENEZER/SCOTT’S MEMORIAL.....Ella Harris
EL DORADO FIRST.....James P. Polk
Associate.....Brittany Richardson
EMERSON/MT. PISGAH.....Barbara Lewis
EMMET/HARMONY/WILLISVILLE
.....Jerry G. Westmoreland
FAIRVIEW (Camden).....Pamela K. Brule
FAIRVIEW (Texarkana)/OGDEN....Barbara B. Gilbert
FOREMAN/WADE’S CHAPEL.....Daryl E. Hines
FRIENDSHIP.....Gene M. Ross
GREER’S CHAPEL/LYDESDALE.....J. Mark Lasater
HALL’S MEMORIAL.....Joyce Watson
HARMONY/PHILADELPHIA/UNITY
.....J. Wayne Edwards
HARMONY GROVE/LAKESIDE/HOLLY SPRINGS
.....James E. Harris
HINTON/DEANN.....Byron Mann
HOLLY SPRINGS (Texarkana).....J. Doug Rhodes
HOPE FIRST.....Tandy Curtis Hanson
HORATIO/WINTROP.....Fred R. Smith
HUTTIG.....Robert Earl Ballard
JUNCTION CITY.....Michael L. Proctor
LEWISVILLE.....Ronnie K Eldridge
LISBON.....Ralph Gary Riley
LOCKESBURG/BEN LOMOND..Michael G. Jennings
MACEDONIA/MOUNT CARMEL ...Tommy Halsell
MAGNOLIA FIRST.....Larry E. Kelso
MCNEIL.....Jennifer Lynn Rowsam
MINERAL SPRINGS/WAKEFIELD
.....Spencer G. Plumley
MOUNT ZION.....Curtis M. Smith
MT. MORIAH/VALLEY GROVE.....James J. Fort
MURFREESBORO.....John Bradley Elrod
NASHVILLE/BINGEN.....Russell Edward Hull
NEW ERA.....Charles Payne
NORPHLET/CENTENNIAL....W. Zachary Roberts
OAK GROVE.....Revel Kidd
PARKER’S CHAPEL/PLEASANT GROVE
.....Troy L. Thomas
PRESCOTT FIRST.....Carlton Cross
RHODES CHAPEL.....James Carroll Rawls
RONDO/PLEASANT HILL....Robert C. Armstrong
RUSHING MEMORIAL.....Harold Rogers
SAINT JOHN.....W. Joe Miller
SAINT MARKRobert L. Lyons

SAINT PAUL.....Robert H. Walker
SILVER SPRINGS.....Tony Huffman
SMACKOVER/SILVER HILL.....Leon T. Dixon, Jr.
SPRING HILL.....Donald R. Nicholson
STAMPS.....Gilliam Sills
SUGAR HILL TEXARKANA...George Edwin Odell
SWEET HOME UNION.....Gene M. Ross
SWEET HOME.....Al Terrell
TAYLOR.....Jerry Pulliam
TEXARKANA FIRST.....Bruce Wayne Bennett
Associate.....Vicky Lynn Stephens
TIMOTHY/SAINT MARK (Camden)...David Swift
VILLAGE/EBENEZER (Stephens)...Robert A. Terry, Jr.



Diane Vogler of First UMC in North Little Rock, at left, and Sara Knight of Eureka Springs UMC, recount the origins of the United Methodist Women during Annual Conference.

Photo by Heather Hahn

WASHINGTON/SARDIS.....Keenan C. Williams
WESTSIDE/MISSOURI.....G. Philmore Worley
WILEY CHAPEL.....Shirley White-Souder

West District
Michael Morey, Superintendent

ALMA.....Ronnie Newberry
ALTUS/GRENADES CHAPEL.....Steve Hance
BARLING.....Steve Holyfield
BONANZA.....Jeffery L Blassingame
BOONEVILLE.....Bonda Deere Moyer
CAVANAUGH/HACKETT.....Troy Conrad
CECIL.....Jerry Eubanks
CHARLESTON.....William V. Buchanan
CITY HEIGHTS.....Randy L. Miller
CLARKSVILLE.....David R. Hanshaw
Associate.....Carter Ferguson
COLES CHAPEL/BRANCH.....Daniel Thueson
DYER.....Cheryle Costner
.....Philip Costner
FAITH.....Charles W. Armour
Associate.....Jeffery L Blassingame
FORT SMITH FIRST.....David Paul Orr
Associate.....Stephen P. Dickinson
Associate.....Claire Hoffman
Associate.....Janice Sudbrink
GODDARD.....W. Wade Shownes
Associate.....Kim Cloninger
GRACE.....William B. Leslie
Associate.....Davida Autry
Associate.....Margaret Sue Kelly
GRAVELLY/BLUFFTON.....Joy Carmean
GREENWOOD.....David Ray Hawkins
Associate.....William Zachary Underwood
HARTFORD/MIDLAND..Chris Rink
HARTMAN/SPADRA/HAYS CHAPEL...Regina Turner
HATFIELD/CHERRY HILL.....James Lybrand

HERITAGE.....James Wesley Hilliard
Associate.....Barry D. Morton
Associate.....Bill R. Kelton
HUNTINGTON.....Frank Grubbs
JOURNEY.....Ricky Lee Huggins
KIBLER.....Vida R. Williams
LAMAR/MOUNT OLIVE.....Robert Cloninger
LAVACA/MOUNTAIN VIEW....Lynn David Strang
MAGAZINE/MOORE’S CHAPEL/WAVELAND
.....Phil Sturdy
MANSFIELD.....Jackie Ann Gregory
MENA FIRST.....Gary Frank Harrison
Associate.....Terry Chapman
MIDLAND HEIGHTS.....Daniel Lane Williams
MILLTOWN.....Louise Finney
MISSION.....Ulysses C Washington
MOUNT OLIVEBarry D. Morton
MOUNTPLEASANT/PARKS/SQUAREROCK/BIRDSVIEW
.....Patricia Diane Miller
MULBERRY.....Charles B. Beevers
NEW BETHEL.....Charles Jordan
NEW HOPE/NEWBERRY.....Robert M. Jeffery
NORTH FORT SMITH HISPANIC MISSION
.....Julio Ibarra
OZARK.....Royal Keith Dodson
PARIS.....Don Eubanks
PIONEER MEMORIAL.....Judy Hall
PRAIRIE VIEW.....Tammy Jo Teltow
SAINT PAUL.....Steven M. Poarch
Associate.....Geral Holloway
Deacon.....Mark L. Waynick
VESTA.....Jonathan Payne
VIETNAMESE MISSION(Fort Smith)...Terry Gallamore
VIETNAMESE (Van Buren).....Thang Nguyen
WALDRON.....Joe R Kitchens
WALTREAK.....Larry Pat Millard
WASHBURN.....H. Gaylan Cope
WESLEY.....Paul Strang
WICKES/MOUNTAINVIEW (Mena)...Bryan Richardson
WOODLANDS.....Ben H. Anderson

Other Appointments
Extension Ministries

DIRECTOR OF CONFERENCE MINISTRIES,
ASSISTANT TO THE BISHOP.....Roy P. Smith
CONFERENCE MINISTER OF NEW CHURCH STARTS
AND CONGREGATIONAL ADVANCEMENT
.....Robert O. Crossman
CONFERENCE MINISTER OF CHILDREN AND
FAMILIESCecilia Kelly
DIRECTOR, CONNECTED IN CHRIST
.....Michael Roberts
CONFERENCE MINISTER OF ETHNIC
MINISTRIES.....Maxine Y. Allen
LAKE REGIONAL HEALTH SYSTEMS
.....Aric Bokker
ARKANSAS ADVOCATES FOR CHILDREN &
FAMILIES.....Patricia Bodenhamer
BUTTERFLY MINISTRIES.....Mary Hoey
CENTRAL HIGH SCHOOL.....Adam Kirby
COORDINATOR FOR SPIRITUAL FORMATION,
HENDRIX COLLEGE.....Amanda Moore
HORIZONS.....James Clifton Christopher
JUSTICE FOR OUR NEIGHBORS
.....Stephen J. Copley
METHODIST FAMILY HEALTH
.....James Scott Moore
PERKINS SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY
.....Rebekah Linn Miles

ST. VINCENT HEALTH SYSTEM
.....Helen Jean Burton
UAMS PASTORAL COUNSELING.....Bob Edwards
UMCOR DISASTER RESPONSE
.....Franklin Thomas Hazelwood
WESLEY ENHANCED LIVING
.....Joe Michael Campbell
ASBURY SEMINARY.....Robert Holifield
TEXAS DEPT OF CRIMINAL JUSTICE
.....Catherine Estes
COURSE OF STUDY SCHOOL.....Samuel Teague
CRIME VICTIMS ADVOCACY COUNCIL
.....Burnley Bruce Cook
DAYSRING BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SERVICES
.....Dana Thomason
HENDRIX COLLEGE.....J. Wayne Clark
.....Judith J. Whitney
MOUNT EAGLE CHRISTIAN CENTER
.....Louise T. Harding
MOUNT UNION COLLEGE
.....Martha D. CashBurless
OHIO WESLEYAN UNIVERSITY...Rockwell Jones
METHODIST HEALTHCARE.....John A. Wilcher
CHAPLAIN, NEA MEDICAL CENTER
.....Clarence Edward Pruett
GENERAL EVANGELIST.....James B. Scott
.....Molly Davis Scott
.....Charles Wiggins
MERCY HEALTH SYSTEM ROGERS
.....Kandi Mount
METHODIST SEMINARY, METHODIST CHURCH
OF CHILE.....Jacob F. Schaible
ST. MARY’S HOSPITAL, ROGERS...Pamela Cicioni
VA HOSPITAL FAYETTEVILLE.....Audie D. Long
CHAPLAIN, U.S. AIR FORCE...Ronald L. Feeser, Jr.
CHAPLAIN, U.S. NAVY.....Scott J. Shafer
CHAPLAIN, U.S. ARMY.....John C. Fimple
CHAPLAIN, U.S. ARMYWilliam Clint Black
CHAPLAIN, U.S. ARMY.....David Carl Eaton
CHAPLAIN, U.S. ARMY RESERVE
.....Leonard Higgins
CRIME VICTIMS ADVOCACY.....David Morgan
INDIANA WESLEYAN UNIVERSITY
.....Christopher T. Bounds
TURNER CENTER FOR CHURCH LEADERSHIP
.....J. Daniel Redding-Rhodes
METHODIST NURSING HOME & VILLAGE
.....J. M. Rogers



From left: Brittany Richardson, associate pastor at First UMC in El Dorado; Lynn Kilbourne, associate pastor at First UMC in Bryant; and her husband, Nathan Kilbourne, associate pastor at Asbury UMC in Little Rock, enjoy conversation during Annual Conference.

Photo by Heather Hahn

Wesley Foundation Directors

ARKANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY, JONESBORO
.....William Eric Van Meter

ARKANSAS TECH UNIVERSITY, RUSSELLVILLEJason A. Molitor
HENDERSON STATE UNIVERSITY/OUACHITA BAPTIST UNIVERSITY..... Jessica Lee Durand
SOUTHERN ARKANSAS UNIVERSITYJames Mark Lasater
UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL ARKANSAS, CONWAY.....John Palmer
UNIVERSITY OF ARKANSAS, FAYETTEVILLEOmar H Al-Rikabi
UNIVERSITY OF ARKANSAS AT LITTLE ROCKMaxine Y. Allen
UNIVERSITY OF ARKANSAS AT MONTICELLOE. Kavan Dodson
UNIVERSITY OF ARKANSAS AT PINE BLUFFHenry Wilkins

Appointed in Other Annual Conference

KANSAS EAST CONFERENCE.....Mark Norman
NEW MEXICO CONFERENCE.....Robert Hunt
OKLAHOMA CONFERENCEJames H. Lenderman
MISSISSIPPI CONFERENCE.... Ronald A Kitchens
CENTRAL TEXAS CONFERENCEL. Leonard Delony
TEXAS CONFERENCE.....Gregg Louis Taylor

Appointed to Attend School

DUKE DIVINITY SCHOOL Andrew C. Thompson

Diaconal Ministry

DIACONAL MINISTRYDavid Clemmons
.....David L. French
.....Jim Walsmith
.....John C. Yarrington
.....Denise E. Palmer
.....Donna Flenniken

Leave of Absence

LEAVE OF ABSENCE.....Thomas Rhoades, Stephen Waggoner, Kay S. Wiggins, Sarah Mullins, Cheryl Jean Cook Baker, Thomas Mark Ashcraft, Larry D. Ott, Mary Jane Pearce, Polly C. Shafer

Incapacity Leave

INCAPACITY LEAVE.....Robert Bell, Rodney M. Patterson, David Michael O'Dell, Doyle E. Berckefeldt, Marion Fleming, Vernon Wayne Johnson, Ed Kerr, Gregory Webb, Billie Jean Tate, Rufus Robert Burnham, Jr., Floyd Ervin, Rita Kaye Hammett Evans, Larry Hunt, Sam A. Long, John R. Soward, Ronald W. Durham, Leslee Lynn Phillips, Betsy Singleton-Snyder, Virginia Sue Trexler, Gregory Webb, Louann Averitt Murphy, Cornelia DeLee, Lewis See

Honorable Location

HONORABLE LOCATIONDarrell Van Smith, Cynthia Lee Davis, James Kenneth Dodd, Paul C. Draper, Rhonda K. Crow Monroe, Norman C. Moyer, Larry Wesley Pearce, Carey Don Womack, Donald W. Lanier, Jerry Keith Cookus, Marcia Crossman, Susan Elizabeth Gladin, Peter H. Kimball, Thomas Winborn Barnett, William S Briant, Jr., Charles Marcus Cooper, Constance Steele



Herschel McClurkin, Jr. presents a Shoal Creek Camp T-shirt to Bishop Charles Crutchfield in celebration of the United Methodist camp's 50th anniversary.

Photo By Heather Hahn



Theresa Hoover, the first black woman to lead the Women's Division of the United Methodist Church's General Board of Global Ministries, sits with leaders of her namesake church in Little Rock. Pictured on the back from left are Rhonda Robinson, Theresa Hoover UMC member; C.J. Duvall, the church's senior pastor; Tyshon Miller, a youth member; Nicki Spencer, the church's youth minister; I. Malik Saafir, the church's associate pastor; and Maxine Allen, conference minister of ethnic ministries. Pictured at front on either side of Hoover are Bill Robinson, retired pastor of Theresa Hoover UMC and Black Community Developers director, and Deborah Bell, Black Methodists for Church Renewal board member.

Photo by Heather Hahn



The Course of Study School Choir from Hendrix College opens a morning business session at Annual Conference with a brief concert of traditional hymns. Pictured from left are Frankie Reynolds, LaNita Daniels, Phil Hathcock, Sam Teague, Eddie Harris, Andy Newbill and Michael Callahan with Rita Callahan playing the piano.

Photo By Heather Hahn

PAUP Continued from page 7A

sermon that his agency is working on the creation of a Poverty Corps that would operate similarly to Peace Corps.

The program is still in its earliest planning stages, Paup later explained in his interview. The Poverty Corps' aim would be to develop opportunities for young adults to minister to the poor in the United States and beyond.

Paup has been passionate about mission work since he was a youngster listening to missionaries share their stories at his childhood church in Oil City, Penn. He previously has served as president of the General Council on Ministries, president of the Advance for Christ and His Church and president of the United Methodist Committee on Relief. He also has been a governing member of the General Board of Global Ministries.

Bishop Felton E. May of Arkansas served as interim general secretary of the General Board of Global Ministries immediately prior to Paup taking the post. May said Paup has shown "skill and energy in his ministry to the denomination."

Paup is confident that the United Methodist Church can be a positive force in addressing pernicious global

problems like poverty and malaria. Still, he also stresses that the denomination will need help from other groups to reach its goal.

"We as United Methodists on the planet are .002 percent of the world's population," he said

"The reason why I looked up that percentage is to say we are not going to accomplish this alone. In the first place, we accomplish it by the leading of the Holy Spirit and the way in which God offers us the opportunities. But we then must partner with others beyond our United Methodist Church in order to be more effective in how circumstances on the planet are addressed."

To learn more about the General Board of Global Ministries, go to www.gbgm-umc.org.

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Youth/Worship Minister: Cabot United Methodist Church currently has an opening in the area of youth ministry and contemporary worship. CUMC is 1300 members strong with a passion for making disciples. Candidates must have experience in youth ministry and worship leading. A successful candidate will have a heart for youth, a passion for worship, and team spirit. Resumes can be sent to Youth/Worship Ministry, CUMC, P.O. Box 1118, Cabot, AR., 72023 or email: office@cabotumc.org

First United Methodist Church in Benton announces a job opening for Director of Music Ministries. We are a 1500+ member congregation with a wide variety of music ministries. Minimum Requirements: Degree in sacred music, formal music education, or certification in music ministries, and a minimum of 5 years related church music experience. Responsibilities include: Coordinate the total vocal music program of the church including children, youth, and adult choirs. Direct choir in traditional worship services; oversee and assist contemporary service coordinator in music for traditional and contemporary worship services; direct handbell choirs for children and adults. This job offers a generous benefits package. Salary commensurate with experience. A complete job description is available on request. Please send resumes to: Search Committee, First United Methodist Church, 200 North Market Street, Benton, AR 72015, or fax 501-315-3603.

UM's stepping out to help children, families

HEATHER HAHN
Editor

For many United Methodist youth groups, the night of Aug. 7 will offer them a chance to do good and make a splash.

Methodist Family Health, for the third consecutive year, will sponsor a Walk for Children and Families on the Big Dam Bridge. Then immediately after the walk, the teens can mosey over to the Youth Service Fund Lock-in at nearby Wild River Country.

Among those participating this year will be 20 or so youth from First United Methodist Church in El Dorado. This will be the first time the group is making the trip to Pulaski County for the walk and lock-in.

Alexis Youngblood, 14, is excited

about both events.

"I think it will be an awesome opportunity to help people," Youngblood said. "I think we will be a closer youth group since we'll be working together."

The double billing allows teens to support their fellow youth twice in a row.

The Youth Service Fund provides financial assistance for United Methodist youth who can't afford to go on a mission trip, fix up their youth rooms or fulfill other youth-ministry needs.

Methodist Family Health is a United Methodist nonprofit that offers a continuum of behavioral services for children and families across the state.

This year's walk will specifically

support the ministry's Methodist Behavioral Hospital in Maumelle, whose clients range in age from 3 to 18. Many in the hospital's care come from the state's foster care system, and they are dealing with a variety of emotional issues.

One such client is Stacy who entered the hospital about seven years ago because he had trouble with all his other foster-care placements.

The 18-year-old, who asked that his last name not be used to protect his privacy, said he struggled with severe anger issues.

"That experience was very beneficial to me," he said. "I wouldn't have gotten as far as I am now with the support if it hadn't been for the [residential treatment center] and the hospital. One of the things they taught me to do better is self-control. They taught me about accepting criticism and a little bit about conversation skills with other people."

Stacy only stayed in the hospital for three months, but he remained

inside the Methodist Family Health system, and now lives in one of its group homes.

He described the care he got from the staff as "tough love but very friendly." Staff members made sure he had cake and gifts on his birthday, presents at Christmastime and a soft, warm place to sleep each night. He said they also taught him life skills.

Stacy is now working toward his driver's license and has taken his first job at a fast-food restaurant.

"They have shown me that people aren't there to hurt you," he said. "They are actually there to benefit you and help you in the long run."

The third Methodist Family Health Walk for Children and Families event will be Aug. 7, starting on the North Little Rock side of the Big Dam Bridge. Registration for the event opens at 6 p.m., and the walk starts at 7 p.m. The fee is \$20 for individuals and \$50 for families. Proceeds from the event will fund a new playground

and wellness equipment for children at Methodist Behavioral Hospital in Maumelle. Registration forms are available at www.methodistfamily.org.



A child at Methodist Behavioral Hospital enjoys the basketball court.

Photo by Heather Hahn

Assembly brings together youth & 1st class speakers, musicians

Arkansas United Methodist teens will have the chance to learn about "Peace, Love and Jesus" or to "Come Clean and Stay Fresh" this month.

The Junior High Assembly, which takes its theme from Jesus' statement, "Blessed are the peacemakers," will be July 25-28 at the University of the Ozarks, 415 N. College Ave. in Clarksville.

The Senior High Assembly will follow immediately after from July 28 to Aug. 1 also at the University of the Ozarks.

The junior high event is for all youth in the sixth- through eighth-grades in the 2008-2009 school year. Its mission is to minister to youth of all backgrounds and make the message of Jesus Christ relevant in today's culture.

The worship leaders will be Rob Holifield, director of community life at Asbury Seminary in Wilmore, Ky., and Adam Wheatley, a recording artist and worship leader from Nashville, Tenn. Holifield grew up in Arkansas, and attended Junior and Senior High Assembly as a youth. Wheatley released his debut album "Bring the Morning, Bring the Sun" in 2007.

The senior high gathering aims to be a create your own event. Participants, who must have finished the ninth through 12th grades, will be able to choose their daily workshops,

extra activities and even their own shirt color.

The event takes its theme from 2 Samuel 22:21-22: "The Lord has dealt with me according to my righteousness; according to the cleanness of my hands he has rewarded me. For I have kept the ways of the Lord; I have not done evil by turning from my God."

The speaker will be Amos Gray, director of student ministries at Mosaic Church in Little Rock. Gray has more than a dozen years' experience in leading multi-ethnic youth ministries. The worship leader will be Wayne Kerr, who performs at about 180 to 200 such events each year.

The Arkansas Conference Council on Youth Ministries sponsors both gatherings. Organizers ask participants in both events to bring their Bibles, items for a talent show, money for Youth Service Fund activities as well as an open heart and open mind.

After July 1, registration is \$175 for the junior high event and \$200 for the senior high event. Those registered after July 1 are not guaranteed a T-shirt. No registration is accepted after a July 17 postmark.

To register or to learn more, visit www.accym.org. You can also join the group "Arkansas United Methodist Youth" at www.facebook.com.

Sunday School class bags a green idea to benefit food pantry, environment

BY COLLEEN HOLT
Special Contributor

The Faith in Action Sunday School class at First UMC in Conway has started a new ministry that keeps the needs of others in mind while helping the church and the community become just a little bit more "green."

In April, the class began selling linen reusable grocery bags to be used when shopping. On the bags, the class screen printed a list of items normally included in a bag distributed from the pantry, including rice, dry beans, peanut butter and jelly, canned meat items, canned vegetables and fruits, and crackers. The list was intended to be a reminder to shoppers of the needs of the church's food pantry.

The idea for printing the shopping bags came from a church member, Stacy Crone, who had seen a like project at Midland UMC in Georgia. The Conway First UMC Faith in Action class joined with the church's Church and Society committee to print and design the bags.



Faith in Action Sunday school class members Kelli Gordon, center, and Catherine Gatlin, right, sell a reusable grocery sack to Susan Mulhearn.

Photo by Stuart Holt

An initial order of 250 bags was placed, and subsequent orders will be made as needed. All proceeds from sales of the bags, which cost \$5, will be given to the food pantry. The bags are a natural brown with burgundy printing, which includes the food list and the name of the church. A wider bottom makes the bags very usable to carry groceries.

A hand-out with the bags encourages church members to "use

this bag each time you grocery shop and know that you'll be doing your part to help the environment by reducing wasteful plastic bag consumption. Use this bag as a friendly reminder of the needs of our own food pantry. We challenge you to commit to making a regular contribution to the pantry. Pick up an item from the list each grocery trip, or fill the bag with items once a quarter or even once a month."

School serves up study for the mission hungry

JESSICA COWART
Special to the Arkansas United Methodist

The School of Christian Mission plans to offer the kind of study United Methodists can sink their teeth into.

With the theme “Together at the Table,” school’s main spiritual growth study will focus this year on food and faith.

The study is about how people’s Christian faith is nurtured, strengthened and enhanced by food and all the ways meals touch their lives. The text will be Food and Faith by Wendy Whiteside with a study text by Faye Wilson.

The event, sponsored by the Arkansas Conference Board of Global Ministries and the Arkansas Conference United Methodist Women will be from July 30 to Aug. 2 at Hendrix College in Conway.

“The goal is to provide quality mission education to individuals,” said Stephen Copley, the school’s dean. “The School of Christian Mission is a national event held in most conferences. The topics are chosen by the National Women’s Division.”

In addition to the food and faith study, adult participants will also be able to take a course on Sudan, subtitled “Why a Dream of Peace is Possible,” or study of Native American

culture.

The text for the Sudan course is The Beauty and Courage of Sudan by Linda Beher with a study guide by Maxine West.

The text for the study on indigenous peoples is Giving Our Hearts Away: Native American Survival by Thom White Wolf Fassett. The speaker will be Tweedy Sombrero, a Navajo and pastor at Trinity UMC in Yuma, Ariz.

There will also be activities and studies specifically geared for children and youth.

Also participants can help assemble disaster kits for children. Kits include a book about God or feelings; a religious coloring book and crayons; a small stuffed animal; a toy fire truck, police car or ambulance and a large zip-lock bag for the items.

Registration for staying on campus is \$160 for youth and adults and \$110 for children in prekindergarten through sixth grade. Registration for those who commute to the school is \$65 for adults and youth and \$50 for children. Nursery care for tikes 2 and under costs \$30.

No registration can be accepted after July 15.

To register, visit www.arumc.org/acscm



Angie Gage kneels to receive blessing by Bishop Crutchfield, Bishop May and other clergy during the ordination service held on June 16. Gage was ordained as an Elder in the Arkansas Conference.

Photo by Patrick W. Shownes

CALENDAR

JULY

- July 6-10: Healing Place Ministries day camp for children ages 7-14 from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. at First UMC in Pine Bluff. (870) 535-0101.
- July 12-18: Ozark Mission Project at West Memphis UMC, First UMC in El Dorado and Cornerstone UMC in Jonesboro. Visit www.ozarkmissionproject.org
- July 13-17: Healing Place Ministries day camp for children ages 7-14 from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. at First UMC in Pine Bluff. (870) 535-0101.
- July 14-17: Youth Harambee, Philander Smith College, www.bmcr.org.
- July 21-24: Focus 2009 — Faithfully Forming Our Children, a conference for children’s ministers, in Indianapolis, Ind. Pre-conference on July 20. More information at www.gbod.org.
- July 24-Aug. 1: Local Pastor Licensing School – Part B, Mount Eagle Christian Center.
- July 25-28: Junior High Assembly, University of the Ozarks, Clarksville.
- July 26-Aug. 1: Ozark Mission Project at Cold Springs, Bear Creek Camp near Conway and First UMC in Hamburg. Visit www.ozarkmissionproject.org.

- July 28-Aug. 1: Senior High Assembly, University of the Ozarks, Clarksville.
- July 29-Aug. 2: The School of Congregational Development, Chicago.

AUGUST

- Aug. 25-26: “Pray, Prepare, Prevent & Prevail,” an Inter-Faith Church Security Awareness/ Response course, Mount Sequoyah Conference & Retreat Center, Fayetteville. Marilyn Braswell, (800) 760-8126 or e-mail programs@mountsequoyah.org.

SEPTEMBER

- Sept. 21: Luncheon for retired clergy, spouses and surviving spouses at the Governor’s Mansion.
- Sept. 30-Oct. 3: Basic Preparation Course for Parish/ Faith Community Nurses and Health Advocates, Mount Sequoyah Conference & Retreat Center, Fayetteville. Sharon Hinton at sth.rnr@door.net.

OCTOBER

- Oct. 12-16: New Church Leadership Institute, Mount Sequoyah Conference & Retreat Center, Fayetteville.

NOVEMBER

- Nov. 14: Arkansas Conference United Methodist Women Annual Meeting, First UMC, Russellville.

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.

- 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 U. Washington at (479) 782-0612.
- Aug. 2-9:** Sequoya United Methodist Church in Fayetteville will lead a mission trip to northern Minnesota to roof the parsonage of Ruth Gangloff, pastor of Kabetogama UMC and Crane Lake Chapel. At least one more volunteer is needed. Gangloff serves a 1,200-mile area as part of the United Methodist Church’s Mobile Ministry. Donna Huie at donna.huie@sequoyah-umc.org or at (479) 442-8677.
- 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.
- 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.
- Ongoing:** “This Olde 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.

Mount Eagle Christian Center, 935 Beal Road in Clinton, is requesting chainsaw and cleanup crews. E-mail Lu Harding at lu@mounteagle.org or call her at (501) 753-4580.

■**FOSTER CARE** *Continued from page 1A*



A large stuffed dog and a number of furniture pieces are among the donations that St. James UMC in Little Rock is storing for the congregation's foster care ministry. Church members use donations to help reunite families by providing children's basic needs.

Photo by Heather Hahn

children have landed in state custody not because of abuse but because their families can't afford their primary needs, said Angela Foy, social-service aide in Pulaski County.

She estimates that about 90 percent children in foster care are there because their families can't afford basic bedding, adequate utilities and sufficient food for the young ones. The bad economy has only made the situation worse. Foy said many of their parents have part-time jobs but not enough education to gain better employment.

When parents or other relatives become eligible to get their children out of foster care, DHS caseworkers help them find a place to live and find employment.

But caseworkers won't let families take custody until assured that they have acceptable housing. This includes a separate bed for each child and a kitchen table and chairs so children don't eat on the floor.

"Without St. James providing the assistance it has, we would not have been able to help a number of families keep their children in the home or return the children to their home," Foy said. "It has been a tremendous help and a great ray of hope for a lot of the families."

Christmas wishes

The ministry started in late 2007 when the church displayed an Angel Tree for parishioners to "adopt" about 70 Pulaski County foster children for Christmas.

St. James UMC member Alison Karrh and her family chose the Christmas wish list of an 18-year-old boy named Patrick.

"We treated him like one of our

own and bought everything on his list," Karrh said.

"I spent a lot of time wrapping his presents, and I just felt led to do extra things for him. I really focused on this child and prayed for him. I put in little notes that said, 'Patrick, I hope this jacket keeps you warm,' 'God loves you,' things like that."

But Karrh wasn't satisfied with just providing the gifts for a teen.

A former special-events coordinator, she volunteered to help with the DHS Christmas party where the gifts would be distributed. Karrh and other members of her Sunday School class brought cookies, punch and decorations to the festivities.

At the party, Karrh decided she wanted to do what she could for foster kids throughout the year — not just Christmas.

Initially, she oversaw the ministry largely on her own, collecting donated furniture from friends and fellow church members, and often using her own money to supply a family's needs.

But soon she realized the project had grown too big for her alone, so she asked Brenda Weeks, St. James UMC's director of mission outreach, to help coordinate the ministry. Around 25 to 30 church members now regularly volunteer with the ministry.

DHS caseworkers and occasionally attorneys or judges refer clients to the St. James program. Karrh makes a site visit to the client's home and consults with both the family and their caseworker to ascertain their exact needs.

In addition to twin beds and kitchen tables, families often need sofas, dressers, microwaves as well as pots, pans and dishes, Karrh said.

Once Karrh has determined a client's needs, Weeks will e-mail the congregation and put a notice in the church bulletin or newsletter with the list of items.

"Nine times out of 10 before the day is over, we have everything this family needs," Weeks said. "It's just incredible."

The foster care ministry also recently received a \$3,000 grant from the Arkansas Conference office for new twin-bed mattresses.

Delivering faith

Stout, now 23, said the aid the ministry has given her and her nephews has strengthened her faith.

She particularly cherishes the support she gets from Karrh, who will call and check in on her and the boys. She said Karrh, the mother of three boys, helped her know how to respond when a nephew threw a temper tantrum.

Stout also said she is grateful she got her college degree before taking on the upbringing of the boys' upbringing. She works as a counselor for the nonprofit group United Family Services.

She said: "I'm just glad God has His hand on me."

Not every client's experience ends as well as Stout's, Karrh said. Even after the congregation helped one woman rebuild after a house fire and provided her with a refrigerator, she failed to attend the necessary meetings to get her children back.

But for one of the ministry's volunteers the experience of helping these families has been equally transformative.

James Jeffery began delivering furniture for the ministry about a year ago at the request of his wife Stacy, who is friends with Karrh.

The Jefferies were members of St. James UMC but not regular churchgoers. Jeffery said he and religion didn't have the best history, and he had mainly joined St. James for his young daughter's sake.

But then he started regularly using a church van to deliver furniture to families across the county. He'd often pack extra toys for the children, some of whom would press their faces against the window whenever they saw him coming. Then he started getting items that were too big to fit in the van.

"I'd been wanting to get a pickup anyway," he said. "And I thought, you know, shucky darn, it was a good excuse, so I bought an old F-150."

He said he was just going with the flow of skipping worship and making deliveries until one day when he was flipping through TV channels. He stumbled upon a speech by the late Millard Fuller, the founder of Habitat for Humanity, who was speaking about the impact Habitat had on children.

"I immediately made the connection between what he was doing with Habitat and what we are doing with this," Jeffery said. "I started putting two and two together, and I saw things in my life that made me realize God has taken me down this

path with this mission."

He now attends worship regularly at St. James UMC with his wife and daughter.

Says Karrh: "I am thankful and overwhelmed that God has used this ministry to touch the lives of so many different people. It has blessed people who are helping in the ministry. It has

blessed me."

To contribute to the St. James UMC foster care ministry, call Brenda Weeks at (501) 217-6722 or e-mail brenda@stjames-umc.org.

To learn ways your church can help foster children, call Angela Foy at (501) 682-0150 or e-mail angela.foy@arkansas.gov.

COMING UP

Lakewood UMC, 1922 Topf Road, will host a "Together We Are One" special service at 9:45 a.m. July 5. During the informal service, families can sit together at tables for Communion. The service will include special music. A potluck lunch will follow. (501) 753-6186 or visit www.expandingthelight.org.

The Ben Few Camp Meeting will be July 17-26. Services will be at 7:30 p.m. July 17, 7 a.m. and 7:30 p.m. July 18 and 11 a.m. July 19. A Bible study will be at 9 a.m., worship at 11 a.m. and local singing groups at 6:30 p.m. followed by worship on July 20-24. The camp meeting closes with a memorial service at 11 a.m. July 28. Meals and RV hookups are available for fees.

Ben Few is between Fordyce and Arkadelphia, west of Princeton and east of Manning, off Arkasas 8 on County Road 201. Watch for the sign.

Larry Kelso of First UMC in Stuttgart will be the evangelist. John Moore of Morrow UMC in Canehill will be the song leader and youth director. Kathleen Dockery of Oaklawn UMC in Hot Springs will be the pianist, and Dusty Rhodes of Fordyce will be the memorial speaker.

To learn more, call Charlotte Harrison at (501) 455-0138.

Southwest District Early Response Team Training will be from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Aug. 1 at First UMC in Hope, 2300 S. Main St. The trainers are Byron and Janice Mann. To register, e-mail Byron Mann at rainmaker@arkansas.net.

Just Communities of Central Arkansas is now accepting applications from high school students throughout Arkansas for Ourtown for Teens, Aug. 2-8.

The one-week residential camp will explore stereotypes and prejudice, and aims to help break down barriers and foster inter-religious respect.

The retreat will be at Ferncliff

Conference Center, west of Little Rock. Pick-up and drop-off point at the State Capitol grounds in Little Rock.

Fees for the camp are \$300 and include room, meals, materials and T-shirt. Limited scholarship assistance is available for students who have applied and paid their \$30 deposit

Applications are available at www.arkansasjustcommunities.org or by calling (501) 372-5129.

A Single Adult Ministry Seminar will be 9:30 a.m. to 2:15 p.m. Aug 29 in the library conference room of Philander Smith College in Little Rock.

In Arkansas, single adults comprise 46.5 percent of the overall population. This course will explore ways to include single adult ministries in congregations. Lunch will be provided.

To sign up, call Jenni Duncan of St. James UMC in Little Rock at (501) 217-6708.

Interfaith Intruder and Security Response Seminar, Mount Sequoyah Conference & Retreat Center, Fayetteville, will be Aug. 25-26.

The seminar will include information and tools to start a church safety/security ministry, improve your current plan and training for church employees (ushers, secretaries, greeters, reception, etc. on recognizing behavioral pre-cursors or suspicious behavior. The gathering will cost \$185 for the first day; \$295 for both days. To register and get directions, visit www.arumc.org

The deadline for the next edition of the Arkansas United Methodist is 5 p.m. July 15. Submissions must be typed or printed and include the street address and phone number for the church or event. Submissions for "Coming Up" must also include the time and date. Priority will be given to including events scheduled in the coming month. 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.

IT HAPPENED



First UMC of Monticello recently held two sold-out dinner theater performances of *Guys and Dolls*, directed by Kathy Lyon-Pace. Pictured from left are Denise Spence (wife of Dennis Spence, Southeast District Superintendent); Ashley Echols, Esbeda Higginbotham and Rebecca Copico.



The Smith Family Singers of Winslow UMC, including son Ben and father Darell Smith sing "Just a Little Talk with Jesus" during a block party held by Wiggins UMC in Fayetteville on June 13. The event, which attracted about 350 people, featured carnival games and five live musical acts.



Seven United Methodist high school students or recent graduates from across the state explored possible vocations in ministry during the Summer Institute at Hendrix College's Miller Center for Vocation, Ethics, and Calling. From June 8 to 12, the participants shadowed ministers for a day, volunteered with Theresa Hoover UMC and the Bethlehem House homeless shelter in Conway, and worshipped together each night.

Pictured at the Arkansas Conference office are the following:

On the back row, from left: Will Lentz, 2012 Hendrix College; Vicki Sutton of the

Primrose United Methodist Women hosted their annual Mother-Daughter-Sister-Friend Luncheon on May 2. The church's "Handsome Waiters" served the meal of chicken salad.

Jan Scholl and her daughter, Katya Lyzhina, of Sherwood spoke about international adoptions. Scholl adopted Katya at age 11 from a Russian orphanage. Debbie Owens of Bryant UMC gave her Christian testimony and sang.

The luncheon raised \$1,250 for En Crescendo Mission.

Parkview UMC in Benton named Gertrude Springer mother of the year at its annual Mother-Daughter Banquet on May 9. Springer joined Parkview UMC on Nov. 17, 1952. She has two daughters, Sherry Bartholow and Kay Harley. Each year members of Parkview are asked to nominate women for the Mother of the Year award. Each person who nominates someone is asked to write a letter stating the reasons why his or her nominee should be the Mother of the Year. A group of judges determines the recipient based on the information contained in the letters. The names of the judges are kept secret.

Tuckerman UMC hosted revival from May 17 to May 20. Herschel Richardson, senior pastor of Christ's Way Church in Jonesboro, was the evangelist. This was Richardson's first time to return to Tuckerman as a United Methodist pastor. Richardson was raised in Tuckerman's

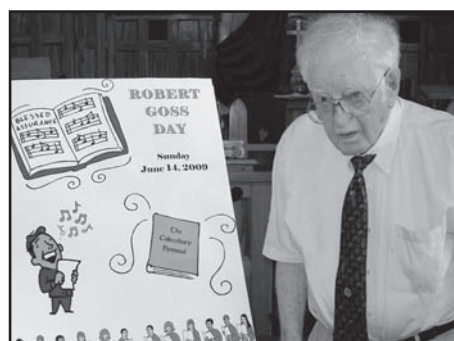
St. Paul's AME Church, where he later pastored as an adult. The event brought together a multiethnic group of Christians. The theme of the week was "Revival of Our Community."

Sylvan Hills UMC in Sherwood hosted on May 24 a potluck and performance by Harmony and Grace-Full Age Band. More than 100 people attended.

First UMC in DeWitt held a birthday party on Pentecost on May 31. Organizers set up tables for each month of the year. Each month's Activity Committee prepared a birthday cake, provided ice cream and decorated its table. Members and guests were asked to sit at the table of their birthday month. However, some members opted to celebrate more than one month by sampling multiple birthday cakes.



A dozen Hendrix College students and faculty spent 10 days in May in Vietnam, constructing houses in the Giuc Tuong Commune. The trip was sponsored by the college's Miller Center for Vocation, Ethics and Calling. Larnie Campbell, left, and Heather Newell played with the local school children in the Giuc Tuong Commune.



Gardner Memorial UMC in North Little Rock observed Charles Robert Goss Day on June 14. Due to health issues, "Robert," as his congregation calls him, retired last month from singing in the church choir after 75 years. He joined the choir at age 13 and has been singing ever since. Goss led the singing in the Sunday and Wednesday evening services as long as any of the church members can remember. Each Christmas Eve service, he would sing "Sweet Little Jesus Boy." The choir room was officially named the Robert Goss Choir Room in his honor and a plaque was hung over the door June 14.



Silver Hill UMC recently celebrated a church activities day by the pond. Winners of the fishing contest from left are Robert Dixon, Caden Cranford, Holly Donahoe, Justin Haltom and Zachary Ellis.



Twenty-one members of the Village UMC in Hot Springs Village congregation recently completed five days of volunteer mission work at the United Methodist Committee on Relief Sager Brown facility in Baldwin, La. The team was led by Jim Morris and Glenn Wortham.



Central UMC in Rogers commissioned nine new Stephen Ministers on April 26. They are left, Melissa Downard, Pat Grier, Cheryl Huff, Rev. Jim Keith, Stephen Melia, Freda Smith, John West, Sandy Widdicombe, Deborah White (not pictured). Central UMC has been involved in the Stephen Ministry program for 22 years. The church ministry's motto is: "Christ Serving People Through People."



AT THE BIG DAM BRIDGE
AUGUST 7, 2009
NORTH LITTLE ROCK

TAKING STEPS TO PROVIDE COMPASSIONATE CARE TO CHILDREN AND FAMILIES.

Methodist Family Health provides emotional, behavioral and spiritual support to more than 1,000 children and families in Arkansas every day.

Great Cause • Good Food • Live Music
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REPORTER

THE UNITED METHODIST

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Section B
July 3, 2009



The Lord's army

U.M. ARMY youth bless those in need

By BILL FENTUM | Staff Writer

Come each summer, thousands of United Methodist youth head for camps where fun takes a back seat to Christian service. What's more, they pay for the privilege.

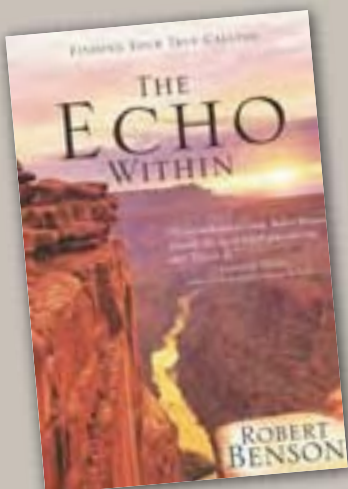
All are soldiers, of a sort, in the U.M. ARMY (United Methodist Action Reach-out Mission by Youth), a nonprofit that organizes youth into teams that provide a week's worth of household repairs for elderly or disabled homeowners. Participants pay a registration fee of \$200 to help cover food and supplies. Many of the kids help with fund-raisers throughout the year to pay their portion.

Youth camp out at host churches, worshipping each night and sleeping in classrooms. At 8 a.m. the next day, they're off to the work

■ See 'Lord's army,' page 4b

COURTESY PHOTO

More than 40 youth and a few college students attended a 2007 U.M. ARMY camp in Haskell, Texas.



Q&A: Finding work that reflects who you are

Can we love the work we do? Is it possible to earn a living and still sense God's pleasure in our pursuits? Robert Benson says "yes" in a new book, *The Echo Within: Finding Your True Calling* (Waterbrook Press).

Mr. Benson has written more than a dozen books about discovering the sacred in ordinary life. He is an alumnus of The Upper Room's Academy for Spiritual Formation and was named a Living Spiritual

Teacher by SpiritualityandPractice.com.

He spoke recently with staff writer Mary Jacobs.

What's the distinction between a "vocation" and a career or job?

The word vocation comes of a root word meaning "to call." It has to do with finding work that comes out of who you were made to be, as opposed to what you can make a living at.

With this economy, a lot of people might say, "Well, meaningful work sounds great but first I need to put food on the table." Do we need to put the idea of vocation aside for now?

I think it's the opposite. I don't want to sound Pollyanna about this: There are people in my neighborhood who've lost jobs, and having lost my work myself a couple of times, I know how frightening that

is. But I honestly believe this particular season actually represents an opportunity to make some choices less based on "How many dollars can I make?" and instead, "How can I work out of who I am?" We all know people and stories where something difficult happened to someone, and in retrospect, the person said, "That's the best thing that ever happened to

■ See 'Q&A,' page 2b

FAITH WATCH

UM leader welcomes tobacco industry bill

Jim Winkler, top executive of the United Methodist General Board of Church and Society, praised Congress on June 12 for passing a bill that gives the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) regulatory power over the U.S. tobacco industry. President Obama has indicated he will sign the bill into law. The FDA could then reduce the amount of nicotine in cigarettes, add limits to advertising and pull some products off the market. The bill "will help to reduce the terrible toll of tobacco that we have witnessed for so long," said Mr. Winkler, who is also chairman of Faith United Against Tobacco, a Washington-based coalition.

PBS votes to limit religious programs

Board members of the Public Broadcasting Service (PBS) voted June 16 to ban new religious programming at 350 member stations after concerns were raised that such shows could violate the network's nonsectarian status. A few existing programs will remain, including Catholic masses broadcast in Denver for homebound seniors and nursing-home residents. The ruling does not affect news shows or documentaries.

Daughter to lead Crystal Cathedral

Evangelist Robert H. Schuller has named his daughter Sheila Schuller Coleman as administrative leader at the Crystal Cathedral in Southern California. Mr. Schuller's son, Robert A. Schuller, resigned as senior pastor in 2008 after the two men differed over the megachurch's ministry and its *Hour of Power* television program. The Rev. Juan Carlos Ortiz, who has served as interim senior pastor, will continue as teaching pastor. Ms. Coleman will assist in worship services and preach occasionally, according to a church spokesman.

—Compiled by Bill Fentum

■ Q&A Continued from page 1B

me." I've seen it and lived it. So this could be an opportunity.

What are some of the things that a person needs to pay attention to as they contemplate vocation?

In the first place, I would do a lot of listening to the things that you hear inside you. We know the stuff that makes us grin, or makes us sing, or makes us dance or makes us excited and happy. Sometimes we don't trust our instincts.

There are places where people come to us, and they are the voice of God to us in a way. They can say things that reaffirm or support or even introduce a clearer sense of who we are. The best work is always done by people who are working out of who they are rather than out of what they do. So my first bit of advice is to really listen to what goes on inside, so you have some sense of who you really are.

How did you find your own vocation?

I think I was 13 the first time I saw my name in print, and I knew that I wanted to be a writer. It just took me

30 years to get around to it. I had a sense of vocation about being a writer, but it took a long time to learn the craft, to find my own voice and to find meaningful things to talk about.

'Listen to what goes on inside, so you have some sense of who you really are.'

Along the way you have to do things, like making a living. So I was in publishing and advertising. I'd always been a freelance writer, so when I took a job at the Upper Room, it turns out that I was a terrible employee. They took me in when I needed to be taken in, and frankly, they fired me when I most needed to be fired. So I couldn't hide anymore. I had to write.

You've attended the Academy for Spiritual Formation, which is a ministry of the Upper Room. How did that experience shape your writing?

There were about three or four things that came together around that time, and some of them don't sound that spiritual. I went through a bankruptcy and through a divorce. I ended up suicidal and in a psych ward, having suffered from clinical depression for 20 years without knowing it. I lost my job. And also I was going to the Academy at the time. Somewhere between all those things, I discovered this real clear sense of who I actually was. I was doing a lot of inward work. In an astonishing way, those things fell together. I came out of it all with a real clear sense of what I was on the planet to do. It turned out, it was what I always thought I was: a writer.

Did you always think you'd write about spiritual topics?

I think I did. I grew up in a religious publishing family. All of the people that I was around were religious songwriters or artists of one sort or another. So it was hard to imagine not writing about spirituality in some way. I always thought I would be writing some kind of memoir. Those were the books that affected me deeply. There's a great line from Annie Dillard, and I'm paraphrasing: "Religious ideas were the first ideas that I really loved, that made every other idea seem mean to me."

Tell me a little about your spiritual heritage.

I was a Nazarene, then I was a Methodist, and now I'm an Episcopalian. I have slowly worked my way toward John Wesley and then past John Wesley. I had Methodist blood before I even knew it. My great-grandfather was the chair of board at the Tulip Street United Methodist Church in Nashville, which in its day was the biggest Methodist church in the finest neighborhood of Nashville. Then he wandered across the street into to a tent meeting in the late 1890s, operated by a Methodist evangelist, and ended up, as they say, "getting religion." He left the Methodist church and became one of six charter members of the Nazarene church. So we grew up in that church.

Then when I was in Chicago, I was exposed to liturgy. I had never experienced that before, and there was a deep connection. I went looking for a Presbyterian church that did the liturgy, but instead, I found Wesleyan UMC in Nashville. I learned later that is the most "Catholic" Methodist church in the history of the UMC. If they'd taken the Eucharist every Sunday, they could've been Anglican. I was there 10 years, then I met the woman I married and we joined an Episcopalian church. We decided we needed to find a church where neither of us had a "back story," where we could start anew.

I've read most of your books and suspect that many of our Methodist readers are fans, too. Anything else you'd like to say to them?

I enjoyed my time with Methodists. That whole part of the world opened up so many things for me. I really began to learn about liturgy. I had a chance to study. Had I not worked for the Upper Room, I would never have been able to go to the Academy, where I learned about spiritual formation and how to translate that conversation into one about finding God in the ordinary parts of our lives. For good or for bad, you guys are to blame for this.

mjacobs@umr.org

UMR launches search for CEO

STAFF REPORTS

DALLAS, Texas—UMR Communications, the parent company of the *United Methodist Reporter*, is seeking a dynamic and visionary leader as its new chief executive officer.



Sarah Wilke

Sarah E. Wilke, who has been UMR's CEO since May 2004, has been named the new world publisher and editor for Upper Room Ministries in Nashville,

Tenn. John Greenberger, UMR's chief financial officer since 2006, is interim CEO.

UMR's mission is to share God's story by publishing quality religion news and providing print and digital resources for communication and education. The national, independent, award-winning communications ministry based in Dallas provides weekly print and electronic media as well as custom services such as design, variable data printing, marketing and targeted mailing.

The CEO will provide visionary leadership, operational guidance and enhanced denominational relationships for UMR Communications. Candidates must have a broad understanding of and appreciation for the United Methodist Church and its structure at all levels.

Candidates must have proven experience in executive leadership and demonstrated skills in administration and publishing business fundamentals. An advanced degree in business or the equivalent in experience as well as organizational leadership experience and a vision for market share is required.

The CEO must be able to assess and respond to economic variables to maintain and enhance the strength of the ministry. Knowledge of both print and electronic media is advantageous.

A complete job description is available by clicking on "CEO Search" at www.umportal.org. Applications will be accepted through Sept. 1.

To apply, e-mail a resume and a statement of interest to ceosearch@umr.org or send to UMR Communications, Attn: Search Committee, 1221 Profit Drive, Dallas, Texas 75247.



Robert Benson

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UM CONNECTIONS

Church Starts has Hispanic leader

The United Methodist General Board of Discipleship has named Samuel Rodriguez director of the Hispanic/Latino New Church Starts Division/Path 1, effective July 1. Prior to this appointment, Mr. Rodriguez was a commissioned missionary with the General Board of Global Ministries and served as conference coordinator for Hispanic/Latino Ministries in the Central Texas Conference. He also served four years in the Northwest Texas Conference as director of Hispanic ministries. New Church Starts/Path 1 aims to recruit 1,000 pastors to start 650 new United Methodist congregations in the United States by 2013.

Kentucky festival offers gospel music

Newsong '09 Music Festival will take place Aug. 14-16 at the Loucun Training and Retreat Center in Leitchfield, Ky. The gathering offers gospel music from various bands, as well as seminars, free overnight camping, food and games. For information, visit www.newsongmusicfestival.org.

Evangelism board names new member

Gary Shorb, president and CEO of Methodist Le Bonheur Healthcare in Memphis, Tenn., was welcomed as a new member of the Foundation for Evangelism Board of Trustees at its recent meeting in California. A non-profit affiliate of the United Methodist General Board of Discipleship, the Foundation awards grants for the development of leaders in the United Methodist Church. Recipients include 13 seminars around the world, including Claremont School of Theology. Last year, the board oversaw the distribution of \$3.4 million in grants to partners in the U.S., Africa, Germany and Russia. The Foundation was founded in 1949 by the late Harry Denman.

—Compiled by Mary Jacobs

Laypersons sought to help start new churches

BY JEANETTE PINKSTON
Special Contributor

NASHVILLE, Tenn.—A network of lay leaders is being launched to help start new Wesleyan faith communities in five fast-growing regions of the U.S.

The Lay Missionary Planting Network (LMPN), an effort launched by Path 1/New Church Starts, a ministry of the United Methodist General Board of Discipleship (GBOD), will find, equip and mobilize 250 lay leaders to reach new faith communities in Virginia (including the Baltimore-Washington Conference), Greater New Jersey, Desert Southwest, Central Texas and East Ohio.

"As the United Methodist Church moves to create new places for new people, we need thousands of lay people to say 'yes' to their baptism and to move into the long tradition of laity who are planters of new churches and faith communities," said the Rev. Karen Greenwaldt, top executive for GBOD.

The network will raise awareness of the importance of lay leadership in planting churches, said the Rev. Bener Agtarap, a new church strategist for Path 1.

The LMPN targets ethnic and underserved populations, and its emphasis is on starting United Methodist churches in areas where the denomination has had limited presence and in

contexts where traditional approaches have not been successful.

Mr. Agtarap said the five conferences were chosen because they have the passion and commitment for new church development; the infrastructure and plan for new church plants and conference staff in place to give support; a growing population among people who are currently underserved by the United Methodist Church; and the desire to find and equip lay people to reach the richly diverse communities within their conferences.

"It's really an exciting opportunity to create new churches for new people in new places in a way that reaches out in a multiethnic fashion," said Bishop Michael Lowry of the Central Texas Conference.



Thomas Butcher

Central Texas already has a fairly significant number of large and very strong Korean Churches in Killeen, the home of Fort Hood military base, the largest active duty armored post in the U.S.

Bishop Lowry said the conference would focus on African-American new church starts. "We will probably do seven African-American congregations, two Hispanic and one Anglo," he said.

"If you study the Wesleyan roots they're really a re-echoing of what happened in the book of the Acts of the Apostles. What we hope to have through a Lay Missionary Movement is a movement of the Holy Spirit as a part of that."

Bishop Lowry says challenges will exist, but churches will have a strategy that is outward-focused to the mission field.

"The future will live with churches that are outwardly focused," he said.



Bener Agtarap

"Churches with more memories than dreams are churches that are on a death spiral. [This] gives us a way to change the trajectory of existing congregations and start new ones; it's a 'both and' — renewing and at the

same time creating new places for new people."

The Desert Southwest Conference includes the two fastest-growing metropolitan areas in the country—Maricopa and Clark counties—yet it is a young and relatively small conference with only 144 churches and fellowships.

"Enormous opportunities for creating new places for new people all across the U.S. call us to engage every

disciple of Jesus Christ to reach out to others," said Bishop Minerva Carcaño, who leads the conference.

"Faithful discipleship in the name of Christ Jesus has always been about sharing our faith," she said. "The LMPN helps prepare disciples to share their faith in ways that will transform the world."

Mr. Agtarap says that as more lay people get involved, the network will create excitement among more individuals and churches wanting to participate in renewing the United Methodist Church by starting new congregations. Participants will receive practical, hands-on, mentor-supported training to lead new congregations.

Theological and practical training will be an essential part of the network's success, said the Rev. Thomas G. Butcher, the GBOD's executive director of New Church Starts.

Charged with recruiting 1,000 church planters to create 650 new congregations by 2012, Path 1 is also recruiting coaches and mentors for the laypersons and their plants.

The team of laypersons and mentors will participate in specialized training in retreat settings that offer dialogue, theological competence, accountability and spiritual community.

Ms. Pinkston is the former director of media relations for the GBOD.

Study finds pay incentives impact pastors' efforts

BY LINDA BLOOM
United Methodist News Service

United Methodists who decide to move from one congregation to another just might be putting a few extra dollars into their new pastor's pocket.

A transfer member can add more than \$32 to pastoral compensation, according to a study presented at the recent annual meeting of the Association for the Study of Religion, Economics and Culture in Arlington, Va.

The study, "Is Higher Calling Enough? Incentive Compensation in the Church," finds strong evidence that pastoral compensation conforms to standard business models.

The authors, Jay Hartzell of the University of Texas at Austin, Christopher Parsons of the University of North Carolina and David Yermack of New York University, admit that such incentives seem unlikely for clergy. "Strong pay-for-performance incentives might damage a minister's spiritual credibility with a congregation that expects intrinsic

motivation to be sufficient," they write.

But using data from 727 churches and 2,201 ministers who served in the Oklahoma Conference between 1961 and 2003, the authors conclude that financial incentives impact pastors' "effort and the service they provide to parishioners." The data was taken from conference journals.

- Among the study's conclusions:
- Compensation for ministers follows patterns similar to chief executive officers in a business.
 - Although the overall level of ministerial pay is modest, it responds significantly to increases and decreases in parish membership.
 - The annual conference uses ministerial assignment as a way to reward productive clergy "with plum appointments that bring higher total compensation."

The Rev. Craig Stinson, director



Jay Hartzell

of connectional ministries and congregational development for the Oklahoma Conference, says he finds the study "fun and interesting," although he's not sure about the cause and effects related to the study's assumptions, noting that some of the data extracted from the conference journals may not be complete.

But he is intrigued that another discipline is being used to look at the church. "I think that's interesting and healthy and I am excited by people who are applying their own field of knowledge to the church," Mr. Stinson says. "We're all trying to figure out why some churches are growing and some churches aren't."

Oklahoma clergy members are not "in it for the money." During the period studied, "mean clergy compensation declined during much of the 1960s and 1970s, before sharply increasing in the 1980s and growing at a more moderate rate from the late 1980s onward," the report says. During the entire period, per capita income grew faster than clerical pay.

In 2008 dollars, the median

pastor compensation is about \$36,900, within a range between \$22,651 and \$49,586. A few pastors earn in excess of \$100,000, with the sample maximum of more than \$238,000 received by the head of a large church in an urban area, according to the study.

Even for pastoral pay, "there is a role for monetary incentives," says Dr. Hartzell, an active member of St. John's United Methodist Church in Austin. If an incentive is to work, however, there must be a way to measure the output of a minister's actions.

Membership changes—transfers within the United Methodist Church, transfers between denominations or transfers in and out of the Christian faith—can be an indicator.

The study does not find a significant link between church revenues and a pastor's compensation. But evidence exists related to church attendance and giving. "In general, in good times, people go to church less but they give more," Dr. Hartzell says. "In bad times, they go to the church more and give less."



COURTESY PHOTOS

ABOVE: Youth participants in 2007 do whatever it takes to spruce up homes in Haskell, Texas.
BELOW: Youth hang out with new friends in a client's neighborhood.



■ LORD'S ARMY *Continued from page 1B*

sites, where they pause at noon for a bag lunch and daily devotions.

"It's the best of a mission trip, a spiritual retreat and a student life camp—all combined," said Brian Smith, executive director at U.M. ARMY's national office in College Station, Texas.

It all started in 1979, when 36 campers from three churches served residents of Athens, Texas, dividing into work teams of two adult leaders for every five youth. Thirty years later, the model remains the same, but the program now draws some 4,000 campers in three U.S. regional chapters located in the United Methodist Church's Southwest Texas and Texas Conferences, and the Northeastern Jurisdiction.

"The adults are mostly mentors," said David Sabom, who directs the Texas Conference chapter. "They make sure the work conditions are safe, then step back to allow the youth plenty of hands-on experience."

Leadership roles rotate every day, so all teens get a chance to direct the work, pack tools or lead devotions. Distractions like cell phones and iPods are banned; and dropping out isn't an option, because church groups travel at least two hours from home to get to camp.

"If you're in your own town, it's too easy to say, 'I've got to leave for baseball practice,'" said Jenny Monahan, director of the Southwest Texas chapter. "But we ask for 100 percent, all seven days."

Amy Maletta, 16, went to her first U.M. ARMY camp last year in Alice, Texas, and now serves on her chapter's youth advisory board.

"I had been on mission trips before," she said, "but nothing like this. You make a lot of close friends, living together for days. The camp really becomes a family."

Clear Lake UMC in the Texas Conference has participated since 1982, and now sends at least 75 people to a camp all of its own. Even church members who can't make the trip take part, praying for the youth and donating food, money and supplies.

Hurricane damage

Clear Lake teams went last summer to Orange County on the Texas-Louisiana border, a region hit hard by Hurricane Rita in 2005. They worked on more than 20 homes, including one where holes in the roof were still covered with a tarp. The couple living there had no insurance, and was denied government funds because the deed wasn't in their name.

Disabled clients may have needs that range from handrails to wheelchair ramps. Clients are referred to the program by local churches or non-profit agencies.

"To see a ramp built and watch them roll out on it for the first time—we all cry," said Marla Frederick, youth ministry director at Clear Lake. "Now they can leave the house without someone to carry them. It's hard to not be moved by that."

Clients are invited to the host church at the end of the week, for dinner and worship with the youth. "They're always asked if they would like to speak," Ms. Frederick said. "And every time you hear someone say, 'I didn't think youth actually cared about us, but my faith in this genera-



Ned Reynolds, a member of Clear Lake UMC near Houston, paints a house.



COURTESY PHOTOS

Youth from Clear Lake UMC visit a client in the hospital.

tion has been restored.' It has a huge impact on them."

U.M. ARMY organizers hope to expand the ministry in the next few years. Four camps are planned this summer in the North Texas and North-west Texas Conferences, and southeastern states will likely come next.

Visiting teams from Texas helped launch the Northeastern Jurisdiction chapter in 2004, starting with a single camp. Now five camps are held each summer in New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Connecticut, New Jersey and Pennsylvania.

Campers in the northeast are sometimes slow to embrace the spiritual aspects of U.M. ARMY, according to Lorraine Macpherson, a youth minister who leads the chapter. That's no surprise, she said, in a region where religious beliefs are often kept private.

So she asks the youth each night to talk about where they saw God that day: in a client's smile, a chat with a friend or any pleasant surprise. "We call it 'God sightings,'" Ms. Macpherson said. "They learn to articulate their spiritual journeys, and no one's testimony is disputed."

Most clients, she added, love being invited to join the lunch-time devotions. Many of them live alone, so the meals, prayers and Bible studies may be their first taste of real fellowship in months or even years.

"Bonds form," Ms. Macpherson said. "When I pull up to a house and find one of the kids sitting on the steps with a client, they usually hop up because they think they're supposed to be working. But I'll get out of the car and say, 'No, just keep talking.'"

"Building those relationships is so important; it's one of the things that makes our program tick."

Teens who grow attached to U.M. ARMY's combination of work, fun and spiritual growth hate to give it up when summer is over. So smaller sessions are held during Christmas and spring breaks.

Year-round help

College students also have the opportunity to serve in yearly camps hosted by the northeastern and Texas Conference chapters. They tackle tougher jobs, like replacing insulation and installing new windows in a Galveston house damaged by Hurricane Ike. But the students are up to the challenge.

"Those camps are a lot more intense," said Ms. Frederick at the Clear Lake church. "In college, no one is there because their parents told them to go. They come for the experience, to work hard and worship hard."

Ms. Frederick told of a 2007 U.M. ARMY mission she led for a smaller youth group at First UMC in Chandler, Texas. The youth spent a week of their Christmas vacation at a family homeless shelter—and saw the spirit of the holiday in action.

Several families were quarreling when the students arrived. But the team set to work anyway, building lockers, shelves and picnic tables, and painting canvasses to hang on the walls. They also held a day-long Vacation Bible School for children at the shelter.

By the last morning, the families were all getting along, Ms. Frederick said.

"They had cleaned out trash in the backyard, arranged the picnic tables and hung the paintings. They said, 'All we needed was to know someone cared enough about us, for us to care about ourselves.'"

"When things like that happen, you can't help but want to be a part of it," Ms. Frederick said.

bfentum@umr.org



A client rolls down her wheelchair ramp for the first time.



Anna Rich, Sally McGahee and Tyler Hoffman of Clear Lake UMC caulk around a window frame.

‘Fruit Loop’ Christians hoard the produce

BY DAN DICK
Special Contributor

People who know me know that I am very big on fruit: the outward and visible manifestations of the faith we profess. James says it all when he reminds us that faith without works is dead.

Furthermore, it is not enough just to produce fruit because until it feeds somebody it hasn't filled its purpose. Fruit must nourish. Fruit must strengthen. Fruit contains that which is essential for health.

And the fruit that we produce as the church is not to be hoarded and enjoyed by us. We produce this fruit and bear it to a starving, malnourished world, bringing sweetness and succulence to an all-too-often dry and bitter existence.



Dan Dick

The fruits—peace, patience, love, joy, kindness, generosity, self-control, faithfulness and gentleness—should be the very first qualities that come to mind when people hear the word “Christian.”

But often they're not. Many people outside the church feel that these expressions of God's Spirit are conditional at best, absent at worst. Most people would love to experience the fruit of the spirit in their lives—they would love to believe that there is more love, peace, patience, kindness, generosity and the rest in the world because of the church of Jesus Christ.

And perhaps there is more of each, but at the same time we must acknowledge that the church also produces such poison fruit as judgmentalism, intolerance, strife, exclusion, fear and alienation.

I sat with a pastor this week with tears in his eyes who wondered if it isn't time to leave the church and do something else. He said:

“I tried to get my church to reach out to the Hispanics in the community, and they voted not to. I tried to get them to open their doors to the street people, and the trustees told me it was too risky. I wanted to try to launch a ministry with students and young adults, but some of the older members didn't like the way they dressed and looked, so they made them feel unwelcome. When I tried to continue the ministry off-site, people complained that I wasn't ministering to them.

“I ripped down all our ‘Open Hearts. Open Minds. Open Doors.’ banners and threw them in the trash five weeks ago, and no one has even noticed. I got my council to read *Five Practices of Fruitful Congregations*, and our chairwoman had the nerve to say: ‘This describes our church perfectly! We're a fruitful congregation.’ The problem is, any fruit we produce, we keep for ourselves.”

This is an excellent example of a “Fruit Loop” congregation: one that produces fruit, but doesn't share it with others.

We have a lot of fruit loop churches. They do good things. They worship. They have Sunday school. They hold friendly fellowship events

for the members. They enjoy one another. They do all the “churchy” things, but much of their fruit is wasted because it doesn't feed anyone beyond the chosen few.

A few years ago I met with some

‘The abundance of the fruit of the Spirit means that it costs almost nothing to give it away.’

church leaders who proudly showed me their \$3.5 million endowment fund for “future” development. This church couldn't meet its current operating budget, struggled with pastoral support, had a parsonage in disrepair and regularly paid only about 40 percent of its apportionments. Fruit loops.

A small church in an inner-city setting. Locked gates across the parking lot. Razor wire crowning a 10-foot chain-link fence around the property. Double deadbolt locks on every door. Bars on all the windows. An alarm system. But spending \$2,000 per month on advertising inviting people to come to church. Fruit loops.

A large church with a deep commitment to Stephen Ministries (care-giving and visitation). Many who

signed up found there were more ministers than people in need. The church had made it a rule: Stephen Ministers could only visit members of the church. Fruit loops.

I wrote a Bible study a few years ago called FaithQuest. The premise was that the message of the Gospel of Luke, the Book of Acts, the Letter to the Ephesians and much of John Wesley's teaching was simply this: The ministry of the church is in the world.

I didn't make this up. I felt fairly confident that Jesus, Paul and John were saying the same thing. And yet the strongest criticism I received was that I was “imposing” my opinion on the Bible.

Shortly after the study came out, I received this letter:

“We returned FaithQuest to Cokesbury for a refund, and we are sorry to see that this is what is being offered to the church. You have an obvious liberal bias, and you have no right to make churches feel guilty if they are not doing social work.

“We are the church and our ministry is to the church. We are here to pray, worship on Sunday and teach our children the love of Christ. To say that the work of the church is in the world is ridiculous.

“We need the church because the world is filled with sin and hate and evil. The church is where we come to get away from all that. If you are going to call something a Bible study, it should be about the Bible, not your opinion.”

Fruit loops—the fruit of the Spirit being grown, nurtured, harvested and consumed behind closed doors. Yet it is so easy to break the loop and let the fruit flow out where it can do even more good.

A few days ago, I received this e-mail from one of my blog readers:

“We helped someone—we actually helped someone. Storms destroyed some homes in our community, so we prayed for the people who were affected on Sunday morning. But from our church, we could see a home that had collapsed.

“Some of us walked over. The family was picking through debris. They were crying. We started talking to them. We found out what their immediate needs were. We started getting

things together.

“We began helping them with clothing, school books and transportation. We adopted them. They started coming to our church and we started looking for other people to help. We started helping more people, and more people started coming to help.

“Our church has never had so much energy. The church is full every Sunday, and something is going on every day of the week. We didn't have to plan it. We didn't have to approve anything. We just did it. Thank you for challenging us and reminding us how easy this could be.”

Sharing our fruit costs very little. Sure, some of the fruit is for us, but God provides plenty for us—and more than enough to share.

And sharing kindness is simple: Be a little more kind. Same for love: Be a tad more loving. Patience? Ditto. This isn't rocket science.

So why don't we share more fruit? Probably because we've gotten out of the habit. We let our fruit grow wild instead of cultivating it. We think in terms of how much we'll need, instead of how much we could produce.

But the beautiful thing about fruit is that while we can come and enjoy it, there's always more left over. We come seeking kindness; we leave with kindness to give away. We come seeking acceptance; we depart with the opportunity to be accepting of others. We come seeking forgiveness; we move into the world better able to forgive others.

The abundance of the fruit of the Spirit means that it costs almost nothing to give it away.

Fruit Loops (the cereal) bears no resemblance to any fruit grown in nature. It's fake. It's chemical. And it offers virtually no nutritional value. But the fruit of the Spirit—the fruit that will last—is real. It's organic. It's good for you.

The world doesn't need more Fruit Loops, but it can use all the real, delicious, sweet, juicy, nutritious spiritual fruit it can get.

The Rev. Dick is the new director of connectional ministries for the Wisconsin Conference. He blogs at doroteos2.wordpress.com, where this column first appeared.

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GEN-X RISING

An evening at Mad Pizza Co.

BY ANDREW THOMPSON
UMR Columnist

The annual conference's daily session ended a little before 5 p.m. Monday in Rogers, Ark. By 5:30, more than four-dozen young adult clergy and lay delegates were gathering in the upper room of the Mad Pizza Co. down the street.



Andrew Thompson

Not all the important "conferencing" happens on the main floor of an annual conference between the hours of 9 and 5. That has especially been the case for the young adult delegates to the Arkansas Annual Conference over the past five years.

Under the leadership of the Rev. Eric Van Meter, a campus minister at Arkansas State University in Jonesboro, a yearly gathering of Generation X and Millennial delegates has grown to become one of the highlights of the annual conference session each June.

The first gathering in 2005 attracted about 18 people. This year, three times that many showed up.

One of the struggles that Gen X'ers and Millennials tend to have with the institutional church is in understanding how some of the traditions that have evolved actually relate to discipleship and ministry. Annual conference is a good example.

While there are wonderful times of teaching and worship interspersed through the three days of conference, much of the time spent seems to be dedicated to endless reports, awards and floor debates over resolutions.

I've never met a young adult clergy or layperson who was opposed to the idea of Christians conferencing together. In fact, most of them crave the opportunity to really connect with one another, pray together and share ideas about ministry. We live in an isolating and individualistic world, and many young pastors and lay leaders go around chronically hungry for true connection.

The problem with annual conference is that it can seem so dang business-like. Parliamentary procedure allows the work to proceed, but it also inhibits real conversation. And the long stream of three- and five-minute presentations can make even the most attentive delegate's eyes glaze over after a while.

If annual conference had always operated this way, Methodism would have never gotten out of the starting gate. And to younger delegates, it is downright depressing to see some of our older colleagues cope with conference by sneaking off to play golf.

But the desire for real conferencing remains. And it is particularly strong with those young adults who make the commitment to actually attend a real annual conference.

So when a group of those young adults gets together for pizza and conversation, the topics covered go much deeper than pepperoni vs. sausage.

Eric opened us up that night at the Mad Pizza Co. with prayer and an invitation to move from table to table, enjoying one another's company. There were easily more than 1,000 people in the official session that day, which could make it hard to spot the young adults present. But when we all gathered in one place, it was really encouraging to see that there were enough of us to make a crowd.

I heard people covering topics that ranged from the ordination candidacy process, the importance of campus ministry and the challenge of helping the United Methodist Church adapt to changing ideas about the itineracy and local church ministry.

Before the night was through, three pastors had gathered a group into a circle to share stories about their experiences as new church planters. It was easily the most enlightening and informative conversation I've had at annual conference in years.

Young adult clergy and laity in other annual conferences should take a cue from Eric and the group in Arkansas. Their example offers a constructive way to move from cynicism to hope.

To an outsider, the gathering in the upper room at the Mad Pizza Co. that night probably seemed unremarkable. But to those who were there, it represented the best of the Wesleyan approach to ministry.

Connection. Conference. Community.

Those words are more than pious platitudes that hearken back to yesterday. They can be reclaimed and reinvigorated.

And when adapted to our own circumstances, they can help to revitalize the clergy and lay leadership of this church.

The Rev. Thompson maintains a blog at www.genxrising.com. e-mail: andrew@mandatum.org.

REFLECTIONS

Though diverse, all citizens celebrate as 'full Americans'

BY BISHOP WOODIE W. WHITE
UMR Columnist

While driving home recently from a Saturday afternoon matinee with five grandchildren, an interesting but short conversation took place amid their loud chattering.

Rather casually, my 8-year-old grandson asked my 7-year-old grandson, "Are you white or black?" I was curious what the response would be from the younger grandson, whose mother is black and father is white.

He responded equally casually: "I'm mixed. I am half-white, half-black and a quarter China." Then he added, "But I am full American!"

While the math doesn't quite come out right, and I am still trying to figure out the "China" part of his response, my grandson's assertion of being "full American" was impressive. He said it with pride, clarity and certainty. And he is right!

As we observe our nation's 233rd birthday, many tributes to its significance will be given. But for me, a 7-year-old's declaration of citizenship seems to capture so much the essence of the day's meaning.

The Fourth of July will be celebrated with parades, picnics, trib-



Bishop Woodie White

utes and patriotic music extolling the virtue of our nation. Those who join in the national celebration will be as diverse as one can imagine, representing different races, ethnicities, religions, languages, political parties, customs and traditions. But they will be Americans all.

For some time now, many individuals and groups have hyphenated their national identity to acknowledge a country or region of their origin—or that of their parents, grandparents or ancestors.

Indeed, except for Native Americans, all of us have ancestral roots that began elsewhere. The common identity of citizenship, however, is the nation to which we pledge our allegiance.

Perhaps my grandson has it more right than he even realizes: We are full American. In part, this is the

real recognition of our national celebration—a common nation, common flag, common allegiance and common government. We celebrate a nation that came into being in order to be a place of welcome to all.

There is no greater symbol of this American pledge than the Statue of Liberty. At its base are found these words: "Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to breathe free. The wretched refuse of your teeming shore. Send these, the homeless, tempest-tost to me. I lift my lamp beside the golden door!"

A few years ago, historian Arthur Schlesinger Jr. posed a question in his rather provocative book *The Disuniting Of America*. "What happens when people of different ethnic origins, speaking different languages, professing different religions, settle in the same geographical locale and live under the same political sovereignty?" he asked. "Unless a common purpose binds them together, tribal hostilities will drive them apart."

Our common purpose is that we are American! How we arrived, when we arrived, from where we arrived and the purpose driving our arrival may be vastly different. Yet once the nation offers its welcome and grants its citizenship, those receiving both are American. Full American!

Martin Luther King Jr. was fond of saying, "We may have arrived in America on different ships, but we are in the same boat now!"

The benefits, responsibilities and meaning of citizenship are not determined on the basis of when or how one became a citizen. Sadly, our nation has not always remembered this solemn right and promise.

As we celebrate the nation's beginnings, we will do so with different accents. We will each look different, displaying diverse physical characteristics. And we will bring different histories to the moment.

But we will sing the songs of the nation and pledge the allegiance as a common people. Americans.

Happy birthday, America!
Happy birthday, Americans!

Retired Bishop White is the Endorsing Agent for Chaplain Ministries and bishop-in-residence at Candler School of Theology.

For young adults, informal, small-group gatherings sometimes offer a better way to connect than annual conference sessions, says Andrew Thompson.

2009 DESIGN PICS PHOTO

Ethnic interns spend summer in D.C.

BY WAYNE RHODES
Special Contributor

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Twelve ethnically diverse summer interns are working with the United Methodist social action agency this summer, helping nonprofit and nongovernmental organizations in the nation's capital.

The interns, ages 19 to 21, began work June 1 in the Ethnic Young Adult (EYA) Summer Internship program of the denomination's General Board of Church & Society (GBCS). They will spend two months in their internships.

Young adults are selected annually from the five ethnic caucuses of the United Methodist Church (UMC) to participate in the internships. To qualify, applicants must be passionate about social justice and active in the denomination, according to the Rev. Neal Christie, GBSC's assistant general secretary, who directs the program.

Mr. Christie, who was an EYA intern himself in 1984, said the internship is the denomination's only leadership development program with a public policy and advocacy focus that reaches out to under-represented racial and ethnic young adults of color.

This year's placement sites include the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), the National Coalition to Abolish the Death Penalty (NCADP), Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice (RCRC), National Council of

Churches of Christ-USA (NCCC) and Justice for Our Neighbors (JFON).

The 12 interns are drawn from 11 United Methodist conferences. Each of the denomination's five U.S. jurisdictions is represented.

The 2009 interns include four African Americans, three Hispanic/Latinos and five Asian American/Pacific Islanders.

"For the first time, five of our 12 interns will receive significant college credit for their eight-week internship," Mr. Christie said. "This puts the EYA internship in another league when their universities trust our faith-based approach to leadership development."

Interns' background

The 2009 Ethnic Young Adult interns are:

Joshua Brubaker (Hispanic/Latino), 19, of Lowell, Mich., attends Hope College. He is majoring in political science and Spanish. He wor-



PHOTO BY BRITTANY THOMASSON

Ethnic Young Adult interns for the General Board of Church and Society pose beside the United Methodist Building in Washington, D.C. The interns will work with nonprofit organizations.

ships at La Nueva Esperanza in the West Michigan Conference. Mr. Brubaker has two internship placements. One is RCRC, which works to bring the moral power of religious communities to ensure reproductive choice through education and advocacy. The other is the Washington Ethical Society, member of a federation that addresses moral issues and public policy.

Amanda Michelle Chadwick (African American), 19, of Raleigh, N.C., is enrolled at North Carolina Central University. A business administration major, her home church is Benson Memorial UMC in the North Carolina Conference. Ms. Chadwick is working at the Children's Defense Fund, which champions policies to lift children out of poverty; protect them from abuse and neglect; and ensure their access to health care and quality education.

Terry Ray Cunningham (African American), 19, of Maysville, Ky., majors in political science at the University of Kentucky. His home church is Scott UMC in the Kentucky Conference. He is an NCADP intern.

Damarias Diaz (Hispanic/Latina), 18, of Germantown, Md., attends Camino De Vida UMC, Gaithersburg,

in the Baltimore-Washington Conference. Her internship is at NCCC, which strives for ecumenical cooperation among Christians in the U.S.

Sydney Anneliese Garrett (African American), 19, of Voorhees, N.J., attends Loyola University in Chicago. Majoring in business and international studies, her home church is Mt. Zion UMC, Lawnside, in the Greater New Jersey Conference. Ms. Garrett is an intern at MOMIE's TLC (Mentors of Minorities in Education's Total Learning Cis-Tem), which works to transform education for at-risk children of color.

Mercielynd Rejoice J. Hernandez (Asian American/Pacific Islander), 19, of San Bernardino, Calif., majors in nursing at Riverside Community College. Her home church is Trinity UMC of the Inland Empire of the California-Pacific Conference. Ms. Hernandez's internship is with the Rebecca Project for Human Rights, a national legal and policy organization that advocates for public policy reform, justice and dignity for vulnerable families.

Edward Kim (Korean American), 21, Alpharetta, Ga., majors in economics at the University of Georgia. His home church is The Korean Church

Atlanta UMC, Duluth, in the North Georgia Conference. He interns at Women Empowered Against Violence.

Telana Victoria McCullough (African American), 18, of Edmond, Okla., attends University of Central Oklahoma. Studying interpersonal communication/leadership, her home church is Quayle UMC in Oklahoma City in the Oklahoma Conference. Her internship is at the NAACP.

Brian Tan (Filipino-Chinese), 19, of Carrollton, Texas, is enrolled at the University of North Texas majoring in international studies and Japanese. His home church is Faith UMC, Richardson, in the North Texas Conference. Mr. Tan is an intern with Jubilee USA, a coalition of faith-based, development, human rights and community organizations working for debt relief for impoverished countries.

Felenisi Vaisilvia Vailea (Pacific Islander), 19, Oakland, Calif., is pursuing a degree in sociology at Laney College. She attends Laurel UMC in the California-Nevada Conference. She is also at the NCCC.

Tiffania Willetts (Puerto Rican), 19, of Fort Myers, Fla., studies at Princeton University. She is a major in economics with a minor in Latin American studies. She is a member of North Fort

Myers UMC in the Florida Conference. Ms. Willetts works at JFON, a network in mission of the United Methodist Committee on Relief, annual conferences, local congregations and ecumenical partners that provides legal assistance on increasingly complex immigration regulations.

Jonathan Kim (Korean American), 21, Alpharetta, Ga., is enrolled at Emory University. He is a member of The Korean Church Atlanta UMC, Duluth, in the North Georgia Conference. Mr. Kim, twin brother of Edward, is senior intern because he participated in the EYA program last year. This year, he will intern at Teaching for Change, which provides tools to transform schools into centers of justice where students learn to read, write and change the world.

The Rev. L.A. McCrae, 23, African American from Bel Air, Md., serves as EYA coordinator. Interning at GBSC on a work/study program through Wesley Theological Seminary, she is studying for a Master of Divinity degree with a focus in urban ministries. Her home church is Ames UMC in the Baltimore-Washington Conference.

University housing

EYA interns are housed at United Methodist-related American University. They attend church together each Sunday, and meet for weekly evening devotions and Bible studies. Interns also participate in weekly seminars exploring issues that affect racial/ethnic communities.

The General Board of Church & Society is one of four international general program boards of the United Methodist Church. Its primary areas of ministry are advocacy, education and leadership formation, United Nations and international affairs.

The Ethnic Young Adult Summer Internship is a cooperative endeavor of GBSC and the denomination's five ethnic caucuses.

Mr. Christie said funding for the EYA summer internship is "limited."

"Costs for housing continue to rise," he said. "With increased funding, we could open the EYA internship to many more students from Africa, the Philippines and Europe."

Last year, four of the interns came from overseas. EYA funding comes from World Service, which is mission giving from local churches.

For information about the EYA program, contact Mr. Christie at (202) 488-5611 or nchristie@umc-gbcs.org. Application details are available at www.umc-gbcs.org under the Leadership Development header.

Mr. Rhodes is director of communications for the GBSC.