

SPECIAL ISSUE

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A WORD ABOUT STEWARDSHIP from the Bishop



BY CHARLES CRUTCHFIELD

Dear Friends:

I love words, and the origins of words. The word “stewardship” has its roots in old English. Roughly translated it would mean “the keeper of the ‘sty’ or hall or enclosure.”

In other words it was used in reference to a trusted servant who was responsible for the lord of the manor’s valuable property. As we use it today, it still means much the same, although we understand being a steward goes beyond just a question of keeping and caring for buildings, livestock and real estate.

Christians are stewards, or at least we should be. We are “keepers” of the Lord’s property. We have been given stewardship of the human family, this earth, the time and skills with which we have been graced, as well as how we use the property of

the church and the money in our pockets.

Stewardship in the context of our faith demands a careful “keeping” of the use of our time. What minutes, or hours, or days have we invested directly in building the Kingdom of God here in Arkansas? How much time do we spend simply telling the stories of faith, even in our own families? Do we use a part of the day in studying the Scriptures, in prayer, in meditation? What time have we spent in lifting others up, in encouraging those who need a word of comfort? Do we set aside time each week for worship?

Stewardship in the context of faith demands a careful “keeping” of our relationships with others.

Every time we let anger wipe out grace and understanding we have failed as stewards. Every time we allow selfishness to trump generosity we attack the best in the human spirit.

We are stewards of our attitudes. When we place ourselves,

our comfort, at the heart of our lives, and act so that “it is all about me” we have turned our backs on Christian stewardship. The keeping of relationships has implications not only for our lives, but also for the life of our communities — even our nation.

Stewardship in the context of faith demands a careful “keeping” of our earth. The layer of smog that envelops our cities and the pollution of our rivers, streams and lakes are visible reminders of our failure. I am always a bit bemused by those who want to debate the global-warming issue, but who will agree that it is dangerous to drink from our streams and rivers. Either or both testify to our corporate failure to care for God’s creation.

Stewardship in the context of faith demands a careful “keeping” of the resources with which we have been blessed. We believe in and practice the biblical tithe. When Karen and I received our first paycheck, one-tenth went straight back to the church.


Our giving to other good causes has always been in addition to our tithe to the church. The tithe is exercised before taxes, before expenses, before everything else. It is really God’s money and we are simply returning it to God’s work.

In reality, Christian stewardship is a lifestyle that touches everything we do and everything we are — from our attitudes, to the clothes we wear, to the words we speak, to the time we spend, to the use of our money, to the activities in which we engage, to the God we worship.

It is a lifestyle filled with joy, and satisfaction, and hope, and grace. But to be quite frank, it is not an easy lifestyle.

Christian stewardship requires strength of conviction. It is not for the weak of will or the faint of faith. It calls for sacrifice, for discipline and for a thoughtful, prayerful living out of the entire Gospel message.

Faithfully,

Charles M. Crutchfield 

Resources for Stewardship Ministries

This isn’t an easy time to be talking about money. Many people are struggling to make sense of their own budgets in this difficult economy. A number of resources are available for pastors and congregations who wish to explore what it means to give abundantly at a time of scarcity.

PROGRAMS

- “Enough: Discovering Joy through Simplicity and Generosity” by Adam Hamilton
- “New Consecration Sunday” by Herb Miller
- “Transformed Giving: Realizing Your Church’s Full Spiritual Potential” by John Ed Mathison

BOOKS

- The Stewardship Companion: Lectionary Resources for Preaching* by David Mosser
- Don’t Shoot the Horse — Til You Know How to Drive the Tractor* by Herb Mather
- Not Your Parents’ Offering Plate* by J. Clif Christopher.
- Stewardship in African American Churches* by Melvin Amerson

WEBSITES

- www.arumc.org/stewardship
- www.umcsgiving.org
- www.churchleadership.com
- www.goodsenseministry.com
- www.stewardshipresources.org

SCRIPTURE

- The place of God — Exodus 20:3; Deuteronomy 6:5
- Clergy support — 1 Corinthians 9:7-14; Philippians 4:10-19
- Giving by the poor — Mark 12:38-44; 2 Corinthians 8:1-5
- Motivations of the heart — Exodus 25: 2; 1 Chronicles 29:9; Matthew 6:21; 2 Corinthians 9:7

Gifts include more than money

The following is adapted from the preface to Bob Crossman's annual stewardship program "Commitment to Christ," which he introduced to great success while pastor of Grace United Methodist Church in Conway.

Many stewardship programs designed for a fall stewardship program in a local church focus almost exclusively on financial gifts to the church.

It seems to me that in most churches, the only time every member is contacted in person or by direct mail is to ask for financial gifts. Members are often correct when they say, "The only time the church thinks of me is when they want money." That should never be the case.

The call to Christian discipleship is far more broad than the typical fall stewardship campaign. "Commitment to Christ 2010" is far closer to the full range of invitations the Lord makes to each who seek to be a disciple.

In "Commitment to Christ 2010," we are using tried and true methods that are found in many different month-long financial stewardship programs. The unique element I have added is to extend the stewardship emphasis to place



Bob Crossman

equal energy on inviting the congregation to make a commitment in each of five different areas of Christian discipleship.

- Daily Prayer
- Faithful Attendance
- Financial Gifts
- Hands on Service
- Witness

During worship, members of the congregation are invited to make commitments to:

Some pastors, no doubt, are thinking that the asking of five commitments would dilute or weaken the financial pledge response. All I can tell you is this: At Grace United Methodist Church in November of 1999, our number of pledging households increased 17 percent and the total amount pledged increased 58 percent. By April 1, 2000, actual giving to the operating fund increased 64 percent over the previous 12 months.

We used versions of this program for six consecutive years,

and the people of Grace Church continued to be very generous growing disciples.

Your particular church may not have the same response. We used this comprehensive stewardship program when the congregation of Grace Church in Conway was 7 years old.

The holistic emphasis seems to be uniquely suited for a young church like Grace where a fourth of the membership had joined by profession of faith and another fourth had come from other denominations.

At the end of this stewardship emphasis, members can no longer truthfully say, "The only time the church thinks of me is when they want money."

Instead, they can truthfully say, "My church expects a lot." And that, I believe, is far closer to the Lord's expectations for each disciple.

To obtain copies of the Commitment to Christ 2010 program, visit www.arumc.org/stewardship.

Bob Crossman is the Arkansas Conference's minister of new church starts. He can be reached at bcrossman@arumc.org.



EDITOR'S CORNER

BY HEATHER HAHN

Ministry Shares

When I first joined the Arkansas Conference staff last spring, one of the first things my colleagues wanted me to know was that all are called to be in ministry in the United Methodist Church.

Put another way, United Methodists believe that a person doesn't need a seminary degree or the title "Reverend" to be a leader in the church's work.

This insight dates back to at least the Protestant Reformation when Martin Luther, John Calvin and others proclaimed that the folks in the pews didn't need ordained clergy to act as their intercessor before God. Lay people could read Scripture, pray and have a relationship with God just fine without relying on the guy with the tonsure or the fancy robes.

John Wesley put particular emphasis on the priesthood of the believer — cultivating a strong network of lay leaders who helped the Methodist movement spread across Britain and the American frontier at a time when pastors were scarce.

From the beginning, Methodist lay people have used their spiritual gifts as preachers, teachers and administrators. They pitched tents for camp meetings, prepared covered dishes for potlucks and volunteered to lend neighbors in need a helping hand.

Today, many United Methodist churchgoers continue to give countless hours to the church, fulfilling their call to ministry in a

variety of ways.

Just as important to ministerial work as giving time is giving tithes.

Your benevolence make the connected ministries of the United Methodist Church possible — helping to build churches in far-flung corners of the world and provide relief to disaster victims long after many other aid groups have moved on.

Churchgoers sometimes think of the apportionments that their congregations send to denominational agencies as a tax.

But the West Michigan Conference offers a different way of thinking about apportionments, calling them "ministry shares."

What you give to your local church and your local church gives in apportionments is an investment in the ministry of the United Methodist Church worldwide. And just like buying a share in any business, your apportionment investment gives you part ownership in the good work being done.

In this issue are profiles of some of the ministries that Arkansas United Methodists have a stake in because of their apportionments. You'll also see the amount the Arkansas Conference has budgeted to give to each group — that is, the amount of your ministry share.

I hope you find this special issue a helpful guide as fall stewardship campaigns get under way.

Trena Henderson, administrative secretary at First UMC in Bryant, and Beverly Graham, secretary at new church start FaithSpring UMC in Little Rock, talk during a gathering of the Arkansas chapter of the Professional Association of Church Secretaries on Aug. 18 at Philander Smith College. During the gathering the secretaries learned about church membership and apportionments.

Photo by Heather Hahn



The Arkansas Conference has put together a Benevolence Guide calendar for 2010. It includes the 2010 budget and an example for each month of what your giving accomplishes. To get a copy, contact Martha Taylor, director of communications, at (501) 324-8005 or mtaylor@arumc.org.



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Issue Date	Submission Deadline
October 2, 2009	September 16, 2009
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Camp brings smiles to seniors and disabled youngsters



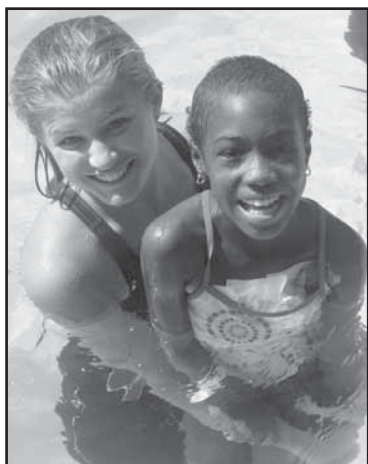
**Camp Aldersgate
in Little Rock
Ministry Share:
\$123,985**

DANA ADDISON
AND TISHA GRIBBLE
Special contributors

Camp Aldersgate is Arkansas's only nonprofit group uniquely dedicated to serving children and youth with disabilities as well as senior adults in a camp environment.

Founded in 1947, the camp initially served as a place for interracial fellowship, meetings and Christian training.

Now, the camp focuses on its special mission to children with medical, physical and developmental disabilities and senior adults throughout Arkansas.



Camp Aldersgate provides all the traditional camp activities for children with medical, physical and developmental disabilities.

Photo courtesy of Camp Aldersgate

Last year, 555 campers came from 117 cities and 63 counties throughout Arkansas and as well as

six other states.

Along with summer camps, Camp Aldersgate also hosts weekend "respite camps." These weekend programs provide families of children with disabilities a rest, or "respite," from the demands of care giving while the camper enjoys social interaction and fun.

Children enjoy a variety of activities at the camp including hiking, archery, fishing, canoeing, scuba diving, swimming and other activities.

The goal is to give campers the best week or weekend possible, while they are treated for conditions such as cancer, muscular dystrophy, spina bifida, autism, diabetes and asthma.

Camp Aldersgate's Senior Day Out program is held from 9 a.m. to 1p.m. each Thursday from September until May. Senior adults

can socialize and while enjoying activities such as bridge, Wii Sports, beanbag baseball, fishing, field trips, board games, arts and crafts and community.

Volunteers are the backbone of the camp contributing 31,815 hours last year of direct community service.

But as we work in mission at Camp Aldersgate, we are acutely aware of how critical the funds are from the United Methodist Church and the United Methodist Women.

Apportionment contributions, along with the United Methodist Women support contribute approximately 22 percent to the budget of Camp Aldersgate.

These funds are a vital component of the operations of the Camp helping us maintain our buildings, grounds and administration costs. The camp has

16 year-round staff members and its 2009 operating budget is \$1,109,206.

Camp Aldersgate is proud to be so closely connected with the United Methodist Church and the United Methodist Women.

It is through this partnership that we are able to enrich the lives of children and youth with medical challenges in an outdoor environment.

We are immensely proud of our church friends and family who have supported us and prayed for us as we work in mission for the betterment of our community.

Dana Addison is the director of development at Camp Aldersgate, and Tisha Gribble is development associate. To learn more about the ministry, visit

www.campaldersgate.net.

Program helps clergy and laity connect to grow church



**Connected
in Christ
Ministry Share:
\$142,500**

KAYLEA HUTSON
For the Arkansas United Methodist

Leadership training, strategic planning and long-range planning are phrases used to describe the benefits of the Connected In Christ (CIC) program within the Arkansas Conference.

Established in 2000, Connected In Christ is a ministry designed to facilitate the connections between clergy and laity needed to develop a faithful, fruitful ministry among both the clergy and laity.

Since 2001, more than 130 congregations — including 160 pastors and 320 lay members, have participated in the program. This fall, the 13th cycle of pastors and churches will begin the two-year process.

At Annual Conference, three of the four churches recognized as "church of the year" were congregations that have been a part of Connected in Christ.

That's not surprising, said Michael Roberts, program director.

"[The congregations] have been exposed to some new ways of thinking about church and have experienced renewal," he said.

"It would be hard for a CIC congregation to not have a greater commitment to our common mission

to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world."

Connected in Christ is not a one-size-fits-all program, but rather a process, which can be tailored to each congregation, Roberts said.

The program started as a way to address several areas of concern within the Arkansas Conference — including low morale, an acceptance of mediocrity, a lack of covenant community and a statistical decline within United Methodist churches throughout the state.

"We began to realize that there would not be a quick-fix solution," Roberts said. "A more comprehensive process was needed."

Initially funded through two grants through the Religious Division of the Lilly Endowment, the program now receives financial support from congregations that invest in the process and through the apportionments paid by Arkansas United Methodist churches.

Roberts said congregations taking part in the Connected in Christ process often see results.

"For example, 93 percent of CIC congregations reported an increase in professions of faith," he said. "[More than] half of congregations participating in CIC are larger in terms of worship attendance."

How it works

Churches participating in Connected In Christ are encouraged to form a team of lay members

coming from a variety of educational and vocational backgrounds. This team, along with the participating pastor, are encouraged to work together in partnership to discern God's will for the congregation — establishing both mission and vision statements.

The ultimate goal, Roberts said, is for congregation and pastor to begin discerning and living God's vision for their ministries.

During the two-year process, lay coaches — under the direction of John Crawford, program director of lay leadership — provide resources and tools as needed.

Roberts said the program's impact within the Arkansas Conference can be measured through the stories told by both lay and clergy members.

Help for a pastor

Belinda Price, senior pastor, and members of Vilonia United Methodist Church became part of the Connected in Christ process in 2008.

Price said the training is helping her congregation develop a mission statement during a time of growth and transition.

During the training seminars, team members developed a survey to help the congregation identify its core values. Those values then helped shape the newly drafted mission and vision statements for the church.

Price said the team is now at the beginning stages of wrestling with



Clergy pray for a fellow pastor during a clergy retreat sponsored by Connected in Christ. The conference-supported program, seeks to form a covenant community to strengthen participating clergy members and their congregations.

Photo courtesy of Connected In Christ

how to turn the vision into a reality.

"I believe our congregation will continue to work toward the vision that it has set for the future," she said.

In addition to the laity training, the program offers pastors a variety of clergy retreats and gatherings.

Price said the connections she has made with other clergy during these retreats have been invaluable.

"After sharing with one another, praying for one another, and simply spending time with one another over a two-year period," she said, "you get to know and appreciate your peers in a deeper way."

Seeing the long-term benefits

William O. "Bud" Reeves, senior pastor of First UMC in Hot Springs, was one of the first pastors take part

in CIC. He took part in the process while appointed to First UMC in Bryant, and he still uses what he learned in Hot Springs

Reeves said the program has permeated the culture of the Arkansas Conference, giving both laity and clergy alike a common language for transformational ministry. Ultimately, he said, the program helps people move into a deeper commitment in Christ.

"[Connected in Christ] changes the life of the church, so it changes the life of people," Reeves said. "We are helping them grow from seeker, to member, to disciple, to minister."

To learn more about Connected In Christ, contact Michael Roberts at mroberts@arumc.org.

Sharing ministry

When you give to your local church, you not only touch lives here in Arkansas — you reach souls around the globe.

In 2010, the Arkansas Conference has budgeted nearly \$1.4 million in apportionments for the World Service Fund, the financial lifeline to the United Methodist Church's global outreach.

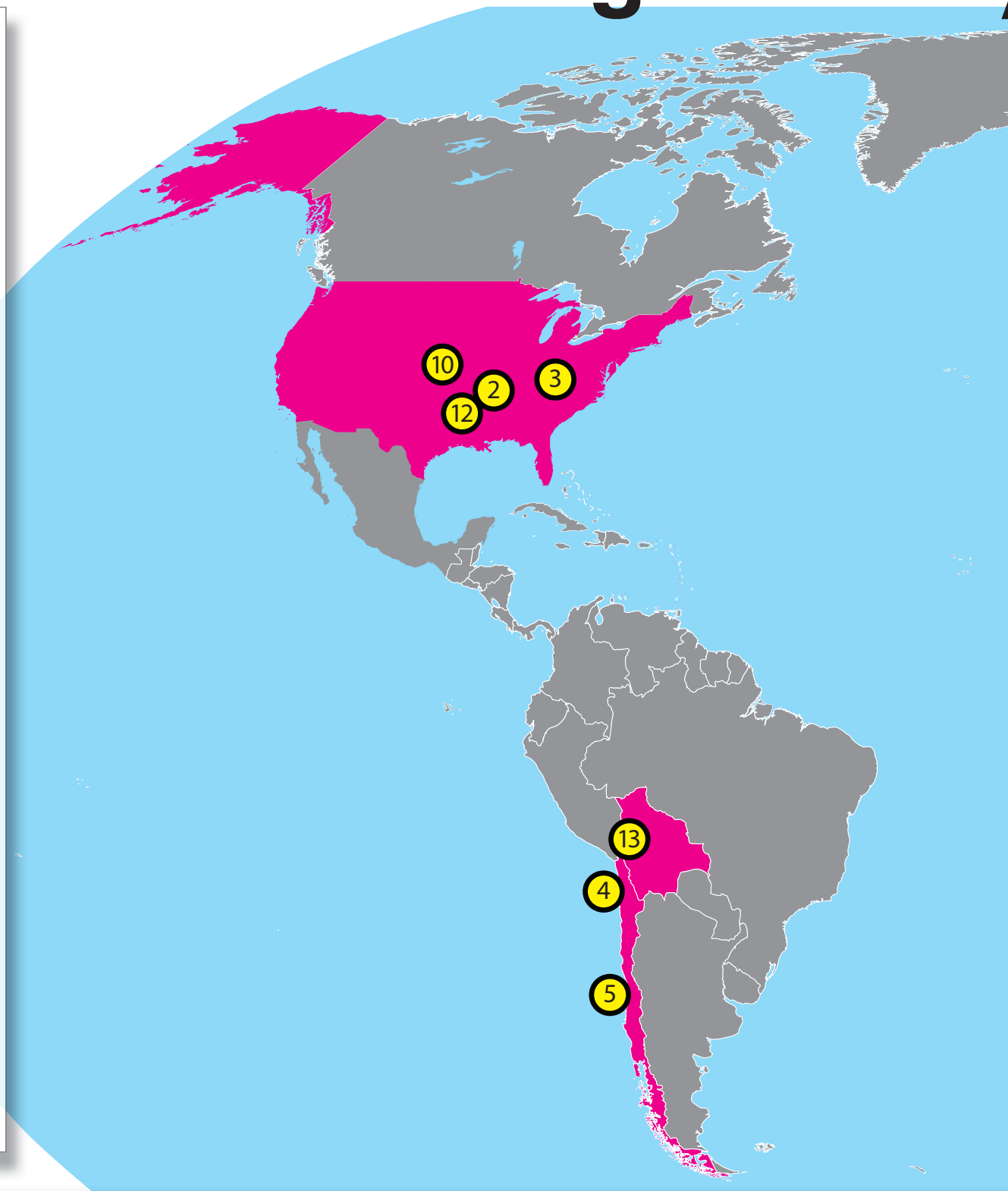
The fund helps build new churches, expand Bible studies and provide youth ministry leadership. Perhaps most importantly, the fund helps fund the salaries of United Methodist missionaries in the United States and overseas.

According to the General Board of Global Ministries, the denomination supports or shares support for 369 active missionaries in 65 countries. They include doctors, builders, professors and pastors. With your benevolences, these missionaries feed the hungry, heal the sick, educate the young and aid the poor — all while spreading the Gospel.

The denomination's support for active missionaries is about \$16 million. The United Methodist Church also provides pensions and benefits for 1,300 retired missionaries.

That money primarily comes from the World Service Fund but also gifts from individual conferences, congregations and United Methodists. For example, in addition to supporting missionaries through the World Service Fund, the Arkansas Conference also has allotted money from its Vision Team budget to help pay 12 missionaries directly.

This map shows just a *small* sample of what your generosity accomplishes. To learn more, visit the General Board of Global Ministries' Web site at new.gb-gm-umc.org.



1 **Alex Awad**, whom Arkansas United Methodists support through the World Service Fund, pastors an international church in East Jerusalem and teaches at Bethlehem Bible College. His formative years were marked by the death of his father, who was killed in 1948 during crossfire between the Israeli and Jordanian armies. His family's tragedy led to his mother's revived commitment to Christ. As a result, Awad said he was practically "raised in the church."

2 **Evelyn Banks-Shackelford**, a missionary supported by the Arkansas Conference, serves

as a Church and Community Worker with the Marianna Larger Parish in Arkansas. She works with five churches in the Arkansas Delta. Among her responsibilities, she operates an area food bank that supplies local food pantries and gives children backpacks of food on the weekends.

3 **Phyllis Crouse**, an Arkansas Conference-supported missionary, serves as librarian at the Red Bird School in Beverly, Ky., part of the Red Bird Missionary Conference. "I try to teach them library skills and the joy of books and reading," Crouse said of her work. "The funding

and support from people throughout the United Methodist Church provides books and audio equipment for our library."

4 **John Elmore**, an Arkansas Conference-supported missionary, serves as mission volunteer coordinator for the United Methodist Church in Chile. Living in Iquique, Chile, Elmore for the last nine years has coordinated work teams and construction projects in the northern part of the country.

5 **Shana Harrison**, supported by the Arkansas Conference, is the

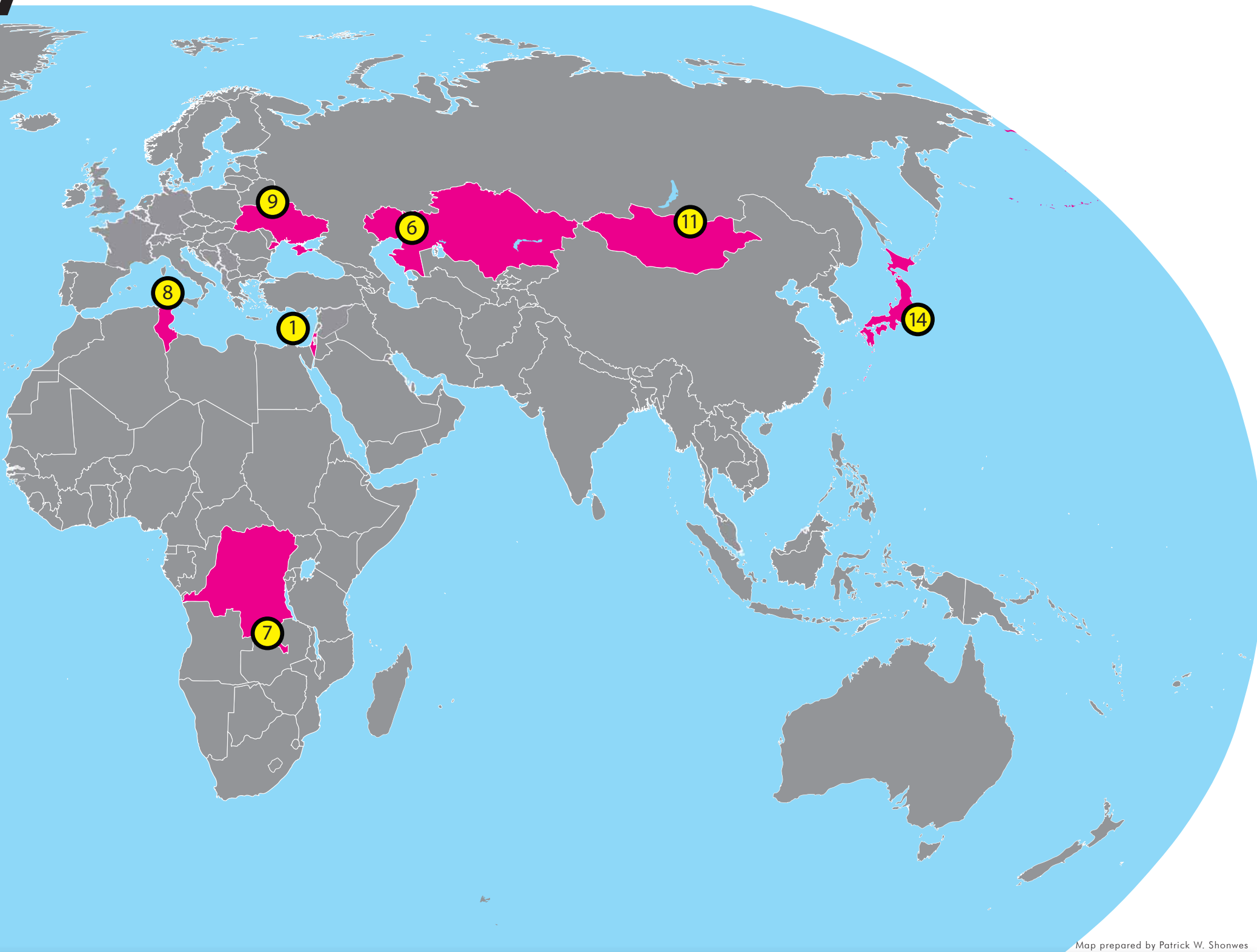
executive director of Foundation Crescendo, a workshop and group home for adults with intellectual disabilities in Santiago, Chile. She particularly enjoys enabling others to meet and develop relationships with adults with disabilities.

6 **Dr. Christiana Koisey Hena**, supported through your World Service Fund gifts, is project coordinator in Eastern Kazakhstan for the United Methodist Church's General Board of Global Ministries Health and Relief Unit. She leads a comprehensive community-based primary health care program, which trains local health

workers to promote better health practices in their communities.

7 **Ellen Hoover**, supported through your World Service Fund gifts, is a part-time professor at the United Methodist university in Lubumbashi, the Democratic Republic of Congo. There, she teaches courses in Islam and church history in the college of theology. She also works with The English-Speaking School of Lubumbashi, an elementary and middle school for children of missionaries, full-time church workers and other English-speaking families in the city. Her husband, Jeffrey, is also a

y to transform the world



Map prepared by Patrick W. Shonwes

missionary and serves as a professor at Katanga Methodist University.

8 **Mutombu and Kona Kayij**, supported here through World Service Fund apportionments, work in church development and outreach ministries in the predominantly Muslim city of Tunis, Tunisia. Mutombu Kayij is also a staff member of Caritas, a local ecumenical organization formed to serve refugees and migrants. Kona is actively involved with the women in the community, prayer groups and other programs .

9 **Helen Byholt Lovelace**, an Arkansas Conference-supported missionary, develops programs related to women's issues and ministers to families affected by drug and alcohol abuse in Kiev, Ukraine. The native of Norway, she also serves as Area Financial Executive for the United Methodist Church in Ukraine and Moldova.

10 **Governor A. Mays**, an Arkansas Conference-supported missionary, is a Church and Community Worker serving in Ogden, Kan. In that role, he pastors Ogden Friendship House UMC and serves as

executive director of the Ogden Friendship House Distribution Center in Ogden. His ministry includes tutoring and an after-school program that has the assistance of Kansas State University students.

11 **Dong Min Seo**, supported through your gifts to the World Service Fund, is a pastor of the Mongolian United Methodist Church in Ulaanbaatar. His wife, HyeYun Hong Seo, is also a missionary and works with an after school music education program and a Christian parents program.

12 **Allyne Solomon**, supported by the Arkansas Conference, serves as a Church and Community Worker with the Lower Delta Parish Community Outreach Ministry in Arkansas. "My call is to work with those in need," she has said. "People who have a crisis do not know where to go or who to turn to — I want to be there to help."

13 **Millie Diane Wimberley**, an Arkansas Conference-supported missionary, works in La Paz, Bolivia, with the Life and Mission division of the Iglesia Evangelica Metodista Boliviana. "I work with a

team in planning workshops which better equip both ordained ministers and local pastors, on whom the local churches are very dependent, to carry out their roles," she said.

14 **Claudia Genung Yamamoto**, supported through your gifts to the World Service Fund, edits the newsletter "Japan Christian Activity News" for the National Christian Council in Tokyo, Japan. She is also a part-time pastor at West Tokyo Union Church and president of the Tokyo Ecumenical and Interfaith Council.

Source: The General Board of Global Ministries at new.gbgm-umc.org

Rethinking historically black colleges and universities



Philander Smith
College
Ministry Share:
\$320,000

Black College
Fund
Ministry Share:
\$185,057

WALTER M. KIMBROUGH
Special contributor

The United Methodist Church historically has been a very progressive denomination.

Our stances have continued the philosophy of John Wesley, who wanted the church to be involved in the matters of the greater society, and not be preoccupied by their own spiritual needs. In fact, we should be openly sharing our work with others in hopes of inspiring the masses to follow our example.

One simply has to look at the work the denomination has done in challenging slavery, and then the establishment of schools to educate the freed slaves. In August of 1866, a meeting was convened in Cincinnati to review the work needed to address the relief and education of freedmen.

This meeting resulted in the Freedmen's Aid Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church tasked with this responsibility. So we began opening schools mainly across the South, as far west as Texas, as far east



Philander Smith College celebrates the grand opening on Sept. 4 of the Barracks-Honors Hall, a residence for 19 honor students. On the stairs, from left, are Larry Ross, board of trustees chairman; Walter Kimbrough, president; Elizabeth Small, president of general contractor PDC Construction, Inc.; and Juliana Mosley, vice president of student affairs. The college completed the \$500,000 renovation project with \$300,000 from the Black College Fund.

Photo by Heather Hahn

as Florida, and north to Maryland.

Today, there are 11 United Methodist historically Black colleges that are members of what we call the Black College Fund. Through our apportionment system, these schools are supported by the members of the United Methodist Church.

This system is viewed by many as the best of any denomination that supports HBCUs.

The stewardship of United Methodists worldwide assists these institutions in continuing the legacy of Freedmen's Aid Society.

United Methodist HBCUs enroll a large percentage of students from low-income families, as well as first-generation students. By supporting these schools, members are playing a critical role in the education of those that Jesus might describe as "the least of these."

But stewardship is a two-way street. While the need of our students cannot be questioned — and we do serve a population that often faces the most challenges in completing their education — we are in tune with the mission of the United Methodist

Church. And we are producing measurable results.

One of, if not the best, examples of this is here in Arkansas — Philander Smith College.

Over the past five years, the college has built upon the work of previous administrations to focus on a stronger mission in line with the work of the church, and a stronger student body to carry out this mission.

Our emphasis on social justice for the mission of this college is not by accident. One only has to review the work of John Wesley, as well as read the social principles of the church, to understand that this is what we are called to do as United Methodists.

While most of our students do not have a United Methodist background, we find more of them becoming involved with our denomination, and many now are joining due to our tremendously beneficial relationship with Wesley Chapel United Methodist Church.

A record number of students completed justice related internships this past summer, working locally with First UMC Little Rock, with the Juvenile Justice Project of Louisiana in New Orleans, and the United Methodist Church in New York.

Our popular lecture series, Bless the Mic, is one of the signature events in Central Arkansas, with a number of speakers addressing justice issues.

Finally, we have created a student body that is comparable to African-American student populations of the best schools in the state.

Sharp increases in high school grade averages and ACT scores, better orientation and first-year experiences, and stronger academic advising and mentoring have resulted in better retention and graduation rates.

Essentially, what we have done was to rethink college. We have made college a verb.

College for us is creating a new generation of leaders who are grounded as advocates for social justice determined to change the world for the better. Our social justice mission is exactly what the rethink church message is all about, "to become more outwardly focused and engaged in the world."

Philander Smith College is leading the way for all of the denomination's historically black colleges.

More of these institutions will engage in institutional introspection, as the entire church is doing, so that we all are in concert as we attempt to transform the world together. So be proud of the fact that your school in Arkansas is leading the charge.

Walter M. Kimbrough is the president of Philander Smith College. To learn more, visit www.philander.edu.

Hendrix helps students find their career paths in the church



Hendrix College
Ministry Share:
\$320,000

J. TIMOTHY CLOYD
Special contributor

As a Hendrix College student, Chase Green has traveled to France on a mission trip and experienced a Journey of Reconciliation trip to Memphis, Birmingham and Atlanta. He's involved with the college's Ministry Explorations group and has been an active leader in worship services on campus.

Stipends have allowed him to perform an internship at his home church — First United Methodist Church of Searcy — and visit seminaries to help him choose his best educational path. He is leaning toward Duke Divinity School.

Chase's Hendrix odyssey is an

example of what can happen when a young United Methodist embraces his calling here. He is one of 42 current students who are recognized as United Methodist Youth Fellowship Leadership Scholars. The program provides scholarships specifically for young United Methodists who exhibit notable leadership roles in their home churches.

Hendrix is especially proud of the students who currently receive these awards, many of whom will return to their home churches during the year to share their experiences.

The college is proud that it is continuing and living the dream and vision set out by the Rev. Isham Burrow and those early forebears.

As a United Methodist college, Hendrix embraces the freedom of the academy where students and faculty explore the boundaries of knowledge while setting a context for that

exploration that values cultivation of both the mind and spirit. In this way, we fulfill our mission to cultivate whole persons and to prepare our graduates for lives of service and fulfillment in their communities and in the world.

To be clear, all apportionment gifts are used exclusively for student scholarships and financial aid.

Gifts from the United Methodist Church of Arkansas help attract students through the UMYF Scholars program, and the investment from the church is reinvested into our students. United Methodist students at Hendrix receive more \$3 million dollars in financial aid from the college. More than \$226,000 in financial aid is given to dependents of United Methodist clergy and UMYF Leadership Scholars.

When you reflect on partnership between the United Methodist

Church of Arkansas and Hendrix College, consider:

■ Hendrix's Chaplain Wayne Clark and Assistant Chaplain J.J. Whitney continuously assist the conference in its initiative "to identify, enlist and retain gifted young pastors who are passionate about making Disciples of Christ."

■ Since 2004, 28 Hendrix graduates have enrolled in seminary. We anticipate 40 students will enter seminary in a four-year period that includes this year's graduating class and the past three graduating classes. ■ The college has been blessed with a gift of \$1 million from Bob and Nadine Miller to help continue the important service work of the College. In appreciation of their endowed gift, the program is now called the Miller Center for Vocation, Ethics and Calling. A focus of the Miller Center is to cultivate the

discernment of a call to ordained ministry.

■ Our continued work with pre-seminarians includes one or two group visits to United Methodist seminaries and stipends for students to make individual visits. We've currently averaged about 10-15 students each academic year who take advantage of this opportunity.

Hendrix College cherishes its relationship with the United Methodist Church and the opportunity to fulfill John Wesley's vision to bring together intellectual curiosity and spiritual formation, knowledge and vital piety.

We are grateful for the many ways in which United Methodists in Arkansas support Hendrix.

J. Timothy Cloyd is the president of Hendrix College. To learn more about the college, visit www.hendrix.edu.

Connecting collegians with Christ



Wesley
Foundations
Ministry Share:
\$845, 683

ERIC VAN METER
For the Arkansas United Methodist

Most Christian communities recognize a variety of spiritual disciplines. For Wesley Foundations, one of the most important of these is checking the mail.

Mail call at Wesley brings with it a fair amount of junk mail, plenty of bills and — incredibly — enough financial support from churches and individual donors to keep the ministries going month after month.

And at the beginning of every month, each Wesley Foundation receives an apportionment check. Although not enough to fund the entire ministry, apportionments represent a key component of campus ministry funding in Arkansas.

Checking the mail is about more than simple economics, though. It's about faith and trust. Each visit to the Post Office is a willful embodiment of hope. It really is a spiritual discipline, held together not by engraved letter binding, but by window envelopes and forever stamps.

Of course, Wesley Foundations engage in plenty of other spiritual disciplines as well — everything from tutoring to mowing the lawn to caring for a friend after a breakup.

Perhaps not everyone will recognize these as spiritual disciplines, at least not on par with prayer or Bible study or worship. But at Wesley Foundations, these latter disciplines are only important insofar as they impact the very close relational quarters in which college students live.

Knowing how God wants his people to interact is important. Living that out in Christian community is more important still.

Wesley Foundations have a unique opportunity to help young adults form Christ-like patterns of behavior that will be a part of their discipleship for years to come.

Mark Lasater, Wesley director at Southern Arkansas University in Magnolia, sees college ministry's impact on every facet of his students' lives.

"The discipling that takes place through Wesley carries over to dorm discussions and [cafeteria]-chats," he says. "Students will show back up at Wesley worship and report about a



Eric Van Meter, Wesley Foundation director at Arkansas State University in Jonesboro, baptizes Blake Schrepfer, who is now a junior interdisciplinary studies major at ASU. Van Meter says Schrepfer is "one of the best young adult leaders I've come across in a while."

Photo courtesy of ASU Wesley Foundation

God moment they had on campus that was somehow interconnected with their experiences at Wesley."

The impact of Wesley Foundations is particularly important in the fall of each school year, when freshmen enter the world of college life. Hundreds of students across Arkansas explore Wesley as a potential spiritual home.

As director at Arkansas State University's Wesley Foundation in Jonesboro, I see firsthand the importance of a United Methodist presence on the college campus.

For example, a young woman came through our doors during welcome week looking for a pastor. She hadn't been to church since she was a little girl, but decided that college was the right time to start again.

She saw the cross and flame on our building and recognized us as United Methodist.

There's no way to know for sure, but I doubt she would have found her way to a local church. Because we were right on campus — outside her dorm, in fact — she had a chance to reconnect with God. And when she graduates, she'll have a chance to continue her journey with

a different United Methodist family.

At Arkansas Tech University in Russellville, an already strong Wesley Foundation ministry continues to grow under new director Jason Molitor.

"We had over 250 in our first worship service," he says. "It's a little overwhelming, but it is so great to see so many young adults excited about their faith."

Similar stories can be told for Wesley Foundations at the University of Central Arkansas in Conway, Henderson State University/Ouachita Baptist University in Arkadelphia, University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff, UA at Little Rock, UA at Monticello, and the University of Arkansas at Fayetteville.

"We want people to know what's going on at Wesley," says Omar al Rikabi, director of UA-Fayetteville. "The investment our conference makes in campus ministry can literally transform the world, both now and in the future."

Eric Van Meter is the campus minister at ASU's Wesley Foundation. He can be reached at astatewesley@yahoo.com.

Giving pastors peace of mind



Pension & Benefits
Ministry Share:
\$4.5 million

HEATHER HAHN
Editor

Long before he joined the clergy, Joe Sparks was a passionate advocate for ensuring the church cared for its pastors in their golden years.

Back in the 1970s, Sparks was among those who successfully urged the state's United Methodists to increase the pension budget to accommodate the growing ranks of retirees.

"I just thought it was our Christian responsibility to support pastors in their retirement," he recalled. "They had dedicated their lives to the church and usually made significantly less than other professionals. When they got done, they didn't have a lot to say grace with."

Sparks later became a pastor himself and for about seven years, he served congregations across the state.

Now Sparks, who lives in Rogers, is collecting a pension himself.

"It's small because I didn't serve very long," he said. "But I am very appreciative."

Church apportionments pay for the pension and health benefits that the Arkansas Conference provides retired clergy and their surviving spouses, said Mona Williams, the conference's insurance and pensions administrator.

While she encourages pastors to also have additional savings, Williams stresses how important church giving is in making sure pastors and their spouses can weather the rigors of old age.

Even after pastors retire, they don't stop serving the church. The vast majority will volunteer as supply preachers, filling the pulpit when a pastor goes on vacation or must attend to a family need.



Joe Sparks long has supported making sure retired clergy receive church support.

Of the 275 retired clergy, more than 50 are now serving full- and part-time appointments, pastoring

congregations where no other pastoral leadership is available.

For example, Sparks, 83, continued accepting appointments wherever he was needed for about a decade.


Mauzel Beal, whose late husband Jim

Beal died in 2005 after 50 years as an ordained elder, said she is grateful she can count on a pension check each month.

"It is such a comfort to know that in these days of economic uncertainty, we clergy retirees and surviving spouses are being taken care of so capably by our conference pensions staff," she said. "I'm proud to be part of a church that cares for its retired servants so well."

"I'm proud to be part of a church that cares for its retired servants so well."

Retreat center offers scenic spiritual training grounds

 **Mount Sequoyah
Ministry Share:
\$12,528**

SHERI ATTLAND
Special Contributor

FAYETTEVILLE — The Arkansas Conference is home to one of the four Jurisdictional institutions whose ministries are supported, in part, by apportionment gifts from congregations in fifteen Methodist Conferences across eight states.

Historic Mount Sequoyah has provided more than 85 years of Christian leadership training and ongoing spiritual formation for Methodists located in this region, now known as the South Central Jurisdiction. After many months of lobbying by communities and railway companies along the borders of Arkansas, Missouri and Oklahoma, founding leaders from Arkansas chartered Mount Sequoyah in 1922 as the Western Methodist Assembly.

They located their mountaintop campus just to the east of downtown Fayetteville. The early leaders chose



The Prayer Path at Mount Sequoyah Conference and Retreat Center in Fayetteville offers visitors a quiet place for reflection and spiritual renewal.

Photo courtesy of Mount Sequoyah

East Mountain as the site also called the “Chautauqua of the Ozarks” in those beginning years.

With the uniting of early Methodist/Wesleyan congregations in 1939, and again in 1968, the Western Methodist Assembly transitioned to what today is the Mount Sequoyah Conference and Retreat Center. This treasure of history and heritage, especially for the people of Arkansas, is also the only Conference and

Retreat Center for the South Central Jurisdiction.

Mount Sequoyah is the core training and gathering place for United Methodist regional leadership and program training events.

Laity and clergy from 6,400 congregations can utilize the programs and facilities for spiritual formation and leadership training, or for a personal stay. Multiple jurisdictional and nationally

recognized United Methodist leaders have responded to their discipleship calling, or, have gained spiritual renewal on the sacred grounds of Mount Sequoyah.

During the past five years, Mount Sequoyah has undergone program transformation to once again become the heartbeat for effective leadership training throughout the South Central Jurisdiction for laity and clergy. Over the past 30 months, the campus has seen a 400 percent increase in participants who are attending the 70-plus jurisdictional training and discipleship development events.

Mount Sequoyah isn't trapped in the past. The growth in population of the Northwest Arkansas metro area puts the mountaintop campus in a dynamic urban location. It's within walking distance of the Fayetteville arts and cultural downtown district and the University of Arkansas at Fayetteville campus.

The 32-acre campus is a park-like setting that offers all visitors a haven for rest, restoration and revelation as they walk the sacred grounds above the chaos of the city

below. Guests can sit in quiet reflection under the canopy of the stationed prayer path.

The center staff members have recently added a program for personal retreat, with guided spiritual direction, led by a resident minister. Personal stays are also available for individuals and families. Family reunions, weddings, anniversaries and other celebrations are becoming commonplace at Mount Sequoyah.

Because of continued support though apportionments and an understanding for what this ministry provides, the tradition of United Methodist discipleship training and leadership will continue for the second century of Christian service and hospitality offered at historic Mount Sequoyah.

To learn more about Mount Sequoyah Conference and Retreat Center, visit www.mountsequoyah.org.

Sheri Attland and her husband, John, are the executive team of Mount Sequoyah Conference and Retreat Center. She can be reached at director@mountsequoyah.org.

Thank You.

Methodist Family Health's Walk for Children and Families was a huge success again this year thanks to our dedicated participants, volunteers and generous sponsors. We offer our heartfelt appreciation to everyone for taking steps with us to support our ongoing mission of providing compassionate care to children and families in need.



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September 18, 2009

Being intentional about community, disciplined lives

BY ROBIN RUSSELL
Managing Editor

Ross Reynolds, 26, felt frustrated with ministry goals after graduating last May from Perkins School of Theology.

Like many seminary grads, he thought he'd end up serving a church. Yet he couldn't picture himself as a typical senior pastor—preaching sermons, handling administrative work and being part of a United Methodist itinerant system where he might be reassigned every few years.

"I was really struggling with that," he said. "I was interested in something that was more involved in people's lives—and long-term. I liked the idea of being able to stay with a group of people."

During an internship serving at-risk kids in Waco, Texas, his passion for ministry was stirred. He learned from Jimmy Durrell, pastor of the non-denominational Church Under the Bridge, about working with the poor and the marginalized.

"I loved it. I felt drawn to that, but didn't know how it would work out within a Methodist system," Mr. Reynolds said.

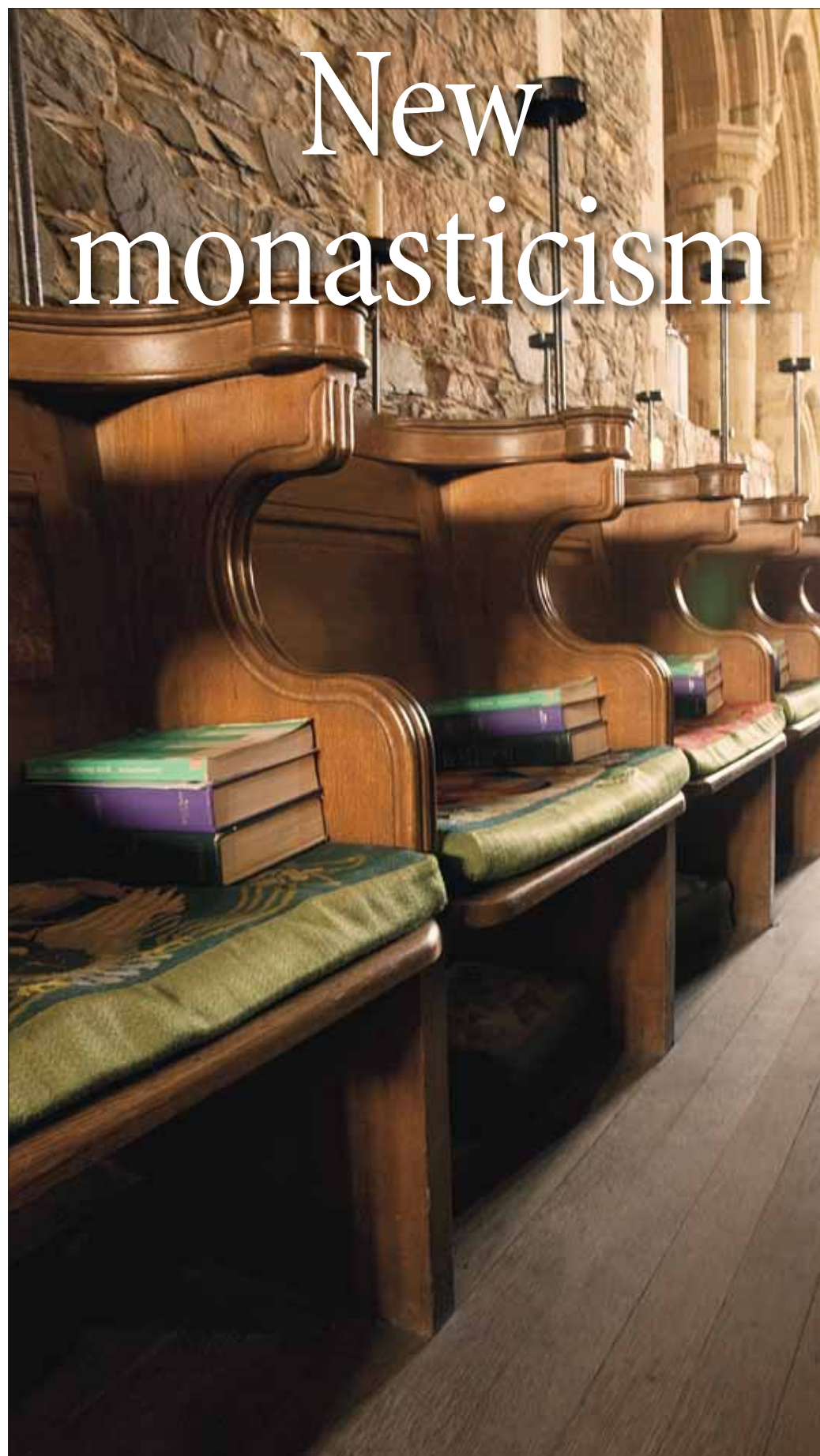
That's when one of his seminary professors, Elaine Heath, told him about a new monastic community at SMU whose members were intentional about serving the poor. When Dr. Heath asked if he would be interested in leading one of the New Day Ministry's houses, his answer was an emphatic "YES!"

Mr. Reynolds is among an increasing number of young adults in United Methodism who are drawn to the intentionality of new monasticism: living out their calling through disciplined and contemplative spiritual practices, participating in community life and serving God and others.

New monasticism defined

Unlike the ancient monks, today's new monastics are not cloistered, nor do they take vows of obedience, chastity and poverty. They are ordinary people—single and married—with jobs in the community. But they do commit to follow a "rule of life" (for United Methodists, that often means living out their Wesleyan membership vows of prayer, presence, gifts, service and witness) and they immerse

■ See 'New Monastics,' page 4A



2009 DESIGN PICS PHOTO

Today's new monastics practice spiritual disciplines that hearken back to their ancient counterparts, but also are intentional about serving their communities.

Q&A:

Appreciating heritage of Christian saints

Most Protestants don't "do" saints, and that's to our detriment, says Chris Armstrong, author of *Patron Saints for Postmoderns* (InterVarsity Press, September). He would like contemporary Christians to re-discover their spiritual heritage of



Chris Armstrong

"the cloud of witnesses" and their power as examples of holy lives. Dr. Armstrong is an associate professor of church history at Bethel Seminary in St. Paul, Minn., and a senior editor of *Christian History & Biography*. He spoke recently with staff writer Mary Jacobs.

Why did you choose the somewhat loaded word "saint" rather than "role model" or "hero"?

I was a teaching assistant at Duke University in the graduate religion program, in classrooms full of mostly United Methodist ministry students. In a church history survey class, we read Augustine's *Confessions*, and I raised the question: Does sainthood still have meaning for us as Protestants? I got a really dynamic response from the students and we were pretty much all agreed that it was a helpful concept.

Paul uses "saint" for any Christian, and I would still affirm that, but there's something more than this. The word "saint" means—despite our flaws and our problems—God can still work in our lives in really cool ways, and it's worth telling each

■ See 'Q&A,' page 3A

FAITH WATCH

Ecumenical council elects top executive

The Rev. Olav Fykse Tveit, a Norwegian theologian, will serve as general secretary of the World Council of Churches (WCC), starting in January. He will succeed the Rev. Samuel Kobia, a Methodist minister from Kenya who was the first African to hold the post. Dr. Tveit, elected Aug. 27 during a WCC meeting in Geneva, Switzerland, currently leads the Church of Norway Council on Ecumenical and International Relations. More than 300 denominations are members of the WCC, including the United Methodist Church.

Two Lutheran leaders blast vote on clergy

The leaders of two Lutheran denominations have criticized the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) for its decision to allow non-celibate gay and lesbian clergy. In a statement, the Rev. Mark Schroeder, president of the Wisconsin Synod, called the new policy "a decisive step away from the clear teaching of the Bible." The Rev. Gerald Kieschnick, president of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, spoke to delegates at the ELCA Churchwide Assembly after the Aug. 21 vote, telling them it will "negatively affect the relationships between our two church bodies."

New NIV Bible coming in 2011

A revised edition of the New International Version (NIV) of the Bible will be published in 2011, Zondervan announced Sept. 1. The edition will replace Today's NIV, a 2002 translation that divided evangelicals over its gender-inclusive language. Douglas Moo, chairman of the NIV translation committee, said in a news conference that translators are reviewing "every gender-related change" made since a previous edition in 1984. "We recognize that not everyone will be happy with all the decisions that we make," he said.

—Compiled by Bill Fentum

Cal-Pac staff loses home in wildfire

BY LARRY R. HYGH JR.
Special Contributor

As fires continue to ravage Southern California forests and threaten homes, one California-Pacific Conference staff person has experienced the fire devastation first-hand.

Julie Garcia, who has been the conference's media secretary for 12 years, lost her home in the Station Fire. Ms. Garcia, who lives in the Big Tujunga Canyon, found only ashes when she returned to the site where her home of more than 40 years once stood.

Ms. Garcia and her family were allowed to return to the site for 10 minutes with fire officials. "There were around 15 houses on my street; now there are none left on my side and two standing on the other side," Ms. Garcia said. "When I moved there I was a new mom with a 3-month-old," she said.

Her three adult children were raised in the home and one of them was born in the home that is now destroyed.

Ms. Garcia, whose family is cur-

rently living with her parents, says she finds strength in her faith to sustain her during this time. "I start getting really upset or really sad, and I just got and sit on my mom's beautiful patio and I say, 'Come to me, Holy Spirit and bring me strength.'"

Leah Switzer, California-Pacific Media Center director, said she could tell by talking with Ms. Garcia how upset she was. "We know each other and there is a special bond between us," she said, adding Ms. Garcia had told her the plants and grass surrounding the home have also been destroyed.

Ms. Garcia's co-workers held an impromptu prayer service the morning after the fire destroyed the home. "As a conference center, we are crying with her, but we know that she is not alone," said Ms. Switzer. "We as a conference family will surround her with all of the love she can get. This is a place of hope and love."

An active member of Tujunga United Methodist Church, Ms. Garcia is involved with the church's prayer and healing ministry. "Julie is a woman of great faith and has hope be-



Raging wildfires are destroying some California homes and threatening several United Methodist Church properties.

THE UNITED METHODIST REPORTER

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PHOTOS COURTESY OF CALIFORNIA-PACIFIC CONFERENCE

United Methodists are helping evacuees as fires in Southern California devastate property.

cause of her own personal prayer life," said Ms. Switzer.

Cal-Pac campsites

The wildfires have also threatened two of the California-Pacific Conference's seven camps, Colby Ranch and Sturtevant Camp. Both camps are located in the Angeles Forest, with Sturtevant accessible only by a scenic moderate-grade, 4-mile hike.

Mark McConnell, site director for Colby Ranch, returned to the camp and found a large portion of it was still standing. "Initially, we were informed that 90 percent of the camp remained intact," said Mr. McConnell. "It turns out that the reality is a bit worse than the initial assessment, but certainly not by much."

At Colby Ranch, three trailer homes used as staff houses, three cabins and some restrooms were burned or damaged. Mr. McConnell said, "Much of the camp is safe and untouched including the main areas, the newly remodeled McGiffen Hall and the manager's residence."

The Rev. Sam Yun, the conference's director of camp program development, is concerned about the 116-year-old Sturtevant Camp. "Sturtevant is in the middle of the forest," he said. A small river runs alongside the hiking trail to the camp, but Mr. Yun said he didn't know if the moisture would help protect the camp itself.

Local churches

Members of several United Methodist churches in the affected areas have had to evacuate homes, but there has been no reported damage to United Methodist Church structures.

The Rev. Yvonne Williams-Boyd, pastor of Altadena United Methodist Church, says several members were given mandatory evacuation orders,

but the congregation was still able to have worship services.

"Although the smoke was thick, the service was a very moving one and well-attended," said Ms. Williams-Boyd. "It was most inspiring to see how many people came out, as they felt that being with God and the congregation was the best way that could get through this most difficult time."

The Rev. Young Han Kang, pastor of Hansarang United Methodist Church in Montrose, reported that eight of his church members were evacuated. The La Canada United Methodist Church offered its facility as an evacuation center.

The Rev. Sunny Pak, pastor of La Canada United Methodist Church, had asked church members to be ready to house evacuees and lined up doctors and nurses to help respond to needs in the community.

Ms. Garcia says her family has survived fire, floods and earthquakes in that home, but this time they didn't make it. Despite it all, she has an optimistic attitude.

"Things happen to everybody, but it's how you deal with it that really matters," she said. "It's just stuff. Compared to other people's tragedies it's still minor."

Dr. Hygh is the communications director for the California-Pacific Conference.

How to help: The California-Pacific Conference has set up a fund to help victims of fires in Southern California. Checks made payable to the California-Pacific Conference with "Southern California Fires" in the memo line may be mailed to California-Pacific Conference, Attn: Treasurer's Office, P.O. Box 6006, Pasadena, CA 91102-6006.

UM CONNECTIONS

Emory grad school named for Laney

The board of trustees for United Methodist-related Emory University in Atlanta has approved naming the graduate school in honor of President Emeritus James T. Laney, who led the university from 1977 until 1993. Dr. Laney, a United Methodist pastor, taught at Yonsei University in Korea and Vanderbilt University before becoming dean of Emory's Candler School of Theology, where he served from 1969 to 1977. He also was U.S. ambassador to South Korea from 1993 to 1997.

LaGrange ranks among 'best value' for U.S. colleges

LaGrange College was named a "best value" for the 10th straight year in *U.S. News & World Report's* annual evaluation of American colleges and universities. The college ranked sixth overall in the magazine's listing of "Southern Baccalaureate Colleges" and was also singled out as one of 10 best values in the 96-school category covering 12 states. The ranking was based on peer assessment, class size, SAT/ACT scores and graduation rates. Located in LaGrange, Ga., the four-year liberal arts and sciences college is affiliated with the United Methodist Church.

Baltic Methodist seminary announces new president

Meeli Tankler, 53, a professor of pastoral counseling and psychology at the Baltic Methodist Theological Seminary in Tallinn, Estonia, has been installed as its new president. She was the unanimous choice of the board of trustees and the Estonia Conference. Ms. Tankler is pursuing studies toward a doctoral degree at Asbury Theological Seminary in Kentucky.

—Compiled by Mary Jacobs

Committee begins study of worldwide church

BY STEPHEN DRACHLER
Special Contributor

ATLANTA—Members of the General Conference-mandated committee to study the worldwide nature of the United Methodist Church have begun a two-year look into the future of the denomination.

The basic question they are asking: What will the United Methodist Church be like in 2016, 2024, 2048 and beyond? "The world is changing," said the Rev. Forbes Matonga of Zimbabwe following the committee's initial meeting Aug. 23-26 at Simpsonwood Retreat Center. "It is clear we must do something other than business as usual."

As the 2008 General Conference considered dozens of proposals dealing with the changing demographics of the church, including its rapid growth out-

side the United States, delegates ordered the creation of the special committee to help the church better understand and organize its worldwide nature.



Forbes Matonga

side the United States, delegates ordered the creation of the special committee to help the church better understand and organize its worldwide nature.

"There is a tectonic shift in the United Methodist world," said member

The committee's 20-person membership includes United Methodists from the U.S., Africa, Europe and the Philippines.

Members began laying a foundation for their work by hearing presentations on the history of Methodist missions; membership trends in the U.S. and around the world; global financial policies related to the denomination; and worldwide globalization trends and issues.

"There is a tectonic shift in the United Methodist world," said member

Richard Grounds. "We want to carefully consider the demographic realities that are dramatically shifting worldwide. We want to respond in ways that ensure fairness and balance."

The group will meet six times before releasing a final report and recommendations in late 2011 for the 2012 General Conference. Two of its meetings will be held outside the U.S.—in the Philippines in April 2010, and in Africa in the fall of 2010. Several members also will attend the Sept. 20-24 meeting of the executive committee of the World Methodist Council in Santiago, Chile.

Kansas Bishop Scott J. Jones, the committee's chair, said the group's work shows the General Conference acted with wisdom by mandating the study.

"There are key questions that need to be answered on how we are going to move into the future as a worldwide

church," Bishop Jones said. "God is doing great things through the worldwide United Methodist Church, and we want to be ready to be as fruitful and effective as possible."

The committee heard an update on voting on the 23 constitutional amendments related to the worldwide church put before the denomination by the General Conference. With a number of annual conferences in Africa yet to vote, final results will not be announced until May 2010 by the denomination's Council of Bishops.

The committee elected additional officers, including: Mr. Matonga and Elizabeth Englund of Sweden as vice-chairs, and Matthew Laferty of Ohio as secretary. Committee reports will be published in English, French, Portuguese, Spanish, German and Korean.

For information on the committee's work, visit worldwideumc.org.

■ Q&A Continued from page 1A

other the stories of where that's happened in people's lives.

A saint is somebody who translates the gospel for his or her particular time and place. The really different thing about Christianity as a world religion was the incarnation, which was not a generalized incarnation of God as an everyman, but as a first-century Jewish carpenter from Nazareth. The reason I think saints are important is that unlike doctrinal statements, we get to see in saints' lives how the theology looks when it's lived.

What kind of saints do postmoderns need?

Those who are worthy of imitation in some way, which is really the same as it's always been. When we read biography, often we're seeking methods and principles: the "three easy ways" to do this or that. It's more complicated and more interesting than that. In biographies, we see incarnations of the gospel. Protestants simply have forgotten about a lot of people who still are commonplace figures for Catholics. We don't give ourselves opportunities to meet and imitate people from other times.

Is there a saint you'd really like Methodists to meet?

Oddly, I think Antony of Egypt (251-356 CE), the first man to venture out into the desert as a monk. He keeps trying to be a hermit, but everyone keeps coming out to the desert to

see him. The lesson is that the contemplative life is a necessary precursor to the communal life. John Wesley once said, "A holy solitary is about as likely as a holy adulterer."

He believed you always had to spend time in small groups or with other people—those were the real means of grace. I would say Methodists should also remember private and contemplative prayer can really have a powerful value, and it's not just for personal growth. Antony came out of periods of contemplation and emerged relationally and communally wise, with something to give to the church.

That's important, especially given the shot-out-of-the-cannon pace with which we live our lives today. We approach spiritual disciplines in immature ways. We've got to reckon with the necessity of a life that's both active and contemplative. You don't do the active part very well unless you are also doing the contemplative part—pressing into God alone.

How'd you decide which people to include on your "Top 10" list of saints?

Part of my purpose was to not to have the usual suspects, to look at people Protestants would not have heard of. The best example of that would be John Amos Comenius (1592-1670). He was the father of modern education and a Moravian bishop, but nobody knows about him. He was a deeply pious Christian figure, but also an enlightenment figure. He pioneered much

of what we consider to be commonplace in modern education today. When I talk about him in the book, it's not to say, "Let's learn about these principles of education," because we already know them: ideas such as educating boys and girls in same classroom, having pictures in our textbooks, not punishing children for intellectual faults in the classroom, and so on. I want people to see that all of this comes from his devotion to Christ—his attempt for his particular time to live the best translation of the gospel he could live.

During his time, people in the church were at each other's throats. There was the Thirty Years War. Christians were killing each other, lying to each other. People were holding their national loyalties higher than Christian loyalties. He and all his Moravian brethren were driven out of homeland; he lived his entire adult life in exile. Instead of being bitter and retreating to this little religious enclave, he went the opposite direction. He was an ecumenist, an educator who wanted to bring people together in their understanding of the world as well as their understanding of the things of God. You don't get the full depth of that story unless you read his biography.

That's what I think is valuable, to absorb a life and imitate elements of character. I tried not to do this in a moralistic, didactic way, but for me there were "a-ha" moments that happened all along the line as I was studying the 10 people in the book.

Do any of these saints seem to speak to issues facing us in the world right now?

Comenius and Dorothy L. Sayers (1893-1957), an English scholar and

novelist. Both would say that when we have a breakdown in education, when our education is narrow, we end up not understanding each other across barriers of cultures or language or nationality. They would say that there is something godly and positive about what we might call a "liberal" education—a broad understanding of other human beings who don't look like us.

We are increasingly living in the global village, but our understanding of each other is not keeping pace with our ability to kill each other. We communicate, but we don't communicate. We use black-and-white clichés and hurtful words; we don't sit down and try to understand each other as human beings.

Amanda Berry Smith speaks to some issues. She was a poor black woman exhorter and evangelist within the AME church and the holiness movement of Methodist church in the late 19th century. She was a preacher first and foremost, sharing a Wesleyan message of sanctification. She spent most of her life talking to white audiences, dealing frankly but not abrasively, confronting white people with racism in ways they could hear—not simply to induce guilt or shame but to drive them toward the grace of God as the only solution. It sounds cliché and simplistic, but if you read the story of her life, you get a real deep sense of how racism is never easy to deal with. But there's a tremendous strength about her that comes partly by force of personality and partly by the grace of God. Anybody who's dealing with that kind of issue could benefit from reading her story.

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■ **NEW MONASTICS** *Continued from page 1A*

themselves in community life and service.

Their vision is simple: to incarnate the gospel message where they live.

It's not about growing church numbers.

"The neighborhood is my parish, whether my neighbors become Methodists or not," says Dr. Heath. "What matters is that they experience the kingdom of God coming near, and that they know it is a kingdom of love."

And it's not about formal ordination to the ministry, though several participants are candidates for United Methodist ordination. In new monasticism, there is no hierarchy of leadership; teams of lay and clergy who are theologically trained for the task lead the communities.

"New Day is a kind of incubator community at SMU," Dr. Heath said, "so that students can see an alternative way of doing church that's United Methodist."

What it looks like

New Day Ministries is part of a growing monastic movement across the country that includes Shane Claiborne, founder of The Simple Way community in Philadelphia, and Jonathan Wilson-Hartgrove, founder of the Rutba House in Durham, N.C.

All new monastics practice a rule of life and worship together, but those who want a more focused experience might choose to live in a community house. New Day has launched two such houses for United Methodist young adults in the Dallas-Fort Worth area since summer 2008.

Typically three to four people live in a house. Members maintain their own jobs outside the home but eat and pray together, and are accountable for their spiritual growth—such as whether they've spent time in Scripture study and other disciplines, what their current spiritual struggles are.

At Epworth House, in a mixed-income neighborhood in Garland, three Perkins students last year practiced hospitality to their neighbors through monthly potlucks and helped organize weekly worship gatherings. About 30 neighbors attend the potlucks; out of

that grew a women's prayer group.

Megan Davidson, a Perkins intern at Epworth House, said hospitality is an effective way to live out the gospel.

"I see a large part of our work as helping those groups to interact, and to not be 'those noisy neighbors' or 'those crotchety old women'—to know each other by their first names and know what's going on in their lives.

"We're not trying to convert people. If that's something that comes from it, then glory to God. But that's not our motivation. Our motivation is relational."

A second group-living arrangement began in August called the Bonhoeffer House in Euless, near Fort Worth. Participants will work with at-risk kids as led by co-pastor Nate Hearne, who heads the truancy program for the local school district.

Sitting on almost a full acre, the Bonhoeffer House is shared by Mr. Reynolds, a Puerto Rican seminary couple from the Kansas East District and a Zimbabwean graduate of Perkins working on a doctoral degree at Brite Divinity School.

"We would love to have vegetable and organic gardens out back, and use gardening as way of ministry and healing for youth," Mr. Reynolds said. "A quiet, safe place to do homework or just hang out."

A third house is being launched in rural Kaufman, Texas.

The North Texas Conference has provided funding for Perkins interns to develop more New Day communities. Dr. Heath is also developing a certificate program through Perkins to provide leadership development.

Appeal to the young

Ms. Davidson said the structured living within new monastic communities helps give young people meaning and purpose, and also helps sustain their faith through college and career years.

"I think some people would call it idealism, that we can live very holistically, holy lives," she said. "In a world where transience is built into our lives, having a rule of life whereby you can stay connected to God and those around you is extremely important."



Dr. Elaine Heath, a professor at Perkins School of Theology, says new monastics are "a visible company of the people of God seeking to be faithful."

UMR PHOTO BY ROBIN RUSSELL



TOP: Members of the Bonhoeffer House gather for their first worship service in August. ABOVE: Christian Kakez-a-kapend (right), a Perkins seminary student from the Democratic Republic of the Congo, teaches a Swahili praise song. RIGHT: Megan Davidson (top left), facilitates a mealtime discussion at Epworth House before helping with an interactive worship experience.

Young adults also want to pour themselves into serving others, even sacrificially, says the Rev. William Thiele, spiritual director of the School for Contemplative Living (SCL) in New Orleans.

"Their goal is not capitalism," he said. "Their goal is, 'I really want to make the world a better place.'"

Amy Laura Hall, an associate professor of theological ethics at Duke Divinity School, says new monastic communities are often located intentionally in neighborhoods that have been marginalized. As

such, they model "what it looks like when mainline Protestant, white kids decide to take the cushion out of their life."

"Some of these students knew that their churches were somehow missing a real piece of what it means to be in the body of Christ," Dr. Hall said, "and this was one way to live it out."

Reform movement

Monastic movements, of course, are nothing new. Church history shows that monastic groups arise

when people see a disconnect between "the call of Jesus and the lack of disciplined holy community in the church," writes Scott Kisker, an associate professor of the history of Christianity at Wesley Theological Seminary, in *Longing for Spring: A New Vision for Wesleyan Community* (Eugene: Wipf and Stock), a new release he co-wrote with Dr. Heath.

And monastic renewal, he added, often comes from lay people, not clergy.

Early Methodists, for instance, en-



PHOTO BY LARRY DUGGINS



couraged Christian formation through small groups called classes and band meetings. They practiced a rule of life together (following Wesley's General Rules) and ministered to the poor. Lay people led the class and band meetings, cared for the poor and the sick, and preached the circuits.

"New monasticism is a holiness movement that resonates deeply with the Methodist soul," Dr. Heath says. She describes new monastics as a "new breed of old-fashioned Methodists."

"Living in intentional community with others sort of forces you to not be able to hide," said Ms. Davidson, who lived with two other students last year. "It requires of you a vulnerability that is not something everyone will be able to embrace."

"Certainly our Methodist roots demand of us a certain amount of accountability—how you spent your days, and how you spent your money. We're trying to bring each other back to that kind of intentionality."

But there are obstacles for United

Methodists who want to live a new monastic life. While a "rule of life" for St. Benedict and other ancient monks involved stability, the United Methodist appointment system typically prevents long-term involvement at the same church.

The church also prohibits its elders from being bivocational, but new monastics say having another job to support your ministry is essential to reach a poor community—without expecting payment in return. For Mr. Reynolds, that means pursuing ordination as well as applying for a firefighter position with the City of Dallas.

"It's hard because I really do still feel that call to be ordained and serve the sacraments—that is a frustrating part," Mr. Reynolds said. "One of my goals is to continue to discern with the United Methodist Church on how we can look at a new model of ministry that can incorporate both."

Ms. Davidson agrees. She has just started the process as a candidate for ordination in the North Texas Conference.

"Conceptually, there is not a conflict there for me. Institutionally there is. So I'm going to have to see how all of that plays out in the future. And we'll be patient in prayer, and in conversation with lots of people about what that might look like."

New monasticism is also an ecumenical movement rather than limited to just one denomination, Dr. Heath said. So participants cannot have "turf issues."

"We cannot think that way," she said. "This is about mission. This is about church. What is the Holy Spirit calling us to do to take God's love to the world?"

Impacting UMC

Ms. Davidson hopes the denomination-at-large sees the possibilities for ministry and attracting young people through new monasticism. By attracting young adults, new monasticism might even help sustain Methodism, she said.

"I think Methodism is in my blood. So I feel like if I just went out and did it on my own, in some ways I would be cheating our history because 200 years from now, students who are in United Methodist seminaries might be reading about what I'm doing now. I feel like the Methodist Church needs us."

Dr. Hall says new monastics are already having an impact on their denomination by showing what it's like to live out their faith in community.

"It's really, really hard work, and it's messy and difficult," Dr. Hall said, "but they give us a picture of embodied life with all its warts and all its messiness that we all in various ways are called to live."

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UMR PHOTOS BY ROBIN RUSSELL

TOP: Ross Reynolds (left) and Jesse Cohen share washing-up duties after a community meal.

ABOVE: New monastics at Epworth House pray before sharing a simple meal of soup and bread.

WESLEYAN WISDOM

Wesleyan fundamentals illustrate 'practical religion'

BY DONALD W. HAYNES
UMR Columnist

Editor's note: This is the third in a four-part series. See archived columns at www.umportal.org.

John Wesley, son of Samuel, fellow of Lincoln College (Oxford) and



Donald Haynes

deeply-read priest of the Anglican Church, was both well-informed and orthodox in his doctrine. But only in recent years have Methodist scholars reclaimed the reality that Wesley did indeed "think and write" theologically.

As his spiritual progeny, we also must "think and write" theologically.

Since Wesley never wrote a theological tome of his "dogmatics" in the way that Martin Luther or John Calvin did, we must glean his doctrines from 65 years of sermons, hundreds of personal letters, scores of published tracts, three sets of his *Journal* and a lifetime of diaries!

Pinning Wesley down to a precise doctrinal formula is comparable to the same task as we look at Scripture. Methodists of liberal theological persuasion cite different passages than those cited by conservatives.

All Wesleyan theology is ultimately soteriological, or the study of salvation. He wrote to Alexander Coates, one of his preachers, that "practical religion" is the point:

"... keep to this: repentance toward God, faith in Christ, holiness of heart and life, a growing in grace, the continual need of His atoning blood, a constant confidence in Him, and all these every moment to life's end."

Wesley warned against a theological emphasis on metaphysical speculations. He insisted that "controversial divinity" results in bitterness and division, while "practical divinity leads to peace and edification." Wesley's 1775 sermon on I John 5:7 is one example of how he distinguished between essential doctrines and opinions. This distinction was always based on whether a doctrine is related to salvation.

I've already written about two Methodist "fundamentals."

First, our salvation emanates from the character of God, and God's character is love. We are sinners, but our sin does not define us. We are defined

by being created in the image of God, however much our sin has made rubble of our identity.

Secondly, God seeks us, rather than our seeking God. We call this "prevenient grace," and Jesus summarizes it in his three parables found in Luke 15: a lost coin, a lost sheep and a lost boy.

Third: Original Sin

Though we have many natural gifts and can attain many noble deeds, and though our innate identity is "daughter or son of the most high God," the fact remains that "the heart of the human problem is the problem of the human heart." We have sinned. It is at this point we introduce Romans 3:23: "All have sinned and are fallen short of the glory of God."

'The great end of religion is to renew our hearts in the image of God.'

—John Wesley

Wesley says in his *Explanatory Notes Upon the New Testament* that we have sinned "by a sinful nature, sinful tempers, and sinful actions." Unlike the New Revised Standard Version or most other translations, Wesley says "we are fallen short," not "we fall short." J.B. Phillips' modern paraphrase reflects this by saying "everyone has fallen short of the beauty of God's plan."

As we sing in a favorite hymn, "Prone to wander, Lord I feel it; prone to leave the God I love." Theologian Albert Outler famously wrote that Wesley believed in "total depravity," but not "tee-total depravity." That is, God can still awaken the human soul. In old revival language, we can "get under conviction."

The Methodist position, when faithful to Wesley, has always been to seek a middle way between Pelagian optimism (which denies original sin) and Calvinist pessimism (which insists that humanity is incorrigibly fallen). Wesley insisted that however deeply embedded in the human psyche sin might be, it is a malignant dis-

ease, not an obliteration of the image of God.

He writes of God's curative activity within our hearts. Sin is a pervasive, universal sickness of the soul, but God gives a three-fold prescription: repent, surrender your will and put your faith in God's sheer amazing grace.

In his sermon "Original Sin," Wesley preaches, "The great end of religion is to renew our hearts in the image of God, to repair that total loss of righteousness and true holiness which we sustained by the sin of our first parents." Unlike Calvin's belief in "irresistible grace," Wesley believes individuals can resist being healed of our sin-sick soul. God's will for all to be saved can be thwarted by our resistance of his grace.

Wesley describes repentance as the "porch" of grace, faith as the "threshold" and holiness as the many "rooms" in which we hide our secret sins and where the Holy Spirit must anoint and cleanse them in what we call perfecting grace.

Grace is the source of salvation, grounded in the character of God. Faith is the instrument of salvation, grounded in the free will of humanity. Love is a relationship. It "takes two to tango."

Fourth: awakening

George Hunter of Asbury Theological Seminary pointed out to me the purpose of Wesley's outdoor sermons: to awaken the sleeping soul. This is God's prevenient grace being manifested in our mind and soul. Being quickened by the Holy Spirit is vastly different from the neo-evangelical's "Four Spiritual Laws," which ask one to pray the "sinner's prayer" and then—via a mere handshake—say, "Brother you are now a Christian." Wesley guided the "awakened soul" to a class meeting the next morning at five o'clock for nurture!

We recognize that coming to Christ in an experience of saving grace is different for each individual. Wesley said of the new birth, "The precise manner how it is done, how the Holy Spirit works this in the soul, neither thou nor the wisest of the children of men is able to explain." He uses the analogy of natural birth. While the unborn fetus has eyes and ears and a mouth, only upon delivery do they come into their created purpose. They are dormant in the womb, just as God's prevenient grace is dormant in the soul until it is awakened.

This is a long-neglected Methodist

fundamental—the awakening of the soul. It happens around a youth retreat campfire; while "searching of the Scriptures" alone; during a Bible study like *Disciple* or a retreat like *Walk to Emmaus*. It happens in an ICU or in a foxhole. It also happens in worship at our church where we have worshipped for years!

Fifth: repenting

Once awakened, our quickened spirit responds to God's "hound of heaven" call and we are moved to repentance. Our sin is before us—our thoughts, words and deeds that have made God weep and brought other people to deep hurt. We are then moved to repentance—*metanoia*, a turning around of one's life. Repentance is quite different from remorse, which is a sense of being sorry we have sinned. Repentance is also not the same as doing penance, or paying a price for forgiveness. Jesus did that!

Repentance is "turning around and going the other way," and meeting the waiting Father who envelops us in arms of grace and welcomes us home. In total contrast to a 1970s movie line, "Love means frequently having to say, 'I'm sorry.'"

Repentance is fundamental to what Wesley called "practical religion." It is the preventive to seeing God's love as cheap grace.

Sixth: being forgiven

Knowing that our sins are forgiven is the experience of "the strangely warmed heart" we see in Wesley's spiritual journey on May 24, 1738, at Aldersgate. It is the "witness of the Spirit." "The faith I want is 'a sure confidence and trust in God,'" Wesley wrote, "which none can have without knowing he hath it—freed from doubt, 'having the love of God shed abroad in his heart, through the Holy Ghost.'"

He then cites Paul's letter to the Romans: "For you did not receive a spirit of fear, but you have received a spirit of adoption. We cry, 'Abba, Father!' it is that very Spirit bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God... heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ" (Romans 8:15-16).

The journey continues

So far, then, we understand from the first six fundamentals that:

- We begin not with our sin but with God's love;
- God's love is a pursuing love;



UMR PHOTO BY ROBIN RUSSELL

United Methodists have to glean John Wesley's doctrines from his sermons, letters, diaries and published tracts.

- We have messed up with sin and fallen short of the beauty of God's plan;
- Every soul is at some point quickened, awakened by the Holy Spirit, convicting us of our sin;
- We must repent, meaning a changing of our old ways and some relationships;
- We can feel, experience and know God's love saving us in our sin and from our sin.

Two fundamentals of Methodism remain.

Seventh: Perfecting grace. If forgiven by God's grace, sin no longer reigns, but it does remain. We must begin the journey of perfecting grace—holiness of heart and life. The goal must be perfect love.

Eighth: Church community. Wesley encouraged Methodists to pursue the discipline of those means of grace that only can be done in the context of a faith community. Christianity is not a solitary religion. We cannot say, "I am a Christian, but I don't believe in organized religion."

To journey, in Charles Wesley's words, is to be "changed from glory into glory 'til in heaven we take our place... lost in wonder, love and praise."

Dr. Haynes is an instructor in United Methodist studies at Hood Theological Seminary. e-mail: dhaynes11@triad.rr.com.

AGING WELL

What younger folks wish older folks would learn

BY MISSY BUCHANAN
Special Contributor

Recently my 25-year-old daughter Beth was offended by something she'd read on Twitter: "There is nothing wrong with today's

teenager that 20 years won't cure." Even though she is no longer a teen, she was frustrated by the general assumption about young people and also the condescending tone.



Missy Buchanan

Not surprisingly, my daughter is not alone. Last month I invited young people to share their thoughts about what they wished older adults understood about them. I received comments from young clergy, teenagers, youth directors and young adults. Almost every response I received mentioned words like "patronizing" or "belittling."

Several young people told how the critical spirit of a few older adults unfairly casts a harsh light on all older adults.

One young man wished older adults understood that just because young people voice new ideas does not mean they are being disrespectful. Nor does it mean that they are trying to undermine anyone. They just want to be taken seriously by their elders.

A 34-year-old minister shared his frustration with those older adults who choose to dwell in the past and refuse to look to the future. As I often say to older adult groups, "It's wonderful to stroll through the good ol' days; just don't park your RV and dwell there."

Emily Sears, a student at Texas Christian University, wanted to remind older adults that in today's secular culture, it is not easy for young people to walk the Christian talk. She made the point that life today is different than it was even a decade ago. With so many distractions and temptations, the youth of the church need encouragement and support from older adults more than ever.

Glenn Miller, director of student ministries at Northside United Methodist Church in Jackson, Tenn., said older adults might be

surprised to learn that young people often want to emulate positive attributes they see in their older counterparts. Many young people, he said, view older adults as accomplished, wise and comfortable in their own skin. He added that the so-called generational gap might be over-inflated, because he sees more similarities than differences between age groups, with fear being the greatest common denominator.

The lay leader for the North Texas Conference, Richard Hearne, shared his experience attending a recent Older Adult Ministry meeting in Nashville, Tenn. In an adjacent room, the Young Adult Ministry meeting was going on. When it was time to eat, the two groups segregated themselves by age at different tables in the dining hall. On the second day, Mr. Hearne invited a group of young people to join their table of older adults.

What followed was a whirlwind of conversation. After posing the question about what each group would like the other group to understand, everyone seemed to get excited.

Mr. Hearne said he learned that young people believe there are basically two types of adults in the church: those who want to retain all the power and those who are eager to pass the power on to the younger crowd, but offer little support.

One of the young participants captured what many other young persons seem to be thinking: Young people are eager to assume responsibility and leadership roles in the church, but they also want to be mentored and encouraged.

In some ways it is like teaching someone to ride a bike. First you show them the mechanics of the bicycle. Then you steady them and give them a push. Finally you run alongside, wildly cheering them on.

What older adults want young people to know and what young people want older adults to know are both important questions. We need to keep asking them. In youth groups and church councils. In seminaries and in families.

Then if we are truly to be the church, we must listen.

Ms. Buchanan, a member of FUMC Rockwall, Texas, is the author of *Living with Purpose in a Worn Out Body* (Upper Room Books).

An advocate for disabilities

BY BISHOP PEGGY JOHNSON
Special Contributor

The world lost a great advocate for disabilities in the passing of Eunice Kennedy Shriver. The sister of the late President Kennedy was a tireless worker for not only disabilities, but for human rights in general. She worked in the prison system and cared about people on the edges of life.

Her great interest in disabilities came from her own family experience. Her sister Rosemary was intellectually challenged. In all of the reports about Eunice's passing not too much was said about Rosemary. I always thought she was a Down syndrome child.

From my research, however, I learned that Rosemary had average intelligence, but she had some learning disabilities and most likely suffered from mental illness. Her severe mood swings led her family to agree to have a lobotomy performed on her. This calmed her mood swings but left her severely cognitively impaired for life.

The well-meaning intentions of her family to have this surgery performed on their daughter (which blessedly is now no longer a part of medical practice) created additional problems. It was indeed one of the first tragedies of the Kennedy family.

This crisis in the family spurred Eunice to begin the Special Olympics, which has grown into a worldwide venture. It gives dignity and purpose to people with many kinds of disabilities. Eunice also encouraged her brother, President John F. Kennedy, to enact laws to improve the lot in life for people in institutions. These were some of the earliest beginnings of de-institutionalization in our country.

Of all of the disability communities I have worked with, there is none more misunderstood than the mental health community. In recent years, medical science has developed a much larger array of medications and therapies to work with than in the past. Many people who had previously lived in locked units in mental institutions now reside in community homes with support systems, have meaningful employment and are integrated into society.

However, thousands and thousands of people with mental illness are not so lucky; instead they slip through the cracks in the system. Many of them are the homeless who live on our streets. Mental-health services get far less funding than physical illnesses in this country. Many insurance programs have no provision for mental health, while others have limited coverage. Families who have family members with mental illness often suffer in si-

lence with few resources for respite, financial support and a stigma that is like none other.

Every church has people in it with mental-health issues. Much of it is hidden due to fear of rejection and alienation. Sometimes strangers with unusual behaviors who enter our doors are politely welcomed but held at a distance by people who are afraid of them or feel uncomfortable associating with them.

I applaud churches that have special classes for people with intellectual and mental-health challenges. I applaud churches that welcome people who come from group homes and give them a place in the family of the church, where acceptance and compassion does more for a person than all the medication in the world.

Where can your church be reaching out? How can you educate your congregation about the attitudinal barriers that we often throw up when a person with mental challenges joins the church?

In all things, show the love of Christ to everyone. Seek support from community and health services as needed, and cover all of your ministries with prayer.

Bishop Johnson leads the Philadelphia Area of the United Methodist Church.



PHOTO COURTESY OF SPECIAL OLYMPICS

Special Olympics founder Eunice Kennedy Shriver with a Special Olympics China gymnast at the 2007 Special Olympics World Summer Games in Shanghai, China.

Retired UM bishop pastors local church

BY JOHN SHEARER
Special Contributor

JONESBOROUGH, Tenn.—Despite reaching the highest position of clergy leadership in the United Methodist Church more than 20 years ago, Bishop Richard C. Looney of Cleveland, Tenn., recently felt a call to return to his pastoral roots.

As a result, this summer he accepted an appointment as pastor of the small Telford United Methodist Church near Jonesborough in northeast Tennessee.

The move is considered unusual in the United Methodist Church. In fact, it could be compared to a successful major college coach taking a high-school coaching position after retirement, or a former CEO of a Fortune 500 company opening a mom-and-pop restaurant.

But Bishop Looney, 75, said he is finding his work as pastor of a church with an average Sunday attendance of only 100 very fulfilling.

"I think it has been very positive," he said. "Early on, someone wanted to make sure I wouldn't preach over their

heads. But the district superintendent, Randy Frye, assured them I was from Southwest Virginia and East Tennessee and I would be all right."

Bishop Looney—whose easy-going and engaging conversational style would work with any size audience—said he accepted the position in sort of a round-about way.

Full circle

A graduate of the Candler School of Theology at Emory University in Atlanta, he started his ministerial career in 1957 serving three small churches in the Rising Fawn, Ga., area.

Other Chattanooga area churches he later served included White Oak United Methodist beginning in 1968 and Broad Street UMC in downtown Cleveland in the 1970s. His son, Jonathan Looney, also lives in Chattanooga.

He was serving as senior pastor at historic Church Street United Methodist Church—the largest

Methodist church in the downtown Knoxville area—when he was elected as a bishop in 1988.

After serving as the resident bishop of the South Georgia Conference until 2000, he soon began

working for the Foundation for Evangelism in Lake Junaluska, N.C., before retiring in 2008.

A short time earlier, he and his late wife, Carolyn, had moved into Garden Plaza retirement living facility in Cleveland.

Following the lead of *The Bucket List* book and movie, Bishop Looney had decided to start traveling a lot in his retirement, but he soon felt restless. The death of his wife from complications to heart disease in April also gave him a need for further service.

Several months ago, Bishop Looney was having a conversation with Bishop James Swanson of the Holston Conference, which covers the East Tennessee and Southwest Virginia areas.

Bishop Swanson had formerly served under Bishop Looney in South Georgia, and—unknown to either of them—Bishop Looney was getting ready to serve under Bishop Swanson.

"He had said something to me that if I get the itch [to preach or serve a church], he knew how to scratch it," Bishop Looney said with a laugh. "And I said I may be getting it."

'Bishop Looney sounds as enthusiastic as a first-year pastor.'



Bishop Richard Looney

Wednesday night blended-worship service," said Bishop Looney.

The appointment seems to be working out emotionally as well as logistically.

"It has been real fulfilling," he said. "I love the people. And it has been good for me with the loss of Carolyn. It is something that keeps me going."

In fact, he sounds as excited as if taking a small church were on his bucket list.

"It's been fun," he said. "I still have plenty of energy and enjoy people and this is working out well."

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