

## IN THIS ISSUE

South Central Jurisdiction announces plan to reduce its bishops from 11 to 10

**5A**

Through Ingathering and other efforts, United Methodists help feed the state's hungry

**6A**

What's better than interreligious dialogue?

Try a trialogue

**10A**

School of Christian Mission serves up tasty lessons on food and faith

**12A**

# Faithful harvest



From left, Scott Adams, Doug Criss, Rita Wildy, Shelby Bandy, Mari Hayden, Tim Bandy, Janet Taylor, Ronnie Kennett, Paul Wildy and Sandra Kennett stand beside the corn field where Leachville United Methodist Church members harvested corn for the mostly elderly residents of area public housing.

Photo by Angela Criss

**HEATHER HAHN**  
*Editor*

Members of Leachville United Methodist Church decided to follow Jesus' command to feed the hungry and ended up reaping far more than they sowed.

This spring, the congregation grew sweet corn on about three acres along the main highway in this northeastern Arkansas farming town. Church members harvested the ears by hand, and delivered bags

of about a dozen each to needy elderly residents and families in Leachville and the neighboring towns of Monette and Manila.

Each sack the congregants delivered had a flier with the name and worship time of the church.

"To see the delight some of the people had, you'd have thought we were handing out Walmart bags full of \$20 bills," Tim Bandy, one of the church volunteers, said. "It was such a blessing to be involved."

He said some of the recipients asked to pick their own corn. Soon, they and others joined parishioners in plucking each stalk clean. Altogether, the church, which has a regular attendance of about 50 people, gave away more than 2,500 ears through their inaugural "Gardening for God" project.

Longtime member Ronnie Kennett said he couldn't believe how many cars he saw lined up each day next to the cornfield as people came

to glean the excess.

"Some may have been there to get corn to sell," he said. "But I think most were there because they really needed it."

The idea for the project began early this year, when congregants drew up a vision statement for the church and talked about how they could do more for their Delta town.

Bev Watkins, who was Leachville UMC's pastor at the time, [See GARDEN, page 7A]

## Churches take healthy interest in fighting the spread of H1N1

**HEATHER HAHN**  
*Editor*

With flu season here, the state's United Methodist churches are taking steps to ensure that their worship, at least in one sense, doesn't go viral.

Vic Nixon, senior pastor of Pulaski Heights United Methodist Church in Little Rock, assured worshippers on a recent Sunday that they can forego physical contact when they pass the peace.

"[I told them] You don't actually have to shake hands or touch each other," Nixon said. "And I told them

we have hand sanitizers throughout the building."

Since spring, First UMC in Bentonville has kept hand sanitizer on its altar so that clergy and Communion servers can wash up before touching the elements of the holy meal.

"We have Communion in every worship every Sunday," Rex Dickey, the senior pastor, said. "As frequently as we take Communion, we thought it was important to do that. ... We're trying to be very proactive without being alarming."

The rapid spread of the highly contagious H1N1 (swine flu) around the globe has made such health precautions particularly urgent this year.

Beyond bringing out the hand sanitizer, First UMC in Bentonville is also discussing under what circumstances an outbreak would lead the church to close its preschool.

Other United Methodist churches are bringing out tiny individual cups for the Lord's Supper

[See FLU, page 5A]

### Some Do's and Don'ts for Worship

- Do celebrate worship and the sacraments fully, and be not afraid!
- Have hand sanitizer available for all worshipers at the entrances to your worship space.
- Wash your hands before you touch food you will share with others.
- Receive the bread (rather than taking it) from servers who have washed their hands.
- If any infectious disease is actively spreading where you are, exchange the peace and greet others in ways that don't require skin-to-skin contact.
- If you normally keep water in the baptismal font, be sure the font is cleaned regularly and the water is fresh.
- Do not come to worship if you are sick.

Source: General Board of Discipleship

# Letters To The Editor

I have waited anxiously for three months to see some mention in the *Arkansas United Methodist* about the recipients of the prestigious Denman Evangelism Awards, which were presented at Annual Conference.

These special people are to be commended for their dedicated efforts to extend God's love and to make disciples of Jesus Christ. They have touched many lives, and it is my opinion that United Methodists across our state are interested in knowing who achieved this honor.

They are: youth, Jared Waylon Guinn of Searcy; laity, Amy and Jerry Buckingham of Cherokee Village; clergy, the Rev. Carlton Cross of Prescott. I am grateful to Dr. David Bush for furnishing me with this information.

Thank you to these very special people for their active participation in advancing the cause of Christ. May God richly bless you is my prayer.

Phena Fincher  
Prescott

As United Methodists in Arkansas seek to Imagine Ministry into the future, I ask all churches as well as Bishop Crutchfield's committee to consider the following:

According to an article by Bill Downs in the Sept. 6 *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette*, in the next 20 years there will be more 80-year-olds in Arkansas than newborns. Today, 13.9 percent of Arkansans are 65 years old or older.

Yet I see no postings on the e-mail network of employment opportunities for a "Senior Adult Activities Director," "Older Adult Coordinator," "Reaching out to Elderly Church Members," "Seeking Seniors for Christian Education" or the like.

Yes, the standard axiom is that "the youth are the future of the church." But does that mean we

abandon the needs, preferences and abilities of the ones who now give and who have, all their lives, given to their churches?

The United Methodist Church at Beebe, for one, has an excellent program called "Shepherd Center." There may be others, but they are not emphasized the way "praise bands" and "alternative worship" and "blue-jean church" are.

Just a thought for the team and others as you deliberate. Remember that the church you are envisioning will have many gray heads among the worshippers.

Mary Catherine McSpadden  
Retired local pastor,  
Mountain View

I write this with some hesitancy, knowing some will misunderstand my heart in this matter of health care reform.

As I read the article on health care reform in the Sept. 4 edition of *The United Methodist Reporter*, I was shocked to discover that our church believes that it is a "governmental responsibility to provide all citizens with health care" (Social Principles, Paragraph 162.V).

The reading of this article prompted me to re-read the Constitution of the United States of America, and I found there to be no such promises. The *general welfare* mentioned in the Constitution does not refer to welfare as understood by many in our society.

Would it ever be possible for the several denominations that make up the body of Christ to work together to meet our nation's health-care needs instead of placing more burdens on the back of our overextended government?

United Methodists teach that we should avoid debt as much as possible; yet we citizens have allowed our government to incur more debt than we can ever reasonably expect to repay.

Could a better plan come from the body of Christ learning to give based on biblical principles? Deuteronomy 14, especially verse 28, addresses the issue of caring for those who can't care for themselves and could be a starting point for Christians to be the light of God to a hurting world, instead of allowing government to receive the credit due Him.

Jimmie Snow  
Pastor of Fairview UMC,  
Mountain Home

Like most everyone, I have been following the much-heated debate on health care. As a general surgeon, I go back years before Medicare was proposed and remember the same debate at that time.

Physicians were leery of any social program, and we had a recalcitrant attitude. But there is no doubt that Medicare has been successful in saving millions of lives. The treatment of millions of surgical conditions have been made possible. I do not believe this would have occurred otherwise, except on a sub-optimal charity hospital basis.

I am proud of our statements in the Discipline on "Right to Health Care." I would like, in some way, to remind our church of our stance as a moral and ethical issue.

I know it would not solve the debate in Arkansas, but at least the debate would be brought to a higher level. To provide health care for all is a test of our character!

Thank you for your consideration.

Dr. Bill Scurlock  
El Dorado

The *Arkansas United Methodist* welcomes letters to the editor. Letters should be no longer than 200 words and include the address and phone number where the writer can be reached.



## EDITOR'S CORNER

BY HEATHER HAHN

# Bringing in the 'Nones'

This is the time of year when even incorrigible city dwellers like me start thinking about the joys of harvest.

Soon my husband, Michael, and I will visit a local pumpkin patch to embrace our inner Linus and pick out the most sincere pumpkin. Churches will dust off familiar harvest-themed hymns such as "Bringing in the Sheaves" and "Come Ye Thankful People, Come." And United Methodists across the state will share God's bounty at Ingathering.

But there is another more metaphorical reaping we Christians are supposed to remember: The one Jesus refers to in Luke 10:2 when He says, "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few."

Trinity College in Hartford, Conn., released a study on Sept. 22 that offers an overview of what might be the ripest mission field in the U.S. Titled "American Nones: The Profile of the No Religion Population," the study examines the 34 million American adults who don't identify with any religion.

Among the study's main findings is that the majority of the "Nones" aren't atheists. Fully 51 percent believe in the divine.

Politically, 21 percent of the nation's Independents are Nones, as are 16 percent of Democrats. Only 8 percent of Republicans identify as Nones.

It's always dicey trying to interpret statistics. But I am guessing that many Nones are turned off from religious affiliation because the

loudest religious voices in the U.S. often belong to the most stridently partisan and most dogmatically certain.

The United Methodist Church's "Rethink Church" campaign is working to clear up the misconception that Christians are more defined by politics than by living out the example Christ gave us.

The denomination's ads pose questions such as: "What if church could bring sides together?" and "What if church didn't wait to be asked if it could help?" Most United Methodists see these possibilities lived out in their own local churches.

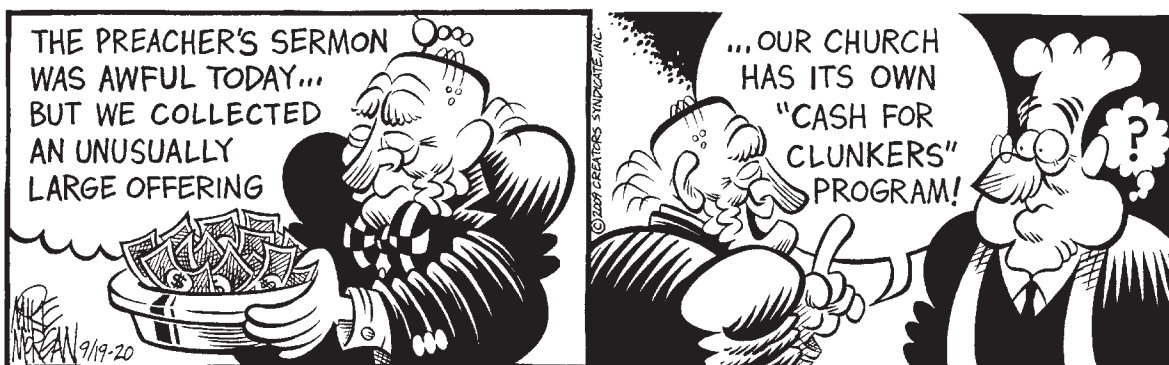
The ads direct viewers to the Web site [www.10thousanddoors.org](http://www.10thousanddoors.org) where those interested can find a United Methodist church near them. The site now attracts more than 400,000 page views each month.

Do you want to join the harvest of the Nones? One easy way is to visit [www.Find-A-Church.org](http://www.Find-A-Church.org) and update the information about your church's ministries.

When people visit the "10ThousandDoors" site, they can click on "Find" and enter their ZIP Code and the ministry that interests them. If, say, a site visitor from your neighborhood is interested in "Helping the Hungry" and your church has a food pantry, that's information the denomination wants the visitor to know.

My hope is that by updating their sites, Arkansas churches can capitalize on the denomination's advertising and bring in the "Nones."

## FOR HEAVEN'S SAKE by Mike Morgan



Volume 156 • No. 22 October 2, 2009  
Martha S. Taylor • Director of Communications  
Heather Hahn • Editor  
Patrick W. Shownes • Communications Coordinator  
[www.arumc.org](http://www.arumc.org)

The Arkansas United Methodist is the newspaper of record for the Arkansas Conference of The United Methodist Church. It is published once monthly, on the first Fridays of each month, and four special issues throughout during the year for a total of 16 issues per year.

Send Correspondence & Change of Address to:  
Arkansas United Methodist, 2 Trudie Kibbe Reed Dr., Little Rock, AR 72202; or e-mailed to Patrick Shownes at [pshownes@arumc.org](mailto:pshownes@arumc.org)

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to:  
The United Methodist Reporter, PO Box 660275, Dallas, TX 75266-0275.

The United Methodist Reporter (USPS 954-500) is published weekly by UMR Communications, 1221 Profit Drive, Dallas, TX 75247. Periodicals Postage Paid at Dallas.



Arkansas Conference Communications  
2 Trudie Kibbe Reed Drive  
Little Rock, AR 72202-3770  
[www.arumc.org](http://www.arumc.org)

Subscriptions  
- \$15.00, 1 Year  
- \$25.00, 2 Years  
- Free, Online  
For more information, visit [www.arumc.org/aum](http://www.arumc.org/aum) or call 501.324.8000.

Advertising is welcomed. For a rate sheet or more information, contact Martha Taylor at 501.324.8005 or [mtaylor@arumc.org](mailto:mtaylor@arumc.org). While all advertising is reviewed before acceptance, it should not be considered endorsed by this newspaper or the Church.

Submission Deadlines

| Issue Date       | Submission Deadline |
|------------------|---------------------|
| November 6, 2009 | October 14, 2009    |
| December 4, 2009 | November 18, 2009   |
| January 8, 2010  | December 16, 2009   |
| February 5, 2010 | January 13, 2010    |



BY CHARLES CRUTCHFIELD

## AN OCCASIONAL WORD from the Bishop

Dear Friends:

As we enter THE rabid season of athletic endeavor — that is to say the World Series, Razorback, Red Wolves, National Football League, World Cup soccer qualifying, WNBA Championship, Tiger Woods (oops) PGA, Thailand Open Tennis Championship, quilting bee, marching band and chorale society season — just a word with you, please.

I have noticed as I passed by the TV set as a football player scored a touchdown, he lifted his hand and pointed to the sky (or was it the JumboTron in the stadium ceiling?).

Then I saw it again as a tennis player scored a winning point.

I wondered, “Are these exceptional athletes saying, ‘I’m number one’? Or, were they pointing up to heaven and giving praise to God for the touchdown scored or the point won on the court?”

I am serious. I really wondered.

Later, I clicked on an interview with a well-known coach. He was talking about the way in which faith was important to him as he coached young men.

He spoke of the importance of seeing yourself as an individual as being part of something much larger than just yourself. Church was like a

team and the challenge was to help the church, made up of many individuals — each with sacred value — pull together to achieve a common goal, in this case to be the church that Christ calls us to be.

He spoke of the importance of his family upbringing. They were disciplined in worship. Though they were people without significant means, he always had enough to give to the offering each Sunday. His parents made certain of that.

He was taught generosity and good stewardship at an early age and came to understand that his small gift, added to other gifts large and small would make a difference.

Then he spoke of his mother, of the importance of her influence on his faith experience. He is a Roman Catholic, and he spoke of always taking his mother’s rosary with him to the games he coached.

It was like having a little bit of her with him even though she has been deceased for some time.

The coach then said, “I always say a prayer before the game. Not for good luck or to win. I would never pray to win. I would never pray for luck. That’s not right. I simply pray to be as good and as strong as I can be.”

Now, that is refreshing. And of course, he is right.

He understands the importance

of prayer and the appropriateness of prayer. It is not about winning or losing or good luck / bad luck.

It is about putting yourself in the hands of God to be the best person, the best father, mother, sister, brother, teammate, friend, husband, wife and disciple of Jesus Christ that you can be. It is not about the score at the end of the game. It is about who you are in the hands of God that really counts.

Have a good (see the first paragraph) season.

Faithfully,

## To heed God’s call to ministry, we must heed the body’s needs

DEENA MARIE HAMILTON  
*Special contributor*

In the world of fast pace and fast food, it shouldn’t be a surprise that Americans have such an issue with weight. I have been battling this for years, but this time, I am ready to make some lifestyle changes.

Being a pastor, a nursing student, a CEO and a mother is not easy. I have been conditioned to have the “I can have it all mentality.” I do have it all — including an expanding waistline. I have gained the typical 15 to 20 pounds my first year of nursing school which was predicted by most of my nursing school instructors.

Paul wrote in his first letter to the Corinthians, that our bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit which we have received from God, and that our lives are not our own, and that we should honor God with our bodies because we were bought with a price (1 Corinthians 6:19-20). Even though this passage concentrates on virtue, it can be an issue of health.

Sexual immorality is not the only way people can defile their bodies. It could be through drug and alcohol addiction and even the foods that we eat. According to the Centers for Disease Control, obesity is associated with diseases such as diabetes, hypertension and even mental illness.

People have seen me and said that I look fine, and that I’m just a



Deena Marie Hamilton

little “fluffy.” I believed that too until I did my own BMI (Body Mass Index). I realized that I am overweight according to my height.

Yikes. No more late-night Scooby snacks!

Being the typical busy young adult, it’s so hard to be healthy. My schedule is so crazy that I don’t have the time to do the health-conscious things I used to do before I supersized my schedule. If I don’t take care of the body that God blessed me with then I’m not honoring God with my body. If we don’t take care of our bodies we will be diminishing the quality of life that God has to offer.

I know that my life is not going to be any less hectic, but I have searched for some drive-through ways to be healthier.

I got some very helpful tips from the Dietitians of Canada. According to the Web site at [www.dietitians.ca](http://www.dietitians.ca), grazing is something that is encouraged because eating small frequent meals keeps us from over indulging and binge eating.

### Handy Snacks for Grazing Days

■ Bagels, bran muffins, crackers, pita bread, cereal bars, raisin bread

and rice cakes

■ Yogurt, hard cooked eggs, cheese, cold cereal, deli meats and milk  
■ Dried fruits, fig bars, fresh fruit, raw veggies and juice

With minute consideration and preparation you can ensure your food choices are healthy ones. Healthy living also includes physical activity as well as good food choices, and we have to commit to some sort of physical activity at least five days a week for 30 minutes.

Go for a walk on your lunch break. Take a cleansing hike. Get your iPod and dance your worries away. It doesn’t matter how you look. Just keep moving!

With a combination of better food choices and increased physical activity, this is a task that doesn’t seem so insurmountable. It can be done. It just takes work. We must remember that anything that honors our Creator is worth it. And I’m sure over time my waistline will thank me for it.

*Deena Marie Hamilton is the senior pastor of McCabe Chapel United Methodist Church in North Little Rock. She can be reached at [rev.deenamarie@gmail.com](mailto:deenamarie@gmail.com).*

©2009 Reprinted with permission. This column originally appeared on the Young Adult Network of the General Board of Discipleship at [www.yanetwork.org](http://www.yanetwork.org).

## Health care reform principles

STEVE COPLEY  
*Special contributor*

Somewhere in the state today, a person will receive a bill from a recent stay in the hospital that will force him to file bankruptcy. There will also be another person who will receive a notice that his insurance policy is being rescinded. Another person will not be able to get a policy because of a pre-existing condition. Then, there are the nearly 47 million in the United States who have no insurance.

There are numbers in our congregations who are losing their jobs and health coverage. Food programs, health ministries and safety-net clinics are overwhelmed.

Now is the time to transform our realities of family bankruptcies, lack of access to care and unnecessary suffering to stories of hope, healing and shared responsibility. Even those who have health insurance are telling us that they cannot afford the care they need, a problem that is getting worse as health care costs rise three times faster than wages.

All of us have a Scriptural mandate to honor the sacredness of life through offering healing to the sick, extending special protections for the vulnerable and to live as good stewards of God’s resources.

As people of faith, we are united in our focus on health care solutions that work for America’s families and our nation. Recently, more than 70 clergy in the state signed a letter that called for four basic principles to be included in any comprehensive health care reform legislation. These are

rooted in our understanding of our faith journey.

Health care reform must:

- Cover everyone, so that no person relies on an emergency room for their health care or delays treatment because they lack insurance or have been denied coverage;
- Provide families with quality health insurance choices that are truly affordable regardless of income;
- Protect and enhance the health care of lower-income families and children by strengthening Medicaid and SCHIP (AR Kids); and,
- Rest on a financially sustainable foundation, providing people with the care they need when they need it and controlling costs.

It is important that our voices be heard in the current debate in Washington.

In the New Testament, it was clear that Jesus was concerned about those who were sick. In Matthew 25, we are called to “visit those who are sick.”

One of the signs of the Messiah, was one who would come and care for those who were ill. It is important to remember that in Jesus’ time, those who were sick were often placed at the very margins of the society.

We need to assist in changing the stories of those who are suffering because the current health care system has failed them. This is where Christ would be found.

*Steve Copley is an ordained United Methodist elder and the director of Justice for Our Neighbors. He can be reached at [scopley438@aol.com](mailto:scopley438@aol.com).*

# A warm welcome has staying power

ZOE MILES  
Special contributor

In the September edition of the *Arkansas United Methodist*, I discussed Dr. Seuss' Whos down in Whoville who were rescued by Horton the elephant. Making the parallel between the Who's and the emerging generation, I recommended that the United Methodist Church hear the Whos crying "We are here" and respond appropriately by not boiling them in a pot of Beezle-Nut Oil.

What happens when there aren't Whos to hear? Surely, we would hear them if they'd come through our doors.

In conversations with my Christian brothers and sisters, I've identified three fragrances

attracting them to the church body: warmth, authenticity and power. Over the next few issues I'll discuss the significance of each aroma to the younger generation, providing practical ways each church can

mist themselves with these scents.

Oxford English Dictionary defines warmth as "...strength or glow of feeling..." According to this definition, not only does being warm equate with friendliness, but being warm means to glow. We're to be people of light.

A first place to pour the oil for your incandescent light is into your Sunday morning greeters. Though this ministry requires little commitment it should not be taken lightly.

When asked what a church can do to provide her a place where she feels comfortable, Krista Fisher, a 21-year-old student from Camden says that young adults "can feel when there are not people, really, who care whether or not [we're] there. It's the way that [we're] welcomed."

Take an honest assessment of your worship greeters' spiritual gifts and character dispositions. Please be sure that the faces you put first before the hurting are the faces that you want to see in your



Mary Faith  
"Zoe" Miles

moments when you need someone to care whether or not you're there.

Secondly, radiating warmth is not to be left solely to the greeters.

Sunday morning worship is like hot chocolate: leaving us glowing at the end of a cold day. It washes us clean of our insecurities.

So, after your minister says, "stand and greet one another," we should use that time as a mission to share our drink, for as a son or daughter of God, we have nothing

to fear. Our cup overflows. Offer drink to the spiritually shivering young woman.

Let the thirsty vagabond drink deeply. Listen to them, pray over them, pour into them and watch the warm richness of God's power melt away their frozen

bonds.

Finally, we should follow the example of Moses. Exodus 24:29 says that "when Moses came down from Mount Sinai ... he did not know that the skin of his face shone and sent forth beams by reason of his speaking with the Lord."

Growing in the Lord's company, we become glowing creations. Evaluate your daily talk with God. When you're genuinely communicating with the Lord, you cannot help but reflect His radiant glory. It is my prayer, sweet person, that you shine as a person who speaks with the Lord. If we give people the opportunity to look us in the eyes and see the holy and radiant glow of the Lord of Hosts, let's trust that they'll want to drink in the warmth.

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



Fisher Street UMC in Jonesboro served free lunch to people in its neighborhood three days a week. June through August. Pictured from left are volunteers Nina Hedger, Nancy Melton, Nancy Haynes and Carol Johnson. The church averaged about 65 people during its meals. First UMC and Cornerstone UMC, both in Jonesboro, partnered with the Fisher Street congregation to help staff and provide food for this project.

Photo courtesy of Nancy Rainwater

## Disciples require steady diet of soul food

BUD REEVES  
Special contributor

Everyone knows that one of the keys to good health is diet. Personally, this has been an area of struggle my whole life. You might say it has been my "growing" edge.

Since my childhood in "husky" sizes, I was trained to eat, and I still love to eat. I have been able for the last 25 years or so to maintain the same waist size, but it has not been without extreme pressure sometimes on my waistband. It has required constant caloric vigilance and a perpetual discipline of eating less than I would really like to.

Diet is a key to spiritual health as well. Unfortunately, the more common problem with our faith is a lack of nutrition.

We suffer from a sort of anorexia spirituosa that leaves us weak and wanting more. For too long, we have been content to let seekers become church members without developing vigorous disciples.

Our language, at least, has turned around, and we are now getting more concerned with "making disciples" and transforming the world through them. However, if we expect to make disciples, we'd better feed them.

The plans for feeding disciples are legion. Rick Warren has five purposes for the church. United Methodist Bishop Robert Schnase has five fruitful practices. George Barna advocates six "foundational faith practices." Jesus narrowed it down to two: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and soul and mind and strength, and your neighbor as yourself." That still works, too.

I would like to propose seven dietary requirements for developing disciples. Like the five food groups in our physical diet, these practices must be balanced to be healthy. We cannot overindulge in one or avoid another if we want to grow and be effective.



Bud Reeves

### Spiritual development.

Personal contact with the Creator is the foundation of our relationship. Daily time in prayer is indispensable, and other strategies of spirituality — like

determining our spiritual giftedness — can lay the groundwork for discipleship.

**Worship.** The spiritual body of a disciple withers without worship. We must get together often with the community of faith to corporately worship our God. Nutritional worship — no matter the style — cannot be like broccoli in a buffet: overdone, mushy and tasteless. Rather, like a healthy salad, worship has to pop, snap, refresh and invigorate the hungry disciple.

**Fellowship.** Growing disciples get together with others on the journey. This is one of the purposes of small groups in any local church — classes, ministry and mission groups, social functions. Discipleship demands an authentic and personal community of faith.

**Study.** Discipleship is a learning process. I have taught and preached the Bible for over thirty years; there are still new insights every time I research a passage. Scripture is the filet mignon of discipleship. (Or if you're vegetarian, imagine a big, juicy slab of eggplant.)

The depths of tradition, history and doctrine are deeper than I will ever fathom.

Disciples have to be constant learners, asking the questions and struggling with the answers until they are all resolved on the other side.

**Stewardship.** Effective disciples know how to deal with their stuff. We live in a selfish, materialistic,

consumer culture. How do we make faithful sense of that? We live on a planet that is a gift. How do we take care of that? Disciples have to learn how to use money, time, talent and creation in a godly way if we want to be nourished.

**Outreach.** It's not about us. Discipleship is about developing our faith so we can help others. We want to help the sick and the poor and the oppressed. We want to help the lost know Christ. Learning how to witness and engaging in compassionate service are like the dessert platter. That's why you eat your vegetables; it's the sweetest part.

**Methodism.** Particularly for disciples who follow Wesley as well as Jesus, it is important to know our distinctive heritage. Methodism as a movement grew out of a troubled time much like ours. We have a gospel of grace and holiness that can speak to our contemporary culture and transform our society — if we will let it. We need to celebrate our heritage, claim our inheritance, and develop a new generation of Wesleyan Methodist disciples.

Churches that provide a balanced diet for their disciples will be more healthy, prosperous and effective.

In this season of the year, as the competing voices of the secular world call us in many directions, I know it's hard to eat right, spiritually speaking.

But it's no small matter. It's about the care and feeding of the Body of Christ. It's about developing dynamic disciples who will have the courage and strength to transform the world. It's about having enough energy to make the journey to the Kingdom of God. Let's eat!

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

# Bishops in South Central Jurisdiction reduced in 2012

## United Methodist News Service

Responding to a directive from the denomination's top legislative body, United Methodists in the South Central region of the United States will make do with one less bishop in 2012.

Through a Sept. 18 Webcast, the 6,400 churches in the South Central Jurisdiction — which includes the Arkansas Conference — learned that the Nebraska, Kansas East and Kansas West conferences will be combined into one episcopal area at that time.

The jurisdiction encompasses eight states: Arkansas, Louisiana,

Kansas, Missouri, Nebraska, New Mexico, Oklahoma and Texas. The jurisdiction also includes the south border of the Navajo Indian Nation in northeastern Arizona.

The South Central Jurisdiction College of Bishops began deliberating on the reorganization after the 2008 General Conference voted to reduce the number of bishops in four of the United Methodist Church's five U.S. jurisdictions.

Nebraska and Kansas currently each have a bishop. The South Central Jurisdiction will drop from 11 bishops to 10.

Following the Webcast, Bishop Charles Crutchfield of the Arkansas Conference said the college of bishops "carefully and prayerfully pursued" the decision-making process.

The decision included input from laity and clergy across the jurisdiction, the study of statistics and demographics, lengthy discussions of various alternatives and prayers for guidance.

"It was pursued with integrity," he said. "We worked hard at it. We used good consultant leadership. I think it was the conviction of the college that this is the best response to the mandate of General

Conference."

Nebraska and Kansas had been part of one episcopal area of the Methodist Church prior to 1952, when each state was designated as a separate episcopal area.

At least three South Central bishops will reach the mandatory retirement age of 68 by 2012: Crutchfield, Nebraska Bishop Ann Sherer-Simpson and Louisiana Bishop William W. Hutchinson.

Details of the realignment will be hammered out by a joint Nebraska-Kansas task force. The jurisdiction's bishops outside the affected conferences have each

agreed to raise \$10,000 to help cover the costs of the transition.

In the Webcast, Sherer-Simpson said United Methodists in Nebraska are open to change.

"I pray that the pioneering spirit will continue to move among us as we engage in this opportunity to work with the Kansas conferences to develop a new episcopal area," Sherer-Simpson said.

Kansas Area Bishop Scott Jones said he was "convinced that there are real possibilities for new approaches that the leaders of Nebraska, Kansas East and Kansas West need to consider together."

## • FLU Continued from Page 1A

in time for World Communion Sunday on Oct. 4.

At press time, five Arkansas residents had died of the H1N1 virus, according to the Arkansas Department of Health.

But even the seasonal flu can be fatal for the elderly and those with chronic medical conditions. About 36,000 people in the United States die each year of influenza, according to the Centers for Disease Control.

The H1N1 virus is most dangerous for:

- Pregnant women.
- Teenagers and young children.
- Frail elders.
- Those with underlying health conditions such as asthma and diabetes.
- Those with weakened immune systems.

Starting in late October, the state health department plans to distribute free vaccinations — one for the seasonal flu and one for H1N1 — at sites in every county in the state. The department also will distribute



During flu season, Methodist LeBonheur Healthcare in Memphis is distributing bottles of hand sanitizer with the hospital's logo.

Photo by Patrick Shownes

vaccines through the state's public schools.

Ed Barham, the department's public information officer, said he expects it will be the most massive vaccination campaign in the state's history.

In the mean time, the department encourages Arkansans do what they can to minimize the

transmission of the germs.

Dr. James Phillips — the department's branch chief who deals with infectious disease — recommends churches use intinction (that is, the dipping method) or individual cups for Communion, rather than drinking from a common cup.

But because the virus is airborne, the primary risk is from the people around you — not Communion, said Barham, who is also a member of Pulaski Heights UMC.

"The best advice we can offer is: People who are feeling ill ... stay home," Barham said. "You also should stay away from anyone who is ill."

Chaplain John Wilcher, the director of clergy and conference ministries at Methodist LeBonheur

Healthcare in Memphis, says church leaders can play a role in promoting awareness.

He hopes pastors will stress the need for people to get shots for both the seasonal flu and H1N1.

Methodist Healthcare also is distributing bottles of hand sanitizer emblazoned with the hospital logo.

Chris Cooper, the senior pastor of Cornerstone UMC in Jonesboro, hopes his congregation can do something similar — pass out small bottles at Arkansas State University tailgate parties.

Cooper got the idea after some family members came down with the flu and couldn't make it to Jonesboro for a football game.

The following Sunday, he used hand sanitizer before consecrating the Communion bread and grape

juice. He also passed the bottle of Purell around to the Communion servers with the blessing, "Take this in remembrance of your neighbor."

"That got people to snickering," Cooper said. "Everybody was pleased that we did this. People said, 'Thank you.'"

During worship, Dickey says he's talked about the importance of regularly washing your hands.

"We've talked about singing the ABC song in your head as you wash with soap and water," the Bentonville pastor said. "I think health and holiness go together."

To learn more, visit the Arkansas Department of Health Web site at [www.healthylarkansas.com](http://www.healthylarkansas.com), or U.S. Department of Health and Human Services site at [www.flu.gov](http://www.flu.gov).

**One in six adults is functionally illiterate.**  
 You, your small group, or your church can help reduce the illiteracy rate in Arkansas by becoming trained Literacy Action tutors or volunteers.

**2009 Literacy Action of Central Arkansas Tutor Training Session**  
**December 5 & 12**

**To learn more:**  
 email: [cford@cals.org](mailto:cford@cals.org)  
 call: (501) 372-7323

**Literacy Action of Central Arkansas**

There are 47 literacy councils across Arkansas—locate one in your area.  
[www.arkansasliteracy.org](http://www.arkansasliteracy.org)

## BUSINESS & PROFESSIONAL DIRECTORY

|  |  |
|--|--|
| <p style="text-align: center;"><b>CHARTERED BUS</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>OUACHITA COACHES</b><br/> <small>Serving Arkansas safely since 1983<br/>                 New Luxury Coaches • Air Conditioned<br/>                 800-782-2877</small></p>  | <p style="text-align: center;"><b>COUNSELING</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Daily Bread Counseling</b><br/> <small>(Member of Clergy Counseling Network)</small></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Rev. Garry D. Teeter, MS, LPC, NCC, BCPC, CBIST</b><br/>                 Offices in Benton and Hot Springs<br/>                 Call for confidential appointment<br/>                 501.847.2229   1.877.847.2229<br/> <a href="http://www.dailybreadcounseling.com">www.dailybreadcounseling.com</a></p>   |
| <p style="text-align: center;"><b>STAINED GLASS</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Serving Arkansas with Quality Stained Glass since 1973</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><small>Churches • Residential • Commercial<br/>                 (800) 791-7667<br/> <a href="http://www.sooisstainedglass.com">www.sooisstainedglass.com</a><br/>                 P.O. Box 13452, Maumelle, AR 72113</small></p> | <p style="text-align: center;"><b>CHURCH FURNITURE</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Quality Furniture at an AFFORDABLE price</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>FORDYCE CHURCH FURNITURE INC.</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><small>Solid Oak &amp; Pine Pews   Pulpit Furniture   Cushions &amp; Upholstery</small></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><small>P. O. Box 572, Fordyce, AR 71742<br/>                 toll free 1 (800) 748-9778   phone (870) 352-2567   fax (870) 352-2070<br/>                 email <a href="mailto:vickey@fordycechurchfurniture.com">vickey@fordycechurchfurniture.com</a></small></p> |

# With Rice Depot, United Methodists share

LAURA RHEA

For the Arkansas United Methodist

In Arkansas, 500,000 individuals live in poverty and far too many face hunger. Thanks to a partnership between the United Methodist Churches in Arkansas and Arkansas Rice Depot, 374,000 of them have food on their tables, and the knowledge that someone cares.

Founded 27 years ago by the Arkansas Inter-Faith Hunger Task Force, Arkansas Rice Depot was built on a foundation of rice — appropriate when you consider that rice is the largest food crop in Arkansas.

Rice growers and the rice industry were the first food donors, and more than 300 of them have been faithful donors over the years.

In 2009, Arkansas Rice Depot will distribute more than 7 million pounds of all different kinds of food, and a wide assortment of personal care and household items, as well as Ingathering kits and disaster supplies.

Arkansas Rice Depot distributed 4,785,716 pounds of food and supplies during the first eight months of 2009, an increase of 374,667 pounds — or nearly 8 percent over the same period last year.

Rice Depot distributes more than 15 tractor-trailer loads of food and supplies per month, or more than 28,000 pounds per day.

Arkansas Rice Depot is the only statewide foodbank in Arkansas, and provides food to more than 13 percent of the population of the state. It is a ministry dedicated to honoring Christ's command to feed the hungry and care for the poor.

Arkansas Rice Depot's mission is simple: "to find sensible solutions to hunger in Arkansas." The programs of Arkansas Rice Depot reach out to individuals facing a food crisis in four distinct ways.



**We Empower:** We believe the key to ending hunger in Arkansas is found in the Arkansas tradition of neighbors helping their needy neighbors. Through Food For Families we provide almost 7 million pounds of food each year to over 300 church and community hunger agencies.



**We Serve:** No senior citizen should receive a life sentence of hunger. Our Food For Seniors program enables volunteers to deliver 50 pounds of food and household items monthly to homebound seniors.



**We Innovate:** Because it's hard to be hungry for knowledge when you're just plain hungry, Arkansas Rice Depot started Food For Kids, a food pantry for students in public schools which has been replicated by 118 food banks across the nation. In Arkansas, Food For Kids serves more than 25,000 children in 600 schools by providing backpacks filled with food, and other items that is sent home with students facing hunger. A backpack filled with food is making a difference that will last a lifetime for these students.



**We Respond:** From house fires and tornados to ice storms and even large factory closings, Arkansas Rice Depot's disaster relief program provides emergency relief through our food pantry partners, public schools, direct disaster service events, and even door to door if necessary. Our emergency relief efforts continue in a community as long as needed.



**We Depend on You:** United Methodist churches have been a key ministry partners with Arkansas Rice Depot for the past 27 years. Through financial support, donations of Ingathering kits, bulk items and food, performing volunteer service, operating food pantries and hosting Simple Pleasures Alternative Holiday Markets, United Methodist churches and individuals have made the work of Arkansas Rice Depot possible.

Without you, hundreds of thousands of Arkansans would face an empty plate. With God's grace — and neighbors helping neighbors — those who hunger will hunger no more.

Laura Rhea is the president and chief executive officer of Arkansas Rice Depot. She can be reached at [endhunger@ricedepot.org](mailto:endhunger@ricedepot.org) or (501) 565-8855.



Young volunteers bag sweet potatoes during the 2008 Ingathering for distribution to local food banks.

Photo by Martha Taylor

The Arkansas Conference will celebrate the 32nd Ingathering from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Nov. 7 at the Arkansas Rice Depot, 3801 W. 65th Street in Little Rock.

All churches are encouraged to participate in this annual effort to stop hunger and provide disaster relief.

The conference emphasizes "Bulk is Better": receiving bulk items saves time and money when they reach Sager Brown, the United Methodist Committee on Relief depot in Baldwin, La.

The District offices will provide collection dates and times in your district.

An Ingathering form can be downloaded from the conference Web site at [www.arumc.org](http://www.arumc.org).



Libby Gray, office administrator for the Arkansas Conference, helps load boxes at the 2008 Ingathering.

Photo by Martha Taylor

# re God's bounty

## What Arkansas Rice Depot can do

### YOUR COMMUNITY FOOD PANTRY

How the Arkansas Rice Depot (ARD) can help you:

- o We can provide food and volunteer training for your community food pantry or soup kitchen. There is no charge for either food or training.

How you can help:

- o Encourage the manager of your local pantry to find out how to get food from Arkansas Rice Depot.
- o If there is no food pantry serving your area, consider whether your church can organize one.
- o Ask us to speak at an event at your church.

### FOOD FOR KIDS

How ARD can help you:

- o We provide food and backpacks for local schools to supply kid-friendly, simple-to-prepare food to children who have little or nothing to eat at home.

How you can help:

- o Make sure your local school nurse or counselor knows about the availability of the Food for Kids program.
- o Pick up, store and package food for the program monthly, delivering it to participating schools in your area once a week.
- o "Adopt" a school to help free up resources for more schools. An average school program costs Arkansas Rice Depot \$2,000 a year.
- o Host a Food For Kids food drive.

### FOOD FOR SENIORS

How ARD can help:

- o We can provide senior assistance boxes that include food, personal care products and household supplies for elderly people at risk of hunger who are unable to get to a food pantry.

How you can help:

- o Identify elderly people in your area who qualify for Food for Seniors.
- o Pick up food from our warehouse in Little Rock and deliver to qualified seniors in your area.
- o "Adopt" a senior for \$20 a month, or \$240 per year, to help expand the program.

### THE COAT PROJECT

How ARD can help:

- o We provide new winter coats for school children referred to us by school nurses and counselors. We also provide new socks, underwear and gloves as available.

How you can help:

- o Host a Back-to-School sock and underwear drive.
- o Host a Deck-the-Tree sock and glove drive. Put up a Christmas tree and ask church members to decorate the tree with new socks and gloves. Send us the socks and gloves for school children in need.

To learn more about opportunities at Arkansas Rice Depot, visit [www.ricedepot.org](http://www.ricedepot.org)

• GARDEN Continued from Page 1A



Pictured sacking potatoes, from left: Paul Wildy, Rita Wildy, Shelby Bandy, Janet Taylor, Eleanor Metcalf, Pastor Doug Criss, Patty Jackson, Tim Bandy, Mai Hayden and Ronnie Kennett. Volunteers gathered at the Jr. Robinson barn to sack thousands of pounds of potatoes to be distributed to residents at three housing authorities and Mississippi County Union Mission. Each sack of potatoes given away had a note included from the Leachville United Methodist Church.

Photo by Revis Blaylock originally appeared in the Town Crier, reprinted with permission

said the congregation discussed growing extra vegetables in their gardens to help feed the hungry.

"From that —pardon the pun — it grew," Watkins recalled. "People asked why don't we have a community garden? What can we plant?"

Soon the plan for a community garden became truly a community endeavor. Watkins mentioned the congregation's idea to her neighbor, Scott Adams, whose grandfather owns Adams Land Co. — the region's main land-holding company.

Adams got excited about the opportunity to feed those in need and arranged for his family's company to donate the plot. He said he had been wanting to do something similar for more than a year.

Cole Hawkins, who farms the land where the plot was located, volunteered to plant the seeds and water the crop. Hawkins said it wasn't much extra effort, and he was delighted to provide people with some fresh corn.

"It's just the way things need to happen," Hawkins said. "It's the way things need to be done."

When time came for harvesting in June, the Leachville congregation worked with the three housing authorities in Leachville, Manila and Monette to identify people who could use the extra produce.

Like a mini-version of Publisher Clearinghouse's Prize Patrol, church members knocked on doors unannounced, surprising recipients with a yummy treat.

Paul Wildy, a church member and recently retired Farm Bureau insurance agent, said he was unprepared for the amount of gratitude people showed.

"There was not one negative comment," he said. "It was all smiles and 'thank you very much.' One said, 'I've got four kids here, who are hungry and will really enjoy this.'"

Word of the congregation's agricultural efforts quickly spread beyond Leachville. In July, potato farmers invited the congregation to glean what was left over from a shipment to the Frito-Lay plant in Jonesboro.

"We expected we were going to go out there and have to dig them up ourselves with a shovel," Wildy said. "But when they brought in their commercial equipment to dig those potatoes, they dug us a trailer load."

The church members bagged thousands of pounds of tubers and again distributed them through the three housing authorities.

Betty Eldried, executive director of Leachville Housing Authority, said her residents, who are mostly elderly and disabled, were deeply appreciative that the church even thought of them.

"For some of them, that big old bag of potatoes fed them for several meals," she said.

In September, another farm near the Missouri border offered the church about 1,300 pounds of potatoes already washed clean and bagged. Church members delivered that batch to Mississippi County Union Mission, a homeless shelter in Blytheville.

Doug Criss, the church's new pastor, came to Leachville UMC in June in time to help with the corn harvest. He pointed out that the congregation and its community supporters were following a biblical tradition that goes back to the Old Testament.

In Leviticus 19:9-10, God instructs the Israelites not to harvest their fields and vineyards in their entirety but to leave the gleanings "for the poor and the sojourner."

He hopes the Leachville effort will inspire other rural communities in the state.

"Most farmers farm about 2,000 acres of ground, and it's nothing to take five acres and make a ministry out of it," Criss said. "It's something we should be doing anyway."

To learn how to start a community garden, contact your county cooperative extension office. Contact information is available at [www.uaex.edu/findus/county\\_offices.htm](http://www.uaex.edu/findus/county_offices.htm).



Photo by Heather Hahn

## Undampened spirits

HAVANA — A sudden downpour played havoc with Havana United Methodist Church's plans for its third annual "Antique Car Show and Gospel Singing."

The classic cars remained indoors and away from public view. Still, the rain didn't dampen the church's efforts to sing God's praise.

Church member Delvin Williams and the congregation's pastor, Ed Seay, spent the day calling area church groups to move the evening concert originally scheduled for the city park inside the church. By 4 p.m. Sept. 12, visitors were crowding into Havana UMC's pews to see groups and soloists perform such familiar songs as "I

Saw the Light" and "His Eye is on the Sparrow."

Williams, who originated the idea for the annual car show and concert, was already thinking of plans for next year's event. But he was relieved the singing still happened.

"It's the most important part," he said. "You can't save someone with a lot of old cars, but with a gospel song, you can bring someone to the Lord."

Pictured at left, members of Havana UMC's Monday Night Bunch — Roger Turley, Tracy Turley, Margaret Steward, Amelia Turley, Hazel Foster, Johnny Foster and Williams — perform for an appreciative crowd. Not pictured is Emma Turley on piano.

## OBITUARIES

### PINE BLUFF

**Robert Edward Turner, 77**, of Pine Bluff, passed away June 7 at Arkansas Hospice, St. Vincent Doctors Hospital in Little Rock, after a valiant fight against cancer.

He was a United Methodist minister who served as pastor of Humphrey United Methodist Church and most recently was pastor of Traskwood UMC and Ebenezer UMC in Tull.

Turner was born in Morrilton and reared in Perry County. He graduated from Watson Chapel High School, and later in life served as superintendent of the Watson Chapel School District.

He also served in the U.S. Navy and ultimately earned his doctorate in educational administration from what is now the University of Louisiana at Monroe.

His parents, Baxter Elam Turner and Alma Swope Turner, preceded him in death. He is survived by his two daughters Robbin Turner Byrd and her husband, Ron, of Bentonville; and Ashley Turner of White Hall; and his son, Rhett Turner of White Hall.

He is also survived by his two sisters, Ann Rawls and Barbara Jean Turner of Pine Bluff; one grandson, Bradley Turner Byrd of Bentonville; his niece and her family.

The family requests memorials be made to The Dr. Robert E. Turner Scholarship Fund, c/o Simmons First National Bank, 501 S. Main St., Pine Bluff, 71601; or to Arkansas Hospice, c/o St. Vincent Doctors Hospital, 6101 St. Vincent Circle, Little Rock, 72205.

Funeral services were held June 10 in the chapel of Ralph Robinson and Son. Burial with military honors followed in Memorial Park Cemetery.

### LOCKESBURG

**Daisy Marie Cravens Cabean,**

100, of Lockesburg died July 8, in a local hospital.

She was born to Oscar and

Mary Turrentine Cravens at Lockesburg on Nov. 27, 1908.



**Daisy Cabean**

She was a retired deaconess in the United Methodist Church, as well as a homemaker and wife of

pastor. She was a member of the Macedonia United Methodist Church of Lockesburg, and enjoyed sewing, flowers, gardening, fishing, and spending time with family.

She was preceded in death by her parents, her husband, A. C. Cabean; three brothers, Herman Cravens, Carl Augusta Cravens and Lester Henry Cravens; two sisters, Ruth Elizabeth Wright and Esther Cravens Sampson.

She is survived by two brothers, John Wesley Cravens and Oscar Cravens Jr., both of Lockesburg; one sister, Melba Cravens Taylor of Caruthersville, Mo., and a number of nieces, nephews and cousins, as well as other family members.

Funeral services for Daisy M. Cabean were held July 11 at Macedonia UMC with Tommy Halsall, senior pastor of Macedonia, officiating. Burial followed in the Holly Springs Cemetery in Lockesburg, under the direction of Chandler Funeral Home in DeQueen.

### VILLAGE

**Harold Gene Rogers, 77**, of Village, died Aug. 26 at the Arkansas Heart Hospital in Little Rock.

A graduate of Southern Methodist University in Dallas, he was an ordained United Methodist



**Harold Rogers**

elder who served churches in Hermitage; Dalark; Tolar, Texas; Italy, Texas; Sardis, Gillett, Mena, DeQueen, Camden, Fairview. After retiring for a number of years

— yet still ministering — he was serving Rushing Memorial UMC in Chidester.

He was born March 24, 1932, to the late Charlie P. and Trudy Rogers near Village. Preceding him in death were three brothers, C.P. Rogers Jr., Billy Ray Rogers and James Nolan Rogers; also three sisters, Bernell Andrews, Nettie Faye Rogers and an infant.

He is survived by his wife of 59 years, Ida Carol (Foster) Rogers; one son, Joseph Glenn Rogers and his wife, Bee, of Village; two daughters, Carol Jean Love and husband, Kenneth, of Sparkman; and Linda Faye Lemons and David Dickenson of Dalark.

He is also survived by four grandsons: Chris Love and his wife, Amy; Jason Love, Wesley Lemons and Dorothy, and Timmy Rogers and mother, Lynette. He also has four surviving granddaughters: Kay Dukes and husband, Jim; Pam Combs and husband, Terry; Mandy Low and husband, Tracy; and Jessica Chandler.

Also among his survivors are one brother, Don Rogers and wife, Carro Lee; two sisters, Louise Smith and husband, William, and Janiece Blount. He also has three great-grandsons and three great-granddaughters.

Funeral services were held on Aug. 29 at Asbury United Methodist Church in Magnolia with David Prothro, Southwest District

superintendent officiating, assisted by Bob Terry, pastor of Village UMC.

Burial followed at the Ebenezer Cemetery north of Village under the direction of Lewis Funeral Home Inc., of Magnolia.

### LITTLE ROCK

**Norris Steele, 82**, a longtime United Methodist pastor and the father of three ordained elders, passed away Aug. 29.

Steele, of Little Rock, was born March 10, 1927, in Jonesboro to John Chambers Steele and Della May (Honnoll) Steele. He was a graduate of



**Norris Steele**

Hendrix College and Southern Methodist University's Perkins School of Theology. He also served as a Merchant Marine during World War II before serving 43 years in the United Methodist ministry.

He was preceded in death by a daughter, Allidel Steele Whitwell.

He is survived by his wife of 64 years, Virginia Davidson Steele. He is also survived by his children, Bill Steele, pastor of Tuckerman and Swifton United Methodist churches, and wife, Mary; David Steele, pastor of Batesville UMC, and wife, Diane; Rodney Steele, North Central District superintendent, and wife, Becky; and son-in-law, John Whitwell of Maumelle. Additional survivors include 13 grandchildren; five great-grandchildren; and a sister, Dulcia Smith.

A celebration of his life was held Sept. 2 at Henderson United Methodist Church.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests memorials be made to Henderson UMC, 13000 Baseline

Road, Little Rock, 72210.

### PENSACOLA, Fla.

**Billy Vernon Dennis, 82**, passed away Sept. 6 at his home in Pensacola, Fla.

Born in Arkansas on July 3, 1927, Dennis graduated from Hendrix College in Conway and



**Billy Dennis**

Duke University Divinity School in Durham, N.C.

He also did graduate work in Boston.

He was a Methodist preacher in

Arkansas from 1945 to 1966 when he joined the U.S. Navy. As a U.S. Navy Chaplain, he served in Vietnam and later Okinawa, Japan. He returned to Arkansas in 1988 and retired in Elaine in 1994. Then moved to reside in Pensacola to be close to his family.

He is preceded in death by his parents, Tommy Dennis and the former Agnes White.

He is survived by his wife of 59 years, Esther; sons Tech Sgt. David W. Dennis; Storekeeper 2nd Class James V. Dennis and his wife, Merri; and John Wesley Dennis and his wife, Tracy, all of Pensacola.

He is survived by adopted family members, Petty Officer 2nd Class Bob Thompson and his wife, Marlene, and Petty Officer 3rd Class John Niemeyer of Pensacola.

He is also survived by five grandchildren and three great-grandchildren.

A memorial service was held Sept. 14 at Warrington United Methodist Church in Pensacola. Burial followed at Barrancas National Cemetery.



## UM COLLEGE NEWS



During its opening convocation on Aug. 27, Philander Smith College honored Nigel Haskett, with the first Ozell Sutton Medal of Justice in recognition of his extraordinary act of courage in the face of adversity. Haskett was an employee at a west Little Rock McDonald's restaurant in August 2008 when he was shot multiple times breaking up a fight between a customer and her then-boyfriend. The award is named for 1950 Philander Smith graduate Ozell Sutton, who became the first black reporter for the *Arkansas Democrat* in 1950. Pictured from left are Haskett, Sutton and Philander Smith president, Walter Kimbrough.

Photo courtesy of Philander Smith College

### Hendrix College celebrates record enrollment

Hendrix has surpassed 1,400 students for the first time in the college's history. That enrollment includes 42 United Methodist Youth Fellowship Leadership scholars.

The 11 new freshman scholars were the beneficiaries of Hendrix's decision to increase the financial award to \$2,000 from \$1,000, which had been the award amount for the past 12 years.

The official census numbers were released following the 10th day of class, revealing Hendrix has an overall student enrollment of 1,463.

The second-largest freshman

class in the college's history, one of the college's most academically talented with an average ACT score of 29 and boasting 62 Arkansas Governor's Distinguished Scholars, created the new milestone for Hendrix.

The increases correspond with Hendrix's ranking as the nation's top "Up-and-Coming" liberal arts college in the September issue of *U.S. News & World Report*.

Hendrix is among 13 liberal arts colleges recognized as having "recently made the most promising and innovative changes in academics, faculty, students, campus or facilities," and "firmly

focused on improving the job they're doing today." Tied for second on the list are Agnes Scott College in Georgia, Davidson College in North Carolina and Furman College in South Carolina.

"As witnessed by all the attention we are receiving nationally, the momentum at Hendrix is exceptional and the accomplishments of our faculty and students are extraordinary," said J. Timothy Cloyd, Hendrix President. "We welcomed a freshmen class of students this year who come from New York to California, and they are preparing for the educational rides of their lives."

## VOLUNTEERS IN MISSION

This Volunteer in Mission listing includes mission opportunities offered by local churches and districts. Often there is room for additional volunteers to join the team. For more information on any of these projects, contact the individuals listed or Don Weeks, Arkansas Area Volunteers in Mission coordinator, 18 Montagne Court, Little Rock, AR 72223; (501) 868-9193 or 681-2909; dweeks@arumc.org.

**Feb. 6-12, 2010:** Rio Bravo, Mexico. Construction help needed to build a casita, a small house. Contact Larry Acton, lacton@ritternet.com or (870) 520.3969.

**March 6-14, 2010:** Costa Rica. Painting, flooring, Bible School. Larry Acton, lacton@ritternet.com or (870) 520.3969.

**Ongoing: "This Olde Church"** Volunteers in Mission project. Help restore and repair churches in the Arkansas Conference. Teams will be painting, weather-proofing, doing general repairs, landscaping and other jobs. Teams DO NOT do roofing, plumbing or electrical. The church that asks for teams will provide housing, help prepare

meals and provide showers. The teams will supply their food, the materials, tools and labor. Any church can apply for help through their District Superintendent. Teams can sign up by contacting Don Weeks at dweeks@arumc.org.

**Wesley Foundation, UALR:** Help needed with general maintenance, cleanup, painting, etc. Contact Maxine Allen at mallen@arumc.org, her office at (501) 663-1153 or her cell phone at (501) 539-0280.

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

## CLASSIFIEDS

**PLACE YOUR CLASSIFIED** in the Arkansas United Methodist for 50 cents per word, no limit. Call 501.324.8005 or mail to: Arkansas United Methodist, 2 Trudie Kibbe Reed Drive, Little Rock, AR 72202; or e-mail: mtaylor@arumc.org

**Minister of Music:** Lonoke UMC, Lonoke, AR. Seeking person with callings and expertise in traditional worship, contemporary worship, hand bells and children's choirs. Please send resume to First UMC, P.O. Box 152, Lonoke, AR, 72086. Call (501) 676-8266 for more info.

**Theresa Hoover United Methodist Church** is seeking a part-time Church Secretary responsible for administrative support of the Pastor and various auxiliaries in the Church. Minimum requirements high school diploma/GED or Equivalent, previous experience as secretary/administrative assistant desired and understanding of United Methodist connectional system desired. Send a resume to: hooverumc@aristotle.net, Attn: Ruth Jones or call (501) 379-1561 for a complete job description.

**Home Study:** Save \$\$\$ Christian Bible College, P.O. Box 8968 Rocky Mt., NC 27804 Phone (252)451-1031; [www.christianbiblecollege.org](http://www.christianbiblecollege.org)

**Dumas United Methodist Church** is currently seeking a part-time (1/2) Youth Director to continue our energetic youth program. The Youth Director must have a strong desire to see the youth and their families grow in their love and faith of Jesus Christ. We are seeking a director who is energetic, well-organized, a self-starter capable of developing new programs and someone who is willing to enable other adults to be involved with them. For an application please contact: Dumas First United Methodist Church, 230 Court Street, Dumas, AR. 71639, or call (870) 382-6626, or e-mail dumasfmc@centurytel.net.

**Youth Group Travel:** Kimberling Kids Travel is now booking Spring Break 2010! Chartered bus quotes are also available. (specializing in student group travel since 1982) (501) 227-8447 \* (800) 476-2291 \* kimberlingkids@aol.com



## Pinnacle Mountain RENEZVOUS

Pinnacle Mountain State Park

**October 16, 2009**

Bluegrass Concert • 6:30 p.m.

Featuring: *Road Less Traveled*, *Posey Hill* and *Runaway Planet*

FREE ADMISSION • Parking \$20 Per Car

**October 17-18, 2009**

• Pioneer and Native American Settlements • Activities for Children and Adults • Canoe Float • Horseback Riding

• Climbing Wall • Food and Craft Booths  
FREE ADMISSION • Parking \$10 Per Car



Special performance by  
Radio Disney, Saturday 17th,  
11:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m.

Call **(501) 868-5806** For Information

Sponsored by: Partners for Pinnacle, Inc.  
[www.ArkansasStateParks.com](http://www.ArkansasStateParks.com) [www.partnersforpinnacle.com](http://www.partnersforpinnacle.com)

# Three clergy to hold interfaith 'Triologue'

HEATHER HAHN  
Editor

A priest, a rabbi and a United Methodist pastor walk into a room.

That's not the set up of a joke but what the leaders of three west Little Rock congregations plan to do over three Sunday afternoons in October and November.

Fred Haustein, senior pastor of St. James United Methodist Church; Monsignor Francis Malone, pastor of Christ the King Catholic Church, and Rabbi Eugene Levy of Temple B'nai Israel will rotate among their houses of worship for what they are billing a public interreligious "trialogue."

Haustein said the goal of the discussions is to emphasize the areas where the three faith traditions agree.

"There is so much division and alienation in the world that people often get pulled into their own camps," Haustein said. "As a result, we lose our common fellowship. We're trying to change that."

The three gatherings will be held at 3 p.m. Oct. 18, 25 and Nov. 1. Each session will focus a different topic.

In order, they will discuss:

- Social issues such as feeding the hungry, caring for the sick and relieving poverty at Temple B'nai Israel, 3700 N Rodney Parham Road, Little Rock.

- Their prophetic role in the community at St. James UMC, 321 Pleasant Valley Drive.

- Matters of faith and theology at Christ the King, 4000 N. Rodney Parham Road.

The triologue was the brainchild of Levy, who held a similar series in the early 1990s with one of Haustein's predecessors, John P. Miles, and Monsignor Gus Hebert, Malone's predecessor at Christ the



**Fred Haustein**

King. The three congregations are among a group of west Little Rock congregations that have a joint worship service each year shortly before Thanksgiving.

After last year's service, Levy approached Malone and Haustein with the idea.

"I've been wanting to do this for a number of years," Levy said.

After the rancorous debates over health care and other political issues, he feels now is the ideal time to emphasize shared goodwill.

"This is a way of saying here are three fairly strong religious denominations that don't have to go around pointing fingers and saying, 'If you don't believe our way, you're going to hell,'" Levy said.

"We know we have some liturgical differences and some theological differences, but there are many, many issues we can agree on and we want our congregants to know that."

Over the last six months, the three clergymen have met together three or four times to plan the triologue.

All three clergy hope the discussions will be the beginning of further collaboration among their three congregations.

"I think people who attend will be pleasantly surprised by how much we have in common," Malone said. "Preparing for this has been a delight."

To learn more, call St. James UMC at (501) 217-6700.

To see more photos of church activities, visit [www.arumc.org/news](http://www.arumc.org/news)

**Kitchen Equip. & Supplies**  
Buy at our prices and Save  
1-800-482-9026 or 228-0808  
AIMCO EQUIPMENT CO.

## REV. CLINT & SHIRLEY BURLESON HAVE MOVED!

Please make a note of our new address.  
17 Parkstone Circle, Apt. #159  
North Little Rock, AR 72116  
(501) 801-9802

## TRANSFORMING THE WORLD



The Green Faith Alliance of Arkansas, which meets monthly at Pulaski Heights UMC, earned the Conservation Organization Award for 2009 from the Arkansas Wildlife Federation. Since June 2008, the Green Faith Alliance has grown from 35 to 240 members from many houses of worship throughout Arkansas. Participants view environmental concerns as stewardship issues. Pictured from left are Leo Hauser, Pulaski Heights member; Vic Nixon, the church's senior pastor, and Steve Copley, director of Justice for Our Neighbors.

Photo by Scharmell Roussel



At a recent Wednesday Night Fellowship supper Katie Puckett of First UMC in Rogers holds up a compostible cup and table wear set. To lower the church's carbon footprint, the congregation has begun using utensils and cups made 100 percent of corn starch. After each meal these items are gathered to be placed into a compost pile.

Photo courtesy of First UMC in Rogers



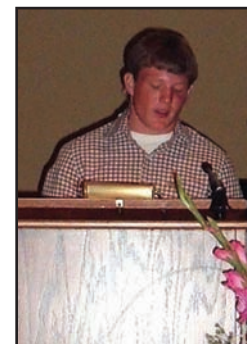
About 40 children attended Vacation Bible School at Unity Methodist Church in Bussey, Arkansas, 20 miles south of Magnolia, in June. They raised \$525 for Arkansas Children's Hospital. This year's theme was Boomerang Express.

Photo courtesy of Unity UMC



Sunday School teacher Nancy Miller and Hardy Peacock, pastor of Rock Springs in Wilmar, present Johnny Free, center, a plaque recognizing his 40 years of continuous service as Sunday School superintendent for the church.

Photo courtesy of Rock Springs UMC



Brynn Hobbs, a member of Mountainside UMC in Hot Springs Village, was certified earlier this year as an Advanced Lay Speaker. A student at the University of Mississippi in Oxford, he is one of the youngest lay speakers in the South Central District. He is the son of Toni and Jerry Hobbs of Jessieville.

Photo by Ed Dinkins



Through its Kids for Christ program, Mountainside UMC in Hot Springs Village taught children about missions. The group held a carwash to raise more than \$1,900 for the Winthrop Rockefeller Cancer Institute. The youngsters also toured various mission sites such as Heifer International Ranch in Perryville and Arkansas Rice Depot in Little Rock. Above, the group is pictured at the Rice Depot. In November, the children will participate in a Living Gift Market at the Coronado Center in Hot Springs Village.

Photo courtesy of Mountainside UMC



Youth from all parts of the Northeast District joined the First Northeast District Youth Choir Tour, which was from June 5-10 in Atlanta, Chattanooga and Memphis. The choir sang at four churches and an Alzheimer's Day Center. The group included 28 United Methodist youth and nine chaperones.

Photo by Kaye Gann

COMING UP

**First UMC in North Little Rock**, North Little Rock, 6701 John F. Kennedy Blvd., will have a pumpkin patch that is open from 10 a.m. to dark daily through Oct. 31. Proceeds support the church youth program. To learn more, visit [www.nlrfumc.org](http://www.nlrfumc.org).

**Trinity UMC**, 1101 N. Mississippi St., Little Rock, will host a presentation by the C.A.L.L., which stands for "Children of Arkansas Loved for a Lifetime," at 9:30 a.m. Oct. 4 during its Sunday School hour. The group seeks to encourage Christians to become foster and adoptive parents. To learn more, call the church at (501) 666-2813 or visit [www.thecallinarkansas.org](http://www.thecallinarkansas.org).

**Graham Chapel UMC**, 467 Arkansas 64 East, five miles east of Conway, will have a revival service at 6 p.m. Oct. 6. David Bush, the chairman of the Arkansas Conference's Committee on Evangelism and pastor of First UMC in Stuttgart, will preach. Bill Mann will lead music. To learn more, call Tom Lukas, the church's pastor, at (501) 513-0844.

**Pulaski Heights UMC**, 4823 Woodlawn Drive, is continuing its "People Helping People" ministry at 6-8 p.m. Mondays through Oct. 26 for those who have lost jobs or experienced reduced income because of career changes or investment declines.

Forthcoming sessions include "Career Opportunities at Waffle House Inc." with Andy Brown, district manager; "Job Interviewing Skills;" "The Interview: Role Play with the Experts" and "Stress Management." To learn more, call the church at (501) 664-3600 or e-mail Nancy Milbourn at [namilbourn@comcast.net](mailto:namilbourn@comcast.net).

**The United Methodist Women of First UMC in Osceola** will host a county fair starting at 9 a.m. Oct. 10 at the church, 303 S. Pecan St. The event will include a bakery and attic treasures. A vegetable soup and chili lunch will be served at 11 a.m. Tickets cost \$5 at the door. To learn more, call the church at (870) 563-2688.

**Harrell UMC**, 223 Eighth St., will have a revival beginning with

supper at 6 p.m. and worship at 7 p.m. Oct. 11-13. Hammett Evans, pastor of First UMC, will speak. Dale Lindsey will lead music. To learn more, call Harry Hamner, the pastor, at (501) 951-0036.

**Hampton UMC**, 417 E. Main St., will have its biennial homecoming service at 11 a.m. Oct. 11 with a meal following at noon. Steve Copley, director of Justice for Our Neighbors and an ordained United Methodist elder, will speak. To learn more, call Harry Hamner, the pastor, at (501) 951-0036.

**Plainview UMC (Yell County)**, 411 W. Fifth St., will celebrate its 100th anniversary at 10 a.m. Oct. 11. A meal will follow at noon. A commemorative church plate also will be on sale. To learn more, contact Pat Bailey at (479) 272-4766 or [patbailey@arkwest.com](mailto:patbailey@arkwest.com).

**First UMC in Benton**, 200 N. Market St., will hold its Williams Preaching Series at 8:15, 9 and 11 a.m. and 6:30 p.m. Oct. 18 and noon and 7 p.m. Oct. 19-20. Nursery will be provided during all services. Brent Strawn, associate professor of Old Testament at Candler School of Theology, Emory University in Atlanta, will be the preacher.

Strawn, an ordained elder in the Church of the Nazarene, has a special interest in ancient Near Eastern iconography, the Dead Sea Scrolls, legal traditions of the Old Testament and Old Testament theology. The series is made possible through the generosity of the late Ruth Stancil in memory of her husband, Curtis Williams. To learn more, call the church at (501) 778-3601

**Mount Eagle Christian Center**, 935 Beal Road, Clinton, will present "Something to Nail To — Practices for Building a Spiritual Life," a spiritual formation retreat for clergy and laity, on Oct. 18-21. Based on *The Sacred Way* by Tony Jones, the gathering follows the Academy for Spiritual Formation/Benedictine retreat model. The cost is \$165 and includes room, meals and activities. Partial scholarships and continuing education units are available. To register, visit [www](http://www).



Shoal Creek Camp will celebrate its 50th anniversary and its longtime commitment to Methodist youth with an open house from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Oct. 17 at the camp, 571 Youth Camp Road, New Blaine, and dinner at 5 p.m. Oct. 18 at the Family Life Center of First UMC in Fort Smith, 200 N. 15th St. Retired Arkansas Razorback football coach and athletic director Frank Broyles will speak and John Tolleson will play music from the 1950s. Pictured from left seated are Paula Tesman, Doug Kelley, Bill McChristian and Flora McChristian. Pictured standing are Mardell McClurkin, Bob Laser, Herschel McClurkin, Barbara Bell, Kenny Bell and Gilbert Holt. For reservations, call Flora McChristian at (479) 394-4478 or the West District at (479) 783-0385.

Photo by Debbie Hicks

**mounteagle.org. The United Methodist Women of Fairview UMC**, 16th and Laurel streets, Texarkana, will have a holiday bazaar from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. Oct. 24. A soup and chili lunch will be served from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. A drawing for a Christmas quilt will be at 2 p.m. To learn more, e-mail the church at [fairviewumctk@juno.com](mailto:fairviewumctk@juno.com).

**Asbury UMC**, 1300 E. University St., Magnolia, will celebrate "40 Years of Grace" at its 10:45 a.m. worship Oct. 25. Bishop Charles Crutchfield will bring the message. A potluck will follow. To learn more, call the church at (870) 234-5594.

**Mount Sequoyah Conference and Retreat Center**, 150 N.W. Skyline Drive, Fayetteville, will host a seminar Nov. 2-6 for clergy and lay ministers preparing their Advent season sermons. The cost is \$395 per person, \$155 for a commuter, \$155 for a participating spouse and \$120 for a non-participating spouse. To learn more, e-mail Kim Ross at [spiritualdirector@mountsequoyah.org](mailto:spiritualdirector@mountsequoyah.org) or call (800) 760-8126.

**Marriage Encounter — United Methodist** weekend will be Nov. 6-7 at Mount Eagle Christian Center, 935 Beal Road, Clinton. Couples can register for the

marriage-enrichment retreat at [www.encounter.org](http://www.encounter.org). The reservation fee is \$50. To learn more, contact Phil or Karen Gier, at (479) 876-5371 or [plgier@yahoo.com](mailto:plgier@yahoo.com).

**Refuge '09**, a conference-wide weekend spiritual-growth retreat for youth in the seventh through ninth grades, will be at 7 p.m. Nov. 6 through 11 a.m. Nov. 8 at Camp Wyldewood in Searcy. The registration cost is \$51 if postmarked by Oct. 16, \$61 after Oct. 16. To register, visit [www.arumc.org/register](http://www.arumc.org/register).

**First UMC in Magnolia**, 320 W. Main St., will have a "Rethink Children" conference for children's ministers and child-care workers from 9 a.m. to 3:45 p.m. Nov. 7. Registration is at 8:30 a.m. Registration costs \$15 and includes lunch and materials. To register, call the church at (870) 234-4530.

**St. Paul UMC**, 2223 Durwood Road, is planning its 100th anniversary celebration on March 6, 2010. The church is searching for addresses of former members and friends. Addresses of former members can be e-mailed to the church at [stpaulumc@sbcglobal.net](mailto:stpaulumc@sbcglobal.net).

The deadline for the next edition of the *Arkansas United Methodist* is 5 p.m. Oct. 14. E-mail information to [hhahn@arumc.org](mailto:hhahn@arumc.org).

Devotional writer to discuss prayer at Conway church

COLLEEN HOLT  
For the Arkansas United Methodist

Internationally known author and retreat leader Robert Benson will speak Oct. 11 at First United Methodist Church in Conway about living a more contemplative and prayerful life in a busy world.



He will lead the church's Good News Celebration at 9 a.m. in the Great Hall and

the traditional worship service at 11 a.m. in the Sanctuary. He also will lead a community-wide "Living Prayer Lecture and Discussion" at 6:30 p.m. in the Sanctuary.

A native of Tennessee, Benson has published more than a dozen books about searching for the sacred in people's everyday lives.

Several First UMC members have studied Benson's words in their personal devotions and at retreats.

"I have wanted to meet Robert Benson for the last four years, ever since I was given his book, *Venite, A Book of Daily Prayer*, by a dear friend," member Sue Higgs says.

"The morning I opened the book to start the morning office, the birds outside my window started going nuts. It seemed every bird in Conway must have flown to the tree by my window to rejoice, to show how pleased God was with the sound of those prayers."

Robert Benson will visit 9 and 11 a.m. and 6:30 p.m. Oct. 11 at First UMC in Conway, 1610 Prince St. To learn more, call the church at (501) 329-3801.

Attention Happy Couples

The Marriage Encounter weekend scheduled for November 6-8, 2009 is approaching fast. Don't miss this great pre-holiday gift for your marriage. Please call or email now for information. 479-876-5371 or [plgier@yahoo.com](mailto:plgier@yahoo.com) Register at [www.encounter.org](http://www.encounter.org)



# School of Christian Mission provides eye-opening and tasty lessons

BY HEATHER HAHN  
Editor

More than 300 of the state's mission-hungry United Methodists received lessons they could sink their teeth into at this summer's School of Christian Mission.

With the theme "Together at the Table," the school's main spiritual growth study was on food and faith. Participants also could choose a study on the ongoing war in Sudan or the culture of Native Americans.

The gathering, sponsored by Arkansas Conference Board of Global Ministries and the Arkansas Conference United Methodist Women, took place July 30-Aug. 2 on the campus of Hendrix College in Conway.

Mary Short of Pangburn United Methodist Church was among those who attended the school for the first time.

"I thought it was amazing," she said. "I came back to work refreshed and feeling like I could deal with just about anything."

For Martha Altom, a member of First UMC in Jacksonville and a jurisdictional officer for United Methodist Women, this was her 15th year to attend the school. She also reported feeling spiritually replenished afterward.

Both women found this year's main study on Food and Faith especially nourishing. The study focused on how people's Christian faith is nurtured, strengthened and enhanced by food and all the ways meals touch their lives. Snacks were a big part of the lessons.

As part of her class, Short for the first time ate hummus, a spread of mashed chickpeas and various seasonings that's popular in Greek and Middle Eastern cuisine. She also tried shortbread cookies from Scotland and chocolate-covered apricots.

One particular emphasis of the study was



From left, Colleen Van Nostrand, Mary Lowe and Martha Altom — all members of First UMC in Jacksonville — sing during worship at the School of Christian Mission.

Photo by Heather Hahn

the importance of hospitality — being willing to open one's home and dinner table to neighbors in need of food.

"It reminds me of the story of the beggar who comes to the door who could be Jesus," Short said.

Altom said the lessons also reminded her of how important the practice of hospitality was in the Scripture.

"We talked about how often in the Bible people sat down together to share a meal and the importance of doing that in Jesus' ministry," she said.

Short chose to take the course on Native Americans, which dealt with key issues affecting today's tribes.

"I learned that most Indians don't really approve of casinos, but they are caught between a rock and a hard place," Short said. "They feel

that's the only way [that] they can have any income to support what they need. They want to use the money toward better schooling and scholarships for Native Americans."

Altom chose this year's geographical study on the ongoing conflict in Sudan, the largest country in Africa. It was eye-opening, she said, to learn of the continuing United Methodist presence in the war-ravaged nation. The United

Methodist Committee on Relief is one of the few international agencies still working in Sudan. In the past three years, the conflict has displaced 2.5 million people and claimed the lives of more than 400,000 victims (including women and children).

"The Sudan course — like the geographic studies always do — made me so much more aware of social issues and justice issues we need to know about," Altom said. "The School of Christian Mission is a wonderful educational tool for learning about social injustices."

The Women's Division of the United Methodist Church begins planning five years in advance each of the course offerings at Schools of Christian across the country, said Diane Vogler, a former Women's Division director and the Arkansas Conference's Sending Team leader.

The course on Sudan will be offered again at next year's school in late July at Hendrix College. The main spiritual-growth study will focus on the three epistles of John. Participants will also be able to choose a course on mission and evangelism.

Activities also will be offered for children and youth.

Short, for one, can't wait until next summer's offerings.

She said: "I plan on coming next year, and bringing my daughter and her kids with me."



Bishop Charles Crutchfield rides a horse during the seventh annual celebration on Sept. 20 of "Old Fashioned Day" at Old Philadelphia Church in the Larkin community. Each year, members of Melbourne United Methodist Church dress in 19th and early 20th century garb and gather in the church building, which was built in the late 1850s. For this Old-Fashioned Day, Melbourne UMC pastor Terry Sager used the book of worship from 1915. The church, which closed in 1957, was once one of six Methodist congregations on the Melbourne charge. The bishop dressed as the circuit-riders who served the church in an earlier era.

Photo courtesy of Melbourne UMC

## Where will you go?



Theological education is a sacred journey, an inward journey of discovery and an outward journey of leadership and action.

Women and men from more than 20 different denominations are choosing Phillips Theological Seminary as their sacred path of learning for faithfulness and service. They take courses online or on campus toward a variety of degree and certificate programs.

Join us at PTS to begin your journey today. Call Linda Ford at 918.270.6463 or visit [www.ptstulsa.edu](http://www.ptstulsa.edu) for more information.



Following Jesus, Engaging the World

Phillips Theological Seminary

901 North Mingo Road • Tulsa, Oklahoma 74116  
1-800-843-4675 • [www.ptstulsa.edu](http://www.ptstulsa.edu)

# REPORTER

THE UNITED METHODIST

umportal.org



## Stepping up

Zimbabwean raises funds for AU students | 4B



## Last day together

Wife pens tribute to her amazing spouse | 6B



## On rudeness

Our words can bless, curse | 8B

Section B

October 2, 2009



PHOTO BY BARRETT ROGERS

Members of Argenta United Methodist, a satellite campus of First UMC in North Little Rock, Ark., worship every Sunday night in a coffeehouse in the city's arts district.

## Reaching new orbits

### Satellite campuses extend outreach

BY MARY JACOBS  
Staff Writer

**M**ike Felder's prayers for church outreach were answered in a most unlikely place: an old Pontiac dealership converted to a coffeehouse.

Mr. Felder, then a youth pastor at First United Methodist Church in Springdale, Ark., had been driving around town and praying, asking God to show him a place where his church could "connect with the community differently."

His discovery led to the February 2008 launch of The Pontiac Church, a satellite campus of First UMC that draws about 140 worshippers every Wednesday night. The congregation

borrows space from the coffeehouse, just six blocks from the main church but worlds away in terms of the people it attracts.

"Our target audience is people who have been hurt by the church, people who wouldn't walk into a traditional church," said Mr. Felder. The coffeehouse's garage-like environ-

■ See 'Satellite campuses,' page 3B

## Q&A:

### Allowing Jesus to show up

The Rev. Jorge Acevedo will receive the 2009 Distinguished Evangelist of the United Methodist Church award later this month from the Foundation for Evangelism. Since he became lead pastor at Grace Church, a multi-site United Methodist congregation in Cape Coral, Fla., church attendance has grown to more than 2,600 in weekly worship. He spoke recently with staff writer **Mary Jacobs**.

#### Obviously, you have a heart for evangelism. Why?

I wasn't raised in a church. I know what it's like to be very far from God, what it's like to be purposeless, what it's like to be lost in a world of addictions in my own life and the life of my family. Out of my personal experience I bring a real passion to reaching people who are far from God. God has given me a passion for reaching the unchurched, the once-churched and the over-churched.

#### The over-churched? Explain.

The "over-churched" person is the second son in the prodigal son story, who never left home. The over-churched have lived a good life. They lived in the father's house, but didn't



Jorge Acevedo

■ See 'Q&A,' page 2B

## FAITH WATCH

**Nebraska, Kansas to share a bishop**

The South Central Jurisdiction (SCJ) of the United Methodist Church will combine two episcopal areas into a new Nebraska-Kansas Area in 2012. The 2008 General Conference mandated the trimming of an episcopal area in each U.S. jurisdiction due to budget constraints; the SCJ needed to cut one of its 11 areas. To smooth the transition, bishops in the other areas have each pledged to raise \$10,000 to help with the costs of meetings and consultations. A transition task force will include seven members from each conference in the jurisdiction.

**Mission leaders urge end to Pakistan riots**

Two United Methodist mission leaders appealed in a Sept. 4 joint statement to the government of Pakistan to protect the country's Christian minority from attacks that have killed at least seven people and left hundreds homeless. Bishop Bruce Ough, president of the General Board of Global Ministries, and Inelda Gonzalez, president of the board's Women's Division, also urged Pakistan to amend its blasphemy law, which carries a death penalty for defamation of the Prophet Muhammad.

**Survey shows number of women clergy rose**

One in 10 U.S. churches employs a woman as senior pastor, double the number from a decade ago, according to a new survey by the Barna Group. Most of the women—58 percent—serve in mainline denominations, including the United Methodist Church, and 77 percent of them have earned seminary degrees, compared to 63 percent of male clergy. Salaries for female pastors, however, average \$45,300, while males average \$48,600. But that salary gap has closed by 30 percent since the last survey in 1999.

—Compiled by Bill Fentum

## ■ Q&amp;A Continued from page 1B

have the Father's heart. Churches are filled with men and women who've been in church every Sunday, but in their hearts they are very far from God. The intimacy of their relationship with Jesus is but a faint memory. There are a lot of over-churched people who are United Methodist in name, but not Christian by their own testimony.

**How do you convert the over-churched?**

It's a slow process. Converting the convinced is really hard! They are convinced that everything is OK, and yet they don't bear the fruit of a faithful follower of Christ. They are not engaged in the personal and social dynamics of the gospel. You reach them by modeling faithful discipleship in the life of the church. The best way is for them to see these unchurched people who come into our church and see the vitality of a fresh new relationship with Jesus. It's pretty contagious.

My philosophy of church growth is pretty simple. If you look at the Gospels, wherever Jesus showed up, a crowd showed up. If we just allow Jesus to show up in our churches, a crowd will show up. But in many churches—by our forms, our liturgies, our music, our sermons—we keep Jesus outside.

**"Allowing Jesus to show up"—what does that look like?**

It's not just a matter of worship style, I can tell you that. But I don't know the answer to that. You know when He's there and you know when He's not. It's like asking somebody what it's like to be in love. You know it when you're in it.

**What about reaching the unchurched?**

It's about meeting people at their point of need. That's nothing new. In our case, what God has allowed us to do best is our healing and recovery ministries. At all three of our campuses we have Celebrate Recovery,

which reaches every week between 600-700 people. Six nights a week we offer some kind of recovery ministry, Bible study, step study, support groups.

Let me frame what I mean by recovery because we tend to think of just drugs and alcohol. Everybody needs recovery, because sin is the ultimate addiction. Sometimes that sin is spending too much money, getting in bad relationships, letting anger get out of control, shopping too much, eating too much, or doing too much alcohol or drugs. Everybody needs recovery. It's just a matter of what you need recovery from.

We've tried to create a culture that says everybody is in recovery from something. There's a culture of deliverance and healing that pervades everything we do. We major in life change.

**It occurs to me that "recovery" is another way of describing the kind of transformation described in the hymn "Amazing Grace."**

Absolutely. We put it this way: "We want to rescue people from the hell they're living in as well as the hell they're heading to." Salvation is not just about pie in the sky until you die. It's about rescuing and redeeming my life right now. Jesus said in John 10:10, "I came that you might have life and have it overflowing more abundant." So we have all kinds of recovery groups, support groups, small groups, Bible studies that are helping people recover.

I wouldn't call it a renaming of what we read in "Amazing Grace;" it's a fleshing it out. From something that's spiritual and eternal in the sweet by-and-by, to something that's practical and livable right now this side of the grave.

**You've presided over some pretty amazing change at Grace Church.**

When I came here in 1996, the church was averaging about 400 in attendance on Sundays, and had been in a five-year decline. My first Sunday here, they told me we had \$29.16 in our checking account and owed \$1.2

million on a building. The church was filled with wonderful people who had just kind of lost their way; they were good people who had just been lulled to sleep. Yet there were 30 people who had been on the Walk to Emmaus who were praying for renewal. They are the unsung heroes of this story: that group of people prayed that God would do a new thing in their church.

I was a first-time lead pastor, 36 years old, younger than anybody else in the room, and God just started to work. I'm a pretty optimistic person. I just started picturing a future that we could be the body of Christ, the way the Bible defines us. For the last 13 years, we have worked diligently, just trying to be faithful to what the Bible says the local church can be.

A large portion of our membership is what we would call "the working poor." Our challenges, they're typically financial; we don't have problems with volunteers. We're a hard-working, working-class congregation that just happens to be real big. We average a little over 2,600 every Sunday in 10 services.

**What made you grow?**

We had an inner transformation that led to an outer transformation. I think we grew because of the grace of God. God was very gracious to us and God honored the work that we did and have continued to do.

It's not formulaic. Growing a church is more art than it is science. It's listening to the Holy Spirit and being willing to obey whatever God asks us to do. Most of the time it feels like we're a train running 60 miles an hour and we're laying the tracks before us as we go. It's a fast-moving machine. A dozen initiatives have grown our church: We have great music, great children's programs, great recovery programs. But the reality is that our people have listened to what God asks us to do and then just did it. It's a dance.

**As you know, Methodists are not known for evangelism. We lost thousands of members last year. Are there any lessons to be gleaned from your experience?**

We suffer from spiritual and heritage amnesia. We've forgotten what the Bible says about the local church. [Willow Creek Community Church pastor] Bill Hybels says the local church is the hope of the world. God

has given the local church the primary responsibility of doling out the grace of God to a broken and hurting world. But we've forgotten that.

We have also forgotten our historical tradition as Wesleyans. We were a movement begun among the working class; we've become a movement primarily among the white collar. We've forgotten our roots of personal piety and social holiness. We have part of

our church that is passionately committed to saving souls and another part that's passionately committed to meeting human need. The genius of the Wesleyan movement, to quote [Good to Great author] Jim Collins, was the "genius of the *and*," not the tyranny of the *or*." Churches that God seems to be working in and through are those that seek to live out the Wesleyan vision of the spiritual life. Churches that forget that, die; churches that live into that, live.

**How has God surprised you in the last 13 years?**

I'm surprised that people keep coming back. It's a miracle. I'm amazed at how far down God can reach. There are thousands of people whose lives have been radically transformed by the grace of Jesus through the ministry of Grace Church. One of my dearest friends, Jim, was a fifth-of-vodka-a-day drinker, two six packs of beer and a handful-of-Vicodin taker, a womanizer, who, when his wife came to see me and I told her to "Run, don't walk, get in recovery." Her husband got into treatment, came back to our church and got busy walking the walk as a disciple of Jesus. Today he and his wife, Kim, lead our marriage ministry. If you had told me that eight years ago when I first met Kim, I would've told you that you were smoking something. But now I've seen the amazing life change in this one guy's life and it reminds me that it's God that does this, not us. There are thousands of Jims out there with stories like that.

Our job is to set the table. God's job is to serve the meal. What we try to do every day is set the table so God can come and serve the meal. And when He serves the meal, people don't leave hungry. They leave transformed.

mjacobs@umr.org

THE UNITED METHODIST  
REPORTER

www.umportal.org  
news@umr.org

John Greenberger, Interim CEO

Robin Russell, Managing Editor

Bill Fentum, Staff Writer

Mary Jacobs, Staff Writer

Ken Lowery, Copy Editor

Cherrie Graham, Advertising Manager

Kristin Del Mul, Senior Designer

THE UNITED METHODIST REPORTER (USPS954-500) is published weekly by UMR Communications Inc., 1221 Profit Drive, Dallas, Texas 75247-3919. Periodicals postage paid at Dallas, Texas and additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to THE UNITED METHODIST REPORTER, PO Box 660275, Dallas Texas 75266-0275.

THE UNITED METHODIST REPORTER has provided denominational news coverage since its beginning as the Texas Methodist newspaper in 1847. The Reporter has no official ties to the United Methodist General Conference or to any of the denomination's general boards or agencies. This newspaper aims to provide readers with a broad spectrum of information and viewpoints consistent with the diversity of Christians.

All material published in this newspaper is copyrighted by UMR Communications Inc. unless otherwise noted. Reprint of material from this newspaper must be authorized in advance by the Editor, and fees are assessed in some cases. To request reprints, e-mail news@umr.org, or fax a request to (214) 630-0079. Telephone requests are not accepted.

Send Correspondence and Address Changes (include mailing label) To: P.O. Box 660275, Dallas, TX 75266-0275 Telephone: (214) 630-6495. Subscriptions are \$26 for 52 issues per year. Click on "subscriptions" at www.umportal.org, e-mail circulation@umr.org or send a check to UMR Communications, Attn: Circulation, 1221 Profit Dr., Dallas, TX 75247.



UM CONNECTIONS

**Zan Holmes to speak at Sojourners event**

Zan Wesley Holmes Jr., pastor emeritus of St. Luke "Community" United Methodist Church in Dallas, will be a keynote speaker for the Sojourners Justice Revival Nov. 10-12 in Dallas. Other speakers will include Jim Wallis, president of Sojourners, Dallas mayor Tom Leppert and author Lauren Winner. The first Justice Revival was held in April 2008 in Columbus, Ohio, and drew 10,000. For information, visit [www.justicerevival.org](http://www.justicerevival.org).

**Windsor pastors set for Prayer Institute**

Pastors, spiritual leaders and Christian educators will gather Oct. 7-10 in Houston for the Prayer Institute's 13th Annual Prayer Explosion Conference Revival. Leading the event are Suzette and Kirby Caldwell, pastors of 15,000-member Windsor Village United Methodist Church in Houston. Other conference participants include pastors Steve Riggle, Rudy Rasmus and ChiChi Bismark, evangelist Joyce Rodgers and Bishop Raphael Green. The Prayer Institute, a non-profit organization committed to praying for the community and nation and teaching people how to pray more effectively, is the event's sponsor. For information, visit [www.prayerinstitute.org](http://www.prayerinstitute.org).

**Shivley, Foundation honored by Hendrix**

Hendrix College recently awarded an honorary doctorate to Lucile Esmon Shivley, 97, of Little Rock, Ark., for her service to the college. Mrs. Shivley attended Hendrix in 1930 but had to drop out due to the Great Depression. The United Methodist-affiliated college also presented the Spirit of Hendrix Award to the Tulsa, Okla.-based J.E. and L.E. Mabee Foundation, which has supported major building projects in every capital campaign at Hendrix College for the past 50 years.

—Compiled by Mary Jacobs

■ **SATELLITE CAMPUSES** *Continued from page 1B*

ment, he adds, is "instantly welcoming." When arriving worshippers see the 1957 hot rod parked in the back, they know they've found a different kind of church.

As the United Methodist Church moves forward as a denomination with a strategy to plant new churches—the goal is 650 in this quadrennium—many established churches are getting in on the action by creating satellite campuses: a cost-efficient way for "old" churches to enter new orbits.

"We were landlocked, so we could not expand by building more space," said the Rev. Jorge Acevedo, pastor of Grace Church in Fort Myers, Fla. "Satellites allowed us to reach new people."

"Most of our bishops and conferences don't have a real preference whether those new churches are independent church starts or second campuses," said the Rev. Bob Crossman, minister of new church starts in the Arkansas Conference and director of the New Church Leadership Institute. "They just want to make sure we have new communities making new disciples."

That was the impetus for Argenta United Methodist Church, a satellite of First UMC in North Little Rock, Ark. The main church wasn't having much luck reaching young people who inhabit the city's recently revitalized arts district, about 5 miles away.

"We thought, 'They're not coming here, so let's go there,'" said the Rev. Will Choate, 24, the First UMC associate pastor who leads Argenta. The satellite attracts about 60 people to the Starving Artists Cafe for Sunday night worship. Most of Argenta's members are young singles and couples in their 20s; a number were active in United Methodist ministries in high school and college but drifted from the church after graduating.

That desire to reach a new group of people is essential if a satellite church is going to create a lasting community.

"I've had to do many autopsies on

satellite churches that failed," says Jim Griffith of Griffith Coaching in Denver, a consultant to hundreds of new church plants in 49 United Methodist conferences. "A satellite church has to be driven by a missional heart for reaching new people in a mission field. If it's not missional, it's not going to work."

Creating a satellite to provide a more convenient location for those who are already members, for example, doesn't reach new people and usually won't have the momentum to last.

"If the primary motivation is personal comfort—a way to let members who live in the area sleep later—it won't carry through when difficulties arise," said Dr. Crossman.

Leaders who help launch satellite campuses say they relish the opportunity to "rethink church" in a new setting.

Designing a worship service for a new space can present an invigorating—and sometimes contentious—challenge. Satellite campuses typically occupy a variety of spaces such as school auditoriums, coffeehouses or gyms, as well as church buildings.

"Strip away the pews, the organ, the piano, the pulpit, the carpet, the stained glass, the banners and the candles, and one must rethink worship," said Katie Shockley, a member of First UMC in Rockwall, Texas, who is helping launch a new congregation called FaithBridge Church, A United Methodist Community, slated to begin meeting in October in an elementary school.

Constructing worship services for someone else changed my perspective on worship," she said. "Worship is not about me, and it never should have been."

That's a key lesson, according to Mr. Griffith: "The temptation is to cut-and-paste what other new, successful churches have done. But each church must do its own homework. Take the time to develop an indigenous approach to your mission field."

That means getting to know the community that the satellite will serve.



COURTESY PHOTO

**Stillwater UMC in Dayton, Ohio, has a satellite campus at a local YMCA. Sunday morning worship takes place in the gym, and as an added bonus, worshippers can exercise for free during the hour after worship, until the Y is open to the public.**



PHOTO COURTESY OF JOSEPH DITOMMASO (DELUXMANAGEMENT@GMAIL.COM)

**Starting a new satellite church is "a full contact sport," according to the Rev. Wayne Botkin, pastor of Christ UMC's south campus in Dayton, Ohio. Getting out into the community—like this YMCA spin class—occupies much of his time.**

"Church planting is a full contact sport," says the Rev. Wayne Botkin, pastor of Christ UMC's South campus in Dayton, Ohio. That's why he's spending most of his time working his "mission field": sweating in spin classes at the local Y, joining the local Optimists club, riding along in patrol cars with police officers, and signing up to chaplain the local fire department.

The relationship between satellite campuses and their mother churches varies widely. Some share the same preaching pastor; others are more autonomous.

At Mr. Botkin's church, which began meeting at a school auditorium in March, worshippers watch a DVD of Christ UMC's senior pastor preaching three Sundays a month. Mr. Botkin preaches "live" the fourth Sunday.

At Grace Church in Florida, the main church and two satellites each have a lead pastor. The three pastors collaborate in sermon prep: They take turns writing the basic sermon, but each pastor delivers that sermon with his or her own spin.

Some satellites, like Argenta and Pontiac Church, grow slowly and organically, drawing almost exclusively from the new community. Others launch with a ready-made congregation—a team of "rent-a-members" from the main church who worship at the new campus during the launch period.

In launching its two satellite campuses, Stillwater UMC in Dayton, Ohio, sent about 75 of its 500 members to worship temporarily at each new site until each acquired its own critical mass of members.

The Stillwater satellite that meets at a local YMCA now worships with about 100 people every Sunday morning in the gym. Most of those 100 are new folks; about 50 of the 75 members who helped start the Y campus have returned to the main church.

"Every time you send a group out, it's a chance for people to step up to leadership," said the Rev. Duane Anders, senior pastor at Stillwater's main campus.

Mr. Griffith recommends the rent-a-member approach, warning that "launching too soon with too few people is the number one reason new churches fail."

Ultimately, satellites that succeed will eventually separate from the main campus and become their "own planets," says Dr. Crossman. But pastors of satellite churches that are geographically near their mother churches say they see opportunities for sharing resources. Argenta doesn't have a youth ministry, for example, partly because few families have children. But when they do begin having kids, Mr. Choate hopes church members will draw on programs offered by First UMC.

At Mr. Acevedo's Grace Church, all three campuses team up for outreach programs.

Making the three-campus church work demands a measure of flexibility as well as a clear vision.

"We are always in flux," says Mr. Acevedo. "What unites us is a common vision, a common DNA, a common strategy and a common structure."

[mjacob@umr.org](mailto:mjacobs@umr.org)

# Stepping up

## Zimbabweans take initiative to help university students

BY KATHY L. GILBERT  
United Methodist News Service

**N**ASHVILLE, Tenn.—Grace Muradzikwa is a successful executive in Zimbabwe. But it was her mother’s heart that responded when she heard more than 300 Africa University students didn’t have the money to go back to school.

Ms. Muradzikwa turned to the business community of Zimbabwe and raised \$100,000 for scholarships in a country where the economy has collapsed and many companies are only operating at 25 percent of capacity.

The effort gave some 60 students the opportunity to continue their education, and showed how a nation could come together to provide a better future for the next generation, Ms. Muradzikwa said.

“I have three children who are currently attending university,” she said at a recent Africa University advisory development committee meeting. “And I couldn’t imagine what any mother or parent must be facing if they had a child in the middle of their studies but did not have the money to let them complete their education.”

### Education first

More than 300 students have not been able to register at Africa University for the 2009-2010 academic year. Rampant inflation in Zimbabwe, where the school is



UNITED METHODIST NEWS SERVICE PHOTO BY KATHY L. GILBERT

**Martha Mutisi, a graduate of Africa University who will be returning as a lecturer, grieves the fact that scholarship help for students is so severely affected.**

located, made Zimbabwean dollars worthless.

In 2009, Zimbabwe switched to a



UNITED METHODIST NEWS SERVICE PHOTO BY VICKI BROWN

**James Salley introduces Grace Muradzikwa as an “outstanding fundraiser” during an Africa University recognition dinner.**

currency of U.S. dollars and South African rand. Africa University can only accept U.S. dollars and many Zimbabwean parents have no means to pay for their children’s education. The cost for sending a student to Africa University for one year is \$5,400, while the average salary for a worker in Zimbabwe is \$100 to \$200 a month.

As the chief financial officer for Nicoz Diamond, the largest insurance agency in Harare, Zimbabwe, Ms. Muradzikwa has ties to the business community. As a board member of the Africa University development committee, she also has ties to the United Methodist-related institution.

She said the chaplain of Africa

University called her to discuss what Zimbabweans could do to help their children.

“We then agreed we would start a fundraising campaign within the Zimbabwe community mindful of the fact many of the Zimbabwean businesses were also going through very difficult times,” she said. “They were also battling with the new currency, trying to restart their operations. But we had faith that since this was something that had to do with the education of their children the business community would be responsive to such a call.”

Ms. Muradzikwa printed photos and bios of the students in need and took them to companies, where she



UNITED METHODIST NEWS SERVICE FILE PHOTO BY MIKE DUBOSE

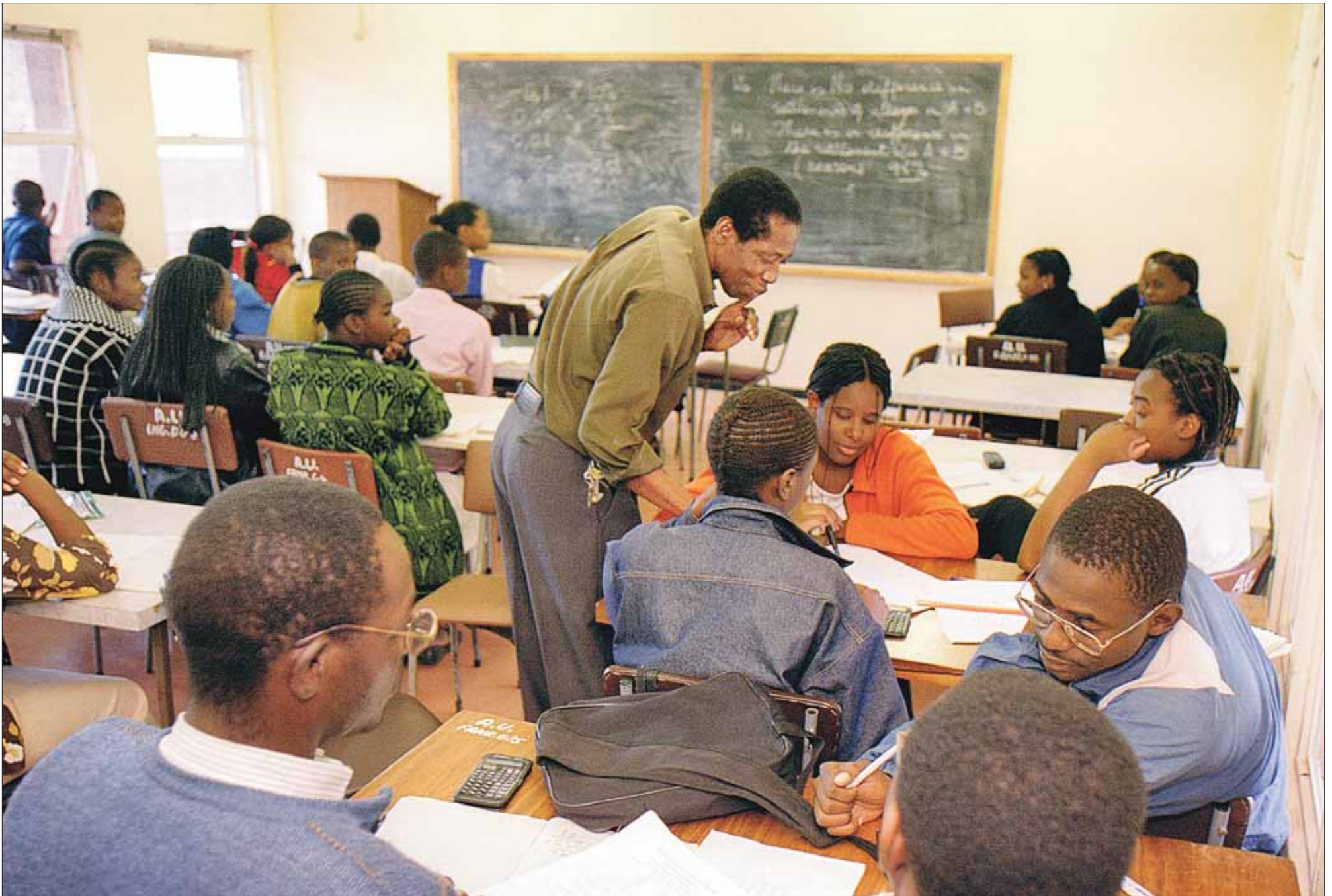
The troubled economy in Zimbabwe has severely affected scholarships at Africa University.



UNITED METHODIST NEWS SERVICE FILE PHOTO BY MIKE DUBOSE

Africa University is located in Mutare, Zimbabwe.





UNITED METHODIST NEWS SERVICE FILE PHOTO BY MIKE DUBOSE

**ABOVE:** David Munasirei teaches geography at United Methodist-related Africa University in Mutare, Zimbabwe.

asked the firms to adopt “two, three or 10” and commit to seeing they completed their degrees.

She found many companies recognized they also were making an investment in their own future.

“One company was particularly interested in students pursuing accounting degrees. Some of the mining houses were interested in engineering students, some others in agriculture students,” she said.

The response was “absolutely awesome.”

“We would walk out of an office and they would say they would take five—it wasn’t an argument, it was just a question of how much they could do.”

### Generous response

Ms. Muradzikwa’s also organized a fundraising event held in conjunction with the annual Nicos Diamond charity ball. The event was held in the Nicos Hotel and the Nicos family do-

nated a three-course dinner for \$15.

“It was a lovely three-course meal—you just don’t get that in Zimbabwe,” she said. “We sold the plates for \$50 so we were able to make a profit of \$35 on each plate.”

Everyone involved in the event from decorators to musicians donated their skills.

With the money raised from the various efforts, Ms. Muradzikwa said, 30 students who were in their final year of study will be able to finish and about 30 other students in their third year will be funded.

“I have always said as Africans in Africa there are pockets we can tap into. It is not all about fundraising in the U.S. and Europe,” she said. “We have Africa University day in our churches and collect a special offering.”

“I think if all churches in Africa were to do this, it would go a long way toward the funding requirements for the university.”



UNITED METHODIST NEWS SERVICE PHOTO BY KATHY L. GILBERT

**ABOVE:** Vice Chancellor Faniel Tagwira says many students have not been able to afford to return to Africa University for the 2009-2010 academic year.

**RIGHT:** Africa University opened this fall with its lowest enrollment in more than a decade.



UNITED METHODIST NEWS SERVICE FILE PHOTO BY MIKE DUBOSE

# A wife's tribute: amazing Steve's final day

BY TYRA DAMM  
Special Contributor

**Editor's note:** This is an account written about the final hours of the author's husband, Steve, a United Methodist who died Sept. 7 at age 40 of a brain tumor that he had battled for more than 20 months. They had called the tumor "that Damm Spot."

On the evening of Sept. 5, Steve wasn't feeling well, but he was certainly improved over that afternoon.

When we woke at 5:30 a.m. Sunday, Sept. 6, his congestion was much, much worse. His throat was burning. His mouth and tongue were swollen. He felt miserable all over.

I spoke with the triage hospice nurse, who sent the on-call nurse to check on him. When "R," a nurse we really love, arrived, I knew from the look on her face that we were in trouble.

After I gave her a list of symptoms, she evaluated him and took me to the dining room to visit. She explained that his body was shutting down. She thought he might have, at the most, seven days left.

A crisis plan was put in place immediately. We started liquid drugs for comfort and to ease breathing. Steve would require 24-hour nursing care.

All this time, Steve's breathing was increasingly difficult. The noises were terrifying.

Our children, Cooper, 8, and Katie, 4, were across the street at a friend's home for most of this activity. I called Steve's parents, Jim and Betty, who



Tyra Damm

called Steve's brother Jim. I called my sister Melane and a few other relatives and friends, along with Pastor Andy.

Susan, a friend from church, had already planned to serve Communion

at home. She and her husband, and another friend, arrived for an abbreviated service.

The three from church, plus Jim, Betty and I surrounded Steve's bed. We sang and prayed and received Communion. Susan gently put a few bread-crumbs on Steve's tongue. She sprinkled white grape juice on his lips.

Cooper and Katie left to play at another friend's house, giving us more time to take care of Steve and time for me to plan how to discuss the rapid changes with them.

We continued to give Steve morphine, which was helping with his breathing and agitation. He tried desperately to communicate, first trying

to talk. I strained to understand him but couldn't. He tried to type but couldn't find the letters. Melane wrote the alphabet, and he pointed to letters to spell.

He said, "I love you" and "Thank you." I held his beautiful face in my hands and told him how very much I loved him and how so very many people loved him and that God loved him and that he was the perfect person for me.

## Surrounded by love

Around the time the second nurse reported for duty at 2:30 p.m., he was starting to drift into a sleep-like state.

R, the first nurse, returned and told me that his symptoms were progressing much more rapidly than she had expected. We might have 24 or 48 hours left.

Cooper and Katie came home, and we waited for the hospice's music therapist and social worker to arrive. Pastor Andy was here, too.

I sat with our children on the sofa and told them that Daddy was very, very sick and that he was going to die soon.

Cooper cried out and bolted for his room.

Katie said, "I don't know why he's so sad. When Daddy dies, he'll still be in our hearts."

She asked, as she often does, what it looks like when you die. When I felt comfortable that she had the answers she needed, I found Cooper in his room.

The music therapist and Andy were with him. They had explained to him why I told him the news.

Cooper told me that he wanted to run away or be locked in a closet.

Before Pastor Andy left, we all gathered in the bedroom to hold hands and pray with Steve. Cooper was on Steve's left side. As Andy spoke aloud, Cooper bent over and sobbed. When we finished, he hid under my covers for a while.

Somewhere along the way I lost count of how many people came in our doors that afternoon and night.

Some hurried over. Uncle Jim came in from Houston. Another delayed her outgoing flight to Los Angeles. Still others drove in from Austin or flew in from San Antonio.

Neighbors and friends streamed in and out. Food and drinks were delivered. We moved more chairs into the bedroom.

Steve couldn't talk back to us and his eyes were closed, but I just know he heard the laughter that filled the room all night long.

We were all devastated, of course, and there were many tears, but you just can't help but tell funny stories when you're talking about Steve.



COURTESY PHOTO

Tyra and Steve Damm, with their children Katie and Cooper, pose at Easter in this 2008 file photo.

At some point during the afternoon, I talked with Dr. M. She praised Steve's courage and will to live. She praised my care. She cried with me. She told me to hold his hand and deliver him to the angels.

I was snuggled next to my one true love, and I just couldn't bear to let go of his hand.

By midnight most everyone had found a place to sleep—either here or at the neighbors'. I stayed awake until about 1:30 a.m. and finally fell asleep. I woke at 2:30. Betty was up, too. She helped tuck me back in, and she went back to sleep in my bed.

I couldn't sleep. I couldn't shake the sense that the time was near.

I didn't say a word aloud, but I was talking to sweet Steve in my head. And I could hear him reply.

"It's OK to go now, sweetie," I would tell him, as I continued to clutch his right hand with my left hand. "You can let go."

And he would reply that he was ready. We did this again and again, in a special unspoken language.

His breathing was very shallow and slow. And then there was one loud breath. The hospice nurse, who was sitting in the corner of the room, hurried over and gave me a sad nod.

We woke Betty. And we sobbed. In minutes, everyone in the house

(except Cooper and Katie) were in the room. In those first moments after Steve's death, we were all supporting one another. Steve's mom. My sister and her husband. Beloved aunt and cousin. My best girlfriend since eighth grade. The friend who introduced me to Steve. Then Steve's father and brother.

## Farewell

I waited until about 5:45 a.m. to wake Cooper. I didn't want to wait too much longer, fearing that as Steve's body changed in appearance, Cooper and Katie would be more frightened.

I told him that Daddy had passed away. I carried him to our bedroom, and he gave Steve's body a hug and a kiss. And again. And then he wanted to go back to bed.

I then woke Katie and gave her the news. She chose to snuggle in his bed, with me on one side and Steve's body on the other. She asked about his white skin and his stillness.

As we waited for the proclamation of death and the UT Southwestern Medical School staff to pick up Steve's body (which he had donated to continue fighting that tumor), I held his hand. I traced my fingers over his distinguished eyebrows over and over again. I told him again how much I love him, how I'll always love him,

how I wished that we could have beaten that Damm Spot, but that we all did the very best we could. I thanked him for giving me the two most amazing children.

In the silence, I kept hearing Steve sing to me. He was singing "Was There Life" by Pete Townshend. It was the first song at our wedding reception in 1994. I can't count the number of times we danced to that song in the kitchen or family room or Steve would just sing it to me out of the blue.

*Was there life before this love  
Was there love before this girl  
I can see  
Was there ever love for her  
before me  
You can count on me to stand  
and say  
Was there ever life before this  
wonderful day?*

When Cooper woke again, Melane and I were concerned that maybe he had forgotten the events earlier. He was cheerful.

I asked if he remembered. He said yes.

"But it's OK, because Daddy believed in God and Jesus, so he's in heaven."

Ms. Damm is a member of Holy Covenant UMC in Carrollton, Texas. Reprinted from her blog at [checkonsteve.blogspot.com](http://checkonsteve.blogspot.com).

# Key Wesleyan fundamental: holiness of life and heart

BY DONALD W. HAYNES  
UMR Columnist

**Editor's note:** This is the fourth column in a series about Methodist fundamentals. See archived columns at [www.umportal.org](http://www.umportal.org).

Question: Who has heard of Hidayet Tuksal, and what does she have in common with Anglican Archbishop Rowan Williams and United Methodist Bishop Larry Goodpaster?

Answer: All are seeking “middle ground” as they try to hold religious extremes together within their global faith communities, even as religion around the globe is tending toward polarization.

Hidayet Tuksal is a Muslim in Turkey seeking some middle ground between women's rights and fundamentalist Islam across the globe. As a feminist, she wears the traditional headscarf to retain her “place at the table.”

Rowan Williams is trying to hold together the 80 million-member Anglican Communion, which ranges from conservative African dioceses to the Episcopal Church in America, which has elected openly gay bishops.

Larry Goodpaster is the president-elect of the United Methodist Council of Bishops, ready to lead the denomination with its extremes on the left and the right! We are another “middle ground” church feeling our way into “Rethink Church.”

The bad news is that the moderates are losing ground in Christianity, in Islam, in Buddhism and in Hinduism. Those who demand more discipline of members and converts are growing. Methodism, on the other hand, has adopted a large theological umbrella and a large measure of cultural accommodation.

Can we “re-think” our identity amid the rumble of a seismic shift in American religion? We cannot ignore the need for teaching our fundamentals. If we are faithful to God's vision for United Methodism, we must affirm who we are, determine what we have to say and to do, and truly re-think United Methodism! We must discover anew what our message is.

What are the fundamentals, then, of United Methodism?

Thomas A. Langford pointed out in his historical overview of developing theology in Wesleyan scholarship that it's much easier to demonstrate tolerance and pluralism in Wesleyan

theology “than it is to track down its distinctive characteristics which promised . . . to provide a concrete shaping power for the future of theology, church, and world.”

I have attempted in this series to enunciate the fundamentals that make United Methodists both a part of the Christian communion and also a distinctive and unique denomination with elements that are quite precious to our identity.

I have already outlined the following as Methodist fundamentals (in omitting the word “United” we do not denigrate the important contribution of the Evangelical United Brethren tradition, but rather seek to reflect a pan-Methodist posture):

1. God's is a never-ending love;
2. God's is a proactive, seeking love;
3. Every child of God has fallen short of the beauty of God's plan;
4. Every child of God has a quickening, awakening “kairos” moment;
5. Convicted of our sin, awakened to our true selfhood, we can repent;
6. We can know our sins are forgiven.

Now comes the seventh fundamental: We must practice “holiness of life and heart.”

Theologian Albert Outler wrote, “Wesley's irreducible minimum of Christian fundamentals were three: the self knowledge of one's sin and need for repentance; pardon and assurance; and “holiness of heart and life.” The latter fundamental defines a “holiness without which no one shall see the Lord.”

Emotional experience must be followed by holy living. In his spiritual journey, Wesley's disciplined spiritual life preceded his experience of “the strangely warmed heart.” As he later detailed the “way of salvation,” he recognized that most people first come to Christ in some experience of saving grace, which Wesley called the “threshold” of salvation, and then move into perfecting grace, which, for Wesley, was God's taking us “room by room” through our thoughts, words, deeds and attitudes.

After his years at Oxford leading the “Holy Club,” Wesley preached in the various colleges of Oxford and went on to become a missionary in Georgia. The Moravians became his mentors, leading to his certain confidence that his sins were forgiven.

In the aftermath of Aldersgate, he immediately spent the summer with the Moravians in Herrnhut, Germany. He left deeply impressed by their assurance of their salvation and perma-



Theologian Albert Outler said John Wesley believed the doctrine of holiness was “the goal and crown of the Christian life.”

nently convinced that even unlettered men could be spiritual directors, but his in-bred Anglicanism was troubled by their doctrine of “stillness.”

Back in London, he pushed them on the relationship of “weak faith” to “maturing faith,” the necessity of good works and the use of the Church's “means of grace” as disciplines through which we grow. Wesley was deeply disturbed when a Mrs. Turner reported that her Moravian mentor advised her to “be still” and “cease any outward works.” A Mr. Bray spoke of the “folly of people that keep running about to church and sacrament.” Others spoke of “ceasing from their own works” and “lying still at Jesus' feet.”

This brand of pietism was more than Wesley could take! On New Year's Eve in 1739, he wrote to the Moravians from whom he was separating: “Much hurt has been done by the doctrine of false, unscriptural ‘stillness.’ Many who were beginning to build holiness and good works on the true foundation of faith in Jesus, are now wholly unsettled and lost . . .”

Wesley re-claimed the formative years of his own spiritual journey. As a child in Epworth, and as a student and a teaching fellow at Oxford, he had deeply internalized books like Thomas

á Kempis' *Imitation of Christ* and William Law's *Serious Call to a Devout and Holy Life*. From these, Wesley developed a lifelong conviction that every action has moral value, good or evil.

He gave prominence to his 1733 sermon “Circumcision of the Heart,” which he preached to the Oxford faculty and townspeople. Wesley insisted that the heart be “circumcised” by “refusing to be led any longer by his senses, appetites and passions.” He reminded his congregation that Jesus calls us to “take up our cross daily,” and all of St. Paul's virtues would be “insecure, even with his salvation in danger” had Paul not practiced “constant self-denial.”

Of his 52 standard sermons—the essence of Methodist doctrine—13 are on Jesus' Sermon on the Mount. Wesley would not disconnect the love of God from the love of neighbor. For Wesley, being a Christian means more than doctrinal affirmation.

Wesley argued with the Moravians that we can indeed have weak faith—“not yet having been purified in heart”—before we have mature faith. Wesley confessed in his letters that we have a “dark night of the soul” or “walk through the shadows.” Methodists were therefore not

shocked when Mother Teresa confessed this same spiritual phenomenon.

The antidote to slipping away from what Psalm 51 calls the “joy of our first salvation” is the spiritually disciplined life, which Wesley called “holiness of heart and life.” From his days at Oxford, Wesley insisted on acts of mercy, love of neighbor, charitable ministries and continuing expressions of what he called “social holiness.”

Early Methodism was intricately interwoven with the problems of the poor—clothing, food, housing, child labor, sickness and what we could simply call “welfare.” Wesley set up a cottage industry for women to knit. Clothing was distributed to those in need. He organized what we would call a “child development center” for children who roamed the streets while their parents worked.

Holy living carried moral responsibility and the imperative of acts of love, mercy and grace. In Bristol, the society fed up to 150 people a day. The Foundry in London featured a “clothing ministry” through which in a two-month period in 1744 he provided 360 people with “needful clothing.”

In his famous tract, “The Character of a Methodist,” Wesley defined genuine Christianity as “simply love of God and love of neighbor.”

According to Wesleyan scholar Richard Heitzenrater, Wesley's goal was a Methodism that moved “beyond a lifeless, formalized religion to one worthy of God, and that is love—love of God and love of neighbor, seated in the heart and showing its fruits in virtue and happiness.” Dr. Heitzenrater says Wesley “pressed hard on the question of holy living.” That is a Methodist fundamental!

As Outler wrote, “I take comfort and courage in the undeniable fact that John Wesley believed and taught an explicit doctrine of ‘holiness’ as the goal and crown of the Christian life, and if this gives you trouble, the burden of proof shifts over to your side (if you claim to be Wesleyan at all) to explain why you are prepared to reject or ignore what he regarded as not only essential but climactic.”

Though the intent for this series was to have four columns, we cannot stop short of naming “perfecting grace” as a Wesleyan fundamental in the next column.

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

# Words have power to bless or curse, analysts say

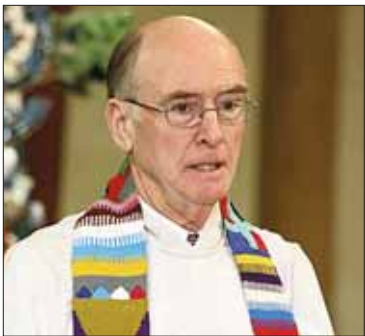
BY KATHY L. GILBERT  
United Methodist News Service

NASHVILLE, Tenn.—Public displays of rude behavior seem to roll out daily, leading many of us to wonder if civility and good manners are dead or at least on life support.

The Internet, television and newspapers are ablaze with opinions on the intemperate remarks of musician Kanye West, tennis star Serena Wilson and U.S. Rep. Joe Wilson.

How should their actions be judged?

The church and the world must hold each other accountable “for the stewardship of words,” says United Methodist



UNITED METHODIST NEWS SERVICE FILE PHOTO  
BY KATHY L. GILBERT

**The church and the world must hold each other accountable “for the stewardship of words,” says United Methodist Bishop Ken Carder.**

Bishop Ken Carder, professor of Christian ministry at United Methodist-related Duke Divinity School.

“What is needed is a transformation of character—hearts and minds that evidence respect for the dignity and worth of every person as a beloved child of God, humility that acknowledges the limitations of our own perspectives and commitment to a vision that transcends political polarities,” he said.

A few incidents of bad behavior do not portend the fall of civil society in America, says nationally syndicated columnist Amy Dickinson, who is a United Methodist.

Civility may be in decline this week, “but next week probably not,” she says.

“Honestly, I think we’re going through something now and people are acting a little haywire. But I think it’s a mistake to make grand and sweeping statements based on what Kanye West does. And that’s because Kanye West always does what he did the other night. He’s sort of a jerk, unfortunately. But a great musician.

“Wilson’s statement doesn’t concern me too much—anyone who enjoys watching the workings of British Parliament couldn’t possibly be fazed by this outburst. And Serena—well, I hate the cursing, but I don’t think it’s anything John McEnroe didn’t do 30 years ago. And we all survived,” Ms. Dickinson says.



PHOTO COURTESY OF MIND’S-EYE

**Country singer Taylor Swift was upset by singer Kanye West’s behavior during the Sept. 13 MTV Video Awards.**

Ms. Dickinson, author of the Ask Amy column, adds, “The United Methodist Church should do what it does best—worship, share and be in community in a Godly way.”

All these public figures behaving badly present a great opportunity for pastors and congregations to talk about respect, she says.

“And of course we parents can and

should continue to mentor our kids at home, starting when they are very young and continuing as long as they will listen to us.”

The Rev. Mark Terwilliger of Beach Lake (Pa.) United Methodist

Church used the example of Ms. Williams’ tirade to illustrate a sermon on “taming the tongue,” based on James 3:1-12.

“In the case of Serena, Kanye and Wilson, all spoke without giving themselves enough time to process their emotions,” he says. “Our words do not just come from out of our mouths, but increasingly our e-mails and our Facebook feeds are products of impulse. Would people be able to tell from what we text to others that we are disciples of Jesus Christ? Everybody’s mothers probably have said, ‘If you can’t say anything nice, don’t say anything at all.’”

Words can hurt, Bishop Carder says.

“Contrary to the proverb, ‘Sticks and stones may break bones but words will never harm me,’ words can be weapons of mass destruction,” he says.

“The church is the one institution that has as its basic purpose to embody the reconciliation wrought in Jesus Christ. How we deal with our differences and disagreements is as important as the specific decisions we reach.”

## CLASSIFIED ADVERTISING • CLASSIFIED ADVERTISING • CLASSIFIED ADVERTISING

### EMPLOYMENT

#### MUSICAL DIRECTOR, LAKE JUNALUSKA SINGERS

Lake Junaluska Assembly, Western North Carolina, seeks Musical Director for Lake Junaluska Singers. Detailed position description and application available by contacting Karen Kirby, HR Director, 828-454-6707, or on [www.lakejunaluska.com/careers](http://www.lakejunaluska.com/careers) page. Application deadline is October 16, submit choral performance DVD and resume to: PO Box 67; Lake Junaluska NC 28745

#### FULL-TIME DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S AND FAMILY MINISTRIES

3,200-member church located in the Houston/Bay Area. Relevant bachelor's degree and experience necessary. For full description or to submit a resume email: [ministry@friendswoodumc.com](mailto:ministry@friendswoodumc.com)

#### DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY MINISTRIES

Spring Valley UMC, Dallas, TX, seeking a full-time Director of Children and Family Ministries. Must be a passionate disciple of Jesus Christ who loves children and is committed and gifted for making disciples among children and young families. Must be a team-player and team-builder who attracts, equips and employs the gifts of others. Contact Martha Myre, 972-233-7671, ext. 19, or email: [mmyre@svumc.org](mailto:mmyre@svumc.org)

#### ASSOCIATE GENERAL SECRETARY, DIVISION OF HIGHER EDUCATION

Serves as division's chief executive and operating officer managing the overall administration and operation of the Division of Higher Education. Serves on executive staff council of the board, reporting directly

to the general secretary/CEO. Doctoral degree required, preferably in a field appropriate to higher education teaching or administration; minimum of 5 years as a senior-level administrator in church-related higher education—President/CEO or equivalent preferred; active membership in The United Methodist Church; sufficient knowledge and understanding of the structure of The United Methodist Church; broad technical knowledge and skills in church-related higher education administration; strong analytical skills and ability to think strategically (visionary). Extensive travel required. Relocation to Nashville, TN, required. Position is available July 1, 2010. Contact: [hr@gbhem.org](mailto:hr@gbhem.org)

#### SEE MORE CLASSIFIED ADS! CHECK OUT WWW.UMPORTAL.ORG

You can find more position listings, services, and exciting opportunities—available only on UMPortal.org

### MISCELLANEOUS

#### DISPLAY & BANNER ADVERTISING

The *United Methodist Reporter* and the UMPortal offer advertisers the ability to target unique messages regarding products, services and employment to church leaders and clergy, as well as individuals in the pews. Reach thousands of Christian households, agencies and organizations by advertising in UMR's products. Variety of display ad sizes and rates to fit any budget and objective. Contact: Cherrie Graham at 214-630-6495, x 142 or [cgraham@umr.org](mailto:cgraham@umr.org)

#### CLASSIFIED ADVERTISING

Regular Readership Weeks (Approximately 150,000 readers)

Expanded Readership Weeks (Approximately 275,000 readers)

Rates are per word or group of figures or initials (20 word minimum)

**Newspaper Only**—\$3.00 per word, two consecutive weeks (one week in Regular Readership and one week in Expanded Readership). **Newspaper/Internet Bundle**—\$4.00 per word includes two consecutive weeks in print and one month on Internet ([www.umportal.org](http://www.umportal.org)). **Internet Only**—\$1.25 per word run for one month on [www.umportal.org](http://www.umportal.org). E-mail your classified ad to: [cgraham@umr.org](mailto:cgraham@umr.org) or enter it online on the Classifieds page at [www.umportal.org](http://www.umportal.org)

#### HAVE YOU HEARD THE NEWS? YOU CAN HAVE YOUR OWN VERSION OF THE UNITED METHODIST PORTAL!

Join the growing number of churches across the UMC who are making the UMPortal their home page. News from your local church, stories from the award-winning staff of the *United Methodist Reporter*, real-time information from Yahoo! News and Google—all in one home page. Visit [www.umportal.org](http://www.umportal.org) and just two clicks can make it your personal homepage. E-mail a request for an online demonstration to learn how easy it is to bring a customized version of the UMPortal to your church at [portal@umr.org](mailto:portal@umr.org)

#### LUMICON DIGITAL PRODUCTIONS

Lumicon offers downloadable worship resources based on the Bible and rooted in current culture, featuring planning guides, graphics and video. The online library provides your church with a range of resources, from Scripture commentary, drama and visual ideas to finished images and videos. Browse the search bank by topic, lectionary or Scripture verse at [www.lumicon.org](http://www.lumicon.org) or call toll-free 1-866-LUMICON (586-4266) for more information.

**STRENGTHEN. effectively.**

**UMR Communications Inc.**

UMR Communications is here to help you strengthen the connection. Using creatively designed, personalized mailing pieces, you can remind your members of important events in the life of your church, invite members and friends to join you for special worship services, keep parents and youngsters involved in youth ministry happenings and raise awareness and support of your church's ministries. From design to mailing, we're here to help you

**CONNECT. effectively.**

UMR Communications | 1221 Profit Dr. | Dallas, TX 75247 | [www.umportal.org](http://www.umportal.org) | 800.947.0207