

## IN THIS ISSUE

Imagine Ministry team plans regional meetings to offer snapshot of Arkansas Conference's effectiveness in ministry

**5A**

United Methodists in Central and North Central Arkansas have a chance to Get Up and Give to Methodist Family Health

**7A**

Church legal clinics aim to welcome immigrants just as the Bible commands welcoming the sojourner

**8A**

United Methodists respond to earthquake in Chile

**11A**

Piney Grove UMC launches recovery ministry for the whole family

**14A**

# Missionaries to Arkansas



Delta Dream Ministries volunteer Carrie Miller, at left, hands out numbers to those waiting to go inside and pick up a box of groceries. On a typical distribution day, between 100 and 120 people will wait in line for food staples.

Photo by Heather Hahn

HEATHER HAHN  
Editor

**M**ARIANNA — As dawn pinks this sleepy Delta town, dozens of people start gathering outside the old railway station.

Even with a cold, biting wind nibbling at their faces, the crowd is in a festive mood.

The people share town news, cheerfully complain about the weather and pat their sides to keep up their blood circulation. Each person has brought a cardboard box.

Shortly before 9 a.m., a woman opens the train station's main entrance and begins handing out numbered cards to those waiting outside. Delta Dream Ministries is now open and late February's food distribution is about to start.

Since June 2004, this United Methodist ministry located in Marianna's old train depot has been providing groceries for residents in this economically depressed region.

In addition to those who line up early in the morning for a box of food staples, the ministry also provides groceries at least once a month for members of a local senior center, patients at a mental-health facility and clients of a substance-abuse treatment center.

Delta Dream Ministries also supplies backpacks full of food each

week to nourish 180 area elementary- and middle-school students. The Arkansas Food Bank Network furnishes most of the ministry's food supply.

Evelyn Banks-Shackelford, who oversees the feeding ministry, says the effort began because she and others saw a need.

"For us, it was a ministry we couldn't say no to," she says. "It's the most visible thing we do."

People need not get in line at sunup to receive food, Banks-Shackelford said. But over the years, the early-morning wait has developed into a time of fellowship among the town residents.

"I think they love the thrill of seeing who gets here first and socializing with each other," Banks-Shackelford said.

The massive food program is one of the state's most prominent examples of the United Methodist Church's Church and Community Ministry.

Banks-Shackelford is one of three Church and Community Workers who minister to needs in Arkansas. The other two are Allyne Solomon, who serves the state's Lower Delta, and Steve Copley (see sidebar, page 8), who works with the state's immigrant population.

[See MISSIONARIES, page 8A]

## Fast times in Christendom: Debating Lenten discipline

HEATHER HAHN  
Editor

Are you giving something up for Lent? Should you?

Two weeks before Ash Wednesday, pastors debated this question when the Facebook page of Lakewood United Methodist Church in North Little Rock posed the question of whether anyone was planning to give up social networking for Lent.

"Seriously?" wrote Danyelle Trexler Ditmer, pastor of Atkins First and Bells Chapel United Methodist churches.

"I have to say that is a very poor



**Russell Hull**



**Danyelle Ditmer**

view of the Lenten discipline of sacrifice. It's like giving up chocolate. In what way will that help you grow closer to God? Instead, let us all endeavor to follow a Holy Lent whereby we honor sacrifice by

taking on disciplines that will enrich our life with Christ and help us more fully appreciate the suffering and death of our Lord and the glory of resurrection on Easter morning."

Russell "Skeeter" Hull, pastor of Nashville First and Bingen United Methodist churches, had his own take.

"I don't argue anything that you say," he replied to Ditmer, "but I think that to say giving up chocolate or social networking would be random or of little value is going a bit far. The idea of the Lenten sacrifice is to make time for us to do exactly what you are talking about in

your previous post. If it is social networking, TV, telephone, breakfast — WHATEVER it is — it's about creating a time to be in prayer or the Word ..."

Clayton Bulice, senior pastor of Primrose UMC in Little Rock, suggested that fasting should be more about doing something good than doing without. He cited Isaiah 58:6: "Is this not the fast that I have chosen: To loose the bonds of wickedness, To undo the heavy burdens, To let the oppressed go free, And that you break every

[See LENT, page 16A]



Hendrix College senior Chase Green receives ashes from J.J. Whitney, the college's assistant chaplain and Miller Center Associate director. Across Arkansas, thousands of United Methodists participated in Ash Wednesday services on Feb. 17 to mark the start of Lent. Ashes have been a traditional sign of repentance dating back to biblical times. The imposition of ashes reminds Christians of the consequences of sin without Christ's sacrifice on the cross: "For you are dust, and to dust you shall return."

Photo by Rodney Steele

## Becoming more of a people of love

**BUD REEVES**  
Special contributor

There is nothing as important as love. Human beings need love as much as we need food and water. Life without love is lonely and worthless.

We need love because we ultimately need God. Love is God's nature and character (1 John 4:8). It is the reason God sent the Son into the world to save us (John 3:16).

As disciples of Jesus, we extend our love beyond the normal boundaries. We are supposed to love more than our families and friends. We love our church family, our community, those who are hurting and broken, even our global human family. That's why we respond when an epic tragedy like the Haiti earthquake occurs.

Even more radically, we are called to love those who hate us and persecute us — our enemies!

Jesus said, "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be children of your Father in heaven; ... For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same?"

The point is clear: The call of the Christian is to love everybody, even those we don't like very much.

What I have noticed lately is a remarkable lack of love in our society. Brothers and sisters in Christ fight and fuss like mortal enemies. Christians in different denominations say negative and critical things about other churches.



**Bud Reeves**

In his recent book, *Christian Civility in an Uncivil World*, Mitch Carnell recounts how his church started a "Say Something Nice" Sunday to try to counter the negativity, and they caught flak for "watering down the Gospel" and were even criticized in their denominational newspaper.

The church of Jesus Christ, which above all should be a community of love, is often a place of narrow-mindedness, hostility and bitterness.

In the larger culture, it is even worse. Spurred by media that pride themselves on belligerence, it is rare that people can have a difference of opinion without questioning each other's motives and honesty. Where is the respect and honor due a worthy adversary, with the intent of working out a mutual compromise that will solve a problem? It just doesn't happen any more.

With all the problems facing our common life, we ought to be able to work out solutions without demonizing our opponents. We're all in this together.

Last month at the National Prayer Breakfast, President Obama lamented the fact that we can no longer have a serious yet civil debate on public policy issues. He called on Americans and political leaders in particular "to bridge their divisions and unite around their common

goals."

I'm not taking political sides here. That's just my point. We should be able to disagree with respect and civility and work out solutions that honor all parties, even when decisions have to be made that go one way or another.

I guess we shouldn't be surprised at the way things are. The Lord of Love came to earth and loved every single person. Yet no person in history was treated with more hostility, hatred, and rejection than him. For his love, people nailed him to a cross.

During Lent, we remember that journey of sacrificial love. The Letter to the Hebrews says, "Consider him who endured such hostility against himself from sinners, so that you may not grow weary or lose heart."

I have not lost heart. I have faith in the ultimate victory of righteousness, as surely as the Christ on the cross became the Lord of the resurrection.

But as we walk the journey of Lent, I believe we need to think about, pray about and strive to become more of a people of love. It's much deeper than just being nice and getting along. It's about the heart of Jesus that breaks over the sin of the world. It's about the love that redeems the brokenness. It's about the love that will ultimately be victorious.

In the end, we'd better be on board.

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



## EDITOR'S CORNER

BY HEATHER HAHN

## Stand and be counted

*"In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world. ... So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David. He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child."*

Luke 2: 1, 4-5 (New International Version)

And it came to pass in these days that a decree went out from the U.S. Constitution that a census should be taken of the entire United States.

This month, the U.S. Census Bureau will begin mailing out forms to households across the country. Article 1, Section 2 of the Constitution mandates that the federal government make an "actual Enumeration" of the population. That means counting both citizens and non-citizens.

Unlike the famed decree that brought Mary and Joseph to Bethlehem, the once-a-decade U.S. headcount doesn't require any travel (just the roughly 10 minutes it takes to fill out the 10-question form and mail it back). And this census isn't for the purpose of levying taxes either.

Instead, the enumeration determines how many representatives each state gets in the House. Census data also will guide the federal government's distribution of more than \$400 billion (of already collected tax revenues) to state and local governments.

Leaders from many faith-based charities also rely on census data when writing grant proposals or

making the case for additional services.

While it's true that the 2010 census won't mark anything near as momentous as Christ's birth, it still is very important. That's why the Census Bureau is asking faith leaders to encourage worshipers to fill out and return their census forms.

For example, the Wesley Foundation at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock has received a grant to help encourage students and others who live in its surrounding neighborhood to complete their 10 questions.

In 2000, only 67 percent of Pulaski County households mailed in their census forms. In fact, only three Arkansas counties had a response rate of 70 percent or better. Even with follow-ups from census workers, bureau officials estimate that some groups, particularly the urban poor, are still undercounted.

People rightfully worry about their privacy. But please be assured the information gathered is only used for statistical analysis. Neither the IRS nor Immigration and Customs Enforcement use the data to track people down. In fact, individual forms remain confidential for 72 years.

Census forms are due in April. After that, census workers will knock on doors to follow up with households that haven't responded.

Now is the time to stand up and be counted.

*To contact me, please e-mail [hhahn@arumc.org](mailto:hhahn@arumc.org) or call (501) 324-8037.*



Volume 156 • No. 44 March 5, 2010  
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@arumc.org](mailto:Patrick.Shownes@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  
800 Daisy Bates Drive  
Little Rock, AR 72202-3770  
[www.arumc.org](http://www.arumc.org) (501) 324-8000

**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) 324-8006.

**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
April 2, 2010	March 17, 2010
May 7, 2010	April 14, 2010
June 4, 2010	May 19, 2010
July 2, 2010	June 16, 2010



# Giving to church supports more than just those in need

PAT LILE

Special contributor

J. Clif Christopher's Jan. 8 column in the United Methodist Reporter raises the question whether your local church is the best place give.

My response is "Absolutely yes." The only qualifier I would place on that strong statement is this: It is the best place to give if you believe that the church of Jesus Christ is the best and most organized way that we have found over the last 2,000 years to follow Christ and, going forward, to keep Christianity alive.

In so doing, we keep alive the church's influence on believers to do good as well as to be good. In this way, believers almost inevitably will give time, talent and treasure to other nonprofit groups and charities to help them address the needs of a troubled world.

To back up my statement, first let me establish that I have a long and strong background with nonprofits and mainline churches.

After a volunteer career of 20 years while my husband, John, practiced law and we were raising



Pat Lile

four children in Pine Bluff, I was fortunate to have a 25-year professional career in the nonprofit world. I have founded nonprofits, been the staff and chief executive officer of nonprofits, and served on numerous boards of directors, and I am currently active on six boards, and also make gifts to each of them.

As much as I value those nonprofits, none of them has the mission of the Christian church — which compels us both to give and to be involved. Not one of them was incorporated with the mission to bring the Good News of Jesus Christ to people.

None was established to keep the organized church alive and thriving when forces work against the very existence of — much less, the spread of — Christianity all around the globe. None of them exists to keep a specific denomination alive, as the

United Methodist Church does. That is important to me and, I would hope, to all Christians.

As to the concept that churches should compete with other nonprofits, I align with the great Christian author Stephen Covey when he promotes an "abundance mentality versus a scarcity mentality."

John and I give both to the church and to other nonprofits, but our first priority and our largest gift is to the church. There is no level-playing field between Christ's church and other charities.

It is like comparing apples (other nonprofits) with steak (the Christian church). Fruit is a nice addition to our diet, but protein is essential for the human body and to keep the body of Christ alive and well.

Many nonprofit groups do outstanding work. But do they provide a fellowship of believers to surround you with caring in time of illness or loss of a family member? Do they rejoice with you on the birth of a new member of your family?

Will any of these nonprofits organize and hold a funeral service for you and commit its executive

director/CEO to say a eulogy and comfort your family and friends at your graveside?

Yes, these are personal questions, and perhaps they are selfish. To a personal question I will add a personal story.

My husband and I have experienced life outside the organized church. When John entered Duke University Law School shortly after we married in August of 1959, and I went to work, we were overwhelmed and did not join a local church in Durham, N.C. The next year, we had our first child and he died of a serious heart defect after three days of life.

We had no family near and only a few new friends there. We learned what it was like to grieve without a fellowship of believers and a pastor to surround us with caring and to help us through this sorrow with a church funeral for our newborn.

After law school, we moved to Pine Bluff and spent 28 wonderful years as active Presbyterians and became elders in First Presbyterian Church.

When we moved to Little Rock in 1990, I felt called to return to my

Methodist roots, and we joined the downtown First United Methodist Church.

John and I have just finished serving a second year as co-chairs of the fall "Giving Campaign" at our church. We are honored and humbled to do even a small part in keeping organized Christianity alive, and in particular, United Methodism, for its focus is critically important; it encourages us to take action and to support other charities and nonprofits in the good that they do.

No one at First United Methodist Church has asked us if our local church is the best place to give. But now, if someone does ask, I think I am prepared to answer.

Thank you, Clif Christopher, for writing this excellent article and challenging us to think through why and to what we give. To God alone be the glory.

*Pat Lile retired two years ago as president/CEO of the Arkansas Community Foundation. She and her husband are members of First UMC in downtown Little Rock. She can be contacted at lilepm@sbcglobal.net.*

## American hears God's wakeup call while visiting a church in China

CLYDE E. HUGHLEY

Special Contributor

This past June, 17 Arkansas teachers and I had the privilege of being invited to participate in a three-week educator's trip to the People's Republic of China. This was sponsored by the Freeman Foundation, through the Arkansas Global Programs at the University of Little Rock at Arkansas.

As a Christian who has been active in ministry for the past 24 years, my key desire was to see what God is doing in and through the Church in China.

Even now, strict governmental controls are maintained over Christian organizations, and all "unregistered" religious activity is repressed wherever and whenever possible.

While in China, I met "John" (the father of a Chinese co-worker who lives in Arkansas) and had the pleasure of spending several hours over two days with him and his wife, Hua. On our second afternoon together, I asked, "Is there a church to be found? I would love to see one."

John and Hua have friends who are members of a local evangelical Christian church, and offered to take me there to see the church in that city.

(I am intentionally leaving the city unnamed because I do not wish to compromise anyone's safety.)

To be honest, this church was not the best-looking structure I have seen. It was tall, pretty rough-looking and needed repair. However, the warmth in which John and Hua's Christian friend received me was real.

As I entered and climbed the stairs of the church, I could hear voices singing — not too softly, not too loudly, but clearly singing to be heard. I wondered what this meant I was going to see.

As I looked around, a group of at least 700 people sang songs of praise (in Chinese) to the Lord.

I was in awe. "Oh!" my heart shouted as God moved me to slowly raise my hands in praise. "If only I could sing the words with you!" One of the church leaders saw me and motioned for me to go to the front.

In the midst of my watching and hearing, God gently said to my Spirit: "You came wanting to have an opportunity to speak. I wanted you to come so you could be spoken to!"

That was it. True, the Church of China needed and still needs our prayers and our support. But God wanted to use my trip to open my spiritual eyes — not so that I could be



Clyde Hughley, pastor of Haven UMC in Hot Springs, leans against a rock that identifies the Beijing Garden Center, while in China last summer.

Photo courtesy of Clyde Hughley

used to touch the Church of China, but so that I could be touched by what He would have me see in the Church.

Before me were college-aged students who could be doing anything else on a Saturday afternoon, but they were here praising God. There were also businessmen, businesswomen, doctors, military officers and police officers — all praising God.

The leader of the service then said something (translated by John)

that was clearly another message from God. "We cannot keep to ourselves the joy we have in Christ," he said to those assembled. "We need to go out and share with all our neighbors the joy that God has given us!"

Wow! Here I was in a country where evangelism is not accepted or approved. Here I was in a country where you place your freedom, your well-being and your life at risk if you dare to evangelize. And here I was in a church that was saying, "Let's do it!"

And God said to me: "What do you and the members of your church do for Me on a Saturday afternoon? And what risks are you taking to tell others of My love and grace?"

And all I could say was, "Forgive me, Lord. Forgive me for forgetting how to love You, how to praise You and how to serve You."

When I left the gathering, one of the leaders and his wife escorted John, Hua and me to the door.

I wanted to express my gratitude for being allowed to have shared in this moment of praise, but words escaped me. I could think of nothing to say. And then it came. "John," I asked. "How do you say, I love you?"

"Wo ai ni!" (Woah eye nee), John said. So, in that parting moment, I said to this Christian brother and his wife those words that only God could give: "Wo ai ni!"

My eyes on China were no longer the same after my encounter with that church. God had spoken to me, and my life will never be the same.

*Clyde E. Hughley is the pastor of Haven United Methodist Church in Hot Springs. He can be reached at hughleyc@hssd.net*

## Heeding the Spirit is not easy, but God grants us the power

MARY FAITH "ZOE" MILES  
*Special contributor*

In writing these articles, the Arkansas Conference has showered me with love and praise, scrubbing me with words of affirmations and cleaning me of my insecurities over and over again.

In talking about authenticity, I need to show you the mud that your words rinse off.

These articles are terribly difficult for me to write.

First, I'm a giant procrastinator. For example, I'm sending this article in late. I realize this is to be anticipated from a college junior who's essentially majored in procrastination the past two and a half years.

Second, when I do come out of hiding to type a few lines, I mysteriously go from having amiably prancing fingers to the fetal position, crying for God to either make it go away or to write it Himself if He wants it so bad.

I attribute a majority of my worst anxiety fits surrounding my article production to spiritual warfare.

Satan doesn't want my generation in church. His minions whisper doubts in my ears: Who am I to have the audacity to think that I can tell you why my generation isn't coming to church? I don't have a special tap into the Generation Y underworld nor do I own a cold stethoscope that can count our heart's rhythms.

So I cry and I wail and I outline and I ask for deadline extensions.

All of this is to say that these articles are not effortless.

However, these articles are a place where God shows up in my life. I am humbled that God wants to use me as a voice for a



Mary Faith  
"Zoe" Miles

generation dancing to heart rhythms I can't distinguish.

All I do is present my words as an offering. I sit down at my computer, type something

decently coherent and trust that whenever I hit send and my article disappears into the ether, God will take my loaves and fishes that I set on His altar and perform a miracle.

I thought that being authentic about my ministry would be a beautiful segue into the final fragrance in this winding series. I've discussed my generation's want for warmth and authenticity. The third fragrance is power.

Power is the one of the three scents that is produced exclusively by the Holy Spirit.

We get confused when we think the miracle of works happens as a result of some great human tool.

When we don't possess the tools that we believe necessary to assist the Spirit, we shrink back at the honor God is calling us to. We act like Moses hiding behind his lisp.

I am a failed human being. But God gently presses me to my knees, telling me all I have to do is lay my words at His feet and He'll take it from there.

If you have enough humility to show up for God, clothed in inadequacy, He'll show up for you.

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

### Conference Mailing Address Change

The mailing address for the Arkansas Conference Office has changed.

**The new mailing address is:  
800 Daisy Bates Drive  
Little Rock, AR 72202**

This does not affect the post office box numbers used by the Conference Treasurer and Pension & Benefits Offices. Our physical location is still on the 2nd floor of the Kendall Science Center on the Philander Smith College campus.

## This season, red is the new black

DEENA MARIE HAMILTON  
*Special contributor*

For those who truly know me, they know that I'm a hardcore fan of the HBO series *Sex and the City*.

I love that show because I could relate to the relationship mishaps of Carrie, Miranda, Charlotte and Samantha.

But what captivated me the most about the show was the fashion. I learned about Manolo Blahnik shoes, Hermes Birkin bags, Prada accessories and Tiffany's blue boxes.

Needless to say because of the show, I broke down and bought a Tiffany necklace and my first pair of \$500 Jimmy Choo black stiletto pumps. Yes, I did. Who said that pastors can't have fashion sense?

As I get more enthralled in fashion perusing the latest *Vogue*, *Elle* and *Mademoiselle*, I wait with baited breath for the new colors that are quoted by fashion experts as the "in" shade.

"Gray is the new Black," or "Orange is the new Pink." Those phrases send me to department stores in desperate need of making sure that I'm in vogue.

I don't encourage anyone to go out in search of designer labels that they can't afford, but when it comes to what we wear there should be one color that we should always be clothed in — and that's red.



Deena Marie  
Hamilton

The blood of Christ is cleansing and gives us permanent reconciliation with our Creator.

It is powerful and life changing. And as the song goes, it will never lose its power. It reaches to the highest mountain and flows to the lowest valley. It should give us strength in

horrifying is that my sins put him there.

As I evolve as a Christian and pastor, I realize that I cannot continue to take for granted what Christ did for me. I must clothe myself with honor by being covered by the blood of Christ.

As we continue Lent and prepare our hearts and minds for the Easter season, let's remember that in order to stay in vogue, we need to take a look at ourselves and see what we're wearing not on the outside but in our hearts.

Do we boldly proclaim the victory that we have in Christ or do we put it away in a closet somewhere waiting for the right occasion to let it be seen?

It's always fashionable to be in step with Christ.

He never goes

out of style because there is no name above the name of Jesus Christ.

But I will say this... Pink and green are my favorite colors, but I sure do look good in red. So from now on, I will be dressed from head to toe in red because the Lord took a chance on a sinner like me.

Remember, red is the new black.

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

**"The blood of Christ is cleansing and gives us permanent reconciliation with our Creator. ... And as the song goes, it will never lose its power."**

our everyday lives.

When Christ went before Pilate, beaten unmercifully, forced to carry a burden that was not his to carry, was barbarically nailed to a tree, had a thorny crown smashed on his head — I could just imagine the only color that he did see was red.

By His stripes, we are healed. He did this out of love. He — who is without sin — had the sins of the world heaped upon him.

What was a vision of shame became a triumphant event of God's glory.

What makes it even more

## Letters to the Editor

There has been a lot of shouting and anger recently about the possibility of government-operated health care.

There are several underlying beliefs in that statement I will make. First, society should provide at least minimal health care for all of its citizens. Second, we should not bankrupt the country with a typical government intervention.

Therefore, I think there is a model that could solve both of these problems.

It could be designed along the lines of the Christian Clinic Movement. I was privileged to be part of the organization of the clinic in Dardanelle. So far that facility alone has provided \$3.5 million in

medical services.

The clinics would be staffed partially by volunteers: doctors, nurses and dentists.

They would be compensated by tax credits. Senior medical students could repay student loans with a year of service. Each year of service could pay for more of their loan liability.

Medications could be furnished with an all-generic drug plan.

Nurse practitioners, specially trained by medical schools, could run the clinics five days a week.

If hospitalization is required, then some form of Medicare could pay for that. Hospitals could bid for the service or we could find

hospitals that need to raise their census to stay in the black.

It could be done for a fraction of the cost. It would not threaten to destabilize the present medical delivery system now in place.

Roger E. Glover, pastor  
Humnoke and Hamilton  
United Methodist churches

*Letters to the editor should include a contact phone number for the writer and be limited to no more than 100 words. They also should be written in the spirit of Christian dialogue. They can be mailed to the attention of Heather Hahn at 800 Daisy Bates Drive, Little Rock, AR 72202 or e-mailed to hhahn@arumc.org.*



# Imagine Ministry team seeks help in imagining conference's future

HEATHER HAHN  
Editor

Since late August, members of the Imagine Ministry team have been working to capture a snapshot of the current state of United Methodism in Arkansas.

This month, the team plans to present a picture of what they've found to pastors and laity at four regional meetings around the state. And they hope these get-togethers will mark the start of similar discussions in all the state's United Methodist congregations.

"The purpose of the regional meetings is to take the conversation that we've been charged to be part of, to take that back to the local church level," said Kurt Boggan, the team's project manager and Northeast District superintendent.

"We'll be proposing some questions that each local church will be taking back and answering in their local church context and share at Annual Conference."

Those questions, broadly, will deal with such topics as the church's identity, purpose and action.

At last year's Annual Conference, Bishop Charles Crutchfield announced the formation of the Imagine Ministry team to examine how the Arkansas Conference does church. He appointed to the team four members of the clergy and four members of the laity.

He named Boggan as project manager, giving him the assignment of keeping the group on task and helping with the group's communications. Crutchfield also hired Gil Rendle, a senior consultant with the Institute of Clergy and



Members of the Imagine Ministry team, from left, are Gil Rendle, a consultant; Kurt Boggan, Northeast District superintendent and the team's project manager; Bishop Charles Crutchfield; Susan Ledbetter, associate pastor at First UMC in Bentonville; Kathy Conley, member of First UMC in Blytheville; Don L. Riggan, member of St. James UMC in Little Rock; Bud Reeves, pastor of First UMC in Hot Springs and Mackey Yokem, the team's convener and Northwest District superintendent. Team members not pictured are Edna Morgan, associate pastor of First UMC in Pine Bluff; Charles W. Donaldson, a member of Hunter UMC in Little Rock; and Jim Argue Jr., president of the United Methodist Foundation of Arkansas.

Photo by Heather Hahn

Congregational Excellence of the Texas Methodist Foundation in Austin as well as an independent consultant.

Over the past six months, the group has been examining different measures of church effectiveness — statistics like church attendance, professions of faith, baptism, membership, financial resources and mission outreach.

Team members also have talked with leaders of other United Methodist conferences that have undergone similar processes of self-examination including the Indiana, Texas and Baltimore Washington conference.

"They've negotiated some areas

of doing change," said team member Susan Ledbetter, associate pastor at First UMC in Bentonville. "They looked at some different ways to do coaching. It should be noted they still see themselves as work in progress, but they report having a new common language. The language influences the action."

She said Rendle pointed out to the team that there's a big difference between talking about attracting members and making disciples.

Over the past four decades, the United Methodist Church — like other mainline Protestant churches — has seen its American membership rolls plummet and the denomination's influence on wider

American culture has declined accordingly. The denomination currently has less than 8 million members in the United States.

Mackey Yokem, the team's convener and Northwest District superintendent, said too often United Methodists focus on maintaining bureaucracy and not transforming the world.

He said the Imagine Ministry team's work is changing the way he and other team members think about the ministries of the church.

"I think it's going to increase the participation of the person in the pew in the ministry of the church," he said. "It's going to be an invitation to broaden participation in real ministry

so we don't just come to worship, but we come to be challenged to think outwardly."

Ledbetter said serving on the team has renewed her sense of calling to the ministry. She first discerned God's call while at a young adult conference in Denver. A student at Iliff School of Theology told those gathered that in 10 years, half of the United Methodist pastors would either be dead or retired.

"I thought, 'That's a horrible thing to say,'" Ledbetter said. "In that moment, I heard God's voice say 'That's what I want you to do.' I wasn't thinking in terms of guaranteed appointment. I wasn't thinking in terms of job security. It took me months to unpack that and realize what that meant in my life. Only now does that moment make sense."

It's now a decade later, and while the Iliff student's dire prediction hasn't yet materialized, Ledbetter still discerns God's calling on her life.

In going through the Imagine Ministry process, she said she "has been awakened."

Likewise, she hopes others will discern God's call as they examine where the United Methodist Church is and where it should be heading.

The group is just barely a quarter way through what the bishop anticipates to be a two-year process.

The group will give a progress report at Annual Conference in 2010. Any proposals that grow out of these conversations will be taken up at the 2011 conference.

Yokem said: "We want to begin a conversation out of which will grow in time a new sense and direction for ministry."

## Imagine Ministry Regional Meetings

The Imagine Ministry team will have four regional meetings. Bishop Charles Crutchfield requests that every pastor attends along with two laity. The bishop also requests that at least one of those laypeople be under the age of 40.

The meetings will be at the following locations:

- Central Region — 3-5 p.m. March 7 at Pulaski Heights UMC, 4823 Woodlawn Drive.
- Northwestern Region — 3-5 p.m. March 14 at Central UMC in Fayetteville, 6 West Dickson St.
- Northeastern Region — 3-5 p.m. March 21 at First UMC in Wynne, 800 N. Falls Blvd.
- Southern Region — 9-11 a.m. March 27 at First UMC in Camden, 121 Harrison Ave. S.W.

## BUSINESS & PROFESSIONAL DIRECTORY

### CHARTERED BUS



### OUACHITA COACHES

Serving Arkansas safely since 1983  
New Luxury Coaches • Air Conditioned  
800-782-2877

### STAINED GLASS



Serving Arkansas with Quality Stained Glass since 1973

Churches ♦ Residential ♦ Commercial  
(800) 791-7667  
www.soosstainedglass.com  
P.O. Box 13452, Maumelle, AR 72113

### COUNSELING

### Daily Bread Counseling

(Member of Clergy Counseling Network)

Rev. Garry D. Teeter, MS, LPC, NCC, BCPC, CBIST  
Offices in Benton, Hot Springs & Little Rock

Call for confidential appointment  
501.847.2229 | 1.877.847.2229

www.dailybreadcounseling.com





# A primer to United Methodist initiatives

*In the continuing effort to make disciples for the transformation of the world, the United Methodist Church and the Arkansas Conference have launched a number of initiatives in the past two years. But admittedly, keeping all the names straight can get confusing. What follows is a primer on these United Methodist programs.*

## GENERAL CHURCH INITIATIVES

**RETHINK CHURCH** — This United Methodist Communications initiative includes multi-media commercials (television, radio, billboards, magazine, and social network advertisements).

Rethink Church is a campaign to reach 18-34-year-old spiritual seekers, and to encourage local churches to move outside the church doors.

The Rethink Church Web site, [www.rethinkchurch.org](http://www.rethinkchurch.org), has resources for use by pastors, local churches, districts and conferences.

## 10THOUSANDDOORS.ORG

— This is the external Web site for Rethink Church. It is the place that the 18- to 34-year-old spiritual seekers can go to learn more about the United Methodist Church and to get plugged into mission activities or Impact Community events hosted by their local congregations. It is a social-network place for seekers to explore what United Methodism is about. This is part of the Rethink Church initiative.



## IMPACT COMMUNITY EVENTS

— An Impact Community Event is a mission that involves members of local United Methodist churches with individuals in the community. Any conference, district or cluster of three churches can plan an Impact Community



Event. Media grants are available from United Methodist Communications to pay for the advertising and promotion of an Impact Community grant. This is part of the Rethink Church initiative.

The Arkansas Conference and Methodist Family Health have received an Impact Community Grant for a project called "Get Up and Give," which will take place April 11.

## CHANGE THE WORLD

— On April 24-25, United Methodists around the world are being asked to serve people locally in conjunction with World



Malaria Day. Congregations will be asked to schedule an activity involving the community and church members for either an existing or new outreach ministry on either April 24 or 25.

Churches are also asked to collect a special offering on that Sunday for malaria.

**UNITED METHODIST WAY** — This is a renewal movement toward recapturing the spiritual health of individuals and the denomination through John Wesley's Way of being in covenant with Christ and with one another. By recapturing the commitment of the Methodist way of living, clergy and laity can experience again the rich spiritual fruit in their lives and in their engagement with the world.

## ARKANSAS CONFERENCE INITIATIVES

**IMAGINE MINISTRY** — This is a comprehensive review of the effectiveness of the conference's operations and structure. The Imagine Ministry team was called into being by Bishop Crutchfield to help begin the process of imagining the future God has for the Arkansas Conference and then assuring that the conference is prepared to meet that future. Utilizing primary and



secondary research, the team will prepare a report for the 2010 Annual Conference with any proposals to be taken up at the 2011 conference meeting.

**SHARING TOGETHER IN CHRIST'S NAME** — This initiative's objective is to create a joyful understanding about how connective giving transforms the world.



Not a stewardship program, the initiative focuses on a celebration of the lives that have been transformed and the betterment of the world because of shared blessings. The initiative will be promoted prior to this year's Annual Conference and materials will be distributed to all local churches in July 2010. The initiative was made possible through a grant from the United Methodist Foundation of Arkansas and being designed and executed by Arkansas Conference Communications.

— MARTHA TAYLOR

## United Methodist Scholarships

- 100% tuition scholarships for Master of Divinity applicants with 3.5 GPA

## Doctor of Ministry

- Congregational Growth and Community Development in Muskogee, OK

## Certificate in Spiritual Formation

- Skills for spiritual leadership to individuals and small groups in the local church

- Master of Divinity
- Master of Arts
- Master of Arts in Ministry
- Master of Sacred Theology
- Doctor of Ministry

[www.drew.edu/theo](http://www.drew.edu/theo)  
**DREW**  
 THEOLOGICAL SCHOOL

36 Madison Avenue, Madison, NJ 07940 • 973/408-3111 • [theoadm@drew.edu](mailto:theoadm@drew.edu)



# Arkansans can Get Up and Give to help Methodist Family Health

ALYSSA ANDERSON

*For the Arkansas United Methodist*

United Methodists in the Central and North Central Districts have a new opportunity to “Get Up and Give.”

On April 11, Methodist Family Health and the Arkansas Conference are partnering in a new event called just that: Get Up and Give. The event, funded by an Impact Community Grant from United Methodist Communications in Nashville, Tenn., will be a day of giving to the women and children served by Methodist Family Health, a nonprofit organization providing mental health services for at-risk families.

For this gathering, you can give your time, your money or new items for those in need.

“Many of the children who arrive at one of our programs come with nothing more than the clothes on their back,” said Ashley Coldiron, executive director of the Methodist Family Health Foundation.

“They depend on us to provide them with the basic necessities, and Get Up and Give is an opportunity for us to collect the items most needed by these children.”

But more than a day of giving, Get Up and Give will also be a day of service. From 1 to 4 p.m., individuals and groups, United Methodists and non-United Methodists, are invited to do one or more of the following:

- Drop off needed items (see list to the side) to either the Methodist Children’s Home in Little Rock or the Methodist Behavioral Hospital in Maumelle.
- Volunteer to help sort and pack collected items.
- Help plant flowers and shrubs, clean outdoor furniture, put down mulch and other outdoor tasks to make the outdoor space better for the kids and visitors.
- Help with a neighborhood cleanup in the area around the Children’s Home.
- Make a monetary donation to the Methodist Family Health Foundation.

Immediately following the event, at 4:15 p.m., Methodist Children’s Home campus will host a celebration of the day’s accomplishments, including live music by the FaithSpring Praise Band, a special guest speaker and refreshments. Representatives from KURB-FM B 98.5 will be on hand during the event to cheer on volunteers.

The celebration will take place



Carolee Cook, director of recreational therapy at Methodist Behavioral Hospital, at right, offers one of the hospital’s clients some tips on her basketball game one spring morning last year. United Methodists in Central and North Central Arkansas have a chance to help Methodist Family Health’s young clients on April 11.

File photo by Heather Hahn

in the Methodist Children’s Home recreation center.

The inspiration behind this new day of giving and service came from a small group of women at Keo United Methodist Church. Led by Jean Landrum and Ila Chaney, the women started their own event several years ago called “Undie Sunday,” and four times a year, they collect underwear, socks and other necessity items for the children at Methodist Behavioral Hospital in Maumelle. Get Up and Give is a larger-scale version of their original event.

Everyone interested in participating in a day of service must register on our Web site at [www.impactcommunityevent.org/Arkansas](http://www.impactcommunityevent.org/Arkansas).

Projects will be assigned on a first-come, first-served basis.

Volunteers should plan to bring some of the following items: work gloves, shovels, wheelbarrows, trowels, posthole diggers, a Roto-tiller and rakes. Closed-toed shoes or work boots are a must— no flip-flops or sandals.

Invitations will soon be arriving at United Methodist churches in the Central and North Central districts.

“Get Up & Give is a great opportunity for people in North Central and Central Arkansas to get involved in projects that have a direct and positive impact on children and families,” Martha Taylor, the Arkansas Conference’s director of communications, said. “It



## How to help:

Get Up and Give will be at 1-4 p.m. April 11 at the Methodist Children’s Home, 2002 S.Fillmore St., Little Rock.

If you are interested in collecting items to be donated at either the Methodist Children’s Home or Methodist Behavioral Hospital, below is a list of what is needed.

All items must be new and will be distributed to Methodist Family Health’s Group/Foster Homes, Therapeutic Day Treatment Schools, Methodist Behavioral Hospital and Outpatient Clinics:

- **Homes:** socks, underwear, paper towels, toilet paper, detergent (laundry and dish), soap and board games.
- **Schools:** board books, computer learning software and school supplies
- **Hospital:** children’s magazines, board books, board games, school supplies, underwear and socks
- **Clinics:** toys for the waiting rooms, coloring books, crayons and board books

Because of grant requirements, registration is needed for those who donate money, items or attend. Register at [www.impactcommunityevent.org/Arkansas](http://www.impactcommunityevent.org/Arkansas).

is what I hope will be the first of many Arkansas events that will involve the Methodist churches and those in their communities.”

She added that Impact Community Grant funds are available for any district or cluster of at least three churches and welcomes those interested to contact her about

how to apply for a grant.

To learn more about Get Up and Give, contact Ashley Coldiron of the Methodist Family Health Foundation, at (501) 661-0720 ext. 7304, or Martha Taylor, Arkansas Conference communications director, at (501) 324-8005.



## OUR SMILES SAY IT ALL.

At The Baddour Center, men and women with intellectual disabilities are growing stronger every day, in every way. Intellectually, spiritually, physically, socially, emotionally, and vocationally. Learn more about this unique community of productive, happy men and women at [www.baddour.org](http://www.baddour.org) or call 888.422.3368.

THE  
BADDOUR  
CENTER

COMMUNITY FOR ADULTS WITH  
INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES.



## Welcoming immigrants to the United States is Church and Community Worker's mission

HEATHER HAHN  
Editor

Because of the legal clinic at Dover United Methodist Church, Cipriano Mata was able to achieve his dream of becoming a U.S. citizen.

"They helped me with a lot with things I didn't understand," Mata said. "They did an absolutely wonderful job."

Mata, 37, is one of scores of immigrants who've found the legal help they needed at a United Methodist church in Arkansas.

Since 2006, First UMC in Monticello, Dover UMC and Oak Forest UMC in Little Rock have each started offering free legal clinics once a month to serve the state's immigrant population.

Mata's case, like all cases at these churches, was handled by a national attorney with Justice for Our Neighbors.

Justice for Our Neighbors, a United Methodist Committee on Relief program, offers a national network of church-based, volunteer-led clinics to help immigrants and asylum seekers navigate the maze of rules and laws that affect their lives in the United States.

The program helps people seeking to reunify their families, secure legal status and enjoy the right to work.

At present, Justice for Our Neighbors has about 20 clinic sites in nine conferences.

Steve Copley, an ordained elder, is a Church and Community Worker as well as the Arkansas Conference's director of Justice for Our Neighbors.

These clinics are one way the United Methodist Church practices biblical hospitality, he says. Specifically, he says the clinics seek to follow Jesus' command in Matthew 25 to serve "the least of these."

"Christ says, 'Did you welcome me when I was a stranger?'" Copley said. "That's what we're trying to do."

The clinics aren't a sanctuary program meant to house undocumented immigrants.

Instead, their main aim is to help people achieve legal status — whether that means obtaining legal residency (commonly known as getting a green card because



Cipriano Mata is pictured at the ceremony at the Clinton Presidential Center, when he became a U.S. citizen. He credits the legal clinic at Dover UMC with helping him to gain his citizenship.

Photo courtesy of Sergio Picado

permanent resident cards used to have a greenish tint) or being naturalized as a U.S. citizen.

"The whole idea of these legal clinics is that if our lawyer can help them, she does," Copley said. "If our lawyer can't, she explains why. At the very least, we try to assure that people won't be taken advantage of by someone who isn't an attorney saying 'I'll help you if you give me \$10,000.'"

The vast majority of immigrants at the three clinics come from Mexico or Central America.

Mata is the first of those helped by an Arkansas clinic to receive citizenship, which he did at a ceremony in September at the Clinton Presidential Library.

Mata, who grew up in the state of San Luis Potosi, Mexico, first came to the United States about 16 years ago because — like many immigrants — he was searching for work.

"After I got out of high school, I was a teenager looking for a job," he said. "I never found one. That's what brought me over to the United States."

He spent his first few months in Brownsville, Texas, before moving to Arkansas, where today he works as a poultry processor in Ola.

He already was a permanent resident when he first heard at his home parish, St. Andrew Catholic Church in Danville, about the clinic in nearby Dover.

Embarking on the naturalization process, he decided, would help him to improve his job

prospects. It also would give him peace of mind, knowing that his residency could not be withdrawn.

To become a U.S. citizen, a person must be a permanent resident for at least five years and be fairly fluent in English. The U.S. citizenship test includes both written and spoken portions and is drawn from some 200 questions dealing with the U.S. government and history. U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services also charges a \$675 filing fee.

The process also requires filling out a lot of paperwork.

Mata credits the Dover UMC clinic with providing him with needed legal expertise. Volunteers also helped him review potential citizenship questions. Mata said he practiced for at least an hour a day for weeks in preparation for the test.

Ultimately, he felt fairly confident on test day. Among the questions he answered, he said, were "What's the capital of Arkansas?," "Who is the vice president?," and "What rights do you have as a U.S. citizen?"

He's now working on his GED and hopes to be able to soon apply for some better-paying jobs.

The clinics largely rely on the leadership of laity. Sergio Picado, the clinic coordinator for the Dover UMC clinic, said he and other clinic volunteers were heartened by Mata's achievement.

But some of the most wonderful cases, he said, involve the national attorney noticing special facts or issues about a case that make the difference between people being able to stay in the United States or being forced to return back to their often impoverished country of origin.

"You're making a difference not just for individuals but for their whole family," said Picado, himself a naturalized citizen who came to Arkansas as youngster from Chile. "It's an effect that is multigenerational. That person's great-grandchildren will grow up in the United States because of the work we're doing today."

To support the work of Justice for Our Neighbors in Arkansas, visit [secure.gb-gm-umc.org/donations](http://secure.gb-gm-umc.org/donations). Steve Copley's Missionary Support Code is 982019.

MISSIONARIES Continued from Page 1A

These three workers are commissioned missionaries of the General Board of Global Ministries. In response to God's call, these workers have committed to uplifting the poor and empowering the disenfranchised in society. They are part of Methodist missionary tradition that dates back nearly 125 years.

In 1885, women in the Methodist Episcopal Church saw a need to provide aid to women in mining and rural areas. Those who took up the vocation were initially called Rural Workers and then Town and Country Workers before taking up their current designation.

At present, 48 Church and Community Workers serve in both rural and urban settings across the United States. They come from a variety of backgrounds, and include clergy, nurses, social workers, lawyers and teachers.

### "On a larger scale"

Banks-Shackelford had been an active lay member of Scruggs Chapel United Methodist Church in Moro when she learned that the area's Church and Community Worker was retiring. She decided it was a ministry she'd like to do.

"We had low membership in the church, so I was one of those people who did a little bit of everything — the youth, the choir, whatever needed to be done," Banks-Shackelford says. "I thought this would allow me to work on a larger scale."

She has now been a Church and Community Worker for more than 20 years. Initially, she worked with predominantly black churches in the Delta, helping to organize Vacation



Dozens of people line up hours before Delta Dream Ministries based in an old train station in Marianna — pr

Bible Schools, confirmation classes and other activities intended to draw community involvement. She took on the food ministry after members of First UMC in Marianna withdrew from plans to organize a similar ministry at the train station.

Delta Dream Ministries typically has two distribution days a month. Around the start of the month, the ministry administers commodities from the U.S. Department of Agriculture. These recipients must meet certain income requirements.

The month's second distribution day is open to just about anyone. Banks-Shackelford only requires that recipients bring their own cardboard



From left, Betty Allison, Katie Denton and Lillie Rachel Massey — all retired educators — are among more than a dozen volunteers who make Delta Dream Ministries work. On Feb. 24, the women helped food recipients sign in.

Photo by Heather Hahn





Delta Dream Ministries opens for the food distribution at 9 a.m. Twice monthly, the ministry — provides groceries for Delta residents in need.

Photo by Heather Hahn

boxes to help replenish the ministry's supplies. For the ministry's record keeping, recipients also must sign in and list the number and ages of people in their household who will be served.

The distribution day on Feb. 24 was an example of this more open giveaway. On this day, Banks-Shackelford has more than a dozen volunteers and part-time workers helping her.

Refrigerators, freezers and pantries take up most of the train depot's space. The station's small sitting area is pretty much the only place where there's room to give out food.

Volunteer Carrie Miller calls out the numbers of those waiting in line outside five or six at a time. The recipients each step inside, sign in at a table manned by volunteers, hand over their cardboard box and in its place, get another box full nonperishable goods.

As the recipients make their way toward the train depot's exit, volunteers top off their box with a container of frozen meat, a pint of milk, a carton of eggs, a box containing king cake and a bag of carrots.

By 10 a.m., the volunteers have given out groceries to more than 100 people.

"This helps me keep my grocery bills down," Haywood Jones, a retired farmer, says. "I'm on a fixed income and any little bit helps."

#### Navigating the system

Most of what Allyn Solomon does as a Church and Community Worker is more behind the scenes.

When a family in the lower Delta loses a job or suffers another emergency, Solomon helps the family navigate the system and connect with the support that's available. Likewise, Solomon helps local churches discover the funding opportunities that are available.

David Moore, senior pastor of First UMC in Hamburg, says Solomon has helped the church's after-school program, The Pioneer Club, obtain grants for a van and educational materials.

"She's helped take the edge off

the financial responsibilities in the church," Moore says.

While her office is at First UMC in Hamburg, Solomon serves as a resource not just for area local churches but also the Southeast District and the Arkansas Conference.

When she first arrived in Hamburg, she put together a resource book for area churches.

She often gets calls when people need help connecting with the church. Last November, a nearby school contacted her requesting help in restocking its coat closet. She led a drive that ended up collecting more than 200 coats.

At present, she is partnering with HIPPY (a national organization, which stands for Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters) to provide healthy snacks for the 90 youngsters the program serves each week in Ashley County.

A longtime Christian educator before becoming a Church and Community Worker in September 2007, Solomon sees the two callings as not that dissimilar. In both roles, she sees herself as helping to share the love of Christ.

"One of the greatest things about being a Church and Community Worker is that you take the church out to people in the community," Solomon says, "and you bring the community back into the church."

To support Arkansas Church and Community Workers, visit [secure.gbgm-umc.org/donations](http://secure.gbgm-umc.org/donations). Evelyn Banks-Shackelford's missionary support code is 982939. Allyn Solomon's support code is 982021. To learn more about Church and Community Workers, visit [www.arumc.org/church\\_community\\_workers.php](http://www.arumc.org/church_community_workers.php).



Evelyn Banks-Shackelford, the church and community worker who oversees Delta Dream Ministries, points to where she'd like to install a three-compartment sink, which the Arkansas Department of Health requires to serve meals on the premises.

Photo by Heather Hahn

## 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](mailto:dweeks@arumc.org).

**Until to Mid-April:** Mountain T.O.P. (Tennessee Outreach Project), sponsored by the Tennessee Conference, provides home repairs in the Cumberland Mountains. Groups choose their own dates (arriving Sunday night and leaving Friday morning). \$200 per person. Samantha Tashman, [sam@mountain-top.org](mailto:sam@mountain-top.org) or (931) 692-3999.

**May 29-June 6:** Guatemala Mission Trip 2010. Doctors and surgical nurses are needed for the medical clinic. Contact Gwen Efird, (501) 666-8446, or Pulaski Heights UMC (501) 664-3600.

**July 16-Aug. 1:** Bunda, Tanzania. Volunteers are needed to help: finish a library for Bunda, start construction on two churches, build water filters for purification and possibly start a medical clinic.

Contact Contact Gary B. Lunsford at Wiggins Memorial United Methodist Church at (479) 442-8633 or his home number (479) 442-6500.

**Aug. 26 – Sept 2:** Christ of the Hills UMC has a mission trip planned to Haiti. Those interested should contact Walter "Bubba" Smith at (501) 922-4503 or e-mail [srpastor@cohmc.com](mailto:srpastor@cohmc.com)

**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. Teams can sign up by contacting Don Weeks at [dweeks@arumc.org](mailto:dweeks@arumc.org).

17th Annual  
**Camden Daffodil Festival**  
Downtown Camden, Arkansas  
"Where History Lives"

**Friday, March 12th**  
**Saturday March 13th**  
**9 a.m. to 6 p.m.**  
(870) 836-6426, Tour Groups (870) 836-1155

Visit historic Downtown Camden during one of its most beautiful times of the year. Tour select private Daffodil Gardens and Historic Homes, Log Cabin Village via guided bus tours. Enjoy Arts and Crafts, fabulous Art Show and sale, Quilt Show, Civil war Re-enactors, Confederate Cemetery Walk, many Children's Activities, Horse Drawn Carriage Rides, 5K Run, Poker Run, Bike Show and topped off with the 10th Annual Steak Cook-Off on Saturday evening with live entertainment.

[www.camdenfestival.com](http://www.camdenfestival.com)  
[cfreeland@cablelynx.com](mailto:cfreeland@cablelynx.com)



# Jacksonville church makes disciples with online study

MARK MCDONALD

For the Arkansas United Methodist

For many people, the challenge of Disciple Bible Study is not the 30 to 60 minutes of daily reading and reflection. It is not even the commitment to spending another two to three hours each week discussing the work with others.

For many, the biggest obstacle to overcome is finding another day and time each week for Disciple gatherings.

Parents are often booked up several evenings a week with extracurricular activities. Business travelers often have trouble scheduling a consistent night off. In the past, this was a necessity in order to participate in Disciple Bible Study.

Last year, as senior pastor of First United Methodist Church in Jacksonville, I ran across a way to reach those two groups as well as a host of others who expressed their concern about not being able to commit to a Disciple class: Disciple

Online.

I took the training — a two-week, online course offered through [www.beadisciple.com](http://www.beadisciple.com) — and was hooked on the concept.

First UMC in Jacksonville offered its first online class in the fall, signing up 16 people within the first few days of the posting. About one-third of those who signed up were from other churches, and one was from another denomination.

Participants in Disciple Online log on to a class Web site for daily assignments that complement their workbook. They watch the weekly video and participate in an online discussion thread that covers what would normally be the first hour of a traditional class.

Then, when class time arrives, they sign on and spend an hour together sharing prayer concerns and working through the second hour of classroom work.

While they spend the same amount of time as traditional

Disciple class, it only requires participants to schedule a single hour. The online format allows for the study time to be held at non-traditional times as well.

First UMC in Jacksonville chose 9 p.m. Monday as the congregation's start time to give parents time to get their children in bed and allow business travelers to settle in for the evening. Two-thirds of the group members live in Arkansas, but participants also come from Missouri, Ohio, Wisconsin, Texas and Nebraska.

Many people are skeptical how an online group would allow for the transformation that many experience in traditional Disciple classes.

Initially among the skeptics was Lisa Buffum, the assistant director of the Institute for Discipleship based at Southwestern College in Winfield, Kan.

"We resisted the idea for quite a time, wondering if it would be possible to have the same kind of

transformational study experience online," Buffum reports.

Buffum says the Disciple Bible Study developers changed their minds after seeing other online communities experience real relationships. Buffum eventually became one of the developers of Disciple Online.

The five pilot classes have all reported transformational Bible study similar to traditional Disciple classes.

Some of the members will text or e-mail each other during class, while listening to the discussion. We e-mail and Facebook each other between classes, and we have developed deep relationships with each other. We've had to learn new ways to keep up with each other and communicate without body language.

The software has a variety of tools they use. Using icons, they can raise their hands, click their microphones on and off, applaud,

vote, or even give a thumbs-down to disagree.

They can break into small groups and use their microphones independently of the other small groups, and facilitators can move from group to group.

It actually works better than traditional small groups breakouts, because you really cannot hear the other groups and get distracted by their conversations.

Several of the Jacksonville Disciple Online participants have experienced the same life-changing revelations that traditional Disciple participants have. They have also added the enjoyment of sharing with Christians from other areas of the country.

Participants call our Presbyterian member "Calvin" and me "Hobbes" whenever we point out the differences between Calvin and Wesley.

We have people from a variety of areas and stages, and we love it!

## AVAILABLE GRANTS

### Church Revitalization

Grants are available for churches that qualify. The Parish and Community Development Committee administers the Revitalization Grant Funds of the Arkansas Conference.

The funds can be used to start a new ministry or renovate a church's physical plant to accommodate a new ministry.

An application can be obtained from your District Superintendent or on the Conference's Web site at [www.arumc.org/forms](http://www.arumc.org/forms). Search for "Parish/Community Development Grant Application."

The forms must be filled out in full with all signatures required. Further, all of the church financial information is required including the church's budget, funds on hand that could be used for said project and the balance on any and all accounts.

All grant requests must be mailed to Bill Wisener at 124 Hunger Run, Monticello, AR 71655 by April 10. Applications received after April 10 will be considered at the fall meeting of the committee.

To learn more, contact Bob Burnham at (870) 733-7519 or e-mail [revburnham@sbcglobal.net](mailto:revburnham@sbcglobal.net).

"Peace with Justice" small

grants are available to United Methodist churches or United Methodist-affiliated ministries that seek to preserve human dignity and combat injustice.

Each year, the Arkansas Conference retains half of the Peace with Justice Special Sunday Offering funds to disperse these small grants.

In 2009, seven programs and ministries received assistance. One such ministry was the the Age to Age mentoring program at the Arkansas Tech University's Wesley Foundation. Melissa Jones, program coordinator, applied for a small grant through Peace with Justice for funds to sponsor at-risk children.

For the past 20 years, Age to Age has provided hundreds of children in need a safe haven and hope for the future through after-school programs. With the help of public school teachers and counselors,

Age to Age seeks out and identifies children in the worst scenarios.

Because of sponsorships — like the ones provided through Peace with Justice small grants — more students have an opportunity to experience the positive changes achieved through the program such as better results on standardized

reading tests, an increased chance of graduating high school and a more hopeful outlook on the future.

Other 2009 Peace with Justice small grant recipients included the Shepherd's Center Adventures in Learning in Beebe, the Philander Smith College Campus Ministry, the Conway Cradle Care Scholarship program, the Pioneer Club at First United Methodist Church in Hamburg, the Madres Y Ninos Program at First UMC in DeWitt, and the Mission UMC United Methodist Women's Charter for Racial Justice.

Peace with Justice small grant applications are now available to download at [www.arumc.org/forms](http://www.arumc.org/forms).

Grant applications also can be requested by e-mailing Danyelle Ditmer at [danyelleditmer@gmail.com](mailto:danyelleditmer@gmail.com) or calling her at (479) 567-0930.

The deadline for grant applications is May 15, and grant awards will be announced in June at Annual Conference in Hot Springs.

The special Sunday offering for Peace with Justice is May 30. The amount of funding available for Peace with Justice small grants each year depends on the abundance of the Peace with Justice Sunday offering.



Celia Whitley, retreat music leader, left, and Jay Clark, youth minister at Pulaski Heights UMC in Little Rock, take in a room full of confirmands at last year's Confirmation Day.

File Photo by Jane Dennis

## Confirmation Day approaches

### Special to the AUM

Confirmation students from across the Arkansas Conference soon will have a chance to submit question Bishop Charles Crutchfield.

Pulaski Heights United Methodist Church in Little Rock will play host to the conference's annual Confirmation Day with the Bishop from 9:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. March 13.

The gathering will include time for students to discuss their personal faith journey as they rotate among three sessions on the Wesleyan tradition including question and answer time with the bishop.

Recording artist Celia Whitley,

a lifelong United Methodist, also will return this year to lead the youth in worship with stories and songs. To learn more about Whitley, visit [www.celiamusic.net](http://www.celiamusic.net).

Confirmands also will play *Let's Make a Deal*, based loosely on the TV game show, where they will be quizzed on their knowledge of the United Methodist Church.

*Confirmation Day will be from 9:30 a.m. to March 13 at Pulaski Heights UMC, 4823 Woodlawn Drive. Little Rock. Registration costs \$10 on March 5 and \$15 after. To register, visit [www.arumc.org/register](http://www.arumc.org/register).*



# United Methodist Church responds to Chile earthquake

LINDA BLOOM  
*United Methodist News Service*

United Methodists were scrambling to respond to a massive earthquake that struck Chile early on Feb. 27 and prompted tsunami warnings across the Pacific region. The magnitude 8.8 earthquake, which hit about 60 miles northwest of the town of Chillán, left at least 400 people dead at press time, according to news reports, including at least three people swept into a large wave on an island 400 miles off the coast of Chile. Santiago, the capital, is 200 miles northeast of the epicenter.

President Michelle Bachelet declared a “state of catastrophe” in central Chile, and the quake was felt in neighboring countries as far away as Brazil, according to news reports. Tom Hazelwood, a United Methodist Committee on Relief emergency response executive, said the agency had exchanged e-mails with Juan Salazar, president of Ministerio Social Metodista in Chile, to offer assistance. He also was in touch with United Methodist Bishop Mary Ann



UMNS image courtesy of Wikimedia Commons.

Swenson of Los Angeles regarding the tsunami warnings for Hawaii. Swenson is leader of the denomination’s California Pacific

Conference, which includes Hawaii. The earthquake struck at 3:34 a.m. and reports of damage continued to come in all day. Shana Harrison, a missionary supported by the Arkansas Conference in Santiago, Chile, reported on her Facebook page on the evening of Feb. 27 that she was safe. She is the executive director of Foundation Crescendo, a workshop and group home for adults with intellectual disabilities. “Thankful that I am okay and that everyone in the group home is okay,” she wrote. “I visited the workshop today, and there does not appear to be any structural damage. Please keep us all in your prayers. Communication is difficult and thus have been unable to reach all staff and clients. The aftershocks make it very difficult to relax, and the members of the group home are still quite shaken up about it all.” She also wrote on Feb. 28 that she was grateful for the support she is getting from a group of friends at church. The force of the earthquake was

enough to jolt the 94-year-old mother of the Oscar Carrasco, a district superintendent in the United Methodist Northern Illinois Conference, from her bed in Curacautín. Joyce Carrasco, Oscar’s wife, reported that they had heard his mother was OK, but that his sister’s house next door was heavily damaged. Her mother-in-law is keeping the family focused in prayer and she feels the family is blessed to be able to be together and prepare a meal. “Thank goodness for fire wood while Curacautín is isolated. . . . bridges are out. There is a tense calm,” Carrasco said. “Still waiting to hear more news.” A United Methodist volunteer-in-mission group from Wisconsin was thought to be in Chile when the earthquake occurred. Hazelwood said the Methodist Church in Chile will be better able to respond to the earthquake because of disaster training that he and Melissa Crutchfield, an UMCOR colleague (and Bishop Crutchfield’s daughter), conducted there in

October. The autonomous denomination has some 15,000 members. About 20 church members, representing different districts, participated in the three-day disaster preparedness and emergency response training, which also allowed for networking with local authorities and emergency response partners. The plan is to create a humanitarian response system in Chile in collaboration with UMCOR and the Chilean Oficina Nacional de Emergencia del Ministerio del Interior. “We have a great relationship with the people in Chile and the church in Chile,” Hazelwood added. Hazelwood and Crutchfield had intended to return to Chile in January to sign a memorandum of understanding with the church, he said, but the trip was postponed because of the earthquake in Haiti. *Donations to the United Methodist Committee on Relief for emergency relief work in Chile can be made at [secure.gbgm-umc.org/donations](http://secure.gbgm-umc.org/donations). The Advance number is 3021178.*

# Oklahoma class helps parents find children’s spiritual gifts

JOEY BUTLER  
*United Methodist News Service*

Imagine a religious education class that focuses on children’s gifts, rather than their sins. It is a class that helps parents recognize what their kids are doing right, and calls on them to nurture those gifts. When those children become teenagers, and face temptations from alcohol to sex, they will have the spiritual talents and readiness to make good decisions. That is the hope of Ken Seidel and Ray Crawford, who teach an intergenerational class at Claremore (Okla.) First United Methodist Church



Identifying a child’s spiritual gifts can take place at an early age.

A UMNS photo from iStock.com.

Letting children focus on those gifts gives them a greater sense of self-worth, which helps them combat bad habits. “Our youth are distracted by over-stimulation in our society,” Seidel says. “So many are going in directions harmful to themselves — drugs, alcohol, violence, sex. It seems to be escalating.” Seidel, a Claremore First member and teacher at an alternative-education center, said that parents, frustrated by running

out of answers trying things that did not work, often ask him for advice. After 10 years of listening to students, he realized the most troubled teens were adopting self-destructive lifestyles modeled after what they saw in popular culture. “It interests me how many children end up being the ‘parent’ in

the family,” Seidel said. “The parents in our society are so confused. They fall into wanting to please their child and keep them happy. ‘Happiness’ is available in our society through all kinds of diversions and too many children choose that route.” After taking an adult spiritual gifts inventory class, Seidel approached Crawford, Claremore

First’s senior pastor, about designing a similar class for children and their parents. “We wanted a gifts inventory for children where they could get feedback from parents, grandparents and others in their lives who love them,” Crawford said. “If you have people who love you, who have been reinforcing that you have some wonderful gifts that God has given you, you’re more likely to believe it.” The result was a five-week intergenerational course that helps parents focus on their children more closely. Through weekly lessons and homework, parents are taught to observe their children, identify their spiritual gifts, and then talk to the children about their gifts and how to use them. At the end of the class, parents and children collaborate to make a poster that illustrates each child’s gifts. This allows each child to see how their gifts make them unique. “When we take the time to focus, we see things that were right in front of our eyes that we’d never seen before. Once we see that, it’s a surprise, and it seems to hit home

more,” Seidel said. Crawford said the class differs from an adult spiritual gifts inventory, in that “these aren’t necessarily the spiritual gifts from the New Testament. “For instance, we had one father who said, ‘My kids just love Jesus. They love to come to church; they want to pray for people.’ We said that is definitely something to be affirmed. We didn’t limit parents to the classical spiritual gifts definition,” he said. The class was designed for parents of children ages 5-11. “Our approach is telling parents, ‘You’re missing these years, when you’re running around and getting them involved in soccer and keeping the activity level high. You’ve kept them busy, but you haven’t given them the moral compass to rely on when all the temptations come their way,’” Seidel said. “We’re trying to offer parents more preventative measures.”

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





Quapaw Quarter UMC in Little Rock combined its New Member Dinner with a Mardi Gras and Valentine's celebration on Feb. 16. While guests munched on king cake, choir members took turn serenading them with love songs.

Photo by Heather Hahn

## Pension initiative seeks to raise \$25 million

### United Methodist Communications

NASHVILLE, Tenn. — For Charles Horace, a retired Liberian pastor, life without a pension was a daily struggle. He recalls weeks in which he would “just live on water” for two or three days.

But through the Liberia pension fund, Horace now receives a quarterly pension benefit made possible by gifts to the Central Conference Pension Initiative.

“If I were not a United Methodist pastor, who would have thought

about me?” Horace said to an audience of the Grand Bassa District of the United Methodist Church. “Let nothing take you from this caring and loving church.”

To provide for the needs of Horace and other retired clergy outside the United States, the Central Conference Pension Initiative initially sought to raise a minimum \$20 million endowment — \$19.2 million has already been pledged or donated.

The initiative's leadership recently established a challenge goal

of \$25 million, reflecting the needs discovered through on-site visits to each of the growing 19 Episcopal areas served by this initiative.

The initiative received almost \$6 million in contributions in 2009. If the program raises the same amount this year, it will have the funds to support current pension initiative activity.

*Those who would like to support the initiative may donate through their church or at [www.ccpi-umc.org](http://www.ccpi-umc.org).*

## OBITUARIES

### STUTTGART

**Doris Saul Beck**, 95, the wife of the late Robert Owen Beck, of Stuttgart died Feb. 3, 2010.

Born Aug. 17, 1914, in

Stuttgart, she was the daughter of Earl and Amy Rhodes. She attended public schools in Stuttgart and received a bachelor of arts degree from Hendrix College in Conway along



**Doris Beck**

with an art degree from Central College (which is now Central Baptist College) in Conway.

She taught in Stuttgart and Humphrey schools and gave private art lessons. She also worked at Denman Jewelers in Stuttgart for 40 years.

Beck was an active member of First United Methodist Church in Stuttgart serving on various boards and committees including as a trustee. She also served as an officer in the church's United Methodist Women.

She was a life member of the National Federation of Music Clubs and long-time member of the Stuttgart Fine Arts Club. She served on the Hendrix Alumni Board of Governors.

She was preceded in death by her parents; her first husband, Floyd Saul; and her second husband, United Methodist pastor Robert Owen Beck. Survivors include two stepchildren, Jim Beck and Kathy Kirk.

Beck shared her wonderful artistic abilities by drawing many pictures of brides, children, grandchildren, homes and establishments in Stuttgart. She

was a wonderful cook and host, and known as a premier lady dressed to the “T.”

A funeral service was held Feb. 5 at Turpin Funeral Home in Stuttgart. David Bush, pastor of First UMC in Stuttgart, and retired elder Bill Elliott, conducted the service. Interment followed at Lone Tree Cemetery in Stuttgart.

Memorials may be made to First United Methodist Church or the donor's choice.

### SHERWOOD

**G. Coleman Akin**, 75, retired United Methodist minister, of Sherwood, passed away Feb. 9, 2010.

He was born in Monticello, to the late L.M. and Virdie Lemons Akin. Coleman was preceded in death by his parents; wife, Karen Herrmann Akin; and a sister, Patricia Daniel. Coleman served churches



**G. Coleman Akin**

in Malvern; Tulle; Texarkana, Ark.; Camden; Traskwood; Humphrey; Stuttgart; and many more places in Arkansas. He spent 25 years of his ministry as a prison chaplain in Illinois and North Carolina.

Coleman was a devoted husband, father and grandfather, brother and friend. He will be missed by all. He was an avid Razorback fan and golfer.

He is survived by a son, Chris Akin (Barbie) of Rancho Santa Margarita, California; two daughters, Amber Winborn (Trey) of Houston, Texas, April Akin (Suni Miani) of Portland, Oregon; two sisters, Kathryn Williams (Tom), Phyllis Oblinger (Ray); two

step-daughters, Wendy Stetler and Lisa Lunsford of Harrisburg, Penn.; eight grandchildren and a host of nieces, nephews, other family members and friends.

A memorial service was held on Feb. 12 at Lakewood United Methodist Church in North Little Rock. Arrangement made by Roller-Owens Funeral Home.

The family suggests memorial contributions be made to the American Heart Association, 909 W. Second St., Little Rock, 72201, or Hospice Home Care, 1200 S. Bowman Road, Little Rock 72211.

### LITTLE ROCK

**Robert William Johnson**, 90, retired United Methodist elder, died Feb. 12, 2010, at Baptist Hospital in Little Rock while surrounded by his loving family. He was born April 25, 1919, in Jersey to Annie Anders and James Patterson Johnson.

One of nine children, he was preceded in death by his parents, one sister and four brothers.

He is survived by his devoted wife of almost 67 years, Helen Porter Johnson, three children, six grandchildren and six great-grandchildren.

He grew up on a farm. In 1940, Johnson joined the U.S. Army Air Force soon after graduating from Hermitage High School, and was stationed at Willow Run in Ypsilanti, Mich. He married his “sweetie” on March 17, 1943.

In 1946, the Johnsons returned to Bradley County, purchased a farm and began what Robert called “some hard years.”



**Robert Johnson**

After several years, he joined an older brother in the oil business in Houston for a year “making the most money I ever made.”

But Johnson soon felt called to the ministry and began his career as a United Methodist minister at 33 in McRae, in 1952. He attended Hendrix College and Perkins Theological Seminary in Dallas during summers to complete the education requirements. Over the next 31 years, he served congregations of Plummerville, Melbourne, Murfreesboro, Little Rock Hunter Memorial, Salem/Congo, Benton Parkview, Stamps, Pine Bluff Carr, Marysville/Silver Hill, Springhill/Deann and Bearden/Thornton.

The Johnsons' favorite pastime was to attend Razorback football and basketball games as often as possible.

His children knew the end was near when, after breaking a hip in mid-December, he never fully regained his interest in the Razorbacks.

His family includes son Robert W. “Bob” Johnson and wife, Kathy, of Powder Springs, Ga., son Keith Gordon Johnson and wife, Debbie, of Collierville, Tenn., and daughter Becky Johnson Kossover and husband, Jerry, of Little Rock.

Survivors also include grandson Mark (Andrea) and their children Liliana Elyse and Jessalyn Helen of Memphis; granddaughter Angela Dodge (Todd) and their children Mason William and Owen Stewart of Colorado Springs, Colo.; granddaughter Kara Myers (Jeremy) and daughter Claire Elizabeth, and grandson Russ Johnson (Cathi) and son Tyler Stephens, all of Marietta, Ga.; granddaughter Ashley Johnson of Nashville, Tenn.; and Erin (Adam) Anglin of Denver. He is also survived by two sisters, Frances

“Hank” Holderfield of Hot Springs and Mary Lee of Warren, as well as a brother, James “Pete” Johnson of Benton.

A celebration of life service was held on Feb. 15 at Trinity United Methodist Church in Little Rock with Candace Barron, associate pastor, officiating. A graveside service followed on Feb. 16 at Pinecrest Cemetery.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests donations to the Robert and Helen Johnson Endowment Fund at the Methodist Children's Home, the original component of Methodist Family Health on Aldersgate Road, P.O. Box 56050, Little Rock 72215.

### LITTLE ROCK

**Martha Vera Madison**, 92, of Little Rock, passed away Feb. 16, 2010. She was born Oct. 9, 1917, in Wallace, Florida to Huey M. Haynes and Emoree Jernigan Haynes. She was a member of the First Church of the Nazarene.



**Martha Vera Madison**

She is survived by her husband of 71 years, retired United Methodist elder Archie C. Madison; son, Richard Madison and wife, Rita; and grandsons, Chris Madison and wife, Natalie; and Phillip Madison and great-granddaughter, Michaela Madison. She was preceded in death by her parents; son, Phillip Madison; five sisters and two brothers.

Services were held Feb. 19 at Little Rock Funeral Home. Internment followed at the Arkansas State Veterans Cemetery in North Little Rock.



COLLEGE NEWS

CONWAY — **Hendrix College** is accepting nominations for the Steel-Hendrix Awards.

The Mary and Ira A. Brumley Award recognizes outstanding Religious Education, and the Ethel K. Millar Award honors outstanding Religion and Social Awareness. Awardees will be selected by the Steel-Hendrix Committee, and the awards will be presented in the 2010-2011 academic year.

The college also is accepting nominations for the Youth Minister of the Year award, which will be given during the 2010 Annual Conference in June.

This award is given to an outstanding youth minister, director or counselor. Full-time or part-time, paid or volunteer youth workers who have exemplified outstanding leadership are eligible. Nominees should be a member of and work in a United Methodist Church in Arkansas. They must be involved with the connectional system and participate in district and conference youth events and be intentional on "making disciples of Jesus Christ." Nominees also need

to have participated in some type of continuing education in the area of youth ministry.

Nominations for all awards should include a letter detailing the individual's career highlights and reason for nomination. Nominations can be submitted to J. Wayne Clark, Hendrix College, 1600 Washington, Conway, Arkansas 72032, or e-mailed to [clark@hendrix.edu](mailto:clark@hendrix.edu). Nomination deadline is April 1.

**The Central District Council of Youth Ministry** will sponsor a free conference-wide College Life Summit for juniors and seniors from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. April 17. The gathering will be in Wesley Hall of Pulaski Heights UMC, 4823 Woodlawn Drive, Little Rock.

Topics for the students will include: how to continue growing in your faith during college; how to find and apply for financial aid; how to choose a college that fits your career goals; how to make your class schedule work for you and how to make the most out of your living space.

Parents will discuss how to best

support their children in college.

To attend, RSVP by April 14 to Todd Lovell at (501) 472-6850 or [tlovell@nrfumc.org](mailto:tlovell@nrfumc.org).

**The Wesley Foundation of the University of Arkansas at Little Rock** will present "A Night at the Rep" to see the play Frost/Nixon on April 22. A pre-show reception will be at 6:30 p.m. Tickets cost \$40. The event will benefit the campus ministry. To buy tickets, contact Maxine Allen, Wesley Foundation director, at [mallen@arumc.org](mailto:mallen@arumc.org) or (501) 539-0280.

CONWAY — The John and Marjim Gill Preaching Workshop will occur April 26-27 in the Student Life and Technology Center on the **Hendrix College** campus.

This year's speaker will be Tony Campolo, the author of more than 35 books. To learn about him, visit [www.TonyCampolo.org](http://www.TonyCampolo.org).

Cost, which includes workshop, resource materials, two lunches, one dinner and one continental breakfast, is \$60 if received by April 16 and \$75 after that date.



Administrators and board of trustees members broke ground on Feb. 22 on a new residence hall at Philander Smith College in Little Rock. The building is registered to receive LEED Green Building certification. Bishop Charles Crutchfield, a college board member, is pictured second from left

Photo by Dan Pierce

Two scholarships are available from each Arkansas United Methodist district. For information on these scholarship opportunities, contact a district superintendent.

To learn more, contact J. Wayne Clark at [clark@hendrix.edu](mailto:clark@hendrix.edu) or (501) 450-1263.

The Renaissance 100 scholarship program at **Philander**

**Smith College** in Little Rock has been given a multi-year boost thanks to a \$100,000 gift from the Rush and Linda Harding Charitable Lead Trust.

The five-year pledge by Rush and Linda Harding of Little Rock will help the college to recruit academically ambitious students who will systematically increase the quality of the student body.

## Ozark Mission Project names 2010 staff

*Special to the AUM*

Ozark Mission Project, a ministry of the United Methodist Church in Arkansas, is pleased to announce its 2010 college staff.

The mission offers a unique camping experience for teens across the state giving them an opportunity to clean up, fix up and paint up houses for Arkansans in need of the help. Often those helped are senior citizens or those with physical disabilities.

What began with one camp in 1986 has since expanded to 12

campus each summer, serving all four corners of Arkansas.

Most of the 2010 college staff members attended four or five camps with their church youth groups.

Now, these nine college students have been chosen after an application process to help lead teens as they construct wheelchair ramps and give older homes much-needed makeovers.

The college staff members also help select the sites where the teens will work, assure that projects are

done well and lead worship and devotions with the campers.

"They are huge role models," Nancy Mulhearn, Ozark Mission Project executive director, said. "They are spiritually sound and emotionally mature."

Mulhearn added that many staff members in previous years have gone on to become youth ministers or join the United Methodist clergy.

To learn more about Ozark Mission Project, visit [www.ozarkmissionproject.org](http://www.ozarkmissionproject.org).

### 2010 Ozark Mission Project College Staff

Name	Home Church	School
Steven Baker	Henderson UMC, Little Rock	Tulane University
Kimberly Barnett	Gillett UMC	University of Arkansas at Little Rock
Emily Bradley	Heritage UMC, Van Buren	University Central Arkansas
Camille Gele	Asbury UMC, Little Rock	Drury University
David Goodwin	Lakewood UMC, North Little Rock	University of Central Arkansas
Erica Hill	Siloam Springs UMC	Arkansas Tech University
Kat Marsh	First UMC, Little Rock	Hendrix College
Lauren Russell	St. Paul UMC, El Dorado	Southern Arkansas University
Chloe Saffold	First UMC, Star City	University of Arkansas in Fayetteville

## PASTORS' TAX RETURNS ARE NOT LIKE EVERYONE ELSE'S!

If you need help with finding your way through the tax maze, give me a call.

We've helped many Pastors reduce their tax bill and negotiated with the IRS.



Let's talk!

**1.888.354.4912**

*Ray*  
**Traylor**  
CPA

[www.raytraylorcpa.com](http://www.raytraylorcpa.com)

Pastor References Available Upon Request



## COMING UP

**First UMC in Little Rock,** 723 Center St., will cheer runners and walkers in the Little Rock Marathon on March 7 as they cover Mile 9, "The Methodist Mile." Brunch will be served and church's First Word Band will play outside between 9 and 10:30 a.m. Worship will follow at 10:30 a.m. To learn more, call the church at (501) 372-2256.

**Wesley Chapel UMC,** 1109 S. State St., on the Philander Smith College campus, Little Rock, will hold "Invite a Friend" Sunday with services at 8 and 10:45 a.m. March 7. A continental breakfast will follow the early service and a reception will follow the second. To learn more, call the church at (501) 372-7893.

**Southside UMC,** 39 Magnolia St., Batesville, will hold a women's conference, titled "Vessels for the Lord," from 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. March 13. A light breakfast and lunch will be provided. Speakers include Sue Howe, Dorothy Jones, Mary Welch and Treccie Cook. The church will host a time of prayer and preparation for the conference at 6:30-9 p.m. March 12. To learn more, contact Nancy Scott, conference coordinator, at (501) 337-0065 or [cnsconfig@suddenlink.net](mailto:cnsconfig@suddenlink.net).

**J. Ellsworth Kalas,** former president of Asbury Theological Seminary, will preach at 10:45 a.m. and give a lecture and book signing at 4 p.m. March 28 at Trinity UMC, 1101 Mississippi St., Little Rock. Before coming to Asbury in 1993, Kalas served for 38 years as a pastor of churches in Wisconsin and Ohio, and for five years as an associate in evangelism with the World Methodist Council. Since 2000, he has served Asbury's preaching faculty. He has published more than 30 books. To

learn more, call the church at (501) 666-2813.

**Palm Sunday and Holy Week services** will be March 28 through April 3. Check with your local church for service times.

**Mount Eagle Christian Retreat Center,** 935 Beal Road, Clinton, will host a Spouses Retreat for all clergy spouses in the Arkansas Conference on April 9-11. This retreat is for clergy spouses, both active and retired, both men and women. This year's theme is "From Heart and Head to Hands" based on Matthew 22:37. The cost is \$90, and scholarships are available. To register or learn more, call Mount Eagle at (501) 723-4580 or e-mail Lu Harding [lu@mounteagle.org](mailto:lu@mounteagle.org).

**Southwest District Lay Speaker Training** beginning classes will be from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., and the advanced class will be 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. April 24 at First UMC in Hope, 2300 S. Main St. Teachers will be Bruce Bennett of First UMC in Texarkana, and David Kassos of Christ UMC in Texarkana. These sessions qualify for those seeking certification or for those seeking to be re-certified. Lunch will be catered and paid for by the Southwest District. Beginning students must order materials from Cokesbury. To register, contact David Kassos at (870) 774-4091 or the Southwest District Office at (870) 216-1407 or e-mail the District Office at [southwestdistrict@swdsumc.com](mailto:southwestdistrict@swdsumc.com).

*The deadline for the next edition of the Arkansas United Methodist is 5 p.m. March 17. Submissions must include the time, date and the street address and phone number for the church or event. E-mail submissions to editor Heather Hahn at [hhahn@arumc.org](mailto:hhahn@arumc.org).*

# Church believes road to recovery is something all ages can celebrate

HEATHER HAHN  
EDITOR

HOT SPRINGS — Bart Haringsma, at 50, has struggled with alcohol and drug abuse for most of his life. He tried Alcoholics Anonymous, Narcotics Anonymous and similar programs. But nothing seemed to work.

"Sadly even as professing Christian, I still got drunk on the weekends," Haringsma said. "But it wasn't until I started hearing about Celebrate Recovery that a change began to occur. ... Now, I don't have all the baggage I used to carry."

He's also been sober for nearly two years, and is now the ministry leader of Celebrate Recovery at Piney Grove United Methodist Church in Hot Springs.

On Feb. 20, Haringsma helped his congregation kick off Celebration Station, a related program for children ages 6 to 12. The grand opening on a Saturday evening drew nearly 100 people including representatives from churches throughout Hot Springs and Nelda Alexander, Celebrate Recovery's state representative.

Celebrate Recovery, a 12-step program based on the Jesus' Beatitudes, originated in 1991 at Saddleback Church in Lake Forest, Calif.

Since then, more than 8,500 people have gone through Celebrate Recovery at Saddleback and the ministry has become a global phenomenon with active Celebrate Recovery groups from Canada to Australia to Kenya.

In Arkansas, some 40 churches in a variety of denominations now hold Celebrate Recovery meetings.

Piney Grove UMC is among the first churches in the Arkansas Conference to offer three programs under the umbrella of Celebrate Recovery, which aims to "help those struggling with hurts, habits and hang-ups."

The ministry includes the original Celebrate Recovery model for adults as well as Life Hurts, God Heals for teens and Celebration Station for children. Elm Springs UMC in northwestern Arkansas also has plans to soon offer all three programs.

Piney Grove UMC first began offering Celebrate Recovery five years ago and added Life Hurts, God Heals last year.

The ministry deals with far more than substance abuse,



Mike Stanley, Piney Grove UMC music minister and a recovering alcoholic, leads the praise band that opens the church's Saturday night sessions Celebrate Recovery for adults, Celebration Station for children ages 6 to 12 and Life Hurts, God Heals for teens.

Photo by Heather Hahn

Haringsma stressed. With youngsters, Celebration Station tackles such problems as jealousy, anger and low self-esteem. Teens and adults deal with such issues as eating disorders or cutting as well as addictions.

Debbie Stanley, a Piney Grove UMC member, said she started coming to the church's Celebrate Recovery sessions initially just to support her husband, Mike, as he struggled to overcome alcoholism.

"Come to find out I had a lot of resentment, bitterness and anger from my past marriages and from him," she said. "This church — and Celebrate Recovery — just loved us until we could love ourselves."

The Stanleys credit Celebrate Recovery with saving their marriage. Today, Debbie Stanley is one of Piney Grove UMC's eight team leaders, and her husband is the worship leader of the church's contemporary service.

Among those leaders are also members of Faith UMC in Hot Springs who help out with Piney Grove's ministry.

David Jones, Piney Grove UMC's senior pastor, said the ministry fosters spiritual growth.

"It goes right to the heart of the

matter, which is Christ," he said. "It says to everybody who comes, 'There is a solution. It's not in you. It's in your acceptance of Christ and allowing Christ to work through you.'"

While the ministry started at a Southern Baptist church, Celebrate Recovery is very much in keeping with Wesleyan tradition, Jones said.

"John Wesley started off by ministering to people in gin houses," Jones said. "Charles Wesley set his hymns to bar tunes. That's where the Methodist Church started. That's our heart and soul."

For the launch of its Saturday night Celebration Recovery programs, the church held a barbecue dinner followed by a praise service where Jones preached about denial. The evening concluded with the gathering breaking into small groups.

Worship opened with the band performing Los Lonely Boys' secular pop hit "Heaven." While an unusual choice for church music, the song's opening lyrics likely resonated with many in the crowd: "Save me from this prison/ Lord, help me get away/ Cause only You can save me now from this misery."

Haringsma said Celebrate Recovery works by showing how Christ has freed people from their own self-imposed prisons.

In Haringsma's case, the ministry helped him to finally open up about childhood difficulties.

"I was going to the grave without anyone knowing," he said. "I know there are thousands of people who are hiding this kind of stuff, burying it and trying to do whatever it takes not to think about that bad stuff. But of course I was using the drugs and alcohol to numb it."

Sharing his burdens with others in the ministry helped, but more important was recognizing that Christ was there to take that burden on Himself.

"If you truly believe Jesus is the higher power, you're going to start to step into His light," Haringsma said. "And you're not going to want to do the things of your past."

*Piney Grove UMC, 2963 Airport Road, Hot Springs, will hold Celebrate Recovery at 5 p.m. each Saturday. Gatherings include dinner, worship and small groups. Childcare is available. To learn more, e-mail Bart Haringsma at [haringsmab@cablelynx.com](mailto:haringsmab@cablelynx.com).*

**REZA JEWELRY**  
WWW.METHODISTCROSS.NET

**PENDANT**  
14kt Yellow or White  
Large 1.5" \$169  
Small 1" \$105  
Sterling Silver  
Large \$59 w/ chain  
Small \$49 w/ chain  
Pewter  
\$9.95 w/ chain

*5 in.*



*1.5 in.*

**FISH AUTO EMBLEM**  
\$8.95  
TO ORDER: 2 for \$15  
Mail Check or Money Order to  
2020 Howell Mill Rd.  
Suite C-206  
Atlanta, GA 30318  
Or  
Call 678-561-7392

**GIFTS FOR EASTER/CONFIRMATION**  
Shipping/Handling \$5.00 (anywhere in the U.S.)



TRANSFORMING THE WORLD



Preschool children at Pulaski Heights UMC in Little Rock raised \$700.83 through "Make A Change for Haiti," a project in which children saved coins and dropped them into jars. Donations will go to United Methodist Committee On Relief, in addition to the \$18,485 the congregation has raised for Haiti relief efforts. Pictured from left at back, are Christian Nash, Michael Kittell, Elle Hutson, Conner Hielt, Meredith Gadberry and Luke Moore. In front is Corrinne Ghidotti.

Photo courtesy of Pulaski Heights UMC



United Methodist Women at Fairview UMC got together to assemble health kits for Haiti. Pictured from left are Margie Parker, Judy McManus, Marion Barnes, Carolyn Upchurch, Shelia Beard and Pam Brule, the church's pastor.

Photo courtesy of Fairview UMC



The congregation of Oaklawn UMC in Hot Springs donated more than \$1,400 for Haiti Relief on Jan. 17. The collection for United Methodist Committee on Relief was received in this wooden bowl handmade out of gum wood by church member, Ed Sheppard.

Photo courtesy of Oaklawn UMC



Harrell UMC has created a "History Wall" in its Fellowship Hall, with pictures and old documents from the church's past. Some of the framed parchments were found during a recent "cleaning up" to move some stuff to a new out-building. Charla Wright and others worked to put the wall together. Harrell UMC will have its 98th Anniversary Homecoming in May.

Photo courtesy of Harrell UMC

Mount Sequoyah to hold gathering for creation care

MARILYN BRASWELL  
For the Arkansas United Methodist

FAYETTEVILLE — The third annual Caring for Creation conference at Mount Sequoyah Conference and Retreat Center will bring members of the faith community together to learn how they can become better caretakers of the Earth.

The conference, slated for April 16-18, will offer workshops ranging from "Sustainability Ethics: Discovering the Holiness of Place" to "Creating Your Green Team: A Model for Action."

The keynote speaker is Sally G. Bingham, a priest and canon for the environment in the Episcopal Diocese of California. Bingham is the founder and president of The Regeneration Project, a religious response to climate change.

Other speakers are John Hill, director for Economic and Environmental Justice of the United Methodist General Board of Church and Society; Pat Watkins, a missionary with the Board of Global Ministries of the United Methodist Church; and Jay McDaniel, professor of religion and director of the Steel Center for the Study of Religion and Philosophy at Hendrix College in Conway.

The conference has been the impetus for Oklahoma Interfaith Power and Light, Arkansas Green Faith Alliance and Arkansas Interfaith Power and Light.

Costs vary. To register and see the full schedules for the Caring for Creation conference, contact Mount Sequoyah at (800) 760-8126, (479) 443-4531, [programs@mountsequoyah.org](mailto:programs@mountsequoyah.org) or [www.mountsequoyah.org](http://www.mountsequoyah.org).

PEOPLE OF FAITH

**First UMC in Monticello** held United Methodist Women's Sunday on Jan. 31. The church gave special recognition pins to **Robbie Stephenson** and **Dalene Stephenson** and a past president pin to **Faye Chandler**. After the service, the women raised more than \$800 for United Methodist Women's missions at a soup and chili luncheon.

**Wesley Chapel UMC in Little Rock** held United Methodist Women's Sunday on Jan. 31. The group received a donation of \$100 from the Wesley Mass Choir, comprised largely of students at

Philander Smith College. The group also raised \$500 to send to the United Methodist Committee on Relief to support Haiti relief efforts.

The youth of **Pulaski Heights UMC in Little Rock** collected \$675 from the congregation to support the church's food pantry on Feb. 7 as part of SOUPer Bowl Sunday. The church also named the pantry the **Judy Strohm** Food Pantry Ministry in recognition of her 20 years of service.

**Just Communities of Arkansas**, an interfaith

organization that strives for equity and justice for all, honored two United Methodists with its Father Joseph H. Biltz Award on March 2.

**Pat Lile**, a member of First UMC in Little Rock, was recognized for decades of work as a volunteer and employee of various civic organizations. She helped integrate the Pine Bluff Chamber of Commerce and, for 11 years, led the Arkansas Community Foundation, one of the state's five largest grant-making foundations. She also served as the head of the Commission on Arkansas' Future, an appointment by then Gov. Bill Clinton.

**Gerald Cound**, a member of Theresa Hoover UMC in Little Rock, was honored for his longtime community involvement. He built an international learning trail at the Heifer Ranch, created a landscape garden at Camp Aldersgate and set up a program for excess furniture to be given to nonprofits throughout Central Arkansas.

In addition, he has served on the boards of Habitat for Humanity in Central Arkansas and Our House Shelter for the Homeless as well as taught Bible School in the Prison. He most recently helped establish the Village Commons on South Main St. in Little Rock.

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*, 800 Daisy Bates Drive, Little Rock, AR 72202; or e-mail: [mtaylor@arumc.org](mailto:mtaylor@arumc.org)

**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)



LENT *Continued from Page 1A*

yoke?”

These pastors were engaging in a debate about Lenten discipline that goes back at least to the Protestant Reformation.

In 1522, followers of Swiss reformer Ulrich Zwingli publicly rejected Rome's prohibition against eating meat during Lent by eating sausages not long before Easter (and were arrested for their trouble).

Harvard University historian Steven Ozment has said for 16th century church authorities, the Lenten menu was tantamount to burning a flag today. The act of defiance is often cited as the start of the Swiss Reformation.

William B. Lawrence, dean of the Southern Methodist University's Perkins School of Theology in Dallas, said that Zwingli — like his contemporary Martin Luther — rebelled against what he saw as the increasingly arbitrary rules of the Roman Catholic Church.

These rules failed to draw people closer to Christ, Zwingli argued.

“In a word, if you will fast, do so; if you do not wish to eat meat, eat it not; but leave Christians a free choice in the matter,” he preached.

However Christians come down on the question of fasting, Lawrence suggests that the 40-day season involve some spiritual devotion on the mystery of Christ's sacrifice

“Which is better: to give something up for Lent or do something new for Lent?” Lawrence said. “The answer would be both.”

Some 200 years after the Protestant Reformation, John Wesley wasn't content to limit fasting only to Lent. The founder of the Methodist movement fasted twice a week — on Wednesday and Friday — said John Farthing, retired Hendrix College professor and now senior pastor of Greenbrier First UMC.

“His fast did not involve abstinence from food altogether but allowed for limited consumption of

food and drink,” Farthing said.

Wesley also advised moderation because he didn't want Christians to fast so severely that they damaged their health.

Still, Farthing points out that Wesley's idea of moderation would seem quite ascetic by today's American standards. Wesley was adamantly opposed to all manner of overindulgence.

He also criticized the common Lenten practice in 18th century England of abstaining from pleasant food. In short, Wesley — like Ditmer — was not a big fan of giving up chocolate for Lent.

“I take that to mean that Wesley sees such minimal fasting as a trivializing of something important,” Farthing said. “I think the absence of an emphasis on Lenten fasting reflects Wesley's desire for fasting to be an integral part of the Methodist lifestyle rather than just an annual observance.”

Bishop Charles Crutchfield and his wife, Karen, for their part, usually fast one day a week. Because of their busy schedules, the day may change from week to week. The Crutchfields will often begin a 30-hour fast following a noon meal and not eat until or dinner the next day.

“For me, fasting is a way of focusing on God,” Karen Crutchfield said.

“It is an addendum to prayer and helps me recognize my human limitations. It helps get ‘me’ out of the way so I can listen to God. Fasting is an act of repentance, discernment and humility. My focus during fasting is intentionally not on myself and my needs, but on God. Any hunger pains or discomfort become a reminder to pray.”

Karen Crutchfield added that it doesn't matter what a person gives up as long as God is the focus.

“It is certainly not an achievement,” she said. “To be able to fast is another gift from God.”

## “The campus has one of the best developed programs of religious life among United Methodist-related colleges and universities.” \*

Hendrix College is pleased to have its accreditation extended for an additional 10 years by the University Senate of The United Methodist Church.

The College's relationship with the United Methodist Church has deep roots, as the University Senate report states: “Hendrix College has a rich history in the United Methodist tradition and proudly proclaims its relationship to The United Methodist Church ... Many (students have) chosen to come to Hendrix because of the way that relationship informed the daily life of the campus.”\*

Thank you to the United Methodists in Arkansas and around the globe who have nurtured Hendrix College and its students. With your support, we can maintain our role as a leader in engaged liberal arts and sciences education and continue changing the lives of those who can change the world.

*\*Excerpted from the Report of the Review of Hendrix College by the University Senate of the United Methodist Church, November 2009.*



Weekly chapel services are among the more than 20 Religious Life events held weekly on the Hendrix campus.

Hendrix would like to extend special thanks to the following Board of Trustee members: Bishop Charles N. Crutchfield, Rev. Rex Dickey, Rev. Pamela J. Estes, Rev. Charles F. Murry, Rev. Victor H. Nixon, Rev. William O. Reeves, Rev. Britt Skarda, Rev. Roy P. Smith, Rev. William B. Smith, Rev. Rodney G. Steele, and Rev. Beth Waldrup

### TRAVEL TO THE HOLY LAND...



Rev. Siegfried and Sherry Johnson at the Tel Dan Nature Reserve in the Upper Galilee

... with Rev. Siegfried Johnson, Sr. Pastor of First UMC Mountain Home, on a 10 day journey of a lifetime, departing Little Rock on May 2, 2011. Having led over a dozen trips with Educational Opportunities to the Holy Land and Greece/Turkey, Rev Johnson — whose graduate studies focused on Hebrew and Semitic Literature/Archaeology — is an experienced tour leader. You will see the Sea of Galilee, Capernaum, Nazareth, Megiddo, the Old City of Jerusalem, Bethlehem, Masada, and much more.

For details or questions, contact Rev. Johnson at [sjohnson@fumcmh.org](mailto:sjohnson@fumcmh.org) or at 870.425.6036



**HENDRIX**  
COLLEGE

[www.hendrix.edu](http://www.hendrix.edu) • 1600 Washington Avenue • Conway, Arkansas

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



# REPORTER

THE UNITED METHODIST

umportal.org



## Greater unity

Brits seek mission with Anglicans | 2B



## Recovering Jesus' message

Church should be in 'business' of making disciples | 6B



## Generational shift

The different world of millennials | 8B

Section B

March 5, 2010



# The Last Guard

United Methodists stay with toughest Katrina cases

UMR PHOTO BY ROBIN RUSSELL

by  
Robin  
Russell  
Managing  
Editor

**A**s the recovery work from Hurricane Katrina drags on into its fifth year, most relief money and volunteer help has shifted from places like New Orleans to more media-saturated, current disaster regions like quake-affected Haiti.

Many people even find it hard to imagine that post-Katrina recovery work is still taking place.

The most destitute families in Louisiana and other hurricane-affected regions, however, have yet to receive help: Some 2,500 family units in New Orleans and surrounding areas still live in trailers pro-

vided by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA); others have not yet returned from nearby states where they fled to escape rising floodwaters. Entire blocks of houses in New Orleans' impoverished neighborhoods are still boarded up in disrepair.

A few die-hard United Methodist volunteers, however, have not yet given up on "the least, the last and the lost" hit hard in 2005 by back-to-back hurricanes Katrina and Rita. United Methodists, in fact, are the last guard of post-Katrina recovery work.

■ See 'The Last Guard,' page 4B

**ABOVE:** Len Carter, project manager for the Louisiana Conference of the UMC Disaster Response Ministry Inc, points to a home in New Orleans' Ninth Ward that United Methodists helped rebuild. **BELOW:** Students from Southern Arkansas University and Arkansas State University help repair a home in New Orleans' Seventh Ward.



UMR PHOTO BY ART RUSSELL/ARMEDIA.COM



## FAITH WATCH

**UM relief agency opens Haiti office**

The United Methodist Committee on Relief has opened a field office in Port-au-Prince, Haiti, as part of a five-year plan to help rebuild the country after the Jan. 12 earthquake. An emergency response consultant will work with the Methodist Church of Haiti and other partners to develop short- and long-term relief and recovery strategies. The agency will also hire five full-time staff members for the office.

**GBGM urges release of Filipino med team**

The United Methodist General Board of Global Ministries (GBGM) on Feb. 11 urged the government of the Philippines to release 43 health workers who were arrested on suspicion of supporting Communist rebels. Family members of the health workers say they were attending a medical seminar. Dr. Alexis Montes, one of two physicians in the group, served from 2007–2009 as a medical missionary through a partnership between GBGM and the United Church of Christ in the Philippines.

**Ivoirian bishop seeks prayer for his country**

Bishop Benjamin Boni, leader of the United Methodist Church in Côte d'Ivoire, called for all church members in the West African country to pray on Feb. 14 after President Laurent Gbagbo suspended the government. Mr. Gbagbo also suspended an electoral commission that had been planning the first presidential election since 2000.

**Clinton prosecutor named Baylor head**

Kenneth Starr, the attorney whose investigation led to the impeachment of former President Bill Clinton in 1998, was named Feb. 12 as the new president of Baylor University, the world's largest Baptist university. Mr. Starr has been dean of the law school at Pepperdine University since 2004. A Texas native and former Church of Christ member, he will begin the post June 1.

—Compiled by Bill Fentum

# British Methodists, Anglicans seek unity

BY BARBARA DUNLAP-BERG  
*United Methodist News Service*

Methodism's founder John Wesley was an Anglican priest who never left the Church of England.

More than two centuries later, the British Methodist Church and the Church of England say they are willing to seek greater unity and cooperate in many ways while continuing to co-exist.

Contrary to British tabloid reports, a formal merger is not necessarily the goal.

The Rev. David Gamble, president of the British Methodist Church, and the Rev. Richard Vautrey, vice president, addressed the Church of England's General Synod Feb. 11, expressing the Methodist Church's continued commitment to a 2003 covenant relationship with the Church of England.

The covenant recognizes the baptisms and ordinations of each church and encourages the sharing of the Eucharist.

The covenant, they said, was "not an irrelevant extra but something at the heart of how we understand our present and future life as a church."

"When I entered theological college in 1971," Mr. Gamble recalled, "I

really expected to spend my ministry as a minister in a united Anglican/Methodist church. I still remember our great disappointment in 1972 [when a merger proposal was rejected]. I really hope and pray that we can take this covenant seriously and enable it to bear fruit as we worship, pray and work together wherever and whenever we possibly can."

Formal talks between the two churches began in the 1960s, but a 1972 attempt at full unity failed because Anglicans were opposed. Issues included Methodist acceptance of female clergy. Today's British Methodist Church has 265,000 members compared with 960,000 in the Church of England.

"Throughout the history of churches working together, as I have experienced it," Mr. Gamble said, "one of the major and oft-repeated texts has been John 17:21, where Christ prays for the unity of his followers not because it's a nice idea, not because it's financially a better use of scarce resources, but that the world might believe. It's mission led."

"We are prepared to go out of existence," he added, "not because we are declining or failing in mission, but for the sake of mission."

While British tabloid reports declared the churches were planning to merge, Anna Drew, lead media officer for the Methodist Church, said, "We're not talking about a takeover of the Methodist Church by the Church of England, but a bigger vision of a unified Christian church, transformed to best serve God's mission in the world. We are committed primarily to that mission and to God's call on our lives as Christians."

"When our institutions no longer serve that aim, it's time for them to change. We are serious about seeking greater unity with our brothers and sisters in the Church of England, in the spirit of the covenant signed by both churches in 2003."

"In some places," Mr. Gamble noted, "there are very close working relationships and exciting new initia-



**David Gamble**



**Richard Vautrey**

tives. In others, you could spend quite a long time trying to find any sign of the covenant in practice. Some churches, clergy and communities are very enthusiastic. Others have theological, ecclesiological or other differences and/or reservations."

"We can and do work together on issues of social justice," Dr. Vautrey said, "on issues that we both know God calls on us to challenge our society and our world. There is, though, more that we could and should be doing together."

"Both of our churches are part of world communions where we have influence and history," Mr. Gamble said, "but where churches in other parts of the world are growing rapidly in size and importance and sometimes see things very differently. As churches and communions, we're both struggling with how we can cohere in a postmodern world, with learning how to live with contradictory convictions. At such times, it is hard to pay attention to those beyond us. But it is precisely at those times that we have things to offer each other."

"We are prepared to be changed and even to cease having a separate existence as a church if that will serve the needs of the kingdom."

## UMC high court to review new church structures

BY LINDA BLOOM  
*United Methodist News Service*

U.S. population shifts, membership declines and economic changes have led to the reorganization of regional United Methodist bodies.

The challenge for the church's conferences is how to retain the denomination's connectional relationships and meet mission priorities on a limited budget. The restructuring can also raise questions about whether the changes adhere to church law.

The Judicial Council, the denomination's top court, will consider a few of those questions during its April

21–24 spring meeting in Madison, N.J.

Among the nine docket items on the council's agenda are decisions by Dakotas Bishop Deborah Kiesey about whether a standing committee on archives and history is required under that conference's new structure and by Indiana Bishop Michael Coyner on the 2010 budget for the new, unified conference in that state.

Two years ago, the Dakotas Conference set up a reorganizational task force, naming it "Romans 12" after the Bible verse that refers to being transformed "by the renewing of the mind."

"One of the things they came back with was a completely different struc-

ture," Bishop Kiesey said.

The new structure was approved in June. At a special annual conference session in November, some pieces were determined, the bishop said.

During the special session, participants spent significant time debating how the changes affect the conference's committee on archives and history. The Rev. Duane Coates of Brookings First UMC asked Bishop Kiesey for a decision of law on the constitutionality of the new structure in relation to that committee.

Bishop Kiesey said the function of archives and history is covered under the new structure, but not through a standing committee. Two different paragraphs in the United Methodist *Book of Discipline* are in conflict over what is required, but the bishop said the conference had followed the most recent change in the *Discipline*.

"We're comfortable with whichever way they rule," she said about a potential Judicial Council decision.

In Indiana, a new structure has affected the budget for program areas. During the 2009 Indiana Annual Conference in June, a request for a decision of law from the bishop was made about whether proper procedures had been followed in bringing the 2010 budget to the body.

The Indiana Conference is a unit-

ing of the former North Indiana and South Indiana conferences. Although the new body became official in October 2008, two separate budgets and accounts were retained until Dec. 31, 2009. The current year represents the first under a single budget.

A motion was made requesting that the conference's Council on Finance and Administration restore funding for 2010 in four program areas—young adults, mission, social advocacy and new programs—to 75 percent of the funding those areas received in 2009. Calling it a resolution, not a motion, Bishop Coyner ruled it out of order and delegates declined to suspend the rules to consider it.

The Rev. Dan Gangler, the Indiana Conference communicator, noted that around \$3 million had been cut from the combined budgets of the previous conferences, creating a budget of \$15.1 million for the new conference.

Another issue of debate and discussion related to the budget, Dr. Gangler said, was the decision to change health care benefits for retired ministers from an insurance plan through the United Methodist Board of Pensions and Health Benefits to a health care subsidy through Medicare. Continuing with the insurance plan would have cost the conference nearly \$2 million, he said.

### THE UNITED METHODIST REPORTER

[www.umportal.org](http://www.umportal.org)  
[news@umr.org](mailto:news@umr.org)

Bob Mathews, 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](mailto: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](http://www.umportal.org), e-mail [circulation@umr.org](mailto:circulation@umr.org) or send a check to UMR Communications, Attn: Circulation, 1221 Profit Dr., Dallas, TX 75247.





UM CONNECTIONS

**Help for Haiti hits \$12 million**

Through individual gifts and special offerings, benefit concerts and other innovative fundraisers, United Methodists have donated \$12 million to the Haiti relief efforts of the United Methodist Committee on Relief as of Feb. 18, according to Melissa Hinnen, the agency's director of communications. The relief agency's Sager Brown Depot distribution center in Baldwin, La., has collected 350,000 health kits.

**Shockley to head UMC's Path 1**

The Rev. Gary Shockley has been named executive officer for New Congregational Development in the U.S. for the General Board of Discipleship effective July 1. Mr. Shockley will succeed the Rev. Tom Butcher, who is taking an appointment in the Desert Southwest Conference. In his new position, Mr. Shockley will lead the Path 1 staff, work with Path 1 steering committee and the Council of Bishops toward the goal of training 1,000 new church planters to start 650 new churches by 2013.

**Wimberly to speak at Methodist Theological**

What did John Wesley say about happiness? Edward P. Wimberly will explore the question in two lectures, "The Pursuit of Happiness: Practical Theology in the Wesleyan Spirit," March 9-10 at Methodist Theological School in Ohio. Dr. Wimberly is vice president for academic affairs, provost and professor of pastoral care and counseling at the Interdenominational Theological Center in Atlanta. A member of the New England Conference, he is the author of 15 books and serves on the editorial board of *Methodist Review*. For information, visit [www.mtso.edu](http://www.mtso.edu).



Edward Wimberly

—Compiled by Mary Jacobs

*A mighty wind*

Southwestern U signs wind-power agreement

STAFF REPORTS

GEORGETOWN, Texas—Southwestern University, a United Methodist-affiliated liberal arts college in Georgetown, Texas, signed an agreement in January that will let the school meet all its electric needs for the next 18 years from wind power.

The agreement makes Southwestern the first university in Texas to have all of its electricity supplied by wind power, and one of fewer than 20 universities in the country to have a totally "green" source of power, according to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

"By taking the bold step to obtaining all of their electricity from wind power, Southwestern University becomes a leader in showing the nation how it can be done," said Paul Rowland, executive director of the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education, in a statement issued by Southwestern.

Wind-generated power will be provided by the city of Georgetown through an agreement with AEP Energy Partners, a subsidiary of American Electric Power, and will come from the Southwest Mesa and South Trent Wind Farms in West Texas. These two wind farms have a total of 151 wind turbines, each of which can generate between 0.7 to 2.3 megawatts of electricity. Power is conveyed through transmission lines.

The initial five-year contract is renewable through 2028. Southwestern President Jake B. Schrum said the agreement will help the university toward its long-term goal of being carbon-neutral, which it promised to work toward last February when he signed the American College and University Presidents' Climate Commitment. This document formally



PHOTO COURTESY OF AMERICAN ELECTRIC POWER

Through a new agreement, Southwestern becomes the first university in Texas to have all of its power supplied by wind power, from the Southwest Mesa and South Trent Wind Farms in West Texas.

commits campuses to eliminate their greenhouse gas emissions over time and educate students about climate neutrality.

"We hope Southwestern will be an inspiration to other universities to advance sustainability," Dr. Schrum said, noting that Southwestern students first approached the city with the idea.

In addition to the wind power agreement, Southwestern has undertaken a variety of other sustainability initiatives in the past year:

- The Wilhelmina Cullen Admission Center received Gold LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) certification from the U.S. Green Building Council.



PHOTO COURTESY OF SOUTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY

Southwestern students have helped spearhead green initiatives at the university, including an environmental summit for area high school students.

- Southwestern will be applying for LEED certification for the new Prothro Center for Lifelong Learning, which opens in March.

- Small compost bins have been placed near all the residence halls and a large compost bin that will handle waste from the cafeteria has been installed north of the greenhouse.

- The student dining area went "trayless" in fall 2009.

- Students, faculty and staff members planted an organic community garden behind the Studio Arts Building.

- Southwestern students organized their third environmental summit for area high school students in 2009.

CLASSIFIED ADVERTISING • CLASSIFIED ADVERTISING

EMPLOYMENT

**DIRECTOR OF YOUTH MINISTRIES**

First UM Church, Lyons, Georgia is seeking a full-time, enthusiastic Director of Youth Ministries. Requirements: experience in youth ministry, excellent communication and relationship building skills and excellent references. Bachelor's Degree preferred. Mature spiritual leader with a heart for youth; lead youth to help them mature in their relationship with Christ. Be able to plan/coordinating activities for grades 6-12. Contact the church office at 912-526-6078 or at [lyonsumc@bellsouth.net](mailto:lyonsumc@bellsouth.net) for an application.

**FELLOWSHIPS AVAILABLE**

Bridwell Library of Perkins School of Theology at Southern Methodist University is accepting applications for the 2010-2011 Visiting Scholars and Ministers Fellowships. Six one-month fellowships, including stipend and travel reimbursement, will be awarded. The program is open to all active scholars from Ph.D. students to retired professors, and to religious leaders of all faiths. Deadline for applications is May 1, 2010. For more information see <http://smu.edu/bridwell>; call 214-768-3483; or e-mail to: [bridadmin@smu.edu](mailto:bridadmin@smu.edu)

**DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY MINISTRIES**

Spring Valley UMC, Dallas, TX, seeks a passionate disciple of Jesus Christ who loves children and has the leadership, organizational skills and vision to oversee and grow a comprehensive ministry. Send resume to: SVUMC; 7700 Spring Valley Road; Dallas, TX 75254; or: [mvowell@svumc.org](mailto:mvwowell@svumc.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)

**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.

**CLASSIFIED ADVERTISING**

Readership is approximately 225,000 readers each week. Rates are per word or group of figures or initials (20 word minimum). **Newspaper Only—\$3.00** per word, two consecutive weeks. **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)



■ THE LAST GUARD *Continued from page 1B*

The United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR) and the Louisiana Conference of the UMC Disaster Response Ministry (LADRM), a 501 (c) (3) organization that is affiliated with the Louisiana Conference, have held their ground, sticking it out with the most difficult recovery cases, even as most charitable organizations have run out of funds or moved on to other pressing needs.

Staff and volunteers are now helping Louisiana residents who have fallen through the cracks: the elderly and the disabled, those without flood insurance and those living paycheck to paycheck who can't afford to fix up their own homes. Not to mention unfortunate homeowners ripped off by unscrupulous contractors who disappear after cashing insurance checks.

"Methodists are the last ones standing," says the Rev. Darryl Tate, the LADRM's executive director. "I'd heard that before, but now have first-hand experience with it."

**Steady funding**

Part of it is UMCOR's long-term commitment to recovery work that goes beyond providing immediate relief in disasters. With its motto of being "the first to move in, the last to leave," the denomination's humanitarian aid agency is known as the "guru" of case management, working with family units until they are back in their homes. After Hurricane Katrina drove more than 2 million people from their Gulf Coast homes, federal and state agencies tapped UMCOR to help oversee case management for affected families.

In Louisiana, UMCOR received the same grants as the United Way. Mr. Tate estimates that two-thirds of the State of Louisiana has benefited from United Methodist assistance, either through case management or construction help.

Because UMCOR is in it for the long haul, the agency practices good stewardship. UMCOR's funding of the LADRM has remained steady, thanks

to donations from throughout the connection in response to an appeal from Bishop William Hutchinson and grants from FEMA and the State of Louisiana. Other charitable groups, meanwhile, doled out their biggest chunks in the months immediately after Katrina struck.

"We've been very frugal with our money. That's why we're still helping," Mr. Tate said.

Eighty-one cents of every dollar that the United Methodist Church has given to the Louisiana Conference has gone to client services, including case management and construction work, with only 19 cents per dollar toward administrative costs. "For recovery work, that is real good," Mr. Tate said.

Bishop Hutchinson selected Mr. Tate, who had been displaced when his church was damaged by Katrina, to run the ministry. At its height, Mr. Tate managed 76 employees—96 with case management workers—and a \$7 million budget, the same as the whole Louisiana Conference.

United Methodist help in New Orleans is all the more remarkable since the denomination is well in the minority in a mostly Catholic city. Before Katrina forced evacuations, about 10,000 United Methodists called New Orleans home; about 6,000 to 7,000 have returned. Overall, some 336,644 residents have returned to the city, about two-thirds of its pre-Katrina population, according to the Greater New Orleans Community Data Center.

United Methodists also have been key players in organizing interfaith disaster response teams, working alongside Lutheran and Catholic charity organizations. "Disaster recovery broke the denominational walls down," Mr. Tate said. "We're like brothers and sisters."

Volunteer help from United



Darryl Tate



Methodists has been steady over the five years of recovery effort. As of December 2009, more than 70,000 volunteers from every state and annual conference in the UMC, as well as 33 countries worldwide, have helped out.

They have given more than 3 million volunteer hours, which represents \$54 million of in-kind free labor. Mr. Tate estimates the direct economic development impact in Louisiana from the UMC to be about \$95 million from putting people to work, buying materials, getting people's homes rebuilt.

**Great need**

In New Orleans' Ninth Ward, the recovery and rebuilding can feel like a drop in the bucket. In any given block, rebuilt houses are surrounded by more that are still boarded up and marked with first-response numbers.

Project managers say that bodies—actually skeletons now—are still being recovered from houses that have been untouched since Katrina hit on Aug. 29, 2005. Breaches in drainage canal levees left most of New Orleans flooded in 10 to 15 feet of water that took weeks to drain.

"We're handling the most difficult cases now," Mr. Tate said. "The only money left at the table is ours."

Before Katrina, UMCOR money could only go to humanitarian aid. But because so many churches were affected, General Conference and UMCOR's board of directors were able to change that directive so that when bishops issue an appeal, 10 percent of funds raised can go to churches.

"For us here in Louisiana, that was a great need," Mr. Tate said. "We lost 32 churches in the city of New Orleans. Some were totally destroyed; most were under-insured."

"We had a lot of parsonages damaged. We had 75 to 80 pastors who were displaced. The bishop had to have a special appeal. Through the generosity of United Methodist churches, not one pastor missed a paycheck or pension payment or health insurance payment."

Mr. Tate said he hopes to make one last push for rebuilding in the New Orleans area and Rita-affected areas in Cameron and Lake Charles, La. It takes \$40,000 to \$60,000 to rebuild a 1,200- to 1,500-square-foot house in the area. Volunteers will work as long as the money holds out.

"We're now in the last phase of recovery. Right now, the money is all allocated. We will be finished with UMCOR money as of Dec. 31, 2010," he said.

"My hope and dream is that when we close down the ministry, I want to walk away knowing that I've rebuilt a community. You've got people there. You've got churches there. It's a justice issue. I have sleepless nights. I want this so bad for the church of Jesus Christ."

Most volunteers are either retired



Chris Hannah, a student from Arkansas State University, works on a house in the upper Ninth Ward.



UMR PHOTOS BY ROBIN RUSSELL

Retiree Ivan King and his wife, Raegene, of Woods Chapel UMC in Lee's Summit, Mo., spend a week each year helping out by delivering tools and supplies from the New Orleans station to work teams throughout the city.





folks or college students who descend on New Orleans during Christmas and spring breaks. That's when project managers see a surge in help. In March, for instance, up to 400 student volunteers a week are expected.

Seven or eight volunteers are assigned to work on a house, tearing down damaged walls, putting up dry-wall, repairing floors and painting interiors. As many as 50 houses a week are undergoing repair.

### Students volunteer

During one week in early January, about 70 students came from Arkansas to spend part of their Christmas break working on houses in impoverished neighborhoods of New Orleans. Some came with groups from their universities' Wesley Foundations; others had volunteered previously with Habitat for Humanity.

The Rev. Eric Van Meter, director of the Arkansas State University Wesley Foundation (and an occasional columnist for the *Reporter*), brought students who wanted to help in the recovery effort with their peers.

"They not only got to experience a new community with the people of New Orleans, but to live out Christian community with one another," he said.

It was the first time he had been in New Orleans since Katrina, and the devastation made an impact.

"I was struck by how much remained to be done in the less affluent parts of the city," he said. "The homeowners we worked with were grateful and patient, but beneath that were currents of frustration at being displaced for so long.

"If 70 college students can come in and make a small difference to a handful of families, that gives me hope that caring on a personal level can have a profound effect."

Len Carter, 71, is one of the LADRM's project managers. Growing up in the Seventh Ward, he came back to New Orleans after a 21-year career in the Air Force.

"The city's coming back, but not fast enough," Mr. Carter said as he gave visitors a tour of the Ninth Ward.

Does he ever get discouraged helping rebuild one house after another?

"Never—I love what I do," he said. "When I walk into a home, they're depressed and they have no money. And when I say, 'We can fix this,' and I see that smile, that's what gets me up in the morning."

russell@umr.org



UMR PHOTOS BY ART RUSSELL/ARMEDIA.COM

**LEFT:** Homes in impoverished New Orleans neighborhoods are still being rebuilt one by one, these days mostly by United Methodist volunteers. **ABOVE:** Many homes, especially in the impoverished upper Ninth Ward, are still sitting vacant as homeowners await help in the fifth year since Hurricane Katrina hit in August 2005.



**ABOVE:** The Louisiana Conference of the UMC Disaster Response Ministry Inc., run by United Methodists, will continue to rebuild homes like these through early 2011, as long as volunteers and funding lasts. **LEFT:** Student volunteer John Thornsberry of Southern Arkansas University in Magnolia, Ark., spent part of Christmas break working on a house in the upper Ninth Ward.



# Mission: making disciples

BY MIKE SLAUGHTER  
Special Contributor

*Editor's note: This is the first of a three-part series.*

One of the mistakes that reoccurs throughout the life cycles of the church is our reliance on a “professional” model of ministry.

Even Jesus didn't possess the pedigree for the official priesthood. He was from the tribe of Judah, and only those from the tribe of Levi could be priests.

The Christian movement began without a professionally credentialed priesthood. Every follower was anointed and appointed by the Spirit to use the gifts that he or she was given for the benefit of Christ's body and mission. These gifts were demonstrated and affirmed by other members of the body.

Every member was a minister. If you belonged to Christ then you were a functioning member of his body. Just like the members of your physical body, every member has a function. Your hand can't work apart from your wrist, which can't work apart from your forearm, which can't work apart from your elbow. I think you get the picture.

As the church became more formalized and institutionalized, a two-tier caste system was created that separated “priest” and “parishioner.” We tend to make the same fatal error when the church begins to grow.

Growth provides the fiscal resources to grow in professional staff and programming. The experience of mission that was once the task of an unpaid servant is now assigned to a paid staff person. Unpaid servants are assigned the passive work of committees while paid staff performs the active role of mission.

## Learning by doing

The unintended consequence is the shift from the experiential model, where one learns by doing, to the academy model, where one learns through study.

Discipleship occurs in the active process of doing. We err when we try to create transformation in people's lives through the transference of concepts rather than through participation in mission. The disciples learned as they traveled and ministered with Jesus. We fail to make disciples when we reduce the meaning of discipleship to the assimilation of

ideas.

When Ginghamburg Church had fewer than 100 people, I was the only salaried staff person. Every hand was needed to accomplish the aggressive mission agenda that we were called to do. The church of less than 100 people had 50–60 disciples functioning as unpaid staff with a budget of \$27,000 a year.

In a post-Resurrection appearance, Jesus gave his followers the directive of making disciples. Disciple making is the business of the church!

It is easy to forget our commission and to substitute church building for disciple building. We become absorbed in building programs, budgets, staffs and facilities—and have I mentioned attendance?

We can spend a whole lifetime in the construction of a ministry that has nothing to do with Christ's commission, despite giving the appearance of success. Don't get distracted in building the church instead of disciples. It can easily become a distraction in challenging economic times.

## His job, our job

Jesus said, “I will build my church and the gates of hell will not be able to prevail against it!” Church building is his job. Then what's ours? “Go and make disciples!” Disciples model the message. They replicate the life and mission of Jesus in the world. When Peter and John met the lame beggar at the Temple they demonstrated the presence of God's power and authority in the man's healing.

A disciple's commitment, authority and experience in mission go way beyond throwing some coin in the offering plate. A disciple has spiritual authority. Mother Teresa once said, “We must become holy not because we want to feel holy but because Christ must be able to live his life fully in us.”

Disciples operate out of a sense of calling that is spiritually motivated. Disciples do not need to be coerced. Their commitment is active and spiritually sustained. Like the prophets and saints who have gone before them, disciples have heard the voice of God asking: “Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?” They have willfully responded: “Here I am—send me!” (Isa. 6:8).

The first task of disciple making is an awakening process. We assist the initiate in identifying God's unique mission for their life.

**The Rev. Slaughter is pastor of Ginghamburg (Ohio) United Methodist Church. This is an excerpt from his new book, *Change the World: Recovering the Message and Mission of Jesus* (Abingdon Press, March).**



Mike Slaughter

## GEN-X RISING

# For Wesley, searching the Scriptures is means of grace that transforms us

BY ANDREW C. THOMPSON  
UMR Columnist

*Editor's note: This is the third in a multi-part series on the means of grace in Christian practice.*

I've made the case in the last two columns that the means of grace are centrally important aspects of our discipleship. Becoming a disciple of Jesus means learning more fully of the salvation Jesus brings. And likewise, we experience salvation's healing as we grow closer to Jesus.

St. Paul's letter to the Ephesians speaks salvation in terms of building the body of Christ through a common increase in the maturity of our faith and knowledge. Paul then says, “We must grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ” (4:15).

The means of grace are really about how that growth happens. And since I made the case for the importance of our participation in the means of grace previously, today I'm going to start looking at some specific examples of the means of grace.

Our Wesleyan tradition divides the “ordinary” means of grace into two main categories: those instituted by Jesus Christ in the New Testament and those that we find by practical experience to be means of grace as we live out our discipleship. For sake of ease, we'll refer to them as instituted means of grace and prudential means of grace.

## More than knowledge

A good place to start is with the Bible. Christians have an intuitive sense that the Bible is important—after all, they hear sermons based on biblical texts each week, and it is to the Bible that we go to learn about Jesus. But the Bible is more than an encyclopedia of facts about God. As a means of grace, it is an instrument of our transformation.

Let me be clear: The Bible cannot save us. Only Jesus can do that. That's a point Jesus makes himself, so I think it's worth making here.

When Jesus was confronted by opponents who thought his acts of healing were violating Sabbath laws, he responded by giving a principle for how to read the Scriptures: “You

search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life,” Jesus told them. Then he went on, “It is they that bear witness about me, yet you refuse to come to me that you may have life” (John 5:39–40, ESV).

Jesus is making a point about *means* and *ends*. So this is the perfect place to start thinking about those practices that make up the *means of grace*.

The Bible's importance—as the word of God—is that it is the prime authority pointing us to Jesus. Our church's official doctrine recognizes that when it says, “The Holy Scripture

laypeople over the past 25 years: Disciple Bible Study. If you've gone through the original Disciple curriculum, you know that the subtitle for Disciple I is “Becoming Disciples Through Bible Study.”

## Transformative

That idea is deeply Wesleyan in that it points to the real reason for searching the Scriptures. We don't do it so we can win at a game of Bible trivia. We do it because reading, hearing and meditating upon the word of God in Scripture is a transformative practice! It draws us closer to Jesus

‘As a means of grace, [the Bible] is an instrument of our transformation.’

containeth all things necessary to salvation” (Article V). Put simply, it's the place where we can come to know who Jesus is.

## How to use the Bible

John Wesley keyed in on the phrase from John 5:39—“searching the Scriptures”—when he wanted to talk about how our study of the Bible can be a means of grace. The Bible itself can't give grace. It's an object, and sitting on your beside table unopened it will do you no good whatsoever. But when we enter into a practice of reading, meditating and hearing the word of God in Scripture, then we find that we are indeed drawn closer to Christ.

In fact, that's just the way Wesley put it in the instructions he gave to his preachers to practice searching the Scriptures as a means of grace. “Do you use all the means of grace?” he asked, and then extended his question to include three main ways of engaging the Bible. In Wesley's own words:

“Reading: Constantly, some part of every day; regularly, all the Bible in order; carefully, with the Notes; seriously, with prayer before and after; fruitfully, immediately practicing what you learn there?”

“Meditating: At set times? by any rule?”

“Hearing: Every morning? carefully; with prayer before, at, after; immediately putting in practice? Have you a New Testament always about you?”

When I see the way he describes engaging the Bible, I immediately think of our Church's most significant development in biblical study for

Christ, and in that sense, opens us up more fully to the presence and power of the Holy Spirit.

I'm aware that a too-strong focus on the role of practices like the means of grace in our salvation can open Wesleyans up to the age-old charge of “works righteousness.” Wesley himself was sensitive to that issue.

In his sermon, “The Means of Grace,” he says, “We know that there is no inherent power in the words that are spoken in prayer, in the letter of Scripture read, the sound thereof heard, or the bread and wine received in the Lord's Supper; but that it is God alone who is the giver of every good gift, the author of all grace . . . whereby through any of these there is any blessing conveyed to our soul.”

So we want to be careful to always emphasize that all saving grace is a free gift of God. But the fact remains that the means of grace are also given to us. And our experience through using them is that they help us to know salvation ever more fully!

One of Wesley's favorite spiritual authors, Thomas à Kempis, writes in his classic *The Imitation of Christ*: “As iron cast into fire loses its rust and becomes glowing white, so he who turns completely to God is stripped of his sluggishness and changed into a new man.”

If grace is that transforming fire, then the means of grace are the kiln wherein it is stoked. And the more we use them, the more we'll find our rust burned away and our souls healed.

The Rev. Thompson maintains a blog at [www.genxrising.com](http://www.genxrising.com). e-mail: [andrew@mandatum.org](mailto:andrew@mandatum.org).



## WESLEYAN WISDOM

## Can UMC break out of its institutional mold?

BY DONALD W. HAYNES  
UMR Columnist

I am not an ostrich. I know that the denominational identity sign on the front lawn is now the least effective means of the local church's reaching new people. I have read Brian McLaren's *Everything Must Change* (Thomas Nelson, 2009).

Mr. McLaren, as we know, is the pacesetter voice of "the emerging church." His book title comes from the words of a young woman in Rwanda, who says: "Today for the first time I see what Jesus meant by the kingdom of God. I see that it's about changing this world, not escaping it or retreating into our churches. If Jesus' message of the kingdom of God is true, then everything must change. Everything must change."



Donald Haynes

Basically, Mr. McLaren sounds like a mid-life convert to liberation theology and speaks mostly to societal issues in this book. But his premise is that as Christians, we have bought into a "suicidal system," and that the church reflects the culture.

### Critiquing the church

For Christmas my son gave me a little volume called *So You Don't Want to go to Church Anymore* (Windblown Media, 2006), written by Wayne Jacobson, the man who was mentor to William Paul Young, author of the popular novel *The Shack* (Windblown Media, 2007) and his friend, Dave Coleman, a hospice chaplain. One of the endorsements is from a college student: "It will challenge you to re-think what church is all about."

In a long series of apparently apocryphal conversations, the authors record one about "traditional church."

Bright young Laurie says, "I know I got some truth and my hunger for God in a congregation just like this."

John asks, "But did it also satisfy that hunger, Laurie?"

She responds: "At times I thought it did. Looking back, however, I think it only frustrated me. It made me hungry to know God in a way it could not fulfill. It also made me feel that this was my fault—that I either did not understand enough or did not work enough."

Then comes the authors' critique of the church:

"That's what happens when an in-

stitution tries to do what it cannot do," the authors write. "By providing services to keep people coming, it unwittingly becomes a distraction to real spiritual life. It offers an illusion of spirituality in highly orchestrated experiences, but it cannot show people how to live each day in Him through the real struggles of life."

### Meager fruit

The guru continues: "In the first days of a new group forming, the focus is usually on God, but that usually fades over time as financial pressures and the desire for order subvert the simplicity of following Jesus. Relationships grow stale, and the machinery siphons off so much energy just to keep it running, it grows increasingly irrelevant."

A third party, a pastor of a megachurch, joins the conversation.

"For all the work that goes on here and all the money we spend, the resulting spiritual fruit is pretty meager. New people aren't coming to know God. Our new people are transfers from other congregations that are having trouble. I don't know anyone here who is on the Journey, and only a few share my hunger. We're so busy that we don't care much about it. I am torn between the responsibility to reform it and the desire to leave it. Neither sounds like a good option."

The frustrated pastor continues, "People have been trying to reform it for two thousand years and the result is almost always the same—a new system emerges to replace the old, but it eventually becomes a substitute of its own. We have people in leadership positions who don't know God very well, but who have strong opinions about the way things should be done."

The dialogue represents the recurring language of those who are giving up on denominational churches like United Methodism. I am in conversation with so many young adults who feel that we are asking young pilgrims groping their way along their life journey to find their way by keeping the nursery at church!

The questions being raised by the emerging church cannot be ignored. We cannot continue to lose our children and our children's children. As important as congregational care is to every pastor, we cannot overlook the priority of ministering to the needs of the seeker, the newcomer and the struggler.

I have three grown grandsons. The oldest finished college in 2009, but has found no job that is remotely commensurate with what he expected as

he received his degree. He is living with us, and our discussions challenge us both to reach over generational lines of philosophy, faith and experience.

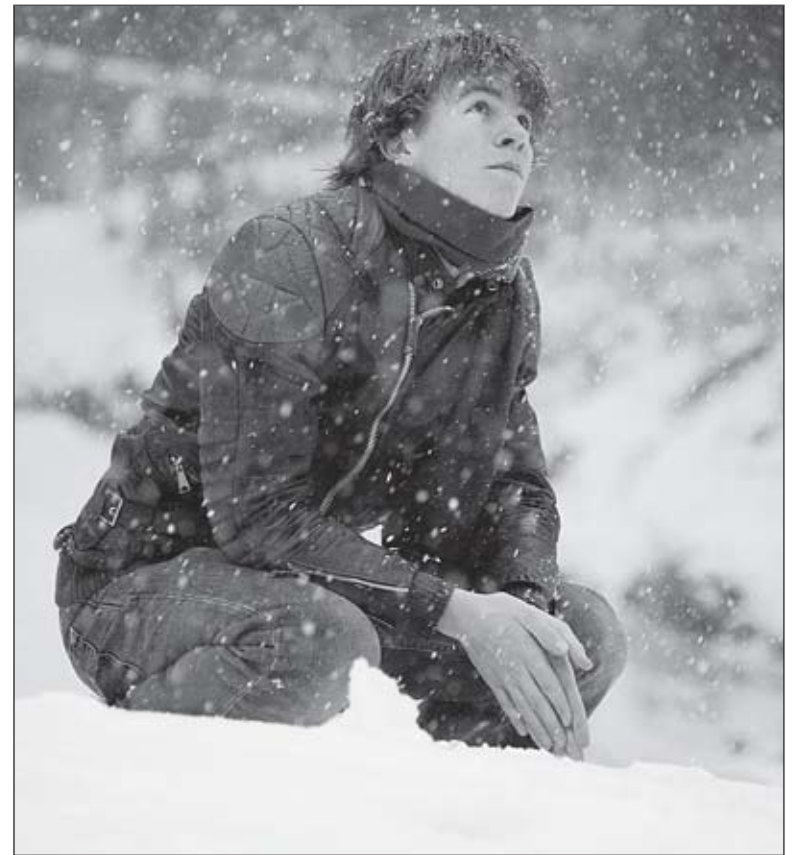
His brother, a college junior majoring in geology at a huge state university is deeply involved in a fundamentalist campus group! While taking a religion course whose professor is a self-proclaimed atheist, my grandson's spiritual mentors in the evenings are quoting half of John 14:6 and insisting that anyone who does not know Jesus as their personal Savior can never go to heaven! Their concept of God does not root salvation in God's love, but in the believer's faith.

Right now, I am heartbroken that the third dropped out of college last week with clinical depression and a low self-image. Like millions of others who grew up in Sunday school and United Methodist Youth, personal Christian faith has not been sufficiently nurtured to "rescue the perishing." All of these are my grandsons, all were reared in large United Methodist churches with large staffs providing multiple program ministries. All have been left to find their own way with their septuagenarian grandfather as their primary mentor.

### No denying reality

I therefore confess that I am worried about my beloved United Methodist Church. Our membership losses, demographic aging contribution base and what Perkins School of Theology professor William Abraham calls "doctrinal amnesia," are reality factors that cannot be denied. Voices across the connection seem to agree that General Conference in 2012 will have to seriously address guaranteed appointment, present pension support level and equitable salary support.

Many local churches who turned to "contemporary worship" as a means of reaching new people have been disappointed that the result was to divide the existing congregation into an "us" and "them." Even a "died in the wool" churchman like Russell Richey closes his profound book *Methodist Connectionalism* (General Board of Higher Education and Ministry, 2009) with the ominous words: "Our divisions, especially between liberal and evangelical, run deeper and wider . . . than anything separating us from other Christian bodies! The warring camps flail against each other and against what remains of established authority—bishops, boards and agencies, seminaries, and the clergy themselves."



© 2010 DESIGN PICS PHOTO

**The church has not borne fruit in the lives of many young people who are trying to find their way spiritually along their life journey, says Donald Haynes.**

He continues, "Mainstream Protestantism is in trouble; a general malaise reigns."

### Need new vision

Revealed biblical faith is not a set of "pat" answers. It's only by playing biblical hopscotch that can we make the Bible a monolithic book of religious prescriptions. As Hebrew history unfolds, so does their understanding of God's will. It is not the same for Ezra that we see in Ruth; it is not the same for Joshua who was convinced God wanted ethnic genocide as it was for Jonah who grudgingly admitted that God loved the Ninevites!

Jeremiah caught a new vision, "when the law of God will be written on our hearts." Ezekiel taught us that sin is not inherited; we are responsible only for our own! Jesus said, "You have heard it said of old, but I say unto you . . ." Paul argued for liberation from circumcision and Mosaic food laws. Revelation pictures avenues into the consummate kingdom from the east, north, west, and south (Rev. 21:24).

Like Rip Van Winkle, we lost touch with scriptural primacy, neglected Wesley's "way of salvation," slept through a revolution and are blinking our eyes as we awaken to a world in

which Methodism has not defined its message, mission and method. Can we "serve this present age"? Yes, if we re-think, re-vision and take on the work of the surgeon—to cut, to experience pain and to be healed.

A book that deserves more serious consideration is Diana Butler Bass' *Christianity for the Rest of Us* (HarperOne, 2006). Like many others, she experienced in her home United Methodist church not the grace theology of Wesleyanism or the controlled doctrine of fundamentalism, but a mirror of the "conventional morality" found in her father's Rotary Club. Now she sees an emerging place for churches that mentor vital spirituality within the context of intellectual openness and honest inquiry. Indeed when radical liberals and rabid fundamentalists draw their battle lines and make mincemeat of the Beatitudes, United Methodist grace will be the gathering place for "the rest of us."

In our new future, we must be neither secularized nor escapist, grounded in spirituality that is the fruit of our grace theology. So it was with Wesley; so it will be if God revisits the people called Methodists.

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



# Millennials live in a radically different world

BY JOEY BUTLER  
United Methodist News Service

When the original *Star Wars* trilogy was re-released to theaters in the late 1990s, I took my cousin, 10 years my junior, to experience those films on the big screen.

I told her that when I was a little kid, I made my dad take me to see *Star Wars* eight times, and *The Empire Strikes Back* six times. Puzzled, she asked, “Why did you go to the theater that many times?”

“Because,” I replied, “we didn’t have VCRs back then.”

She looked at me like I’d said we didn’t have electricity. Or possibly fire. Now she has a sister, 10 years younger, who is dumbfounded that she survived a childhood without the Internet.

Younger generations live in a radically different world than previous generations did at that age. They have different beliefs, different concerns and different perspectives.

The United Methodist Council of Bishops has launched a plan intended to lower the average age of United Methodist membership 10 years by 2019. To attract younger generations, churches must understand who they are, what they like and how best to reach them.

## Meet the Millenials

*M\*A\*S\*H\** was going off the air, MTV was launching, “Thriller” was in cassette decks and Generation Y was in its infancy.

Generation Y was born between 1982 and 1995. It is the most “wired” generation yet. Unlike their more self-absorbed Generation X predecessors, “millennials” are very team- and community-oriented, and more optimistic. They are the most tolerant of any generation on issues such as immigration, race and homosexuality.

And they don’t seem to like the church much.

According to research by both Pew Research Center and the Barna Group, Generation Y has little trust in the institutional church.

Pew reports 18- to 25-year-olds are among the least likely to attend

church regularly: 32 percent attend at least once a week compared with 40 percent of those over age 25. Sixteen percent say they never attend.

Even young Christians are wary. A 2007 Barna study reports half of young churchgoers perceive Christianity to be judgmental, hypocritical and too political. One-third called it old-fashioned and out of touch with reality.

When Barna asked young people to identify their impressions of Christianity, one common theme was “Christianity is changed from what it used to be” and “Christianity in today’s society no longer looks like Jesus.”

The findings led Barna president David Kinnaman to write *unChristian: What a New Generation Really Thinks about Christianity*.

“Young people are very candid,” Mr. Kinnaman writes. “In our interviews, we kept encountering young people—both those inside the church and outside of it—who said that something was broken in the present-day expression of Christianity.”

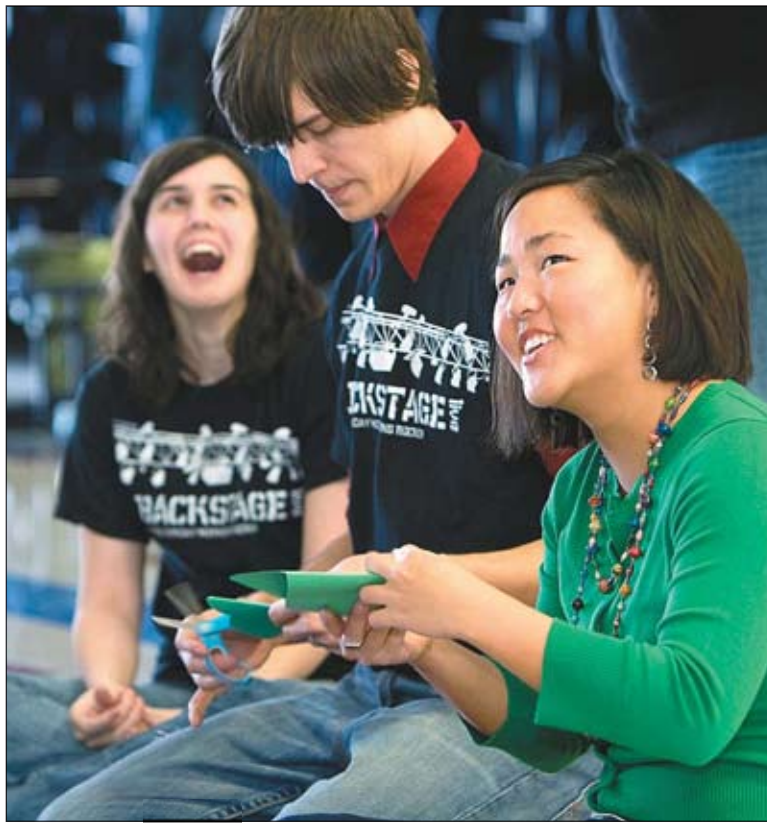
## Depressed yet?

It’s not easy to hear such criticism about the church, but this generation isn’t a lost cause. It may just be what the church needs.

“People in that age group have not rejected spirituality. What they’ve rejected is the tradition and what they perceive to be the hypocrisy of the church,” says Jamie Dunham, chief planning officer at Bohan Advertising, a Nashville-based firm that worked on the United Methodist Church’s “Rethink Church” campaign.

For many years, Mr. Dunham says the dialogue has been about “what type of music was played in the worship service and what type of clothes you wore. The real discussion is what place does church have in our culture and community. This younger generation is looking for things that allow them to get outside the church to do things.

“The churches that I think have the healthiest approach today put emphasis on the actions that show they are people trying to solve prob-



UNITED METHODIST NEWS SERVICE PHOTO BY MIKE DUBOSE

Melissa Wheatley, right, helps with Sunday school classes at Trinity Church in Spring Hill, Tenn.

lems in the community rather than trying to insulate themselves,” Mr. Dunham says.

Morley Winograd and Michael Hais, co-authors of *Millennial Makeover: MySpace, YouTube, and the*

*Future of American Politics*, call Generation Y “the most civic-minded since the generation of the 1930s and 1940s. . . . This is a generation of activist doers.”

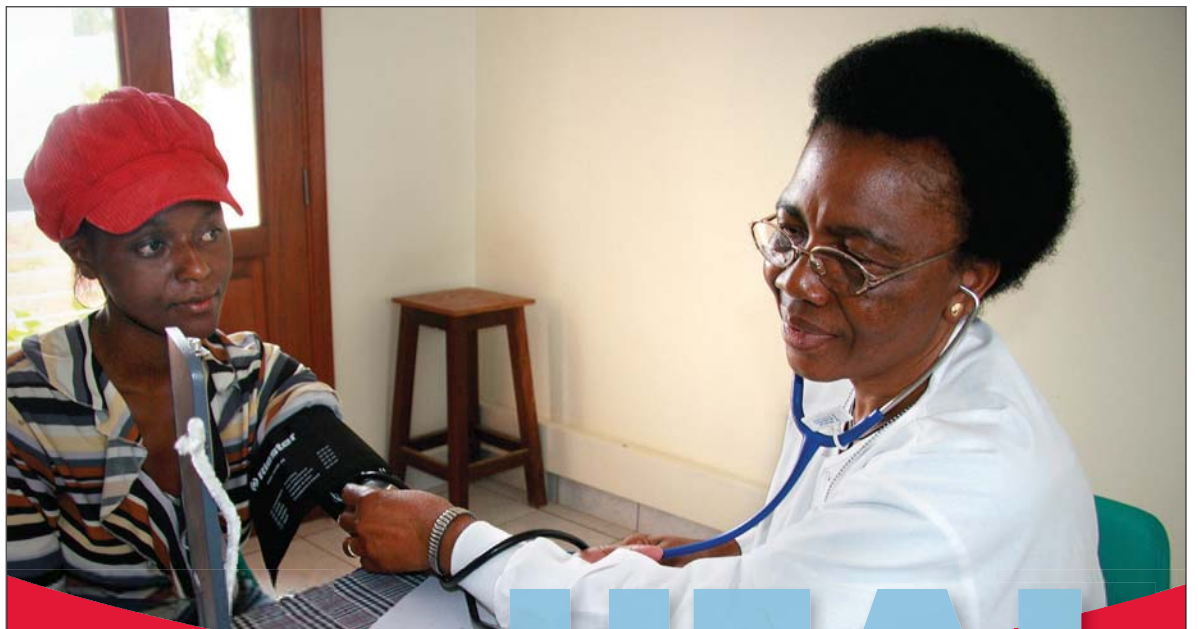
The more opportunities Millennials have to get their hands dirty, the better. Churches need to look into their communities and see what needs are there—perhaps a pancake breakfast for the homeless, a Habitat build or a community cleanup.

When designing ministries, remember young people in entry-level jobs and paying college loans often don’t have as much money to contribute as older members.

Reports saying young people mistrust the church are scary, but there is hope—if churches will be creative and find new ways to do ministry that appeal to this skeptical group.

“Generation X suffered from breakdown of the traditional household, and grew up in a time where they’re more pessimistic and fearful about the world,” says Mr. Dunham. “But Generation Y is hugely optimistic. They want to make changes for the better, and make the world better than what they grew up in.”

Mr. Butler is editor of content for 18- to 34-year-olds at United Methodist Communications.



United Methodist Missionaries

# HEAL

Missionary Yema Luhahi serves as a nurse and trainer at Maua Methodist Hospital Nursing School in Kenya.

By supporting United Methodist missionaries like Yema, you help them heal individuals and assist communities that confront the diseases of poverty.



GIVE THROUGH THE ADVANCE AT:

[givetomission.org](http://givetomission.org)



Order your copies of the *The Church in Haiti: Healing and Hope*, a special supplement to the *United Methodist Reporter*.

Copies of this supplement are available at a special price in bundles of 50.

Please order your copies by April 15!

Order by phone: 800-947-0207, ext. 142 or online at [www.umportal.org/portal\\_store.asp](http://www.umportal.org/portal_store.asp).