

IN THIS ISSUE

God steps in where a mother's love can't go

4A

Black Methodists for Church Renewal and the Methodist Federation for Social Action invite the Arkansas Conference to "Imagine Justice"

5A

Jacksonville congregation goes "M.I.A." to serve others

6A

North Central and Central District churches join together to "Get Up & Give" to Methodist Family Health

7A

The United Methodist Foundation of Arkansas announces the recipients of Dollars for Scholars

9A

Vietnamese Christians build church that clicks



Ethan Phan helps operate the computer with music lyrics and other images used during worship at the Vietnamese United Methodist Church in Fort Smith.

Photo by Heather Hahn

HEATHER HAHN
Editor

FORT SMITH — When Saigon fell on April 30, 1975, Tommy Ho — a Green Beret with the South Vietnamese Army — faced almost certain execution if captured by the advancing North Vietnamese forces.

So, he escaped the only way he knew how — by jumping into the Pacific Ocean and trying to swim to safety.

A local fisherman pulled him from the brine. But his true deliverance came when he spotted a U.S. Naval vessel on the horizon.

Within two weeks, the ship had transported Ho to the United States, and he became one of the more than 50,000 Vietnamese refugees processed at Fort Chaffee.

He had nothing but his Army pants and a T-shirt.

But his Christian faith, he said, sustained him during his first difficult days in a strange country as he started life anew.

Thirty-five years later, Ho has raised a family and built a career in the Arkansas River Valley region, and he remains just as committed to his faith. He is among the founding members of the Vietnamese United Methodist Church in Fort Smith, or *Hoi Thanh Giam-Ly Vietnam*.

[See NEW CHURCH page 8A]

ON THE RELATIONSHIP OF HEALTH CARE REFORM TO THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH



BY CHARLES CRUTCHFIELD

Dear Friends:

It has become apparent that there is some considerable confusion regarding the relationship of the United Methodist Church to the newly passed health reform legislation.

On the evening that the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act was passed by the U.S. House of

Representatives, Rep. Nancy Pelosi stated that the United Methodist Church supported the reform legislation.

No agency of the United Methodist church had advance knowledge of the content of any of the speeches delivered on the night of Rep. Pelosi's remarks.

The United Methodist Church has not endorsed any specific legislation. Only the General Conference of the church endorses a *specific* piece of legislation.

The 2008 General Conference passed a resolution on health care

reform that is contained in the Book of Resolutions.

We have endorsed broad principles regarding health care that may be addressed in a particular piece of legislation.

Support for any health care reform by representatives of the church should be viewed within the context of Resolution 3201 and Paragraph 162.V in the 2008 Book of Discipline, both passed in 2008. These documents are available on the Arkansas Conference Web site at www.arumc.org.

The United Methodist Church

has been "on record" in support of health care reform since long before the current legislation was written and long before the current debate began.

It is also important to remember that the delegates to the General Conference are elected by the clergy and laity delegates of each annual conference in United Methodism.

The General Conference is a representative expression of the worldwide church, which meets once every four years. The next

[See HEALTH CARE, page 12A]



Marilyn Campos, 15, and her younger sister, Viviana Campos, 10, celebrate after Viviana finds the dress to wear at her sister's quinceanera (15th birthday celebration) later this year. For the second year, Butterfly Community Ministries — a United Methodist nonprofit group that works with the local Hispanic community — held a prom and quinceanera dress giveaway on April 2-3. Most of the lightly used formal dresses were donated by members of North Little Rock First UMC. Mary Hoey, a United Methodist deacon, is the ministry's executive director. Fellowship Bible Church in North Little Rock volunteered its space for the event.

Photo by Heather Hahn



EDITOR'S CORNER

BY HEATHER HAHN

Changing times

I first decided to cover religion more than a decade ago because I felt there were so many stories about faith communities that had yet to be told.

I wanted to show that Christianity was about far more than the latest outlandish thing Pat Robertson said.

In fact, one of my hopes was to share some examples of Christians serving the least of these so that others might be inspired to emulate their work.

And in the past year, I have gotten to bear witness to so many examples of churches doing effective ministry.

I've seen United Methodist teens brave the blistering July heat of the Arkansas Delta to paint an elderly woman's house. I've seen United Methodist women in North Little Rock play fairy godmother to girls in need of prom and quinceanera dresses.

I've seen churches in the West District join together to build a Habitat for Humanity house, and those who attended last year's Annual Conference donate phone cards so U.S. service members overseas could call home.

And I've seen countless United Methodist volunteers feed the hungry, tend the sick and welcome the strangers in their midst.

What I see now is a time of transition for many in the Arkansas Conference.

Almost every Sunday this spring, some United Methodist pastors in the state will tell their congregations that they soon will be

departing for a new appointment.

For these clergy members and their faith communities, this is a time of good-byes and perhaps some anxiety.

But it's also a chance to make a fresh start and, prayerfully, to take on a new adventure in ministry.

For me, this is a time of transition as well. As I write this, I am just a few days away from beginning a new post as a reporter with the United Methodist News Service in Nashville, Tenn.

I will certainly miss writing about United Methodists in Arkansas full time. But I'm still part of the United Methodist family, and I'm hoping in my new role I will continue to be able to tell the stories of some of the wonderful ministry being done here — only for a national and international audience.

And I am excited to get to cover the new ways the United Methodist Church is connecting with people and building the Kingdom.

It has been one of the greatest joys and privileges of my life to cover Arkansas Methodism.

But even as I depart, I know the *Arkansas United Methodist* will continue to share information that can't be found anywhere else — as it has for more than a century. The newspaper remains a valued part of the Arkansas Conference's mission.

No matter what changes the future holds for Arkansas United Methodists, you can count on this newspaper to be there beside you.

May the Lord bless you and keep you.

Church is walking through the wilderness

KATHY CONLEY
Special contributor

On behalf of the Bishop and the Imagine Ministry Team, I would like to thank everyone who attended our regional meetings.

Your faithfulness to the United Methodist Church was demonstrated as you engaged with other United Methodists to begin the conversations that will strengthen our church. Now, you must continue that conversation at your local church.

Involve as many people as you can, so we can get as much information as we can. To access the Web survey, visit www.arumc.org and click on "Imagine Ministry." The survey closed on April 30.

The Imagine Ministry Team will pay heed to every comment, question and suggestion. The information you provide to us will help us as we discern the plans God has in store for us.

At Annual Conference, you will turn in the work your church has done with the answering of the questions requested. I thank you in advance for that important information.

The direction our church is going in the future is exciting to comprehend. God has done great things with the United Methodist Church, and we will continue to work hard to reveal and share the love and grace of our God for years to come.

This process of discernment is one we on the Imagine Ministry team take very seriously. Nothing will be decided, adjusted or changed without



Kathy Conley

a complete "thinking through" of the outcome. Many of our decisions will be hard because we are going into the deep water of change and that requires a sense of questioning, strength and confidence.

Prayer is of the utmost importance in the process.

The Imagine Ministry Team is

"Nothing will be decided, adjusted or changed without a complete 'thinking through' of the outcome."

charged with setting and discerning priorities and directions — not strategies and action plans. The local church will ultimately be responsible for taking action.

The local church is where we will begin addressing our failures as congregations to be Christ to our communities. It is where we will rediscover who we have been through the years as a grace-filled church spreading the love of Christ to the world and where we will plan to live out the church's future.

We are charged with looking at our future and realizing that we must step beyond all the old problems and move ahead to a new way of telling the "old, old story." Oh, we will still share it in the most important of ways — the witness of our lives. But the

use of creative methods, including technology, will have to be present in order to reach the generations to come.

We have talked in our meetings that we are building a new bridge while we stand on it, and that is very difficult. These challenges will be too, but as a lifelong member of the United Methodist Church, I see the importance of addressing them now.

As a United Methodist, I see these challenges turn into opportunities and possibilities. Yes, it is a walk into the "wilderness," a place that is scary and unknown. But it's also a place where we sometimes find God — as many of our friends in the Scriptures did — if we have the eyes to see.



Even in the "wilderness," the United Methodist Church will continue to be the church

Wesley established, just with a new list of God-given strategies for reaching God's children in this day.

The Imagine Ministry Team is reflecting on the formulation of a new vision. God is doing a great thing right now with us. Your support of the process and confidence in the United Methodist Church in Arkansas will help this to happen.

Let us allow the Spirit of God to move among us and to do a new thing. In the strength and boldness of Christ, let us begin now!

Kathy Conley is a member of Blytheville First United Methodist Church. She is also a member of the Imagine Ministry Team. She can be reached at kathyconley21@gmail.com.

 <p>Volume 157 • No. 01 May 7, 2010 Martha S. Taylor • Director of Communications Heather Hahn • Editor Patrick W. Shownes • Communications Coordinator www.arumc.org</p>	 <p>Arkansas Conference Communications 800 Daisy Bates Drive Little Rock, AR 72202-3770 www.arumc.org (501) 324-8000</p>										
<p>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.</p>	<p>Subscriptions - \$15.00, 1 Year - \$25.00, 2 Years - Free, Online For more information, visit www.arumc.org/aum or call (501) 324-8006.</p>										
<p>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</p>	<p>Advertising is welcomed. For a rate sheet or more information, contact Martha Taylor at (501) 324-8005 or mtaylor@arumc.org. While all advertising is reviewed before acceptance, it should not be considered endorsed by this newspaper or the Church.</p>										
<p>POSTMASTER: Send address changes to: The United Methodist Reporter, PO Box 660275, Dallas, TX 75266-0275.</p>	<p>Submission Deadlines</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Issue Date</th> <th>Submission Deadline</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>June 4, 2010</td> <td>May 19, 2010</td> </tr> <tr> <td>July 2, 2010</td> <td>June 16, 2010</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Aug. 6, 2010</td> <td>July 21, 2010</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Sept. 3, 2010</td> <td>Aug. 18, 2010</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Issue Date	Submission Deadline	June 4, 2010	May 19, 2010	July 2, 2010	June 16, 2010	Aug. 6, 2010	July 21, 2010	Sept. 3, 2010	Aug. 18, 2010
Issue Date	Submission Deadline										
June 4, 2010	May 19, 2010										
July 2, 2010	June 16, 2010										
Aug. 6, 2010	July 21, 2010										
Sept. 3, 2010	Aug. 18, 2010										
<p>The United Methodist Reporter (USPS 954-500) is published weekly by UMR Communications, 1221 Profit Drive, Dallas, TX 75247. Periodicals Postage Paid at Dallas.</p>											



BY CHARLES CRUTCHFIELD

AN OCCASIONAL WORD from the Bishop

Dear Friends:

I am about to show my age. I liked the comedian George Burns. He could squeeze a pound of humor out of an ounce of words. Sometimes the words were loaded with a ton of wisdom.

He once said: "The secret of a good sermon is having a good beginning and a good ending, then having them together as close as possible." Wisdom for some of us preachers. ...

But I think the most profound thing he said was: "I look to the future because that's where I'm going

to spend the rest of my life."

These are important words for me. They state a simple truth. We cannot live in yesterday.

Sometimes in my mind I replay the night my high school basketball team was playing for the district title. We were one point behind. Time was running out. I was fortunate enough to steal the ball on an in-bounds play.

I had a 20-foot jump shot open. The best free throw shooter on our team was under the basket. In a split second decision I threw the ball to him. He would be fouled and win

the game. NOT.

He missed both free throws and time ran out. I wonder, what if I had taken the shot?

We cannot change the past. We cannot live in yesterday.

This is a terrifying world. Nuclear proliferation, expanding poverty, fear and even hatred of those who are different culturally or politically, lack of civility, a still trembling economy all encourage an urge to return to the comfortable past.

But we cannot return to yesterday. We are going to have to

live in the uncomfortable future.

Remember the words of both Matthew and Mark as they describe the resurrection, "...he goes before you to Galilee..." Jesus goes ahead of us into tomorrows that are not yet clearly defined or revealed.

What the Gospels are saying to us is that we do not need to draw back from the challenges and opportunities that tomorrow holds. Jesus is already there.

Put another way, the grace of Jesus Christ enables us to live with the uncertainty of the future. We can be confident knowing that if we

are faithful in our way, God in Jesus Christ will be faithful in God's way. We have no need to fear the future, even with all its certain changes and the uncertainty they will surely bring.

The future belongs to the people of God.

The battle has already been won. Jesus has gone before us. Jesus is there.

Faithfully,

A better future begins with local churches

ERIC VAN METER
Special contributor

Enough talk.

That seems to be the message I get from most people I talk to about the Imagine Ministry process that our conference is engaged in. For the most part, I have to agree.

It's not that I don't hold the members of the Imagine Ministry Team in high regard. I sincerely respect them and their efforts, and I think that sentiment is generally shared among my colleagues.

Still, the problems brought up in the March listening sessions have been around for more than a decade, and the results of our process to address them are not slated to be implemented until at least 2011.

The glacial pace at which United Methodists even consider change is, for many of us, at least as frustrating as any problem we face.

It's all too easy to blame the myriad challenges of the Arkansas Conference (or the entire American United Methodist Church, for that matter) on our slowness to interpret or respond to the changes in the culture at large.

It's easy to complain about our leaders, our processes, our structures. I'll freely admit that I've been guilty of that more than once.

So it's understandable that some of us would respond with "enough talk," and others would simply shrug their shoulders and ignore the whole thing.

Understandable, but not necessarily helpful. If we want to be part of a healthy, vibrant Annual Conference, we so-called rank-and-file United Methodists are going to



Eric
Van Meter

have to take some responsibility.

Virtually every problem we face — declining numbers, advancing age, diminishing financial resources, etc. — cannot be effectively addressed at the

conference or even the district level.

These Arkansas Conference's "problems" amount to nothing more

to be done by those of us in localized contexts. Organizations can't love people. Neither can programs. Only other people can.

That, I think, is the starting place for changing the culture of frustration that affects so much of our conference connection.

The Arkansas Conference can make the soil better. We local folks have to lovingly tend the individual plants, if we want anything to grow.

The good news is that we don't have to wait to get started. There are a few simple — not easy, but simple — things we can do now to build a

are not answers in and of themselves. They are merely tools to help us speak good news.

We can think younger without trying to think for the young. Young adults in their twenties and even thirties have a natural connection to their culture.

Rather than try to train that culture out of them in order to make them good church members, perhaps we should show a little more faith in their ability to handle difficult decisions.

We can welcome a future that honors the past without dying along with it. Like it or not, American Christianity is changing on some very deep levels. Church membership and service no longer equal discipleship. Many contemporary disciples are looking for ways to passionately follow Jesus, with or without the traditional church.

Methodism began because a handful of Christ followers were willing to move with God instead of trying to steer God. Perhaps we can find that same courage in our time.

And perhaps we can find the courage to live above our frustrations with institutions. Perhaps we can recognize what they can offer and work on parallel paths with them toward a more faithful and fruitful United Methodism, at least in Arkansas.

Enough talk. We can do this. Starting now.

Eric Van Meter is campus minister of Arkansas State University's Wesley Foundation. He can be reached at astatewesley@yahoo.com.

"The Arkansas Conference's 'problems' amount to nothing more than a collective description of local realities."

than a collective description of local realities. And if the root of the problem is local, the solution has to be local as well.

That means it's up to us.

I'm not suggesting that the work of our conference leaders is not vital. All of them, including those involved in the Imagine Ministry process, have critical (and often thankless) organizational work to do. Keeping a highly centralized denomination such as ours connected without letting a cumbersome bureaucracy get in the way is no small task.

I am suggesting, however, that the more necessary — and ultimately, more difficult — work has

healthier annual conference.

We can think smaller. If the last decade has taught us anything, it's that construction does not equal growth.

A worshiping community begins not with space, but with a willingness to love individuals and families in the name of Jesus.

If we love selflessly, some of the people around us will want to do the same. I think that's a beautiful kind of life to share.

We can put technology in its place. The cry to "embrace technology" too often gets translated into gimmicky overuse of trendy media. Tech tools like social-networking, texting and multimedia

Letter to the Editor

I was ashamed to read the article "D.C. Churches torn on gay marriage rules" in the April 16 issue of the *United Methodist Reporter*.

The article did absolutely nothing to uphold the sacred Scriptures or the Triune God. The top authority was what the *Church* said. No credence was given to the fact that it is the Word of God that stipulates what the *Church* says is actually the highest authority.

As far as I am concerned, if those pastors do not agree with the United Methodist Church regulations that are based on the Word of God, then they should join the Presbyterian or the Lutheran churches.

Perhaps someone could have written a caveat to that story giving Scripture references and the reasons why we are admonished to hate the sin but love the sinner. No where does Scripture say we should hold up government as *our* spiritual authority. Render to Caesar what is Caesar's and to God what is God's.

Ella Mae Carter
Member of
Wesley UMC in Conway

Bud Reeves' column will return in the June 4 issue

God's love fills the void where a mother can't go

DEENA MARIE HAMILTON
Special contributor

Moses' mother did something that was brave. She hid him when he was born because he was a really cute baby that had something special about him. She could not throw him into the Nile as commanded by Pharaoh.

Instead she got a papyrus basket for him and plastered it with bitumen and pitch, and she put it among the reeds on the bank of the river.

His sister followed the basket among the reeds and watched as Pharaoh's daughter came to bathe at the Nile and discovered him (Exodus 2: 1-4).

The love of a mother is something that is strong and impenetrable. My heart goes out to people who grow up without the love of a mother. That is devastating. Only God's love can fix that.

There are children who have or will grow up with their mothers addicted to drugs or mothers who have a lifestyle that is detrimental. I felt like a motherless child many times because my mother suffered from mental illness.

One day my mother would act normal, and the next day she would act like she was on another planet. It was very confusing. It's not easy living with someone who suffers from mental illness.

So as I grew up and had a daughter of my own, I realized that I should be grateful for the mother that I have and love dearly.

She has her good days and bad, and now in her old age she is starting to suffer from the beginning stages of dementia. But when I look back on our lives together, I realize some things.

My mother was always by my side. She made sure that I had what I needed to do well in school. She made me breakfast every morning and made sure I had good meals.

She was the best grandmother she could be.

She even went as far as to buy my daughter a mink-fur sweater when my baby was only 6 months old. My daughter was the best-dressed baby at church.

Most importantly, she made



Deena Marie Hamilton

sure that my daughter was christened at 6 months.

Even when she was having a bad day and we were both frustrated, my mother always told me how much she

loved me. I've never felt unloved or neglected by her... just mistreated and misunderstood.

My mother has said some very hurtful things to me because of her illness.

People tell me that she doesn't know what she's doing. She's sick, and she doesn't mean it.

But it still stings because the words are coming from a woman that has brought me into this world. But when it gets too hard for me to bear, I just look at her and tell her how much I love her because I've been taught that love covers a multitude of pain. And it does.

I'm grateful to God for the many women that mentored me through the years because of my mother. But I am also grateful that He gave me the type of mother that allowed for me to be strong and independent.

Even though she wasn't always capable of taking care of me, I know my mother loves me just as much as Moses' mother loved him.

I look at her and wonder sometimes how life would have been for me if she didn't suffer from mental illness.

Would I have turned out better than what I am now? Honestly, I think things are as God intended them to be.

Because of my mom's illness, I learned at an early age whom I can truly depend on, and that's God.

The more I love God, the more I appreciate her sacrifices.

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

Don't let tragedy overwhelm the pursuit of justice

MARY FAITH "ZOE" MILES
Special contributor

Sitting in a lecture by Sierra Leone native Ishmael Beah, I felt myself shrink into a ball and catapulted into the ocean.

Beah was a child soldier in the early 1990s and is the author of the book *A Long Way Gone*.

He recounted slaughter and brainwashing, and running through the night in order to see stray, reddened bullets. As he told his story, I felt pointless and helpless against world tragedy.

Through global connectivity, society is more aware of human atrocities, stirring us to feelings of guilt and inadequacy. My first response to these emotions is to want to do nothing, burdened by my limitations.

In the pursuit of justice, however, there are two factors that discourage us from taking action.

The first factor is the problem's magnitude.

In Nehemiah, the Israelites return from captivity to find their city in ruins. Though building an entire kingdom is a daunting task, brick by brick, they slowly begin to rebuild their walls (see chapter three for details).

We fight the battle by first



Mary Faith "Zoe" Miles

finding our holes in the wall.

Our position in rebuilding can be anywhere. Think of something that bothers you in your community, state, country, etc. and do research. Dust off

library cards or become Google literate. Pray over your keyboard, asking God to guide you. In doing research, you can find the place in the wall where you can start building.

The second demobilizing factor is our personal lives.

As the Israelites rebuild, the surrounding nations become angry and attack them before the construction's finished.

Though it seems to be more productive to fight off the enemy before continuing to rebuild, if they cease work to fight, the enemies will infiltrate the city. So, they multitask: "Those who carried materials did their work with one hand and held a weapon in the other" (Nehemiah 4:17).

Likewise, as we begin to work at our wall, the Bible assures us that

we will have troubles. Granted, the chances of armies attacking us are not likely. However, bosses will become dictators, bank accounts will plummet, and children will not make the grade.

But if we allow our problems to draw our focus, we're leaving ourselves and the Kingdom vulnerable to a greater attack.

In the midst of our material struggle, we must persist in our work. It is with this persistence and determination that walls get built and the Holy Spirit manifests outside of the church.

My generation, like those before us, is eager to build the Kingdom of God on Earth. In order to do that, we need the Church to gather as a body and be the vehicle to carry us to our holes in the wall. We'll attend churches with gas-tanks full of adoration for our Savior and trunks full of bricks to build His Kingdom.

Beah reminds us not to "belittle [our] contribution." God will carry our work into completion. Brothers and sisters — let's find our holes.

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.



Lawrence Bridges Jr., 9, and other members of Mabelvale Elementary School's African Drum and Groove Ensemble perform at the 11th annual African Drum and Dance Festival. Members of Little Rock First, Quapaw Quarter, Theresa Hoover and Wesley Chapel United Methodist churches joined together to organize the event on the campus of Philander Smith College. The event raised the \$8,000 needed to drill a water well in the Democratic Republic of Congo's North Katanga Conference, a partner of the Arkansas Conference.

Photo by Patrick Shownes

APPOINTMENTS

The following are the most recent pastoral retirements, appointments and other changes that have been officially announced as of press time on April 30. Most of these pastoral changes won't take place until after Annual Conference in June.

To see a complete list of appointments as they become official, visit www.arumc.org/appointments.

Retirements

- John Walls (Fairfield Bay senior pastor)
- Mary S. Hoey, (North Little Rock First, deacon)

Charge Realignment

- Westside Charge formed consisting of Westside, Camden; St. Mark and Missouri in the Southwest

District. Don Nicholson will be the part-time pastor

- Springhill / Oak Grove of Southwest District. Revel Kidd will be the part-time pastor.

Confirmed Appointment Changes

- Alma — Velda Bell
- Bay — Heath Williams
- Beebe — Russell Hull
- Benton: First, Associate Pastor — Robert Clonginger
- Cabot — Beth Waldrup
- Carlisle — Ryan Rush
- Cave City / Bear Creek — Roger Hook
- Calico Rock / Spring Creek — Mike Smith
- Conway First, Associate — Regina Gideon
- Conway: Grace — David Hawkins
- Diamond City / Omaha — Pat Bodenhamer

- Dumas / Tilar — Tandy Hanson
- Fairfield Bay — Paul Strang
- Fayetteville: Sequoyah — Sara Pair
- Forrest City First — Jan Edwards
- Fort Smith: Goddard, Associate — Carter Ferguson
- Fort Smith: Wesley — Matt Daniels
- Greenwood — Craig Russell
- Hazen / DeValls Bluff — Carolyn Doering
- Helena — Mark Massey
- Highland Valley, Associate — Bill Cato
- Huntsville / Presley Chapel — Allen Crum
- Jonesboro: Cornerstone, Associate — Jeanne Williams
- Jonesboro First, Associate — Blake Langdon
- Jonesboro: St. Paul — Charles Sigman

- Jonesboro: Shiloh / Paragould: Shiloh — Everett Isom
- Junction City / Pleasant Grove — Lynn McClure
- Little Rock: Winfield — Larry Hughes
- Little Rock: Pulaski Heights, Associate — Heath Bradley
- Mountain View First / St. James — Ron Newberry
- Murfreesboro — Troy Thomas
- Nashville First/ Bingen — Paul Coy
- Newport First — Brad Elrod
- North Little Rock: Lakewood, Associate — Andrea Allen
- Paragould First, Associate — Angie Gage
- Paris / Prairie View — Jim Rowland
- Parkview/ New Hope — Bill Steele
- Pea Ridge / Brightwater — Brian

- Timmons
- Rector — Mace Straubel
 - Rison / Mount Carmel — Glenn Hicks
 - Rogers: Central, Associate — Alex Workman
 - Rogers: Oakley Chapel — Shane Pair
 - Salem / Viola — Dany Partlow
 - Stamps — Terry Mann
 - Stuttgart: Grand Avenue — Ed Wyers
 - Tuckerman/ Swifton — Donald Lewert
 - Westside Charge — Don Nicholson
 - Wheatley / Salem — Charlotte Staggs
 - Wynne First — Glenn Pettus

Extension Ministry

- Jeannie Burton, Arkansas Hospice Chaplain

Two groups urge Conference to “Imagine Justice”

HEATHER HAHN
Editor

As the Arkansas Conference embarks on the “Imagine Ministry” process, two United Methodist groups are asking the state’s churchgoers to also “Imagine Justice.”

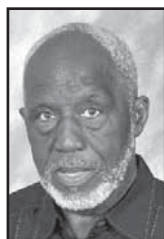
Arkansas members of Black Methodists for Church Renewal and the Methodist Federation for Social Action have joined together to form the Imagine Justice Coalition. Their goal is to get Arkansas United Methodists to take a more active role in addressing social justice issues, especially poverty.

Many of the groups’ members will wear buttons that read “Imagine Justice” at this year’s Annual Conference on June 6-9 at the Hot Springs Convention Center. The groups also will have a shared banquet on June 6 at the gathering.

“We have to begin to have a church that is inclusive of all the issues we face,” said William Robinson, a retired elder and member of Black Methodists for Church Renewal. “If we don’t do that, we will continue to lose members. The Gospels tell us we are to reach all people — not just ourselves.”

Specifically, he and other coalition members said many of the poor often feel shut out from churches. Justice, they said, is about more than just serving the poor. It’s about making those with less feel truly welcome at worship and as partners in ministry.

“If I go somewhere and



William Robinson



Kenneth Hicks

everybody there makes six figures, and if I make none, I think I’m not going to be accepted,” said Deborah Bell, chair of Arkansas Conference’s Black Methodists for Church Renewal and a member of Theresa Hoover UMC in Little Rock.

“We need to think about who are we really trying to reach. Are we trying to reach all people or are we just trying to reach the upper middle class?”

Black Methodists for Church Renewal is the national black caucus that represents the more than 2,300 predominantly black United Methodist churches within the United States. The caucus, according to its Web site at www.bmcumc.org, also seeks to “to serve as the spiritual agitating conscious of the church.”

The group was founded in 1967 — a year before the Methodist Church and Evangelical United Brethren Church merged to form the United Methodist Church.

The Methodist Federation for Social Action, founded in 1907, seeks to mobilize clergy and laity within the

denomination to “take action in issues of peace, poverty and people’s rights,” according to its Web site at mfsaweb.org.

The two groups in Arkansas have cooperated on issues before, but formed this new coalition only recently. They are just starting to consider what actions they want to take as a partnership. But they share a conviction that the pursuit of God’s command for justice is a key to church growth.

“We are maintaining corporation instead of really being the church in mission,” said Marie Jordan, a member of the Methodist Federation and North Little Rock First UMC.

The biblical call for justice is different from charity, said retired Bishop Kenneth Hicks, a member of the Methodist Federation for Social Action.

“It’s not just doing good things for needy people, but it’s asking the question: Why does this situation prevail?” he said. “It calls for us to be more prominent as an influence in how laws are made and what laws are made. The Internal Revenue Service tells us that churches have to be careful in their advocacy. But as members of the faith community, we can encourage appropriate legislation.”

Ronnie Miller-Yow, national president of Black Methodists for Church Renewal and chaplain at Philander Smith College, said, “The church’s whole mission should be one of justice.”

New editor to be announced soon

A search for a new *Arkansas United Methodist* editor began in April, and the Conference personnel committee met with three qualified candidates April 29. A decision on on the new hire will be announced via the e-mail network and in the *Arkansas United Methodist*.

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.sooisstainedglass.com
P.O. Box 13452, Maumelle, AR 72113

COUNSELING

Daily Bread Counseling

(Member of Clergy Counseling Network)

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

Call for confidential appointment
501.847.2229 | 1.877.847.2229

www.dailybreadcounseling.com



Jacksonville church cancels services to share God's love



Parker Price, a second-grader at Pinewood Elementary School and member of Jacksonville First UMC, takes a break from sweeping his school grounds to leap into a pile of pine needles.

Photo by Heather Hahn

HEATHER HAHN
Editor

JACKSONVILLE — The congregation of Jacksonville First United Methodist Church skipped regular worship the Sunday after Easter and went M.I.A. — “Methodists in Action,” that is.

Beginning at 8 a.m. April 11, more than 300 church members — many wearing black “Methodists in Action” T-shirts — cleaned the grounds of area public schools, raked leaves at city parks, planted a flower garden at the Jacksonville Senior Center and sorted donations for a local food pantry.

Later that morning, the church's two music groups helped lead a worship service at Hope Korean UMC in Jacksonville. Altogether, church members served at 11 sites around the city.

“We’re putting the Easter celebration into action today,” said Mark McDonald, the congregation's senior pastor. “We’re saying, ‘He is risen, and this is what we do.’ We serve others. Our slogan here is ‘Love God, Love Others, Serve the World,’ and this is the one day when it all comes together.”

Every United Methodist no matter how young or old could get in on the action, and the congregation's labors weren't limited to work outside the church walls.

At the building, youngsters planted flowers to take to people who need their spirits lifted and helped to assemble health kits for United

Methodist Committee on Relief, the denomination's main relief agency.

A group of women stitched prayer shawls, while another group sewed school bags that also would be sent to UMCOR. Still other church members joined in a silent prayer vigil in the church sanctuary.

Sabine Curtis was among the group sewing the prayers shawls.

“Sunday mornings are always special,” she said. “But when I woke up this morning, I thought, ‘Lord, this day we’re going to do something for you.’ Worship is important. But you can do service in a worshipful manner.”

After the packed pews of Easter, churches usually experience a sharp drop in attendance the following week. Pastors even have a nickname for the day — “Low Sunday.”

McDonald first introduced the day of service last year to help his congregation sustain its Resurrection high.

“This is radical service,” the pastor said. “People don’t expect this, and it grabs people’s attention.”

Parker Price, a First UMC member in second grade, was excited to work outside on a crisp spring morning in his T-shirt and jeans. He was helping about a dozen other churchgoers bag up pine needles and cones to turn into mulch at the appropriately named Pinewood Elementary School.

“We’re here to spread the word of God,” he said.

His mom, Kyla Price, a second-

grade teacher at Pinewood, had arranged for volunteers to help clean the grounds at four Jacksonville schools. She said many of her teachers were looking forward to seeing the spruced up schools on Monday.

“It’s actually putting the Scripture into practice,” Price said. “And it’s caught on. Other churches are starting to pick up on this and come out to help [with cleanup at the schools].”

Kenneth Clark, the principal at Jacksonville High School, came out to see the volunteers power-wash the grimy exterior walls of the 40-year-old school building.

“When I was approached by the church for them to come out and power wash, it was like a dream come true,” he said. “I can’t wait until Monday. I want to see the faces of the kids when they get off the bus.”

Over at FishNet Missions food pantry, scores of churchgoers were unloading and shelving groceries. The nondenominational ministry, the largest food pantry in Arkansas, feeds about 8,780 families a month.

Dewey Sims, the pantry's founder, surveyed all the activity with delight.

“I was telling the pastor a while ago that ‘My hat’s off to you,’” Sims said. “So many churches take pride in how big their building is or how many people are at worship instead of how much they’re helping people. And that’s what it should be all about.”



Lauren Dozier, a ninth-grader and member of Jacksonville First UMC, sorts boxes of bread at FishNet Missions — the largest food pantry in Arkansas — during her church's M.I.A. Sunday.

Photo by Heather Hahn

Join us
as we
consecrate
the new
Le Bonheur
Children's
Hospital

As a new chapter in the Le Bonheur Children's Hospital story begins, we invite you to join us in invoking God's blessing on our new facility and future efforts.

Consecration Ceremony

Monday, June 14, 2010
10-11 a.m.
50 N. Dunlap St.
Memphis, TN 38103

Tours and additional activities will follow.

Celebrate with us in this new setting as we give thanks and ask for God's guidance to continue being a common thread of exceptional care for all children.

Le Bonheur
Methodist Healthcare Family
Children's Hospital

Shuttles from parking areas will be provided for your convenience.

A day to "Get Up & Give"

United Methodists spend afternoon sprucing up Children's Home



From left, Erin Phelan, Rebecca Mitts and Lauren Wise, all members of FaithSpring UMC in Little Rock, clear a bed for flowers to be planted at the Methodist Children's Home. A grant from United Methodist Communications helped promote the "Get Up & Give" event.

Photo by Patrick Shownes

HEATHER HAHN
Editor

Arkansas United Methodists spent a Sunday afternoon getting dirty so that children who've endured abuse and neglect might have a cleaner, prettier place to live.

More than 150 youth and adults on April 11 mulched flowerbeds, planted fresh blooms, carted away weeds, bagged up trash and generally tidied up the gardens and sidewalks on the 84-acre grounds of the Methodist Children's Home.

Also during the afternoon, members of other area churches dropped off donations of toys, school supplies, diapers and other needed items for Methodist Family Health, which oversees the home.

These activities were all part of the Arkansas Conference's campaign to "Get Up & Give" to a critical community need. In this case, the volunteers — many sporting red T-shirts that proclaimed "Get Up & Give" — were serving a ministry that provides mental-health services for children and families statewide regardless of their faith.

An Impact Community Grant of about \$25,000 from United Methodist Communications in Nashville, Tenn., made the event possible.

"Having money to market your program is literally a godsend," said Ashley Coldiron, executive director of the Methodist Family Health Foundation. "This place is being transformed."

Martha Taylor, the Arkansas Conference's director of communica-

tions, suggested applying for the grant to Coldiron. Taylor said she used the money for radio and TV advertising as well as posters and direct mail.

Representatives from KUBR-FM 98.5, a local pop station, were out to do a remote.

'Our passion is mission'

The grants from United Methodist Communications, offered as part of the Rethink Church initiative, support clusters of three or more churches, districts and conferences that move out into their communities, creating doors to welcome the unchurched.

The "Get Up & Give" gathering was among the first three "Rethink Church" events to take place.

The Arkansas event drew volunteers from eight churches in Central and North Central districts.

Among them were Denise Fleming and her husband, Fred, members of Asbury United Methodist Church in Little Rock. Under a cloudless sky, the two were planting a bed of zinnias, mums and tiger irises.

"My passion is gardening, but more so, our passion is mission," Denise Fleming said. "My husband said that this is a way to combine the two. We're helping somebody."

Methodist Family Health serves about 1,200 children and their families at facilities around the state.

Most of the ministry's young clients have experienced abuse, abandonment or neglect, and the Arkansas Department of Human Services has referred them for care.

The ministry's services include foster care, emergency shelter, outpatient counseling, acute psychiatric care and Arkansas CARES (Center for Addictions Research, Education and Services), a residential treatment program where women overcoming drug addiction can stay with their children.

CAREfully Catered, a company operated by recent graduates of the Arkansas CARES program, supplied the day's refreshments.

Most of the congregations that participated in "Get Up & Give" have long supported Methodist Family Health with monetary donations and gifts for the clients at Christmas.

'A church is like a family'

The praise team at FaithSpring United Methodist Church, a new church start in west Little Rock that launched last fall, leads worship for Methodist Family Health clients every few months.

Rebecca Mitts, an eighth-grader at FaithSpring, has an aunt who works at the ministry, and she was eager to help the friends she'd made when visiting with her church and with her aunt.

"If they see that a church is like a family, they might want to join," she said. "There are kids here that we're really good friends, so I think it's cool that I can help them out."

Brock Patterson, FaithSpring's senior pastor, said a service project like "Get Up & Give" has the advantage of giving his new congregation a chance to bond.

"We don't have (our own building), so we don't have the



From left, Betsy Dietz, Carol Hutton, Lolly Honea and Sharon Skaer of St. James UMC's New Challenges Sunday School class tend one of the flower beds at the Methodist Children's Home.

Photo courtesy of Methodist Family Health

opportunity to have a potluck or a family picnic or things like that," Patterson said. "As a result, we have to take every opportunity we can to find something that brings everybody together."

While this year's event only involved United Methodist churches in the central part of the state, organizers hope next year to make the gathering a conference-wide day of service at Methodist Family Health group homes and other facilities around the state.

Andy Altom, Methodist Family Health's chief executive officer, said the event has helped raise awareness about the work his ministry does not just among United Methodists but also among others in the community.

But the biggest impact, Altom said, may be on Methodist Family Health's clients, some of whom joined the volunteers for a worship service after the work was through.

Paul Stapleton, Methodist Family Health's training coordinator, agreed.

After being removed from abusive parents at the age of 4, Stapleton grew up under the care of an organization similar to the United Methodist ministry. Service projects like this, he said, leave big impressions.

"When they see people help them out, they're more likely to give later on," Stapleton said.

"It's an investment. You're investing your time, but you're also investing in these clients' future."

NEW CHURCH *Continued from Page 1A***First in the jurisdiction**

The denomination's South Central Jurisdiction, which encompasses eight states, has about a dozen Vietnamese United Methodist missions including one in Van Buren.

The Fort Smith congregation last August became the first predominantly Vietnamese fellowship in the jurisdiction to receive a charter as an independent church.

The 9-year-old congregation, which has a weekly attendance of about 50 people, has been worshipping inside the choir room of St. Paul UMC in Fort Smith.

On Easter Sunday, the congregation dedicated land it has purchased where it plans to construct a church building of its own.

"We are a group here who really loves God," Ho said.

The multi-generational congregation includes immigrants and their natural-born children and grandchildren.

Parishioners sing hymns in Vietnamese and English.

Terry Gallamore, the church's English-speaking pastor, also makes sure his sermons are translated so worshippers can hear them in both languages.

Do Van Le and Linh Hua serve as Gallamore's translators. Le also has long served as the church's lay leader.

Hanh Nguyen, who helps lead the church's music, said the church hopes the bilingual worship will help the older parishioners work on their English skills and ensure that their



Members of the Vietnamese United Methodist Church in Fort Smith celebrate becoming the newest chartered church in the Arkansas Conference on Aug. 9, 2009. The church has been meeting in the choir room of St. Paul UMC in Fort Smith for years. But the congregation is now in the process preparing to build a church on property once owned by St. Paul UMC. The church dedicated the land on Easter this year.

Photo courtesy of the West District

American-born children don't completely forget the language of their forebears.

Worship offered a similar benefit when Ho first arrived at Fort Chaffee, he said.

Ho — who was baptized in Saigon in 1968 and already knew English fairly well — worked with the Baptist chaplain at the fort to invite recent arrivals to services.

"I brought them to the church to listen to gospel music and learn about the Bible," Ho said. "Many of them learned English from the Bible."

Finding a home in Methodism

Like Ho, many of the parishioners of the new United Methodist Church left behind family and braved harrowing journeys to reach the United States.

At 16, Steve Nguyen was among the thousands of boat people willing to risk their lives to evade Communist "re-education camps."

For six days and six nights in 1978, he traveled in a rickety boat across the Pacific to the Philippines.

"At one point, we had no food and no water," he said. "It was really scary."

He stayed at a refugee camp in the Philippines until he found a sponsor in Minneapolis, Minn., who was willing to take him in. He finished his high school education in Minnesota, but eventually moved south mainly to get away from the cold winters. Today, he and his wife, Trish, own a nail salon in Fort Smith and have a 7-year-old son.

Gallamore, the church's pastor, said because of the traumas so many of his congregants have experienced, they value their country and their Christianity all the more strongly.

"One of the things that excites

me as a United Methodist is the strength of this congregation's faith," he said. "Their faith is so real. It's a community that really cares for each other. It's a community that ministers to their pastor."

The United Methodist Church is a relatively recent arrival to Vietnam. The General Board of Global Ministries first sent a team to the country in 1998 after Vietnam and the United States formally normalized diplomatic relations.

Most of the parishioners of the Fort Smith congregation hadn't heard of Methodism until they arrived in the United States.

Initially, the congregation wasn't affiliated with the United Methodist Church at all. Instead, the group worshipped inside a Baptist church. But after some disagreements, members approached St. Paul UMC about using their space.

The parishioners soon decided they felt at home within the United Methodist family.

Church member Kiet To said what he and others really like about being part of the United Methodist Church is the denomination's commitment to the serving those in need. He was thrilled to have joined other West District churches last fall in building a Habitat for Humanity house for a mother and her children.

"That's why we like being Methodists," he said. "We really help people."

To learn more about the church's capital campaign, mail inquiries to Vietnamese UMC at 4100 Grand Ave., Fort Smith, AR 72904.

GET MOTIVATED FOR THE DAY BOCS Breakfast Hosts Neal Christie

Assistant General Secretary for Leadership Formation

General Board of Church and Society

SERVING STARTS AT

7 a.m. Tuesday, June 8, 2010

Grand Avenue

United Methodist Church

841 Quapaw Avenue - Hot Springs, AR

Tickets available online with registration or contact Doni Martin - fredoni@centurytel.net or call 870-926-2107

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.

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: 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

Oct. 1-9: Shiprock, N.M. Volunteers are needed for new construction on dorm for intern; interaction with Navajos. Contact:

St. James UMC in Little Rock, Claudia Reynolds, leader, (501) 653-0048. .

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.

OBITUARIES

LITTLE ROCK

Earl Hughes, 85, a retired United Methodist elder, of Little Rock passed away on March 27, 2010.



Earl Hughes

Hughes was born on January 1, 1925, to the late Arnold Vinson and Ilar Massey Hughes in the family home on Spring Street in Searcy, Arkansas, built by his grandfather, John Anderson Massey.

He was a Methodist minister for 43 years and served various churches throughout the state. He was active in civil rights and in geriatric care reform. He also was a lifetime member of Ring 29 of the International Brotherhood of Magicians, and used magic in his ministry.

He was preceded in death by his parents; his wife of 41 years,

Lynne Hughes; his brothers, Harold, Herbert and Roy; and two sisters, Marguerite Fraser and Ellen Marie Vincent.

Survivors include children Dr. Michael A. Hughes and wife, Dr. Eril Barnett Hughes of Ada, Okla.; Mitchell Hughes and daughter, Suzanne Hughes, both of Little Rock. Also among his survivors is grandson, Stewart Hughes; and many nieces and nephews.

The funeral service was March 30, 2010, in the Chapel of Pulaski Heights United Methodist Church in Little Rock with Vic Nixon, senior pastor, and Bishop Kenneth Hicks officiating. Interment followed at Oak Grove Cemetery in Searcy.

The family wishes to thank Ruth Griffin and Carmelia Johnson and others from Elder Independence for their kind assistance and care.

In lieu of flowers, memorials may be made to UMCOR (United Methodist Committee on Relief), P. O. Box 9068, New York, New York 10087, or Arkansas Children's

Hospital, 1 Children's Way, Little Rock, Arkansas 72202.

ULM

Beatrice Geneva Ratekin, 84, of Ulm, widow of United Methodist local pastor Gene Ratekin, died April 4, 2010, at her home.

Ratekin was born July 28, 1925, in Stuttgart to Charles Edward and Ida Mae Carr Cox. She was a member of Grand Avenue United Methodist Church and was a retired nurse.

Besides her parents and her husband, she was preceded in death by two sisters, Rena Melkovitz and Leona Syre; and a brother, Charlie Cox.

Survivors include two daughters, Kathleen Morris and her husband, Robert, of Ulm and Diane Bailey and her husband, Mike, of Stuttgart; two brothers, Edward Cox and his wife, Mary Joan, of Cape Coral, Fla., and Robert Cox, and his wife, Sharon, of Prairie Grove, Arkansas; five grandchildren; and two great-grandchildren.

Funeral services were April 7 at Grand Avenue United Methodist Church with burial in Almyra Cemetery.

MOUNT IDA

Jo Katherine "Kathy" Smith, 58, of Mount Ida, passed away on April 6, 2010, in her home. She was born Feb. 20, 1952, in Mount Ida, to Joe and Evelyn Sheffield.



Jo Katherine Smith

She worked for the United States Treasury for 29 years, was a certified public

accountant and had a master's degree in forensic accounting.

She was an active member of the Mount Ida United Methodist Church where she blessed the congregation each Sunday from the choir loft.

She lived in Mount Ida most of her life. She had a great love for her

family, friends and community. Her amazing gifts in the kitchen were shared with many throughout the years. She loved to teach and share her knowledge and will be remembered as a woman of integrity, honor and grace.

Survivors include her beloved husband, Mike, pastor of Norman United Methodist Church; daughter, Amelia Freilinger, and son-in-law, Maverick, of Las Vegas, Nev.; son, Frank Smith, and daughter-in-law, Lindsey, of Jacksonville; two grandsons, Barrett and Dylan; sister Helen Plotkin, and brother-in-law, Rich, of Conway; and brother, Tim Sheffield of Mount Ida. She leaves behind many cherished relatives and friends.

Services were held on April 10 at Mount Ida UMC.

Her honorary pallbearers were Harold Humphreys, Richard Ray, Carl Smith, Elmer Smith, Ron Smith, Steve Smith, Craig Smith, Rich Plotkin, Tim Sheffield, Hodge Black, Billy Watkins and the congregation of Mount Ida UMC.

PEOPLE OF FAITH

The United Methodist Association of Health & Welfare Ministries, a national network of



John Wilcher

United Methodist-related organizations, honored Chaplain **John A. Wilcher** with its Distinguished Service Award.

One of the highest honors bestowed by the association, Distinguished Service Award recipients are characterized by leadership and proven commitment to the advancement of the Association.

As a former member of the association's Board of Directors as well as chair and member of numerous other committees, Wilcher has influenced the association through his personal practice of true Christian values.

He received the award on March 6 in San Francisco during the association's 70th National Convention. Wilcher, a member of the Arkansas Conference, is the



From left, Cindy Parker, LaDonna Busby, Fonda Kirkman, Connie Thomas, Libby Gray and Karen Branton, all of Arkansas, attended the Professional Association of United Methodist Church Annual Conference in Orlando, Fla. Not pictured is Carolyn McNamee, who also attended.

Photo courtesy of Fonda Kirkman

director of clergy and conference ministries at Methodist Le Bonheur Healthcare in Memphis.

Seven administrative assistants from the Arkansas Chapter of the Professional Association of United Methodist Church attended the group's 28th Annual Conference in Orlando, Fla. They were Carolyn McNamee, Libby Gray, Karen Branton, LaDonna Busby, Cindy Parker, Connie Thomas and Fonda Kirkman.

Approximately 220 professionals representing United Methodist offices from local

churches, district offices, conference offices, episcopal offices and United Methodist agencies from all over our nation were in attendance.

Busby received recognition as a certified professional United Methodist Church Secretary after attending the association's institute at the Candler School of Theology at Emory University in Atlanta, Georgia last summer.

Kirkman and Gray also received recognition for renewing their professional certification. Kirkman is a member of the class of 2007, and Gray is a member of the class of 2005.

Arkansas foundation announces recipients of Dollars for Scholars

Special to the AUM

A total of \$52,000 in scholarships recently were awarded to 13 Arkansas students attending Hendrix College in Conway.

Each year, local churches can select one or more members who matriculate to a United Methodist college or university to be recipients of the United Methodist Higher Education Foundation Dollars for Scholars.

The student's local church contributes \$1,000, and that is matched by \$1,000 from the United Methodist Foundation of Arkansas; \$1,000 from the United Methodist Higher Education Foundation and \$1,000 from the college.

"These four partners make for a significant \$4,000 award," said Jim Argue Jr., president and chief executive officer of the United Methodist Foundation of Arkansas.

"We're delighted these 13 students are attending Hendrix, but we're disappointed we were unable to recruit any students attending Philander Smith," he added. "We are exploring that issue now, and hope to develop strategies that will allow this program to support Philander and its students, too."

The United Methodist dollars for Scholars recipients for 2010 include: Takayla R. Ames of Grace UMC in Rogers; John G. Breshears of Oak Forest UMC in Little Rock; Mary E. Breshears of Quapaw Quarter UMC in Little Rock; Diana T. Brown and Patrick E. Brown of Pine Bluff First UMC; Christa J. Campo of Winfield UMC in Little Rock; Deanna K. Diles of St. Luke UMC in Little Rock; Benjamin A. Fish of Mabelvale UMC; Lindsay J. Lloyd of Booneville First UMC; Meredith L. McKinney of Batesville First UMC; Jordan K. Mohlke of Desha UMC; Jillian C. Petersen of St. James UMC in Little Rock; and Elizabeth J. Pond of Salem UMC in Conway.

The United Methodist Higher Education Foundation is dedicated to helping students achieve their dreams by providing scholarship aid for United Methodist students attending the 122 United Methodist-related institutions.

Kitchen Equip. & Supplies

Buy at our prices and Save
1-800-482-9026 or 228-0808
AIMCO EQUIPMENT CO.

COLLEGE NEWS



Bishop Charles Crutchfield presided over the Consecration Ceremony of Hendrix College's new \$26 million Student Life and Technology Center on April 16 during the college's Alumni Weekend festivities. The building is a LEED-certified building and incorporates state-of-the-art technology. The building was paid for through the college's current \$100 million capital campaign. Pictured from left are North Central District Superintendent Rodney Steele, a Hendrix College trustee; Ellis Arnold, executive vice president of Hendrix College; Bishop Crutchfield, who also serves as a Hendrix trustee; Hendrix College Associate Chaplain J.J. Whitney; and Hendrix College Chaplain Wayne Clark.

Photo by Stuart Holt

Former Asbury Seminary president challenges faithful to help the poor

CANDACE BARRON

For the Arkansas United Methodist

Trinity United Methodist Church in Little Rock recently welcomed J. Ellsworth Kalas, former president of Asbury Theological Seminary in Wilmore, Ky.

Palm Sunday marked his second visit to the congregation, which has used his Christian Believer study. Kalas has long had an impact on discipleship in the United Methodist Church, and his sermon and lecture on March 28 did not disappoint. His message was filled with hope and with a challenge.

Kalas, who has served on the Asbury's preaching faculty since 2000, told those gathered that he believes Christianity is not for the faint of heart. Courage is essential for one to be a Christian, he said.

Kalas spoke about the people shouting out "Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven and glory in the highest heaven!" as Jesus entered Jerusalem on the back of a donkey. The professor pointed out that religious authorities rebuked Jesus for letting the people shout and Jesus replied, "I tell you, if these were silent, the stones would shout out" (Luke 19:40).

At least one stone did cry out,



J. Ellsworth Kalas

Kalas said, the stone that rolled away from the door of the tomb where Jesus was buried. The people may have been silent that night before Easter but the very stones did cry out and opened to release

Jesus from the tomb.

Christians, too, can learn from the stone that cried out, he said. He encouraged Christians to speak out against injustices and sins that they see around the world, some of them perpetrated in the very name of God.

The faithful can challenge the status quo when it is unfairly tilted in the favor of the haves versus the have-nots.

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. He has published more than 30 books.

Kalas challenges believers to become the Christians God meant them to be all along.

COMING UP

The deadline for **2010 Peace with Justice Small Grant** applications is May 15.

If your church is involved with a ministry program that promotes equality, accessibility to resources and social justice, this is an opportunity to receive a small financial boost. Grants are typically are in the range of \$250 to \$1,000). To apply, e-mail Danyelle Ditmer at danyelleditmer@gmail.com for an application or visit www.arumc.org and download the 2010 Peace with Justice Grant Application from the "Forms" menu.

Peace with Justice Sunday is May 30. Half of this special offering stays in the Arkansas Conference to fund Peace with Justice grants.

Duncan Chapel UMC, 2624 Rock St., Little Rock, will celebrate its 110th anniversary at 3 p.m. May 16 with an old-fashioned gospel fellowship and reception. Henry Roddy, a gospel singer and pastor of Trinity Bible Center in Dallas, will speak.

To learn more, call the church at (501) 244-9992.

The Children's Music Ministry of Wynne First UMC, 800 N. Falls Blvd., will perform the musical *Sermon on the Mound* at 6 p.m. May 16. Admission is free, but to go with the Christian baseball theme, baseball-style concessions will be sold at the show.

To learn more, call the church at (870) 238-3265.

Levy UMC, 47th and Allen streets, North Little Rock, will hold a "Battle of Bands" at 3 p.m. May 22 on its south lawn. Admission is free

with a non-perishable food donation accepted. Voting for each performance is done by cash donations with all proceeds going to the Amboy Community Food Pantry. To learn more, call the church at (501) 753-6041.

The Interfaith Hospitality Network of Little Rock will sponsor a 100-Hole Golf Marathon with shotgun start at 7 a.m. and a Fun Walk at 4:30 p.m. May 24 at Maumelle Country Club, 100 Club Manor Drive. There is no entry fee for this event, but all participants are asked to make a good-faith effort to raise funds for the ministry by sending out 25 sponsor letters to friends and family members.

To learn more, contact the Interfaith Hospitality Network by calling (501) 372-0733 or visit www.ihn-lr.org.

Mission UMC in Fort Smith and the South Central Jurisdiction will hold Extreme Camp for the deaf, hard of hearing and hearing children ages 6 to 18 on June 24-27 at Cross Point Camp in Kingston, Okla.

This program will offer an intensive American Sign Language experience and recreational activities. The Extreme Youth camp, on Lake Texoma, will be open to youth from Arkansas, Oklahoma, Texas, Kansas, Louisiana, Missouri, Nebraska and New Mexico.

Some of the camp events include a Jesus And Me concert, swimming, water tubing, paddle boats, dance class, climbing/rappelling tower and challenge courses with high and low elements.

The camp costs \$200. Limited scholarships are available. To learn more, visit www.missionumc.com/extremecamp.html.

Mount Eagle Retreat Center, 935 Beal Road, Clinton, will play host to an intergenerational Summer Folklore Camp on July 21-25. The camp includes two day trips to the Ozark Folk Center in Mountain View for craft classes. The camp costs \$165 per person.

To learn more, visit the Mount Eagle Web site at www.mounteagle.org or call Shirley Waggoner at (479) 751-5373.

The Arkansas Conference will sponsor a basic preparation training course for those interested in becoming parish nurses on Aug. 5-7 at Mount Eagle Retreat Center, 935 Beal Road, Clinton.

The course is for registered nurses who have a calling to use their nursing skills to promote health in their congregations and communities. The class size is limited to 15.

The course costs \$50 and includes room, all meals, course instruction and Basic Nursing Preparation manual. To register, visit www.mounteagle.org and click on "Happenings."

To learn more, contact Janice Sudbrink at Fort Smith First UMC at (479) 782-5068 or jsudbrink@fsfumc.org.

The deadline for the next edition of the Arkansas United Methodist is 5 p.m. May 19. E-mail submissions to Arkansas Communications at communications@arumc.org.

Board of Church and Society announces two initiatives

Special to the AUM

The Arkansas Board of Church and Society wants to remind readers of two initiatives open to the state's United Methodists.

The board has developed a roster of individuals in the state who are willing to make presentations to local church organizations and committees, community organizations or in other venues.

The Board of Church and Society Speakers Bureau has speakers available to discuss and make presentations regarding environmental justice, poverty issues, hunger, disability rights, the death penalty, the Cradle Care Ministry in

Conway, immigration and other peace and justice issues.

The board also invites churchgoers to be part of a group of individuals who send greeting cards for birthdays and holidays to inmates on death row.

Each month participants receive an e-mail with the names and addresses of the inmates on death row who are having birthdays during that month; there are usually three or four.

Participants send a greeting card or letter to each one. You can choose whether or not to include your return address. Some individuals will appreciate the thought so much they

will write you a return letter of thanks.

According to the United Methodist Church's Social Principles listed in the Book of Discipline, the denomination opposes the death penalty.

Capital punishment "denies the power of Christ to redeem, restore, and transform all human beings," the Social Principles read.

If interested in engaging one of these speakers or participating in the ministry to death-row inmates, contact Arkansas Conference Board of Church and Society Chair Doni Martin at (870) 926-2107 or fredoni@centurytel.net.

TRANSFORMING THE WORLD



When the mission team from Jonesboro First UMC arrived at Cookson Hills Family Mission, Oklahoma, six inches of snow covered the ground. Nevertheless, the group pressed on, spending most of the trip tearing down an old house at this mission for at-risk children and teens. Pictured from left at top are Sarah Stringer, Rachael Gallimore, Jordan Gallimore and Bethany Gallimore. In the bottom row from left are Troy Ratliff, Katherine Lee, Lou Riley, Samuel Gallimore, Thomas Toney, Rita Gallimore, Scott Gallimore, Mary Owens, Madison Sprouse and Laura Owens.

Photo courtesy of Jonesboro First UMC



Members of Horseshoe Bend UMC gathered for the church's second annual symbolic seder on Maundy Thursday. Ninety people attended. Pictured is the cast of the *Room Upstairs*. From left, they are: Nancy Sprague, Gary Wilson, Jean Bledsoe, Leona Bonsall, Tom Taylor, Barbara Bell, Dave Zigler, Jan Taylor, Megan Rayoum, Linda Wright, Bill Wright, Reuben Landrum, Linda Landrum, Jim Frey and Pete Landrum.

Photo courtesy of Horseshoe Bend UMC



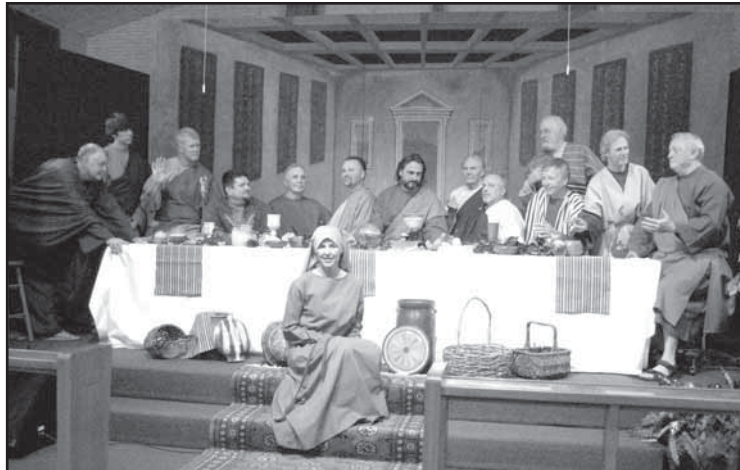
During Palm Sunday services on March 28, Richard Lancaster — senior pastor of Lakewood UMC in North Little Rock, presented Tom Hazelwood with a giant check of \$11,658 to help the victims of Haiti Earthquakes. The church ended giving about \$17,000 to the effort. Hazelwood, who leads United Methodist relief work for the Americas, was the guest preacher.

Photo courtesy of Lakewood UMC



Circle 5 of El Dorado First UMC met in the home of Melba and Tommy Johnson and arranged Easter baskets for children who spent the holiday in hiding because of violence in their home. The baskets were delivered to the office of the shelter Turning Point. Pictured from left are Kay Hardin, Angie Green, Liz Butler, Melba Johnson and Pat Odom, pastor of Dumas Memorial and Marysville United Methodist churches.

Photo courtesy of Pat Odom



Oaklawn UMC in Hot Springs presented *The Living Last Supper* on March 28. Church member Howard Hoover designed the background. Barbara Guinn, church secretary, directed. The Twelve Disciples were played by church members: Michael Crawford, Drew Duggan, Dr. Dale Burroughs, Jimmy Fulkerson, B. J. Smith, Kelly Beaty, Sonny Hines, Rhet Gaede, David Fastenow, Mac Guinn, David Ashcroft and Fred W. Hunter. Steve McMahan played Jesus. The narrator was Julie Burroughs. Two Roman soldiers (not pictured) were Drew Short and Joshua Allen.

Photo courtesy of Oaklawn UMC



Cabot UMC held its Easter Sunrise Service in the new, yet unfinished, Youth and Education Building. More than 100 people listened as Raymond Vining, associate pastor, delivered the sermon. The new 20,000-square-foot building will contain a new youth facility and 20 new classrooms. Completion is scheduled for June 2010.

Photo courtesy of Cabot UMC

**Recycle
Reuse
Replenish**



Be sure to recycle your *Arkansas United Methodist* when you're through reading it (or give it to a friend).

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

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

Hiring: Financial Assistant. Part-time position, 20 hours. First United Methodist Church, Conway, Arkansas. Apply by sending resume to: jobs@conwayfumc.org.

Position Open. First Methodist Church of Wynne is presently interviewing for the position of Youth Director. We need a vibrant, energetic and youth-passionate person for this spot. Available immediately. Call 238-3265 for job description and contact information.

Hope First United Methodist Church is seeking applicants for the full-time position of Music Director/Organist. Applicant prepared to manage/oversee all aspects of the church's music program and possess applicable education/training. Salary & benefits up to \$40,000. Contact FUMC Office, P.O. Box 400, Hope AR 71802-0400 or (870) 777-8816 or e-mail fumchope@yahoo.com. Deadline for submissions: June 1, 2010.

HEALTH REFORM *Continued from Page 1A*

meeting is in 2012.

The role of the denomination's General Board of Church & Society is bring public attention to and advocate for the social principles approved by the General Conference.

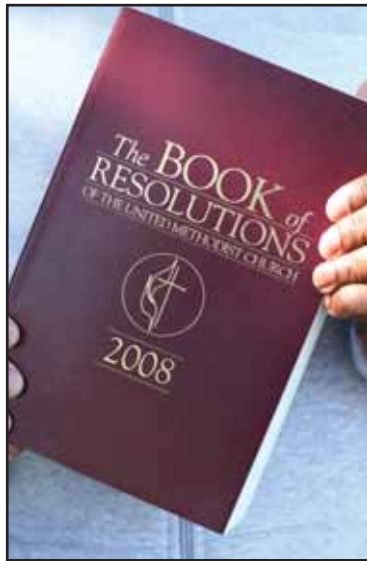
For more than 30 years, the General Conference has addressed by resolution the need for health care reform in the United States and around the world. Access to quality health care for all of God's children is a deeply moral and spiritual issue.

It is an issue of the deepest moral and spiritual concern that many children of God in the United States and elsewhere in the world are denied that which many of us so easily access.

While the issue may seem "political" to some, for the United Methodist Church, it is a matter of a fundamental, God-given, human right.

The rub, of course, is in the disagreement about the best manner in which to provide this basic human need. It is there that politics and political philosophy enter the debate.

It is intriguing to note,



The Book of Resolutions contains United Methodist General Conference-approved statements on social issues, such as health care.

United Methodist News Service photo by Kathleen Barry

however, that even the politicians in Washington seem to agree that the system we have in the United States is broken.

I have yet to hear a single politician from either party say that nothing should be done to extend health care to people who have no

access to it today.

It would appear that deep down, in spite of our disagreements about process, most of us (and certainly people of faith) recognize that quality health care is a fundamental human right and as such, an issue of deep religious concern.

I have no idea what the future may bring with regard to the currently adopted legislation. But I do know that there is a great deal of "mis-information" and confusion that seems to float across the airwaves.

We have all heard and read statements of "facts" that have been clearly countered the next day.

I know that thoughtful discourse is better than angry, depersonalizing argument about this important issue. And I know that all God's children deserve access to quality health care.

In that spirit, I intend to pray that the future will be better than the past or the present.

Faithfully,

Charles W. Cantelero



To see more photos of church activities, visit www.arumc.org/news



THE CHRISTIAN MARRIAGE SYMBOL

The Holy Cross proclaims your faith

Interlocking circles celebrate your marriage

Three beautiful diamonds represent your past, present, and future

Genuine Diamonds & 14kt Gold starting at \$475.00 including chain

NO SALES TAX TO ARKANSAS METHODISTS

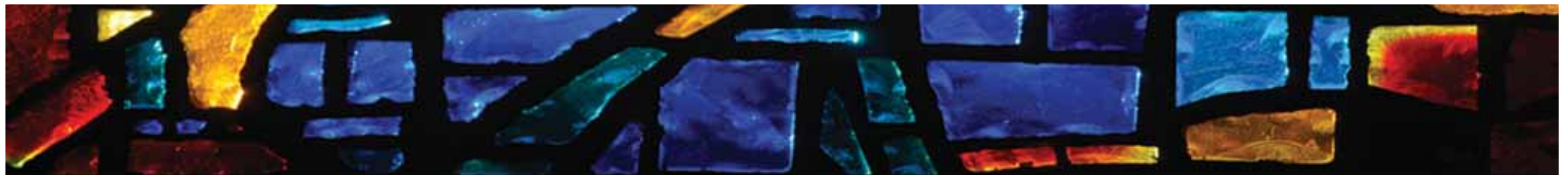
Parks

Diamond Jewelers

2501 Kennedy Lane

For orders or questions call toll free **800.993.8080**

Texarkana, TX 75503



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
DREW
 THEOLOGICAL SCHOOL

36 Madison Avenue, Madison, NJ 07940 • 973/408-3111 • theoadm@drew.edu

REPORTER

THE UNITED METHODIST

umportal.org



Sparkle in their eyes

UMW members play fairy godmother | 4B



Caring for all creation

Rescuing doomed dogs is 'God-given task' | 6B



Middle-way approach

Let's be reasonable on immigration | 7B

Section B

May 7, 2010

Q&A:

HIV-positive pastor makes each day count

The Rev. Shane Stanford contracted HIV during a treatment for hemophilia in the late 1980s when he was 16. At the time, he was given a bleak prognosis. But with advances in treatment he has gone on to be ordained in the United Methodist Church, get married and father three children.

As senior pastor of Gulf Breeze (Fla.) United Methodist Church, one of the largest in the denomination, Mr. Stanford has a pulpit to share glimpses of grace on a difficult journey. He spoke recently with managing editor **Robin Russell** about his new book, *A Positive Life* (Zondervan).

Let's talk for a minute about what it was like to hear that diagnosis back in the late 1980s. That had to be a fearful time.

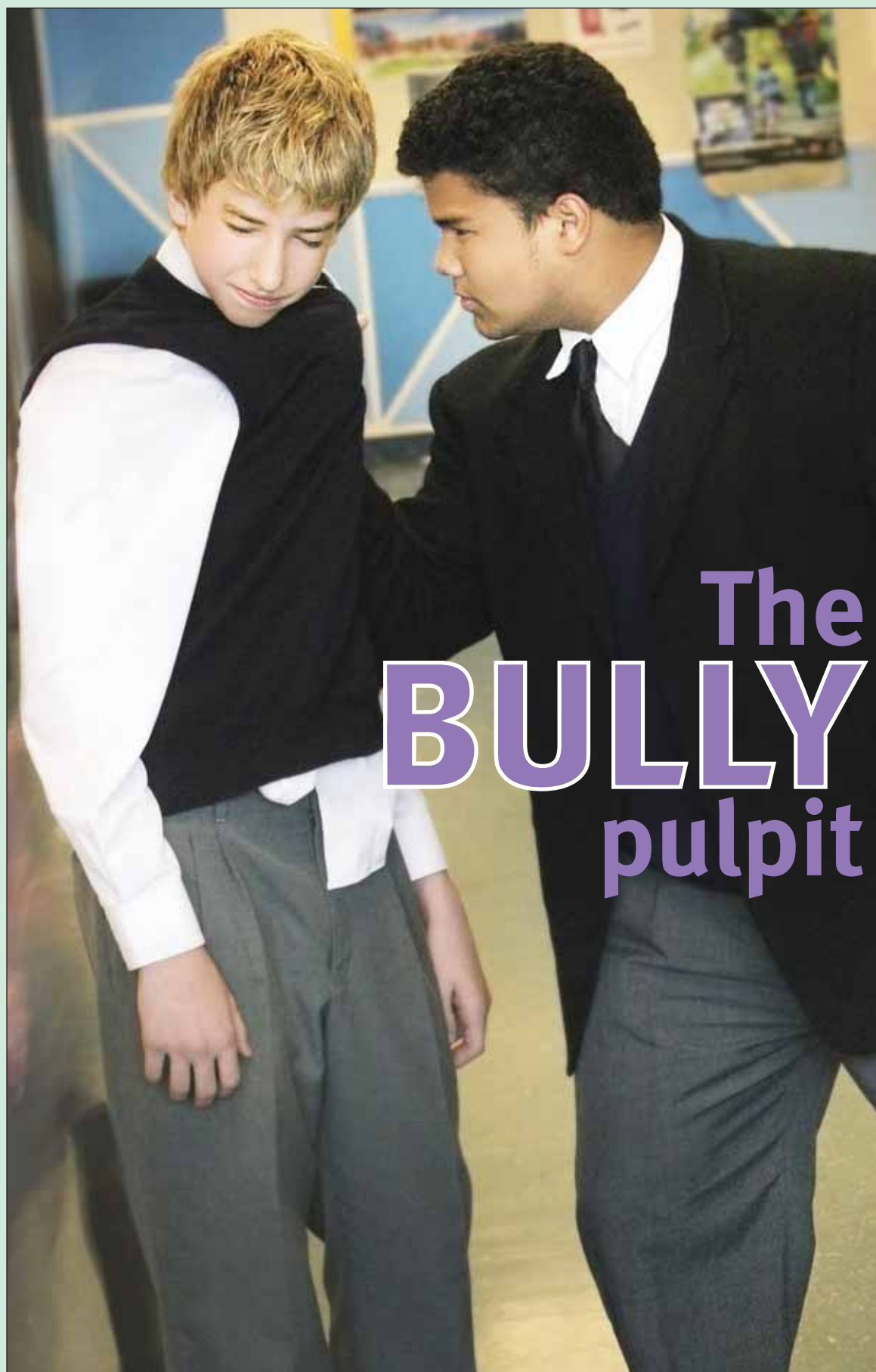
I was tested in 1986, but it was so scary back in those days that they didn't tell me for almost eight months. I was told in June of 1987 by my doctor, who later said he was probably the one who ordered the Factor (used to treat hemophilia) that was contaminated with the HIV. He really has struggled with that possibility over the course of his life.

It was tough. I remember thinking I was stepping outside of my situ-

■ See 'Positive,' page 2B



Shane Stanford



Church leaders can speak up about bullying

By MARY JACOBS
Staff Writer

The Rev. Lara Whitley longs for a day when there will be no need for pastors to perform the heartbreaking task she just handled—the funeral for an eighth-grader who had taken his own life.

Jon Carmichael, 13, of Joshua, Texas, a small town near Fort Worth, hanged himself in his family's barn after classmates had bullied him in school. Ms. Whitley, lead pastor of First United Methodist Church in Joshua, was asked by the family to perform the April 1 funeral.

Jon, a straight-A student, had been bullied since the seventh grade. Classmates knocked his books out of his hands and tossed him into a trashcan.

His death joined the growing number of "bullycides" in the news recently.

"Bullycide is the most disquieting trend facing youth today," said Missy Wall, a former United Methodist youth minister and director of Teen CONTACT, a suicide prevention organization in Dallas. "Our children and youth are being bullied verbally, mentally, emotionally and virtually to the point of suicide."

According to the website for The Bully Project, a documentary film project, more than 5 million American kids will be bullied this year in the United States. An estimated 160,000 children are absent from school each day because they're afraid of being bullied.

Ms. Wall believes cell phones and the Internet have made bullying more pervasive—and more destructive—than ever.

"When we were young, you might get picked on at school or on the playground, but you went home and had at least eight hours until it started again the next day," she said. "Now, with the Internet, students don't ever have a break. They go home and they still get text messages or comments on Facebook."

© 2010 DESIGN PICS PHOTO

Whether bullying takes place in the hallways or in cyberspace, it hurts and humiliates children. United Methodist youth ministers and pastors can help by creating "safe space" in the church.

■ See 'Bullying' page 3B

FAITH WATCH

UM-related university seeks new ownership

Officials at United Methodist-affiliated Lambuth University in Jackson, Tenn., are negotiating future ownership of the school with various management groups, according to the *Jackson Sun*. The school has struggled financially, missing payrolls for faculty and staff, and its accreditation is on probation. President Bill Seymour said in an April 20 press conference that he wants the eventual owner to keep the school's affiliation with the denomination.

Former UM publisher dies in Nashville at 91

John Procter, former president and publisher of the United Methodist Publishing House, died April 15 in Nashville, Tenn., at age 91. Coming to the office in 1970, he founded *Circuit Rider*, a magazine for clergy, and the weekly newsletter *Newscope*; both publications remain in print. Procter retired in 1982.

UCC abandons TV to advertise online

The United Church of Christ has launched an Internet advertising campaign to promote its openness and diversity. A 60-second video ad was posted April 16 at UCC.org, and 60,000 members and supporters were asked to spread the message on social networking sites like Facebook and Twitter. CBS and NBC refused in 2004 to air TV spots for the denomination that showed unnamed churches turning away gays and minorities, saying the ads were too controversial.

Pope's poll ratings drop over scandals

American approval of Pope Benedict XVI's handling of the Catholic sex abuse scandal has fallen sharply since his April 2008 visit to the U.S., according to a new study released by the Pew Research Center. In phone interviews conducted April 1-5, 12 percent of Americans said the pope had done an "excellent" or "fair" job with the scandal, compared to 39 percent a year ago.

—Compiled by Bill Fentum

■ POSITIVE Continued from page 1B

ation, kind of like a person looking into the scene. Really thinking to myself, "This can't be happening." I remember asking my doctor to clarify what he said, and then asking, "Am I going to die?" And he said: "There's no treatment. We know you've probably had it for some time. Yes, you probably are."

Your grandfather was instrumental in helping to shape your journey. How did he encourage you?

We were standing on a hill we used to go to on Sundays, and he looked over at me and said, "What are you going to do with this thing?" He wouldn't even say the letters. And I said, "Well, I don't know. I don't think I have much of a choice." And very quickly he came back and said, "You know you always have a choice. No one can take that choice away from you. You can choose to get in the corner and feel sorry for yourself." And he had tears in his eyes, and he said: "If you decide to do that, I'll get in the corner with you and have that pity party with you. But I think you're going to make a different choice. I think you're going to make every day matter." That was the watershed moment for me, because I didn't know what the future held but I knew that I wanted every day to mean something.

There were times in my life when it expressed in less-than-positive ways. It caused me to have a great drive for accomplishing things that would cause some other problems along the way.

How did your future wife respond when she learned about your diagnosis? You were very young at the time.

She was incredibly supportive. She had just turned 16. What I realized is that she began to tell me a little bit about things that she had been through. She's a survivor of sexual abuse, but I didn't know the full story. She was trying to let me know that

she had wounds and she had things in her life that had not been healed. I think that's why she was so open and so responsive to my situation. She knew we were both wounded; we were both broken. To my surprise, she was supportive and said, "As long as we have [time] together, we'll do this together." And that's a pretty big statement for a 16-year-old.

Public response to AIDS in the 1980s was mostly fear-based because not much was known about the virus. What was it like as a young person to live with such secrecy about your illness?

It was tough. We were still sitting in groups or at a person's house or in conversations where people were making these blanket statements about people living with AIDS or who were HIV-positive. And here I knew I was one. And these are our closest family friends, and some of them were family. It really kind of drove me further down into that life of secrecy. And so I was pretty good at keeping that secret for quite a while. We would tell people periodically, people we knew we could trust. But we did have a few situations where we told people who we never heard from again. And that was always tough.

You say that Magic Johnson's 1991 announcement that he had the HIV virus really freed up the conversation.

Oh, yeah! Before then, there had been no mainstream celebrity, no sports star like that, who had ever really dealt with HIV or AIDS. He changed the landscape for millions of people. I remember the day it happened. I remember watching it on television, thinking to myself, "Wow. This is going to be big." Although it would still be a couple of years before I went public myself.

You write about a Mississippi doctor who was the "best example of Jesus" you have ever known.**What character qualities made her so?**

Her name was Nancy Tatum. She was the very first person to openly treat HIV-positive patients in the community where I grew up. She just had that heart for Christ. She knew that others viewed this disease like leprosy, but she also knew how Jesus responded to the lepers at the gate. So she felt compelled to be like Jesus in those situations. She became a very dear friend of mine. She was just a person who relied on a set of very strong core values. Part of that was no one should ever cry alone, and no one should ever die alone. That was part of her ministry.

You were the first HIV-positive person who openly went through the ordination process in the United Methodist Church. That can't have been easy.

It wasn't. It was very surreal at times. We had a situation when I was still in seminary, and two district superintendents arrived and asked if we could give them a ride back to their hotel. When we did, they escorted us up to a hotel room, and the chair of the board of ordained ministry had flown in to have a clandestine meeting to go over what they thought was going to be a very difficult process. And it was. There was a lot of debate about whether or not I could or should be ordained. It wasn't a moral issue; it was over appointability, because if they feel you're not appointable, then that's directly related to ordination. At the same time there were a lot of financial issues—the cost of keeping me alive. Also, if I passed away at an early age, my wife would be on the death benefit for a long, long time. There were lots of conversations. What it did is it made very good people take a very long look at what they really believed. Thankfully we made it through the ordination process. We had one person who left the annual conference very angry over this situation, but 99 percent of people have just been very supportive from the very beginning.

How's your health now?

Very good. We're on a cocktail of medicines that are responding very well. Most of my issues are related to side effects from other medicines.

The biggest side effect was a blocked artery. On a daily basis, I've felt like I've had a little bit of the flu for the last 15 years: You have aches, you have headaches, you have fatigue. I have to be very careful to eat right, I have to be careful to exercise, I have

to be careful to laugh a lot during the day because stress has a physiological effect. If you think about it, everyone should be doing that, not just someone who's HIV positive.

You've learned valuable lessons about the importance of community that many pastors have never known, particularly

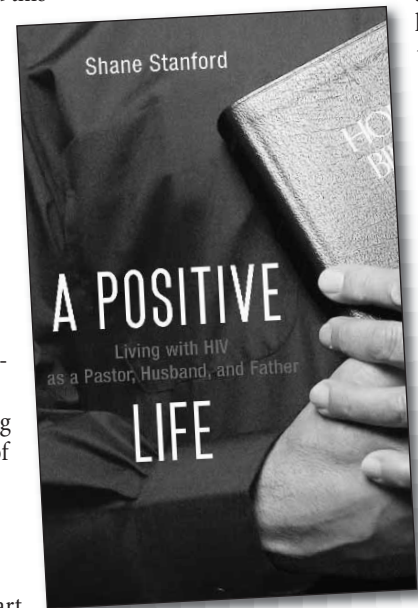
about being vulnerable with folks in their own congregation. What would you tell other church leaders?

We really are only limited by our ability to be transparent. The less transparent that we think we can be, the less connection we're going to make and the more we will struggle to be effective in jobs that we do. I think pastors have been called to be authentic and genuine and transparent, not only because it endears them in the life of their congregation but it models for people what it means to be honest and truth-tellers. A lot of folks can't admit they've got broken edges. But everyone has something that's broken. And we're much healthier if we agree that we're broken and then say, "Let's move on and see what Christ will do in order to put those broken edges back together."

How can the church better support persons living with HIV and AIDS?

I think it coincides with what the church should do better to help anyone living with chronic illness. With HIV, you can get the right medicine and you can live with a chronic illness. It doesn't have to be terminal. The church mobilizes best around the mission that most resembles what Christ's mission was. If you look at the life of Jesus, he was developing people and leaders who would go into the midst of the most damaged and unhealthy places on the planet. What happens is churches are so good at remaining inside and saying we love Jesus that we forget that our goal is actually to go outside and to love like Jesus.

rrussell@umr.org



THE UNITED METHODIST
REPORTER

www.umportal.org

news@umr.org

Bob Mathews, CEO

Robin Russell, Managing Editor

Bill Fentum, Associate Editor

Mary Jacobs, Staff Writer

Mallory McCall, Staff Writer

Cherrie Graham, Advertising Manager

Dale Bryant, Senior Designer

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

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

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

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



UM CONNECTIONS

African-American women to gather

All African-American women in the church are welcome to attend "The Strong Black Woman—a Gentle Force for God" Aug. 5–7 at Lake Junaluska Conference and Retreat Center in North Carolina. Speakers will include the Rev. Telly L. Gadsden of Sumter, S.C.; Chanequa Walker-Barnes of Durham, N.C.; Lydia Waters Hamilton of Dallas, Texas; the Rev. Alfreda Lynette Wiggins of Baltimore, Md.; and the Rev. Sherry Daniels of Norfolk, Va. Visit www.lakejunaluska.com/african-american-women.

Peace with Justice grants announced

The United Methodist General Board of Church and Society (GBCS) has awarded grants totaling \$50,000 to 15 Peace with Justice ministries with funds from Peace with Justice Sunday on May 30. In Africa, recipients are: Migori (Kenya) Inter-Religious Justice & Peace Project (\$5,000), Children Peace Builders Club/Brighter Future Children Rescue Center in Monrovia, Liberia (\$5,000) and United Methodists in Nigeria (\$4,000). In the Philippines, recipients include the Just Peace League (\$2,400), People's International Observers' Mission 2010 (\$1,000) and Small Farmers Action on Poverty & Exploitation (\$5,000). In the U.S., recipients are the Delaware Ecumenical Council on Children & Families (\$1,600), the West Virginia Council of Churches (\$3,000), Andrew's Answer, a ministry of United (Methodist) Church of Rogers Park in Chicago (\$2,500), "Children at the Table of Peace," Lake Junaluska, N.C. (\$5,000), Peace & Justice Clinic in Matthews, N.C. (\$2,500), the Stop Wage Theft Project of Workers Interfaith Network in Memphis, Tenn. (\$3,500), the Hispanic Youth Leadership Academy Midwest in the Nebraska Conference (\$5,000), the Women's Storybook Project at Westlake United Methodist in Austin, Texas (\$2,000) and the Black Male Initiative at Wesley Chapel United Methodist in Little Rock, Ark., (\$2,500).

■ **BULLYING** Continued from page 1B

No matter how often adults may insist that "words will never hurt me," humiliating taunts from peers can traumatize adolescents. Ms. Wall says that bullying can trigger a response in the brain similar to Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).

A brochure on Adolescent Bullying offered by the General Board of Church and Society echoes that. "Verbal cruelty hurts as much as beating or kicking," according to materials. "It can cause harm that may last for years or a lifetime."

And when bullying seems inescapable, despairing victims may believe suicide is the only answer.

Faithful response

So how should churches respond? Experts say faith groups can play a key role in teaching young people empathy for others, especially victims of bullying. Youth leaders can challenge young people to stand up to bullies, rather than simply looking the other way. And church youth groups can serve as a "safe space" where young people can feel accepted and safe from bullying behavior.

None of which is easy, but Ms. Wall says it's the responsibility of Christian disciples to take a stand against bullying.

"There's probably at least one person in every youth group who is affected by bullying," she said. "If they can't talk about it in youth group, they probably won't talk about it anywhere."

Cultivating a sense of empathy—a key piece in preventing bullying behavior—starts early, says Mary Muscari, author of *Not My Kid: 21 Steps to Raising a Nonviolent Child*. Increasingly, neuroscientists, psychologists and educators believe that bullying can be reduced when children learn empathy at an early age. And that's a natural lesson for churches to teach.

"Teach kids to think about what's important about a person," said Dr. Muscari, an associate professor at Binghamton University. "It's not the clothes they wear or the color of their skin. Kids today are so materialistic. We need to reverse that."

Bystanders' role

While it's important to discourage bullying behavior and protect children who are victims of bullies, most youth will fall into a third but crucial group in the dynamics of bullying: the bystander.

Here's where youth leaders can call Christian kids to a higher standard.

"The bystander plays a huge role in the dynamics of bullying," Dr. Muscari said. "We need to teach kids that silence is agreement. If you witness an act of bullying, and you don't do anything, you are condoning it. Kids may not realize that."

Lee Hirsch, who interviewed Jon Carmichael's parents for The Bully Project documentary, was a victim of middle-school bullying himself. He says faith leaders can enroll kids in being leaders in situations where bullying occurs.

"There is so much power in what happens when just one person takes a stand against the bullying," Mr. Hirsch said.

"When a bystander steps in, it breaks that pattern. When someone takes a stand for the underdog, that is going to have an amazing impact on that person's life."

Dr. Muscari encourages role-playing to show young people ways to react around bullying. Have one youth portray the bully and another the victim. Then let kids invent ways to defuse the situation.

"Just having one kid who says, 'Hey, cut it out,' can totally change the dynamics of a bullying situation," she said.

At a minimum, young people who witness bullying should make teachers, administrators or other authorities aware of what's going on.

That's Jon Carmichael's mother's plea.

"If students see bullying taking place, they need to report it," said Tami Carmichael. "Please."

A safe place

Churches can take steps to make the youth program a "safe place" where bullying doesn't occur and fellowship opportunities are available for young people who feel vulnerable. That might mean hosting "Stop Bullying" days or creating "anti-bullying zones."

But getting at the root of the problem takes creating a deeper culture of acceptance and respect for all.

"Even in church, there are often cliques within the youth group," said Ms. Wall. "I think the biggest thing is to talk about it. Ask questions. How do we rate our youth group? Is this a safe place? How do we make this a safe place?"

Adults in the church should also consider how they unintentionally reinforce the caste system that tends to arise among teenagers. Youth leaders should be careful not to play favorites or to tease kids in ways that make them targets.

One former youth minister in a



Linda Bales Todd



Lara Whitley

large urban area, who asked that his name not be used, reported being ordered by church leaders to "get the popular kids to youth group" to attract more teens to the program.

That sets the wrong example, says Linda Bales Todd, director of the Louise and Hugh Moore Population Project at the denomination's General Board of Church and Society. (GBCS provides materials relating to adolescent bullying as part of the Population Project's focus on domestic violence and the welfare of children.)

"A church should be reaching out to all young people, whether they're popular or not," she said. "They need to know it's a place they can go regardless, where they're going to be loved."

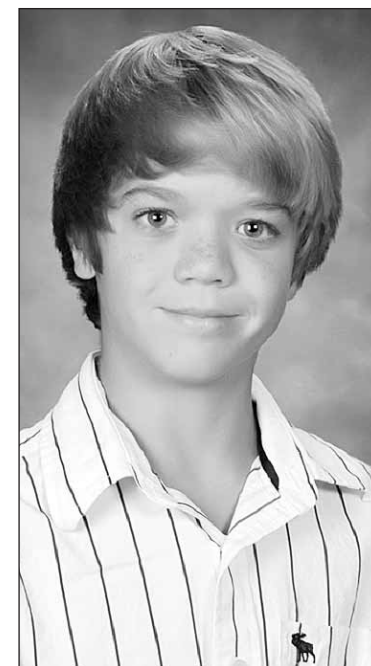
Kids who are bullied, particularly older children, often won't tell their parents or other adults in their lives if they're being bullied. Youth leaders can watch for signs that a child may be a victim of bullying, such as turning up with torn or damaged clothing, books or other belongings; having few, if any, friends; unexplained cuts or bruises; behavior that suggests sadness, depression or moodiness.

Youth leaders can also be sensitive to watch for kids who are targets for bullies.

"It's the vulnerable kids that get picked on," said Dr. Muscari. "Bullies are predators. They sense fear. They hone in on those weak kids. Build these kids up. Help them to have more friends and better social skills, so that they aren't being picked out as targets."

Final words

Jon Carmichael's funeral took place on April 1, Maundy Thursday. In her sermon, Ms. Whitley recalled the words that Jesus spoke to his disciples



COURTESY PHOTO

Thirteen-year-old Jon Carmichael of Joshua, Texas, hanged himself after he was bullied at school.

in the Upper Room, which she believes are at the heart of how United Methodists should teach their children about confronting bullying.

"Jesus gave the disciples a commandment: to love one another as I have loved you," she said. "This wasn't a new concept. It was God's hope all along for humanity. We have to treat one another with the respect we want for ourselves, because like Jon, we are all children of God."

"If we've learned anything from this terrible tragedy, it's that how we care for one another is very, very important."

For information on how to recognize and prevent bullying, visit www.stopbullyingnow.hrsa.gov.

mjacobs@umr.org

How to intervene

What should young people do if they witness an act of bullying? Here are suggestions:

- Ask yourself, "Is it my job to help?" Think about how you might feel if the bullying was happening to you.
- Don't just stand there . . . say something.
- Kids who bully may think they're being funny or "cool." If you feel safe, tell the person to stop the bullying behavior. Say you don't like it, and it isn't funny.
- Don't be just a bystander. If other students laugh or join in, let them know they're not helping.
- Don't bully back! It won't help and could make things worse.
- If you don't feel safe confronting the bully, say something kind to the child who was bullied. Be a friend.
- Tell an adult—a teacher, school counselor, school nurse or principal. Take a friend along if you need help. If you're afraid of retaliation, ask the adult at school to help keep you safe after telling.
- Talk to your parents about bullying that you see or know about.

—Source: www.stopbullyingnow.hrsa.gov



Estefani Hernandez shops for a dress at the Prom Closet at St. Andrew United Methodist Church in Plano, Texas.



LEFT: Rita Keyes helps Kendal Phelps try on a dress to model at a Plano city event showcasing "eco-fashions." BELOW: Linda Shuttlesworth, a member of St. Andrew, helps girls select purses to match their prom outfits.



Sparkle in their eyes

UMW members help prom dreams come true

BY MARY JACOBS
Staff Writer

PLANO, Texas—Near the racks of dresses, Lorena Hernandez held up a silky hot pink sequined gown for her friend to see.

"Oooh—sparkly," said Cassie Stevens.

In the dressing room, Estefani Hernandez modeled a gown in navy and red for her mother Sylvia and "clerk" Lynda Shuttlesworth to consider.

"I like the navy, but the red looks young and fresh," said Ms. Shuttlesworth. "You'll have lots of years to wear navy."

"I'll take the red one," Estefani said.

What sounded like an afternoon of retail fun was actually ministry in progress. The girls were "shopping" at the Prom Closet, an outreach of St. Andrew United Methodist Church in Plano, Texas that's brought smiles to the faces of many local high school girls while promoting a "green" alternative to buying a new dress.

It's a simple idea: Church members and friends donate gently used evening gowns and accessories. Any high school girl who needs a dress for the big event can choose one for free, and also pick accessories to match.

Amy Millis, daughter of church member Jane Marshall, suggested the project as her mother was contemplating potential service projects for her United Methodist Women's (UMW) group,

the Rachel Circle at St. Andrew. Ms. Millis had put together an informal prom closet for girls at the high school where she teaches, and she thought the idea might work at the church, too.

"You might be surprised at the need, even on that side of town," she told her mom. "There's more than you realize."

She was right. More than 125 girls turned up to "shop" the Prom Closet's inventory of more than 550 dresses this year.

Racks full of dresses in a rainbow of tulles, satins, sequins and silks greeted the young ladies. Some of the dresses still sported tags—they'd never been worn—and some boasted pricey names and designers such as Chanel, BCBG and Neiman Marcus.

Organizers were surprised by the number of dresses donated to the project. Women from virtually all of the UMW circles at the church have pitched in by bringing dresses or volunteering time.

"There was an outpouring of support," said Devra Helffrich, a member of St. Andrew. After local TV news crews covered the story, the church received dozens of calls from people in the community asking how they could donate. One couple that attends the church's Saturday night contemporary service went "shopping" for the closet, purchasing a new dress and a set of matching accessories to donate.

At a recent shopping session, church member Kay Richardson stopped by to donate a few dresses that her daughter, now 25, had worn to school dances. The dresses were in pristine condition and still in style.

"They've been in the closet for six years," said Ms. Richardson. "I called my daughter to make sure she didn't mind, and she said, 'Get rid of them!'"

Many of the shoppers have come from nearby communities, but a few have come from Plano, an affluent community hit hard by the recession.

"We had one young lady from a private school whose dad has been out of work for 1½ years," said Ms. Helffrich. "She found something and was very excited."

One Plano mom, whose family was struck by a major financial setback, expressed gratitude for the dress her daughter chose. "She absolutely loves it," she said through tears. "And there's no way she'd be able to attend her prom without this."

To get the word out, organizers contacted area school systems. Articles in the local newspapers and TV stations also brought in more "customers."

"To see the sparkle in their eyes makes it all worthwhile," said Ms. Helffrich. "The girls come here, and they're a little shy and hesitant, but they leave with a big smile, so excited they'll be able to

attend their proms. It's just satisfying to know we could make a difference in someone's life."

"There's always a need for larger sizes," said Jane Marshall, pointing to the sparse inventory at the rack of larger-sized dresses. The closet's selection of evening handbags has also been a hit.

"First the girls choose a dress, but then, when they find a handbag and jewelry to match, they really light up," said Ms. Marshall.

The Prom Closet served not only as an outreach but also as a timely example of "green" shopping. Several local high school girls modeled dresses from the closet at an "Eco-Fashion Show" sponsored by the city of Plano as part of its Earth Day celebration.

Girls who selected free dresses even had the chance to give back themselves. As the girls left the Prom Closet, each received a note explaining how the dresses had been donated by church members. "We would ask that if you don't think you'll be using this dress again after the prom, we will gladly accept it back—clean and ready for some other lucky girl to wear next," the note read.

One shopper even turned up at the Prom Closet with two dresses of her own to donate before picking a "new" one for her dance.

"This idea just keeps giving, which is wonderful," said Ms. Helffrich.

mjacobs@umr.org



A young lady models the dress and accessories she assembled at the Prom Closet at St. Andrew United Methodist Church in Plano, Texas.



"Shoppers" at the Prom Closet can accessorize their dresses with shoes, jewelry and purses. BELOW: Jane Marshall, a member of St. Andrew UMC, shows off one of the 500 dresses donated to St. Andrew's Prom Closet by members of the church and friends.



Estefani Hernandez tries on a dress with help from her mom, Sylvia.

Rescuing animals is 'God-given task'

BY AMY FORBUS
Staff Writer

I knew it had gotten serious when I received this message from a friend: "You're my doggy connection. Friend from high school is moving back to Texas in the spring and wants a big dog. I told her I know the Harriet Tubman of big dogs."

At that point, I had helped place a couple of dogs with people who were willing to love and care for them, and had just begun taking foster dogs into my own home. My exposure to what we had jokingly called "The Under-pup Railroad" was growing.

Since December, I have pulled 11 dogs from the euthanasia lists of two shelters under the auspices of three different rescue organizations. Some dogs I've packed into the car and driven out of state, where another driver waited to take them on the next leg of the journey to foster homes. Others have stayed with me before moving to long-term foster or adoptive homes.

Since March, we have had Crystal, a pit bull terrier, and Pooh Bear, a border collie mix puppy, as our long-term foster dogs. (Why yes, my husband is a saint. How did you guess?)

After I'd learned the two were about to be euthanized, I spent the evening in an e-mail frenzy submitting all of the proper rescue paperwork. Early the next morning, I drove to my local city animal shelter and picked up Crystal and Pooh Bear on what would have been the last day of their lives. They had been kenneled together at the shelter and were already fast friends.

Challenges

The following days were not easy. We treated Pooh Bear for a bacterial infection, and when she got past that, we had her spayed. Crystal had already been spayed, but we are working on helping her overcome her shyness around new people and places.

The bills for vaccinations, surgeries, medications and kibble start to add up. Not to mention the cost of patching a hole in the carpet after we'd made the wrong call on whether a dog was ready to be left alone in a room.

But to us, it's worth it because of the difference it makes.

Our own dogs, an Australian Cattle



PHOTO BY KARLA KIRBY

Crystal is being cared for by Amy Forbus while she awaits an adoptive home.

Dog and a shepherd/collie mix, aren't exactly thrilled with these strange critters coming through their house. But they've learned to cope, and sometimes it even seems as though they understand what we're doing.

Caring for creation

And as I see it, what we're doing is a ministry. It's an act of caring for God's creation, just like the recycling we place by the curb and the composting and organic gardening we do in the backyard.

Countless generations ago, humans used the dominion God gave us to domesticate a species. That process left the species dependent upon us for their well-being. I choose to be one of the humans who accepts a caretaking role, believing that it's a God-given assignment.

Last weekend, as a friend and I drove away from a shelter with five dogs in the back of the car, she expressed her sadness that we couldn't save every animal there—especially Tildie, a black-and-tan shepherd mutt who had gotten our attention.

I told her that when I fret over not being able to save them all, I rely on a story that's easily found on the Internet called "Parable of the Starfish." The upshot: If you can make even a small difference, then make one.

Euthanasia day at that shelter was the following Monday, and that sweet black-and-tan girl was on the list. But on Monday, my friend called the shelter. She made the difference for one more.

Welcome home, Tildie.

Ms. Forbus is the digital community builder for UMR Communications.



Amy Forbus

Discipleship training is essential

BY MIKE SLAUGHTER
Special Contributor

Editor's note: This is the last in a three-part series.

I have wanted a motorcycle since I was a teenager, but the priorities of pursuing an education, getting married, raising a family and paying for children's education tend to delay recreational non-essentials like that.

But finally, after saving for almost 10 years, I ordered my lava red 2005 Harley-Davidson Road King Custom.

Before my new bike was delivered, I took the Honda motorcycle safety course, taught by a retired machinist named Les who had been riding bikes for more than 50 years.

Over the five nights of the course, Les put us through every conceivable situation that a biker might face. We maneuvered around cones that provided quick curves and swerves. We practiced emergency stops and experienced the 30-percent traction loss on wet pavement.

Mastering the clutch, foot shift, and hand and foot brakes at the same time can prove challenging. Friday night under the lights was test night. You had to demonstrate competency in each of the areas that we had practiced throughout the week. Miss a cone or stop past the line, you lose points. Lose 20, and you fail the course.

Core competencies

Drop the bike, and you fail the course. Pass, and you qualify for the motorcycle endorsement on your driver's license. The motorcycle safety course is a strategic and repetitious system of training that produces competence in amateurs who had previously never been on a bike.

Likewise, our training of people in the church must go beyond inducting them as members. We must provide core competencies for lifestyles of servant discipleship.

The disciple needs to be rooted in the daily practice of the five classic disciplines of Christian faith:

First and second, daily Scripture reading, and prayer and meditation. Through these, the disciple learns how to listen to the intuitive voice of the Spirit.

Next, life in community. Transformation happens through networks of accountability and encouragement. Cell-discipleship groups are essential in the process of discipleship-making.

Fourth, service. The church is the body of Christ in the world. Every member is needed, and every member must do his or her work for the body to function. In the process of member assimilation we must have an ongoing system to help people identify their gifts and passions to find their unique place of service in Christ's kingdom.

Finally, stewardship. You and I are the only bank account that Jesus has to carry out his mission in the world. I get tired of hearing people ask, "How can a loving God let innocent children suffer and starve?" God doesn't; God's people do. A disciple chooses to follow Jesus in living more simply so that others may simply live.

Action plan

Too many churches have mission, vision and purpose statements that few members can articulate and translate into action. A church may have a multitude of programs, but no one is really sure how they connect together for one strategic, overarching purpose.

'The strategic practice needs to move people in their development to love God, love people and serve the world.'

Disciples replicate themselves. Programs don't make disciples. Disciples make disciples. For this to happen, every local church needs to have a strategic and repetitious system of training that is clearly laid out for the initiate. The discipleship strategy must address how, why and in what a person is expected to be involved.

At Ginghamburg we articulate a simple strategy for participation at the visitor orientation. We communicate: "Here is the expectation for every person who seeks to follow Jesus in the path of discipleship at Ginghamburg."

The strategic practice needs to move people in their development to love God, love people and serve the world. To accomplish this, we ask

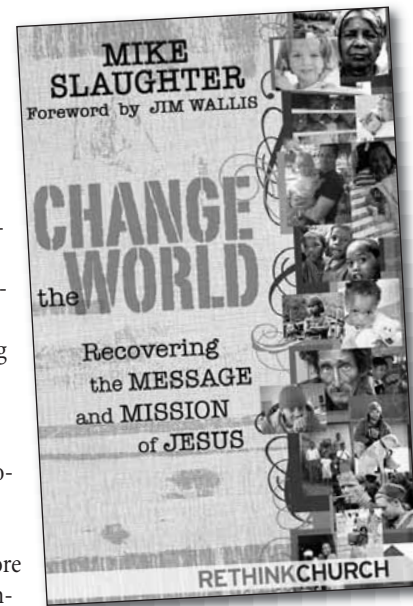
people to live in the life rhythm of celebration, cell and call.

Celebration. We learn to love God as we worship together in community and experience the teaching of God's word and sacrament. Participation in weekly public worship and daily personal worship is essential to the process of transformation.

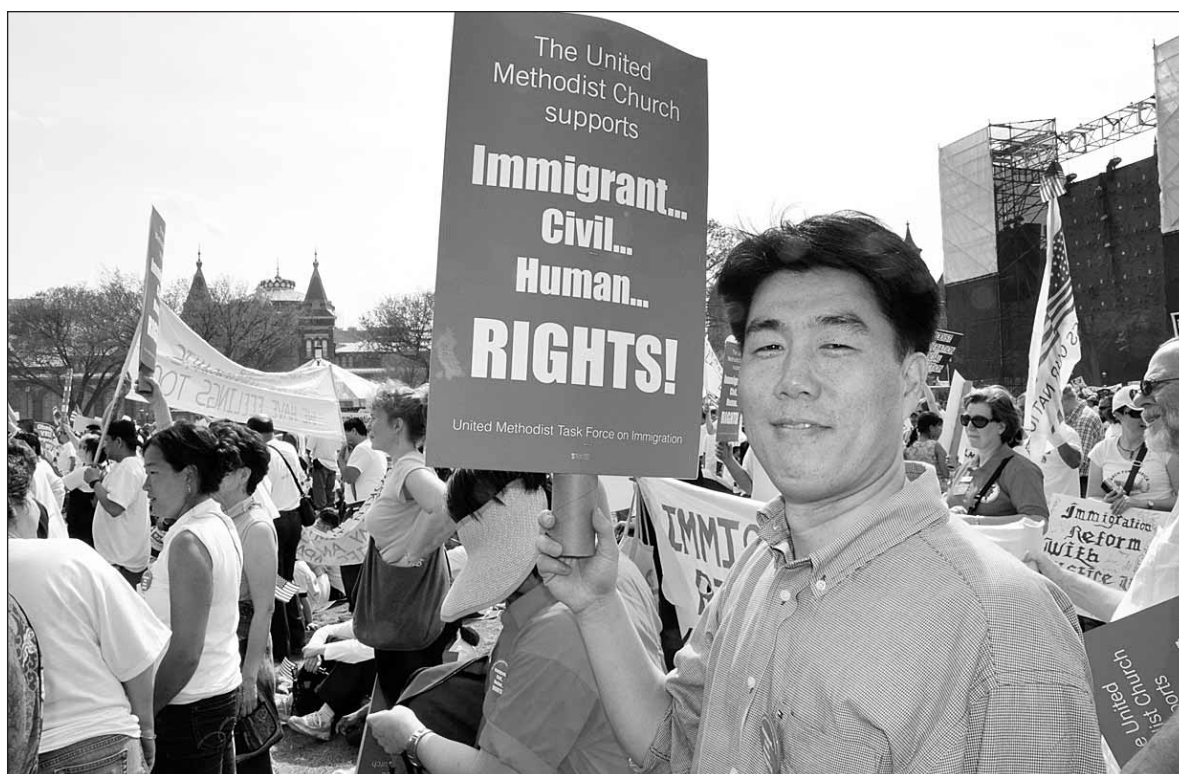
Cell. We learn to love one another as we meet together in cell community. The life of the body is in the cell! In small, intimate communities, we learn to respect differences and realize that our unity is based not in our ideology but in the redemptive work of God in Christ Jesus. Relationships are crucial to the

process of discipleship, but small groups must be about more than fellowship. They must lead these disciples out into the world.

Call. We serve God by serving the world through our individual calls and gift mixes. Doing is the ultimate form of learning. Every member of the body of Christ is called to be a functioning member serving the world in Christ's mission.



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



UMNS FILE PHOTO BY JOHN COLEMAN

The Rev. We Chang, pastor of First UMC, Manchester, N.H., attends a March immigration rally in Washington, D.C.

Reform lies in murky middle

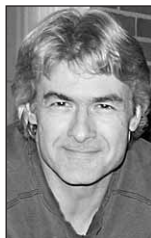
BY JEFF HARLOW
Special Contributor

Effective immigration reform belongs in the middle. For me, as a Christian, immigration reform makes perfect sense. And there's good news. A middle-way approach to how we respond to our immigration crisis is being embraced by a growing group of centrist religious leaders across the country.

Kudos to the National Association of Evangelicals (www.nae.net) for example, for their courageous and open support of comprehensive immigration reform. It cost 'em, though. The NAE took a hit from a few reactionary extremists. I am relieved that many of us standing with the NAE in the murky middle consider such extremist reactions against reform to be rooted in fear at best, or nativistic hate at worst.

The immigration problem in the U.S. is everyone's problem. A solution will be good for everyone. So join me in the middle. The middle ground on most religious or public policy issues is a tough place to stand. The middle ground is murky, muddy; it's difficult to talk about because it lacks those snappy, emotive sound bites that sting the opposition and attract media attention.

Comprehensive immigration reform has a good home in the religious and political middle.



Jeff Harlow

From a biblical perspective, I stand in a long line of religious folks who believe what the Bible says about God's special concern for the most vulnerable among us. Our nation's immigrants (most of them) come to us looking for help and hope and safety. How we treat them is a decidedly biblical issue. Most followers of Jesus agree (and have agreed for centuries) that we should love them, welcome them and care for them.

I believe we need a rational and humane approach to securing our nation's borders. Security is a good thing. Comprehensive immigration reform must address our border issue. Let's agree, most immigrants are good people. In fact, apart from the Native American community we are a nation made up entirely of immigrants. We're pretty good people! But some immigrants do seek to harm us and enter our country for illegal purposes. There must be a rational and humane way to secure our borders so that those seeking to enter for work and safety are welcomed, while those seeking to enter for illegal purposes are stopped.

Let's be reasonable about how to deal with the close to 12 million undocumented immigrants currently living in the U.S. We could spend billions of dollars to hunt them down for deportation. Raids make good evening news, but they are not very effective and cost a ton of money. Since a large portion of our undocumented immigrants have been here for many years, deporting them splits families, leaving behind children who are legal residents because they were

born here. If we care about families, we need a better way. God's grace teaches me a better way.

Comprehensive immigration reform should provide a reasonable pathway for undocumented immigrants who are living and working in the U.S. to receive legal status.

Think about this: It is estimated that our current pool of undocumented immigrants would increase our nation's tax revenue by close to 60 billion dollars if these workers were granted a pathway toward legal, open status as taxpayers.

Let's be reasonable about making it easier for potential workers to enter our country safely and legally. The current system is so restrictive that an enormous and dangerous underground illegal system of exploitation exists. Immigration fueled by clandestine illegal operations encourages human trafficking and unsafe workplace conditions. The truth is, even with our difficult recession and employment problems here, our economy needs immigrant labor, so let's help them to help us, legally.

Comprehensive immigration reform makes perfect sense, from a biblical perspective and from an economic perspective. It's the right thing to do. I stand in the middle on this issue, with a growing number of evangelical and mainline Christian communities, along with other faith communities in our country. Be reasonable. Join me in the murky, but effective middle.

The Rev. Harlow is pastor at Brossville (Va.) UMC. Reprinted from his blog, unpackingideas.org.

When the church itself breaks the body of Christ

BY DAN DICK
Special Contributor

I remember attending a worship service a few years ago, led by a young pastor who was presiding over his first Communion. He served a rural congregation known far and wide for the ongoing conflicts within the small fellowship. It was hoped he could bring peace to an embattled situation.

As he raised the bread and pulled it apart, he intoned loudly, "This is the body of Christ, broken by you." He hesitated, realizing his mistake, and rosy-red flushed both cheeks.

But instead of going on, instead of apologizing, he lowered the bread and looked out at the congregation and said, "I meant to say, 'broken for you,' which is the glorious gift of God to us; but I am going to stand by what I just said."

"This church is breaking the body of Christ in an unacceptable way. Christ did not die for us so that we could continue in our sin. Christ died that we might have a chance to start over."

"I invite us all to share in this Communion meal as an act of repentance from what we have been, and a pledge and promise to become something better."

I was deeply impressed by this young man's courage. Sadly, some in the congregation did not go forward to receive Communion that day.

What are we doing to the body of Christ? Why do we keep abusing it?

Petty differences define some congregations. Massive splits destroy others. Factions form within long-standing congregations, undermining any possibility of true community in Christ. Us vs. them thinking predominates in many of our congregations, and some churches do little more than mediate fights.

What's wrong with us? Where did we get the idea that animus, hostility, disrespect, aggression, rudeness and contempt were acceptable behaviors—anywhere, let alone the church?

Our culture is filled with discontent and discord fueled by media moguls looking for a sensational story and by outrageous talk-show hosts stirring up base instincts and baser behaviors. Fine. If the world wants to live that way, people have a right to choose their own poison.

But the church? Come on, we should want something better. And not just want it; demand it.

When the fruits of the Holy Spirit are love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control, we should have a lens through which to judge our thoughts, words and deeds.

Name-calling, gossip, disrespect, put-downs and attempts to undermine others should not be tolerated. Civility, respect, tolerance, forgiveness, willingness to compromise, a desire to

'We shouldn't have to be reminded to be kind and Christlike, but hey, we're only human.'

listen and compassion should govern our life together.

But these things can only happen if we decide to make them happen. People have to choose to be Christian. It won't happen to us by accident.

I have long been a proponent of relational/behavioral covenants—guidelines for shared conduct in local churches. These covenants lay out behaviors that we will not tolerate, behaviors we will nurture and support, and practices that we can engage in together (like prayer with and for one another) that will build bridges and strengthen bonds.

We shouldn't have to be reminded to be kind and Christlike, but hey, we're only human. No one is perfect, all have sinned, all fall short of the glory of God. But we still need each other.

I believe some of the most important work any congregation can do is to work on building healthy, positive relationships. If we can transform our congregational environments into counter-cultural centers of kindness, grace and civility, we truly offer an alternative to a sick and broken world.

If we embrace the fruits of the Spirit and define ourselves by these fundamental qualities of the Christian life, we cannot help but become better than we are and make our churches safe havens in a less-than-friendly world.

And we become the people God wants us to be. All we have to do is to want it for ourselves.

The Rev. Dick is director of connectational ministries for the Wisconsin Conference. Excerpted from his blog,



Dan Dick

Aid ongoing as China mourns quake victims

BY LINDA BLOOM
United Methodist News Service

As China observed a national day of mourning for earthquake victims on April 21, a team from the Amity Foundation, a United Methodist partner, was assisting survivors.

More than 2,000 people were killed when the 7.1-magnitude earthquake struck the Yushu area of China's northwestern province of Qinghai on April 14.

More than 12,000 were injured and 175 remain missing, according to Chinese officials. The affected area's high altitude, near-freezing temperatures and damaged roads have made rescue operations more difficult.

The Amity team now on the ground in Qinghai includes two staff members who led a team of professional voluntary psychological counselors in the Sichuan earthquake region in 2008, according to She Hongyu, an Amity executive and director of the foundation's research and development center.

Within a week of the earthquake, Amity distributed three shipments of blankets, food and water. The fourth Amity shipment arrived in the Qinghai province the night of April 21.

Rice, flour, blankets and mineral water from that shipment were distributed in three locations.

Amity staff also delivered medical supplies to emergency medical teams and candles to the school in Longbao Town, where classes were scheduled to

resume. Another shipment was being assembled in Xining, the provincial capital.

Amity relief workers visited villagers in Zanian Village, Longbao Township, for the third time, bringing 8 tons of flour; 2 tons of rice; 2,000

bottles of mineral water; and 1,000 cartons of beef sausages. The fact that "people from thousands of miles away care about us" gives them new hope, one villager said.

The government of Hong Kong approved a \$580,000 grant to support

Amity's emergency relief work in Yushu. The foundation is preparing a proposal to submit to Action by Churches Together. The United Methodist Committee on Relief will make a grant once an appeal is launched by the ACT Alliance.

Book Offers Personal Stories of
Answering God's Call

Elders, deacons, seminarians, campus ministers, chaplains, and college students tell of stepping out in faith to answer God's call to ordained ministry.

To order, contact Cokesbury
1-800-672-1789
www.cokesbury.com

ISBN 978-0-938162-81-0 \$14.95

new from

GENERAL BOARD OF
Higher Education & Ministry

CLASSIFIED ADVERTISING • CLASSIFIED ADVERTISING

MISCELLANEOUS

USED PEWS

Ministry service to churches. Sell, buy or donate your used pews or church furniture. Call 540-493-7397 or visit us at: www.usedpews.org

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

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

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

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

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

CLASSIFIED ADVERTISING

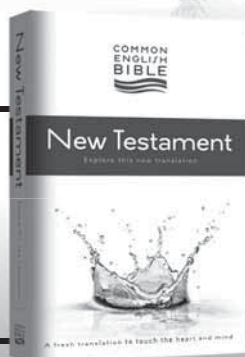
Readership is approximately 225,000 readers each week. **Rates** are per word or group of figures or initials (20 word minimum). **Newspaper Only**—\$3.00 per word, two consecutive weeks. **Newspaper/Internet Bundle**—\$4.00 per word includes two consecutive weeks in print and one month on Internet (www.umportal.org). **Internet Only**—\$1.25 per word run for one month on www.umportal.org. E-mail your classified ad to: cgraham@umr.org or enter it online on the Classifieds page at: www.umportal.org

"Let us press on to know the LORD... who will come to us like... the spring rains that give drink to the earth." ~Hosea 6:3



A fresh translation to touch the heart and mind

The Common English Bible offers a fresh look at the Bible, making it readable and understandable without compromising scholarship. More than 100 biblical scholars from 22 faith traditions are translating the CEB, and 77 reading groups are ensuring a natural, enjoyable reading experience. **The Common English Bible is not a revision or an update – it is a bold new translation.**



Discover for yourself

Visit www.CommonEnglishBible.com for a **FREE COPY** of the New Testament, to be published this fall. Bookmark the site and visit regularly for new features and updates.

The CEB translation is sponsored by the Common English Bible Committee, an alliance of denominational publishers.

COMMON
ENGLISH
BIBLE

UMR102220001 PACP00725207-01