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A 'GOD-SIZED' PROJECT

Church builds house for single mom

BY AMY FORBUS
Editor



Just because a congregation is only two years old doesn't mean its members can't think big.

Pontiac Church, the satellite campus of First United Methodist Church in Springdale, decided early on that 30 to 40 percent of its total offerings would go into local missions.

Since its beginning in an old car dealership building in 2008, the people of Pontiac Church have made home repair and wheelchair ramp construction a part of their mission effort, which they call Rule 2 (rule2.org). They draw the name from Jesus' answer to the question found in Matthew 22:34-39: "Which commandment in the law is the greatest?"

[See GOD-SIZED, page 8A]

Members of Pontiac Church, a satellite campus of First United Methodist Church of Springdale, gather on the side porch of the house they built this year for a local mother and daughter.

COURTESY PHOTO

Solar panels bring creation-conscious power to Ft. Smith church



Bishop Charles Crutchfield gets a bird's-eye view of the solar panels installed atop Grace Community UMC in Ft. Smith. Behind him is one of two identical arrays adding up to 1,400-feet of panels.

PHOTO BY JON GRAY

BY AMY FORBUS
Editor

It began last year with small changes, like the recycling bins that appeared in the worship center and throughout the building of Grace Community UMC in Ft. Smith.

Grace Church also began encouraging people to bring their own coffee cups instead of relying on disposable ones—just one more way they could care for the world God created.

And they reuse any ministry materials they can, ranging from set designs to supplies for children's and student projects.

Then this year, Grace Church's commitment to creation care grew even more. On Oct. 10, they dedicated to the glory of God the

1,400 square-feet of solar panels mounted on the roof of their facility.

The 16.77-kilowatt capacity solar array is the third-largest in the state, and the largest installation for any church in Arkansas.

"We generate approximately 4 to 5 percent of the church's need for power from the solar panels," said the Rev. Bill Leslie, Grace's senior pastor.

So how did a local church get so involved in clean energy?

One of Grace's members, Terry Tremwel, owns a green energy company, and he approached church leaders to offer the solar panels as a gift from the his family. That generous donation, combined with the state of Arkansas' energy rebate program, made what would have

[See SOLAR, page 10A]



EDITOR'S CORNER

BY AMY FORBUS

Facing the opposite of Christ-like love

The term was first used in 2001 by authors Neil Marr and Tim Field. Within the past year, it grew prevalent enough that almost everyone has heard of it: bullycide.

If you're not familiar with bullycide, use any search engine and your computer will yield thousands of results—stories in which someone is bullied to the point of breaking, and takes his or her own life.

When stories of bullycide incidents began to surface, I did wonder: How bad could it be?

But I only wondered that for a few seconds. It didn't take long for me to think back to my own elementary and middle school years. By just briefly revisiting middle-school thoughts and feelings, I remembered that for some, it could indeed be that bad.

Social media can intensify the problem. In a constantly connected culture, young people who face bullying may not get a break when they go home. Facebook can be a useful tool for maintaining relationships, but when it is instead used to taunt or tease someone any time of the day or night, it becomes just another source of stress and pain.

True, most of the time bullying does not lead directly to suicide. But it can follow many destructive paths. It can do damage to relational skills; it can lead a person to believe such behavior is acceptable or even necessary for survival; and it can even result in a bullied child turning around to take it out on someone else he or she sees as weaker. A cycle of brokenness often propagates much more easily than does a cycle of healing.

Countless kids, and even some adults, face bullying every day. How many of us witness it and say nothing about it? How often do we brush it off as just something that's part of life? It doesn't have to be part of life. Not if we refuse to let it happen.

The week I'm writing this column, I've heard several bullying-related installments of the "Here's to

Your Health" radio spots by Dr. T. Glenn Pait of the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences. Looking for transcripts, I discovered that this particular series first aired in April of this year.

But with media attention in recent weeks highlighting the bullying problem in our society, the radio spots suddenly became more timely than when they first aired. (If you have missed these brief but valuable audio clips, find them by searching "bullying" at uamshealth.com/herestoyourhealth.)

On Oct. 29, Bishop Charles Crutchfield participated in a news conference with other spiritual leaders involved with the Interfaith Alliance of Arkansas. His words were not just intended for the media. Part of Bishop Crutchfield's job is to offer spiritual guidance to the people of the Arkansas Conference.

"All God's children, no exception, are persons of sacred worth and value," Bishop Crutchfield said. "Language that devalues and denigrates another human being, that is hurtful and hateful, is outside the bounds of the kind of Christ-like love that is expected of followers of Christ."

He continued with a crucial reminder: "In spite of our brokenness and human failures, we are all valued and loved by God."

Yes, all of us are valued. Those who face bullying are beloved children of God. And so are the ones dishing it out.

May we all learn to give an additional measure of grace to the bullied and the bullies; to show love to the broken and the walking wounded of this world; to take seriously our Christian duty of standing up for the oppressed; and to honor the dignity and worth of everyone we encounter, whether or not we see eye to eye.

It is, after all, the example Christ set for us.

To contact me, e-mail aforbus@arumc.org or call 501-324-8037.

Addressing confusion about baptism among Gen-Y crowd

BY MARY FAITH "ZOE" MILES
Special Contributor

Editor's note: This column is the second installment of Miles' series on Generation Y and the church. The first installment appeared Sept. 17.

The Rev. Jennifer Long, director of religious life at Oklahoma City University and campus minister at the Wesley Foundation, lists infant baptism as one of the most frequently asked questions from students concerning the United Methodist Church.

Her experience isn't dissimilar to mine, as my survey of 100 young adults showed infant baptism as one of the most questioned traditional practices in our denomination.

Confusion surrounding infant baptism isn't unique to my generation. Many Christians without and within the walls of the United Methodist Church believe that adult and infant baptisms are the same; however, they are two distinct differences in the New Testament.

In Acts, adult baptisms occur as people repent, accept/believe the message of Christ, and receive the Holy Spirit.

It is derived from Jesus' baptism at the beginning of his ministry. After his immersion, the Spirit of God falls on in him and "a voice from heaven [says], 'This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased'" (Matt. 3:17). Like Jesus, baptized adults are identified as daughters and sons of God, spiritually consecrated for His use in the world.

This is often the only understanding of baptism. As an infant is

incapable of making a commitment before baptism, infant baptism appears empty of this divine connection and identification. It is



Mary Faith "Zoe" Miles

often observed as a skeletal tradition, developed over time by the religious elite.

Infant baptism, however, is based on the principle of familial baptism as represented in Acts (16:15, 33), playing an important role in an individual's spiritual growth. Consider how we care for children: It's crucial that a child get to doctors' appointments, to daycare and eventually to school. A parent and/or a community is committed to driving the child to those places until he or she is grown enough to reach the pedals and steering wheel by himself.

Likewise, infant baptism is a commitment by the parents and body of the believers to "drive" the child toward Christ until his or her spirit grows enough to reach the pedals of faith. Without their spiritual guidance and a continuous movement in the direction of Christ, the child is left sick and crying on the carpet.

While this common misunderstanding is not one easily cleared outside of the church, we can begin to dissipate the fog within our own congregations.

This is done both through explaining the difference between the two baptisms when a child is being baptized as well as pressing

the importance of the process of confirmation.

When the child is old enough, he or she takes a driving test as a mature acceptance of the responsibility that comes with driving. The child is prepared to follow the road without the steady assistance of parental supervision.

In the United Methodist Church, confirmation is the driving test.

Confirmation is a time of remembering our baptism and our parents' commitment, and taking our spirituality as our own responsibility. We then stand before our congregations and submit our lives to Christ as individuals, being claimed as sons and daughters of God by our own decision.

It should be emphasized to the preteens that confirmation is not another Sunday school class or Wednesday night activity. It is their time to make that spiritual decision to walk in the baptism of Christ that their parents set for them at birth.

It is the time they first step into their identity as men and women of God.

As believers, we can all wear the profound knowledge that, if baptized as infants, our parents and church families were willing to carry us to Jesus when we were too small to walk.

Baptized as adults by confirmation or by water, we can dress ourselves in the identity God created before anyone learned to drive.

Miles is a senior at Oklahoma City University, a United Methodist-related institution. She can be reached at mmiles.stu1@my.okcu.edu.

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Martha S. Taylor • Director of Communications
Amy Forbus • Editor
Patrick W. Shownes • Communications Coordinator
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Submission Deadlines

Issue Date	Submission Deadline
Dec. 3	Nov. 17
Jan. 7	Dec. 21
Feb. 4	Jan. 20



AN OCCASIONAL WORD from the Bishop

BY CHARLES CRUTCHFIELD

Dear Friends:

His name was Carlos.

I knew him first as a student and then as an employee at Lydia Patterson Institute in El Paso, Texas. He was a bright, smart, smiling young man. During his time as an LPI staff member he worked in development. Then, as he matured and his talents increased, he moved on to work for an insurance company and finally Chase Bank.

He was a gifted young man with a wife and child. He had the kind of personal values and faith so desperately needed to help the border move beyond violence and anarchy.

He was gunned down in the streets of Juarez, the victim of an attempted robbery gone terribly wrong.

Every day several hundred young men and women from Juarez, Mexico follow in Carlos' footsteps. These high school students walk, or ride the bus, or catch a ride from

their homes in Juarez to attend Lydia Patterson Institute (lydiapattersoninstitute.org). Some travel for two hours. Others will come from homes in the "secundo barrio" around the school on El Paso's south side.

At LPI, these students receive a first-rate education that is blended with extra-curricular activities and a strong religious life program. When they graduate, 90 to 95 percent of them attend college. Almost all of the graduates qualify for scholarships. "La Lydia," as the school is affectionately known, has for almost 100 years been providing education for boys and girls on both sides of the border.

Our support for *La Lydia* provides a place of safety for these students, an island of refuge from the drug wars and violence. But even more, it is a place where the church proclaims again that knowledge and civility will indeed finally overcome the shadows of ignorance, violence and hatred.

It is a place where the church

proclaims that the ultimate values are those found in the realm of the spirit—values like compassion, humility, forgiveness and charity.

It is a place where we declare that ultimately, AK-47s and nine-millimeter pistols cannot stand against the love of Christ.

For almost 100 years, people like us have provided the resources necessary to keep La Lydia's doors opened to young people whose lives, in turn, have been transformed.

Our shared mission giving provides for support of Lydia Patterson Institute. I hope you will join me in making certain that LPI can continue to be a beacon of hope on the border.

It would be a fitting memorial for Carlos.

Faithfully,

Charles Crutchfield

- Speaker, interim)
- Ebenezer—Luther Williams (Part-time Local Pastor, interim)
- Northeast District**
- Forrest City: Victory—Moses Green (Full-time Local Pastor)
 - Hoxie—Bonda Moyer (Elder)
- Northwest District**
- Army Chaplain—Harry Cross (Provisional Elder)
 - Rogers: Grace—Michael Winberry (Assoc. Member)
 - Gravette/Sulphur Springs—Phil Sturdy (Full-time Local Pastor)
 - Circle of Life Extension Ministry—Audie Long (Elder)
 - Decatur/Highfill/Springtown—Russ Hall (Full-time Local Pastor)
- Southwest District**

- Wiley Chapel—Betty Scull (Part-time Local Pastor)
- South Central District**
- Faith—John Miles, Sr. (Retired Elder, interim)
 - Gardner—Mark Williams (Part-time Local Pastor)
 - Keith Memorial/Leau Fraiz—Carol Clark, Assoc. (Part-time Local Pastor)
 - Morning Star—John Walker (Retired Elder, interim)
 - New Salem—Dennis Horvath (Retired Local Pastor, interim)
- West District**
- Booneville—Gerald Holloway (Full-time Local Pastor)
 - Fort Smith: St. Paul, Assoc.—TBS
 - Magazine Charge—TBS

New appointments

Bishop Charles N. Crutchfield announces the following appointment changes that have occurred since the 2010 Annual Conference:

North District

- Antioch/Harmony—Jim Gilliam (Part-time Local Pastor)
- Fairfield Bay—Jim Reed (Lay Speaker)
- Newark: Hazel Edwards Memorial/Oil Trough—TBS

North Central District

- England—Von Dell Mooney (Retired Elder, interim)
- Oak Grove—Kent Tallent (Lay Speaker, interim)
- Chickalah—Bud Choate (Lay

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Providing permanency for all God's children

November is National Adoption Awareness Month. For those of us in the field and for adoptive families, it is a time of celebration and recommitment.

Please take a moment to think about adoption: Would you, another member of your family or a close friend love and raise a child or a sibling group as your own?

The U.S. has reached a record 149,000 children in foster care—a number so high that many experienced child welfare professionals don't know what to do about it.

The 50 federally funded public agencies across the country have never placed more than 60,000 children in a single year. Children "left behind" must wait another year—or more—until there's a better solution.

But it is worthless to say, "We need to cut the red tape and eliminate unnecessary delays and costs," then do nothing to change the system.

So I propose an alternative to criticizing a system already bursting at the seams: The people of U.S. churches can choose to get involved. Volunteer at a public or private agency that recruits adoptive families. Or learn more about adoption and prayerfully

'Layperson' does not equal 'amateur'

BY JOHN CRAWFORD
Special Contributor

Do we as laity check our brains when we walk in the doors of the church?

It's an interesting question. I see us make decisions in the church that we would never make in the business world.

Instead of taking advantage of the unique combination of laity, pastor and staff in the church, we abdicate our responsibility as laity, deciding that it is up to the pastor and staff to grow the church. We often lose sight of making disciples and instead focus on keeping the people in the church happy and comfortable.

We as laity must step up and take more of the responsibility for the growth and direction of the church.

We must make sure our church has a strategic plan that outlines how it will do its part to fulfill the vision and mission of the Conference and the whole United Methodist Church: to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

We must make this plan knowing that we will have different pastors and leaders as we grow, but that Christ remains our true leader. We must realize that change will occur, regardless of whether we plan for it. We must accept these realities while ensuring our focus is outward, not inward.

The church is the only institution that exists for the people who are not yet here. We tend to forget that, though. Instead, we only focus on the people who are here.

We must think of reaching the unchurched. Yes, we can build on the past, but we must look toward the future, too. We must not carry the luggage of the past with us.

How many church committee meetings do we attend in a year? Why do we go?

I'm issuing a challenge: Next time you find yourself in one of these meetings, ask the question, "Is what we are discussing going to bring more people to Christ, or will it only make people here feel better?"

It is exciting to think what we can do if we focus all the energy in the church toward bringing people

to Christ. We must articulate a vision of how we will become a better church for the future for our children and grandchildren—and for people we have never met. We must set goals, establish plans and hold ourselves accountable.

We as laity must support the church with our talents, skills and knowledge as well as our money. If we continue to do the business of the church in the same way we have done it for the last fifty years, will we have a more faithful church? I don't believe we will.

Every time we go to a committee meeting, let us challenge ourselves to not do business as usual, but set goals and visions for the future. Then, let's keep in mind the ways we can translate those plans into work.

Let us use our everyday skills to make this a better church and conference.

Crawford, a member of St. James UMC Little Rock, serves as director of lay leadership for Connected in Christ, the Arkansas Conference's comprehensive plan for church revitalization.



John Crawford

consider that choice.

Remember, you are the church, and these are God's children.

William R. Barling
Executive Director, Families Are Special
Member, First UMC, North Little Rock

Letters to the Editor policy:

All letters must be signed (name and city/church) and include

the writer's telephone number or e-mail address.

The editor reserves the right to edit letters for style and length. Letters longer than 200 words will not be considered for publication.

The Arkansas United Methodist will not print letters containing personal attacks.

The Arkansas United Methodist reserves the right to publish Letters to the Editor in print, on the web, or both.

Reshaping and refining: an Imagine Ministry update

BY KURT BOGGAN AND
MACKEY YOKEM
Special Contributors

Though we haven't made any major announcements in recent months, your Conference Imagine Ministry team has continued working together to discern God's vision for Arkansas United Methodism. Since Annual Conference, we have:

- articulated the Conference's core values and priorities based on conversations and input from last year's small group sessions at Annual Conference, surveys and regional meetings held last spring
- begun the process of reshaping a vision and mission for the Conference based on those values and priorities
- held a series of focus groups to gain feedback on the reshaping of the vision, mission, core values and priorities.

The Imagine Ministry team's next meeting is Wednesday, Nov. 17. It will be a time of preparation for the next phase, which includes training leaders and refining our focus.

On Dec. 2 and Feb. 18 and 19, we will join with Gil Rendle, our consultant who has guided several other Conferences in this process, to train about 100 people on interpreting the vision, core values and priorities of the Conference. The Imagine Ministry team invited an equal number of clergy and laity to become interpreters, focusing on those who will still be in positions to lead the church 20 years from now.

After those people have received training, they will help facilitate a series of meetings this spring in four different geographical areas of the Conference:

- Southeast area on March 26
- Northeast area on April 2
- Northwest area on April 3
- Central area on April 16.

Locations of these meetings will be announced as soon as they are set.

The April 16 meeting will occur in conjunction with the 2011 Vital Signs event, and we hope that any people in other parts of the state who were unable to make the previous meetings will take the opportunity to attend the one on that day. Gil Rendle will be our keynote speaker, and Bishop Charles

Crutchfield will lead worship.

The Imagine Ministry team expects the sharing in these workshops to help us refine the Conference's vision, mission, core values and priorities. They are a crucial part of our preparation presenting them those key elements to you at Annual Conference 2011.

While we do not yet know how these elements will look, we can tell you that form will follow function: How we do what we do—and who does it—will grow out of the vision, mission, core values and priorities.

To put it bluntly: Whether we like it or not, the church of the 20th century is losing its relevance in today's culture, and if we're going to be faithful to the calling of Christ, we're going to have to do church differently. That's going to mean change for everybody—clergy, lay leaders, participants of any kind. It's time that we all examine our expectations of what we think the church ought to do.

To that end, we are developing a Conference-wide Bible study focusing on Acts 2, the story of how the early church was formed. We plan to release the free study materials late this year, and we hope that all United Methodist churches

in Arkansas will study it together in January 2011.

The Bible study will be posted on the Imagine Ministry page of the conference website (arumc.org/imagineministry), and we hope that individuals, small groups and entire congregations will consider what we all can learn from the early church's story told in Scripture.

Please find us on Facebook at facebook.com/imagineministry, "like" our page and look for updates during and after our Nov. 17 meeting.

Most importantly, please be in prayer for our team's discernment process.

Gil Rendle tells us that we are in a paradigm shift, and we believe he is correct. The old formula was happy preachers plus happy congregants plus apportionments paid equals success. Now, though, the focus is on the mission field. It's going to take years to make this shift, yet we must have a sense of urgency, for the sake of our mission. Gil compares it to building a bridge... using the bricks of the bridge you're standing on as the material.

How do we apply the gospel to a world that changes every millisecond? It may require a reshaping of everything we know as "church."

Boggan and Yokem are district superintendents who serve on the Imagine Ministry team.

**'To put it bluntly:
Whether we like it
or not, the church of
the 20th century is
losing its relevance in
today's culture...'**

imagineministry
...REACHING FORWARD TO WHAT LIES AHEAD...
PHILIPPIANS 3:13

Church health requires 'both/and' approach

BY WILLIAM O. (BUD) REEVES
Special Contributor

As we navigate the seas of deep change, the tendency in many churches is to "batten down the hatches." We try to avoid the storms of change by preserving what was meaningful and traditional in an earlier time. We conceive of the world in "either/or" terms. We can be either traditional or contemporary, intellectual or emotional, connectional or independent, oriented either toward social action or evangelism.



Bud Reeves

In his book *Built To Last*, Jim Collins examines some of the key leadership qualities of companies and organizations that have been consistently successful for many years. One of the concepts is "the genius of AND."

Successful organizations are able to embrace opposite extremes on a number of levels at the same time. Instead of choosing A or B, they figure out how to have A and B. They can look at opportunities from the perspective of "both/and" rather than "either/or." In most situations, being able to embrace different perspectives allows for expansion of the organization.

For example, a company that has retail outlets all over the country can start an internet presence that attracts customers not coming into their stores. A restaurant that caters to families can have both a playground for kids and salads for health-conscious parents. Whether you're talking about technology, education or church, the days of the single-option menu are over.

As theological descendants of John Wesley, we are genetically predisposed to "both/and." Wesley was the great synthesizer, drawing differing perspectives from diverse sources to put together a successful ministry for his time. He was fundamentally an Anglican, but he drew on the resources of the Catholics, the Greek Orthodox, the Moravian Pietists and the philosophers of the Enlightenment to communicate the gospel in a way that ignited thousands of hearts for Jesus Christ.

As United Methodists, we believe that both faith and works are necessary for a complete relationship with God. We believe both in the Christian education of the head, and we also encourage the emotional commitment of the heart. When we reach out into the world, we offer a way of salvation (evangelism), and we also care for human needs (mission).

Recently, the Council of Bishops launched the Call to Action initiative, which involved a study of effective United Methodist churches and the qualities that make for vitality. The results confirm the need for "both/and" thinking. Signs of vitality include having both traditional and contemporary worship services, small group ministries in addition to Sunday school, and strong pastoral leadership coupled with effective lay leadership.

What does "the genius of AND" look like in a local church? There should be multiple styles of worship, either in separate services or in a blended service that incorporates different styles and the use of technology.

Sunday school should be vigorously promoted, and there should be small group opportunities for learning and fellowship outside of Sunday morning. Members should be cared for and nurtured, and the ministry should reach out to the unchurched and needy in the community. Empowered lay people should lead the church and be held accountable for their witness and stewardship.

At the same time, clergy should be accountable for their effectiveness and be left in their appointments long enough to effect positive change.

We are blessed to have the heritage and the resources to be a "both/and" church. We have a great Wesleyan tradition, and we have the possibility of improvement, innovation, and renewal. As Collins says, we can both "Preserve the Core" and "Stimulate Progress." A vital church maintains its DNA while the organism morphs to adapt to the environment, so that healthy growth may occur.

We were "built to last." May God grant us *both* the wisdom *and* the courage to do so!

The Rev. Dr. Reeves serves as pastor of First UMC, Hot Springs. He can be reached at brobud@fumchs.com.

Visit arumc.org/imagineministry to:

- View the video of a presentation delivered by Bishop Janice Huie in 2007 to bishops and district superintendents. **Discuss:** What needs to change for the church—and your congregation—to become "nimble"?
- Read the Ten Provocative Questions posed by Dr. Lovett Weems Jr. of the Lewis Center for Church Leadership, Wesley Theological Seminary. **Discuss:** How do these questions affect each local church, and the group with whom you're having this discussion?
- Read "The United Methodist Way" by the Rev. Andrew Thompson. **Discuss:** How many characteristics listed on page 5 do you see embodied in your congregation? How can you work to add those that are missing? How can you enrich those that are already there?
- Use the Conference-wide Bible study on Acts 2 that will appear on the site in December.

In addition to these web-based resources, look in the Dec. 3 issue of the *Arkansas United Methodist* for a book review of *Deep Change*, one of the books the Imagine Ministry team has read to inform this process.



The Rev. Loyd Perry, right, speaks at the presentation of a grant given by the Horace C. Cabe Foundation and the C. Louis and Mary C. Cabe Foundation for Leola UMC's parsonage repairs. Others pictured, from left: Jay Leek, Grand Avenue UMC; the Rev. Chester Jones, South Central District Superintendent; J. J. Harrington, Leola UMC; and Anita and Charles Cabe, Cabe Foundation.

COURTESY PHOTO

Cabe grant makes Leola parsonage repairs a reality

BY AMY FORBUS
Editor

Early this summer, retired pastor the Rev. Loyd Perry approached South Central District Superintendent the Rev. Chester Jones about starting a new mission to help the district's small churches with building repairs and improvements.

Having already seen a need in the district, Jones suggested to Perry that Leola United Methodist Church should benefit from the program's first project.

Leola and Moore's Chapel UMCs share a pastor, so together the two congregations pay the pastor's salary and expenses for upkeep on the parsonage at Leola, where the Rev. Will Bradford currently lives. But with an average attendance of 22 at Leola and 40 at Moore's Chapel, the two congregations simply did not have the funds to cover needed repairs at the parsonage.

Perry met with Leola UMC leadership and prepared a cost estimate for the parsonage improvements. The United Methodist Men of Grand Avenue UMC, Hot Springs, heard about the need and offered to donate their labor to the project.

With the estimated cost and the donated labor in place, Perry prepared a proposal for a grant from the Horace C. Cabe Foundation to fund the project. On Sunday, Sept. 12, at Grand Avenue UMC in Hot Springs, Charles and Anita Cabe presented the grant funding to Leola UMC on behalf of the Horace C. Cabe Foundation and the C. Louis and Mary C. Cabe Foundation.

Though the official mission

project for small churches is new, Leola UMC is the third church in the past three years to receive funds from the Cabe Foundations by working through the South Central District office.

Charles and Anita Cabe are members of Gurdon UMC, and over time they've become aware of such needs across the district.

"Our foundation felt like our small churches are a very important part of our communities," said Anita Cabe, who serves as the C. Louis and Mary C. Cabe Foundation's secretary/treasurer. "We also appreciate the work the Grand Avenue members are willing to put into this project."

Among other improvements, the parsonage that houses the pastor of the two-point charge now has newly installed energy efficient windows.

"The parsonage was built in 1958, long before 'energy efficient' was ever heard," said Dan Holland, a trustee of Leola UMC. "However, due to increased fuel cost and limited resources, a prayer for new windows was answered. The churches of Moore's Chapel and Leola gratefully acknowledge the Cabe Foundation for their commitment to helping small congregations."

"Our small church parsonage was to the point where it needed help from the outside," said Bradford, pastor of Leola and Moore's Chapel. "[The Cabe Foundations'] giving spirit met our needs perfectly."

Cindy Parker contributed to this report.

TRANSFORMING THE WORLD

First UMC Jonesboro takes VBS, mission on the road

First United Methodist Church of Jonesboro this summer commissioned a mission team of 18 adults and kids to travel to Buras, La., to respond to needs made known by the Louisiana Conference of the UMC. The Buras area experienced adverse effects of both Hurricane Katrina in 2005 and the BP oil spill in 2010.

The Jonesboro team led Vacation Bible School for the children of the area, ministered to the unchurched in the community, and made repairs and improvements to the campus of their host church, Trinity UMC, which had been almost completely destroyed by Hurricane Katrina and continues to work on rebuilding its facility.

The Jonesboro church has been asked to return to Trinity UMC next summer to help out with similar projects, including VBS.



Members of the mission team from First UMC Jonesboro played games and led singing for children at Trinity UMC in Buras, La. Other team members spent time making repairs and improvements to the church's building.

First UMC Malvern 'Harvest of Hope' raises \$15,000 to feed kids

To help alleviate hunger in Arkansas communities, the Rev. LaVon Post has started an effort called "Harvest of Hope" in three churches he has served.

This year marked the first Harvest of Hope in Malvern, where Post was appointed in 2009. John Allan Funk, a member of First UMC Malvern, served as coordinator—a big job when it's never been done before.

"I was absolutely petrified," he said, "but we knew what our goal was: to help feed kids."

The church pre-sold tickets redeemable for smoked chickens and pork butts, then a team gathered on Labor Day weekend to prepare the meat for pick-up. With more than 1,000 tickets sold, First UMC was thankful to have help. Nine churches were part of the effort in Malvern, including seven United Methodist congregations.

St. Paul UMC in Malvern has a smokehouse on its church grounds, and they loaned the facility for cooking.

According to Funk, Harvest of Hope couldn't have happened without the expertise of the St. Paul crew. One member, Al Rogge, stayed for 26 hours straight to help get the work done.

"We sent him home, and he took about a three-hour nap and came right back," Funk said.

Seven schools in Hot Spring County benefit from Arkansas Rice Depot's Feed the Kids program, so the \$15,000 Malvern's Harvest of Hope netted this year will be put to work in the very community that raised it.

"It was the largest amount raised in the first year of any Harvest of Hope," Funk said. "We were just overwhelmed, but we realized that this was a God thing."

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Seniors Day Out at Camp Aldersgate offers activi

BY AMY FORBUS
Editor

Friends greet each other with hugs and smiles. In one room, a group paints and decorates wooden boxes for a craft project. Another room is home to a Bible study. And in the great hall, a game of beanbag baseball is about to begin.

It's a Thursday morning at Camp Aldersgate, which means Seniors Day Out is up and running.

Consistently popular

"Our senior adults come from all over the city," said Stacy Robinson, senior adult activities coordinator for the United Methodist camp in Little Rock. Two shuttles—one from Camp Aldersgate, the other provided by senior adult services agency CareLink of Central Arkansas—pick up older adults from a variety of locations in the greater Little Rock area, and other seniors drive their own cars to the weekly gathering.

Seniors have to be able to function independently to attend the program, which has met each week of the school year since 1973 and draws 45 to 50 participants each week. Some drive their own vehicles from North Little Rock, Scott and various parts of Saline County for the fellowship and activities.

The mornings begin with a time of light exercise, continue with a variety of activities—from fishing to line dancing to dominoes—and conclude with a hot meal provided by CareLink, followed by a presentation.

"Sometimes it's educational, sometimes it's entertaining; it just depends on the day," Robinson says of the presentation time. The variety of the special programs ensures that there's something for everyone to enjoy. Recent guests have included a representative from the Mosaic Templars Cultural Center to speak on the center's mission, and pharmacist and magician Richard Knoll, who performed magic tricks and gave the talk "How to avoid thrills from your pills," a useful topic for many attendees who take prescription drugs.

One Thursday each month, the group takes time to celebrate birthdays, with cake and party goods supplied by local units of United Methodist Women.

Robinson finds the diversity and camaraderie of Seniors Day Out participants impressive.

"You see all socioeconomic backgrounds, all ages—I love that," she said. "The divisions these people saw in the '40s and '50s ... at camp, they don't exist."

Historical perspective

It's fitting that diversity remains part of Camp Aldersgate's identity: Long before it became known for providing camp experiences for children and youth with medical needs, its purpose was to serve as a gathering place for racially integrated Christian fellowship and training in the still-segregated South.

Two women who shared in the early days of Camp Aldersgate can still make regular trips to the camp. At a recent Seniors Day Out, Velma Burgines, age 104, and Mabel Harris Webb, age 92, reminisced. Known as "Miss Velma" and "Miss Mabel" to Camp Aldersgate staff, the two have memories that span the entire life of the camp, back to its founding in 1947.

Burgines' involvement with Camp Aldersgate goes back to day one. "I started out with the turkeys," she said, referring the turkey farm that occupied the property before Camp Aldersgate was founded in 1947.

Burgines represented White Memorial Methodist Church—the congregation where she is still active today—at the gathering that marked Camp Aldersgate's beginning. She started helping with children's camps as soon as Aldersgate began hosting them.

For a number of years, Burgines was in charge of worship, leading the devotionals during the camp's weekly worship time. Singing was a central activity in those days. "We just had fun and worked together," she said.

Now a Seniors Day Out participant, Burgines attends whenever possible, though having to use a walker has slowed her down a bit. She participated in the program's morning exercise sessions well into her nineties, and she still enjoys crafts like sewing, knitting and crocheting.

Webb served on the staff from 1973 to 1980, when she retired and transitioned back to a volunteer role. She spoke fondly of the singing that enhanced camp worship in years past, of Burgines' devotionals and of the prayer garden that has served as a holy place at Camp Aldersgate over the years.

"We used to go over and have the prayer service every morning ... in the prayer garden," Burgines said. "That was the most important."

Prayer was integral to the formation of the camp and its attendees and staff. As they walked the prayer garden, they stopped and said prayers at different points along its path.

Looking to the future

Robinson expects Seniors Day Out to grow and change in the coming years. "We are reaching out to the Baby Boomers," she said, "so I am expecting to see an increase [in attendance], and different activities."

One of the new activities introduced this year for Seniors Day Out participants was the first-ever overnight camp. On Oct. 4-5, about a dozen senior adults enjoyed a movie night, archery, fishing and more during their 24-hour stay at Camp Aldersgate. The overnight experience arose from Camp Aldersgate staff responding to what seniors were interested in trying.

"This is something that the seniors actually said they wanted to do," Robinson said. And the event went so well that it will definitely appear on next year's schedule, she says. "I don't think any of them wanted to leave."

How you can help

Cover the cost:

Donations to Camp Aldersgate and an annual registration fee of \$20 per person help cover expenses for Seniors Day Out. You can help provide scholarships to ensure that cost is never a barrier for anyone who wishes to attend.

Give of your time:

Camp Aldersgate is seeking volunteers to help with the Seniors Day Out program from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Thursdays from August to May. Kitchen volunteers serve prepared food (no cooking) and clean up after the meal. Drivers take the camp van to pick up participants in the local area between 8 and 10 a.m. and drop them off between 1 and 3 p.m. Volunteer drivers must have a clean driving record and be between ages 25 and 72. For more information, contact Tess Hardin, Volunteer Coordinator at Camp Aldersgate, 501-225-1444 or thardin@campaldersgate.net.



FAR LEFT: A Seniors Day Out participant gives archery a try during Camp Aldersgate's first overnight camping experience for senior adults. LEFT: Volunteer Jay Jones, right, helps a camper get ready to fish in Camp Aldersgate's pond. ABOVE: The Rev. Anthony Honeycutt leads a Bible study on spiritual gifts during a Thursday morning Seniors Day Out session.

AUM PHOTOS BY AMY FORBUS

ties, fellowship for older adults



Camp Aldersgate executive director Sarah Wacaster (center) stops to visit with Velma Burgines (left) and Mabel Harris Webb (right) as they share stories of the camp during a recent Seniors Day Out gathering. Burgines, age 104, represented her church at the 1947 meeting that first organized Camp Aldersgate as a Methodist campground that would serve as a place for interracial gatherings and Christian training.



Beanbag baseball (above) and craft projects (below) are among the choices for recreation during Seniors Day Out at Camp Aldersgate in Little Rock.



nce upon a time, there was a little boy named Justin who got into lots of trouble because he felt like nobody loved him. He was even mistreated at home, so the courts came and took him away. For years, little Justin moved from foster home to foster home, desperately searching for a family to love and help him. Then, one day, Justin found hope, and his story found happiness.

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Methodist Family Health provides treatment and support to women, children and families in Arkansas who suffer from emotional, behavioral and addiction issues.

Thanks to Methodist Family Health, I finally found a loving foster home with Penny and Joseph Reynolds," says Justin, now an 18-year-old high school senior. Six years ago, Justin couldn't control his urge to steal computers and other electronics. Today, still in the Reynolds' care, he has plans to major in a computer-related field in college. And, according to Justin, he owes it all to the Reynolds – especially Penny, the woman he now calls Mama. "Mama is the reason I am where I am now," Justin says. "I used to be real sad. Now, I just smile a lot."

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A 'God-sized' project: church builds house for single mom (continued from page 1A)

Jesus answered, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind." This is the greatest and first commandment. And a second is like it: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself."

Rule 2 opportunity

With the rule of loving their neighbors as themselves in mind, PontiacChurch had been looking and praying for a "God-sized" project—meaning something they could only accomplish with the help of God, explained the Rev. Mike Felder, the full-time local pastor serving there.

"We were looking and praying for something 'God-sized' for us to do, because we're a very mission-minded congregation," Felder said.

The answer to that prayer walked right into one of their worship services.

"Someone brought a guest, introduced us to her and said, 'She's got a couple of things in her house [that need repairs]. Would you guys go and look at it?' because they knew we did that," Felder said.

It started out as a need for some propane to heat the home, said Chris Scherz, a church member and plumbing contractor with construction experience. They met that need easily, but then discovered more problems.

"We wound up building a lean-to structure over the roof of the manufactured home, because the roof itself really couldn't be patched," Scherz said.

They continued to discover greater needs for repair than they had expected.

"You could put your finger through the side of the house," Felder said. "We made a temporary repair and said, 'We'd like to build you a house,' and she said, 'No. Absolutely not.'"

But Felder and members of PontiacChurch didn't give up on the possibility that this was the God-sized project they'd been waiting for. They kept praying, and every time Felder saw the homeowner, he would ask if she was ready for the church to build her a house. After a couple of months, she agreed to it.

A 'Taylor Made' project

The homeowner did own the land on which her manufactured home sat, so the Rule 2 project

already had a starting point. And, inspired by the homeowner's 10-year-old daughter, Taylor, they soon had a name for the project: Taylor Made.

Scherz talked with Pete Day, director of Camp War Eagle, whom he knew through previous projects at the camp. He learned that maintenance staffs at Camp Ozark and Camp War Eagle were thinking of getting together for a service project. Camp War Eagle had enough lumber available to frame a whole house.

"I called Mike and said, 'This is something that may be a reality; what do you think?' and he said, 'Absolutely.'" That was the day, Scherz said, that "it felt like it went from a dream to reality."

It only took a few phone calls to secure framing material from Camp War Eagle and Camp Ozark, and to find the maintenance staff at Camp War Eagle ready to donate their labor. The framing itself was accomplished in a single weekend.

From April to August, Taylor Made project leader Scherz and his wife, Amy, and others in their weekly small group coordinated details large and small. The core team held regular meetings to plan each weekend's schedule, make decisions about donation activities and more. PontiacChurch members also recruited Taylor Made project workers who attend worship at the downtown campus of First UMC Springdale.

Scherz estimates that 85 to 90 percent of the labor was donated by volunteers.

"That was the thing that impressed me the most, was the willingness of northwest Arkansas to reach out and really help us" in an economic climate that was less than ideal, he said. "It seemed like every lead that we went after came up with something."

For example, someone in the church knew someone who deals in roofing material. When they approached that person, he donated the whole roof.

When all the donations were tallied, PontiacChurch had spent about \$22,000 to build a \$62,000 house. The church's annual budget runs about \$120,000, so the value of this project alone represents about half of their offerings for this year.

Scherz says the whole project seemed blessed.

"Being in construction for 18 years, it was amazing to me how easy everything went together," he

said. "That was the biggest deal."

He was impressed by the willingness of PontiacChurch, a new congregation of just 120 people, to step up and build a house free and clear.

Being able to build a relationship with the homeowner and her daughter made this project a special one for Scherz, too. Taylor and her mother have continued to worship at PontiacChurch since the completion of their new home.

"I've been a part of several mission projects, and this one was different," he said. "It was a four-month, pretty much every weekend deal. It was a growing experience for us as a small group and as a church."

A sign of grace

While the Rule 2 Taylor Made Project brought together a lot of people, some folks left the church over it, too.

Felder said that people were asking, "Why didn't the church build me a house?" He met that criticism head-on through sermons on God's grace.

"We're not owed anything," Felder said. "It was not that this person was so needy that they were owed something; it's grace. It's a sign of grace, and it was an opportunity where things lined up and we were able to do that. We can't dictate those things."

Felder believes PontiacChurch would be willing to build another house if an opportunity again became known, but they realize their next chance to meet a God-sized goal may not come in the form of construction.

Open to God

PontiacChurch now meets in a building once occupied by United Parcel Service. Felder says they are open to whatever possibilities the new space may allow.

"When we moved, people kept asking me if we were going to have showers [in the new building]," he said. "I'd answer, 'I don't know. I hadn't really thought about whether we were going to have showers or not.'"

After Felder fielded the same question from four or five different people, the church decided to respond to the request, thinking it may be part of their next God-sized project.

"I said, 'We are going to have showers. I don't know what we're



TOP: The groundbreaking for the Taylor Made house took place in March. ABOVE: Kids get to work painting a bedroom in the Taylor Made house.

going to do with them, or why we're supposed to have that," Felder said. But now that they have installed one shower in each gender's bathroom, PontiacChurch is ready for whatever comes next.

"We would love someday to be a place where...if we have somebody that's without a job or homeless or whatever, that we could bring them in, give them a place to stay, a job, start doing some training and some teaching on life skills and things and equip them to go back out," Felder said.

As for PontiacChurch's next project, they aren't making plans at this point. They're just waiting for God to lead.

"It may be a house attached to our building, it may be somewhere else, it may be we're supposed to focus on wheelchair ramps," Felder said. "It just basically boils down to 'What's the need, and what do we have to offer?'"

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COMING UP

November

Arts and crafts fair at Highland Valley Nov. 13

Highland Valley UMC in Little Rock is hosting an arts and crafts fair on Saturday, Nov. 13 from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Lunch will be available in addition to the handmade items for sale. The church is at 15524 Chenal Parkway in Little Rock.

Small Church Leadership Institute Nov. 14-18; scholarships available

Applications are available for a limited number of scholarships to attend the Small Church Leadership Institute, scheduled for Nov. 14-18, 2010, at Mt. Sequoyah Conference Center in Fayetteville. Register today at mountsequoyah.org. This year's theme is "Strengthening Worship in the Small Attendance Church." The Small Church Leadership Institute is designed to equip laity and pastors with the knowledge and skills to lead their churches to a higher level of health and vitality.

Presenters include three leaders from from the United Methodist General Board of Discipleship: the Revs. Dean McIntyre (Director of Music Resources), Safiyah Fosua (Director of Invitational Preaching Ministries) and Taylor Burton-Edwards (Director of Worship Resources), all authorities on small church transformation.

In addition, three pastors will share their church's stories of transformation, new life and hope: Sharon Karamoko of Jackson, Tenn.; Regina Turner of Spadra, and Dan Williams of Fort Smith.

This event is possible through the financial support of five Conferences (Missouri, Oklahoma, Kansas East, Kansas West, and Arkansas) and the United Methodist Foundation of Arkansas.

Joy of Giving Market at First UMC Paragould Nov. 20

First UMC Paragould, 404 West Main St., will host its first Joy of Giving Market on Saturday, Nov. 20 from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. The market provides opportunities to give to mission as well as purchase items that will make great Christmas gifts. All proceeds from this event will benefit missions. Various church groups will sponsor booths featuring cookies, Fair Trade coffee, a local backpack ministry for children in need, Heifer International, Methodist Family Health and more.

Alternative Christmas Market at St. Paul UMC Little Rock Nov. 20-21

Gifts from the Alternative Christmas Market at St. Paul UMC will not only be appreciated by the receiver but will also feed the hungry, clothe the naked, allow a visit to the imprisoned and empower people to follow their dreams. St. Paul's market will include items from Rice Depot, Heifer International, Troop 30 and more. The market is open from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Nov. 20 and from 9 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Nov. 21. The church building is at 2223 Durwood Road in Little Rock.

December

Sequoyah UMC hosts Mrs. Santa's Kitchen Dec. 11

Mrs. Santa's Kitchen at Sequoyah UMC will feature homemade cookies, candy, bread and gift items. The event runs from 9 a.m. to noon on Saturday, Dec. 11. All proceeds will benefit local missions. Sequoyah UMC is located at 1910 Old Wire Road in Fayetteville.

January

Perkins School of Youth Ministry Jan. 10-13

Register now for Perkins School of Youth Ministry, scheduled for Jan. 10-13, 2011. Internationally-known author Brian McLaren is the keynote speaker. For details, contact Charles Harrison at charles@mcyouth.org or 972-333-9870, or visit the PSYM website: <http://www.smu.edu/Perkins/PublicPrograms/PSYM.aspx>.

The deadline for the Dec. 3 issue of the Arkansas United Methodist is 5:00 p.m. Nov. 17. E-mail calendar submissions to Arkansas Conference Communications at communications@arumc.org.

Little Rock-area churches 'MERGE' for Friday night tween ministry

Lock-ins. Food. Learning about United Methodist Church connections. Games. Secret missions. Laser tag. Trick-or-treating for UNICEF.

It's all part of MERGE: Where United Methodist Tweens come together.

Seeing a need for ministry with "tweens"—that demographic of not-quite-kids, but not-quite-teenagers—several United Methodist churches in Little Rock have begun a partnership for Friday night fellowship and fun among that particular age group.

The first MERGE took place about a year ago and drew 17 tweens. At the third gathering, attendance hit 68. Coordinators now hope to make it a quarterly event—or perhaps even more frequent. Different churches take turns hosting the fun; so far, Asbury, First and Winfield UMCs have served as hosts.

The next gathering happens Friday, Dec. 3, at Pulaski Heights UMC and includes food, games and a "secret Christmas mission." The cost is \$5 per tween.

For information or to learn how your church can become a part of MERGE, contact Pam Snider at 501-225-9231 ext. 126 or Pam@asbury-lr.org.

At right, MERGE participants compete in a "marshmallow challenge" and cheer on teammates in an obstacle course.



PEOPLE OF FAITH



Crews Veazey

First UMC Hamburg scholarship awarded

Crews Veazey, a member of First United Methodist Church of Hamburg and the son of Stanton and Kim Veazey, is the first recipient of the church's Mildred K. Blanks Memorial Scholarship. Blanks, a member of First UMC Hamburg for more than sixty years, died in 2009. The \$2,500 scholarship was endowed by Blanks' daughter, Liz Witherington, to honor the memory of her mother. Current or former members of First UMC Hamburg may apply for the scholarship. Recipients must show a strong tradition of Christian service and be entering a post-graduate program that provides services for the needs of others. Veazey, a graduate of the University of Arkansas, now attends medical school at UAMS in Little Rock.

Copley honored by interfaith organization

Rev. Stephen Copley on Oct. 7 received the Community Service Award for 2010 from the Institute for Interfaith Dialog, Little Rock branch, at the 6th Annual Intercultural Friendship and Dialog Dinner. Copley was recognized for his leading role in bringing different faith groups together.



Stephen Copley

Alumni provide MTS scholarships to current seminarians

The Memphis Theological Seminary Alumni Association of the Arkansas Conference is proud to announce its first two United Methodist student scholarship recipients. Dr. Rockey Starnes, alumni treasurer, has announced that two \$500 scholarships were awarded this semester to Zeke Allen and William Galbreath. It is the Alumni Association's plan to award at least one scholarship annually at its June meeting.

Solar panels bring creation-conscious power to Ft. Smith church (continued from page 1A)

been an expensive project much more economically feasible for the church.

After a month-long installation process, the panels were ready to start collecting solar energy in March, but they remained in the testing phase until September, when the way cleared for them to fully connect to the Arkansas Valley Electric grid.

The church didn't just sit and wait, though. Inspired by the solar array, leaders decided to take a significant step inside the building, too. The Tremwels again stepped up and helped to cover the cost of converting 30 incandescent lights in Grace's worship center to LED fixtures. The conversion reduced the heat given off from the lights by 90 percent.

An excerpt from the church website, gracethechurch.com, conveys some of the excitement over the lighting project:

"We can now light the entire auditorium with just over 3,000 watts of electricity during worship and only 400 watts during the week! That's less than most vacuum cleaners! Talk about saving electricity and money! The entire project should save Grace \$300 to \$400 each month during peak usage."

The dedication, attended by West District Superintendent the Rev. Mike Morey and Bishop Charles Crutchfield, included music from the church's youth band. The service fittingly featured Genesis 1:1-5 as its scripture focus. In that passage, God separates the light from the darkness and calls it "good."

That good creation is now providing a share of the energy for Grace Church's facility.

"We believed this was a tremendous opportunity for us to be witnesses to our members and our whole community of the need to wisely use the resources God provides," Leslie said.

BOOK REVIEW: Hope for reversing a troubling trend

BY JESSICA SZENHER
Special Contributor

Many teens in America are replacing their traditional faiths with a watered-down, self-serving belief system. In *Almost Christian*, author Kenda Creasy Dean offers hope and specific suggestions that adults in all congregations can use to reverse this trend.

As Associate Professor of Youth, Church and Culture at Princeton Theological Seminary, Dean was a member of the research team on the National Study of Youth and Religion conducted between 2003 and 2005. The results of that study indicate that most young people in America feel good about religion—but their understanding is shallow, their participation is limited and their faith doesn't last long after high school.

The study concludes that young people between ages 13 and 17 tend to practice a belief system called Moralistic Therapeutic Deism. They believe in a Creator who watches over them, wants people to be good, but is not involved in their lives except when they need God to resolve a problem. Their goals are to be happy and feel good about themselves. And they

believe good people go to heaven.

This belief system, the study says, is actively displacing the traditional faiths of conservative, black and mainline Protestant, Catholic and Jewish teens in the U.S. Given their additional conclusion that most teens mirror their parents' belief systems, this study has implications far beyond youth ministry.

However, a significant minority of one in 12 teens says religious faith is important and that it makes a difference in their lives. Dean centers much of *Almost Christian* on the examination of teens in this group to determine what qualities of family and church life

have brought about their deeper, more lasting faith.

A long-time United Methodist youth pastor with two teenagers at home, Dean tells the stories of individuals in this 8 percent minority and draws lessons from their life experiences. She concludes that parents who discuss their faith

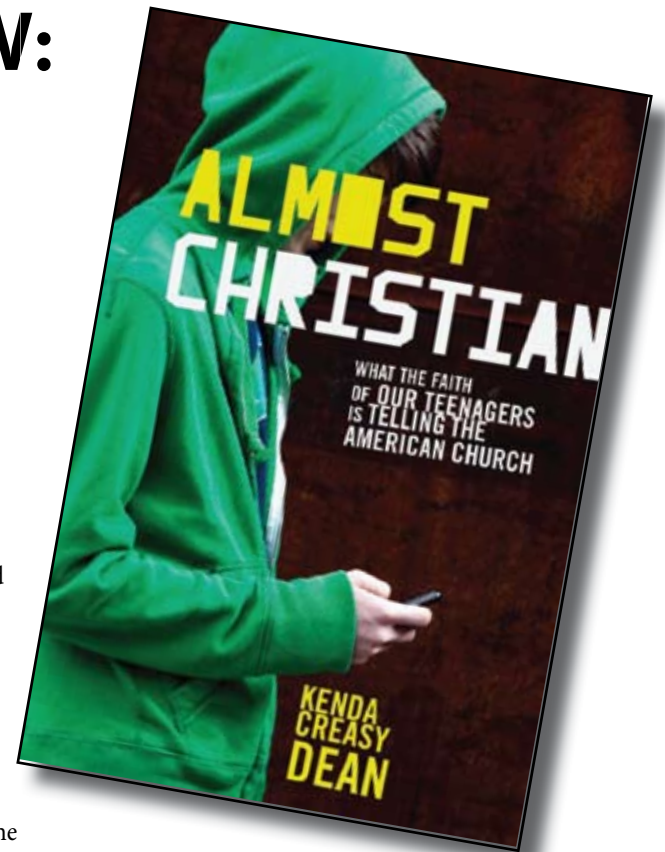
and provide a vocabulary for their children to express their faith; supportive adults in the local church who help teens answer questions and probe their faith; and a congregation that encourages participation by youth in church activities are essential for deep spiritual formation.

She says key resources for Christians are a creed, a community, a call and a hope. Teens need to understand what they believe about the God who is revealed through Jesus Christ. They need a community of believers to model Christian love, a powerful call to mission service that gives life purpose and hope for the future that by following Christ they will bring God's will to fruition.

Dean is optimistic about adults' abilities to provide those resources to our teens. But she does not back away from the commitment and time that is needed to help accomplish these goals for young United Methodists as well as youth of all faith communities.

Though the language and analysis of *Almost Christian* is not always easy to understand, it is well worth the effort to obtain Dean's insights and practical suggestions. Reading this book gives me hope that we all can develop a creed, a community, a call and a hope—and the ability to translate to coming generations.

Szenher is a member of the Arkansas Conference Communications Commission and of First UMC, Little Rock.



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*Almost Christian:
What the Faith of Our
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American Church*

By Kenda Creasy Dean

Oxford University
Press, 2010

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OBITUARY

SHERIDAN

Jay Glynn Culpepper, 70, of Sheridan, passed away on Thursday, Oct. 7, 2010.

He was born on April 29, 1940 in Springhill, La. He was the son of Irene Culpepper and the late W. Jay Culpepper of Sheridan.



Jay Culpepper

He served in the United States Army in Pusan, Korea. He was called into the ministry twenty-five years ago and became an ordained United Methodist pastor. With much devotion, he lovingly served his parishioners in the Carthage Charge, Sulphur Springs UMC, First UMC of Bearden/Thornton, First UMC of Pine Bluff, Western Hills UMC in Little Rock, Asbury UMC in Magnolia and First UMC of Carlisle, from which he retired this year. After retirement, he continued serving part-time at First UMC of England.

He was preceded in death by a brother, Conley Clinton. He is survived by his wife of 40 years, Libbi Richardson Culpepper; a sister, Brenda Haynes of Sheridan; brothers, Paul Culpepper and wife Darlene of Atlanta, Texas, Gary Culpepper and wife Maryanne, Barry Culpepper and wife Sandy and sister Cynthia Winston and husband Jimmy, all of Sheridan.

Also surviving him are his children, Jay Glynn Culpepper, Jr. and wife Lori of Moataca, Va.; Mynde Emerson and husband Kenny and Candi Finley and husband Stacy, all of Fordyce; and his grandchildren, Logan Jay and Haleigh Culpepper of Moataca, Jackson and Abby Emerson and Allaynah and Pierce Finley, all of Fordyce. Other survivors include many loved nieces, nephews and cousins.

A memorial service was held at Center Grove UMC in Sheridan on Tuesday, Oct. 12. In lieu of flowers, the family asks that memorials be made to Heifer International, 1 World Avenue, Little Rock, Ark., 72202.

Arkansas Rice Depot launches new Diaper Depot initiative

UMC's Ingathering 2010 event to include diaper drive



Laura Rhea, President and CEO of Arkansas Rice Depot, speaks at the Oct. 7 ceremony marking the launch of Arkansas Diaper Depot. Looking on is the Rev. Pat Bodenhamer, pastor of Diamond City UMC and coordinator of Ingathering 2010.

AUM PHOTO BY PATRICK SHOWNES

According to the Children's Defense Fund, one Arkansas child is born into poverty every 47 minutes. Struggling families often must make difficult choices, such as deciding whether to buy food or purchase diapers for their children.

To help ensure that parents have the ability to provide diapers for their infants, Arkansas Rice Depot, Kimberly-Clark and the March of Dimes on Oct. 7 launched a new initiative, Arkansas Diaper Depot.

"Many mothers are not able to take their child to daycare because they cannot afford the required diapers," said Laura Rhea, President and CEO of Arkansas Rice Depot. "Through the Arkansas Diaper Depot, we hope to help ease the burden that many struggling mothers and families feel."

The Arkansas Conference of the United Methodist Church has signed on as a supporting organization of the Diaper Depot. Ingathering, the Conference's annual project supplying items for disaster relief and feeding the hungry, this year will include a diaper drive to benefit Diaper Depot. The Nov. 20 event will be held at the Rice Depot warehouse.

Partners in the Arkansas Diaper Depot include Huggies manufacturer Kimberly-Clark and the Arkansas chapter of the March of Dimes. The two organizations identified Arkansas Rice Depot as an effective avenue for reaching Arkansas' families in need.

Kimberly-Clark already sponsors the Huggies Every Little Bottom campaign, which raises awareness of the need for diapers encourages local communities to

take action. The Arkansas Diaper Depot will help spread the word statewide as it collects diapers and supplies them to families.

"Kimberly-Clark is proud to be part of the Arkansas community and dedicated to raising awareness about the huge need for diapers for moms in need," says John Pownall, Conway Facility Manager for Kimberly-Clark.

Kimberly-Clark showed their dedication to the cause by presenting Arkansas Diaper Depot with a "special delivery" of newborn care kits and wipes.

Mothers and their infants from area pregnancy centers New Beginnings in Benton and Breath of Life in Malvern were on hand to be the first recipients of goods from Arkansas Diaper Depot.

trucks and trailers can begin as soon as worship concludes.

Helpers whose vehicles do not need unloading: Please park in the lot across the street from the Rice Depot. Walk to the spotlight to cross the road; be careful and look both ways!

An important note from UMCOR's Sager Brown Depot: The bleach in the cleaning buckets has caused some problems at times—transportation, spillage, etc. Church World Service has already removed it from their list of items, so we have decided to follow their lead. It will be a phase-out process, so do not worry about removing bleach from already completed buckets. Any buckets including bleach will still be accepted.



Reminders for Ingathering

Saturday, Nov. 20 • 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Arkansas Rice Depot • 3801 W. 65th Street, Little Rock

How to prepare for the big day...

- Pray for God to use you and your church in building up the Kingdom.
- Register to attend by visiting arumc.org/ingathering. Registered participants will receive the 2010 Ingathering t-shirt bearing the image above.
- Links on that same page have information on assembling kits and completing your Ingathering Report Form.
- Bring some diapers for Diaper Depot, too!
- Put all like kits in one box and label or label bulk items.
- Dress for the weather—Ingathering happens rain or shine,

warm or cold.

Volunteers can be any age. Jobs include unloading, packaging, labeling and special Rice Depot projects, so everyone will have something to do!

Arrive promptly: The morning will begin with a special worship service to celebrate the life of Lill Wilson and glorify God. We will begin at 10 a.m. in the parking lot. Bishop Charles Crutchfield, the Rev. Kurt Boggan and others will be leading us in this short but meaningful worship time.

The Northeast District trailer will be unloaded as part of the worship service, in honor of Lill Wilson. Unloading of other

All creatures great and small... The Lord God made them all

Animal blessing honors pets as God's good creations

BY KAYLEA HUTSON
Special Contributor

Some might say the late-afternoon worship service went to the dogs.

In fact, it may have seemed at times that the dogs, cats and horses outnumbered humans during the Blessing of the Animals service held Sunday, Oct. 3, at First United Methodist Church in Springdale.

More than 100 people of all ages brought their pets to church for the service held in honor of St. Francis of Assisi, the patron saint of animals.

In recent years, United Methodist churches have seen an increase in animal-friendly services either on or around Oct. 4, St. Francis' holy day. The United Methodist *Book of Worship* includes "A Service for the Blessing of Animals" on page 608.

After a brief service which included two hymns, a pet-friendly prayer and a scripture reading, owners brought their animals forward for individual blessings.

The event was designed to give pet owners a chance to thank God for the gift of creation and animals.

"Pets play such a major role in people's lives, yet we often fail to give glory to God for what they offer us,"

said the Rev. David Freeman, associate pastor at First UMC Springdale. "It's a fun way to gather the church. Any time and any reason to get people together for fun, fellowship and community builds the body of Christ."

While not an annual event, pastors at First UMC Springdale have hosted the pet-friendly service several times during the past few years. Freeman said people often request that the church hold the service.

This year's blessings only included dogs, cats and horses, but past services have featured donkeys, goats, a 30-year-old turtle and even a rat.

Participants had a chance to pass on additional blessings by bringing donations of pet food or kitty litter. Several hundred pounds of food and litter were given to the Springdale Animal Shelter following the service.

Ultimately, Freeman said, pastors hope the unconventional service helps build community within the First UMC church family.

"People get to know others better through these kinds of events, and thus, the community grows stronger," Freeman said. "It's interesting to see a part of people's lives, like a pet, that you never get to

see at any other time—especially Sunday morning.

"It's funny to see how people's pets reflect their personalities and behavior. So seeing new sides of people is beneficial to strengthening relationships."

Four-year-old Lindsey Dodson attended the service with her aunt, Rhea Williamson. The youngster said she liked being at church with her aunt's dog, Little Bit.

"I love this," Williamson said. "This is such a neat thing. It's a good community experience that is special with your animal."

Ginny Stamps agreed. Stamps, a frequent children's ministry volunteer, brought her two Italian Greyhounds to the event.

She said enjoys showing off her rescue dogs, especially to children. She has even brought her pets to Vacation Bible School.

"We all love the animals," Stamps said. "It's nice because a lot of kids don't have dogs. This is a chance to share [them] with someone else."

"My animals are like my kids."

Hutson serves as minister to families with children at First UMC Siloam Springs, and maintains the website for the Northwest District, NWDist.org.



ABOVE: Pat Brown watches as her dog, Angel, "pets" Dolly the horse, owned by Terry Tucker, during the Blessing of the Animals at First UMC Springdale. BELOW: The Rev. Steven Coburn, senior pastor (foreground), and the Rev. David Freeman, associate pastor, bless pets during the Blessing of the Animals at First UMC Springdale.

PHOTOS BY KAYLEA HUTSON



 HENDRIX

The Hendrix College Choir presents the 46th Annual
Candlelight Carol Service

December 2-4, 7:30 p.m.
December 5, 4 p.m.

Greene Chapel • Hendrix College • Conway

Reservations Required. Call 501-450-1495 beginning Nov. 22.

Tour Services

Thursday, December 16 at 7:30 p.m.
First United Methodist Church, Fort Smith

Friday, December 17 at 7:30 p.m.
First United Methodist Church, Pine Bluff



LEFT: Hendrix College Chaplain the Rev. Wayne Clark blesses Concerto the puppy during the college's Blessing of the Animals on Sunday, Oct. 3. Charis Lorenz, a junior biology major from Rancho St. Margarita, Calif., is raising Concerto to be a guide dog for the blind as a Service to the World project for Your Hendrix Odyssey: Engaging in Active Learning, the college's engaged learning program. The puppy will live with Lorenz until it is 16 to 18 months old, learning how to act and react and getting acclimated to the variety of surroundings a service dog commonly encounters.

PHOTO BY ANDREA NEWSOM

REPORTER

THE UNITED METHODIST

umportal.org



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Section B

November 5, 2010

High commitment—a key to growth

Churches find new members, step up to great expectations

BY MARY JACOBS
Staff Writer

Just showing up at the altar one Sunday morning isn't enough to join City on a Hill, a United Methodist congregation in Woodstock, Ga.

Prospective members must participate in an all-day Saturday class to learn about the Christian faith and United Methodist beliefs, then sign a covenant committing to regular prayer, worship attendance, small group participation, service, witnessing and tithing.

It's not easy. And nobody's apologizing about that.

"We're a high-commitment church," says lead pastor, the Rev. Chris Bryant. With a booming laugh, he adds, "And we're looking for ways to raise the bar even higher."

City on a Hill started as a church plant five years ago, and today averages around 335 in weekly attendance. Many would argue that's no coincidence—that "high commitment" churches tend to grow, and more importantly, stay vital.

"High demand organizations make themselves attractive," agrees

Dan Hotchkiss, senior consultant for The Alban Institute, a Herndon, Va.-based nonprofit leadership development organization for congregations.

High growth

Indeed, some of United Methodism's largest and most successful churches would describe themselves as "high commitment."

At Ginghamburg Church, a United Methodist megachurch in Tipp City, Ohio, prospective members are required to undergo a 12-week class, "A Follower's Life," which clearly outlines membership expectations. At the end of the class, class leaders interview soon-to-be members individually, querying each about his or her personal spiritual practices (such as prayer and Bible study), involvement with a small group and plans for serving others and contributing financially to the church.

"We're nosy," says Carolyn Slaughter, Ginghamburg's director of membership. "We feel you need to know what and who you're committed to, rather than just popping up and saying, 'Yeah, I'm in.'"

■ See 'Members' page 4B



PHOTO BY DAN EVANS

Leslie Brown enjoys fulfilling her commitment to regular outreach, one of the expectations of all members of City on A Hill, a United Methodist congregation in Woodstock, Ga. Here, she's helping at the church's annual Single Mom Gas Giveaway.

Churches urged to help break silence on AIDS

BY MALLORY MCCALL
Staff Writer

DALLAS—When it comes to talking about HIV/AIDS, most churches aren't. And that silence speaks loudly, according to speakers at the third international Lighten the Burden Conference.

Nearly 200 participants, including United Methodists and other denominations across the U.S. and Africa, gathered Oct. 14-16 in Dallas to work toward an AIDS-free world.

"Things are happening, but not

enough is happening," said Musa Dube, a professor of humanities at the University of Botswana and a speaker at the conference. "The people present are the 'active' ones, yet still little is happening."

The conference focused on supporting persons infected and affected by HIV/AIDS; combating HIV stigmatization and discrimination in church and society; training laity and clergy to be engaged in HIV education, prevention, care and treatment; increasing awareness of the global HIV/AIDS pandemic; equipping laity and clergy

to provide leadership in churches and the global community; and nurturing a global health initiative through the United Methodist Global AIDS Fund. Since 2005, the fund has raised more than \$3 million to support 175 AIDS-related projects in 37 countries throughout Asia, Latin America, the Caribbean and sub-Saharan Africa.

There are more than 33 million people living with HIV/AIDS worldwide, and 2.5 million new people are infected each year. Women living in sub-Saharan Africa represent about

■ See 'Conference' page 3B



UMR PHOTO BY MALLORY MCCALL

Molly McEntire, a Florida State University student and member of the General Board of Discipleship's division on ministries with young people, greets participants at the Lighten the Burden III conference in Dallas.

FAITH WATCH

Agency urges support for Chinese Christians

The United Methodist General Board of Church and Society (GBCS) released a statement Oct. 14 urging all church members to pray for Christians in China and to raise awareness of religious persecution around the world. In October, church leaders were forbidden to travel to an evangelical gathering in South Africa after Chinese officials claimed their attendance would threaten national security. The GBCS also called for United Methodists to contact the State Department and urge pressure on China to lift restrictions on faith practice.

Fed warns county to uphold Islamic rights

The U.S. Department of Justice filed a court brief Oct. 18 in Rutherford County, Tenn., warning county officials that denying religious land-use rights to prevent construction of a mosque and Muslim community center would violate civil rights laws. A group of landowners in Murfreesboro had sued to stop the construction, questioning Islam's validity as a religion entitled to First Amendment protection.

Donations increase for religious charities

Several of the nation's largest religious charities saw an increase in private donations in 2009 despite the economic recession, according to rankings published in the October *Chronicle of Philanthropy*. Support for Feed the Children, which ranked fifth in the Philanthropy 400, totaled \$1.19 billion—a 1.2 percent increase over 2008. Catholic Charities USA was ranked third with a 66 percent increase to \$1.28 billion, but the group has questioned the accuracy of the figure.

Crystal Cathedral files for Chapter 11

The Crystal Cathedral in Garden Grove, Calif., filed Oct. 18 for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection from creditors. The decision came after some creditors filed lawsuits against the church, known for its Hour of Power TV broadcast.

—Compiled by Bill Fentum

Call to Action urges church reform

BY HEATHER HAHN
United Methodist News Service

NASHVILLE, Tenn.—The United Methodist Church needs to institute widespread reforms—from consolidating general church agencies to holding bishops and clergy accountable for church growth—to revitalize the denomination, a churchwide advisory group says.

The Call to Action Steering Team's final report, says the status quo of a shrinking and aging U.S. church is "toxic" and unsustainable. The report will be presented and discussed Nov. 3-4 at the Council of Bishops' meeting in Panama City.

"We must reduce the perceived distance between the general Church (including the general agencies), the annual conferences, and local congregations," the report said. "We must refashion and strengthen our approaches in leadership development, deployment, and supervision. . . . In short, we must change our mindset so that our primary focus and commitment are on fostering and sustaining congregational vitality."

'The need for accountability by the church's leadership . . . for results in the life of the church is absolutely crucial.'

—Neil Alexander

Among the group's recommendations:

- Starting in January 2011, make congregational vitality the church's "true first priority" for at least a decade.
- Dramatically reform clergy leadership development, deployment, evaluation and accountability. This would include dismissing ineffective clergy and sanctioning under-performing bishops.
- Collect statistical information in consistent and uniform ways for the

denomination to measure attendance, growth and engagement. "We should passionately care about results," the group said.

- Reform the Council of Bishops, with the active bishops assuming responsibility for promoting congregational vitality and for establishing a new culture of accountability throughout the church.
- Consolidate general church agencies and align their work and resources with the priorities of the church and the decade-long commitment to build vital congregations. Also, the agencies should be reconstituted with smaller, competency-based boards.

Illinois Area Bishop Gregory V. Palmer, steering team co-chair, said he hopes his fellow bishops will receive the report as "the faithful, thoughtful and diligent work of other United Methodists who are yearning with hope for the church."

Based on survey

Some of the recommendations also may require the approval of General Conference, the church's top leg-

islative body.

In the wake of decades-long membership declines, the Council of Bishops and Connectional Table created the 16-member Call to Action Steering Team, which includes clergy and laity, to reorder the life of the church for greater effectiveness in the church's mission to "make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world."

The team based its recommendations on two studies it commissioned from independent researchers. One



UMNS PHOTO BY KATHY L. GILBERT

Tia Tucker, left, and Robin Pearce are among the many young people active at First Grace UMC, New Orleans. A new report urges that congregational vitality be a denominational priority.

was an "Operational Assessment of the Connectional Church" that found the church was undergoing a "creeping crisis of relevance" and rated general agencies below average in fulfilling the church's mission.

Another study, "The Vital Congregations Research Project," analyzed data from 32,228 United Methodist churches in North America and classified 4,961 congregations, or 15 percent, as "high-vital" local churches. The study found that four key drivers of congregational vitality in the United States are effective pastoral leadership, multiple small groups, diverse worship styles and a high percentage of spiritually engaged laity in leadership roles.

What is not acceptable, Call to Action members emphasized throughout their report, is the status quo.

"Leaders, beginning with the bishops and including lay and clergy across the Connection, must lead and immediately, repeatedly, and energetically make it plain that our current culture and practices are resulting in overall decline that is toxic and constricts our missional effectiveness," the report said.

"Business as usual is unsustainable. Instead, dramatically different new behaviors, not incremental changes, are required."

Local churches don't have to wait for action from the Council of Bishops or General Conference to get started.

10-year emphasis

Neil Alexander, co-chair of the steering team and president of the United Methodist Publishing House, said the proposed 10-year emphasis to congregational vitality is in keeping with the already-established goals of the denomination. His hope is that the 10-year emphasis will lead the

church in its strategic planning at all levels of administration to make vitality "job one."

A big part of that emphasis is holding church leaders accountable for church vitality. The report recommends the denomination create "prompt and humane ways" for under-performing clergy to exit or be declined entry into the professional ministry in the first place. The report also recommends sanctions for under-performing bishops.

"The need for accountability by the church's leadership—especially the bishops—for results in the life of the church is absolutely crucial for the challenges as we go forward," Mr. Alexander said.

The Call to Action team is still unsure which recommendations will require the passage of legislation at General Conference to implement, Mr. Alexander said.

The team recommends that the Council of Bishops establish an "Interim Operations Team" to determine what legislation is required. The team would also work with the Council of Bishops, Connectional Table and the general agencies to plan the denominational funding and budget that will be considered at the 2012 General Conference.

Ultimately, the message and ministry of the United Methodist Church is one worth saving, Mr. Alexander said.

"The gospel and our Wesleyan view of the way God's grace goes before us and beckons us to God is of such critical importance that it must not be ignored," he said. "The integration of personal and social holiness is a way of being in the world that can redeem a broken and hurting world. That is no less true today than when the circuit riders set out to spread scriptural holiness across the land."

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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

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UM CONNECTIONS

UMA names new president, CEO

The Rev. Stephen L. Vinson has been named president and CEO of the United Methodist Association (UMA), a nationwide association of more than 380 health and human service organizations and professional headquarters near Dayton, Ohio. Active in the UMA since 1992, Mr. Vinson has held senior management positions in United Methodist-related children's homes and retirement communities. He was previously the vice president for development at Methodist Senior Services in Tupelo, Miss., a network of 12 campuses providing a range of care for older adults. For information about UMA, visit umassociation.org.

Perkins prof presents baseball, culture paper

Mark W. Stamm, associate professor of Christian worship at Perkins School of Theology, SMU, presented an academic paper "Pray Ball? Reflections on the Serious Liturgical Challenge of Giving Thanks for Baseball" at the 22nd Cooperstown Symposium on Baseball and American Culture in June. Dr. Stamm, an elder in the North Texas Conference and a member of the Society for American Baseball Research, discussed a theology of play and playing in relation to baseball, and included a thanksgiving prayer that he composed for the occasion, "A Baseball Berakah." The paper has been submitted for publication in the biennial volume of the Symposium.

Lake Junaluska to host 'Caring for Creation'

Caring for Creation 2011 at Lake Junaluska Conference and Retreat Center in Lake Junaluska, N.C., will be March 31-April 3. The conference will feature nearly 40 speakers, including John Hill, director of economic and environmental justice from the General Board of Church & Society, and will address topics such as how to involve young people in creation care and how to advocate for environmental sustainability. To register, visit www.lakejunaluska.com/caring-for-creation.

■ **CONFERENCE** Continued from page 1B

half of those affected globally. In 2007 more than 2 million people died from HIV/AIDS. Nearly 30 years after the first cases of HIV garnered the world's attention, people are still contracting the disease, mainly due to the lack of preventive education, experts say. And still, people remain hesitant to publicly discuss the issue.

Less than 50 percent of young people between the ages of 15 and 24 have accurate knowledge about HIV/AIDS prevention and transmission, according to the UNAIDS 2008 Report on the Global AIDS Pandemic.

And although more United Methodist clergy and lay members are advocating for HIV/AIDS education, ministries and funding, the disease still carries a heavy stigma for some church members, said the Rev. Donald Messer, committee chairperson and executive director of the Center for the Church and Global AIDS.

In a workshop called "Why We Care: Our Faith and AIDS," Dr. Dube provided a questionnaire, asking participants whether the topic of HIV/AIDS is addressed in their churches through sermons, small groups, songs, prayers and outreach ministries. Overall, the tallies showed that HIV/AIDS was rarely included in the teaching, programming and ministry of churches.

When discussing the results of the self-analysis, one participant quoted the Rev. Olav Fykse Tveit, general secretary of the World Council of Churches, and asked, "Why should the Church be involved in HIV/AIDS? The question should be reversed. Why shouldn't the Church be involved in this issue?"

"The question we need to ask is where do we start," said Bishop William Muriuki Mwongo of the Methodist Church of Kenya. Dr. Dube's response was, "We start where we are."

"It won't be easy, it never is. Some



Sponsored by the UMC Global AIDS Fund Committee, the Lighten the Burden Conference aimed to lift up the struggle against HIV/AIDS.

days we'll feel as if even the church is against us," said United Methodist Bishop Minerva Carcaño of the Desert Southwest Conference.

"But Jesus' heart takes everyone in. All are welcomed into the covenant community of God's reign—the sick, the blind, the lepers, the immigrant, those in prison and those who have HIV/AIDS," she said. "No matter how the world sees them, Jesus always sees them as beloved and so should we."

Fighting stigma

Bryan Jackson was 11 months old when his father, a phlebotomist, injected him with a syringe of HIV-tainted blood with the intention of killing an unwanted child. Bryan was given 5 months to live with the disease, but he beat the odds. Now at 19, Mr. Jackson is speaking out on behalf of young people who are infected with AIDS, sharing his faith and changing the way people perceive those living with the disease.

"The stigma grows every day," he said. "When we ignore it, it only gets worse."

"For the longest time, HIV controlled my life," he said. People continually pinned him as just another statistic. He came from a low-income, single-mom household, was a victim of a hate crime and had HIV/AIDS. Always hearing the odds stacked against you can be depressing, Mr. Jackson said. "But then I asked myself, why not me? God chose me to serve this purpose."

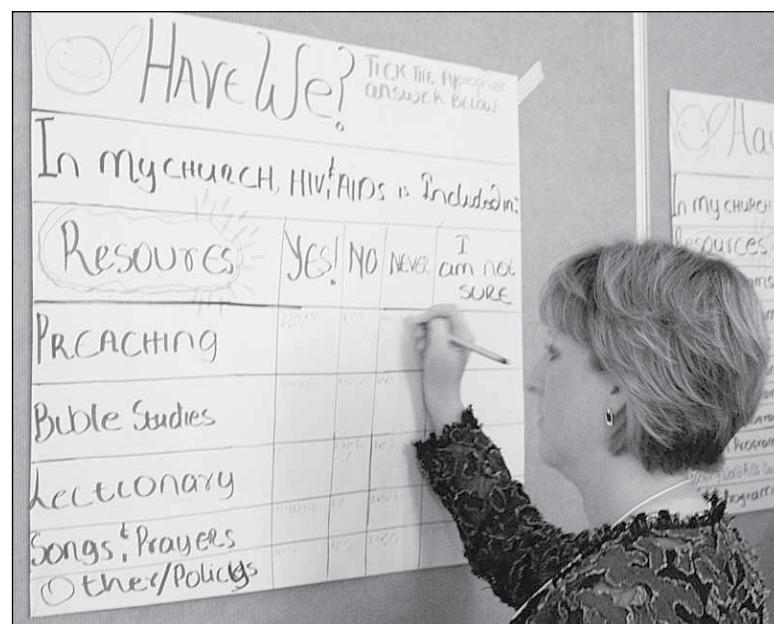
"Having HIV is a lot like being a Christian," he said. "We live in a dirty, perverted society. Are we going to be part of the problem or are we going to be part of the solution?"

Mr. Jackson has started a nonprofit organization called Hope is Vital, and continues to speak at schools and conferences across the nation while attending college. He has been a longtime volunteer at Camp Kindle, a weeklong camp based in Valencia, Calif., for children and young people affected by HIV and AIDS.

Mr. Jackson was among the young people who gathered at the conference to brainstorm ways to urge friends, families, schools, congregations and communities to eliminate the stigma of HIV/AIDS and talk about transmission, prevention and the reality of living with the disease.

There was also a seminary colloquium, which included 22 representatives from nine seminaries who discussed the need for a training curriculum in HIV/AIDS ministries. Retired United Methodist Bishop Albert "Fritz" Mutti and his wife, Etta Mae, led the session. The Muttis lost two sons to HIV/AIDS and are advocates for AIDS education.

Garlinda Burton, top executive of the United Methodist General Com-



UMR PHOTOS BY MALLORY McCALL

Lighten the Burden III participants gauge how well their churches include HIV/AIDS in sermons, prayers, songs, small groups, fundraisers and mission work.

mission on the Status and Role of Women, encouraged young people to step up in their congregations and ask for HIV/AIDS educational programs and service projects. "Sometimes us old folk won't move until we are asked—or sometimes pushed," she said.

"Silence sends a message, especially in the pews."

Sharing the passion

Ronald Silas, a lay member from Park Avenue St. John's United Methodist Church in East Orange, N.J., said the conference was his first international AIDS awareness event.

"There are scholars, theologians, bishops, doctors and preachers here," Mr. Silas said. "But I'm just a lay church member."

But with the support of his pastor, he voluntarily and single-handedly organizes health fairs and HIV/AIDS educational seminars for his congregation and community.

"I only have a 12th-grade educa-

tion," Mr. Silas said. "I'm retired from the United States Army, yet I'm here because I have the same passion for [HIV/AIDS] education and prevention as everyone else here. It's amazing."

During the conference, several recipients were honored with the inaugural United Methodist Global AIDS Leadership Awards for their global leadership and involvement in the fight against AIDS. Among those honored were the Muttis, Dr. Messer, Dr. Dube, the United Methodist Louisiana Conference and former President George W. and Laura Bush.

A new HIV/AIDS fundraising campaign, "20/20: Visioning an AIDS-Free World," was unveiled at the conference. The campaign encourages every United Methodist to give \$20 a year until the year 2020 to support global HIV/AIDS projects and to reduce the stigma of HIV/AIDS. For information, visit www.umglobalaidsfund.org.

mmccall@umr.org



UMNS PHOTO COURTESY OF DON MESSER

The Rev. Donald Messer (second from left), shown with his wife, Bonnie, and retired United Methodist Bishop "Fritz" Mutti and his wife, Etta Mae, were among the recipients of the inaugural United Methodist Global AIDS Leadership Awards.

Joining the church, she added, represents a level of deeper commitment, rather than simply a formalizing step. So it's no mistake that while weekly average attendance is 4,500 at Gingshamsburg, there are only 1,300 people on the membership rolls. (By contrast, membership numbers typically exceed average attendance at most United Methodist churches.)

"People will rise to the level of expectation," she said. "If you expect much, they will give much."

Gingshamsburg's approach explains how many "seeker-friendly" megachurches can still set high expectations, according to an August 2010 study by Marc von der Ruhr of St. Norbert College and Joseph P. Daniels of Marquette University. Initially, the study reports, megachurches expect little in regard to financial or time commitment of new attendees, but "once attendees perceive a good fit with the church, the megachurch increases its expectation of commitment."

Clear expectations

The Rev. David Walters, lead pastor of The Vine, a United Methodist congregation in Braselton, Ga., says his church "set the bar high" when starting as a church plant three years ago. Today, the church is thriving and weekly attendance averages around 460.

"I think part of it is our generational demographic," said Mr. Walters, 33. "People in my generation have a desire to be more involved and to participate at a higher level of commitment. And human experience teaches us that, if there's anything of value, it's going to require something of us."

The link between high-commitment and vitality, says Mr. Hotchkiss, is not necessarily a matter of formal requirements; clarity is more important. Prospective members respond to a clear mission and a challenge, and clear expectations convey the congregation's sense of significance and seriousness about its work.

"If the church thinks it's a matter of indifference as to whether you attend church or not, for example, people are apt to follow your lead," he said.

Mr. Hotchkiss is quick to add that "high demand" churches are often mistakenly associated with conservative theology and "low demand" with more liberal theology.

"There's an increasing number of liberal churches that are getting very clear about what their own church covenant is," he said. "For ex-



PHOTOS BY DAN EVANS

Members of City on A Hill church, a United Methodist congregation in Woodstock, Ga., are expected to volunteer regularly for outreach. This year at the church's Single Mom Gas Giveaway, members checked the oil and tire pressure, washed windows, added washer fluid, and offered beverages and a kind word. Some \$7,800 in gasoline and oil was given away as part of the Mother's Day event.



ample, they may not say that a literal tithe is a biblical command for everyone, but they make it an opportunity for some and recognize and honor it as such."

Typical commitments

At Snellville (Ga.) United Methodist Church, new members sign a covenant in which they agree to a host of activities: pray daily for the church, attend worship and participate in a small group regularly, tithe, serve others, welcome newcomers and "be positive and upbeat about my church and voice my concerns and suggestions to the staff and leaders." Those who want to serve as

church leaders must sign an even more demanding covenant, agreeing to attend meetings and training and to maintain confidentiality.

"People want a church with a strong mission and clear expectations," said the Rev. Richard Hunter, Snellville's senior pastor. "If you become inactive, we help you off the rolls. We feel that membership is a privilege and a statement of faith."

Pruning outdated and overstated membership rolls is a good place to start for churches that want to strengthen the level of commitment in their congregations, says Jim Griffith, founder of Griffith Coaching Network in Denver, Colo.

"When a church is in denial or not in good shape, they are typically clinging to their old membership rolls," he said. "Cleaning up membership rolls is the first place we start."

But Mr. Griffith, who has coached United Methodist churches in 51 annual conferences, doesn't equate basic expectations of worship attendance, service and tithing with "high commitment." Instead, he points to Methodism founder John Wesley's more direct model of accountability. When Wesley visited class meetings, he would ask questions about members' spiritual practices.

"It's not like we're making up new rules here," he says. "This is right out of John Wesley's



COURTESY PHOTOS

There's nothing "churchy" about the atmosphere at Grace Church in Fort Myers, Fla., but those who wish to join know there's a high expectation to commit to follow Jesus in their daily lives.

RIGHT: Visitors receive a friendly greeting at The Vine, a United Methodist congregation in Braselton, Ga., but those who wish to join must commit to regular attendance, outreach, small group participation and financial contributions. **BELOW:** Worship is casual and contemporary at The Vine, but expectations are high for those who commit to join the church, according to lead pastor, the Rev. David Walters.



COURTESY PHOTOS

A friendly greeting (above) and a coffee bar (below) make visitors feel welcome at The Vine. Volunteer greeters aren't hard to find, because members commit to serve regularly.

playbook.”

Asking for a regular commitment to give financially should be a basic expectation for church members, Mr. Griffith said.

“It’s very unsettling when you’re working with a church that’s trying to reach new people, and you have board members who aren’t committed to the church themselves, who aren’t giving a dime to the church,” he said.

Mr. Griffith also cautions against measuring commitment on the basis of worship attendance.

“Attendance is no longer the primary way to express commitment,” he said. Instead, he asks members, “Are you involved in a ministry? Are you in a small group? Are you contributing financially to the church?”

Susan Beaumont, a senior consultant with The Alban Institute, says that the key is whether members are participating more deeply, rather than just more often.

“It doesn’t accomplish much if people attend more church suppers or take more yoga classes at the church,” she said. “Congregations that focus just on participation as an end in itself tend to fail.”

Seeking transformation

A better way to think about high-commitment, Mr. Hotchkiss says, is in terms of “the kind of life transformation the congregation tries to produce.” He cites management guru Peter Drucker, who once said that the “product” of non-profit organizations is “changed human beings.” Get clear on that, Mr. Hotchkiss says, and the rest will follow.

As an example, he worked with a United Church of Christ congregation that put a strong

emphasis on outreach. “I told them, ‘You’re a factory, turning affluent suburbanites into citizens of greater Indianapolis,’” he recalled. “That became like a slogan for them.”

While that congregation didn’t have formal requirements, Mr. Hotchkiss said “you’d be uncomfortable there if you were able to serve and didn’t. It wasn’t a matter of institutional strictness, it was a clear vision of what the Christian life is all about.”

Grace Church in Fort Myers, Fla., with 2,700 in average weekly attendance and 1,700 members, doesn’t have the strict requirements of places like Ginghamburg. But lead pastor, the Rev. Jorge Acevedo, says he’d consider his church “relatively high commitment” because of its emphasis on following Jesus.

“I think that people are attracted to the way they see that Jesus took the servant’s towel, put it over his arm and served the world,” said Mr. Acevedo. “We don’t do it as well as we should or could, but we do try to order our lives after the life of Jesus, and I think that’s attractive to people.”

In churches where he’s worked, Mr. Hotchkiss has asked leaders, “How has belonging to this church changed your life?” In low-vitality churches, he said, respondents are often puzzled by the question. But in growing, vital churches, leaders typically have “intense stories”—about quitting jobs to do something more congruent with their Christian commitment, or a moving experience in working with the poor.

“When I ask, ‘What would you have done if someone had warned you about how belonging to this church would’ve changed your life?’ the answer inevitably is, ‘I would’ve run the other

way.’ They’re thinking of all the sacrifices that came from learning to care about things they hadn’t cared about before. It’s not about keeping the customer satisfied or meeting their needs.”

“Following Christ has inherently high expectations,” said Mr. Walters. “If you want to live, you’ve got to die.”

“People want to be part of something that will

actually make a difference,” agreed Mr. Bryant. “We have a saying in our church: It doesn’t matter if I know CPR. If I never practice, I’m not saving anybody’s life.”

“So we say, if you want your faith to make a difference, join us. We don’t ‘play’ at church.”

mjacobs@umr.org

Recapturing awe

BY BISHOP ROBERT SCHNASE
Special Contributor

As I was walking along the Katy Trail near my home, I looked up to notice a bald eagle perched near the top of a tree that overhangs the path. Majestic, regal, awesome. . . . Words can't capture the impression of seeing an eagle in the wild less than 60 feet away.

Bicyclists and runners and walkers were moving along the path, but none of them had noticed the bird. But the experience was so rare and wonderful that I couldn't help but want to share it.

So I signaled to a couple of bicyclists racing by. They slowed to a resting position, eyeing me with a mixture of suspicion and irritation. I pointed up at the eagle, and they immediately caught the magic of the moment. "Cool! Awesome!"

And then each spontaneously began to tell me their own eagle stories. "When I was a kid and I was canoeing in Minnesota with my dad, and we saw a nest. . . ." "I remember in college when we went on a biology field trip. . . ."

After a few minutes of sharing stories, they thanked me and moved on, but I stayed to watch. A few minutes later, a runner came by. I dared to interrupt the music playing through her earphones, and she, like the others, showed extreme caution when I tried to get her attention. I pointed to the eagle, and she melted into the moment. She began to talk about her mother's love of eagles and how they had driven into the mountains to see one when she was a teenager. She called a friend on her cell phone to tell her that she was looking at a live, wild bald eagle right there in front of her!

During the next 20 minutes, I interrupted eight more people. The pattern repeated itself: suspicion and irritation, unexpected awe and joy, immediate and spontaneous sharing of a powerful memory and expressions of gratitude for sharing the moment.

This is not a new experience for me in the world of birding. There are several places on the trails I regularly run and walk where I have identified the roosts of barred owls. They usually sit hidden deeply in thick brush and I don't give up their secret hiding places to passersby. But some evenings, one of the owls will be sitting in plain view, and I'll stop runners, walkers and even bicyclists to look. They are always amazed and delighted, and



Bishop Robert Schnase



PHOTO BY BISHOP ROBERT SCHNASE

Seeing a bald eagle in the wild adds joy and wonder to our lives, says Bishop Schnase.

then they tell me about the owl that lived near their grandmother's house, or that flew across the road near their home the week before or that they sometimes hear in the night.

There is a contagious and connecting quality to wonder. An unexpected encounter with awe interrupts the mundane and routine, breaks through suspicions and irritations, adds joy and depth, and draws us toward each other.

'There is a contagious and connecting quality to wonder.'

I think this partially explains the appeal of the early church, and also helps us understand the provocative and enchanting quality of congregations that offer worship or serving ministries that are alive, authentic, profound and connect people to God. We feel drawn in by the mystery of grace and the majesty of God, and we can't help but tell our own stories and share what we have experienced with others.

The second chapter of Acts describes the early church like this:

"Everyone around was in awe—all those wonders and signs done through the apostles! And all the believers lived in a wonderful harmony, holding everything in common. . . . People in general liked what they saw. Every day their number grew as God added those who were saved." (Acts 2:43-47 from *The Message*)

Awe, wonder, mystery, exuberance, joy, surprise, delight—these we see in Christ's life and experience in the love of God. May others see them in us and with us, through our witness in Christ's name.

Missouri Bishop Schnase blogs at fivepractices.org.

When worship style is our idol

BY DAVID GARVIN
Special Contributor

I admit it. I am guilty of worship snobbery. I am a selective worshipper. A worship elitist. A liturgical snob.

Give me a well-put-together service, a theologically sound and intellectually challenging sermon, and a choir second only to the heavenly chorus. I am a worshipper who dines on what fancies me the most, often leaving the remainder of the worship palate untouched.

Each week I examine the Duke Divinity School worship schedule to see who is preaching, what choir is singing and what worship tradition is being celebrated at each service.

My favorite professor is preaching on Tuesday, I notice. I will be sure to be there.

Oh, the contemporary praise and worship team is leading the Wednesday service. I'll plan to watch *Glee* on Tuesday night, and skip worship on Wednesday to catch up on reading.

Predictable services

It's an Anglican service on Thursday. I don't have the time to spare. But I've always wanted to hear the preacher. Perhaps I can eavesdrop when the preacher steps into the pulpit.



David Garvin

I fear that I am not alone. When I go into different churches the demographics and homogeneity of various worship services are predictable. Young people congregate with other young folks at "contemporary" praise-and-worship services. Those who have always worshipped in a traditional manner gather to worship "traditionally." Different styles of worship and worshippers rarely mix.

In the name of being "selective" or "efficient" we prioritize one worship style over another. We believe one preacher (the one we like) is more likely to speak God's Word than the less well-known preacher we're not willing to give a chance. We cling to old hymns and dismiss the new choruses because surely goodness comes with age.

Why do we do this?

Pleasing ourselves

Of course, we have our preferences for worship, but why do we prioritize? Idolize might be more accurate. It seems we lift up one style of worship above the One who is to be worshipped. We enter into churches, sanctuaries, chapels or other holy places seeking something that pleases us. We use worship as a means to satisfy our own desires.

When this happens, worship becomes a commodity no different than the millions of other products we consume throughout our lives. We shop for a worship service that is comfortable and accommodating to our preferences

like we hunt down a pair of blue jeans that fits just right. We profess allegiance to a worship style the same way we commit ourselves to a certain auto manufacturer. We say, "I am a contemporary worshipper" as confidently and trivially as we say, "I'm a Ford or Chevy person."

When our allegiance to a particular worship style overshadows our allegiance to the One worshipped we've missed the point. Worship becomes our idol; we bow down to the presentation of the mortal over the immortal. Our emotional and psychological needs—not our need to praise and glorify God—take center stage.

Jesus' counsel to Mary and Martha may help: "Only one thing is needed (Luke 10:38-42). That one thing, says the Psalmist, is "To dwell in the house of the Lord . . . to gaze upon the beauty of the Lord" (Psalm 27:4). We don't need worship to be many selfish and pleasing things; only one thing is needed.

Worship is not bowing down to our own preferences and losing ourselves in our own worshipful delights. Rather, true worship is getting lost in wonder, love and praise of the God who calls and invites us to enter God's holy and mysterious presence always, everywhere and in any manner.

The Rev. Garvin serves as pastor of Shiloh UMC in Liberty, N.C., and an M.Div student at Duke Divinity School. Adapted from his blog, Kentucky Fried Methodist, at <http://davidgarvin.net>.

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WJK FAITH in ACTION

Have we devalued membership?

BY DAN DICK
Special Contributor

We'll take anybody. We don't even require membership classes anymore. Nobody has the time, and most of the people who join our church are coming from other churches anyway.

We ask at the end of every service if there is anyone who wishes to join, they come forward, and we ask if they believe in God and in Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior. If they say "yes," they're in. Our numbers are way up because of it.



Dan Dick

The above paraphrase from a recent conversation I had with one pastor reflects the "low-cost/high-benefit" mentality of American consumer culture, but is it appropriate in the church? I say "no," but there are an awful lot who say "yes."

It isn't about rules and regulations and keeping people out. It is about making it as simple as possible for people to enter the family of God.

I don't disagree that we should be an open gate—but a gate still implies a boundary: something that distinguishes those who say "yes" from those who have no interest. There is a huge difference between making something simple, and making it meaningful.

I believe that many of our attempts to make Christianity simple have done little more than devalue the Christian life, resulting in an insipid, passive and unproductive faith.

Life of substance

The Christian life has substance. It makes demands. It requires action and practice. It must be learned and honed and perfected. It is a partnership agreement with God, the Holy Spirit and faith community. It isn't a hobby. There are very clear requirements and expectations.

A person seeking to embark on the lifelong journey of Christian formation needs to know what this means, and then the choice is whether or not the person really wants to pay the costs to reap the benefits.

It costs very little to believe in Jesus Christ as the Son of God—you don't even need a church for that. But to grow in the faith, become a Christian disciple, pursue transformation in the Spirit to lead and teach and serve—these require true church.

The person seeking doesn't get to make the "rules." This would be like hiring someone and telling them their job is to do whatever the heck they want to.

We make a muddled attempt at offering expectations in the United Methodist Church, but we have little accountability so it all falls flat. We ask newbies if they will "uphold the church by their prayers, presence, gifts, service and witness," but offer virtually no guidance as to what we are really asking. We make assumptions that new members know how to pray, that they have a disciplined prayer life and that they will now include the church in said prayer life.

When asked, "What does it mean to 'uphold the church by your presence?'" nine out of 10 United Methodists answer, "Attend worship services." Most United Methodists limit gifts to a financial contribution, service to "helping out at the church" and witness as "going to church."

The percentage of "new members"

'Being a Christian disciple comes with some demands. It is up to each individual to decide whether they want to meet those demands, but this is their choice.'

who become "inactive members" within the first six months of joining a United Methodist Church crept above the 50-percent line in 2006 and has kept going up. New members aren't even being held to the minimum standards. Zero accountability.

A person can "join" a church, never pray, never attend, never give, never serve, never share their faith and remain a member in good standing. What message does this send to the world about the value of membership vows in the United Methodist Church?

I agree that membership isn't the point. Membership has always been a means to an end rather than an end in itself. A membership process at its very best is an integration of a newcomer into the very DNA of the local congregation and the church universal. It widens the circle we label "us."

All this changed when the driving value of Methodism shifted from service to size. Once numbers ascended the throne, all bets were off. Getting bodies in the pews trumped getting new members into the body of Christ.

Diluted purpose

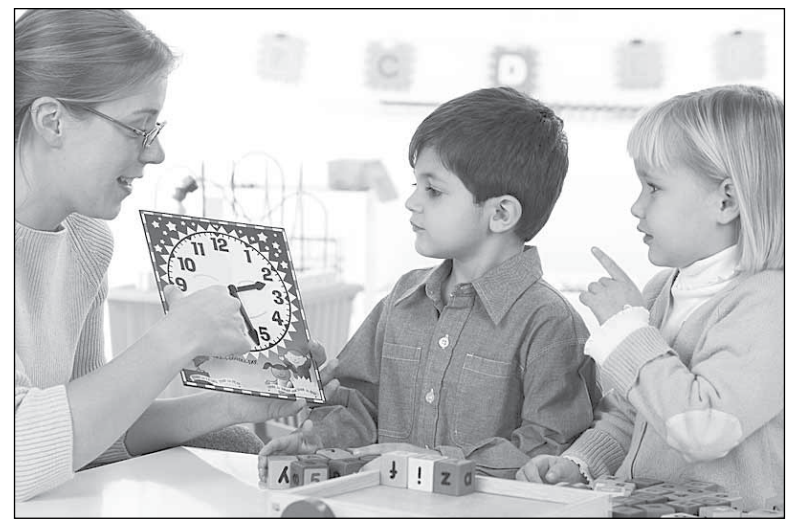
The influx of other faith communions also has an impact. The Evangelical Association, The Methodist Church and the Evangelical United Brethren were primarily mission societies that prized personal holiness and evangelism above all else. We existed for one purpose—to be a wit-

ness to Christ in the world.

As we have welcomed Baptists, Presbyterians, Lutherans, Roman Catholics, Episcopalians, Disciples of Christ and a host of other denominations, we have become more stew than salad—a blending of flavors that over time lose their distinctiveness and become something "other"—and I would say less than the sum of our parts.

A significant number of people enter the United Methodist Church dragging their plunder from Egypt—carrying all their history of the way their old church worked into their new church.

A lay leader in a United Methodist Church told me recently: "In my last church the priests did everything. I get so angry at our pastor every time he talks about 'the ministry of the



Recruiting church nursery volunteers should begin with an assumption of grace, not obligation, says Kim Mitchel.

Nursery lessons: Finding a better way to recruit your church volunteers

BY KIM MITCHEL
Special Contributor

Recently we have been focused on revitalizing the nursery at our church. We put in rigorous safety measures. We organized a committee to support the nursery's vision. We assigned a greater position to the front door of the nursery and tried like crazy to recruit people to help rock babies.

Every step was successful except for one—recruiting volunteers.

We tried everything. We asked. We begged. We set out sign-up lists. We made bulletin announcements. We used our new projection screens and the monthly newsletter.

Nothing worked.

Then I took a leadership class and learned about valuing the history of the church and using it as a bridge toward change. I also learned about beginning with a presumption of grace instead of judgment.

I took this to heart, and the next Sunday I asked the pastor if I could do an announcement for the congregation.

That day I wore overalls and a plaid shirt since I was to do a lesson with the children on the parable of the sower. What better way to talk about this parable than to dress the part of the farmer!

When I stood in front of the congregation, my clothing caught them off guard. I told them that thinking about the seeds in the lesson had me thinking about seeds in general.

I then said how proud I was to be serving in a congregation that 50 years ago planted seeds of faith in our children and had always placed children

first in the life of the congregation.

I reported to them that despite the recession, our church was still keeping up with the expanding needs of a growing children's ministry.

Then I rehearsed all the new things we had accomplished related to the nursery, knowing that they surely would want to know because of their long-standing love for and commitment to children. And I reminded them that all this happened because of the seeds many of them had planted so long ago.

I asked them a question. "For young families, what is the first entry point into the church?" They all said, "The nursery." Well, aren't we proud to have such a tradition of caring for our babies!

They were then invited to stop by and see what wonderful things were happening in the nursery. They could even hold a baby or two.

That afternoon the nursery was buzzing with people! They crowded in to get a glimpse of their new nursery that continued their longstanding love of children.

Instead of judging them for not volunteering, I assumed instead that they really cared about the history and the nursery. Funny thing. They did.

Recruiting volunteers still requires work, but the context has changed. Now there is awareness and pride where before was obligation. And that makes all the difference both for those who recruit and those who say "yes" to this opportunity for ministry.



Kim Mitchel

Ms. Mitchel is director of Christian education at Gaithersburg Presbyterian Church in Gaithersburg, Md. Reprinted by permission from *Leading Ideas*, the online newsletter of the Lewis Center for Church Leadership of Wesley Theological Seminary at churchleadership.com.

The Rev. Dick is director of connectional ministries for the Wisconsin Conference. Reprinted from his blog, *United Method Deviations*, doroteos2.wordpress.com.

Chilean Methodists, UMCOR sign agreement

BY LINDA BLOOM
United Methodist News Service

STAMFORD, Conn.—When a massive earthquake struck Chile on Feb. 27, Juan Salazar and his fellow Methodists were ready to respond.

Four months earlier, a group from the Methodist Church of Chile had received disaster preparedness training from the United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR).

That fledgling partnership was strengthened Oct. 11 with the signing of a memorandum of understanding between Chilean Methodists and UMCOR officials during the annual meeting of the United Methodist General Board of Global Ministries (GBGM), the relief organization's parent agency.

For the Rev. Cynthia Fierro Harvey, UMCOR's top executive, the agreement signifies "a wonderful example of a model of mission" for two denominations with a history of cooperation.

In October 2009, two agency staff members—Melissa Crutchfield and the Rev. Tom Hazelwood—conducted disaster preparedness workshops in Chile. At the same time, a new entity for the church, the Methodist Humanitarian Aid Team (EMAH), was created. So when the strongest earthquake in 25 years caused destruction

across Chile, "their skills and training were put into quick, practical action," Ms. Crutchfield said.

Chilean Methodist Bishop Mario Martínez—who signed the memorandum of understanding along with United Methodist Bishop Janice Huie, UMCOR's president—expressed thanks for the new opportunities for cooperation.

Missionary spirit

Bishop Martínez invoked the missionary spirit of William Taylor, a Methodist who first went to Chile in 1877. "His task was not only to evangelize and form congregations, but also to contribute to Chilean culture through education," he said.

Today, the Methodist Church of Chile has more than 8,000 members, with 66 pastors serving more than 100 congregations. The church owns 23 educational institutions with more than 10,000 students, runs a series of clinics that see more than 500 patients daily and provides social services.

The GBGM also works with the Chilean church on other mission and evangelism projects, said the Rev. Edgar Avitia, staff executive. A roundtable meeting with various partners, including British, European and other Latin American Methodist representatives, is planned in November in Coro-



PHOTO BY CASSANDRA ZAMPINI, GBGM

Bishops Mario Martínez (right) of the Methodist Church of Chile and Janice Huie, president of UMCOR, sign a cooperative agreement on disaster response.

nel, Chile.

In February, the 8.8 magnitude earthquake and accompanying tsunami, centered in south-central Chile, killed more than 500 people, destroyed infrastructure and affected hundreds of thousands of families.

In addition, 16 Methodist churches in the regions of Maule, Bio Bio and Metropolitan sustained damages, and a few already have been demolished

by municipal order. Four parsonages and 11 other church-related buildings were also damaged.

After the earthquake, the Methodists first had to determine their role in the emergency response. "We discovered that some things you can do and some things you just can't do," Mr. Salazar, who leads the church's social ministry and humanitarian response team, explained to UMCOR di-

rectors. "We were not going to be building bridges."

Instead, their efforts placed an immediate focus on earthquake survivors. "We needed to hug people, to console them and to pray with them," he said. "We hugged thousands of people."

Paths to relief

Then, they followed two paths to provide emergency relief services—one through a larger group, the Inter-Church Emergency Committee Chile 2010, and the other through a Methodist team for humanitarian aid.

The interchurch committee, in consultation with survivors, dealt with the immediate crisis—providing food, water, hygiene kits and blankets—and then tackled the emotional aftershocks through psychosocial assistance and conflict management. Current efforts include the repair of homes, promotion of small income-generating projects and a focus on community health.

How to help:

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