

IN THIS ISSUE

'Tornado tubs' meet
post-disaster need

5A

'Flash mission'
during Conference

8A

Empowerment
Center breaks
ground

9A

Pastoral
appointments for
2011-2012

10A

Conference approves Imagine Ministry proposals

Special session set for Oct. 29

BY AMY FORBUS
Editor

"Deep change" dominated discussion at the ninth session of the Arkansas Annual Conference, which gathered in Hot Springs from June 5-8, 2011.

The top news from the business sessions: Members of the Conference approved all four motions proposed by the Imagine Ministry team, which presented the results of its two-year discernment process that resulted in a plan for implementing deep change in United Methodist congregations of Arkansas.

As a result of the changes, the Conference tabled its 2012 budget until Oct. 29, when a special called session of the Annual Conference will gather again in Hot Springs to vote on financial decisions related to Imagine Ministry implementation.

The body also referred to the called session a motion to set district superintendents' salaries at no more than 120 percent of the average full-time elder's salary.

Members approved new vision and mission statements
[See CONFERENCE, page 5A]



Delegates elected to General and Jurisdictional Conferences Members prepare for the tasks ahead

BY AMY FORBUS
Editor



The Arkansas delegation to the 2012 General and Jurisdictional Conferences. Front row, from left: the Rev. John Miles II, the Rev. Mackey Yokem, Carole Teague, Karon Mann, Asa Whitaker, the Rev. Rodney Steele, Sarah Steele and the Rev. Rebekah Miles. Second row: Karen Millar, the Rev. Ronnie Miller-Yow, Deborah Bell, Brian Swain, the Rev. Roy Smith, the Rev. Susan Ledbetter, Clefthon Vaughan and the Rev. Aubrietta Jones. Third row: the Rev. Wes Hilliard, Sandy Smith, Brandon Bates, Natalie Clark, Jay Clark, the Rev. Kurt Boggan, Brenda Norwood and the Rev. C.E. McAdoo. Back row: the Rev. Michael Roberts, the Rev. Pam Estes, the Rev. David Bush, John Crawford, Todd Burris and the Rev. Andrew Thompson.

With proposals and voting on the Imagine Ministry process, which has the potential to change the course of ministry in Arkansas, the agenda for the 2011 Arkansas Annual Conference was packed.

But it also was an election year, making the schedule tighter still. Balloting to elect the lay and clergy delegations to the 2012 General and Jurisdictional Conferences filled any gaps in the agenda.

General and Jurisdictional Conferences occur every four years, and each Annual Conference sends a delegation to each of the quadrennial events. This quadrennium, Tampa, Fla., hosts General Conference from April 24 to May 4, 2012.

General Conference considers a wide variety of legislation that may result in changes to the denomination's *Book of Discipline* and *Book of Resolutions*—and, by extension, to local church practices.

One example of change that has come by action of this governing body: In 2008, General Conference approved a change in membership vows. Now, each person who joins a United Methodist congregation pledges to uphold it by their prayers, presence, gifts, service and witness. "Witness" was added by General Conference action just over three years ago.

Jurisdictional Conferences occur concurrently in the five U.S. Jurisdictions. Arkansas lies in the South Central

[See DELEGATES, page 6A]

Imagining more than inertia for the church

BY ANDREW C. THOMPSON
UMR Columnist

Roller coasters create a certain feeling of inevitability. As soon as the little car crests the first hill, you realize the only way to get to the end of the ride is to go through the dips, loops and twists that stand between you and the safety of the platform.

There is no engine, of course. Roller coasters are powered by gravity. Inertia takes over after the initial climb out of the gate. Then, weight and gravity make sure that the cars keep moving.

The church can seem a bit like a roller coaster at times, especially when we're in a season where the talk of reform or restructuring is prevalent.

Methodists have never believed that congregationalism is the best way for the church to live faithfully. We are a connectional people, led by our bishops and united through the connected polity of our annual conferences. Through that connectionalism, every single congregation is part of something larger in both ministry and mission. Ideally, our connectional identity preserves faithfulness in doctrine, discipline and common spirit.

But anything larger than a congregational polity can be frustrating. When a local congregational church needs to adapt to new circumstances, it only needs to deal with itself. When a whole denomination senses the need to adapt, though, the level of complexity is much greater.

The reason is inertia, just like the roller coaster. Structure and organization for ministry are determined at the macro level—in our case, at the General Conference. But the General Conference is not well-suited for that work. It meets for a few days, once every four years. And it simply can't attend to the myriad local differences within the church.

So inertia drives the church forward, through dips and loops it can't avoid. But does it have to be



Inertia runs a roller coaster, but it shouldn't run the church, says Andrew Thompson, who sees Imagine Ministry as an opportunity to break away from structures that impede ministry.

PHOTO BY T.S. HEISELE

that way?

I witnessed another possibility a few days ago while attending the Arkansas Annual Conference session in Hot Springs, Ark. And I came away convinced that the kind of reform the church needs is best handled at the level not of the General Conference but of the annual conference.

The Arkansas Conference passed a raft of legislation called "Imagine Ministry" during its session. The result of a two-year study process initiated by Bishop Charles Crutchfield, it recommended dramatic changes to both the focus and the organization of the annual conference.

Imagine Ministry presents a more specifically Wesleyan focus for ministry at the local level, but it also backs it up with concrete structural changes: a reduction in the number of district superintendents and a redefinition of their role, the encouragement of collaboration among congregations at local levels and the creation of structures that encourage the faith formation of clergy and laity.

The net effect will be a reduction of top-heavy administration and a reorientation of ministry at local levels. In that sense, the Arkansas Conference has advanced some of the ideas of the Call to Action report on its own (and more quickly than could ever be done at the general church level).

With a roller coaster, inertia is what allows the ride to happen at all. It's what provides the thrill of the

experience. But all roller coasters are made to end where they began. They're fun because you know the coaster is going to deliver you back to the solid ground of the platform.

The inertia of the church doesn't have that same closed-loop construction. Our inertia may well carry us off a cliff rather than back to solid ground. God's purposes will be worked out over time in the church catholic, but that doesn't mean we can't make an irredeemable mess out of Methodism with poor choices.

That's exactly why the Arkansas Conference's actions are significant. They wrestle control of the church's direction away from the impersonal forces of inertia, with the idea that the church's structure should facilitate (rather than impede) the work of shepherding our flocks, equipping the saints for ministry, and making disciples of Jesus Christ.

Will these reforming moves be successful? Time will tell. But clearly the United Methodist Church in Arkansas has a much better shot at a much brighter future because of them.

It is nothing less than the imagination of a new form of ministry. And the result could be exciting indeed.

The Rev. Thompson, an elder in the Arkansas Conference, maintains a blog at genxrising.com. He is a regular columnist for the national edition of the United Methodist Reporter (umportal.org), where this commentary first appeared. Reproduced with permission.



EDITOR'S CORNER

BY AMY FORBUS

The future of the past

"The past is never dead. It's not even past."

—Gavin Stevens, *Requiem for a Nun* by William Faulkner

As we imagine what the future of the Arkansas Conference will look like, I've found myself thinking more about the past, and how it has shaped how we think and what we do today.

Whether we have held onto a tradition or released it to history, that tradition played a role in forming our current identity.

Do you recite a creed in worship? If so, you're part of a long line of Christians who declare common beliefs each time they gather.

Attend worship every week, but don't know what a creed is? You're not alone. But learning about the Apostles' Creed, the Nicene Creed and others could help you explore your own perspective of the faith.

Do you sing guided by projected words on a screen, or use a hymnal? Those aren't the only options; perhaps you repeat after a song leader until everyone is on board with a new tune and words. Or do you close your eyes and listen, enveloped in the original form of "surround sound"?

When I served on a local church staff, part of my job dealt with overseeing worship bulletin content. One week, as I attempted to make room for something else on the page, I asked the pastor why we had to print the Lord's Prayer every week.

"Because not everyone knows it by heart," he answered.

There I was, in my mid-twenties, and it had never occurred to me that

someone might enter our sanctuary not knowing the Lord's Prayer.

Or not knowing the name of the room was "the sanctuary." Traditions that had molded my faith were completely foreign to some folks.

In a past installment of his column, Bishop Crutchfield has mentioned Phyllis Tickle's book *The Great Emergence*. The author posits that every half-millennium or so, the Church has had what amounts to a giant rummage sale. We look at what we have, conclude it's just too much, then decide what to toss and what to keep. (The last big sale became known as the Protestant Reformation.)

Hear that noise? It's the 500-year alarm bell.

The Imagine Ministry process may well be the Arkansas Conference's response to that alarm. Annual Conference approved the groundwork, and Bishop Crutchfield is appointing a transition team and task forces to help us forge ahead.

As we add to the rummage sale pile, some will think, "Finally! I couldn't stand having the old way in my way any longer!" Others will express concern over throwing the proverbial baby out with the bath water. And I suspect that we all may find ourselves expressing either point of view, depending upon the tradition in question.

Even if we choose to let go of it, our church's past remains here in some form, shaping our future.

Thanks be to God.

To contact me, send an e-mail to aforbus@arumc.org.



Volume 158 • No. 09 July 1, 2011
Martha S. Taylor • Director of Communications
Amy Forbus • Editor
Patrick W. Shownes • Communications Coordinator
www.arumc.org

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

Send correspondence & subscription updates to:
Arkansas United Methodist, 800 Daisy Bates Drive,
Little Rock, AR 72202; or e-mail to
Patrick.Shownes@pshownes@arumc.org

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

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



Arkansas Conference Communications
800 Daisy Bates Drive
Little Rock, AR 72202-3770
www.arumc.org 501-324-8000

Subscriptions
- \$15.00, 1 Year
- \$25.00, 2 Years
- Free, Online
For more information, visit
www.arumc.org/aum or call 501-324-8006.

Advertising is welcomed. For a rate sheet or more information, contact Martha Taylor at 501-324-8005 or mtaylor@arumc.org. While all advertising is reviewed before acceptance, it should not be considered endorsed by this newspaper or the Church.

Issue Date	Submission Deadline
Aug. 5	July 18
Sept. 2	Aug. 18
Oct. 7	Sept. 21



AN OCCASIONAL WORD from the Bishop

BY CHARLES CRUTCHFIELD

Dear Friends:

Late last week I toured Vilonia, Clarksville, Ozark and Etna. These communities and their surrounding areas were hard hit by the tornados earlier this year. I found volunteers, county officials, youth groups from out of state, VIM teams from our Conference and our churches responding to the devastation and destruction.

People were helping people without regard to race, church affiliation (or no affiliation), or political viewpoint. As we know, a tornado or a flood does not distinguish among financial status, social standing, ethnic background,

educational level or the like. A destructive storm simply destroys. A people of faith rebuild houses *and* community. I was so proud of the response of local United Methodists.

The small rural community of Etna was pretty much destroyed. The area looked like a war zone. The houses and barns were distributed across the landscape—piece by piece.

I really was not prepared for what I saw, primarily because the visual images have pretty much disappeared from our media, even though the destruction was just as final and complete as anything in Joplin or Tuscaloosa. When you measure the devastation one life or family at a time, Etna compares—

Etna compares.

I shall not forget an American flag flying beside a foundation slab. The house was gone. I will not forget a child's "Raggedy Ann" doll smiling up, besmirched with mud, from the bar ditch. I will not forget the friendly wave of some teenagers working to clean an area for a tent next to a destroyed home.

I shall not forget our disaster relief coordinator making a list of needs from "Gatorade" to tarps, to cleaning supplies. I shall not forget the church driveway where churches that too often argue obscure points of theology came together to respond to the need of all God's children.

We have a responsibility for our

neighbors in Etna, just as we do for Joplin and elsewhere. Some of our efforts at disaster response gain traction because of the size of the tragedy (read Haiti). Some of our response efforts slip through our fingers because the story disappears—too small to be of interest.

Therein lies a tragedy almost as great as the storm.

There will be more "Etnas" in the days ahead. There will be more "Haitis" as well. And there is no place in the Christian faith for "compassion fatigue." The needs of the world are never ending, always demanding more of us than we think we can give.

The needs are still great. You can

still respond. Arkansas Conference disaster relief funds; UMCOR; *One Great Hour of Sharing*; Haiti relief; Imagine No Malaria; Congo water wells; Arkansas Rice Depot.

You can help. Do it now. Please.

Faithfully,

Charles Crutchfield



Editor's note:

To give to any or all of the causes Bishop Crutchfield mentions above, visit www.arumc.org/donate.

Excerpts from Bishop Crutchfield's June 6 episcopal address

It was thought to be impossible to climb. When asked why he was trying to climb Mt. Everest, the great British climber, Sir George Leigh-Mallory said, "Because it's there."

This was really his gracious way of saying, "Dummy, if you have to ask, you will never understand the answer." Dressed in wool Norfolk jackets, felt hats, hobnailed boots, and with no oxygen—decidedly unsporting, old chap—Mallory and his companion Sandy Irving started toward the summit of Everest on June 8, 1924, almost 93 years ago to the day.

Another team member far below, watching their progress through a telescope, saw them climbing upward about 800 yards below the summit. As he watched, the clouds and mists swirled in, a snow squall hit the summit of Everest and visual contact was lost. Later, as it became apparent the two climbers had been lost on the mountain, the one who had been watching as they disappeared into the swirling snow pronounced a fitting epitaph: "When last seen, they were still climbing."

A continuing struggle

This "mountaineering moment" reminds me of St. Paul, writing these words of undiminished joy and confidence from a prison cell:

"Not that I have already obtained this or have already reached the goal; but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own. Beloved, I do not consider that I have made it my own; but this one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the heavenly call of God in Christ Jesus. Let those of us then who are mature be of the same mind; and if you think differently about anything, this too God will reveal to you. Only let us hold fast to what we have attained." [Philippians 3:12-16]

St. Paul reminds us the Christian life is one of continuing struggle upward, a process that requires "straining forward," toward a "prize" that "lies ahead." St. Paul is quite clear that he has not yet achieved all there is to be attained. It lies before him. Yet he is confident. Sounds a bit like Mr. Wesley speaking of "going on" to perfection.

When last seen, the saints of our faith were still climbing. Mother Teresa in a Calcutta slum, Dietrich Bonhoeffer in a Nazi prison, Moses in the Sinai wilderness, Martin Luther King Jr. preaching about going to the mountain top, Joshua on the

borders of the Promised Land. They all knew those called by God must step beyond the past with all its comfort and the present with all its tangling excuses to embrace the future. In the name of God, they were the apostles of risk. They knew the future was not about them. It was, and always is, about God's call and God's Kingdom.

This annual conference session will be a watershed moment for us. We know that we currently live in an unsustainable environment. We cannot go on like we have been living as a church. Not just structurally or financially, but, even more important, spiritually.

Focus on mission

The mission is the focus—making disciples of Jesus Christ equipped to transform the world. The mission is not about how comfortable we are, it is about how faithful and fruitful we are. The mission is about rooting all we do in our understanding of Scripture and our grace-filled Wesleyan emphasis on personal and social holiness. It is about local congregations identifying the local and world-wide mission fields which God, not tradition, not the past, not the latest social trend, is calling that congregation and its pastoral leadership to address.

The mission is about taking a courageous step beyond the walls of our church to proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The mission calls the annual conference and local churches and individuals to be equipped and held accountable for making disciples and transforming the world in the name of Jesus Christ.

Our shared ministry in the United Methodist Church is about the Kingdom of God. None of this is easy. Deep change is never easy. But, the change we face and embrace will be transforming.

The Imagine Ministry proposals are pointing in the direction of a profound spiritual shift in the life of our conference. When we began this process almost two years ago, we began with an apostolate of prayer, a time of seeking God and listening to God. Along the way, a Bible study based on Acts, 2, 6, 10 and 15 was made available as an opportunity of focusing on a biblical way of doing church in a different manner. I trust all of you have had the opportunity to use this wonderful spiritual resource. Earlier this conference year you were invited into a time of fasting and prayer as an act of preparation for this annual conference. I know some of you have taken that invitation

seriously. And now as we come to the time of Holy Conferencing, it is time to again prayerfully seek the presence and guidance of God.

Prayer

My prayer is that when this moment is recalled, it will be said of us "When last seen, they were still climbing." We stand in need of prayer and of the presence and guidance of the Holy Spirit. This is a critical time for us spiritually. To this end and in preparation for all the decisions that must be made by our conference in the next three days, I invite you now to enter a season of directed prayer.

Bishop Crutchfield closed his address by leading prayer:

- For those who have suffered in the natural disasters, tornados, flooding, tsunamis, and for those who are responders;
- For the ministry of the church in the midst of disaster;
- For extravagant generosity in attitude and action;
- For the leaders of our nation and world to find avenues to peace, freedom and justice for all people;
- For chaplains in the military, in hospitals and homes and prisons and elsewhere who bring the light of the love of Jesus into places of despair and hopelessness;
- For the strength to rise above petty attitudes and personal agendas;
- For wisdom and discernment as we elect delegates to General and Jurisdictional Conference;
- For a hopeful spirit and a contrite heart;
- For a life of courageous faith and deep commitment that does not fear the journey of discipleship, or the future to which God is calling us.

Our Gracious God, we pray that the Holy Spirit might be evident in all we do or say at our annual conference and in the life of our churches. We pray that our lives may so radiate the warmth and passion of your love for us that we will have the confidence and courage to be agents of transformation in our homes, our churches and our communities. Give to us serenity of heart and mind. Endow us with confidence and hope. Enable us to say "yes" to the guidance and direction of your Holy Spirit.

By the power of that same Spirit, prepare us for this day and every tomorrow. We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Sculptor's work raises thousands to provide clean water in Congo



Artist and United Methodist layperson Winston Taylor of Russellville, Ark., donated his time and resources to create "Woman at the Well," a bas-relief clay sculpture measuring four feet in diameter, during the 2011 Annual Conference session.

As Taylor sculpted, Conference attendees bid on the sculpture in a silent auction, the proceeds of which benefitted the Congo Wells Project. The winning bid of \$3,000 came from Nadine and Bob Miller, who purchased the sculpture for First UMC Fort Smith.

AUM PHOTO BY AMY FORBUS

Trusting God leads us to love

BY REGINA DETTRA
Special Contributor

My daughter and I volunteer at our local animal shelter. We have witnessed the results of abuse, neglect and abandonment. At times, the cruelty and irresponsibility of humans leaves me to question the senselessness of it all.

Regardless of the reason, those animals can find relief and care in the shelter. Ample food and protection from the elements give security. Positive human interaction brings joy and contentment. They realize that life will get better, especially when a family arrives interested in a new pet. Eventually, a home is found and a family made complete.

One Saturday, my daughter tended the kennels of the new arrivals. She replaced the soiled newspaper, replenished the food and water and then shared a little love. Each animal welcomed her, except one. There stood

Ginger, a Cavalier King Charles Spaniel, crouched down as if to say, "Please don't hurt me."

When my daughter opened the crate, Ginger scooted out of reach and shook with fear. Sweetly and softly, she tried to comfort Ginger. She sat by the crate for more than an hour and reassured Ginger that everything was okay. It wasn't long before I was recruited to help.

Finally, we convinced Ginger to come to the door. She emerged with caution, wanting to trust us. Yet she



Regina Dettra

feared what we might do to her.

We took Ginger home with us that afternoon. She needed positive human interaction. People rarely adopt timid animals. They prefer happy, tail wagging dogs. We intended to help Ginger overcome her fear and be that happy doggie.

Sadly, though, the extent of her abuse caused her to be afraid of everything. The slightest hand movement made her cower. With any noise, she shook. If we gently scolded her, she winced. She never made eye contact nor enjoyed our company those first few days.

Showing patience and love became our priority. With gentle praises and reassurances, little by little we gained Ginger's trust. Within a week, she shyly sat next to us. By then, she had captured our hearts and completed our family. We adopted Ginger.

I often wonder about the abuse she endured. It puzzles me to think someone could harm her. Senseless pain and suffering prevails in this broken world of ours. People every day face cruelty from which we are not immune. We experience abuse, neglect and abandonment just like the animals in the shelter.

At times, life makes us cower, shake and distrust others. We can be instilled with fear, a sense of powerlessness and uneasiness. Life-changing events lay the foundation of distress and doubt. For some of us, poor choices label us as outcasts, diseased and wayward.

Because society often points the condemning finger, we find ourselves tossed away and disregarded. In response, we may try to fade into the background and grow suspicious, just like Ginger.

At times, fear keeps us just wanting to trust God. We have heard testimonies of the great things God can do but we are unsure if the same is true for us. Isaiah 41:13 says, "For I am the Lord your God, who takes hold of your right hand and says to you, 'Do not fear; I will help you'" (NIV). God will bring loving Christian people into our lives to share our burden.

Like Ginger, the more we trust, the more we find love—God's perfect love. Little by little, we will stand strong out from under the inadequacies as God's power strengthens our faith. We can find mending for the abuse, neglect and abandonment through God's grace.

In turn, we become a witness to God's life-changing love. We notice a friend in need and extend a helping hand. We advocate healing with our personal stories of triumphs and listen to the painful testimonies of others.

With God, we can reach out to a brother or sister—perhaps through phone calls, a card or a comforting hug. We draw near to those in our Christian community and beyond with prayer. We feed the hungry and shelter the homeless. We follow Jesus' example that no one deserves to be disregarded. Beckoning them to emerge and to trust God becomes our calling.

As we have watched Ginger improve, she has helped to guide Fred, another abused spaniel we have adopted, into a life of freedom from his past. In her own way, Ginger has answered that calling, too.

Dettra is a member of Sardis UMC and a motivational speaker. To read her blog, visit reginadettra.com.

VOLUNTEERS IN MISSION

This Volunteers in Mission listing for the Arkansas Conference also includes mission opportunities offered by local churches and districts. Often there is room for additional volunteers to join a team. For more information on any such projects, contact the individuals listed or Don Weeks, Arkansas Area VIM coordinator, 501-868-9193 or 681-2909; dweeks@arumc.org.

Disaster response update

To learn how your church can help those affected by this spring's storms and flooding, watch for updates at arumc.org, or contact Conference disaster response coordinators Byron and Janice Mann at rainmaker@arkansas.net to add your team to the volunteer list.

'This Olde Church'

This Olde Church pairs work crews and Arkansas Conference churches needing assistance with

repairs and maintenance to their facilities. Visit arumc.org/vim for a listing of available projects, or to submit an application for help.

Campus ministry at UALR needs maintenance work

The Wesley Foundation at UALR needs help with general maintenance, such as clean-up and painting. Contact the Rev. Maxine Allen at mallen@arumc.org, 501-663-1153 (office) or 501-539-0280 (cell).

Teams still needed for Cincinnati, Ark. tornado recovery

People in the Cincinnati, Ark., area still need skilled and unskilled labor for recovery from the December tornado. To help, contact Kristin Marlatt at 479-422-4157.

Ramp construction team needed

Mission UMC Ft. Smith has a building in need of a wheelchair ramp. If your VIM team is interested in this task, contact Don Weeks at the phone or email address listed above.



Paul's Fourth Missionary Journey

Follow the Journeys of Paul with Rev. Siegfried Johnson, Senior Pastor of St. James United Methodist Church, Little Rock, on a Mediterranean Cruise visiting sites in Italy, Greece, and Turkey. We depart on May 4, 2012 to

Rome and board Celebrity's newest ship, The Silhouette, following an itinerary including Naples, Corinth, Athens, Ephesus, Rhodes, Santorini, Crete, Venice, and more. For more information and brochure contact Rev. Johnson at sieg@stjames-umc.org.

New ‘tornado tubs’ meet post-disaster need

BY AMY FORBUS
Editor

A cleaning bucket from the United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR) can help a flood victim stave off mold damage to a house that has been invaded by water.

But a cleaning bucket doesn’t provide as much help if a person has nothing left to clean.

As spring tornadoes hit Arkansas and Missouri, Denni Palmer, disaster response coordinator for the Northwest District, began to notice that people needed supplies that would help them organize their scattered belongings. Some of the items that would give them the ability to separate salvaged keepsakes from debris didn’t appear in cleaning buckets.

So Palmer spent some time on the idea and developed a new disaster response kit: the “tornado tub.” And they’re making a difference in helping tornado

victims sort through belongings and begin the recovery process.

Tornado tubs include plastic bags of various sizes for belongings that need sorting, along with heavy-duty trash bags to help get the trash out of the way; duct tape and a permanent marker for labeling items; and supplies similar to those found in cleaning buckets, such as rubber gloves and laundry detergent.

The cost for assembling a tornado tub is approximately \$55, about the same as for assembling a cleaning bucket. The health kit included in the tub raises the price by a few more dollars.

For now, it’s an Arkansas-based project, but Larry Gentry, then-Conference disaster response coordinator, on May 31 forwarded the idea to UMCOR for consideration. UMCOR has a review process for proposed new kits.

In the meantime, requests for tornado tubs have begun to come in from hard-hit areas of Arkansas.

“There were some delivered to Denning and Etna, and they asked

for more,” said Janice Mann, who with her husband, Byron, now serves as co-coordinator of Conference disaster response.

Contents of a tornado tub:

- 2 18-gallon tubs with lids (stack one inside the other)
- 1 5-8 oz. can or bottle of insect repellent (be cautious of the name of the scent - see note below)
- 1 8-12 oz. can or bottle of spray air freshener
- 1 pair of work gloves
- 1 pair of rubber gloves
- 1 package of zippered plastic gallon bags (20-count)
- 1 package of zippered plastic quart bags (30-count) (Both sizes will help sort through smaller items that need to be kept together such as jewelry, paperwork, etc.)
- 1 permanent marking pen
- 1 roll of colored duct tape (can help label and identify one household’s items)
- 5 dust masks
- 22 heavy duty trash bags (more



Northwest District disaster response coordinator Denni Palmer devised the “tornado tub” as an early response kit following this spring’s storms in Arkansas and Missouri.

PHOTO BY KAYLEA HUTSON

for trash removal)

20 kitchen trash bags for larger, personal items that need containment. (Since these bags are white, it can help survivors also have an idea what is in the bag.)

1 40-50 oz. laundry detergent (Be cautious of the names of the scent. A name like “after the rain,” which normally sounds peaceful, in this context may be upsetting to some.)

1 UMCOR health kit

Place all items inside the inner tub and tear off a 2-3 ft. section of duct tape; place the rest of the roll in the tub. Put both lids on and snap them down. Put the section of duct tape on the tubs to hold everything together.

Bring tubs to the Arkansas Rice Depot or where directed by disaster response personnel.

Kaylea Hutson contributed to this report.

Conference approves Imagine Ministry proposals (continued from page 1A)

for the Conference, as well as four new “core measures” for revitalizing the connection: rooting actions in Scripture and personal and social holiness; establishing the mission field as the primary place for attention and resources; equipping laity and clergy for shared outcomes of transformation with excellence; and organizing ministry around the unique geographic, cultural, demographic and ethnic contexts in the identified mission fields.

Other motions presented by the Imagine Ministry team and approved by the Arkansas Conference included reducing the number of districts from nine to five, effective at Annual Conference 2012; simplifying the organizational structure of the Conference; and appointing a team to arrange for transitioning to the new structure.

Floor discussion

Among those speaking in favor of the changes was the Rev. Rodney Steele, who stated that he had “agonized over Imagine Ministry” as he decided how to vote. Ultimately, though, he concluded that he likes “the opportunity for collegial spirit” that the new roles of circuit elder and congregational coach will provide in the new, larger districts.

“Yes, I’m willing to try,” he said, “because it’s not the only step, it’s the next step.”

While all four motions passed easily, the votes were not unanimous. But not everyone who voted against the changes did so out of the desire that everything stay the same. For example, the Rev. Andrea Allen of Lakewood UMC North Little Rock expressed her view that Conference members were being presented with a false dichotomy of deep change versus slow death.

“There are those who believe there is need for deep change, but who also think that Imagine Ministry is not the way,” she said.

Lay member Linda Johnson of Corning shared on the Conference floor her reservations about reducing the number of

district superintendents. She emphasized the importance of district superintendents to small churches, but also shared her willingness to accept the results of the voting.

“I’m a good Methodist, and if it’s voted in, you better believe I’ll work as hard as I can [to implement the changes]” she said.

Transition

Following the approval of all four Imagine Ministry motions, IM team convener the Rev. Mackey Yokem thanked the Conference for the many months of conversation surrounding Imagine Ministry. “It does not need to end,” he added.

And conversation on the Facebook group for Imagine Ministry has stayed active since Conference adjourned. New discussions on each of the core measures, as well as questions about a variety of topics ranging from procedures for election of General Conference delegates to suggestions for training sessions before next year’s Annual Conference.

At press time, Bishop Charles Crutchfield was working to appoint a transition team to guide the Conference through this season of change. He also will create other task forces to address specific areas of ministry. “You’ve helped to complicate my life this summer, but I’m glad for that complication,” he said following the votes.

“It’s going to be a tremendous transition, and there are going to be some aches and pains,” he added. “But there’s nothing this Conference cannot do.”

Other actions

Eleven persons with an average age of 42.7 were ordained at the evening worship service on June 7. Cynthia Shaw Henry and Dawn Marie Spragg were ordained as deacons, and Gail Cole Baldwin, Candace Barron, Danyelle Ella-Marie Ditmer, Kirk Doering, David Duane Hoffman, Lynn Cross Kilbourne, Nathan Kilbourne, Brittany Richardson Watson and Vida Williams were

ordained as elders.

At the same service, six persons were commissioned as provisional members of the Annual Conference: Michael Blanchard, Natasha Murray-Norman, Lee Myane, Michael Smith, Martha Taylor and Garry Teeter. Two clergy from other denominations, Mark Donald and James Harris, were welcomed as associate members.

Balloting for the clergy and lay members of Arkansas Conference delegations to the 2012 General and Jurisdictional Conferences took place during the business sessions. For details on the delegation, see the related story on the cover of this section.

The Council on Finance and Administration proposed a change in the apportionment formula, which would include in the calculations each congregation’s average worship attendance. The body amended the proposal to keep the current apportionment formula for one more year, giving CFA the opportunity to take into account the new Imagine Ministry “core measures,” revisit the formula and make a new proposal to the 2012 Annual Conference.

None of the three resolutions proposing petitions to General Conference received approval. Two proposed petitions dealt with deleting from the *Book of Discipline* statements related to homosexuality, and a third proposed that the denomination hold General Conference only in states or municipalities that do not approve of the death penalty.

A resolution entitled “Care and Protection of God’s Creation Near Gas Extraction Sites” passed by a margin of 339-269. The resolution urges Congress to repeal the 2005 federal law that exempted the process of hydraulic fracturing, commonly called “fracking,” from accountability to the Clean Water Act. As a result of the resolution’s passage, the Conference secretary will send a letter to legislators to express the will of the Conference on this matter.

Delegates elected to General and Jurisdictional Conferences (continued from page 1A)

Jurisdiction, and Oklahoma City, Okla., will host the next South Central Jurisdictional Conference July 18-21, 2012.

The chief responsibility of Jurisdictional Conference is to elect new bishops to succeed those retiring. Arkansas' Bishop Charles Crutchfield will be among those retiring in 2012.

Election results

The Arkansas Conference elected the following lay and clergy delegates, listed in order of election in their respective categories:

Lay delegates elected to General Conference are Asa Whitaker of Batesville, Ark. (head of delegation); Sarah Steele of Mountain Home, Ark.; Karon Mann of Little Rock, Ark.; Cleifton Vaughan of Little Rock, Ark.; Carole Teague of Conway, Ark.; and Karen Millar of Searcy, Ark.

Clergy delegates elected to General Conference are Rodney Steele of Mountain Home, Ark.; Rebekah Miles of Fort Worth, Texas; Ronnie Miller-Yow of Little Rock, Ark.; Mackey Yokem of Fayetteville, Ark.; Susan Ledbetter of Bentonville, Ark.; and John Miles II of Jonesboro, Ark.

Lay delegates elected to the South Central Jurisdictional Conference are Deborah Bell of Little Rock, Ark.; Todd Burris of Conway, Ark.; Jay Clark of Little Rock, Ark.; Sandy Smith of Russellville, Ark.; Brian Swain of Fayetteville, Ark.; and John Crawford of Little Rock, Ark.

Clergy delegates elected to Jurisdictional Conference are C.E. McAdoo of Texarkana, Ark.; Michael Roberts of North Little Rock, Ark.; Roy Smith of Russellville, Ark.; Aubrietta Jones of Cabot, Ark.; Kurt Boggan of Jonesboro, Ark.; and Wes Hilliard of Van Buren, Ark.

Reserve lay delegates to Jurisdictional Conference are Brenda Norwood of Little Rock, Ark.; Brandon Bates of North Little Rock, Ark.; and Natalie Clark of Conway, Ark. Reserve clergy delegates are Andrew Thompson of Memphis, Tenn.; David Bush of Stuttgart, Ark.; and Pamela Estes of Pine Bluff, Ark.

Delegation sizes are determined by the secretary of General Conference, who takes into consideration a number of factors, including the number of United Methodists in each Conference and the minimum allowance of one lay and one clergy delegate for smaller Conferences. The total delegates to General Conference cannot exceed 1,000 people.

The Arkansas Conference has a total of 12 General Conference delegates for 2012. Jurisdictional Conference delegates serve as alternates to General Conference.

Work begins

Immediately following adjournment of the 2011 Arkansas Annual Conference, the General and Jurisdictional Conference delegations held their first meeting,

which included a discussion of expectations, along with a couple of specific items of business.

As first-elected layperson, Asa Whitaker serves as head of the delegation, a role that traditionally alternates between laity and clergy each quadrennium. (The Rev. Rodney Steele, first-elected clergy, serves as co-chair of the delegation.)

At the initial meeting, General Conference delegates chose the legislative committee on which they will serve while in Tampa. Delegates make these choices in order of election, taking into account the varied experiences of delegation members. Whitaker chose Discipleship as his General Conference committee.

More meetings lie ahead. The Arkansas delegation "will probably meet a total of six times between now and General Conference," Whitaker said, "but we do not have a fixed schedule because it is really dependent on what type of legislation is coming down the pike." He says every Arkansas delegation meeting will include time for planning next steps, because "we want to be flexible to allow the delegation to shape the levels of discussion."

In addition to meeting regularly for briefings on legislation, an Oct. 21-22 gathering in Oklahoma City will include all General and Jurisdictional Conference delegates from the South Central Jurisdiction, an area comprised of eight states, for an event designed to educate and inform delegates regarding issues coming before them.

Likely subjects include the proposed changes to the clergy pension plan, Call to Action Report recommendations, and other recommendations from the Council of Bishops. The purpose, Whitaker says, "is not to try to garner votes, but to simply inform so that a knowledgeable vote can be cast."

The Arkansas delegation also will meet in January to interview candidates for the episcopacy—that is, potential bishops.

In addition to in-person meetings, the delegation is currently evaluating communication systems for use between meetings; and has had preliminary discussions about the potential for using Skype, teleconferencing and other forms of communication.

As for whether Arkansas will put forth a candidate for the episcopacy, Whitaker says the discernment process will soon begin.

"We have a defined process that we go through about if and who we

Volunteer marshals, pages needed for General Conference

Volunteers can now apply online to serve as marshals or pages during the United Methodist Church's 2012 General Conference. The denomination's top legislative assembly will meet in Tampa, Fla., April 24-May 4, 2012.

Approximately 150 volunteers are needed during General Conference. Marshals and pages are responsible for their own travel and expenses.

Marshals serve in the visitor and reserved seating galleries, assist visitors and special guests and check credentials for proper authorization.

Pages assist delegates, secretarial staff, Bishops, members of the Judicial Council and official visitors. They distribute approved materials and deliver printed information.

Those interested should submit an online application at umcevents.org/gc2012marshalpage. Deadline for applications is Aug. 31, 2011. Applicants will be notified of their status by Nov. 30.

will support as a candidate for bishop," he said. The delegation has used this process twice before. Clergy who are willing to be considered for bishop enter the process, and the delegation picks it up from there.

The discernment process must be complete before December to allow candidates to prepare and make travel plans for interviews. Historically, several Conference delegations have held interviews on the same day to reduce candidates' travel expenses and time expenditure.

Delegates reflect

Three delegates shared recently their thoughts about the work before them.

"It's mind-boggling, the time and energy it takes to do this well," says the Rev. Dr. Rebekah Miles, second-elected clergy member of the delegation. Miles is heading to her third General Conference.

"My first time, in '04, it wasn't nearly as hard or time-consuming, because I didn't know what I was doing and didn't know how to make things happen," she said. "At the end of [my] first General Conference, I talked with some of the key members on my legislative committee, Higher Education and Ministry. We agreed to work together on some key issues in preparation for General Conference '08.

"I then organized and led some groups that drafted, supported and then helped to pass legislation. And by the grace of God and a lot of hard work, we got more passed than I would have dreamed."

Miles says she invests the time "only because I believe the renewal of the church depends on the reform of the process by which we prepare people for ordained ministry."

Is it worth it? She acknowledges the increased work load creates

challenges. "It's hard on me personally and professionally and it's hard on my family," she says. "It's only worth it in the larger scheme of things."

Lay delegate Sarah Steele is the youngest of the Arkansans bound for General Conference; she will turn 21 this fall. (Natalie Clark, age 18, was elected as an alternate to Jurisdictional Conference, making her the youngest delegate overall.)

Age aside, this is Steele's second time to serve on the delegation; her rookie year was in 2008. She now serves as a director of the General Board of Global Ministries, so she chose to serve on that committee at the 2012 General Conference.

"The way the UMC does mission is one of my favorite aspects of the church," she says. She hopes to educate Arkansas United Methodists about their denomination by posting blog entries from Tampa.

The Rev. Ronnie Miller-Yow, third-elected clergy delegate, is a first-time delegate to General Conference. He will serve on the Local Church legislative committee.

Miller-Yow says his biggest goal is to learn. Having gone to General Conference 2008 as an observer with Black Methodists for Church Renewal (BMCR), he has experienced one perspective, but this time he will be right in the middle of it all.

As the national president of BMCR since 2009, Miller-Yow has built relationships with people in other Conferences, so he feels he can help make "a cross-connectional impact."

He said he hopes to be able to see the action at General Conference through more than one lens, so he can answer the questions, "How does this affect our Conference, how does this affect ethnics throughout the church and how does it affect the church in general?"

CLASSIFIEDS

PLACE YOUR CLASSIFIED in the *Arkansas United Methodist* for 50 cents per word, no limit. To schedule your ad, call 501-324-8005 or mail to: *Arkansas United Methodist*, 800 Daisy Bates Drive, Little Rock, AR 72202; or e-mail mtaylor@arumc.org.

Youth Minister - If you have a passion for ministry to youth, are enthusiastic about building relationships with students that strengthen their faith and prepare them for Christian adulthood and if you would like to help build a Student Ministries program, please contact Henderson UMC in Little Rock, AR. Interested candidates will have leadership experience and/or formal training in youth ministry. A strong commitment to the Christian faith and the United Methodist *Book of Discipline* are required. This person must be able to organize, develop and encourage leadership, cooperation, respect, trust and friendship with a youth group, as well as engage parents and volunteers. Approximately 20-30 hours a week. Interested candidates should send a resume, references and letter of interest to Dr. Robin Moore at Henderson_humc_pastor@swbell.net.

For Sale: 1989 Chevrolet 1-ton frame, 24 passenger bus, 350 V-8 automatic transmission. 49K+ miles, good tires, mechanically sound. \$5000 OBO To see, call 870-367-5085, Rock Springs UMC.

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

PEOPLE OF FAITH

Conference names new Disaster Response Coordinators

Byron and Janice Mann of Hope have taken on the role of Disaster Response Coordinator for the Arkansas Conference. The two will serve together as co-coordinators.

The Manns are certified United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR) Early Response Team members and trainers, with a decade of disaster relief experience. They also are trained in Volunteer Reception Center operation and have been active in local emergency management as mass care coordinators and shelter managers.

They succeed Larry Gentry, who resigned from the position in mid-June.

"We would be remiss if we didn't acknowledge Larry Gentry for all the work he has done as the disaster coordinator for the Conference," said Janice Mann. "He was a vital link throughout many of this and past seasons' tornadoes and flooding."

Byron Mann is a local pastor serving the Hinton/DeAnn Charge, and will take the lead in on-the-ground response. Janice Mann will have primary responsibility for organization and training.

The Manns have scheduled two disaster response Care Team training sessions July 29-30. Care Teams are faith-based, on-going teams with standardized UMCOR training that provide spiritual and emotional care following disasters. See page 14A for information on these sessions.

The Manns may be contacted at 870-703-8359 or rainmaker@arkansas.net.



Byron and Janice Mann



Dewitt Smith, left, receives thanks from Bishop Charles Crutchfield and Jim Argue Jr. for his six years of service as board chair of the United Methodist Foundation of Arkansas.

of Arkansas at Little Rock and Henderson State University in Arkadelphia.

A member of First United Methodist Church in Russellville, Smith is chair of the Arkansas Conference Board of Ministries and recently was elected a delegate to the 2012 Jurisdictional Conference.

"Our board plays the vital role of guiding us in our mission to strengthen and expand United Methodist ministries through the creation and administration of permanent charitable endowment funds," said UMFA President Jim Argue Jr. "I want to thank Dewitt for his six years of outstanding service, and I look forward to working with Sandy in the years to come. We are delighted to welcome Rush and Pam to our important work."



Pam Estes

Estes serves as senior pastor at Lakeside UMC Pine Bluff, where she continues her history of community service in the locations where she is appointed. She serves on the Hendrix College Board of Trustees, the Arkansas Annual Conference Board of Pensions and the Southeast District Committee on Ordained Ministry. Estes is a member of the Daughters of the American Revolution and Rotary International, where she has been named a Paul Harris Fellow.

Harding is CEO of Crews & Associates, Inc., in Little Rock. A 35-year veteran of the securities industry, he recently was named Chairman of the FINRA District 5 Business Conduct Committee. He has served on the board of the University of Central Arkansas for two decades. Harding also serves on the board of First Security Bancorp, the Arkansas Sports Hall of Fame and the Arkansas Arts Center. He has held numerous leadership positions at First UMC Little Rock.

UMFA manages \$105 million in endowment funds and other charitable assets that benefit local churches and other United Methodist ministries.



Sandy Smith



Rush Harding III

UMFA Board elects new leadership, board members

Sandy Smith of Russellville has been elected chair of the board of directors of the United Methodist Foundation of Arkansas. She succeeds Dewitt Smith of Bella Vista, who served as chair for six years. The Rev. Pam Estes of Pine Bluff and Rush Harding III of Little Rock were elected to serve as new board members.

Smith, who holds a Ph.D. in nursing from Loyola University in Chicago, teaches in the Nursing and Emergency Management Departments of Arkansas Tech University. She formerly held nursing education positions at the University

TRANSFORMING THE WORLD



Members of three units of United Methodist Women—the Ashdown/Richmond Charge UMW, the Sugar Hill Texarkana UMW and the Fairview Texarkana UMW—present Bishop Charles Crutchfield with a check for \$8,020. The gift, given on June 6 during the 2011 Arkansas Annual Conference, was designated toward the Congo Wells Project, which provides sources of clean drinking water for villages in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

AUM PHOTO BY AMY FORBUS

United Methodist Women from three units join together to reach Congo Wells Project goal

After attending Annual Conference in 2010 and learning about the Congo Wells Project, Gerane McWilliams of Sugar Hill UMC Texarkana presented the potential project to her fellow members of United Methodist Women. They decided to join with two other United Methodist Women units in the Southwest District to raise \$8,000, the full amount required to build a well that will provide clean drinking water to a village in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Over the course of just a few months and several fund-raising lunches and other events, the women had raised more than the \$8,000 minimum. On Monday, June 6, at Arkansas Annual Conference in Hot Springs, they presented a check for \$8,020 to Bishop Charles Crutchfield for the benefit of the Congo Wells Project.

And the giving didn't stop there. The United Methodist Women of the Ashdown/Richmond Charge gave an additional \$210 toward Nothing But Nets, one of the anti-malaria initiatives supported by the denomination.

Kaleidoscope Kids auction Sept. 16

The 13th Annual Kaleidoscope Kids Auction is slated for 6:30 p.m. Friday, Sept. 16, at the Junior League of Little Rock's Woman's City Club Building. All proceeds benefit Kaleidoscope Grief Center, a program within Methodist Family Health and Arkansas' only grief center for children and families, as well as Methodist Counseling Clinics statewide.

For information, call 501-661-0720 ext. 7304, e-mail lbrown@methodistfamily.org or visit methodistfamily.org.

**Recycle
Reuse
Replenish**



Be sure to recycle your copy of the *Arkansas United Methodist* when you're through reading it (or share it with a friend).

Flash MISSION

Participants take break from Annual Conference, reach out to community

BY KAYLEA HUTSON
Special Contributor

HOT SPRINGS, Ark.—“Flash mob” typically means a group of people spontaneously breaking out into a choreographed song and dance routine in a public location.

Quick, loud and focused, the action harnesses the energy and excitement of a large gathering of individuals.

Using that spontaneity as a model, participants from the 2011 Arkansas Annual Conference gathered on Tuesday, June 7, for a “flash mission project” benefitting the Eleanor Klugh Jackson House, a local mission.

Forgoing lunch, 25 volunteers, under the direction of the Rev. Carl Palmer, pastor of Elm Springs UMC, instead weeded and planted flowers, painted and repaired a wooden fence, served meals, sorted clothing, cleaned curtains and windows and made phone calls for an upcoming event.

“I always thought this was something we should do as an Annual Conference,” explained Palmer. “Flash mobs are all the rage—I thought we could descend [on a service project], do what we needed to do and get out.”

Palmer said the genesis for the project came out of the 2010 Annual Conference, when a resolution calling for a service project in the host city was withdrawn from consideration.

Rather than wait for official approval, volunteers wanted to make an impact in the Hot Springs community beyond Conference activities.

Palmer picked Jackson House for several reasons, including close proximity to the Hot Springs Convention Center, as well as the ministry it provides to area residents through its crisis ministries.

“This was just awesome,” said Janie Smith, director of Jackson House. “Most of our everyday

volunteers are retired and can’t do some of the heavier stuff, so the items just go undone.”

Smith said several of the projects—including taking down the curtains and cleaning the windows—had been left undone for more than five years.

“We’ve had youth groups come here to do some things, but sometimes you have to have adults in order to get things done properly,” Smith said. “This was perfect because [the group] could do the projects. I told them what needed to be done, and they were experienced enough to take care of it.”

Promoted strictly through social media—primarily Twitter and Facebook—the flash mission project volunteers included four Wesley Foundation campus pastors, numerous college students and a variety of other individuals representing several churches throughout Arkansas.

The Rev. Claire Caldwell, from First UMC Fort Smith, was one of the volunteers who learned of the project through Facebook. She decided to participate because it gave her a chance to help the local community.

The Rev. Clark Atkins, pastor of college ministries at St. James UMC Little Rock, had a similar motivation.

“This was a better way to use my lunch hour,” Atkins said. “I liked the idea that we were able to come together in mission.”

Amy Cofer, a college student from the University of Arkansas at Fayetteville, liked being able to volunteer during Annual Conference.

“This is something the church should do—connect with the community,” she said.

The Rev. Eric Van Meter, director of the Arkansas State University Wesley Foundation, saw the flash mission as a way to educate his students.

“This was an opportunity to do more than talk,” Van Meter said. “Change comes from individuals and



ABOVE: Wesley Foundation directors the Revs. John Palmer and Eric Van Meter help repair a fence outside of the Jackson House thrift store.

TOP RIGHT: The Rev. Dee Dee Autry, associate pastor at Grace Community UMC Fort Smith, helps sort clothing in the Jackson House thrift store.

SECOND FROM TOP: Peg Shelton of Elm Springs UMC makes phone calls for the Jackson House to spread the word about an upcoming community block party.

RIGHT: Muriel Aston, a member of the Arkansas State University Wesley Foundation, preps a flower garden in front of Jackson House.

LOWER RIGHT: David Jondro, left, and Eric Hughes, right, of the Arkansas Tech Wesley Foundation, help a Jackson House volunteer prepare meals.

PHOTOS BY KAYLEA HUTSON

groups of people who care. Change is not a matter of Annual Conference proposition or vote, but a matter of caring for people.”

John Palmer, director of the University of Central Arkansas Wesley Foundation, agreed.

“I kind of hope what we did at this Annual Conference was be the hands and feet of Jesus,” Palmer said.

“It’s important to reach out to those in the community who have needs.”

Hutson serves as minister to families with children at First UMC Siloam Springs, and helps with web ministry for the West and Northwest Districts.



BCD breaks ground on Empowerment Center

LITTLE ROCK—Bishop Charles Crutchfield offered the opening prayer June 17 at the groundbreaking ceremony for a new Empowerment Center, marking a major achievement of an organization born out of one of Arkansas' United Methodist congregations.

Better Community Development, Inc. (BCD), founded as an outreach program of Theresa Hoover UMC, provides services focused in Little Rock's 12th Street corridor, including substance abuse treatment and affordable housing.

The new Empowerment Center at the corner of 12th and Valentine will provide housing, supportive services, life skills training, job training and more to homeless individuals.

It's a dream being realized upon property purchased about 15 years ago, according to the Rev. Dr. Bill Robinson, executive director of BCD.



ABOVE: The Rev. Bill Robinson acknowledges applause from the crowd gathered for the June 17 Empowerment Center groundbreaking. RIGHT: BCD staff, board of directors and representatives from partner organizations turn the first shovels of dirt at the construction site.

AUM PHOTOS BY AMY FORBUS

"We had some ideas, and we didn't know quite how to put it together, but we just kept working on it," said Robinson. "What you have to do is find out who the partners are and

who can help you make it become a reality. That's what we tried to do." Partners in the \$5.5-million Empowerment Center effort include the U.S. Department of Housing and



Urban Development, the Arkansas Development Finance Authority, the Federal Home Loan Bank of Dallas and Bank of the Ozarks.

Robinson sees a bright future

ahead for BCD's new Empowerment Center.

"Hopefully, this time next year, we'll have these structures up and be ready to go to the next level," he said.

Youth group crosses generation gap, teaches Facebook class for older adults

BY AMY FORBUS
Editor

In January of 2011, Brooke Crumpler attended Perkins School of Youth Ministry, a series of courses offered through with Southern Methodist University's Perkins School of Theology (PSYM) in Dallas.

Crumpler directs the Three in 1 Youth Ministry, a cooperative ministry of Christ of the Hills UMC and Mountainside UMC in Hot Springs Village. Because the community has a high population of retirees, she chose to take a course on intergenerational ministry during her time at PSYM.

"In a community like Hot Springs Village, this type of ministry is very important to bridge the gap between youth and church congregations," Crumpler says.

The PSYM course asked participants, "What can a teenager teach an adult?" As she and other youth ministers sought answers to that question, the idea for a Facebook class was born.

The class, held at Christ of the Hills UMC, is made up of "students"—adults of the church—and "teachers"—members of the youth group. Students are put into groups of three or four, based on skill level, and paired with a teacher. "Imagine your fellowship hall full of

tables with lap tops and extension cords as far as the eye can see," Crumpler said.

She kicks off the class by explaining the general idea of social networking and answering questions of concern. Students then receive a "Facebook Vocabulary," a printed list of definitions relating to the website that has become a natural part of communication for any teenager.

"As we continue to a more hands-on part of the first lesson, the students are encouraged to ask specifics and 'how-to' questions of their teacher while learning to set up a profile and find friends," says Crumpler. "By the end of Facebook 101, our students have accounts, have had profile pictures taken and uploaded and made a few new friends."

There was even "homework" assigned: Each student had to find and add both Crumpler and their table's teacher as a Facebook friend. Within two hours after the end of class, 90 percent of the students had completed their homework and started general communication on their new Facebook page.

The second session, Facebook 201, has a more informal feel. "We start the second class discussing our week in the world of social networking," Crumpler said.

Students then receive more detailed

instruction sheets, and the teachers begin to work with each student's sets of questions one-on-one.

"It has been wonderful to see youth and adults communicating on a more personal level," she says. "Adults are able to develop more understanding of the teenager's world, are more willing to ask for help from the youth and are becoming more comfortable working with computers."

"On the other side, the youth felt that they really taught something, and were surprised how easy it is to share their wisdom."

The Facebook class has been in high demand, and Three in 1 has already received requests to repeat the sessions in the fall. "Our 'students' have raved about how wonderful it was for the youth to take the time out of their lives to teach them," she said.

What the older adults may not realize, Crumpler added, is how much confidence and pride they gave the youth by being willing to learn from them.

"It only took two evenings in a span of two weeks to bridge a generational gap," she said.

If your church would like guidance for starting a similar course, contact Crumpler at brookecrumpler@gmail.com.



ABOVE: Hannah Pate, left, guides Ruth Weatherwax through information presented in the Facebook class offered by Three in 1 Youth Ministry, a cooperative effort between Christ of the Hills and Mountainside UMCs.

BELOW: Brady Hobbs, left, watches as June Jensen explores Facebook in a recent class offered by Three in 1 Youth Ministry.

COURTESY PHOTOS



2011-12 Conference Appointments

Central District	
Deidre J. Roberts, Superintendent	
AMBOY.....	Roger Armstrong
ARGENTA.....	James W. Choate
ASBURY-LITTLE ROCK.....	Bryan Fink
<i>Associate</i>	Nathan Kilbourne
<i>Associate</i>	David M. Moore
BETHEL-JACKSONVILLE.....	Thomas Babington
CANVAS COMMUNITY.....	James D. Bentley
FAITH-LITTLE ROCK.....	Harriett Akins-Banman
FAITHSPRING.....	Brock Patterson
<i>Deacon</i>	Jenni L. Duncan
<i>Deacon</i>	Martha S. Taylor
GARDNER MEMORIAL.....	Richard S. Mitchell
HENDERSON.....	N. Robin Moore
HIGHLAND VALLEY.....	W. Wade Shownes
<i>Associate</i>	Brittany Stanton Richardson Watson
HOOVER.....	Ismail M. A. Saafir
HOPE KOREAN.....	Ohyeoun Kim
<i>Associate</i>	Billy Howard Cox
HUNTER-LITTLE ROCK.....	Melvin Moss
JACKSONVILLE FIRST.....	John Mark McDonald
<i>Associate</i>	Walter Garrett
LAKEWOOD.....	Richard Lancaster
<i>Associate</i>	Andrea E. Allen
<i>Associate</i>	Hazel M. Clark
<i>Associate</i>	Cynthia Shaw Henry
LEVY.....	John Wedaman
LITTLE ROCK FIRST.....	Michael Mattox
<i>Associate</i>	Donna Hankins-Hull
<i>Deacon</i>	Mary Jane Cole
MABELVALE.....	Robert Marble
MAUMELLE FIRST.....	Luke Conway
<i>Associate</i>	Zeke Allen
<i>Associate</i>	Wayne Jarvis
MCCABE CHAPEL.....	Johnnie Davis
MOUNT PLEASANT-LITTLE ROCK.....	Mary N. Jones
NEW HAVEN-LITTLE ROCK.....	Norma Gillerson
NORTH LITTLE ROCK FIRST.....	Davis E. Thompson
<i>Associate</i>	James W. Choate
NORTH PULASKI.....	Carol S. Goddard
OAK FOREST.....	Russell D. Breshears
<i>Deacon</i>	Amanda Moore
PRIMROSE.....	Clayton Bulice
PULASKI HEIGHTS.....	Britt Skarda
<i>Associate</i>	Heath R Bradley
<i>Associate</i>	Jeffery Bernard Hampton
<i>Associate</i>	Aubrietta Lynn Jones
<i>Associate</i>	Lynn W. Lindsey
<i>Deacon</i>	Gail Dee Hocott
<i>Deacon</i>	James Scott Moore
QUAPAW QUARTER.....	Thompson Murray
<i>Associate</i>	Elizabeth Anne Holcomb
SAINT ANDREW-LITTLE ROCK.....	Carol Ann Blow
SAINT JAMES-LITTLE ROCK.....	Siegfried Johnson
<i>Associate</i>	Gary Clark Atkins
<i>Associate</i>	Blake Russell Bradford
<i>Associate</i>	Gregory Schick
SAINT LUKE/GEYER SPRINGS.....	Mary Candace Barron
SAINT PAUL-LITTLE ROCK.....	Gerald Collins
SAINT PAUL-MAUMELLE.....	Reginald Russell
SWEET HOME-LITTLE ROCK.....	Barbara A. Douglas
SYLVAN HILLS.....	Beverly Watkins
TRINITY-LITTLE ROCK.....	Betsy Singleton Snyder
TRINITY-NORTH LITTLE ROCK.....	Gerald Meeks
WESLEY CHAPEL-LR/DUNCAN.....	Ronnie L. Miller-Yow
WESTERN HILLS.....	Sylvia Nasic
WHITE MEMORIAL/MARKS CHAPEL.....	Clyde Hughley
WINFIELD.....	Larry D. Hughes

North District	
Charles T. Settle, Superintendent	
ALPENA.....	Les Bailey
ANTIOCH/HARMONY.....	Jim Gilliam
ASH FLAT/EVENING SHADE.....	Larry Morris
BALD/KNOB RUSSELL.....	Treva Mills
BATESVILLE FIRST.....	Kay Burton
	Robert Burton
BEEBE.....	Edward Hull
BERGMAN.....	TBS
BRADFORD/PLEASANT PLAINS.....	William P. Mills
BULL SHOALS/YELLVILLE.....	Donnie Hudson
CALICO ROCK/SPRING CREEK.....	Michael Andrew Smith
CAVE CITY/BEAR CREEK.....	Roger B Hook
CEDAR GROVE-FLORAL.....	Aline Cantrell McCracken
CEDAR GROVE-YELLVILLE/PLEASANT RIDGE.....	Donald M Cremer
CENTRAL AVE.-BATESVILLE.....	Paul Seay
CHEROKEE VILLAGE.....	Thomas DeWeese
<i>Associate</i>	Jimmy W. Anderson
CLINTON.....	Vaughn Marsden
CORINTH /POWELL’S CHAPEL.....	Robert Kegerize
DAMASCUS.....	William Grothe
DESHA/CONCORD/CORNERSTONE/JAMESTOWN.....	Steve Long
	James D Wheeler
DIAMOND CITY/OMAHA.....	Patricia Bodenhamer
EVERTON/VALLEY SPRINGS.....	Sandra “Sandy” Garrett
FAIRFIELD BAY.....	Paul Strang
FAIRVIEW-MOUNTAIN HOME.....	James Jimmie F Snow
FORREST CHAPEL-BROCKWELL.....	Loye Vern Mason
GARNER.....	TBS
GRIFFITHVILLE/DOGWOOD.....	Terry Kai Haley
GUION.....	John Adams
GUM SPRINGS-SEARCY.....	Jim Bradberry
HARDY.....	Brien Nix Hall
HARRISON FIRST	John D. Darnall
HAZEL EDWARDS MEMORIAL /OIL TROUGH.....	Robert Stanley Ernest
HEBER SPRINGS.....	Thomas Toombs
	Kathy DeBusk
HOLIDAY HILLS.....	C. Daniel Brand
HORSESHOE BEND/WISEMAN.....	Nancy Cameron
JASPER.....	Larry M Acton
JUDSONIA/KENSETT.....	James Robert Wilson
LESLIE/MARSHALL.....	Cheryl Jean Cook Baker
MAMMOTH SPRING CAMP.....	James (J.R.) McElhannon
MCRAE/ELLIS CHAPEL.....	Gilliam Sills
MELBOURNE/BETHESDA/CAMPGROUND/CUSHMAN....	Donna Alberts
MOOREFIELD/OAK RIDGE.....	Lavon Bloodworth
MOUNT PLEASANT-QUITMAN.....	Harold Moore
MOUNTAIN HOME.....	Rodney G. Steele
<i>Associate</i>	Randall D. Ludwig
MOUNTAIN VIEW/SAINT JAMES.....	Ronnie Newberry
NEWPORT FIRST.....	John Bradley Elrod
OAK GROVE-SEARCY.....	TBS
OXFORD.....	Bobby Coleman
PANGBURN/MOUNT PISGAH-SEARCY.....	David Doyle
QUITMAN.....	David Caswell
ROSEBUD.....	Kathy DeBusk
SAINT PAUL-HARRISON/BELLEFONTE/VALLEY VIEW.....	Mark Donald
SAINT PAUL-SEARCY.....	Mary Hilliard
SALEM-SALEM/VIOLA.....	Robert Daniel Partlow
SEARCY FIRST.....	Keith Goza
<i>Associate</i>	Charles Dee Harper
SHARP/ASBURY-BATESVILLE.....	Jerry Lumpkin
SHIRLEY.....	John Hiegel
SIDNEY.....	TBS
SOUTHSIDE.....	James T Pierce
STONEY POINT/FLOYD.....	Robert Mark Quick
TUCKERMAN/SWIFTON.....	Donald Lewert
UMSTED MEMORIAL/EMORY CHAPEL.....	Jimmy J. Mosby

WESLEY-COTTER/NORFORK.....	Terry Moser
WILD CHERRY.....	Marty Sanders

North Central District	
Deidre J. Roberts, Superintendent	
ADONA.....	Frankie Reynolds
ATKINS BELL’S CHAPEL.....	Rebecca Searcy Wiseman
BETHLEHEM-LONOKE/PROVIDENCE.....	Toby Austin
CABOT.....	Beth Ann Waldrup
<i>Associate</i>	Ben Crismon
<i>Associate</i>	John Shirron
<i>Associate</i>	Raymond Vining
CARLISLE FIRST.....	Ryan Allen Rush
CENTERVILLE.....	Lana Gartner
CHICKALAH.....	Bud Choate
CHRIST-CABOT.....	Jeffery Warrick
CLEVELAND/OVERCUP.....	Sara Darlene Bayles
CONCORD-LONOKE.....	William N. Steele
CONWAY FIRST.....	Charles Murry
<i>Associate</i>	Elizabeth Lynn Kilbourne
CROSSPOINT.....	Tammy Garrison
DANVILLE/TRINITY-DANVILLE.....	Thomas Sullinger
DARDANELLE FIRST/LIBERTY HALL.....	James A. Benfer
DES ARC FIRST.....	Michael W Topham
DOVER.....	Roy Beth Kelley
EBENEZER-CONWAY.....	Luther Williams
ENGLAND.....	George Edward Crumbly, Jr.
GRACE-CONWAY.....	David Ray Hawkins
<i>Associate</i>	Cletus Gregory Comer
GREENBRIER FIRST.....	Kevin Lyon
<i>Associate</i>	Donna Bennett
HAMILTON/ HUMNOKE.....	Roger E. Glover
HAVANA.....	Ed Seay, Jr.
HAZEN/DEVALLS BLUFF.....	Carolyn Doering
HEBRON-CARLISLE.....	Roger Crouch
HICKORY PLAINS.....	Deborah D. Harrison
KEO.....	Charles Perry
LONOKE FIRST.....	Larry Martineau
MAYFLOWER.....	Richard Wilkins
MORRILTON FIRST.....	Todd-Paul Taulbee
MOUNT CARMEL-VILONIA/GRAHAM CHAPEL.....	Thomas E. Lukas
MOUNT TABOR-CABOT.....	Jason Sutfin
MOUNT ZION-LONOKE.....	Wesley Howard, Jr.
NAYLOR.....	Luke Parker
NEW ZION MOUNT ZION-CENTER RIDGE.....	James Lee Scruggs
OAK GROVE.....	Kent Tallent
OAKLAND.....	LaNita Anne Daniels
OLA/PLAINVIEW.....	Rollie Thomas Mullins
OLD AUSTIN.....	Von Dell Mooney
PERRYVILLE.....	David E. Baker
PLUMERVILLE.....	Keith Coker
POTTSVILLE.....	Mildred Faith Bryant
RUSSELLVILLE FIRST.....	Roy Patterson Smith
<i>Associate</i>	Gail Cole Baldwin
SAINT JAMES-LONOKE.....	David Scruggs
SAINT PAUL-GRAVEL HILL/BRIGGSVILLE.....	Steve Lawrence
SALEM-CONWAY.....	Leon Gray
SOUTHBEND.....	Garren Earle Hagemeier
SPRINGFIELD MALLETTOWN.....	Austin W Coleman
VILONIA.....	Belinda Price
WARD SIXTEENTH SECTION.....	Richmond P. Meadows
WESLEY-CONWAY.....	David D. Hoffman
WESLEY-RUSSELLVILLE.....	Davida Autry
WYE MOUNTAIN.....	Mark Matthews

Northeast District	
W. Kurt Boggan, Superintendent	
AUGUSTA/TUPELO.....	Robert DeBaun
BAY.....	Heath Williams
BLACK ROCK/LYNN/POWHATAN.....	Michael Bolin

BLYTHEVILLE FIRST.....	Donald L. Hall, Jr.
BROOKLAND /UNION GROVE.....	William J Sardin
CAMPGROUND.....	George Edward Harris
CHERRY VALLEY/VANNDALE.....	Jim West
CHRIST UNITED.....	John Snyder
CHRIST WAY.....	Herschel Lee Richardson, Jr.
COLT/FORREST CHAPEL-FORREST CITY.....	Everett Blakely
CORNERSTONE-JONESBORO.....	W. Christopher Cooper
Associate.....	Jeanne Williams
Deacon.....	Rebecca Boggan
CORNING.....	Pauleen Ann Ferris
DELL/ALDERSGATE.....	Marilyn Webb
EARLE/CRAWFORDSVILLE.....	TBS
ELI LINDSEY/FRIENDSHIP-RAVENDEN.....	John Stoll
ELLIS CHPL/CENTRAL-WYNNE/HUNTER.....	Melvin Dwight Mann
FARM HILL.....	Jerry A. Hall
FISHER STREET/BONO.....	Nancy M. Rainwater
FORREST CITY FIRST.....	Janet T. Edwards
GRIFFIN MEMORIAL.....	Michael Sutton
HARRISBURG FIRST/PLEASANT VALLEY.....	J. Beth Perdue
HICKORY RIDGE/TILTON.....	Michael Utley
HOXIE.....	Bonda Deere Moyer
HUGHES/MADISON.....	R. Marilyn Neal
IMBODEN/SMITHVILLE.....	Bob J. McMillon
JONESBORO FIRST.....	John P. Miles, II
Associate.....	Lloyd Blake Langston
Associate.....	Patty Sue Soward
LEACHVILLE/CARAWAY.....	Douglas Criss
LEPANTO JOINER.....	Janice Williams
MANILA COMMUNITY.....	Jerry Pentecost
MARION.....	Tom M. Letchworth
MARKED TREE.....	Ron C. Williams
MARMADUKE.....	Stephen Wayne Baldwin
Deacon.....	Sarah Mullins
MARS HILL.....	Milburn Teasley
MAYNARD.....	Thomas Dellinger
MCCRORY/COTTON PLANT.....	Karl Dixon Platt
MONETTE/LAKE CITY.....	Jerry W. Reed
MOUNT CARMEL-JONESBORO.....	Clarence Edward Pruett
NETTLETON.....	Harmon B Whitehurst
OSCEOLA.....	Tyrone Hill
PARAGOULD FIRST.....	William B. Leslie
Associate.....	Angela Gage
PARKIN/MCELROY.....	William Joe Head
PIGGOTT/WRIGHT’S CHAPEL.....	John Sandine
PINE LOG.....	James Kjorlaug
PLEASANT GROVE-JONESBORO.....	Nan Nelson
POCAHONTAS.....	Rockey Earl Starnes
PRUETT’S CHAPEL/BEECH GROVE.....	Doyle Dwayne Smith
RAVENDEN/RAVENDEN SPRINGS.....	Danny Roark
RECTOR.....	Mace P. Straubel
ROCK SPRINGS-LAFE/RAMER’S CHAPEL.....	Howard Mark Trout
SAINT PAUL-JONESBORO.....	Charles Sigman
SEDGWICK/PLEASANT HILL-BONO.....	Herbert A Brubaker
SHILOH-PARAGOULD/SHILOH-JONESBORO.....	David Swift
TRUMANN/TYRONZA.....	Jeff Weaver
VICTORY-FORREST CITY.....	Moses Green
WALNUT RIDGE.....	Steve Cook
WARREN’S CHAPEL/WOOD’S CHAPEL.....	John Michael
WEINER/FISHER.....	Dan L. Walker
WEST MEMPHIS FIRST.....	David F. Moseley
Associate.....	Sheila M. Jones
WHEATLEY/SALEM.....	William F. Cato
WHITE HALL/FAKES CHAPEL.....	Stephen Anderson
WILSON/KEISER.....	Gary Yarbrough
WYNNE.....	Lester Glenn Pettus

Northwest District
G. Mackey Yokem, Superintendent

ARKANSAS KOREAN MISSION.....	Young Jin Kim
BELLA VISTA FIRST.....	Jaimie Jack Alexander
Associate.....	Lee Benjamin Myane

BENTONVILLE FIRST.....	Rex Dickey
Associate.....	Don Bortell
Associate.....	Benjamin Gee Hines
Associate.....	Susan Ledbetter
BERRYVILLE.....	Floyd Ray
BLAND CHAPEL.....	David E. Mack
CENTRAL-FAYETTEVILLE.....	J. Anthony Holifield
Associate.....	Steve K. Pulliam
Associate.....	Cleifton Samuel Vaughan
CENTRAL-LINCOLN/ CINCINNATI.....	Andy Newbill
CENTRAL-ROGERS.....	Carness Vaughan
Associate.....	James Dell Keith
Associate.....	Jim Alex Workman, Jr.
Deacon.....	J. Lester Oliver
Deacon.....	Dawn Spragg
DECATUR.....	Russ Hall
ELKINS.....	Charles Gary Ashcraft
ELM SPRINGS.....	Carl D. Palmer
EUREKA SPRINGS.....	Stanley Wade Adams
FARMINGTON.....	Justin Ledbetter
GENTRY.....	George Adkins
GOSHEN.....	H. Franklin Cook
GRACE-ROGERS.....	William Zachary Underwood
GRAVETTE/SULPHUR SPRINGS.....	Phil Sturdy
GREEN FOREST.....	Stephen Brizzi
HARMON.....	J. Michael Callahan
HIGHLANDS.....	Rex G. Darling
Associate.....	J. Michael Callahan
HUNTSVILLE/PRESLEY CHAPEL.....	Roger Allen Crum
LIVING WATERS AT CENTERTON.....	Blake A. Lasater
MORROW.....	John M. Moore
OAKLEY CHAPEL.....	Shane Pair
PEA RIDGE/BRIGHTWATER.....	Brian Timmons
PRAIRIE GROVE FIRST.....	Matthew H. Johnson
ROGERS FIRST.....	David Bentley
Deacon.....	H. Cathy Caudle
Deacon.....	Sandra Wanasek
SAINT JAMES-FAYETTEVILLE.....	Charles White
SEQUOYAH.....	Sara Cole Pair
SHILOH.....	LonHudson
SILOAM SPRINGS FIRST.....	Randy H. Rowlan
SPRINGDALE FIRST.....	Stephen Coburn
Associate.....	David C. Freeman
Associate.....	Kenneth R. Lee
Associate.....	Rob Williams
Deacon.....	Judith S. Van Hoose
SPRINGTOWN/HIGHFILL.....	Russ Hall
TRINITY-FAYETTEVILLE.....	Terry M. Gosnell
TUCKS CHAPEL.....	Brian Youngs
VINEY GROVE.....	G Randall Nix
WEDINGTON.....	Joseph W. Hall
WESLEY-SPRINGDALE/BETEL.....	Ramiro Lizcano
WIGGINS/WINSLOW.....	Gary B. Lunsford

South Central District
Michael Morey, Superintendent

AMITY.....	Glen Dale Harris
ARKADELPHIA FIRST.....	Carroll D Jackson
BENTON FIRST.....	Robert David Jones
Associate.....	Mark Norman
Associate.....	Garry Teeter
BETHEL-SHERIDAN.....	Albert Marlar
BISMARCK.....	Heather Spencer Clawitter
BRYANT FIRST.....	Hammett Evans
CENTER GROVE-SHERIDAN.....	James Bacon
CHRIST OF THE HILLS.....	Walter L. Smith
Associate.....	Patrick O. Henry
Associate.....	Helen Stegall
Associate.....	David B. Wilson
CONGO.....	Polly Burton
DIAMONDHEAD.....	Michael S. Fikes

FAITH/MORNING STAR.....	Wanda Murray
	John Franklin Walker
FRIENDSHIP-FRIENDSHIP/ ROCKPORT.....	Robert S. Reid
GARDNER.....	Mark R. Williams
GLENWOOD/DAISY.....	Elizabeth Stegall
GRAND AVENUE-HOT SPRINGS.....	George Edward Rook
Associate.....	Deborah Perry
GUM SPRINGS-MOUNTAIN/ PINE.....	Jeff Ladd
GURDON.....	Gregory A. Burks
HAVEN.....	Harold Eichelberger
HOLLYWOOD.....	Carla Ray Thompson
HOT SPRINGS FIRST.....	William O. Reeves
Associate.....	Teresa Holt
Associate.....	John P. Miles
Associate.....	Carl A. Ownbey
Associate.....	John S. Polk
KEITH MEMORIAL/L’EAU FRAIZ.....	Dale L. Diffie
Associate.....	Sidney Carol Clark
LANGLEY.....	Lindsey Saenz
LEOLA/MOORE’S CHAPEL-SHERIDAN.....	William Charles Bradford
MALVERN FIRST.....	Lavon Post
MANCHESTER.....	George T. Whitney
MOUNT CARMEL-BENTON.....	Bob Warford
MOUNT IDA/JOPLIN.....	David Steele
MOUNT ZION/CENTER GROVE/TRINITY-GURDON.....	Travis Langley
MOUNTAINSIDE.....	Chris Hemund
Associate.....	Sara J. Gotschall
NEW SALEM.....	Dennis E. Horvath
NORMAN.....	James Michael Smith
OAKLAWN.....	Fred W Hunter
OKOLONA.....	Troy Lee Cate
PARKVIEW/NEW HOPE.....	Natasha Murray-Norman
PINEY GROVE.....	Scott Gallimore
Associate.....	Jacob Steven Lynn
Associate.....	Rose A. Poag
PLEASANT HILL-ALEXANDER.....	Vince Crawford
PULLMAN HEIGHTS.....	Ronald G. Grigsby
SAINT ANDREW-ARKADELPHIA.....	Bob W. Sanders
SAINT PAUL-MALVERN /ADKINS MEMORIAL.....	Clarence Fowler
SALEM BENTON.....	Carlton Cross
SARDIS.....	Stephen P. Dickinson
SHERIDAN.....	John Andrew Fleming
SHOREWOOD HILLS/MAGNET COVE.....	Bob C. Clark
TRASKWOOD/EBENEZER-TULL.....	Randy Dale Reed
VILLAGE-HOT SPRINGS.....	George W. McCoy
Associate.....	Thomas R. Jarrell

Southeast District
Dennis Spence, Superintendent

ALMYRA/HUNTER’S CHAPEL-ROE.....	Ted Edmondson
ALTHEIMER/WABBASEKA.....	George Mitchell
BAILEY CHAPEL.....	Travis Earl Jackson
BAYOU METO/LODGES CORNER.....	Mary F. Welch
BRINKLEY/BRASFIELD.....	James L. French
CARTHAGE/HUNTER’S CHAPEL-LEOLA/TULIP/WAVERLY.....	Al Harrell
CLARENDON/HOLLY GROVE.....	Judy Wilson Clark
CROSSETT.....	Russell R. Moore
DEWITT/ST. CHARLES.....	Daniel R. Kirkpatrick
DUMAS/TILLAR.....	Tandy Curtis Hanson
EUDORA/PARKDALE.....	Chyrl Savage Slocum
EXTRA.....	Bonnie Carol Moore
FORDYCE FIRST.....	John Charles Fimple
GILLETT/DELUCE.....	Charles Coffelt
GOOD FAITH CARR.....	Walter Michael Wilkie
GOOD HOPE/NEW EDINBURG.....	John H. Kidwell
GRADY/TRINITY-STAR CITY.....	Lee Alan Zuehlke
GRAND AVENUE-STUTTGART.....	Edward Wyers
GREENHILL/LACEY.....	J. Donald Johnson
HAMBURG FIRST.....	David A. Moore
Associate.....	Bonnie Carol Moore
HAMPTON/HARREL/FAUSTINA.....	Harry J. Hamner
HAWLEY MEMORIAL/WESLEY-PINE BLUFF.....	Jackie Ann Gregory

HEBRON-NEW EDINBURG.....	Maurice Caldwell
HELENA FIRST.....	Mark B. Massey
HERMITAGE/WAGNON.....	Marty Reep
HUMPHREY.....	William Paul Woolley
KINGSLAND/CHAMBERSVILLE.....	Mark Rivers
KYNETTE.....	Kennis Key
LAKESIDE-LAKE VILLAGE/MONTROSE.....	John Embrey
LAKESIDE-PINE BLUFF.....	Pamela Jean Estes
Associate.....	Alicia Bobo Frye
LIVINGSTON CHAPEL.....	Lawrence O. Taylor
MARIANNA/BEAR CREEK CAMP.....	Gordon Mohr
MARTIN'S CHAPEL.....	Melissa Maskell
MARVELL/LEXA.....	Kirk Doering
MCGEHEE FIRST/ARKANSAS CITY.....	Mary Love Loftis
MONTICELLO FIRST.....	William Alfred Eason
MOUNT OLIVE/BETHEL-NEW EDINBURG/WILSON CHPL.....	L.T. Marks
MOUNT OLIVET/PROSPERITY/UNION.....	Garry E. Wiles
NEW HOPE-SHERIDAN.....	Danny Dunlap
PALESTINE/TRINITY-WARREN.....	Charles W. Cauley
PINE BLUFF FIRST.....	David Fleming
Associate.....	Edna Morgan
PLEASANT GROVE-DEWITT.....	Gene White
PORTLAND/DERMOTT/WILMOT.....	Terrie Lynn Bunnell
REDFIELD.....	TBS
RISON/MOUNT CARMEL-RISON.....	Frankie Glenn Hicks
ROCK SPGS/WILMAR/MT PLEASANT/ANDREWS CHPL.....	Hardy Peacock
ROE.....	Joe E. Glover
SAINT FRANCIS.....	Jonah Wayne Smith
SAINT JAMES-PINE BLUFF.....	Henry Wilkins
Associate.....	Linda K. Duncan
SAINT LUKE-PINE BLUFF.....	James Edward Conn
SAINT MARK-PINE BLUFF.....	David Morgan
SCRUGGS CHAPEL.....	John W. Love
SHERRILL.....	William Ferguson
SPARKMAN/DALARK/BETHLEHEM.....	Sidney Royce Savage
STAR CITY FIRST.....	Bryan R. Diffie
STUTTGART FIRST.....	David W. Bush
SULPHUR SPRINGS-PINE BLUFF.....	Willis Findley
WALLER'S CHAPEL/FOUNTAIN HILL/ZION.....	Boyd F. Savage, Jr.
WARREN FIRST.....	Gary Maskell
WATSON/MOUNT TABOR-MONTICELLO.....	Walt Lowe
WESLEY CHAPEL-BRINKLEY/TAYLOR CHAPEL.....	William J Thompson
WESLEY-MCGEHEE.....	Barton Bynum
WEST HELENA/ELAINE.....	Richard P Rogers
WHITE HALL.....	Johnna J. Galloway

Southwest District
C.E. McAdoo, Superintendent

ASBURY-MAGNOLIA.....	Michael P. Daniel
ASHDOWN FIRST/RICHMOND.....	James H. Cross
AVERY'S CHAPEL/BRUCE/MEMORIAL MIDWAY.....	Jimmy Keith Teeter
BEARDEN/THORNTON.....	Andrew Wayne Hughes
BELL CHAPEL/RED HILL.....	Larry E. Goza
BRADLEY.....	John Braden
BUENA VISTA-STEPHENS.....	Cedric R. Walters
CAMDEN FIRST.....	Henry Andrew Ratliff
CENTER/CENTER POINT.....	Robert B McCoy
CHRIST-TEXARKANA.....	J. David Kassos
DELIGHT/ANTOINE/SMYRNA.....	James Taylor Henderson
DEQUEEN FIRST/GILLHAM.....	David S. Williams
DIERKS/GREEN'S CHAPEL.....	Robert L. Lyons
DODDRIDGE/OLIVE BRANCH.....	Walter L. Burnett
DUMAS MEMORIAL/MARYSVILLE.....	Pat Odom
EBENEZER-NASHVILLE.....	Shirley F White-Souder
EL DORADO FIRST.....	James P. Polk
Associate.....	Michael Blanchard
EMERSON/MT. PISGAH.....	Barbara Lewis
EMMET/HARMONY-HOPE/WILLISVILLE.....	Jerry G. Westmoreland
FAIRVIEW-CAMDEN.....	Pamela K. Brule
FAIRVIEW-TEXARKANA/OGDEN.....	Barbara B. Gilbert
FOREMAN/WADE'S CHAPEL.....	Terry Sager
FRIENDSHIP-PRESCOTT/SWEET HOME/UNION.....	Gene M. Ross

GREER'S CHAPEL/LYDESDALE.....	James Mark Lasater
HALL'S MEMORIAL.....	Joyce Watson
HARMONY-COLUMBIA/PHILADELPHIA/UNIT.....	John Wayne Edwards
HARMONY GROVE/HOLLY SPRINGS/LAKESIDE.....	James E. Harris
HINTON/DE ANN.....	Byron Wesley Mann
HOLLY SPRINGS -TEXARKANA.....	Doug Rhodes
HOPE FIRST.....	Steven Johnson
HORATIO/WINTROP.....	Phil Smith
HUTTIG.....	Robert Earl Ballard
JUNCTION CITY/PLEASANT GROVE.....	Lynn Ann Lewis McClure
LEWISVILLE.....	Ronnie K Eldridge
LISBON.....	Ralph Gary Riley
LOCKESBURG.....	Teresa Egan Chapman
MACEDONIA/MOUNT CARMEL.....	Tommy Halsell
MAGNOLIA FIRST.....	Larry Eugene Kelso
MINERAL SPRINGS/WAKEFIELD.....	Spencer Glendas Plumley
MOUNT MORIAH/VALLEY GROVE.....	James J. Fort
MURFREESBORO.....	James Wainscott
NASHVILLE FIRST/BINGEN.....	Paul B. Coy
NEW ERA.....	Charles Payne
NORPHLET/CENTENNIAL.....	William Zachary Roberts
PARKER'S CHAPEL.....	Gilbert Philmore Worley
PRESCOTT FIRST.....	Bill Lindsey Fish
RHODES CHAPEL.....	James Carroll Rawls
RONDO/PLEASANT HILL-TEXARKANA.....	Robert Clyde Armstrong
RUSHING MEMORIAL.....	Lonnie M. Landers
SAINT JOHN.....	Willie Joe Miller
SAINT MARK-EL DORADO.....	Michael L. Proctor
SAINT PAUL-EL DORADO.....	Robert Henry Walker
SCOTT'S MEMORIAL.....	Ella Harris
SILVER SPRINGS.....	Tony Huffman
SMACKOVER/SILVER HILL.....	Leon Thomas Dixon, Jr.
SPRING HILL/OAK GROVE.....	Revel Kidd
STAMPS.....	Terry Mann
SUGAR HILL.....	George Edwin Odell
SWEET HOME-MURFREESBORO.....	Al Terrell
TAYLOR.....	Ray Durham
TEXARKANA FIRST.....	Bruce Wayne Bennett
Associate.....	Vida R. Williams
TIMOTHY/McNEIL.....	Michael Gene Jennings
VILLAGE/EBENEZER-STEPHENS.....	Kenneth Hipp
WASHINGTON.....	Keenan C. Williams
WESTSIDE/ST. MARK/MISSOURI.....	Donald R. Nicholson
WILEY CHAPEL.....	TBS

West District
G. Mackey Yokem, Superintendent

ALMA.....	Velda Bell
ALTUS/GRENADES CHAPEL.....	Mark Cloninger
BARLING.....	Steve Holyfield
BONANZA.....	Jeffery L Blassingame
BOONEVILLE.....	Geral Holloway
CAVANAUGH/HACKETT.....	Troy Conrad
CECIL.....	Jerry Eubanks
CHARLESTON.....	William V. Buchanan
CHERRY HILL.....	James Lybrand
CITY HEIGHTS.....	Randy L. Miller
CLARKSVILLE.....	David R. Hanshaw
COLES CHAPEL/BRANCH.....	Jim Brooks
DYER.....	Philip Costner
	Cheryle Costner
FAITH-FORT SMITH.....	Charles W. Armour
Associate.....	Jeffery L Blassingame
FORT SMITH FIRST.....	David Paul Orr
Associate.....	Claire M Caldwell
Associate.....	Robert Blackwell Cloninger
Associate.....	Janice Sudbrink
GODDARD.....	James Steve Wingo
Associate.....	Kim Cloninger
Associate.....	Carter Ferguson
GRACE COMMUNITY.....	John Jeffrey Jones
GRAVELLY/BLUFFTON.....	Joy Carmean

GREENWOOD.....	Robert Craig Russell
HARTFORD/MIDLAND.....	Chris Rink
HARTMAN/SPADRA/HAYS CHAPEL.....	Regina Turner
HATFIELD.....	Sidney Simpson
HERITAGE.....	James Wesley Hilliard
HUNTINGTON.....	Frank Grubbs
JOURNEY.....	Ricky Lee Huggins
KIBLER.....	Deanna L. McCormack
LAMAR/MOUNT OLIVE-CLARKSVILLE.....	Tammy Jo Teltow
LAVACA/MOUNTAIN VIEW-ALMA.....	Lynn David Strang
MAGAZINE/MOORE'S CHAPEL/WAVELAND/PIONEER MEMORIAL.....	.
	Judy Hall
MANSFIELD.....	John J Noggle
MENA FIRST.....	Gary Frank Harrison
MIDLAND HEIGHTS.....	Daniel Lane Williams
MILLTOWN.....	Louise Finney
MISSION.....	Ulysses C Washington
MOUNT OLIVE-VAN BUREN.....	Barry D. Morton
MULBERRY.....	Charles B. Beevers
NEW BETHEL.....	Charles Jordan
NEW HOPE-VAN BUREN/NEWBERRY.....	Robert M. Jeffery
NORTH FORT SMITH HISPANIC MISSION.....	Julio Ibarra
OZARK.....	Royal Keith Dodson
PARIS/PRAIRIE VIEW.....	James T. Rowland
PARKS.....	Peggy Catron
SAINT PAUL-FORT SMITH.....	Steven M. Poarch
Associate.....	Todd Vick
Deacon.....	Mark L. Waynick
SQUARE ROCK/MT. PLEASANT-WALDRON.....	Suzanne Wilson
VESTA.....	Jonathan Payne
VIETNAMESE-FORT SMITH.....	Terry Gallamore
VIETNAMESE-VAN BUREN.....	Thang Nguyen
WALDRON/BIRDSVIEW.....	Patricia Diane Miller
WALTREAK.....	Larry Pat Millard
WASHBURN.....	H. Gaylan Cope
WESLEY - FORT SMITH.....	Matthew I. Daniels
WICKES/MOUNTAIN VIEW.....	Bryan Richardson
WOODLANDS.....	Ben Hampton Anderson

Other Appointments
Extension Ministries

ARKANSAS CONFERENCE.....	Philip L. Hathcock
ARKANSAS CONFERENCE.....	Robert Owen Crossman
ARKANSAS HOSPICE.....	Helen Jean Burton
ASBURY THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY.....	Robert Holifield
BRITISH METHODISM, GREAT BRITAIN.....	Susan Howe
CASA de DIOS.....	Mary Olson
CHRISTI HEALTH SYSTEM.....	Aric Bokker
CIRCLE OF LIFE HOSPICE.....	Audie D. Long
CONNECTED IN CHRIST.....	Michael Roberts
COURSE OF STUDY SCHOOL.....	Samuel Teague
CRIME VICTIMS ADVOCACY.....	David Morgan
DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS, STATE OF TX.....	Catherine Estes
EVANGELICAL SERVICES FOR AGING.....	Joe Michael Campbell
FLO & PHIL JONES HOSPICE HOUSE.....	Clarence Edward Pruett
GBGM METHODIST CHURCH OF SANTIGO CHILE.....	Jacob F. Schaible
GENERAL EVANGELIST.....	Charles Wiggins
HENDRIX COLLEGE.....	Judith J. Whitney
HENDRIX COLLEGE.....	J. Wayne Clark
HORIZONS STEWARDSHIP COMPANY.....	J. Clifton Christopher
INDIANA WESLEYAN UNIVERSITY.....	Christopher T. Bounds
JUSTICE FOR OUR NEIGHBORS.....	Stephen Jean Copley
MEMPHIS THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY.....	Andrew C. Thompson
METHODIST HEALTHCARE.....	John A. Wilcher
METHODIST NURSING HOME & VILLAGE.....	J. M. Rogers
OASIS CENTER OF NORTHWEST ARKANSAS.....	Donnie J. Huie
OHIO WESLEYAN UNIVERSITY.....	Rockwell Jones
PERKINS SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY.....	Rebekah Linn Miles
PHILANDER SMITH CHAPLAIN.....	Ronnie L. Miller-Yow
PROVIDENT MINISTRY SERVICE.....	Molly Davis Scott
ST. MARY'S HOSPITAL.....	Pamela Cicioni
TYSON FOODS.....	Richard McKinnie

UMCOR DISASTER RESPONSE.....	F. Thomas Hazelwood
UNIVERSITY OF MOUNT UNION.....	Martha D. CashBurless
US AIR FORCE.....	Ronald L. Feeser, Jr.
US ARMY RESERVE.....	Leonard Higgins
US ARMY.....	Harry T. Cross
US ARMY.....	William Clint Black
US NATIONAL GUARD	David Carl Eaton
US NAVY.....	Scott J. Shafer
WESLEY FOUNDATION - ASU.....	William Eric Van Meter
WESLEY FOUNDATION - ATU.....	Jason A. Molitor
WESLEY FOUNDATION - HSU/OBU.....	Jessica Lee Durand
WESLEY FOUNDATION - PINE BLUFF.....	Henry Wilkins
WESLEY FOUNDATION - SAU.....	James Mark Lasater
WESLEY FOUNDATION - UALR/ CONFERENCE STAFF.....	Maxine Y. Allen
WESLEY FOUNDATION - UAM.....	Edward Kavan Dodson
WESLEY FOUNDATION - UCA.....	John David Palmer
WESLEY FOUNDATION - UNIVERSITY OF AR.....	Omar H. Al-Rikabi

Appointed in Other Annual Conference

CENTRAL TEXAS CONFERENCE.....	Lawson Leonard Delony
MISSISSIPPI CONFERENCE.....	Ronald A Kitchens
NEW MEXICO CONFERENCE.....	Robert Hunt
OKLAHOMA CONFERENCE.....	James H. Lenderman

Deacons Appointed Beyond the Local Church

ADVENTURE IN ARTS - PULASKI HEIGHTS.....	Gail D. Hocott
AR CONFERENCE - DIR OF COMMUNICATIONS.....	Martha S. Taylor
CENTRAL HIGH SCHOOL.....	Adam Kirby
DAILY BREAD COUNSELING - BRYANT, AR.....	Garry Teeter
HENDRIX COLLEGE LIBRARY - DIRECTOR.....	Amanda Moore
JUSTICE FOR OUR NEIGHBORS.....	Melissa Thomas
METHODIST FAMILY HEALTH.....	James Scott Moore
MOUNT EAGLE RETREAT CENTER.....	Louise T. Harding

Diaconal Ministry

David Clemmons	David L. French
Jim Walsmith	John C. Yarrington
Denise E. Palmer	

Leave of Absence

Thomas Rhoades, Stephen Waggoner, Thomas Mark Ashcraft, Thomas Frase, Larry D. Ott, Mary Jane Pearce, Polly C. Shafer

Incapacity Leave

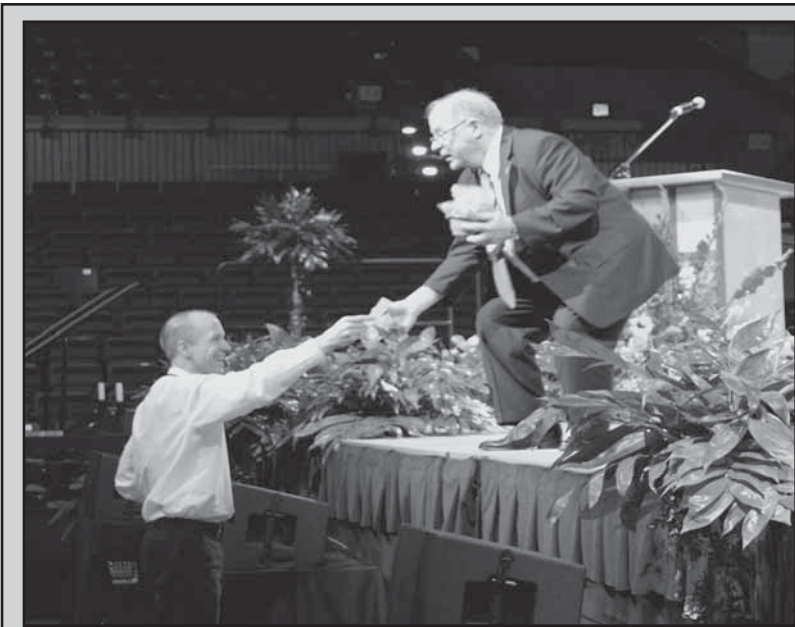
Robert Bell, Cornelia DeLee, Lewis See, Louann Averitt Murphy, Rufus Robert Burnham, Jr., Douglas Edwards, Floyd Ervin, Rita Kaye Hammett Evans, Larry Hunt, Everett Isom, Sam A. Long, John R. Soward, Regina Holtman Gideon, Cloyd Stephen Wiseman, Doyle E. Berckefeldt, Marion Fleming, Vernon Wayne Johnson, Gregory Webb, Marcia Dodd, Ronald W. Durham, Leslee Lynn Phillips

Honorable Location

Cynthia Lee Davis, Rhonda K. Crow Monroe, Larry Wesley Pearce, Constance Steele, Cary Don Womack, Darrell Van Smith, Jon Mac Taylor, Peter H. Kimball, Donald W. Lanier, Jerry Keith Cookus, Marcia Crossman, Susan Elizabeth Gladin, Charles Marcus Cooper, Thomas Winborn Barnett, William S. Briant Jr.

RIGHT: Military chaplain the Rev. Walter “Bubba” Smith salutes Bishop Crutchfield during the Ordained Ministry report at the 2011 Annual Conference. Smith left just two days after Annual Conference to begin a six-month deployment as Area Command Chaplain in the Middle East.

AUM PHOTOS BY AMY FORBUS



Impromptu auction garners additional funds for Congo Wells

The Rev. John Miles II, left, gives Bishop Charles Crutchfield his \$500 bid for a dish of candy to benefit the Congo Wells Project.

While waiting for ballot results for the Jurisdictional Conference delegation, the Bishop began an impromptu auction of the candy left on his desk as Annual Conference drew to a close. The resulting outpouring of generosity raised more than \$1,700 for that cause and others. Individuals emptied their wallets of cash, and various groups from throughout the Conference gave larger amounts. Clergy spouses gave \$250 in honor of Karen Crutchfield, and First UMC Maumelle gave \$1,100. The Rev. John Walker gave \$54 to honor his and his wife’s 54th wedding anniversary. The flood of generosity from the floor even included more candy, given to help keep the bids coming.

AUM PHOTO BY AMY FORBUS



ABOVE: The Rev. Chester Jones, center, a retiring district superintendent, passes the mantle to the Rev. Brittany Richardson Watson, a newly ordained elder, at the close of the June 7 commissioning and ordination service, as Bishop Charles Crutchfield looks on.

LEFT: Bishop Hope Morgan Ward of Mississippi preaches during a Service of Commemoration and Holy Communion, the opening worship at the 2011 Arkansas Annual Conference. Bishop Ward also preached the following night at the service of baptismal renewal.



NURTURE. *effectively.*



A truly thriving church nurtures relationships with the people within its community. This can be especially true in mission settings where the constituents served by the ministry are not necessarily the ones who provide most of the financial support and resources. UMR Communications can help you find the right way to encourage and cultivate the relationships that help you to

CONNECT. *effectively.*

Contact Cherrie Graham 800-947-0207 x142 | cgraham@umr.org

COMING UP

July

Vessels for the Lord conference July 8-9

Christ of the Hills UMC, 700 Balearic Road in Hot Springs Village, will host a Vessels for the Lord event from 8:30 to 3:30 on Saturday, July 9, featuring the Revs. Treccie Cook, Dorothy Jones and Mary Welch.

A time of prayerful preparation for the spiritual atmosphere for the Saturday conference will take place on Friday night, July 8, from 6:30 to 9:00 p.m. Attendees can expect to be blessed through fellowship, good food, special music, spirit-filled messages that can be applied to daily life, powerful prayer time, Holy Communion and moving of the Holy Spirit. There is no admission charge, but a love offering will be taken. A light breakfast and lunch will be provided.

For more information, contact Nancy Scott at 501-337-0065 or cnscott@suddenlink.net, Cassy Jungnickel at 501-922-4888 or visit vesselsfortheLord.org.

First UMC Paris homecoming and revival July 17

First United Methodist Church of Paris, Ark., invites all who have had relationship with the church to attend a homecoming and revival on Sunday, July 17. The Rev. Heath Bradley, who was raised in the Paris congregation and now serves at Pulaski Heights UMC Little Rock, will preach at both the 9:35 a.m. and 6:30 p.m. worship services. Former pastors and their families will receive special recognition, and a dinner will be served after the morning service.

Junior High Assembly July 20-23

Build on your relationship with Christ, relationships within your youth group and form new ties with others across the Conference by attending Junior High Assembly 2011, scheduled for July 20-23 at University of the Ozarks in Clarksville.

The Rev. Mark Norman, associate pastor of First UMC Benton, and Wayne Kerr of Houston, Texas, will serve as worship leaders.

For general information, contact Rod Hocott, rhocott@arumc.org or 501-324-8008. To ask specific questions about the event, contact Be Guinn, tsc@aristotle.net or 501-944-3294; Jay Clark, jclark@phumc.com or 501-944-8400; or Angel McPeak, amcpeak74@gmail.com or 479-883-0420.

Visit arumc.org/register to sign up for the event.

For details, visit accym.org, or join the group “Arkansas United Methodist Youth” on Facebook.

Senior High Assembly July 23-27

“Here Comes the Son!” is the theme for 2011 Senior High Assembly, July 23-27 at University of the Ozarks in Clarksville. The focus of the week involves seeking out spiritual gifts and learning how to take them out into the world. Participants will dig deep to discover their spiritual gifts, look at the differences and similarities of everyone’s gifts and how they all come together to form the Body of Christ. The Rev. Will Choate, pastor of Argenta UMC, and Wayne Kerr of Houston, Texas, will serve as worship leaders.

For general information, contact Rod Hocott, rhocott@arumc.org or 501-324-8008. To ask specific questions about the event, contact Natalie Clark, squirt4893@yahoo.com or Denise Wilson, dhwilson@centurytel.net or 501-339-8693.

Visit arumc.org/register to sign up for the event.

For details, visit accym.org, or join the group “Arkansas United Methodist Youth” on Facebook.

2011 School of Christian Mission July 27-30

“All Things Made New,” the 2011 School of Christian Mission, is scheduled for July 27-30 at Hendrix College in Conway. Study topics include “Coming Out on the Side of Grace:

Forgiveness and Reconciliation,” “Joy to the World: Mission in the Age of Global Christianity” and a course on Haiti that incorporates a focus on the impact of the 2010 earthquake.

The Arkansas Conference Board of Global Ministries, Arkansas Conference United Methodist Women and United Methodist Foundation of Arkansas co-sponsor the event. Doni Martin serves as this year’s dean.

In addition to courses for adults, the school also includes programs geared toward children and youth.

Participants must register by July 15. To download a brochure and registration form, visit arumc.org/acscm.

If you have questions about the School of Christian Mission, contact Beth Cobb at 479-719-0350 or bethcobb@att.net.

‘Care Team’ Training for Disaster Response July 29 and 30

Arkansas Conference Disaster Response will offer Basic Care Team training on Friday, July 29, from 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. and Care Team Leader training from 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. the following day. The combined cost is \$25, which includes materials, background check and meals.

Disaster response “Care Teams” are faith-based teams with standardized United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR) training to provide spiritual and emotional care following disasters. Deployed through their Conference disaster response, Care Teams provide support, information and referral for a holistic disaster recovery and help disaster survivors connect with their personal, community, spiritual, emotional and basic life resources. United Methodist Care Teams comply with standards set by National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster response (VOAD).

For information or to register for these sessions, contact Janice Mann at rainmaker@arkansas.net or 870-703-8359. Registration deadline is July 15.

August

Methodist Family Health Walk for Children and Families Aug. 5

Methodist Family Health’s 5th Annual Walk for Children and Families, an event benefiting the children and families served by MFH, is coming up Friday, Aug. 5.

Registration begins at 6 p.m. on the North Little Rock side of the Big Dam Bridge at Cook’s Landing. The Walk begins at 7 p.m. There will be live music, free ice cream, pizza and walking for a great cause. Cost is \$20 per individual or \$50 for a family. This event precedes the Wild River Country Youth Lock-In sponsored by the Arkansas Conference Council on Youth Ministries. For more information, contact Maggie Beeler at mbeeler@methodistfamily.org or 501-412-6178 or visit methodistfamily.org.

Lock-in at Wild River Country Aug. 5

The Youth Service Fund and Arkansas Conference Council on Youth Ministries (ACCYM) will sponsor a lock-in at Wild River Country in North Little Rock following Methodist Family Health’s Walk for Children and Families at the Big Dam Bridge. The lock-in begins at 8:30 p.m. Friday, Aug. 5 and continues until 1:30 the following morning. No reservations necessary. Upon arrival, a chaperone must purchase each group’s tickets (chaperones are free; churches must send one adult chaperone per 12 youth). A portion of the event’s proceeds will benefit Youth Service Fund.

2011 Ethnic Local Church grant applications due by Aug. 10

Aug. 10 is the next deadline to apply for an Ethnic Local Church Grant from the United Methodist General Board of Church & Society (GBCS). The grants are to strengthen ethnic minority local churches through education, advocacy or leadership

development as they engage in social justice.

To qualify, applicants must be either a United Methodist local church, district, annual conference, racial/ethnic caucus or other affiliated ethnic group/organization; or an ecumenical group/organization working with and through at least one United Methodist agency or organization whose program has an impact on at least one United Methodist ethnic minority local church.

The Ethnic Local Church Committee of GBCS’s Board of Directors makes grant recommendations to the full board for approval. At their spring meeting, GBCS directors awarded \$276,360 in Ethnic Local Church grants to 10 ministries.

Intent of the program is to provide start-up money; therefore, priority goes to first-time applicants. For more information, contact the Rev. Neal Christie at nchristie@umc-gbcs.org or 202-488-5611, or download the application at umc-gbcs.org.

St. Paul School of Theology hosts youth event Aug. 20

The second annual “ONE God, ONE Day, ONE Love” event on Saturday, Aug. 20, is an opportunity for youth from different Methodist churches (AME, AME Zion, CME and UMC) to meet for a time of worship, community building and service, as well as a time to reflect on the work done together. St. Paul School of Theology in Kansas City, Mo., and nearby community service organizations will host the event.

The cost is \$7 per person and includes lunch. For information, visit youththeology.com/oneday. Registration deadline is August 1.

Imagine Justice Summit features Bishops Keaton, Crutchfield, Sept. 17

In conjunction with the Arkansas Conference of the United Methodist Church and the Arkansas Board of Church and Society, the Imagine Justice Coalition of Arkansas announces the Imagine Justice Summit to be held Saturday, Sept. 17.

The summit will feature two leaders of our denomination: Bishop Charles Crutchfield of the Arkansas Area and Bishop Jonathan Keaton of the Michigan Area. Philander Smith College in Little Rock, Bishop Keaton’s alma mater, will host the event.

Based on Micah 6:8, “He has told you, O mortal, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do

justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?” the summit’s content will deal with justice issues that affect everyone. A track especially for young adults is being developed.

The Imagine Justice Coalition includes the Arkansas chapters of Black Methodists for Church Renewal and Methodist Federation for Social Action.

For information, contact Liza Godwin, lizagodwin@sbcglobal.net.

Look for more details in the August 5 issue of the *Arkansas United Methodist*.



Bishop Charles Crutchfield



Bishop Jonathan Keaton

OBITUARIES

FORT SMITH

Dois M. Kennedy



**Dois
Kennedy**

The Rev. Dois M. Kennedy, a retired elder in the United Methodist Church, passed away on May 28, 2011.

Born April 14, 1934, in Quitman, Ark., he was the youngest of nine children. His parents were Luster Kennedy and Lula Edwards Kennedy.

During his upbringing in Quitman, he was inspired by a high school Sunday School teacher, Harold Wilson, to enter the ministry. Wilson also became a minister in the United Methodist Church and lived his last years at the Methodist Nursing Home in Fort Smith, where Dois visited him regularly.

Dois graduated from Hendrix College and Perkins School of Theology at Southern Methodist University in Dallas, and served churches in the Texas area while in seminary.

Upon graduating from Perkins, he pastored Bethel in Jacksonville and Amboy in North Little Rock. He later served at First UMC Batesville before becoming pastor at Goddard UMC in Fort Smith, where he served for 21 years. During his time at Goddard, the church twice received the Large Church of the Year award, in 1995 and 1996. He retired in June 2004.

Kennedy served on committees in the North Arkansas Conference. He received the Harry Denman Award for Evangelism. He enjoyed visiting members of the church, homebound members, hospitals and nursing homes. His passion was serving.

He was very active in the communities where he served, which included involvement as chaplain for the Area Agency on Aging Hospice Program, AIDS Support Group, Community Rescue Mission, Board of Advisory Trustees at Sparks Hospital in Fort Smith and Fort Smith Police Department Care Team.

He is survived by his wife, Barbara; four children, Cindy Kennedy of Waterville, Minn.; Steve Kennedy of Las Vegas, Nev.; Chris Kennedy of Whitesboro, Texas; and Laura McCoy of Whitesboro, Texas; three stepchildren, Melissa Chitwood of Van Buren, Ark; Kevin Chitwood of Van Buren, Ark; and Tim Chitwood of Fayetteville, Ark; one brother, Junior Kennedy of Jacksonville, Ark; 10 grandchildren and 1 great-grandchild. He was a wonderful husband, father, grandfather and he blessed his family's lives.

A funeral service was held Wednesday, June 1, 2011, at Goddard UMC with another service at 1:00 PM Thursday, June 2, 2011, at Hope Community Church in Fairbanks, Ark. Burial at Fairbanks Cemetery followed.

Pallbearers were Steve Kennedy, Chris Kennedy, Kevin Chitwood, Tim Chitwood, Terry

Jennings and John Bernardo. Honorary pallbearers were all United Methodist clergy.

Memorials may be made to Goddard UMC, 1922 Dodson Ave., Fort Smith, AR 72901 or Peachtree Hospice, 2910 Jenny Lind, Fort Smith, AR 72901.

LEE'S SUMMIT, Mo.

Gerald F. Myers



**Gerald
Myers**

The Rev. Gerald Fay Myers, 72, of Lee's Summit, Mo., formerly of Russellville, Ark., passed away Friday, June 3, 2011 at Wilshire at Lakewood Nursing Home after a lengthy battle with Parkinson's disease. He was a retired elder in the Arkansas Conference.

The son of Fay and Mary Kathleen Burris Myers, he was born July 26, 1938, in Russellville. He graduated from Russellville High School with the class of 1956 and then received his Bachelor of Arts from Bethel College in McKenzie, Tenn., in 1962.

While attending Bethel College, he met and married the love of his life and beloved wife of 50 years, Rita Prather Myers. He received his Master of Divinity degree in 1965 from Memphis Theological Seminary.

Myers' first appointment was at Hampton Harrell Faustina UMC in South Arkansas (Calhoun County). He then served at First UMC Hot Springs as associate pastor, alongside George Wayne Martin; as senior pastor of Markham UMC Little Rock; Carr-Memorial UMC in Pine Bluff; and Portland, Wilmot and Dermott UMCs. Upon retirement in 2003, he and Rita moved to Russellville. In 2007, they moved to Lee's Summit, Mo., for special medical care.

Myers was a member of the Masonic Lodge and the Eastern Star Chapter #571 in Portland, Ark. He enjoyed woodworking, especially making custom furniture and later bird houses for family and friends. He also loved playing his acoustic guitar.

He is survived by his wife, Rita Myers of Lee's Summit, Mo.; three sons, Steven Myers and his wife, Pamela, of Sheridan; David Myers and his wife, Amanda, of Pine Bluff; James Stanfield-Myers and his wife, Paige, of Lee's Summit; two grandchildren, Whitman and Hudson Stanfield-Myers of Lee's Summit; a brother, Wayne Myers and his wife, Sue, of Russellville; a sister, Mary Patton and her husband, Joe, of Pottsville; and a sister-in-law, Maryellen Myers of Russellville.

The funeral was held on June 6, 2011, with the Rev. Roy Smith officiating. Burial followed at Oakland Cemetery in Russellville.

Memorials may be made to the National Parkinson's Disease Foundation, www.parkinson.org. An online guest book is available at humphreyfuneral.com.

Adopt a backpack this summer

It's mid-summer. As children dream of fireworks and diving boards and grilled hot dogs, parents are beginning to think about uniforms and bus passes and school supplies.

Olimpia Underwood is no exception. As a Spanish professor at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock and mother of a young teen, Underwood has a passion for education, intercultural dialogue and immigrants. These passions led her to volunteer at Arkansas Justice for Our Neighbors (JFON), where she schedules client appointments, conducts intake interviews and ensures that each client feels welcomed.

She wanted to provide the children of clients with a special back-to-school gift, and the Adopt-a-Backpack program was born.

Participating in Adopt-a-Backpack is a fun, creative way to share Christ's love with low-income immigrants in Arkansas. To participate, donate a new or gently used backpack and school supplies to fill each backpack, or give \$30 to provide one child with a backpack and school supplies.

Backpacks will be distributed to the children of JFON clients at the three clinics in Arkansas: (1) Dover UMC, the Rev. Roy Beth Kelley; clinic coordinator Sergio Picado; (2) First UMC Monticello, the Rev. Bill Eason; clinic coordinators Isabel Bacon and Sherry Knight; and (3) Oak Forest UMC Little Rock, the Rev. Russ Breshears; clinic coordinator Olimpia Underwood.

In the past year, Arkansas JFON has served clients from many countries, including Vietnam, Mexico, Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, Peru and South Africa. To learn more, or to sign up your church or Sunday school class, contact the Rev. Stephen Copley, JFON executive director, at 501-626-9220, or regional attorney Julie Larson at 501-374-3811.

BUSINESS & PROFESSIONAL DIRECTORY

STAINED GLASS



**Serving
Arkansas
with Quality
Stained Glass
since 1973**

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

CHARTERED BUS



**OUACHITA
COACHES**

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

BOOKKEEPING SERVICES

BOOKKEEPING
FOR CHURCHES

30 Years of
Experience



FOOTPRINTS

501.676.5010

www.footprintssolutions.com

COUNSELING

Daily Bread Counseling

(Member of Clergy Counseling Network)

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

Call for confidential appointment

501.847.2229 | 1.877.847.2229

www.dailybreadcounseling.com



Find the Arkansas Conference of The
United Methodist Church on Facebook
at facebook.com/arkansasumc

Kitchen Equip. & Supplies

Buy at our prices and \$ave

1-800-482-9026 or 228-0808

AIMCO EQUIPMENT CO.



**Great Cause
Good Food
Live Music
Registration 6 p.m.
Walk 7 p.m.
\$20 Individual
\$50 Family**

Taking Steps to Provide Compassionate Care to Children and Families.

**AUGUST 5, 2011
BIG DAM BRIDGE
NORTH LITTLE ROCK**

Methodist Family Health provides emotional, behavioral and spiritual support to more than 1,400 children and families in Arkansas every day.

For more information, call Maggie Beeler at 501.661.0720 ext. 7299, email her at mbeeler@methodistfamily.org, or visit www.methodistfamily.org.

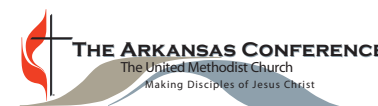


Shuler Drilling Company, Inc.

El Dorado, AR



Arkansas Medical Staffing, LLC
Caring Professionals by Your Side
501-224-1010



REPORTER

THE UNITED METHODIST

umportal.org



Ask Boldly

No room for wimps
in stewardship efforts | 6B



Reflections

Annual gatherings
are UM strength | 6B



On trial

Lesbian pastor
gets day in court | 8B

Section B

July 1, 2011



PHOTO COURTESY BARBARA PHILLIPS

Faithful members of First United Methodist Church in Archer City, Texas, are still quite evident. But the church, like many in rural areas, struggles to pay its bills. One reason is that many members are retired and on fixed incomes, limiting their ability to contribute.

Rural churches face financial struggle

BY LINDA BLOOM
United Methodist News Service

First United Methodist Church remains a respected member of the Archer City, Texas, community, but the boom times are over for both the congregation and the town.

Oil revenues and the population, estimated at 1,848 in 2000, have dropped in the past several decades. The county seat now serves as a bedroom community for Wichita Falls, although it draws some tourists who visit the bookstore established by author Larry McMurtry and stroll streets seen in the movie versions of two of his novels, *The Last Picture Show* and *Texasville*.

At the church—whose members have included county judges, town officials and Mr. McMurtry's mother

and sister—smaller contributions from seniors on fixed incomes and young families on tight budgets make it increasingly hard to meet financial obligations.

Tasks like repairing church windows, updating the parsonage and even starting new mission programs must go to the back burner.

Jerry Phillips, a mortgage loan officer who moved to Archer City in 1988 and commutes the 25 miles to a job in Wichita Falls, wonders how long First United Methodist can operate under these conditions. "We're just barely hanging on by our fingernails to get all the expenses met," he said.

Meeting financial obligations is a consistent struggle for the denomination's rural churches, according to a 2010 survey by the United Methodist Rural Fellowship.

Many rural congregations are proud of fulfilling 100 percent of their apportionments, the assessments that support general church ministries. But, the survey found, that commitment seems "unduly burdensome" and rural church members are concerned about the formula by which apportionments are calculated and the increasing costs associated with them.

"We all are committed to the connectional system," Mr. Phillips said. "Our hearts are in that sort of thing. But we can't seem to get an even chance to keep some of those dollars for local programming."

Some rural churches are joining in new ministry models to avoid closing their doors.

As a lay representative to North Texas Annual Conference—which

met June 5-7 in Dallas and Plano—Mr. Phillips has seen what happens to rural congregations that are no longer sustainable. "Every year, we vote on disbanding a church or two or three," he said.

In contrast, "most of the growth in our conference is in the metroplex, the Dallas-Fort Worth area," he added. "They're committed to building churches there."

Financial distress

The Rev. Jim Ozier, the conference's director of new church development and congregational transformation, acknowledges the rural-urban transition "is one of the real places of tension in the denomination."

Downward demographic trends have made it "tough" for churches in

■ See 'Struggle' page 4B

Q&A: UM actress brings faith to Broadway

Victoria Clark isn't a Catholic, but she plays one on Broadway. The United Methodist actress earned a Tony nomination for her role as Mother Superior in the current Broadway musical *Sister Act*. (She won a Tony in 2005 for her role in *The Light in the Piazza*.) Ms. Clark, an active member of St. Paul & St. Andrew United Methodist Church in New York City, says her faith informs her creative process as an actress. She answered questions via email from staff writer Mary Jacobs; here are excerpts.

Many artists see their work in a spiritual light, even if they aren't particularly "religious." Could you talk about how your faith informs what you do?

My faith is everywhere in my work. I pray hard before I take any job. It takes me forever to make a decision about what work to do, because I know I will be giving so much of my time and energy. I am not good at just skimming along. I really think hard about characters I play and do an

■ See 'Broadway' page 2B



Victoria Clark

FAITH WATCH

Baptists take stand on illegal immigration

Southern Baptists support a path to legal status for illegal immigrants, but don't favor amnesty. A resolution approved at the recent annual meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention called for restitution by those seeking legal status. "Southern Baptists understand it's just not politically viable to send an estimated 12 to 15 million undocumented immigrants back," said the Rev. Paul Jimenez, pastor of Taylors First Baptist Church of Taylors, S.C. "It's not humane either."

Bishops oppose assisted suicide

U.S. Catholic Bishops have come out strongly against suicide for the terminally ill. The bishops recently met in Seattle, where physician-assisted suicide is legal. "Compassion isn't to say, 'Here's a pill,'" said Cardinal Daniel DiNardo of Texas. "It is to show people the ways we can assist you, up until the time the Lord calls you."

Williams in trouble over budget criticism

The Rev. Rowan Williams, archbishop of Canterbury, was hailed as a "national treasure" when he officiated at the wedding of Prince William and Kate Middleton. But only weeks later, he's become a focus of controversy because of his strong criticisms of budget cuts championed by British Prime Minister David Cameron. Mr. Williams called Mr. Cameron's austerity program "radical, long-term policies for which no one voted."

Religious envoy calls leaders to task

The new U.S. envoy for international religious freedom says leaders in government, religion and business must be willing to condemn hateful ideologies. "Leaders who remain silent are contributing to the problem and should be held politically accountable," Ambassador-at-Large Suzan Johnson Cook told a U.S. commission on June 14.

—Compiled by Sam Hodges

■ **BROADWAY** Continued from page 1B

enormous amount of research. I struggle *constantly* with my choice to be an artist/actor, and wonder every day if I am doing enough in this world to make it better—to make it more beautiful, safer, etc. I often wonder if I shouldn't be off somewhere feeding hungry people.

My mom's sisters Jean Poe and Barbara Brock were both missionaries for their whole lives and they always told me that God needs us everywhere, and to look for ways to serve God where we are. So that's what I try to do in my acting and in my teaching. But I never feel it's enough. Never feel I am doing all that God has called me to do. Sometimes I am in true agony about this.

On the flip side, has the experience of playing Mother Superior in *Sister Act* somehow affected, deepened or otherwise informed your faith?

Yes, there was no other way. I am back to reading the Bible again, [though] not as much as I would like to. I learned a lot about the saints, and am still learning. Had to investigate a person, this character, whom I decided early on in the creative process was going through a period of spiritual dryness, deadness, lifelessness, and at times despair. And then to know that, you have to know the converse. You have to know the joy of God to feel God's absence, so I have been exploring all those things in my faith, and have examples of every kind of feeling and spiritual awakensness/dryness.

In my research, I met an absolutely wonderful person: Mother Dolores Hart, a former actress who left that life behind to become a nun at the Abbey of Regina Laudis in Bethlehem, Conn. She is in her early 70s now, and we met and she asked me about my faith, and what I believed. It was she who encouraged me to find Mother Superior's humanity, not her piousness, and to make her as real and as human as possible. I began with a very rigid character, but

over time, have allowed her to be more and more just me in a habit. A person who uses sarcasm and wit to hide the pain and the lack of spiritual fire, and who is miraculously brought back to her own faith by an unlikely source, Deloris Van Cartier, the character Patina Miller plays. It should be the other way around. Mother Superior should be teaching Deloris, but it is Deloris who ends up giving Mother her life back. That's the beautiful irony of our story, and it is a very humbling and cathartic journey to play every night. I am an extremely lucky actor.

Did you have any hesitations about taking the role, given that it's a little irreverent?

It's not irreverent in my opinion. It is beautiful in that she shows up her flaws.

Toward the end of the show, there is a brief theological debate between Deloris, the "undercover" nun who's a nightclub singer, and Mother Superior. I wondered if that was part of the original script, and whether there was any discussion behind that.

The script goes like this:

DELORIS: You know, sometimes when I'm singing with these girls, I'll just get it into my head to take it up a half-step, and all of them just take it up right with me without anybody saying a word.

MOTHER SUPERIOR: Perhaps one day you will know that that is God.

DELORIS: Perhaps one day you will know that that is just being human.

MOTHER SUPERIOR: Or perhaps one day we will realize it is both and they are the same thing.

This is not really something I believe Mother Superior would really say. Theologically, she does not believe that. And we did have conversations about what she really thinks and what else she could say. But we decided to keep it in anyway.

What do you think that passage was trying to say?

First, we have to meet in the middle—compromise is always necessary. Which is not very doctrine-y or Catholic, from my understanding. Secondly, it's the idea that Jesus is both human and divine is true, and as Mother Dolores Hart says, God needs our humanity, and that in this miraculous and mysterious way, Deloris's humanity is more divine than anything that Mother Superior possesses at this point. She has much to learn from Deloris in the areas of grace, forgiveness and compassion, three huge tenets of Christianity.

People always applaud at this point in the show and at the embrace between the two characters because they see Mother accepting Deloris and not fighting the semantics of the wording and the theology. These two could stand there and argue all afternoon. What's important is that they find some common ground and stop there, and hopefully, this will turn into a friendship. I think Mother would really like for that to happen.

In seeing your performance, some of the best laughs came when you responded without saying a word. I wondered if you might talk a little about how you made that choice and why it worked so well.

It's all in the script and our director Jerry Zaks. He is a magical and wonderful artist. Also, he let me find those moments with great patience.

Did you grow up in the Methodist Church? And did you sing in the choir?

I grew up in a Congregational church in Dallas, Texas. Yes, I did sing in the choir and was active in the youth group. I went to Ghost Ranch in New Mexico for three summers with my two older brothers to attend a choral camp there led by Dr. George Lynn, one of the all-time greatest choral conductors. My Southern Baptist grandmother lived about 5 minutes from our house and attended First Baptist Church in downtown Dallas, and she often played hymns by ear and sang at our house. My brothers both have beautiful singing voices, and the three of us had to sing duets and trios from time to time. It was hard to keep a straight face most of the time. We get pretty silly when we are all together.

How did you get connected with St. Paul & St. Andrew UMC?

My wonderful ex-husband took me to church at SPSA about a week after we started dating. A member there, Mary Ruth Reitz, heard me sing and said, "You're sitting in the wrong place. You need to get up there and be



PHOTO BY DENISE WINTERS

Victoria Clark, a member of St. Paul and St. Andrew UMC in New York, was nominated for a Tony for her role as Mother Superior in *Sister Act*.

in the choir." So I started singing with them whenever I could. That was about 27 years ago! I can't believe it!

I knew it was the church for me—very progressive and caring. I had always just grown up going to church and then going home. This church is our home. There is no "going" anywhere. If you attend, you are family, and everybody plays a part in making the church as vital and as viable as can be.

Are you involved there in any particular activity?

I taught Sunday School there for about six years, and served on the first interfaith committee that worked with our sister Jewish congregation from B'Nai Jeshuran in the early years of our "collaboration," when they first started sharing our worship space. I also helped make the huge banner that hangs over the chancel area, which reads, "It is Good When Brothers and Sisters Dwell Together in Harmony." I remember cutting out the felt letters! I gave several concerts to raise money for interfaith work, and worked closely with many great artists, including the singer-songwriter Jane Kelly Williams, and of course our wonderful pastors K Karpen, and for many years Ed Horne.

Aside from the fact that it's a lot of fun, is there anything you hope members of the audience might take away from the show?

Just what we sing at the end: "Nothing Matters More Than Love."

mjacobs@umr.org

THE UNITED METHODIST
REPORTER

www.umportal.org

news@umr.org

Sam Hodges, Managing Editor

Bill Fentum, Associate Editor

Mary Jacobs, Staff Writer

Cherrie Graham, Advertising Manager

Dale Bryant, Senior Designer

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

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

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

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



UM CONNECTIONS

Eleven Women Receive Seminary Scholarships

Eleven recipients of the 2011-12 Georgia Harkness Scholarships have been invited to participate in the United Methodist continuing educators' gathering in Miami, Fla., in July. The meeting will provide scholars a chance to learn about issues that the church will deal with during the 2012 General Conference. The \$5,000 scholarships are granted to women over 35 who are planning to be ordained as elders. The scholarship recipients are: Catherine Capp of South Pasadena, Calif.; Ella DeDeaux of Pass Christian, Miss.; Cecilia Grandosin of Redmond, Wash.; Sandra Johnson of Las Vegas, Nev.; Kim Kie of Pittsfield, Mass.; Julie Lewis of Laurel, Del.; Mimi Mills of Biddeford, Maine; Charla Sherbakoff of Knoxville, Tenn.; Nancy Shute of Brookville, Pa.; Maribel Vazquez of Caguas, Puerto Rico; and Kathy Williams of Wichita, Kan.

Faith leaders seek criminal justice reform

More than 20 faith leaders from across the United States gathered at the U.S. Capitol on June 16 to advocate for passage of the "National Criminal Justice Commission Act." The United Methodist Board of Church and Society and the Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism, on behalf of the Faith in Action Working Group of the Justice Roundtable, coordinated the "fly-in." The event was an effort to sway support to the bill targeted at fixing the nation's criminal-justice system.

Brewer named GCFA secretary

During the spring meeting of the General Council on Finance and Administration (GCFA), Scott Brewer was elected as Assistant General Secretary for Connectional Relations. Mr. Brewer, who has been with GCFA since 2001, will be responsible for strengthening relationships between annual conferences and GCFA as well as continued oversight of GCFA's data collection, record-keeping, and research functions.

—Compiled by Mary Jacobs

Did Ayn Rand inspire GOP budget?

BY DANIEL BURKE
Religion News Service

The atheist philosopher and novelist Ayn Rand published more than a dozen books before she died in 1982. Now, liberal Christians say another work belongs in Rand's controversial canon: the 2012 Republican budget.

House Republicans passed their budget along party lines in April, saying its drastic cuts to federal programs are necessary to prevent a deficit crisis.

But in a petition drive, video, ads and websites, liberal Christians counter that Rand's dog-eat-dog philosophy is the real inspiration for the GOP budget and its author, House Budget Committee Chairman Paul Ryan, R-Wis.

"You've got a guy who is a rising Republican star, and who wrote the budget, saying he's read her books and Washington needs more of her values," said Eric Sapp, executive director of the American Values Network, which produced the video. "If you're a Christian, you've got to ask some serious questions."

In other words, Mr. Sapp argues, you can follow Ayn Rand or Jesus, but not both.

In novels such as *Atlas Shrugged*, the Russian-born Rand portrays American capitalists as heroes battling an encroaching government bent on milking their success. In nonfiction writings, Rand is more explicit about her Objectivist philosophy, which views religion as a "primitive" sop to the feeble-minded masses.

Tea Party Republicans have embraced Rand's writings, particularly *Atlas Shrugged*, which some argue foretells the Great Recession and

Washington's extraordinary efforts to end it. Rush Limbaugh, former Federal Reserve Chairman Alan Greenspan and Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas all call themselves Rand fans.

Biographer Anne C. Heller says Rand was raised a secular Jew in Russia when Jews were persecuted by the Russian Orthodox Church. Rand decided that the existence of God and Christian ideal of self-sacrifice were untenable ideas, Ms. Heller said.

"It must be either reason or faith," Rand said in a 1979 interview. "I am against God for the reason that I don't

want to destroy reason." Rand saw her materialist philosophy and Christianity as incompatible and hoped to undermine Judeo-Christian ethics.

Rand's anti-religious views, however, are not as well-known as her novels. By highlighting them, Mr. Sapp and liberal Christians hope to discredit the GOP budget, and drive a wedge between the conservative Christian and Tea Party wings of the Republican Party.

To that end, Mr. Sapp is promoting a video in which evangelical leader Chuck Colson warns Christians to beware of Rand's "idolatry of self and selfishness."

"I am no fan of big government, but there are far better ways to critique it than Rand's godless nonsense, especially for Christians," Mr. Colson says in the video.

More than 6,000 people have signed a petition asking Mr. Ryan to put down Rand and pick up a Bible, according to Kristin Ford of Faithful America, a left-leaning online group.

"Ayn Rand's philosophy of radical selfishness and disdain for the poor and struggling is antithetical to our faith values of justice, compassion and the common good," the petition reads.

The American Values Network video, which Mr. Sapp said will be emailed to 1.2 million Christians in Wisconsin, opens with anti-religious

remarks from Rand and segues into Republican leaders, including Mr. Ryan and Sen. Rand Paul, R-Ky., offering high praise of the novelist.

"Rand, more than anyone else, did a fantastic job of explaining the morality of capitalism, the morality of individualism," Mr. Ryan says in a 2009 Facebook video excerpted in the ad. "It's that

kind of thinking, that kind of writing that is sorely needed right now."

'Cafeteria Randian'

Mr. Ryan's spokesman, Kevin Seifert, said the congressman "does not find his Catholic faith to be incompatible with his feelings for Ayn Rand's literary works. ... Rand is one of many figures and authors that Congressman Ryan has cited as influencing his thinking during his formative years."

Mr. Seifert said that Mr. Ryan has not seen the ads, and so would not comment on them, or offer an opinion on Rand's anti-religious statements.



U.S. Rep. Paul Ryan, a star of the federal budget debate, faces criticism from some Christians for his admiration of novelist-philosopher Ayn Rand and her emphasis on individualism.

"It's not appropriate for him to speculate on an individual's personal religious views," Mr. Seifert said.

The GOP congressman has quoted the late Pope John Paul II's warning that government welfare programs can lead to inertia, overweening public agencies, and ballooning budgets.

Jay W. Richards, a Catholic and author of *Money, Greed and God: Why Capitalism is the Solution and Not the Problem*, calls Mr. Ryan, like many Rand admirers, a "cafeteria Randian."

"I suspect the progressive Chris-

tians are confusing that point," he said. "You can agree with Rand's critique of collectivism as enervating and soul-destroying without adhering to her overarching philosophy."

But Ms. Heller disagrees.

"Certainly you can believe that the state can't do everything for everybody, but if you are a practicing Christian, you also believe that it is our duty to take care of the least among us," she said. "And we know perfectly well from history that churches and individuals can't do that job alone."

Dean Duke Divinity School

Duke University invites applications and nominations for the position of Dean of the Divinity School. The University seeks for its next Dean an intellectual leader who has a demonstrated commitment to scholarship and theological education for Christian ministry, an ability to articulate and implement a strategic plan consistent with the University's overall strategic plan, the capacity to work collaboratively and creatively with faculty and administrative colleagues within the School as well as across the University, and the potential to be effective in fundraising and generating other kinds of supportive relationships. Especially the Dean must shepherd the historic and continuing relationship between the Divinity School and the United Methodist Church, as well as its strong relationships with diverse Christian denominations and other religious faiths.

Please send inquiries, applications, and nominations electronically to the address below by Thursday September 15, 2011.

Susan F. Booth, Program Coordinator
Office of the Provost, Duke University
susan.booth@duke.edu

To ensure full consideration, include "Divinity Dean Search" in the subject line. All attachments must be accompanied by a text message in the body of the email that includes the name of the individual submitting the application/nomination. For more information: <http://divinity.duke.edu/dean-search>

Duke UNIVERSITY
*Duke University and Health System
is an Equal Employment Opportunity/Affirmative Action Employer*



PHOTOS COURTESY BARBARA PHILLIPS

Jerry Phillips is a mortgage loan officer who worries about the financial future of First UMC in Archer City. “We’re just barely hanging on by our fingernails” to meet expenses, he says.

■ **STRUGGLE** *Continued from page 1B*

places like Archer City. “We see examples where occasionally a church can just really thrive,” he said, citing one growing small congregation in East Texas, “but those are few and far between.”

At 61, Mr. Phillips is one of the younger members of his Sunday school class. He estimated that of the 75 regu-

lars who attend worship, some of whom are second- and third-generation members, about half are living on Social Security or a teacher’s pension. Many are widows or widowers who raised their families in the church. The church has about 200 members on its rolls.

Among the active members are Jane Toliver, 75, and her husband, Bill, 81, re-

tired school employees, who joined the church in 1967.

The church’s financial future is Jane Toliver’s main concern. “The older people are on a fixed income and the younger people, some of them have been hit by loss of jobs,” she explained. “Then there are divorces—that always hits people financially.”

She is appreciative of efforts by younger church members, particularly the “single moms” who are eager volunteers. “They’re very involved. But they don’t have a lot of money to put into apportionments and the upkeep of the church.”

The congregation generates \$100,000 to \$125,000 in gifts and offerings each year, Mr. Phillips said, but that only covers required expenditures, such as payroll, utilities and apportionments.

If someone doesn’t fund a new congregational program from his or her own pocket, “it probably doesn’t get done.”

Sometimes, the offerings aren’t enough for the basics. Last year, Ms. Toliver said, the church was “way behind” on its apportionment commitment. At

the last minute, someone donated a car, which the congregation sold, allowing it to meet most of the shortfall.

She believes “different rules” should apply to financial obligations for rural congregations like First Church Archer City than for larger urban churches like First Church Dallas or First Church Wichita Falls.

Still, Ms. Toliver is more optimistic about the church’s fortunes now that a new pastor, the Rev. Beth Kellner, is leading the congregation. “We’re so open and ready to be led and have some new ideas that we can try,” she said.

‘Possibilities’

Ms. Kellner, who started Feb. 1 at First United Methodist, agrees “there is a lot of concern” about paying the bills, but thinks the congregation can continue to draw on its rich heritage for strength. “We know there are people in the community . . . who need the church,” she said. “A lot of possibilities stand in front of us.”

A vision shaped from those possibilities, she believes, must come from the congregation itself. Ms. Kellner, experienced with small congregations,

has met with small groups of members to hear what they want, feel and dream.

“That has been very, very insightful and very eye-opening,” she said. “One of the things we’re all in agreement on is reaching out to our children, our youth and our young adults.”

Her husband, John Drummond, is working as a volunteer to help revitalize the church’s youth program.

Melba Gardner, a long-time member who also serves as a part-time administrative assistant in the church office, is a big advocate for building a strong youth ministry. “They are the future of our church and we really need to work in that area,” she said.

For Ms. Gardner, 75, life at First United Methodist is very much a family affair. She and her late husband, Clyde, joined the church after retiring from their jobs at Southwestern Bell and moving to a lake near Archer City in 1990. Her two sisters, two sons and a daughter-in-law also belong to the congregation.

She is concerned because the congregation can’t afford to hire a youth minister. She would like to see more denominational attention to rural areas



The Little Disciples class represents part of the youth contingent at First UMC in Archer City.

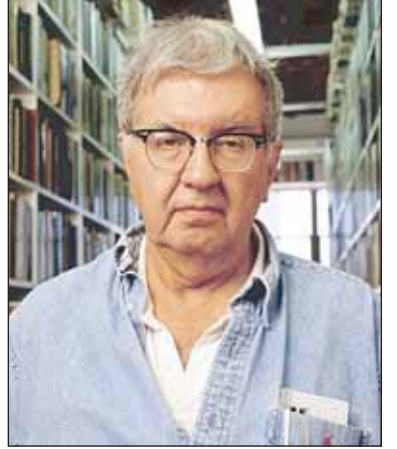


PHOTO COURTESY ANGILEE WILKERSON, UNIVERSITY OF NORTH TEXAS

Though a small town, Archer City is home to a massive bookstore owned by Larry McMurtry, who grew up there and went on to become author of the Pulitzer Prize-winning novel *Lonesome Dove* and many other books.



ABOVE: Audrey Schroeder recently sang her first solo, accompanied by her uncles Ryan and John Phillips. LEFT: Christi Payne and her daughters are among the young families active in the church, including as volunteers. BELOW: Some at First UMC in Archer City say rural congregations need special help, including “different rules” for paying apportionments.



FUMC in Archer City, Texas, faces serious financial challenges, but spirits are lifted by the involvement of young people in worship. Clay and Callen McCasland serve as acolytes.

and financial assistance for struggling churches.

“A lot of churches wish we could pay for a youth minister for them,” Mr. Ozier said. “But, unfortunately, no conferences I know of have that kind of budget anymore. What we have to do instead is try to train lay people in youth ministry or group churches together.”

‘Harder job’

At present, 67 North Texas churches are part of what the conference calls the “transformation process,” designed to help congregations “either maintain or regain their focus of inviting people to remember what church is all about.” Depending on the congregation’s size, Mr. Ozier said, each church pays \$1,000 to \$2,000 a year over a three-year period

for seminars on various topics, coaching and consultative work.

In addition, the North Texas Conference offers training seminars and summits for churches of all sizes throughout the year and participates in a jurisdiction-wide small church leadership institute. Ms. Kellner, who grew up in a small church on the outskirts of Baltimore, has already been involved in some of this training and plans to attend the small church institute in November.

Still, Mr. Ozier acknowledged, “it’s true that more emphasis is put on starting new churches. That’s because all of our denominational research shows the best way to reach new people is through new churches.”

A church’s history and the dynamics of relationships among members can make revitalization of an existing

congregation “a harder job” than a new church start, noted the Rev. Roger Grace, the rural fellowship’s executive director.

“You have to change an entire culture sometimes to revitalize a church,” he said. “That’s a longer task and a hard task. But it needs to be done.”

Significant revitalization does not occur without change within the congregation, Mr. Grace added. “A number of churches aren’t willing to do that and they don’t grow.”

Ms. Kellner believes that Archer City’s welcoming, loving congregation wants to be intentional about making a difference. “There is a sense that God is in this place,” she said. “God does have a plan for us and we’re seeking to discern it and how we can best carry it out.”



Most pastors wimp out in stewardship preaching

BY MARTIN THIELEN
Special Contributor

Several months ago my clergy support group discussed stewardship. We eventually got to the topic of stewardship sermons. When we did, a member of the group said, "When it comes to preaching about money, most preachers are wimps!"

Unfortunately my colleague's comment is often true. When it comes to preaching on stewardship, clergy tend to be timid, tentative and apologetic. However, the Bible is not timid about money at all. Since financial stewardship is a major biblical theme and since our churches need strong financial support to prosper, clergy need to become bolder about preaching on money.

Last fall our church engaged in a major emphasis on financial stewardship. During October all of our adult Sunday school classes studied Adam Hamilton's excellent little book, *Enough*. In support of that study, I preached a four-week sermon series on Christian finances called "God Lessons from the Great Recession."

A brief synopsis of the series follows.

1. Don't be a financial fool. The first sermon, based on Jesus' parable of the rich fool in Luke 12:13-21, warned listeners not to make the acquisition of money and things their ultimate priority. To help make the point, I told my congregation about the classic movie *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*, based on the Pulitzer Prize-winning play by Tennessee Williams. The movie tells the story of a rich and powerful old man called "Big Daddy." Tragically, in the end Big Daddy, like Jesus' rich fool, was absolutely bankrupt in things that really matter. The bottom line of the sermon was: Don't let this happen to you.

2. Follow God's financial plan. The second sermon laid out, in broad strokes, the following six biblical financial principles. A listening guide listing these principles and Scripture references was provided.

- Earn ethically (Hab. 2:6-9; Prov. 11:1).
- Resist greed (Eccl. 5:10; 1 Tim. 6:9-10).
- Spend modestly (1 Tim. 6:6-8; Heb. 13:5).



Martin Thielen



PHOTO COURTESY GOODSAMARITANPROGRAM.ORG

The Rev. Martin Thielen says the Bible is anything but timid on the topic of financial stewardship—so why are clergy afraid to preach about it?

- Avoid debt (Prov. 22:7; Rom. 13:8).
- Save diligently (Prov. 21:20; Gen. 41:35-36).
- Give generously (Prov. 3:9; 1 Tim. 6:18).

3. Cultivate a life of contentment. The third sermon grappled with the question, What brings true contentment? The text was Philippians 4:10-13, where Paul says, "I have learned to be content with whatever I have" (NRSV). I began the sermon by sharing important research from an excellent book called *The How of Happiness: A Scientific Approach to Getting the Life You Want*. According to the author, Sonya Lyubomirsky, social scientists have discovered that once a person's basic needs have been met, additional money and possessions have virtually no impact on their contentment levels.

So if money and things don't lead to contentment, what does? Although numerous factors contribute to our overall happiness, none is more important than gratitude. The remainder of the sermon laid out several strategies for enhancing gratitude, all based on the apostle Paul and the book of Philippians.

4. Follow Dr. Green's final prescription. The title for this sermon came from the popular TV show *ER*, which ended a 15-year run in 2009. Dr. Mark Green, one of the main characters, was about to die from a brain tumor. He shared final words of advice to his daughter, his "final prescription," so to speak. He said to her, "Be generous. Be generous with your time.

Be generous with your love. Be generous with your life. Be generous." This message, based on Proverbs 11:24-25 and Acts 20:35, was the only sermon in the series that focused directly on supporting the church financially. I shared my own testimony on tithing and encouraged members of the congregation not currently tithing (most of them!) to move in that direction.

This small-group study and sermon series profoundly impacted our stewardship campaign. The campaign, carried out primarily through the mail, began immediately after the four-week emphasis. In spite of a terrible recession, more people pledged more money than ever before in the history of our church.

In fact, pledges increased 13 percent from the year before. An increase of that amount would be remarkable any year, but given the horrible economy, it was almost miraculous. It proved to me that when church leaders creatively and boldly challenge their congregation to generously support God's work, the people of God will enthusiastically respond.

Dr. Thielen serves as senior pastor of First United Methodist Church, Lebanon, Tenn. His preaching and worship website, including sermons and series, is www.GettingReadyforSunday.com. His books include *What's the Least I Can Believe and Still Be a Christian?* *A Guide to What Matters Most* (Westminster John Knox Press), and *Ancient-Modern Worship: A Practical Guide to Blending Worship Styles* (Abingdon Press.)

REFLECTIONS

Nothing quite like Annual Conference

BY WOODIE W. WHITE
UMR Columnist

I am Annual Conference session addicted! While there are those who often complain about having to attend, even when I was required to be present as a clergy member, and later as an active bishop, I looked forward to attending. Not to sometimes boring sessions mind you, or to out of control debates, of course, none of which occurred when I was presiding! (That's a joke.)

There is perhaps no time when we are more Methodist than at an Annual Conference session. Here United



Bishop Woodie White

Methodists of all descriptions, and from all kinds of congregations, come together and there seems to be a special something that finds a kind of common identity. This common identity does not mean homogeneity in all things, however. We United Methodist are different in race, ethnicity, language, world-view, even theological emphasis, but that is precisely what gives us this sense of commonality.

As a retired bishop, I really don't have to attend an Annual Conference session. Bishops are not members of an Annual Conference, but rather the Council of Bishops. Yet, I can't imagine not attending some portion of an Annual Conference session. During this season of conferencing, I was privileged to attend three. They were different but alike. In fact they were far more alike than different.

John Wesley and Francis Asbury saw to it that when Methodists came together for conference there would clearly be common items of agenda and to some degree form. Specific matters would be attended to regarding the state of ministry and accountability of one's stewardship. This has not changed, though each Annual Conference may be distinctive. But even regional flavor does not erase the character of a United Methodist Annual Conference session.

Drop a blindfolded United Methodist in the midst of an Annual Conference session being held anywhere across the connection, and he or she will identify the gathering if not the location. Yes, there is something distinctive about it.

I was able to sing "And Are We Yet Alive" three times, and each time I was just as excited. And though the musicians in one Conference tried to change it a bit, the people were not having it. The body sang it by heart!

The main thing

There is such an excitement among United Methodists as they gather. Even those who are less excited about being there are a part of the landscape. It wouldn't be Annual Conference without them. And there are still those who purchase new outfits for the occasion. I observed a few who forgot to take off the tags.

Debates, resolutions, worship, gatherings at Cokesbury, and oh, the singing! But nothing is quite as moving as the recognition service for those clergy retiring. The memorial service to remember those lay and clergy members who have died since last the conference met is never without tears. There is nothing more beautiful than the ordination service. The ancient ritual is joined to contemporary liturgy. The act of laying on of hands by the bishop always brings a sense of something greater than anything seen, including the act itself.

By now, most of this year's conference sessions in the United States have taken place. Lay and clergy have been elected to represent their conference at the General Conference in the spring of 2012. Reports of the generosity of United Methodists to causes across the world have been made. Urging by leaders that greater attention be given to winning disciples of Christ for the transformation of the world have been heard. Lay and clergy return to congregations and communities vowing to be more faithful in the new conference year.

We United Methodists are far better than we often give ourselves credit. Despite the fact we have "drifted astray" as one author put it, we are seeking again to make the main thing, the main thing. And because we all love the church so profoundly, there will be discussion, debate, and sometime conferencing that is not very holy! That too is the Methodist Way. There is something quite special about an Annual Conference session.

I can hardly wait for next year!

Retired Bishop White is the denomination's Endorsing Agent for Chaplain Ministries and bishop-in-residence at Candler School of Theology.

Good leaders want honest assessment

BY TOM ARTHUR
Special Contributor

Conventional wisdom says that leaders hate criticism and those who work with them would rather keep a dysfunctional team than confront a leader's incompetency. No one wants to be seen as uncivil or impolite, especially in ministry settings. We have an epidemic of niceness that keeps us from giving and receiving good feedback, but I think we leaders long for constructive criticism, and I think those who we lead long for ways to dish it out without feeling like they're tripping the "nicewire."



Tom Arthur

I hate criticism, too. But not always. I actually like it when I ask for it. When I get a surprise critical email it upsets my whole day. I get anxious. I ruminate on the criticism. I argue with the person. I get defensive. But when I ask for criticism and get a response email chock full of it, there's little-to-no anxiety. I actually learn how to be a better leader.

A comment in a recent post of mine suggested that an associate pastor felt isolation when she planned worship and preached and didn't receive any comment, positive or negative, from her senior pastor. I'd feel bad too, but then I'd go ask for it. When I was a ministry staff member of a large church I always desired real, honest and constructive feedback from my pastor. I regularly requested it.

'... what would it be like if we were constantly asking for feedback, for critique, for criticism?'

A recent article in *Psychology Today* suggests I've been on to something. Apparently we are more open to receiving feedback when we ask for it. We get less defensive. We hear the critique without prejudice. We take into consideration how we can improve without feeling insulted. This got me thinking, what would it be like if we

were constantly asking for feedback, for critique, for criticism? Would our stress levels as leaders go down? Would we get better at what we do? Would we be both more faithful and more fruitful? Could we say goodbye to niceness?

I've also been wondering if asking for feedback doesn't dismantle the nicewire for the person giving the feedback. If you are open to feedback, and actually make changes based on it, won't those dishing it eventually trust to say what they really think instead of what they think you want to hear? One of my staff members and I have built that kind of a trusting relationship. We're always asking each other how we can improve. No stepping on eggshells between the two of us. We tell it like we see it because we ask each other for that kind of critique. We're actually improving one another's leadership.

Here are some ways I've tried to court feedback:

- Taking five minutes at the end of every meeting to ask the team what went well in the meeting and where there's room for improvement.
- A 360 degree evaluation survey online every year to ask the membership to tell me how I'm doing (Marshall Goldsmith's book *What Got You Here Won't Get You There*, shows you how to do this).
- A vision meeting twice a year where the church staff presents ideas for the future and asks two questions: What are the strengths of these ideas, and what are the obstacles to accomplishing this vision?
- A sermon feedback team to watch sermon DVDs (thank you seminary preaching class for this idea) and questionnaires in 10 random bulletins every Sunday (Bishop Will Willimon writes about this in the *Concise Encyclopedia of Preaching*).
- Pre-worship meetings with everyone involved in worship to ask for suggestions on how to improve today's worship (my church was already doing this when I arrived as pastor) and meeting with my worship leader between services to ask each other the same question (this was my worship leader's idea, and he continually improves my sermon!).

Break the nicewire and ask for feedback. All the time.

The Rev. Arthur is pastor of Sycamore Creek Church, a worshiping congregation of the United Methodist Church, in Lansing, Mich. Reprinted from *Faith & Leadership* (www.faithandleadership.com).

UM annual gatherings prompt useful questions

BY JEROME (JERRY) DEVINE
Special Contributor

John Wesley has often been quoted on his deep concern as an octogenarian. Near the end of his life he raised the specter that the people called Methodist could become a lifeless sect, having the form but not the substance.

Every Annual Conference gathering I participate in raises that specter for me. Every General Conference I monitor or participate in as a delegate raises that specter for me. While I stepped away from the Wesleyan movement earlier in my life for a brief period, I have been in this journey nearly since birth. Something keeps me here. Perhaps it is a combination of a disquieted heart and a compelling hope and desire to see transformation outside and within our church.

How did you experience your 2011 Annual Conference? What did you take away? What did you add so that others might receive something to take away? Did you have opportunity for someone to ask you why we were present and what it is that we do?

We in the Detroit Conference passed some legislation, and tabled a lot as well. That happened in several annual conferences this year, so I suppose we may learn something from that shift eventually. Some studies and comments would suggest we are no longer in the place of legislating ourselves into wholeness.

In the meantime the elected delegates to General Conference 2012 will have opportunity to work with the many petitions seeking to engage what we are to be about as a people of God in our time. We passed a budget with no discussion, as we often do these days. I appreciate not micromanaging such things on the floor of annual conference. Listening well to one another prior to annual conference does make a difference.

Story power

Stories matter. Public narrative changes the way in which we see one another and are able to hear and act. Stories impacted a special offering. Stories impacted medical kit collections and donations. Stories awakened us to what it means to see Jesus



Jerry DeVine

among the marginalized.

Stories helped us laugh as we celebrated long ministry careers. Stories helped us heal from losses experienced over the past year. Where did you find your story among the other stories told?

Last January I heard a talk by a CEO of major global corporations who also happens to be a leading United Methodist.

This successful corporate leader told the story of one particular corporation he was asked to take over and lead into a new level of effectiveness and profitability. In his five years with the company he led it from a \$3 billion a year industry to nearly \$20 billion a year.

This United Methodist fully understood the necessity of clear expectations and accountability. When he first arrived at the new company, a staff person handed him two notebooks, each about 180 pages. One notebook was the policy manual and the other was the procedures manual. The new CEO did read both through, quickly assessing that they were focused on restriction more than innovation and empowerment.

Capacity to engage

The CEO held a press conference in the company's parking lot, where he took both manuals and ceremoniously burned them. He then set about creating guiding documents that encouraged excellence and communication, alongside of expecting

collaboration in the midst of innovation. He wanted fruitfulness.

We are at our best when we expect something of each other. We are at our most fruitful potential when we encourage excellence and communication, alongside of expecting collaboration in the midst of innovation. We are at a time in our movement's history that is calling for innovative and adaptive leadership in a system set up for managerial continuity.

What would it be like if we could fit the essentials of our *Book of Discipline* in a shirt pocket or small purse? Don't misunderstand me: the *Book of Discipline* can be a source of insight and guidance. It can also be so detailed that we lose the capacity to engage our present day.

What would it be like if we had a deep conversation on what we should be able to expect from one another as clergy? What should laity expect from one another? What might the outer communities expect from our local churches? What might our local churches expect from our connectional community?

We have completed another annual conference session. Did it matter that we gathered? Yes, it did. The year ahead is our opportunity to prepare for and examine the fruit of our decisions.

The Rev. Dr. Jerome (Jerry) DeVine is director of connectional ministries in the Detroit Annual Conference.

CLASSIFIED ADVERTISING • CLASSIFIED ADVERTISING

MISCELLANEOUS

DISPLAY & BANNER ADVERTISING

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

YOU CAN HAVE YOUR OWN VERSION OF THE UNITED METHODIST PORTAL

News from your local church, stories from the award-winning staff of the *United Methodist Reporter*, real-time information from Yahoo! News and Google—all in one home page. Visit www.umportal.org and see how easy it is to have a Portal page for your church. Request an online demonstration to learn how easy it is to bring a customized version of the *UMPortal* to your church, email: portal@umr.org.

CLASSIFIED ADVERTISING

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

LUMICON DIGITAL PRODUCTIONS

Lumicon offers downloadable worship resources based on the Scriptures and rooted in current culture, features planning guides, graphics and video. Online library provides your church with range of resources, from Scripture commentary, drama and visual ideas to finished images and videos. Browse the search bank by topic, lectionary or verse at www.lumicon.org or call toll-free 1-866- 586-4266 for more information.

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

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

UM jury gives pastor 20-day suspension for having officiated at same-sex union

BY HEATHER HAHN
United Methodist News Service

KAUKAUNA, Wis.—In a rare church trial, the Rev. Amy DeLong was unanimously found guilty on June 22 of having violated United Methodist law by performing a same-sex union.

The same jury, or trial court, of Wisconsin ordained elders voted 9-4 to suspend the pastor for 20 days, beginning in July. By a vote of 12 to 1, the jury acquitted her of a second charge of being a “self-avowed practicing homosexual.”

The church forbids the ordination and appointment of anyone meeting that description.

“The trial was truly a heart-wrenching and painful process,” said Bishop Linda Lee of the Wisconsin Annual Conference. “Yet, we have hope because of our common faith in Jesus Christ, and trust that some growth and good can come of this.”

Ms. DeLong has not denied that she is a lesbian, but her counsel, the Rev. Scott Campbell, argued that church authorities had not proven she engaged in prohibited sexual activities.

During the trial here, Ms. DeLong faced numerous questions about the nature of her relationship with her partner of 16 years, Val Zellmer.

She balked at questions by the church’s counsel, the Rev. Thomas Lambrecht, about her sexual activity: questions which he said he was reluctant to ask. Ms. DeLong said such questions should have been asked

during the fact-finding investigation before the trial.

After about 15 minutes of consultation among both counsels and the trial’s presiding officer, retired Bishop Clay Lee Jr., Mr. Lambrecht posed the question one more time.

“While I don’t fully understand what the word self-avowed and practicing means, I do know when it feels like a forced avowal, and that is what this is feeling like,” Ms. DeLong said. “My answer is still I will never, to anybody who is trying to do me harm, talk about the intimate, private behavior of my partner and me.”

She did testify that she has called herself “a self-avowed practicing homosexual” because that is what the *Book of Discipline*, the denomination’s law book, calls her.

The trial also included testimony from Carrie Johnson. Ms. DeLong officiated at the holy union of Ms. Johnson and her partner, Carolyn Larson, in September 2009.

Ms. Johnson testified that she approached Ms. DeLong about performing the ceremony because she believed in God and wanted to have a sign of that presence at the service.

“The second reason was why not?” Ms. Johnson said. “Why can’t we be treated as human beings like everybody else? It was about fairness.”

Penalty phase

Ms. DeLong was the only witness called by Mr. Lambrecht during the trial’s penalty phase.

She testified that she would not

abide by the United Methodist Church’s ban against clergy officiating at same-sex unions.

“I can’t imagine doing that,” she said.

Ms. DeLong’s counsel called five witnesses on her behalf, among them the Rev. Richard Strait, chair of the Wisconsin Annual Conference Board of Ordained Ministry. Ms. DeLong served with Mr. Strait on the board from 2002 to 2008, and Mr. Strait served as a character witness.

Mr. Strait testified that if performing same-sex unions “were a heinous crime, there would be a whole lot of us in deep trouble.”

Asked if Ms. DeLong demonstrates a calling by God to pastoral ministry, Mr. Strait answered “beyond a shadow of a doubt.”

He described her commitment to the church, noting that Ms. DeLong leads Kairos CoMotion, a Wisconsin Annual Conference extension ministry, and receives no pay or health benefits.

“If there is any way she can be returned to pastoral ministry, that would be a great blessing,” Mr. Strait testified.

Suspension requested

Mr. Lambrecht asked the jury to suspend Ms. DeLong indefinitely until she agreed in writing not to perform same-sex unions or until the denomination’s law on such unions is changed.

“Contrary to the statements of some of those who testified yesterday afternoon, this is not some insignificant violation of the terms of the *Book of Discipline*,” Mr. Lambrecht said in his closing statement.

He reiterated that at stake is the covenant United Methodist elders make to uphold the *Book of Discipline* and abide by its provisions.

Mr. Lambrecht pointed out that as the church’s representative, he was not asking for Ms. DeLong to be expelled from church membership, nor did he want to deprive her of her credentials or remove her as a clergy member of the Wisconsin Annual Conference.

“The church’s main interest in terms of a penalty is that the requirements of the *Book of Discipline* are honored and complied with,” he said. “We want to make sure that DeLong will conform her future behavior to the requirements of the *Book of Discipline* so we are not back here in the future.”

Mr. Campbell in his closing statement countered that the jury has full discretion to determine the penalty.



PHOTO BY MIKE DUBOSE, UNITED METHODIST NEWS SERVICE

The Rev. Amy DeLong offers Holy Communion during a worship service for supporters on the eve of her United Methodist Church trial, in Kaukauna, Wisc.

He mentioned a nonbinding resolution recently approved at the Northern Illinois Annual Conference that calls for clergy to receive a 24-hour suspension if they officiate at a same-sex union.

In previous trials regarding same-sex unions, he said, the *Book of Discipline* has sometimes been used as a club.

“We seek to terrorize compassionate pastors into withholding blessings from those whom the *Discipline* calls them to serve,” Mr. Campbell said. “This is not right, dear friends.”

Ms. DeLong’s actions were “not a violation of covenant but the vindication of conscience,” he asserted, drawing murmurs of “Amen” from a crowd of many Ms. DeLong supporters.

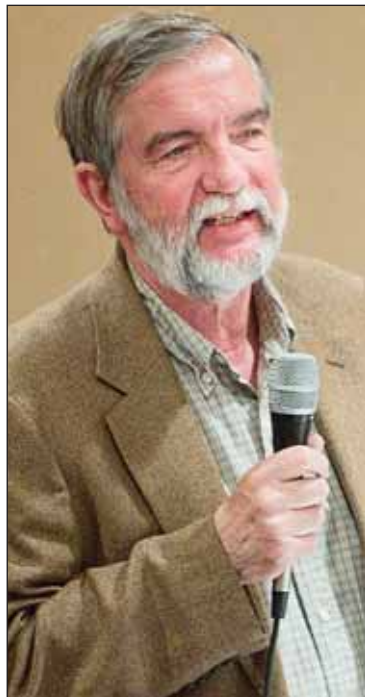
After Mr. Campbell spoke, Mr. Lambrecht offered a rebuttal, telling the jurors that they should consider the harm that will be done if they fail to penalize Ms. DeLong adequately. He said the lack of accountability will prompt some United Methodists to leave the church.

He also urged the jurors to keep in mind “our brothers and sisters in Africa, Latin America and other parts of the world.”

“There is no disputing that becoming a more gay-affirming church would severely harm our church’s witness in other countries where our brothers and sisters are confronted with life-and-death circumstances in their conflict with radical Islam,” he declared.

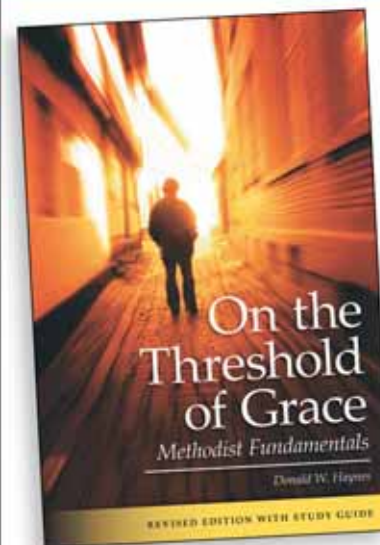


The Rev. Thomas Lambrecht served as counsel for the UMC.



The Rev. Scott Campbell represented the Rev. Amy DeLong.

Now Available: Revised Edition with Study Guide



On the Threshold of Grace

“Don Haynes is one of the wisest people I know. He studies deeply and thinks expansively. But he writes ‘plain truth for plain people’ in the spirit of the original Wesleyan ‘folk theologian.’”
— Lovett H. Weems, Jr.

Order your copy today at:
www.umportal.org/portal_store.asp