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# Hope multiplied

## Lay chaplains answer call to care

BY AMY FORBUS  
*Editor*

Each September, a new evening class gathers at Little Rock's St. James United Methodist Church. Though not a Bible study, it relies heavily upon biblical teachings. It equips laypersons to be the church by caring for one another.

Community of Hope (COH) is a chaplaincy program designed for laypersons who feel called to become spiritual caregivers. COH chaplains visit people in hospitals, nursing homes, retirement homes, prisons and other places where people can benefit from pastoral care.

COH traces its origins back to St. Luke's Episcopal Hospital in Houston, Texas. In 1994, after a patient at the hospital realized the impact that spiritual care had on his process of healing, the Rev. Helen Appelberg, then the assistant



Gayle Fiser, right, a Community of Hope lay chaplain and member of Quapaw Quarter UMC Little Rock, visits with Orleen McKuin, a member of First UMC Morrilton who lives in a cottage at Little Rock's Presbyterian Village retirement center.

PHOTO BY PAUL FISER

director of pastoral care for that hospital, began developing curriculum to teach laypersons how to provide care for each other.

But COH's influences go back further than the 20th century. In addition to the obvious foundation of Christ's teachings, COH participants are strongly encouraged to follow the Rule of St. Benedict.

On Sept. 7, at the first meeting of the St. James UMC 2011-2012 COH class, each of the 20 participants received a copy of The

Rule of Benedict: A Spirituality for the 21st Century. It provides daily readings from St. Benedict as well as reflections from author Joan Chittister, a Benedictine herself. "The intent is to help you be a balanced person," said Ann Baskette, one of the class leaders.

"The rules that [Benedict] brings forth can be rules for our daily activities, even today, 1,500 years later," said Susan Hiller, who introduced participants to the book that will serve as a guide in their

new ministry.

COH reached Arkansas in 2000, and St. James UMC Little Rock in 2003. Since then, more than 100 lay chaplains have received training and continuing education through St. James' COH ministry. Hiller and Jenny Smith were both part of the first class commissioned at the church, and Baskette was their instructor.

Smith, who now serves as director of congregational care for [See HOPE, page 5A]

## Budget approved, updates received at called session

BY AMY FORBUS  
*Editor*

HOT SPRINGS—The Oct. 29 Called Session of the Arkansas Annual Conference resulted in an approved budget for 2012.

Budgetary decisions at the June gathering had been referred to this special session because the adoption of the Imagine Ministry team's proposals affected the Conference budget. At that time, Bishop Charles Crutchfield set the Called Session for Oct. 29 to allow the Council on Finance and Administration (CFA) adequate time to consider the financial implications of Imagine Ministry.

After questions and comments from the floor of the Conference, a voice vote was taken, followed by a show of hands that confirmed the budget's approval by a wide margin.

The morning began with worship, including a message from the Rev. Vic Nixon drawing upon 2 Corinthians 5:6-21, in which Paul encourages the church at Corinth to get on with reinventing themselves. Translated into common vernacular, "Paul's second letter to the emergent church at Corinth is a 'git-r-dun' message," Nixon said.

"I believe that God constantly inspires the church to change," he said,

adding that we live in a time that calls for bravery and boldness.

### Budget

The first action item related to the Conference budget involved a motion made at Annual Conference in June by the Rev. Bennie Harmon. The motion, which would have set district superintendent salaries at 120 percent of the average Elder's salary, had been referred to the Called Session to allow for further study. It failed to pass.

The Rev. Brittany Richardson Watson, a member of the transition team's budget task force, presented the 2012 budget, explaining that the most significant changes reflected the transition from nine districts to five; the elimination of Parish and Community Development grants to allocate those funds to the Network of Discipleship and Mission; and the redirecting of the Connected in Christ budget to fall under the new Center for Clergy and Laity Excellence in Leadership.

Many line items for the second half of 2012 remain fluid because the work of the transition team continues. Voting members approved a motion by the Rev. Todd-Paul Taulbee to correct the cost of district superintendent insurance

[See SESSION, page 12A]



Sandi Matthews, left, prayer ministry coordinator at Village UMC, prays with a woman who requested prayer at Hot Springs Village's Walk for Cancer Research. Village UMC sponsored a prayer station, which offered participants in the Sept. 10 event several ways to pray. The station was staffed by members of the church's prayer team.

PHOTO BY PATTY PRINCE



## Praying for—and with—a community

BY PATTY PRINCE  
Special Contributor

There seems to be a spirit of revival in many of our churches. In Hot Springs Village, Village United Methodist Church has been exploring new ideas and venturing into ministries that take us into the community. I want to share about just one of them.

Sally Schuck, a member of our church, in 2010 attended the Village Walk for Cancer Research (VWCR) to walk in honor of her sisters, who both have cancer. On that day, Sally watched as water and food were given out to participants, and she noticed a need going unmet. She saw pain and suffering in the eyes of those she encountered, but she never saw any prayer being given.

Sally shared with the Village UMC prayer ministry team what she had witnessed. She asked them to pray that God would provide a way for the prayer team to provide a presence at this event in 2011.

The prayer ministry team decided to host a prayer station at the 2011 VWCR, but two months before the event, they encountered a dilemma: They did not have the \$500 to rent a space. They didn't even have a budget! They called a leader of the VWCR, explained their situation and asked about a discount as they shared why they so earnestly wanted to be there. But their words seemed in vain as they were told discounts could not be given.

A week after the phone call, the prayer team met again and prayed that God would provide a way for

them to be there. Little did they know that as they prayed, God had already answered their prayer.

Claire MacNeill, co-chair of the VWCR, had heard about their plight. A strong believer in the power of prayer, she had hoped some organization would bring prayer to the VWCR. Claire's daughter Kerrie had lost her battle with cancer in 2004. It was prayer and faith that had comforted and sustained Claire through the loss.

Each year since her daughter's death, Claire has contributed \$500 to the VWCR. This year, however, Claire felt led to use that money to pay the required fee for the Village UMC prayer ministry team's booth space. God not only answered their prayer, he answered it abundantly!

On Sept. 10, the morning of the VWCR, the prayer team met before dawn. They placed three tables on a grassy area, each spaced far apart for a specific purpose.

One table held prayer request cards and prayer boxes for those who might not want to pray but might want to fill out a prayer request card. That same table held information about Village UMC, our Time of Renewal event scheduled for the following month and—of course—the prayer ministry.

Another table held prayer fans made by Village UMC prayer coordinator Sandi Matthews. Each fan contained a Scripture and prayer. The fans would not only be used to help people keep cool, but also would impart a message of strength and hope to those who received them.

Two flip-chart easels stood in front of the third table. One read "Pray for" and the other, "Praise for." Designed for those who might not feel comfortable praying or filling out a prayer request card, the easels invited people to jot down the name

of someone who needed prayer. Placed a distance away from the other two tables to create more privacy, the easels proved effective—by the end of the day, each one held three pages of names to pray for.

Each Village UMC volunteer and prayer team member wore a sign around his or her neck reading, "Prayer Station." Some became walking prayer stations, taking prayer to those who couldn't come to them.

One woman they approached had recently had cancer surgery and attended with a group of her supporters who had come to walk in her honor that day. The prayer team prayed with her, and then gave her a prayer fan.

The woman slowly read the prayer and Scripture on the front and back, then pulled the fan to her chest as if it was something treasured. She told the prayer team how much the prayer meant to her, and asked if she could have an extra fan to share with a friend who has cancer.

There were many requests for extra fans. At the end of the day, the prayer team had given out more than 400 of them. Because of these and many other affirmations that the gift of prayer was needed, the prayer team has already begun its plans for next year's VWCR.

Throughout the day, people stopped to visit the prayer station. Some simply wrote the name of someone on the flip-chart. Some paused to fill out a prayer request card. Others came seeking someone to pray over them.

As everyone prayed and wept, hugged and shared stories that day, they felt the presence of *Jehovah Rapha*—the Lord who heals.

*Prince is a member of Village UMC. To contact her, send an e-mail to pattyprince52@yahoo.com.*



## EDITOR'S CORNER

BY AMY FORBUS

## Learning and doing

I spent a few days last month at UMAC, the United Methodist Association of Communicators' annual meeting. It began with worship and a mission project at a food pantry in our host city of Albuquerque, and continued with learning through workshops and networking with colleagues from other Conferences.

From my perspective as a layperson, UMAC is how I imagine a gathering of the Order of Elders or Order of Deacons might feel. It reminds me that I'm not alone. Across the United Methodist connection, communicators like me face the same ministry challenges, learn the same lessons and celebrate the same victories.

One person at this year's gathering really stood out to me. The Rev. Lorenza Andrade Smith certainly is a communicator, but in a different way from many UMAC members. As our keynote speaker, she told us about her ministry among the poor and homeless in San Antonio, Texas. (Section B of this issue includes a Q&A between Lorenza and *United Methodist Reporter* managing editor Sam Hodges.)

Lorenza is learning more about the plight of the poor by living among them. She has become poor and homeless herself—sending a powerful message about how seriously she takes her ministry. Though she is a provisional Elder, she draws no salary, receives no pension or other benefits; she signed

them away to be appointed to this work.

"I think it's been a process of emptying myself to be a follower of Christ, to embody the Gospel," she said when asked about her calling. It's not just a metaphorical emptying, either: Before she left her previous appointment, she invited congregants, friends and family to come and take her belongings. Now, with the limited number of items she can carry, she finds new ways of relying upon God to care for her.

When someone asked Lorenza what an average person can do to empty themselves, she acknowledged that not everyone is called to give up home and possessions. She suggested we begin by emptying ourselves from the busyness of life, then finding some way to advocate for someone else.

What's your method of advocacy? Is it running or walking a 5k for a cause you believe in? Is it becoming a mentor or a reading coach for a child? For at least two people I know, it's participating in Occupy Little Rock—even though some of their fellow clergy disagree completely with that choice. For others, it's working on a personal level to feed the hungry, care for the sick or comfort the mourning.

Our question as Christians isn't "Will we help?" but "How will we help?" Jesus calls us to carry his light and love to a hurting world. Let's get going.

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Dec. 2	Nov. 15
Jan. 6	Dec. 14
Feb. 3	Jan. 18





## AN OCCASIONAL WORD from the Bishop

BY CHARLES CRUTCHFIELD

Dear Friends:

For the past several days Karen and I have been sharing in spiritual life retreats with our United Methodist military chaplains in the Pacific, first in Okinawa and now in Hawaii. We've had the opportunity to be with chaplains serving in the Navy, Marines, Air Force, and Army.

Some were just beginning their service; others were nearing the end of thirty-year military careers. Several have served in the Iraq and Afghanistan conflict. The chaplains we met are currently stationed in Korea, Japan and Hawaii, and one is serving aboard a guided missile cruiser that just happened to be in Pearl Harbor for maintenance.

One of the highlights of the visits has been the opportunity to strengthen the connection between the "church back home" and these

men and women who are going where most of us cannot go—indeed do not want to go, doing a ministry we cannot do, but doing so for us and in the name of our church.

They are truly itinerant, serving in a multitude of locations and settings, generally moving every two or three years. They sacrifice a great deal of personal comfort for the sake of the mission to bring Christ into the lives of service personnel and their families. I am frankly humbled by their commitment.

We have also been privileged to visit with several of the Navy and Marines commanding officers at Pearl Harbor. Without fail, they have been articulate, thoughtful and very supportive of the work of the chaplains. In every conversation the talk has turned to the subject of post-traumatic stress disorder and the important role of chaplains and

the church in responding to PTSD.

The military are seeking to address the issue with persons on active duty, but often cannot maintain the same level of contact with Reserve and National Guard personnel. This leaves it to the church and other local agencies to respond. There are wounded, hurting military service personnel in our communities who need our care. It is a challenge the church can address.

The Arkansas Annual Conference has chaplains serving from Baghdad to Japan and across the United States. Let us keep them in our prayer.

Faithfully,

Charles Crutchfield



## Northwest Ark. churches partner with Habitat for Humanity on Apostles' Build



Brightwater Memorial and Pea Ridge United Methodist Churches presented recently a \$3,245 donation to Habitat for Humanity of Benton County, Inc. to support the upcoming Apostles' Build. The Apostles' Build is a new home sponsored by area churches that have raised money and will provide volunteers throughout the construction process. The home's construction began Sept. 16, with a dedication planned for Nov. 17. Other churches involved include Bland Chapel UMC, First UMC Bentonville, First UMC Bella Vista, Highlands UMC Bella Vista, Bella Vista Presbyterian Church, St. Vincent de Paul Catholic Church of Rogers and Cross Church of Rogers.

Pictured (from left): the Rev. Brian Timmons, pastor for both churches; Debby Wieneke, executive director of Habitat for Humanity of Benton County; and Ken Mangold, member of Brightwater Memorial UMC and the Habitat for Humanity of Benton County board of directors.

# The United Methodist Church is just fine

BY ROGER HOOK  
Special Contributor

To hear some tell it, you'd think the United Methodist Church is in such dire circumstances as to render it ineffective in ministry.

I know, the numbers show decline, and we cannot ignore the numbers; however, statistics do not tell the whole story. Unfortunately, we have elevated numbers to such importance that we are now questioning our sustainability. We are drawing conclusions that must be rebuffed.

We live in a complicated world, confused about matters of faith. A 2010 Barna Group survey found that three out of five U.S. adults who don't attend church describe themselves as Christians. There is something wrong with that reality.

The church has looked inward, as it should, and asked, "What is wrong with the church that people claim to be Christian disciples but want nothing to do with the church?"

### 'Church growth' plans

When it comes to the health of the church, I sometimes wonder if the "church growth" industry has done more damage than good. Tell a

person how bad he or she looks on a regular basis, and that person will begin to believe it.

One of the first books on growing a church came along early in my ministry. It suggested that if a church followed twelve keys of church growth, it would grow numerically. I thought, "I can do that."

"Make sure the church follows up on every visitor by contacting them the same day they first attend worship," the author suggested. I went charging forth every Sunday afternoon and evening, visiting the visitors. Some came back and eventually joined, but only a small percentage.

There was also a plan for maintaining high worship attendance that involved contacting members who missed two consecutive Sundays. Well, I could do that, too!

I wrote to every member who missed. If the absences continued, I made a pastoral call. I wanted them to know their pastor cared about

their attendance. Then one day, a member stopped to speak with me.

"Brother Roger," he said, "I want you to know that each time you contact me about church attendance it makes me feel like a teenager who has done something wrong." I changed strategies following that conversation.

A bright future in the UMC will not come from a "church help" book (although we can learn some things from them), nor will it be discovered by communicating how bad the church is today. The United Methodist Church is just fine.

I do not believe pastors are ineffective, or lazy, or just don't care. I'm not aware of a single pastor who wants to do a poor job in ministry.

The clergy I know need encouragement. They need leaders who support and guide them from a spiritual perspective. I've been fortunate to have such leaders in my ministry. However, it is less common today than a few years back. Pastors need pastors, not personnel managers.

Today's trend is to train spiritual leaders in the strategies of the secular world. District superintendents, carrying enormous workloads because of vast geography and a penchant to allow secular

policy to dictate what is inherently spiritual, no longer have time to engage pastors in supportive, encouraging relationships.

### Strong theology, doctrine

I have long believed the numbers will serve us fine as long as we do not let numbers become our focus. So, where should the focus of the local church be? It should be in the very areas that today stand as our strengths.

We are strong in fellowship and worship. We are strong in searching the Scriptures. We are strong in the true vital signs of the church: kindness, compassion, concern for social justice and love of neighbor. United Methodists remain faithful to their calling. The laity of local churches give and give. Ask a United Methodist to take on a ministry and it will happen.

But just as clergy need encouragement, so do laypersons. They need the support of their pastor, district superintendent, bishop and Conference leaders—spiritual leaders readily available and eager to share Christ.

The UMC is theologically and doctrinally strong. We have the strength of open Communion, open

hearts and open doors. Things are not so bad that we need to abandon what it is to be United Methodist.

Who would want to follow the path of the mega-church that markets worship as a "fast-paced service that will have you in and out in thirty minutes"? Worship is more than a nod in God's direction. It's part of a way of life in Jesus Christ.

Every United Methodist congregation is crucial to our future, whether two or three are gathered or two or three thousand. We would do well to claim who we are and who we have been.

Let's quit focusing on what is wrong with the UMC. Let's quit taking our cues from outside the church, allowing other influences to tell us what we ought to be. Let's concentrate on what is right with the church.

United Methodism has a sure and strong heritage, rich in Christian tradition, built on a solid foundation that sustains us even today.

If we have lost anything, it just might be that we have lost courage and heart.

*The Rev. Hook serves as pastor of Cave City and Bear Creek UMCs. To contact him, e-mail [brorogerhook@gmail.com](mailto:brorogerhook@gmail.com).*



# Innovative Leadership Project to help create vital congregations

Conference, district and congregational leaders seeking to respond to Council of Bishops' Call to Action to create vital congregations can find help from a new leadership development process for local church leaders.

The Innovative Leadership Project (ILP) is designed to help congregations that are looking for ways to become vital, to stay vital or to increase vitality.

"The ILP is a breath of fresh air as it charts a course for equipping and empowering congregations to expand and revitalize ministries," said Bettye P. Lewis, director of connectional ministries for the Tennessee Conference, the first Conference to adopt ILP. "It provides a holistic approach for developing growth strategies related to one's community context."

Geared toward local church teams of clergy and laity, ILP explores spiritual and theological foundations, enhances leadership development and designs a discipleship system for church vitality.

Developed by Craig Kennet Miller, director of pastoral leadership at the United Methodist General Board of Discipleship (GBOD), ILP is available to any group of churches, or even a single church. A new round of training launches on Nov. 5, but churches can set their own schedule for the seven-month training period.

"Part of the idea of the Innovative Leadership Project is that you participate in four seminars over the course training period with your church team, and you do that with other churches," Miller said.

"The Tennessee Conference is developing a strategy to invite churches to participate.... They see this as way for their Conference to respond to the Call to Action."

ILP helps leaders look at the whole system of the congregation, including how it connects to its members and to the people who live in the surrounding community. Churches in a group (such as a district, cluster or city) gather for the seminars and learn together. Between seminars, church teams and individuals work on assignments with the goal of developing and improving various ministry areas in the congregation.

A church's ILP team of five to 10 people should include the lead pastor, staff related to the overall program of the church and key laity who have influence in the congregation. During training, team members will:

- Learn how to start new ministries in their congregations and evaluate current ministries
- Build knowledge and develop strategies around the Call to Action Drivers of Change related to creating vital congregations
- Learn to use an assessment tool that enables their church to develop a plan for its future.

Each church's \$300 registration includes a kit of 10 Innovative Leadership Guidebooks, a USB flash drive with presentation material for the four Innovative Leadership Seminars, tools that can be reproduced for church leaders and three GodFilms videos used in the seminars.

GBOD webinars are available throughout the year to train people to lead the seminars.

For a complete overview of the program, visit [churchleaderUMC.com](http://churchleaderUMC.com) or contact Miller at [cmiller@gbod.org](mailto:cmiller@gbod.org).

# Christian activist Claiborne addresses standing room only crowd at Hendrix

BY RACHEL THOMAS  
Special Contributor

CONWAY—On Monday, Oct. 24, self-described "Christian activist" Shane Claiborne appeared before a packed house in Greene Chapel at Hendrix College. He spoke about the walls people build, and the Christian responsibility to tear them down.

"I love that old saying that the gospel should comfort the disturbed and disturb the comfortable," Claiborne said.

Claiborne, a native of Tennessee, at age 21 co-founded a community called The Simple Way in one of the poorest neighborhoods of Philadelphia.

"I met Jesus and he just messed everything up," Claiborne said.

He has written numerous books and spoken across the country and the world. He went to Iraq in 2003 with the Iraq Peace Team, an experience he has since shared in his writings.

He was invited to give the keynote lecture for the annual Steel-Hendrix Banquet during the weekly worship service in Greene Chapel, which included Holy Communion. The service drew college students and members of surrounding communities.

Claiborne spoke on Luke 16:19-26, the parable of the rich man and Lazarus. He drew special attention to the fact that Lazarus is given a name while the rich man is not, and that the rich man is clearly religious, since he calls out to Abraham.

"His religion did nothing to tear down the wall between himself and the poor man," Claiborne said. "Not only would the poor man be better off without that wall, but so would the rich man."

Claiborne spoke about the richness of the U.S., and also its high depression and suicide rates.

"We're the loneliest, wealthiest people in the world," he said.

## Removing walls

Claiborne also told stories about Christian activism that tears down walls.

"They sing each other songs



Author and activist Shane Claiborne on Oct. 24 delivered the 2011 Steel-Hendrix lecture.

PHOTO BY TSAR FEDORSKY

over the wall," he said of Christian activists on either side of the U.S.-Mexico border. "And they serve each other Communion by throwing the bread.... We're not going to wait for politicians to tell us how to treat immigrants, we're going to read Deuteronomy and we're going to read the book of James."

He spoke of his own experiences fighting anti-homelessness laws in Philadelphia. He and others served Communion—in the form of pizza—and slept outside with the homeless in Love Park. Distributing food and sleeping outside were both made illegal under the new laws.

For several weeks they were allowed to protest undisturbed, but eventually they were arrested.

"We were handcuffed and taken to jail, and that's how I learned what justice was," Claiborne said.

"I never got arrested before I was a Christian, only after."

The judge was sympathetic to their cause, particularly after Claiborne explained the message on the T-shirt he wore into the courtroom, "Jesus was homeless," by quoting a line from the Gospel.

"That's why it's good to know your Scripture," Claiborne said.

They were eventually declared

not guilty, on the grounds that the laws were unjust.

## Asking 'deep questions'

Claiborne explained that he thought one of the biggest problems for Christians is, "What if Jesus really meant all that stuff he said?"

"It should cause us to ask deep questions," Claiborne said. Some of these questions will, in Claiborne's view, lead Christians into peaceful conflict with "principalities and powers."

"When we read the Bible, it doesn't say, for God so loved America, but for God so loved the world, doesn't it?" he said.

He spoke about knowing people who suffer personally in his work with The Simple Way.

"We get to know the names and faces of the people who are the faces of suffering," Claiborne said. "Compassion always leads to justice."

At the end of his talk, Claiborne prayed that God would tear down the walls, and make Christians known "not by what we're against, but by what we're for."

The Simple Way can be found online at [thesimpleway.org](http://thesimpleway.org). A number of resources are available on the website.

*Thomas is a Hendrix sophomore and serves as news editor of the college's student newspaper, The Profile.*

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# Homecoming in the works for Etna man

## UMCs statewide invited to provide help for reconstruction

BY MARTHA S. TAYLOR  
*Arkansas Conference*

Terry Jackson will never forget the night of May 24, 2011. An EF-4 tornado ripped through the community of Etna, Ark., where Terry lived in a mobile home with his wife, Cheryl. When the storm passed, Cheryl had been killed, their home destroyed, and Jackson was severely injured with crushed shoulders and pelvis, as well as other injuries.

Jackson was hospitalized in Tulsa for an extended period of time. Following his release, he endured months of in- and out-patient rehabilitation. Even in the face of such challenges, Jackson dreamed of rebuilding his home on a small piece of property given to him by his mother.

But with no assets, his medical expenses climbing above \$180,000 and his hope dwindling for a return to full-time work, Terry's prospects looked bleak.

Yet God had already gone ahead of the storm and made provision for Jackson by way of faithful United Methodists, committed to helping a broken man regain some semblance of normality.

### UMs, partners pull together

A member of First UMC in Ozark, Yvonne Case, who also happens to work for the Department of Human Services in Franklin County, was the first to recognize Jackson's need. He wasn't eligible for assistance and didn't have insurance. Just about every dime of the family's income had been used to pay for Cheryl's college tuition.

According to the church pastor, the Rev. Keith Dodson,

Jackson is highly thought of in the Etna area, and people were ready to come to his aid. Word of his situation quickly spread beyond the small community's boundaries.

Upon hearing Terry's story, Don Weeks, Conference Volunteers in Mission (VIM) coordinator, recalled how donated materials and volunteer labor restored a home following a tornado that struck Cincinnati, Ark. He knew that that success could be replicated. The Conference's disaster response committee and local church mission groups across Arkansas were on the same page.

"As we talked with local officials in Franklin County, we realized Terry's situation was dire," he said. "We had the means and resources to help him, and so we did."

On Terry's 49th birthday, representatives from VIM, the Conference Disaster Preparedness and Response Committee, Ozark UMC, St. James UMC Little Rock and Franklin County's Department of Human Services presented Jackson with an offer he couldn't refuse: start-up funds and the intention of securing additional funds, materials and volunteers to rebuild his home.

A start-up grant of \$10,000 by the Arkansas Conference Disaster Relief Fund provided the seed money for the project. Weeks pitched the idea to the RV-based mission volunteer group NOMADS (Nomads on a Mission Active in Divine Service), and they are making arrangements for volunteers to help with the construction of the home in the coming weeks and months.

Saint James UMC has contributed more than \$8,000 to the project with encouragement from their mission coordinator, Brenda Weeks.

"After we saw what happened after the tornado, so many people wanted to help a family get back on their feet," she said. "Terry was indeed one of those that fell through the cracks. He

was not eligible for assistance and didn't have any insurance. Every dime they could make was going to his wife's college education. I'm sure there are many other stories just like his."

The Hinton/DeAnn Charge, pastored by the Rev. Byron Mann, issued a challenge to all the churches in the Southwest District to contribute \$100 each to the fund set up to provide materials for the home. Gifts are being accepted in the district office through Nov. 30.

An Arkansas Tech University career development class drew up home construction plans and delivered them within a week of their being contacted about the project.

### More assistance needed

Construction has begun on the 1,600-square-foot, three-bedroom home with labor provided by Jackson's family and friends.

As the project moves forward, additional volunteers, financial and material donations are needed. Any individual or church can help, says Conference disaster relief coordinator Janice Mann.

"We need volunteers to help with the actual construction, but we also need volunteers to help provide meals for the workers, to hold fundraising events in their churches or communities or to give donations of materials and other goods," she said. "We are actively seeking partner churches, groups and individuals to pitch in and give Terry a chance."

Those interested in volunteering with the Terry Jackson home project may contact Weeks at dweeks@arumc.org or 501-681-2909, or Mann at rainmaker@arkansas.net or 870-703-8359. Financial gifts may be mailed to the Arkansas Conference Treasurer's Office, Attn: Terry Jackson Disaster Response, P.O. Box 3611, Little Rock, AR 72203.

*Taylor serves as director of communications for the Arkansas Conference, and as pastor of discipleship for FaithSpring UMC.*

# Hope (continued from page 1A)

the St. James, never thought she would end up being a lay chaplain. But after her husband died following a long illness, she found herself unwilling to leave her house except to attend church services. And it was through an announcement in the church bulletin that she became aware of St. James' first Community of Hope class. The word "hope" got her attention.

"At that point in my life, I needed some hope," she said. "I was smart enough to recognize that I needed to get up, get out and get going."

Smith had received calls from two fellow church members who, like her husband, had been diagnosed with cancer. She knew that in relating to them, she needed the skills the Community of Hope class provided.

"I did not realize the path that the good Lord had put me on, and all of a sudden it was like a light bulb that went off: 'Okay, you're supposed to now learn about this. You're supposed to share this with others. You've been there, but now you need to go and listen to them,'" she said.

Smith had sworn she would never go back into a hospital after her husband's illness and death, but after being commissioned as a COH lay chaplain, she went so far as to take Clinical Pastoral Education—an educational experience based in hospitals. Then the congregational care position opened up at St. James. It was a natural fit for the calling she had received from God; the job includes training new lay chaplains.

Community of Hope International's multi-denominational, worldwide organization counts two Arkansas United Methodists among its board members: Baskette serves as an at-large member, and Hiller represents the Southern U.S.

At St. James, a COH class runs from September through December, followed by a three-month internship. After their internships, new lay chaplains are commissioned, and may work through their own faith communities to provide pastoral care.

The Rev. Greg Schick, contemporary worship pastor at St. James, sees great value in the ministry done by COH chaplains,

and in the training they receive. "They're trained in a way that they feel so equipped, and they feel called to do it," he says. "We need everybody to represent the church in all the different areas of ministry, and here you've got ultimate training for people to be the church."

Schick says that St. James' pastors share hospital visitation duties, but also depend upon lay chaplains. COH makes visitation a much stronger ministry for St. James.

Schick also appreciates that COH is interdenominational. With many varieties of people working together, he says it shows people "the Church with a capital C."

Liz Faulkner, a retired teacher, has served for four years as one of the St. James lay chaplains.

"Nobody really wants to go to nursing homes or hospitals because none of us really wants to be sick, and none of us really likes to realize what it's like to get old," Faulkner says. "But one thing I've discovered is there's so much faith in both of these places, in hospitals and nursing homes."

Faulkner says listening is the most important thing she does as a lay chaplain.

"I'm not in a position to say,

'Oh, well, you need to pray....' That's not it at all," she says. "The faith is all here. But sometimes they just need

to tell their stories and talk to somebody. And that is probably what I do mostly, is just try to listen."



Liz Faulkner, left, and Sue Sims receive an autoharp lesson from their 98-year-old friend, Jane Sentell, right. Faulkner, a Community of Hope chaplain, met Sentell while making a pastoral care visit to another resident of the nursing center where Sentell lives.

AUM PHOTO BY AMY FORBUS

## Are you feeling called to offer care?

Several locations across Arkansas offer Community of Hope training. Jenny Smith will help you connect with the opportunity nearest to your home. Contact her at jenny@stjames-umc.org or 501-217-6756 to learn more.

For information on the worldwide organization, visit coh-international.com.



# Vietnamese UMC makes history with groundbreaking



The Rev. Terry Gallamore and translator Linh Hua look on as church members of all ages turn shovels of dirt at the groundbreaking ceremony for the first building belonging to Vietnamese United Methodist Church Fort Smith. The church is the first chartered Vietnamese congregation in the South Central Jurisdiction of the UMC.

PHOTO BY TODD VICK

BY TODD VICK  
*Special Contributor*

Sunday, Oct. 9 marked a historic occasion for the South Central Jurisdiction as well as the Arkansas Conference. That afternoon, about 55 people gathered to break ground on a notable United Methodist Church's building—the first Vietnamese UMC in the jurisdiction.

Vietnamese UMC Fort Smith celebrated as they broke ground on their 4,000 square-foot building at the corner of Alabama and Albert Pike in Fort Smith.

The Rev. Phil Hathcock, director of connectional ministries and assistant to the bishop, brought greetings on behalf of Bishop Charles Crutchfield.

"You are in the thoughts and prayers of United Methodists in Arkansas today," he told the congregation.

Vietnamese UMC is the first predominantly Vietnamese congregation in the jurisdiction, which includes United Methodists across eight states. While there are many Vietnamese mission churches in the jurisdiction, this is the first church to receive an official charter from the denomination.

"It's a big day and a big step," said church member Linh Hua.

The church began when a group left the local Vietnamese Baptist church and began worshipping in the choir room at St. Paul UMC Fort

Smith. Now in its 11th year, the church has weekly attendance of about 30 people. In addition to worship, the church holds a monthly Bible study and has a mission outreach to several churches in Vietnam, including one through which 200 souls were saved last year.

The groundbreaking ceremony, just like the church's Sunday morning worship, was multi-lingual. The Rev. Terry Gallamore, pastor of Vietnamese UMC, leads the congregation in worship by way of two translators, church members Do Van Le and Linh Hua.

The ceremony included Scripture readings, a message by the Rev. Mackey Yokem, superintendent of the West District, prayers, and the traditional row of people with shovels turning dirt. However, a unique feature of this ceremony was the singing: Hymns sung simultaneously in English and Vietnamese provided a Pentecost experience as people praised God in multiple languages and interpreted for each other.

"This is one of the greatest days of my life," said Gallamore.


The church received in 2010 a \$50,000 Catch the Vision grant for the purchase of land. The congregation raised other funds through the sale of egg rolls as well as profits shared from special first Saturday sales at Taipei, a local restaurant owned by one of the members.


The West and Northwest Districts provided additional funding, and the West District held a special Pentecost offering.

Vietnamese UMC now has \$120,000, just short of their \$150,000 goal. Their financial goal will provide enough money to get the building "in the dry"—that is, the exterior construction completed. After the building is in the dry, the congregation will finish the interior with labor provided by church members and other groups.

The Rev. Bob Crossman, Conference minister of new church starts and congregational development, pointed out that the location chosen by Vietnamese UMC provides good positioning for the church to attain Imagine Ministry's goal of reaching the mission field. Two-thirds of the 3,000 Vietnamese residents of Fort Smith live within a five-mile radius of the church's property.

*The Rev. Vick serves as associate pastor for youth ministries at St. Paul UMC Fort Smith.*




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# Run for Shelter 5k raises \$7k to help end homelessness



Runners leave the starting line of the Run for Shelter 5k, held Oct. 15 in the Hillcrest neighborhood of Little Rock.

AUM PHOTOS BY AMY FORBUS

BY AMY FORBUS  
Editor

More than 200 people participated in the Hillcrest Run for Shelter 5k and Fun Run, an Oct. 15 event that raised close to \$7,000 for a new ministry in Little Rock that helps homeless individuals make the transition back to life off the streets.

Rock of Hope, founded in February and recently incorporated as a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, grew out of several individuals' work with the warming center for the homeless operated by canvascommunity UMC Little Rock during the area's January 2011 winter storms.

Pulaski Heights UMC for six years has hosted a 5k to coincide with Hillcrest Harvest Fest, and has chosen a charity to receive proceeds each year. Past runs, called Miles for Missions, have benefited Hurricane Katrina relief, Arkansas Hospice Center, a variety of local outreach ministries, Wade Knox Children's Advocacy Center and more.

Choosing Rock of Hope this year reflected personal involvement from some Pulaski Heights members and the event organizers, according to Dave Anderson, who coordinated the event.

"There were a number of people who had done volunteer work at canvas' warming center and felt it addressed an important need," he said.

Mary Lewis Dassinger, director of missions for Pulaski Heights UMC, noted that though the

race begins and ends in front of the church building, "We want it to be about more than just PHUMC."

She said that working as a neighbor and community partner is a priority for the church.

"We are excited about the way canvascommunity and Rock of Hope have responded to God's call to offer hope and shelter to Little Rock's homeless," she said. "The race allows us to invite people from PHUMC, Little Rock and beyond to participate in and show support of their good work, bringing attention to God's call to all of us to serve one another."

The money raised by the 5k participants will help refurbish one of the houses Rock of Hope is making available for people who have a desire to get off the streets. Each Rock of Hope house provides a home for at least four people making the transition away from homelessness.

"Two houses are occupied, with a third coming online within 45 days," said John Ripa, one of Rock of Hope's founders. "Plus a planned purchase [of a fourth house] by the end of the year."

Rock of Hope works with many churches in the Pulaski County area, some United Methodist, others not. It counts many faith-based and governmental organizations among its partners as well.

In addition to local partnerships, a crucial element of Rock of Hope's model is having a "champion" for each person making the transition. A champion provides fellowship, encouragement, prayer and other help while building a friendship with the person in transition. To learn more and watch an introductory video, visit [therockofhope.org](http://therockofhope.org).



LEFT: Kyle Forehand and Katye Dunn of Pulaski Heights UMC prepare post-run snacks for participants in the Run for Shelter 5k and Fun Run.  
CENTER: Jim Garrett, a founder of Rock of Hope, prepares stones bearing the Rock of Hope logo to be distributed to the first 75 male and female finishers of the Run for Shelter 5k.  
ABOVE: The Rev. Britt Skarda, senior pastor of Pulaski Heights UMC Little Rock and a participant in the Run for Shelter 5k and Fun Run, offers a prayer before the race begins.



# Young job seekers find inspiration, help through church



Juanita V. Pierre, 24, chats with Mimi Kelly (left), who works the volunteer information desk as part of RUMC Job Networking.  
UMNS PHOTO BY KATHLEEN BARRY

BY KATHY L. GILBERT  
United Methodist News Service

ROSWELL, Ga.—Emily Hatcher, 26, is working overtime to find a job.

She keeps a strict schedule. On Monday, Wednesday and Friday she spends six to eight hours applying for jobs. The other days of the week, she sharpens her skills by taking computer classes online and networking.

The college graduate with a degree in early childhood education works as a babysitter and a substitute schoolteacher.

“I put maybe 200 résumés in before I actually get a call,” says the pretty, quiet young woman, dressed for success in dark sweater, skirt and sensible shoes, attending RUMC Job Networking, a ministry of Roswell United Methodist Church.

“Most of the girls I know are nannies, looking for other jobs,” she says. “It is difficult because of the economy. I know a lot of people my age are looking for other jobs not in their field.”

### A dire need

Hatcher is part of a job-networking group that meets at the church every other Monday.

The table host for the 21/29 group is Mark Reynolds, 26, who has been a member of the church all his life. As he puts it, “I started out in the babies’ class.”

Katherine Simons, coordinator of the job-networking ministry, approached Reynolds about starting a group for young job seekers last year. “She said she thought the need was pretty dire,” Reynolds recalls.

He has 53 people on his contact

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list for the group.

He says one of the first lessons he learned was “to manage people’s expectations.”

Young people coming into the church have degrees from schools like Penn State, Georgia State, Tennessee, Colorado, Vanderbilt and Boston—even Harvard.

“A young woman came in last week, and she has an MBA from Penn State,” Reynolds says. “An MBA from Penn State is considered one of the best in the nation.”

Still, she has not been able to find a job.

“Some of her confidence has been shattered; some of her ability to portray herself in the best light has been shattered,” Reynolds says. “The job I have and the job others here have is to restore some of that confidence and introduce her to Christ and a faith-based confidence, rather than skills and talents-based confidence.”

It is his job to remind her that her potential is just as high as it was when she graduated.

### Building a network

Juanita V. Pierre, 24, just graduated with dual degrees in accounting and Spanish. In college, she focused all her energy and time on making good grades. She expected to graduate, get a job and start her life.

Now, like many young graduates, she is living back at home with her family. She values the time she has now to reconnect with her family, but her dream is to be a forensics accountant working with the FBI or the IRS.

“I know how strong I am, and I believe in myself,” she says. “I am hard working, and they are going to see that. They are going to hire me. I feel like maybe in the next six months, hopefully, I will get exactly what I am looking for.”

David Hampe, 25, just graduated with a degree in civil engineering. He has a part-time job at the school from which he graduated but is coming to Roswell to “launch my career right the first time.” He says he is technically homeless. All his stuff is packed in boxes, and he lives at his sister’s house during the week and goes to his parents’ home on the weekends.

“Nobody is designed to go through this job search on their own, to go through life on their own

in general,” he says. The 21/29 group gives him accountability with people his age and introduces him to a new group of professionals outside the range of his normal group of friends.

“When you build and establish a relationship with people who are in a job search with you, you build a bond of people who care and are willing to pay it forward to help everyone out until everyone in the group is hired,” he says.

### Finding hope

Hatcher says everyone told her to go to Roswell United Methodist Church to join the job-networking ministry.

“I have actually gotten more interviews through their job postings than other job postings. Instead of just going online and applying for jobs, I have had a lot more contacts through career networking,” she says.

“A lot of people find their identity in their job,” she adds, “especially

when you are young and trying to find your fit. I think a lot of people think their career is who they are.”

That’s where faith steps in, she says.

“We talk about that at RUMC, that you are God’s workmanship, that he created you with special qualities and spiritual gifts. He is going to use those as long as you know who you are and you use them in the best way you can.”

Hatcher, her older sister and brother—all in their 20s—are living at home with their single mom, who is caretaker for her mother. Hatcher feels blessed to have her family, and she knows God will take care of her.

“I just keep applying, keep looking, and I think the economy is going to get better. That’s my hope. I think there will be a lot more jobs created.”

*Gilbert is a multimedia reporter for the young adult content team at United Methodist Communications, Nashville, Tenn.*

## UMFA grant supports professional development program for the Crossing Jordan Movement

The United Methodist Foundation of Arkansas (UMFA) has made a grant to fund a new professional development program for the Crossing Jordan Movement, an interdisciplinary approach for renewal, strengthening and advancement of African-American congregations in the Arkansas Conference.

“We are pleased to support the Crossing Jordan Movement,” said Jim Argue Jr., UMFA President and CEO. “Our grant expands training for selected African-American pastors in their initial assignments, fosters relationships between these ministers and ultimately helps retain their service to Arkansas congregations.”

Begun in 2008, the Crossing Jordan Movement has sponsored district and statewide meetings of African-American clergy and lay people. These events bolster relationships and provide leadership training. Members of the movement are preparing a new comprehensive plan for ethnic ministries to be presented at the 2012 Annual Conference.

“The UMFA grant is being used to provide additional professional development and mentoring to African American pastors beyond the resources already offered by the Conference,” said the Rev. Maxine Allen, Conference Minister for Ethnic Ministries. “Through this grant, Retired Bishop Felton May is serving as an individual mentor to seven African-American pastors in the state who also come together for group meetings and peer interaction.”

UMFA manages \$106 million in endowment funds and other charitable assets that benefit churches and United Methodist ministries, and is sixth largest in assets among the 49 United Methodist Foundations in the country.

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# ‘Mitto’ offers new mission experience to Arkansas youth

BY ROD HOCOTT  
*Special Contributor*

The Arkansas Conference Council on Youth Ministries (ACCYM) has a long history of creating and implementing events for the youth of our Conference that are both spirit-filled and disciple-making. It has been more than 11 years since a new event appeared on the ACCYM roster, and we think it is time to add a missing piece of the program: missions.

Mitto (pronounced “me-toe” and meaning “missions” in Latin) has been in the planning stages for about three years now. It will finally have its inauguration this year. Here’s the mission statement the task force developed:

“Mitto is a mission experience for young people, especially those from smaller membership churches. The opportunities will include multi-mission options, relational

evangelism, and making stronger disciples while keeping it close to home. Mission is not what we do, but who we are.”

Mitto is for senior high youth (grades 9 through 12) who have a heart and mind for missions, especially being of service to those in their very own community. Open to youth from around the Arkansas Conference, Mitto will be held in a different district each year, beginning in the Central District.

So how does it work? Mitto takes place the week between Christmas and New Year’s Day, Dec. 26 through Jan. 1, and will be limited to 60 youth and 10 adults. Each day from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., youth will be divided into groups and have the opportunity to do mission work.

This year’s mission opportunities include work with Methodist Family Health, Arkansas Children’s Hospital, UALR Wesley

‘Mission is not what we do, but who we are.’  
—from the Mitto mission statement

Cost for Mitto 2011 is \$50 if registered by Nov. 15, and \$75 thereafter. A flyer and registration form are available on the Conference website, [www.arumc.org](http://www.arumc.org).  
If you have questions or need further information, contact Rod Hocott, 501-324-8008 or [rhocott@arumc.org](mailto:rhocott@arumc.org).

Foundation, Arkansas Food Bank, Arkansas Rice Depot, Parkview Nursing Home, feeding the homeless under the Broadway Bridge and more.

The theme for Mitto 2011 is “Taking It Home,” and the text is Job 38:19-21. Each day after lunch,

participants will attend workshops led by persons in local missions, who will share with students strategies for implementing mission ideas in their local churches and communities.

As a way of sharing in this event, various local churches in the

district will provide each day’s evening meal.

A hallmark of every ACCYM event, including Mitto, is the opportunity for building relationships through small group gatherings and free time. In addition, worship will be held each evening; this year’s speaker is the Rev. Jamey Bentley of canvascommunity UMC Little Rock, and the worship band is the Hot Springs-based group Visitor’s Parking.

This event has been a long time coming. Churches, encourage your senior high youth to attend Mitto. And pray that they will come home with a renewed spirit and hope for what can take place in their communities as we become God’s hands and feet on earth.

*Hocott ([rhocott@arumc.org](mailto:rhocott@arumc.org)) serves as Arkansas Conference minister of youth and young adults.*

## COMING UP

### November

**HollyFest at First UMC North Little Rock Nov. 4**  
First UMC North Little Rock, 6701 JFK Blvd., will host its annual HollyFest from 5 to 9 p.m. Friday, Nov. 4. In addition to the chili and hot dog supper, the family-friendly event features live entertainment, a live and silent auction, bake sale, toy sale and handmade gifts. The North Little Rock Mayor’s Youth Council will lead an area of free children’s activities with crafts and more. The new church cookbook, *Still Standing at the Stove*, will be available for \$20. HollyFest is sponsored by United Methodist Women, and last year raised more than \$7,500 for missions.

**UMW soup supper at Sulphur Springs UMC Pine Bluff Nov. 5**  
The United Methodist Women of Sulphur Springs UMC Pine Bluff are having a soup supper on Saturday, Nov. 5, from 5 to 7:30 p.m. at the church’s Christian Community Center. A donation of any amount buys a ticket for soup, drink, dessert and live local entertainment. All proceeds benefit missions.

**Renewing the ‘County Seat’ Church at Mount Sequoyah Nov. 9-10**  
“Renewing the ‘County Seat’ Church” is an event designed to focus on strategies and methods for increasing the impact of ministry in a “county seat” setting. Clergy, laity and staff of such congregations are invited to attend the two-day workshop at Mount Sequoyah in Fayetteville. For more information or to register for the event, visit [mountsequoyah.org](http://mountsequoyah.org).

**Arts and crafts sale at Highland Valley UMC Little Rock Nov. 12**  
The Highland Valley UMC United Methodist Women will sponsor their annual arts and crafts sale on Saturday, Nov. 12, from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. In addition to crafts, the event features a lunch of homemade soup, cornbread, dessert and beverage from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. Admission is free, and the lunch option is \$5. Proceeds will benefit missions. The church building is located at 15524 Chenal Parkway in Little Rock.

**Small Church Leadership Institute at Mount Sequoyah Nov. 13-17**  
The Small Church Leadership Institute (NCLI) is designed to equip laity and pastors with the knowledge and skills to lead their small-attendance churches into the future. For information on speakers, preachers and workshop leaders, or to register, visit [mountsequoyah.org](http://mountsequoyah.org).

**Philander Smith College luncheon to honor Bishop Crutchfield Nov. 14**  
This year’s Philander Smith College President’s Luncheon will honor Bishop Charles Crutchfield, who will retire next year after eight years of service to the Arkansas Conference. The luncheon will be held from 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. Nov. 14 at the college. Ticket prices are \$150 for individuals or \$1,250 for a table. For details or to purchase tickets, contact the college’s director of development, Rodney Parks, at 501-975-8535.

**Writing Your Safe Sanctuary Policy online course Nov. 14-18**  
BeADisciple.com is offering a workshop for congregations beginning the process of writing a Safe Sanctuary policy. Participants will learn why congregations should have a policy, what it should include, how to get a policy written, approved and implemented. Participants will have access to the course 24 hours a day and may work at a time of day most convenient to them. While not expected to write the policy during the course, participants may send it to the workshop leader for feedback when it is written.  
Safe Sanctuary policies protect our children and youth, our teachers and leaders, and our congregation’s reputation and resources. To learn more or enroll, visit [beadisciple.com/workshops.html#SSIIntensive](http://beadisciple.com/workshops.html#SSIIntensive).

**‘Breakfast with Santa’ at Sulphur Springs UMC Pine Bluff Nov. 26**  
Sulphur Springs UMC Pine Bluff is hosting its annual “Breakfast With Santa” event on Saturday, Nov. 26 from 8 to 10:30 a.m. in its Christian Community Center, 9238 Sulphur Springs Road in Pine Bluff. A \$10 ticket includes a pancake and sausage breakfast, a visit with Santa and a family photo CD. All children who attend must be accompanied by an adult. For more information or to make reservations, contact Laura Delhommer at 870-718-4770.

### December

**Service of Light and Hope at St. James UMC Little Rock Dec. 10**  
A worship service for anyone experiencing loss, grief or sadness during the Christmas season will take place on Saturday, Dec. 10 at 5:30 p.m. at St. James UMC, 321 Pleasant Valley Drive in Little Rock. “A Service of Light and Hope” draws its name from two of the themes of Advent and Christmas, and the liturgy for this time of worship is based on those themes. The service will feature an opportunity for people to light a candle in memory of a deceased loved one, or as a prayer asking God to shed light on a situation of loss or pain.

## Bishop Palmer to speak at ‘Can We Talk?’

“How does the Call to Action impact African American churches?” is the question to be discussed at Can We Talk?, an event



**Bishop Gregory Palmer**

hosted at Philander Smith College Nov. 18-19, 2011.  
Bishop Gregory Palmer (Iowa Area), a former president of the worldwide United Methodist Council of Bishops, will be the keynote speaker and preacher. In addition, Saturday’s events include a roundtable discussion with bishops from throughout the South Central Jurisdiction.

Can We Talk? is an established and safe forum in which African Americans can enter and then exit a “no holds barred” dialogue about God’s preferred future for the African American church.

Visit [arumc.org](http://arumc.org) for the Can We Talk? brochure and online registration form.



# BOOK REVIEW: Sports novel centers on example of Christ

*Jesse Crosse*

By Michael J. Moran

Parkhurst Brothers  
Publishers, 2011

BY MARCIA DUNBAR  
Special Contributor

She was the most precious little red-headed girl I'd seen all day. Six years old, with wide blue eyes beaming with excitement, and a sweetness found in the simple joy of being at a carnival. We were on a mission trip in the Delta, and I was in charge of face painting. We tried to create whatever was requested, from butterfly masks to puppy dog faces.

Angela (not her real name) wanted to be a tiger. She described in detail how she had won a beautiful doll and that this was the best day of her life. She then exclaimed, "Daddy said we could come here 'cause there weren't many black people yet."

I froze and felt my stomach drop. Had I heard her correctly? I stopped painting and leaned in, praying that what I said next would stay with her and direct her toward thinking differently in spite of being taught to think in terms of color.

"God sent us here to love on everyone," I said. "We are all God's children, and he has taught us to take care of each other no matter what color we are." I wanted to cry.

*Jesse Crosse* is the latest work of Mike Moran, a local writer, retired teacher from Little Rock Catholic High School for Boys and mentor to too many to count. I normally would not pick out a sports related book on my own, but I knew that Moran had written it and I enjoyed his memoir, *Proudly We Speak Your Name*. I am so glad that I had the opportunity afforded to me.

An allegory based on the life and crucifixion of Jesus Christ, *Jesse Crosse* takes place during the 1960s in the fictional, small Southern town of Jewelton. Coach Levitson is beginning the basketball season without enough players to have a chance at succeeding in winning any games.

The book's narrator is Luke Anteock, the self-proclaimed team manager, or "Doc" as everyone calls him. He sets out determined to scour Jewelton High for four "dream basketball players." Jon Mercer, a thin, bookish oddball who writes the sports section for the school newspaper, helps Doc find the four needed players.

In his earthly ministry, Jesus sought out unlikely candidates for help in fulfilling God's plan. In this allegory, it's up to Si Montler, Phil

Lipscomb, Bart Holeman and Jesse Crosse—the team's first African-American player—to lead Jewelton to the playoffs. These unassuming few have been sought after as the saviors of the team.

Coach Levitson sees instantly the gifts that these small-framed and gangly boys have. Most importantly, he sees the ability in Crosse to see the unseen. The coach guides the boys to teamwork and understanding through various trials and obstacles, including being rebuked by other team members for their unique strategy of play and for the color of Jesse Crosse's skin.

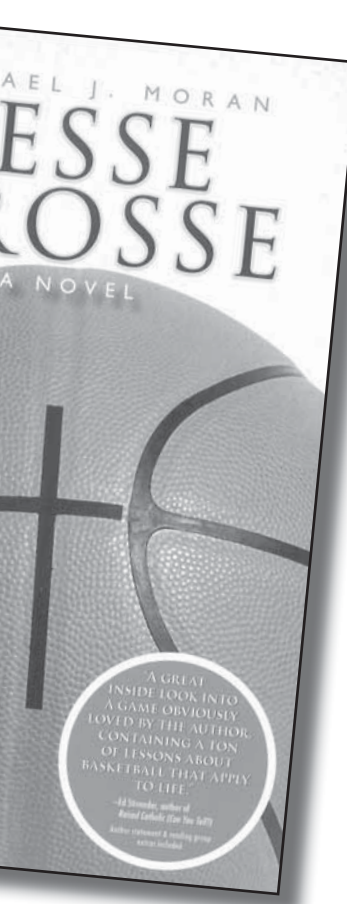
In dealing with the taunts of closed-minded people, racial slurs and death threats, Levitson teaches the team far more than athletics—he tackles hard issues like respect, honor and acceptance.

*Jesse Crosse* delves into such issues as pride, racism, judgment, forgiveness and the extraordinary impact one can have on another's life. The story runs deep, making it an excellent read for all generations. Those who lived through the civil rights movement will remember the crushing weight of discrimination and, ultimately, the rise of equality and brotherly love. Those who have participated in team sports will recognize the transformative impact of a coach's guidance and mentoring to bring about honor, respect and teamwork.

And greater still is the lesson that through Christian example, and sometimes great sacrifice, comes redemption and glory.

*Jesse Crosse* may soon appear on many required reading lists in schools. It even includes discussion questions and character definitions at the end of the book, which are helpful in covering all of the parallels between the story of Jesus Christ and that of Jesse Crosse. Not all of the characters are as obviously defined as Jesus/Jesse, but all are worth knowing.

I won't learn what will happen to little Angela from the carnival, but I do know that thanks to a loving God and the sacrifice his son made, every day is a new chance for forgiveness, understanding and acceptance.



Perhaps someday Angela will read the story of *Jesse Crosse* and learn that no matter what color, nationality or religion, we must all take care of one another. As Christians, that is exactly what we are called to do.

*Dunbar serves as director of evangelism for St. James UMC Little Rock.*

## Call for handbell choirs: festival at Central UMC Fayetteville

"Praise Him with the clash of cymbals, praise Him with resounding cymbals. Let everything that has breath praise the Lord." The ancient cymbals mentioned in Psalm 150:5-6 are said to have resembled water pitchers with wide open necks, similar to the bells of today.

Central United Methodist Church Fayetteville will host its ninth annual handbell festival on April 27-28, 2012. The event is for bell choirs of all denominations to come together and learn new skills, improve ringing techniques, stretch to master more challenging music, grow as ringers under the direction of respected clinicians, network with other ringers and have fun.

With a "Bells, Beads, and Zydeco!" theme, festival participants will enjoy delicious New Orleans-style food, participate in four Saturday ringing sessions to fine-tune the music and hone technique before presenting a public concert at the end of the day.

"We are excited about this festival as a ministry extending beyond the doors of our church, because it equips and encourages all skill levels of ringers, intermediate through advanced," said Fenner Russell, the congregation's director of traditional music and worship.

"Extreme Ring," an optional Friday night event for participants who wish to ring more challenging music, will be directed by Kerry Johnston of First UMC Springdale. Johnston also serves as director of Ozark Bronze, northwest Arkansas' auditioned community handbell ensemble. Beginners are invited to come observe and be inspired.

Saturday is for ringers of all skill levels, with the intention that bell choir members return to their home churches invigorated and with improved skills and confidence. The clinician is Lloyd Larson, a composer with more than 1,000 arrangements to his credit.

For information or to register your choir, contact Russell at frussell@centraltolife.com or 479-442-1824.



## CLASSIFIEDS

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

**The Arkansas Conference Commission on Archives and History is seeking a part-time archivist** to work on the Hendrix campus. Applicants should preferably be United Methodist, have a love of history, be knowledgeable of the Arkansas Conference clergy and churches, be user-friendly with computers and basic office equipment, and live in Conway or be willing to commute. Contact chairman Tyler Thompson at tylersq@comcast.net or 501-664-3788.

**10-day group tour of Ireland April 18-27, 2012**, \$3,069 air, lodging, 2 meals & guides, from New York. Optional pre-tour to Ellis Island. Tour hosts Jenni and Glen Duncan. Information or sign-up with jduncan@faithspringchurch.org or 501-551-2141.

**Give the gift of mobility to disabled children and adults** in developing countries by supporting The Red Thread Promise's All Terrain Wheelchair (ATW) program. \$350 sends an ATW across the globe to someone in need. For more information visit [www.redthreadpromise.org](http://www.redthreadpromise.org) (keyword: wheelchair) or call 817-320-6522.

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



## OBITUARIES

### FORT SMITH

#### Bryan B. Hightower

Bryan Bedell Hightower, 84, passed away on Saturday, Sept. 10, 2011, in Fort Smith.

He was born Sept. 28, 1926, in Hartman to Bryan Elijah and Rachel Francis Cline Hightower. He was a retired controller for Armour Meat Co. and later W.R. Grace. He was a veteran of the U.S. Army, serving during the Korean War.



**Bryan Hightower**

A founder, charter member and teacher of the Win One Sunday School Class, he served as a leader of Wesley UMC Fort Smith. His civic activities included playing on the semipro South Fort Smith baseball team, The Smokers,

coaching various Boys Club teams and being a member of the American Legion. He spent the last 10 years of life battling Parkinson's disease.

He is survived by his wife, Iris Hightower of Fort Smith, a retired Deaconess in the United Methodist Church; two sons, Roger Hightower of Fayetteville and Daryl Hightower and his wife, Lisa, of Sheridan; and one granddaughter, Sarah Hightower of Little Rock. He was preceded in death by his brothers and sister, Hoyle, William and Francis.

A funeral service was held Tuesday, Sept. 13, 2011, at Wesley UMC with the Rev. Matthew Daniels officiating. Interment followed at the U.S. National Cemetery, Fort Smith.

Pallbearers were Rick, Steve, Hoyle Wayne, Bryan, and Richie Hightower and Jeff Harris. Honorary pallbearers were the Win One Sunday School Class and The Smokers Baseball Team.

Memorials may be made to Wesley UMC, 2200 Phoenix, Fort Smith, AR 72901, or to the Fort Smith Boys and Girls Club, 4905 North O Street, Fort Smith, AR 72904.

### LITTLE ROCK

#### George F. Ivey

The Rev. Dr. George Franklin Ivey, 94, passed away Thursday, Sept. 29, 2011, following a long illness.

Born on Oct. 12, 1916, in Graceville, Fla., he was a graduate of Alabama State College and John Brown University in Siloam Springs. He received his Masters and Ph.D. in family counseling from Florida State University and an honorary Doctor of Divinity from John Brown. He did postgraduate work at Harvard and Princeton Universities and attended seminary at Southern Methodist and Southwestern Universities.



**George Ivey**

He served as a chaplain in the U.S. Army Air Corps during World War II, including combat postings in the South Pacific and the Philippines, and reached the rank of Major. During his military service he was awarded three campaign ribbons, two unit citations and six battle stars. Near the end of the war, he toured the country raising money for War Bonds and was repeatedly honored by the U.S. Secretary of Treasury for his outstanding contributions.

Ivey entered the Methodist Conference in Abilene, Texas in 1938 and served several churches in west Texas before becoming vice president of Centenary College in Shreveport, La. He served at First UMCs in Springdale, Camden, Hot Springs and Fort Smith, and as superintendent of the Fort Smith District. He retired in 1981.

He is survived by his wife of 71 years, Doris; a son, David, of Fredericksburg, Va.; two granddaughters, Patty Landry of Little Rock and Jennifer Farrar of Locust Grove, Va.; four great-granddaughters; and a brother, Charles Edward Ivey, of Graceville, Fla.. His elder son, G. Frank, Jr., of Little Rock, preceded him in death.

A member of the Arkansas Conference, he connected with St. James United Methodist Church Little Rock in retirement. He was a Life Member of the Fort Smith Rotary Club, the American Legion, was a 32nd degree Mason, the York Rite Shriners, the Knights Templar and Red Cross of Constantine. He was a member emeritus of the Board of Regents of John Brown University and pastor emeritus of First UMC Fort Smith.

A memorial service was held Monday, Oct. 3 at St. James UMC Little Rock, with inurnment at the St. James Columbarium. The Rev. Siegfried Johnson officiated.

Memorials may be given to St. James UMC, 321 Pleasant Valley Drive, Little Rock, AR 72212, or Arkansas Hospice, 14 Parkstone Circle, North Little Rock, AR 72116.

### STAMPS

#### Terry G. Mann

The Rev. Terry Gene Mann, 51, passed away on Thursday, Sept. 29, 2011, at his residence after a long battle with cancer.

He earned a Bachelors degree in Psychology from Henderson State University and a Master of Divinity degree from Memphis Theological Seminary. He had previously served several communities in southern and eastern Arkansas through his 21 years of pastoral service, and served as pastor of First UMC Stamps at the time of his death. He was a beloved Christian, minister, mentor, son, brother, husband, father, uncle and friend.



**Terry Mann**

Survivors include his wife, Vicki Mann, and son, William, both of Stamps; a daughter, Gracie Mann of Glendale, Ore., his parents, Eugene and Marie Mann of Saffell; two brothers, Mark Mann and his wife, Joyce, of Jonesboro, and David Mann and his wife, Kathy, of Longview, Texas; three step-children, Tera Morgan of Lynn, Joshua Walker and Jacob Huskey of Jonesboro; and many loved ones and friends. He was preceded in death by his sister, Brenda Mann Jones.

Funeral services were held Sunday, Oct. 2 in Jonesboro, with Brother Fred Dover and Brother Don Vuncannon officiating. Burial was private.

For memorials, please consider a gift to Salem UMC, P.O. Box 49, Wheatley, AR 72392, or First UMC, P.O. Box 366, Stamps, AR 71860.

## NOMADS meet, work, plan at Mount Eagle

Five pairs of Arkansas NOMADS (Nomads on a Mission Active in Divine Service) on Oct. 2 met at Mount Eagle Retreat Center near Clinton for a week of work and fellowship. Beginning each day with devotional time, the group did maintenance on



John Hardin, Paul Bauer and Don Brown, all members of NOMADS, use the sawmill at Mount Eagle Retreat Center to cut lumber for on-site construction.

PHOTO BY DORIS JUNE

the primitive campground, cleaned lodges and cabins and used the sawmill to cut lumber for a new pavilion being constructed.

The group met with Conference Volunteers in Mission coordinator Don Weeks, who made a proposal for some rebuilding needed for recovery from a tornado in the Etna area (see story on page 5A). In response to that need, Arkansas NOMADS are setting up a Revolving Team Project (RTP) for the site. An RTP provides a steady presence of workers for four to six months, with crews taking shifts as short as one week.

## Alvin Murray sermon collection published

*Re-Digging Wells*, a collection of selected sermons by the Rev. Dr. Alvin C. Murray Jr., has been published and is now available through Amazon.com.

Murray was a United Methodist minister in Arkansas, serving from the 1940s until his death in 1998.

The title of the book comes from one of the sermons in the collection. "Digging the Wells Again" centers on a passage from Genesis 26, when Isaac inherits the responsibilities of Abraham after his father's death.

"There are two 'inheritance' sermons in the book," Stephen Murray, son of the late Dr. Murray and the book's editor. "They really kind of alter your viewpoint about what we should be thinking about when we think of what we are going to leave for future generations."

For information about the book, which is available in paperback or as a Kindle e-book, visit [re-diggingwells.com](http://re-diggingwells.com).



**Alvin C. Murray**

## Did you know? Ark. UM Museum facts

- In its 17-year history, the United Methodist Museum of Arkansas has made its home at three different church buildings: Quapaw Quarter UMC Little Rock, Asbury UMC Batesville and now First UMC Little Rock.
- The museum originally had no formal ties to the Conference Commission on Archives and History. Thanks to a reorganization made official during the 2011 Annual Conference, that arrangement has changed. The museum now exists in relationship to the Conference Commission, as do the Conference Archives, which are stored and maintained in Conway at Hendrix College's Bailey Library, and the Arkansas United Methodist Historical Society.
- Saturday, Jan. 14, 2012, marks the official opening of the museum's new home at First UMC Little Rock. Look for details in the Dec. 2 issue of the *Arkansas United Methodist*.





The Rev. Steve Coburn, a member of the transition team tasked with implementing the Imagine Ministry plan, presents the team's report to the Oct. 29 Called Session of the Arkansas Annual Conference.

AUM PHOTO BY AMY FORBUS

## Session

(continued from page 1A)

premiums for the second half of 2012. The amount had not been known at the time the report was issued, but has since been determined. The motion replaced the estimated cost with the confirmed cost, which is lower than the estimate.

After speeches relating to the stress the Conference budget places on small congregations, lay member Jay Clark asked for clarification on how much direct control the Conference has over its budget. Clef Vaughan of CFA explained that

because of insurance premiums, pensions and general church apportionments, the Conference has direct control over only about 20 to 30 percent of its budget.

Many budget questions cannot yet be answered because the work of the transition team continues. CFA member Don Riggan said that more clarification will be available in the spring of 2012. The budget passed as amended.

### Reports given

The agenda also included reports from the task forces relating

to Imagine Ministry, as well as Conference task forces on children and youth ministry, ethnic ministries and young adult ministry. These groups will provide further updates and recommendations at the 2012 Annual Conference.

"Our next step is to begin the dreaming process," said the Rev. David Freeman, convener of the Conference Task Force on Young Adult Ministry. The group understands that their task is a spiritual one, and Freeman invited the members of the Conference to join them in prayer, fasting and study.

As a time-saving measure, Bishop Crutchfield requested that questions for the task forces be submitted by e-mail to Jim Kimsey, a lay member of the transition team, at [Jim@kimzeyinc.com](mailto:Jim@kimzeyinc.com).

The Rev. Bud Reeves, a member of the Imagine Ministry team, provided a summary of Imagine Ministry and highlights of the related task forces' work since their formation this summer.

"Our goal, again, is not primarily to save money, but to be effective in ministry," he said.

One significant change since approval at Annual Conference is that the Networks for Personal and Social Holiness have been consolidated into

a single entity called "Holiness of Heart and Life: The Network of Discipleship and Mission."

"We realized that to separate the two would violate our Wesleyan heritage," Reeves said. An explanation of the Wesleyan rationale for the name change is posted at [arumc.org/ac2011](http://arumc.org/ac2011), along with other documents in the "Interim Reports" section of the Oct. 29 agenda.

The Rev. Stephen Coburn

provided an update from the transition team, then chastised Conference members for their lack of trust. "We are all on the same team, or at least that's what I thought," he said.

Some statements posted to Facebook, both as individual status updates and as comments on the Imagine Ministry Group page, reflected the contentious tone of parts of the session.

## Ten-year-old active in knitting ministry



It may take her months to complete her first scarf, but Lauren Stallings is learning from the best.

At age 10, she is the youngest among the knitters of the Corning United Methodist Women, a group that has made more than 400 prayer shawls, lap robes, scarves and chemo hats in just a few years.

Realizing that some of those present have been knitting for nearly 70 years, Lauren is still amazed at how they can look around and carry on a conversation while continuing to knit without dropping a stitch.

One of her favorite parts of the weekly activity is participating in "laying hands and praying" over a shawl to be delivered to a person whose spirits need lifting or who is celebrating a special occasion.

—submitted by Fred Martin

## THIS CHRISTMAS, START A NEW FAMILY TRADITION

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# REPORTER

THE UNITED METHODIST

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## Jubilee Journey

Seminary friends  
help orphan walk | 4B



## Gen-X Rising

Individualism a barrier  
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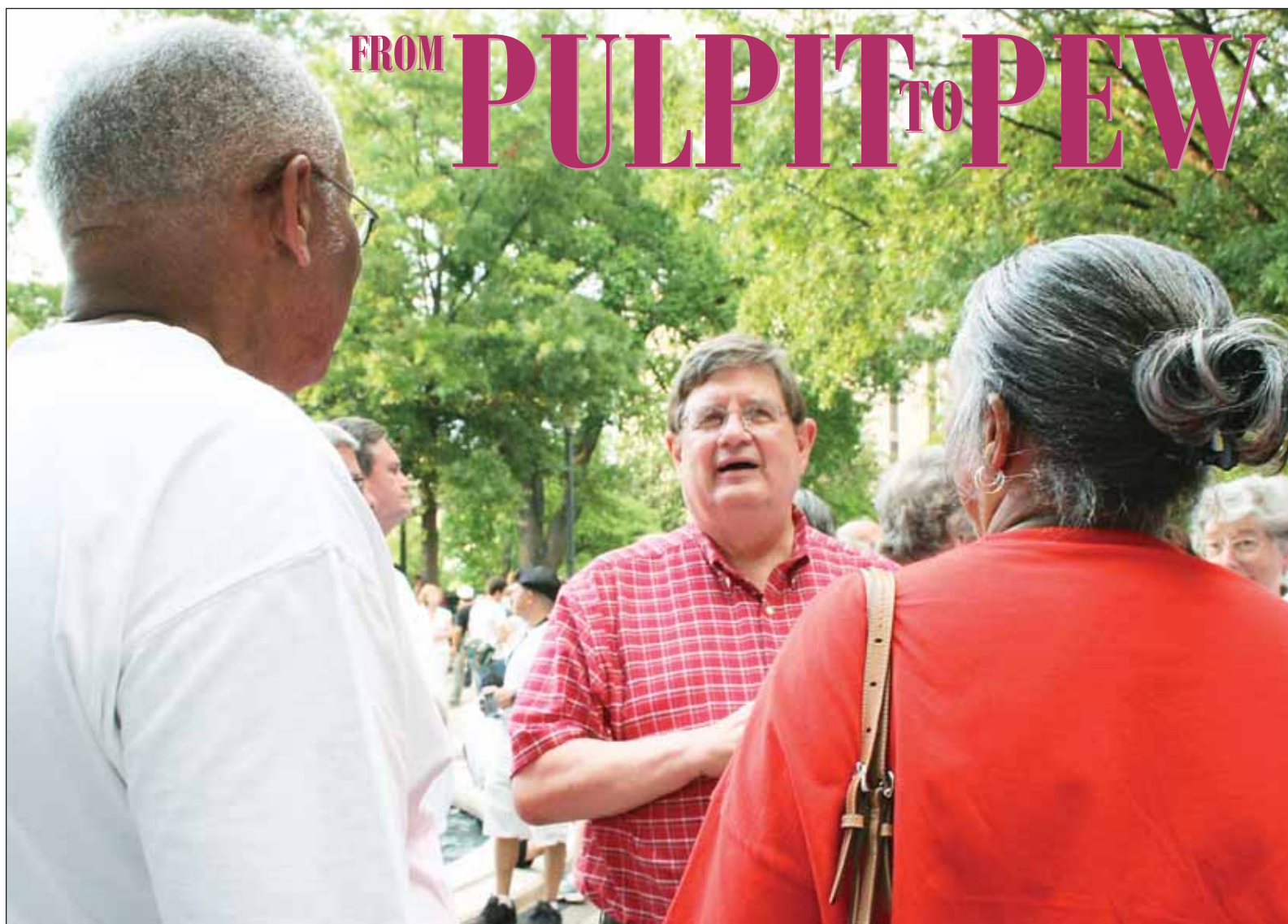


## Reflections

Old Methodist story  
finds new telling | 7B

Section B

November 4, 2011



## FROM PULPIT TO PEW

The Rev. Reagin Brown, a retired United Methodist pastor, speaks during the June 25 march in Birmingham, Ala., against Alabama's HB56 Immigration Law. Now that he's no longer in the appointment system, he says, he feels freed up to speak out.

UMNS PHOTO COURTESY LYN COSBY

## Making the transition challenges retiring pastors

BY MARY JACOBS  
Staff Writer

In most churches, the distance between the pulpit and the pews spans about a dozen feet.

But for newly-retired United Methodist pastors, the journey between the two might as well be a thousand miles. Just ask the Rev. Charles Buck, 64, who retired from First UMC in Poplar Bluff, Mo., in July, after 44 years as a pastor.

"I had trouble sleeping for the first month," he said. "After being accountable to a church and a daily regimen for years ... I had to learn how to slow down."

After decades of service, retire-

ment often involves wrestling with a sense of loss of identity and recognition, figuring out how to manage long days no longer filled with meetings, pastoral visits and sermon preparation, and observing a number of rules—written and unwritten, in moving to a new congregation, as a member, not as the pastor.

For some, the end of a career in ministry begins a period of grieving.

"It's like empty nest syndrome," said the Rev. Diana Holbert, who retired last summer, with her last appointment at Grace UMC in Dallas. "It's about identity. I've always been a pastor."

Mr. Buck said, "Retirement is a time when you have to emotionally

and physically make some adjustments. I'm enjoying it now, but it took me awhile to get there."

Retirement can bring unexpected blessings, too. The Rev. Reagin Brown, who retired from First UMC in Fort Payne, Ala., in July, says retirement made it easier to take a vocal role in fighting Alabama's immigration law.

"I would've done so either way, but there's a lot less cost this way," he says. "I have friends who are in situations where they feel they can't afford to do that. And some friends, who are active pastors, have spoken out, and paid a heavy price for it."

### Unwritten rules

One of the most difficult chal-

lenges for retiring United Methodist clergy is making the transition from pastor to parishioner. Most pastors leave the last church they served and establish a membership at another United Methodist church in retirement.

"You don't go back to the church where you served, not even to do a funeral or a wedding, unless the pastor calls and says, 'I really need you,'" said the Rev. Katherine Glaze Lyle, who retired from full-time ministry in the North Texas conference in 2011.

Dr. Holbert said the unwritten, professional courtesy rule is not to return for at least a year.

"That's pretty strictly followed by

## Q&A: Pastor casts lot with homeless

**The Rev. Lorenza Andrade Smith**, a 42-year-old provisional member of the UMC's Rio Grande Conference, has become known in San Antonio for her activism on immigration issues. That includes undertaking a fast in support of hunger strikers pushing for passage of the DREAM Act, which would create a path to citizenship for young undocumented immigrants who get a college education or serve in the military.

Since July, she's been on a special pastoral appointment, living on the street to be in solidarity with the homeless and others on society's margins. She took a break to speak to the United Methodist Association of Communicators, in Albuquerque, N.M.

**Managing editor Sam Hodges** caught up with her there.

### Was there a turning point that led you into activism?

There wasn't anything, really, in my background. I've always done things with refugees and prison work, but as far as the public (role), it was really this thing with the Dreamers (DREAM Act activists). It was a sense of, "Where is the church?" And I didn't see the church.

■ See 'Homeless' page 2B



Rev. Andrade Smith

■ See 'Pastors' page 8B



## FAITH WATCH

**Pope names Vatican ambassador to U.S.**

Pope Benedict XVI has chosen Italian Archbishop Carlo Maria Vigano as the Vatican ambassador to the United States. He succeeds Archbishop Pietro Sambi, who died in July of complications from lung surgery. Archbishop Vigano, 70, has been a top official at the Governorate of Vatican City State, where he gained a reputation as a cost cutter, Religion News Service reported.

**City official sues SBC for \$1.5 million**

A member of the Metro Nashville Council is suing the Southern Baptist Convention, claiming he and his wife were fired as missionaries after they complained about illegal and unsafe building practices at a job site in New Delhi. Ron Nollner and his wife, Beverly, are asking for \$1.5 million from the SBC, according to *The Tennessean* newspaper. They were hired by the SBC's International Mission Board to oversee construction of an office building, the lawsuit claims.

**Zondervan releasing Jimmy Carter books**

Former President Jimmy Carter will soon be bringing out two books with Christian publisher Zondervan. *Through the Year with Jimmy Carter: 366 Daily Meditations from the 39th President* will be released in January, and *New International Version Lessons from Life Bible: Personal Reflections with Jimmy Carter* comes out in March. Mr. Carter is the author of 25 books already, ranging from poetry to fiction to memoir to political analysis.

**Oklahoma church votes to leave PC (USA)**

Members of the First Presbyterian Church of Enid, Okla., voted 2-1 to break from the Presbyterian Church (USA). The denomination has permitted gay ordination and taken other stands that have upset many conservative members and churches. The vote was non-binding but allows the church to take action, said the Rev. Roy Schneider, pastor.

—Compiled by Sam Hodges

■ **HOMELESS** Continued from page 1B

**As for your current “street” appointment, was that your idea or (San Antonio Area) Bishop Jim Dorff’s, or did you come up with it together?**

This happened prior to this November deal with the Dreamers. I felt called. I’d always worked with the marginalized, just not in a public and challenging way. And I just really had approached them, my district superintendent and my bishop, and told them that I felt called to be in solidarity with those on the margins.

And so it took us about a year and a half to really compromise to this place. Bishop Dorff really took a stance in opening a space to make this happen. We talked about a three year commitment. Of course, he appoints me every year, and we’ll evaluate.

**I gather you’ve given up your salary and liquidated a lot of your material goods. Is that right, and if so, why did you do that?**

That’s correct. I went out with what I had on, and a (bed) roll. First, the bishop wanted to pay me. That was part of that one-and-a-half-year struggle. It was like, how can I be in solidarity with the homeless and be receiving this nice little check. And then there was talk about, “Well, don’t receive it now but we’ll hold it and it can accumulate.” It just didn’t seem authentic.

**Do the homeless people**

**in San Antonio know you’re a pastor and come to you for help?**

Certainly I am up front with the homeless, that I am a pastor. But I do tell them that I’m not there to provide any charity, that I’m there to listen and learn. I think that mutuality and respect opens a world for them and for me, to be able to learn from them.

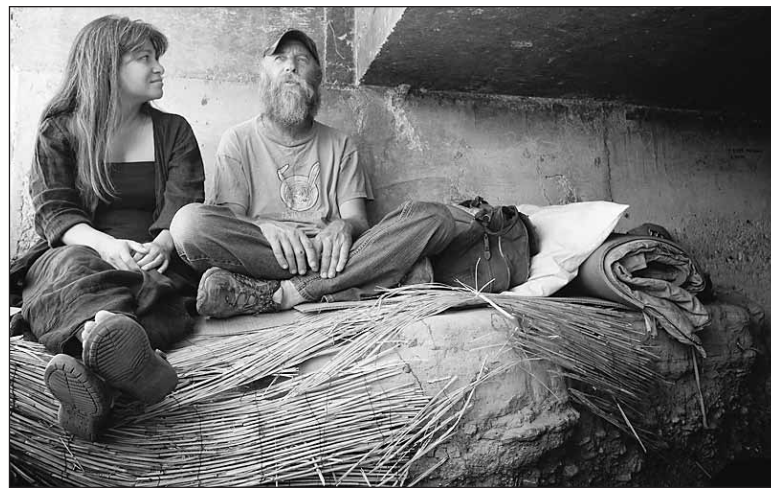
**Do you get asked for prayers as you move about?**

I do. The homeless have access to Facebook, too, through the library, so I get a lot of private messages. They all have my cell number. I’m very open about that. They do call for prayers. Sometimes we sit around. There’s a lot of God talk. But also a lot of anger toward the church.

**What has surprised you most about life on the street?**

Sleep deprivation. When I got dropped off on July 1st, in the park, I said, “Oh my goodness. Where do I go? Where do I sleep? Where do I bathe? Where do I go to the restroom?” ... I didn’t have to worry about food, but I did have to worry about where I was going to sleep. I never realized how exhausted I would be.

The other thing that has surprised me is the criminalizing of the homeless. I didn’t realize that. Now I’ve experienced getting a ticket, getting warnings, being told to move on. It’s a



UMNS PHOTO BY MIKE DUBOSE

**The Rev. Lorenza Andrade Smith is living on the street to be in solidarity with the homeless and others on society’s margins. Sleep deprivation has proved a major challenge.**

sense of non-worth. I sit by a man sometimes who is elderly, on a fixed income. ... He pays for his medications, and with what’s left over, he probably spends maybe two weeks in a hotel. The rest, he sleeps on a bench sitting up, because he can’t afford tickets, and he’s trying to abide by the law.

**Would you give the UMC a grade on responding to the homeless?**

I’m certainly not going to do that. (Laughs.) That would be pretty unwise, as much as the church is supporting this—my bishop, a lot of pastors and lay people, organizations. They know my challenge.

**Does the bishop want you to call in every so often?**

One of the compromises was that I would come with a phone and an iPad. The Texas Methodist Foundation had channeled in some money, and the bishop has that for the ministry, including to pay for that kind of communication, for safety issues. ... There’s some things I might tell him afterward. (Laughs.)

**Any heroes or heroines in this line of work? Somebody like Dorothy Day?**

My strength has come probably from my mother’s strength, and from God. ... Someone like me probably shouldn’t be on the streets. I know that. But I believe the spirit empowers us to do great things. And the spirit empowers the church.

## Hollon, Reporter among UMAC contest winners

FROM STAFF REPORTS

The United Methodist Association of Communicators (UMAC) held its annual meeting last month, in Albuquerque, N.M. And, as always, a main event was the awards banquet recognizing outstanding work in a number of categories.

The Rev. Larry Hollon, top executive of United Methodist Communica-

tions since 2000, received the “communicator of the year” award at the Oct. 20 event. Mr. Hollon has had a key role in the United Methodist Church’s participation in anti-malaria campaigns.

The *United Methodist Reporter* won a certificate of excellence in the newspaper category, with judges remarking on the steady mix of interesting and readable stories.

Staff writer Mary Jacobs won a certificate of excellence in the writing category for an article titled “Disconnected: Are our general agencies a long way from the pews?”

Judges also honored former managing editor Robin Russell with a certificate of excellence in the opinion/editorial category, for a column headlined “Too bland for our own good?”

Two staff members of UMR Communications, the Reporter’s parent company, were honored for work in publicity and advertising. Cherrie Graham and Erika Dorsey won a certificate of excellence for campaign/strategic planning, and a certificate of merit for a UMR advertising campaign.

Stephen Hustedt and Christina Dillabough of the Desert Southwest Conference won best of class for print for Transformation Magazine. Best of class for digital publications went to Jamie Jenkins and Tim McDaniel of the North Georgia Conference, for *Monday Morning in North Georgia*.

Jessica Connor of the South Carolina UM Advocate won best of class

in writing for a story titled “Spirit Singers.”

The Rev. Paul Jeffrey won best of class in both photography, for work in Southern Sudan on behalf of the General Board of Global Ministries, and media presentation.

Best of class in visual design went to Hal Sadler and Ron Underberg, for GBGM’s New World Outlook. In video production, best of class went to United Methodist Communications (Fran Coode Walsh, Lilla Marigza, Jan Snider).

The best of class award in publicity and advertising went to various staff members of GBGM, the United Methodist Committee on Relief, and United Methodist Communications, for the 10-Fold Campaign.

The UMAC Hall of Fame inductees this year were Wally Athey, former director of communications for the Desert Southwest Conference, and the late Rev. Ann Greene Whiting, who was editor of the Southern New England edition of the *Reporter* and *Zion’s Herald*, and also served as editor and publisher of the Michigan Christian Advocate.

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## UM CONNECTIONS

**Website given to UMC's Claremont**

The website Religion-On-line.org has been donated to UMC-affiliated Claremont School of Theology by the Rev. William F. Fore. Dr. Fore, a retired Yale University professor, created the site in the late 1990s so that his theology students in India could have access to theology books online. The site has had about 10 million "hits" this year, from visitors in more than 200 countries. The site offers more than 6,000 book chapters, articles and speeches. Dr. Fore said he hopes Claremont will be able to fill its gaps in Judaism, Islam and other religions.

**Bedford led churches, called square dances**

The Rev. Lee Alvin Bedford, Jr., a UM pastor for 60 years, died Sept. 30, at age 83. Born in Runge, Texas, he earned degrees from Southern Methodist University and its Perkins School of Theology. While in seminary, he was a professional square dance caller, singing with RCA records. He was pastor of several North Texas Conference churches, and formed Casa Linda UMC, which grew to 1,800 members in his tenure. He served as director of evangelism for the North Texas Conference and as chaplain for the Texas Air National Guard and Dallas Police Department.



Lee Bedford

**UMCOR looks to help Turkish quake victims**

The United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR) was in discussion with partner International Blue Crescent about how to assist Turkey after a 7.2-magnitude earthquake hit that country on Oct. 23, leaving at least 279 people dead. UMCOR expected to be able to provide blankets, plastic sheets and hygiene kits for survivors. The area affected is populated mainly by Kurdish communities and is among the nation's poorest regions, UMCOR said.

—Compiled by Sam Hodges

# 'Sesame Street' special a hit at UM center

BY HEATHER KEMPER-HUSSEY  
*United Methodist News Service*

EAST ST. LOUIS, ILL.—Jagged lines of 4- and 5-year-olds zigzagged into the room. Excitement rumbled through the tiny crowd as their widening eyes recognized the red and blue monsters surrounding the television.

On this Friday morning, Sesame Street had come to the children of the Lessie Bates Davis Neighborhood House, a United Methodist community center.

Thanks to the St. Louis Area Foodbank and a grant from Walmart, the children at the center viewed a screening of a primetime special of Sesame Street, titled "Growing Hope Against Hunger." The special features celebrity guests Brad Paisley and Kimberly Williams Paisley and, of course, the Sesame Street Muppets, including a new Muppet named Lily, whose family doesn't always have enough to eat.

Many of the children who watched Lily at the Oct. 14 screening could identify with her experience.

"Right now, 41 percent of our residents here in East St. Louis are living in poverty, and 20 percent are in extreme poverty," said Aundrea Young, deputy director at the Lessie Bates Davis Neighborhood House. "That means 40 percent of our area children are going hungry. So this message by Sesame Street is very close to us, very close to our hearts."

**Lessons from Muppets**

The one-hour special follows the familiar and beloved Muppets—Elmo, Rosita and Grover. Together, through song and humor, they help

Lily realize that her family is not the only family that suffers from hunger. Lily plants the seed in her audience that communication can also help.

"Talking about it with my parents made me feel a lot better," she says.

Hunger may seem an unusual topic for the sunny TV show famed for teaching generations of children their ABCs and 123s. But in the troubled economy, many more American children are experiencing empty bellies. They need the food pantries that so many United Methodist congregations offer.

The Annie E. Casey Foundation reported in August that more than 2.4 million more children joined the ranks of the U.S. poor over the past decade. According to U.S. Department of Agriculture, nearly 17 million American children are "food insecure," which means their access to food is limited or uncertain.

"By Lily coming out and talking about having to go to the food pantry, it makes our kids not feel so ashamed of having to reach out for help," said Vera Jones, director of education and youth development at the Lessie Bates Davis Neighborhood House. "Plus, we want to make sure that if they need help and are not currently reaching out, that they feel comfortable enough to do so."

**Seeing Jesus' face**

During the episode of "Growing Hope for Hunger," Mr. Paisley began a song with words of "planting hope." As the kids of the Neighborhood House clapped along, Mr. Paisley provided simple strategies on how anyone can lend a hand—by planting a garden,



UMNS PHOTO BY HEATHER KEMPER-HUSSEY

**Bethany Prange, communications coordinator at the St. Louis Foodbank, talks to children at the Lessie Bates Davis Neighborhood House.**

holding a food drive, donating food or even just by being a friend. The friends at the Lessie Bates Davis Neighborhood go a few steps further.

At the Neighborhood House, Ms. Jones said, staff members are a resource for parents and their community. They have counselors on hand who can connect and transition parents to any assistance they may need.

"If we identify a family that may not be aware of the WIC (Women, Infants and Children) program, or maybe they need food delivered from our food pantry, we help get them connected to those resources and will deliver food," she said.

The mission work of the Lessie Bates Davis Neighborhood House began in the early 1900s with the support of the Rev. W.F. Fransee. During the past 10 years, Neighborhood House has continued to expand its

programs and services to youth, families and the elderly.

The ministry is now a national mission institution supported by United Methodist Women.

Through the years, Fransee's original commitment—"To try to see the face of Jesus Christ in every person who walks through the doors of the Neighborhood House"—continues.

"I think Lily is just perfect!" squealed 5-year-old Anastasia, as she twirled the yellow bracelet just given to her by the St. Louis Foodbank.

When asked why she thought Lily was so perfect, she looked up with bright eyes and exclaimed, "Because she's just like me."

**Ms. Kemper-Hussey is the director of communications at Morning Star Church, a United Methodist congregation in Dardenne Prairie, Mo.**

## LETTERS

## 'Hot button' issues distract

The world is in need of serious attention to social justice and to the real standards of our Christian faith.

Historically, Methodists have been among the most active and productive advocates for that. But such "hot button" issues as homosexuality and abortion have distracted us.

If we want to reestablish ourselves as a serious advocate for the kind of things John Wesley advocated, the very first thing that should happen in the 2012 General Conference is removal of provisions in the *Discipline* regarding these hot button matters.

Philip Susag  
Manchester, Conn.

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I found Dr. Haynes' column on Arminianism (Oct. 14) to be ex-

tremely interesting and informative. I was raised in a Southern Baptist church and have been a United Methodist for 11 years. I coordinate children's ministries and small group studies for our church. I suspect a lot of the Christian books and curriculums out there reflect a Calvinist view so pervasive that we don't even recognize it.

I use a Vacation Bible School kit that is "grace-focused" rather than "salvation-focused."

Alyce Leytham  
Lawson, Mo.

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# Walking with God

Seminary friends help Congolese orphan get prosthetic legs

Essay by Christina Cavener, Special Contributor



Playing with the children at the Jamaa Letu orphanage has been a joyful part of Christina Cavener's time there.



*"The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me; he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed, to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and release to the prisoners; to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn."*

(Isaiah 61:1-2)

Could this passage be any richer with liberation? It is chock-full of ways in which the Spirit of God calls us to release, to bind up, to liberate, and to proclaim good news! We are to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor: Jubilee.

Jubilee, the biblical concept of total freedom and rest, is a culmination of the Sabbath. Jubilee is justice: it moves all of creation from debt to equal living, from sickness to health, from captivity to freedom, and from hunger to fulfillment. There is no greater calling on humanity than to bring forth this vision of healing.

This calling to enact the vision of Isaiah always comes from the communities we are connected to: namely the body of Christ. My involvement at the Denton Wesley Foundation in Denton, Texas, led me to Cameroon in 2006. There, we hosted a camp honoring youth leaders for the United Methodist Church in that country. It was this experience that forced me to evaluate my future in a new way. God was calling me to breach my comfort zone and to venture beyond the world I had created for myself. At the time, I was not sure what this would entail, but two years later my new home became the city of Lubumbashi in the Democratic Republic of Congo. My participation in the body of Christ moved me from one side of the world to another.

From August 2008 until May 2009, I served as an English teacher at The English Speaking School of Lubumbashi and as a volunteer at the Jamaa Letu Orphanage under the United Methodist Church. My responsibility was to teach from Monday to Thursday and simply to spend time at the orphanage from Friday to Sunday.

The more I did, the more awareness I gained about the children's needs. There were no mosquito nets, school supplies, or decent shoes, and their clothing was full of holes. The list of needs seemed endless. Brittany Burrows and I began to email churches and contacts we knew from the UMC's North Texas Conference. In no time, money came pouring in. We were able to provide mattresses, clothing, shoes, school books and supplies, mosquito nets, malaria medication, and more. Our original pur-

pose, just spending time with the children, turned into much more: pieces of Jubilee were coming to fruition.

One of the orphans at Jamaa Letu is named Emmanuel. He was born without legs, from an unintended pregnancy. His parents sent him into the streets to beg for money, leaving Emmanuel to survive on his own. Emmanuel thought he would die of starvation, but the orphanage saved him. He understands that God led him to a place of refuge and hope that embraces him fully, and where he has formed a new family in Christ.

Emmanuel not only survives, but thrives at the orphanage. He loves God with all of his heart, he always has a smile on his face, he constantly makes jokes, and the other boys consistently look to him for guidance. Emmanuel is an exceptional child with incredible resilience.

During one of our bible studies, we asked the kids to share their prayers with us. Emmanuel's only prayer as a twelve year old was that he would be able to walk one day. Again we contacted churches and he was able to receive his preparation sur-



This summer, Emmanuel received a new set of prosthetic legs that allow much greater mobility and durability than his first set.

gery to attach prosthetic legs in April 2009. During this time, Brittany and I were searching for partnerships that would enable us to do more. Brittany searched online and finally found the International Foundation for the Physically Disabled. We discussed our hopes and dreams with IFPD.

In 2009, Brittany and I returned to the U.S., where we continued to communicate with the orphanage about how to attach prosthetic legs. Within the next year, Emmanuel's first prosthetic legs were attached at a local hospital, Wote Pamoja, with no charge. In Swahili, "Wote Pamoja" means "all together," and this is truly how the organization functions. With the help of the community and hospital staff, only three patients out of ten actually pay for their prostheses. Often the doctors work for weeks without compensation. These saints at Wote Pamoja saw how special Emmanuel was and decided to construct legs for him. Though they increased Emmanuel's mobility greatly, the legs were somewhat painful and difficult to maneuver. Upon receiving this knowledge, we asked IFPD for assistance. Wote Pamoja



has limited resources and we saw the potential in a partnership between this Jubilee-enacting hospital and IFPD.

In July 2011, our work with IFPD enabled us to visit Emmanuel and teach two of the doctors at Wote Pamoja how to attach new high-quality prosthetic legs with a design initiated by Cobus Venter, co-founder of the IFPD. These legs would increase his mobility, enable him to walk without a cane, completely dissolve pain, and last for a lifetime. The doctors at Wote Pamoja became very excited at the prospect of partnering with IFPD and assembling these prostheses. Building prosthetic legs usually takes eight to ten days in a developed country, yet it took the Wote Pamoja doctors four days to finish. Those doctors were dedicated to little Emmanuel!

Emmanuel's face lit up as he took his first steps with his new legs. His first words were, "Asante sana! Asante sana! Mungu bariki!" which translates as, "Thank you very much! Thank you very much! God bless you!" This message is meant for all of us. When we allow the Spirit to work within us, all things are possible.

Since the construction of these legs was so successful, IFPD will be able to partner with Wote Pamoja to enhance its facilities and train all of the doctors in how to assemble the prostheses. This means that in the summer of 2012, Brittany will be taking supplies to the facility to enable higher quality care and I will be leading a team of doctors to train all of the staff at Wote Pamoja on how to construct the legs with their new equipment and supplies.

In the near future, the hospital can increase its efficiency and serve more patients who have been injured due to war, violence, or birth complications. These same high-quality legs first used by Emmanuel will be distributed to other children around the world. God not only answered Emmanuel's prayer, but prayers for children everywhere.

What was intended to be a small project opened the door for world-wide change. This is the hope of Isaiah 61. When the Spirit of God is upon us, it can lead us down unexpected and miraculous paths toward healing.

Christina Cavener graduated from SMU's Perkins School of Theology in May 2011 with a master of theological studies degree. For two years, she has been youth and children's director at Grace UMC in Dallas, and continues her work there. Brittany Burrows is to graduate from Perkins next May with a master of church ministries degree. She's an intern at the Denton Wesley Foundation.



Emmanuel is seen above with Christina Cavener (l) and Brittany Burrows in April 2009, after the operation that let him get his first artificial legs. In the photo at left, Ms. Cavener and Ms. Burrows are spending time with children of the UMC-supported Jamaa Letu orphanage during a return visit last July. (All photos courtesy Ms. Cavener.)



## GEN-X RISING

# Individualism is reason for UMC 'professions' decline

BY ANDREW C. THOMPSON  
UMR Columnist

It's never a good idea to see how the sausage gets made. At least that's the conventional wisdom.

I tested that particular piece of wisdom a few days ago. I actually ended up glad I saw sausage-making firsthand.

The "sausage" in this instance was the conferencing process that ultimately governs the United Methodist Church. Next spring the General Conference will meet in Tampa, Fl. And as a way to begin preparing for that quadrennial event, all the annual conference delegations of the South Central Jurisdiction (one of the five Methodist jurisdictions in the United States) met together in Oklahoma City.

All of what I saw was informative, and some of it was invigorating.

In two days of intense conferencing, one of the most striking presentations given was by Don House. Mr. House is the chairman of the SCJ episcopal committee.

Mr. House presented his case for the need we have for sustained church growth, in many areas but particularly in church membership.

He noted the number of measures that show a decline in the church over the past few decades. Total church membership and worship attendance are two that are often cited.

The one standard of measure that he is most concerned about is the decline in professions of faith. The church in the U.S. has seen a 31.3% decrease in professions of faith since 1995.

To understand the significance of what Mr. House was trying to get across, we have to ask ourselves the question, "What exactly is a profession of faith?"

## Zero-sum game

The key point about professions of faith is that they are instances of persons joining a local church by something other than infant baptism or transfer-of-membership from another church. Our Book of Discipline lays out the meaning of a profession of faith in ¶217: "When persons unite

as professing members with a local United Methodist church, they profess their faith in God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth; in Jesus Christ his only Son, and in the Holy Spirit. Thus, they make known their desire to live their daily lives as disciples of Jesus Christ. They covenant together with God and with the members of the local church to keep the vows which are a part of the order of confirmation and reception into the Church."

Profession of faith is a key component of membership in the church for a denomination, like ours, that believes strongly in infant baptism. When an infant is baptized, it is the faith of Christ and the faith of the church that makes possible the sacramental response to the grace of God. A profession of faith, on the other hand, is the response of that baptized person once she or he reaches an age where such response is practicable.

The reason that the decline in professions of faith is so crucial to Mr. House is because it is through such means that the church grows. Transfers of membership are a zero-sum game: one congregation's loss is another's gain. But professions of faith represent new additions to the household of faith.

'We resist identifying ourselves as fundamentally connected to larger groups ...'

The concern Mr. House was raising should be a concern common to all of us. We live in a country with an expanding population. If we believe the gospel is really good news, there is no reason why our own church should not be expanding as well.

But we're not expanding on the whole. We're contracting. And that means we have a significant problem.

There are surely many reasons why our professions of faith seem to be lacking. We need to question our own commitment to evangelism. But we also need to look seriously at cultural factors working against us.

I think two of the most significant are twin trends that are dangerous to the church: individualism and privatization.

## Tough trends

Individualism identifies all of life's value at the level of the individual himself. Our culture embraces a fairly radical version of it. The ancient Greek philosopher Protagoras is known for his saying, "Man is the measure of all things." Well, individualism takes that view a step further and holds that every individual man (or woman) gets to measure all things.

Privatization is another cultural trend that is the inevitable companion to individualism. We resist identifying ourselves as fundamentally connected to larger groups, so we tend to see value as possessed by us personally.

Sounds a little complicated, I know. But it's not. What I mean is simply this: As an individual, I get to decide the worth of a given thing. It is all a matter of my personal opinion. And once I decide, the value I attach to that thing belongs to me and me alone. I don't have to explain it to you, and I don't even have to admit it to you.

If you are starting to make the connections between this sort of thinking and the resistance to confessing one's faith publicly, then you're on the right track. The twin forces of individualism and privatization lead people to believe something like this: "My belief in God is something private to me. It can neither be called into question by anyone else nor can it be called upon for public witness unless I decide that of my own free will."

It all sounds perfectly democratic and libertarian. To American ears, it has a nice ring. But it is also a deeply anti-biblical point of view. Nothing in Scripture or the tradition of the church supports such an individualized and privatized faith.

Mr. House is right to focus on the need to buck the trend against declining professions of faith. But to do that, we have to realize what we're up against. It is nothing less than reversing a powerful cultural trend that is making the individual reign supreme.

The Rev. Thompson is an instructor in historical theology & Wesleyan studies at Memphis Theological Seminary. Reach him at athompson@MemphisSeminary.edu.

# Want church growth? Be willing to take risks

BY TOM ARTHUR  
Special Contributor

I've been experimenting with ways to grow my church. I know "church growth" is sometimes a bad word for us mainliners, but at its best, church growth is about making disciples of Jesus Christ. So I went with my worship leader, Jeremy, to Michigan State University's campus and tried to hand out worship invite cards to students.

This was way out of my comfort zone, but I was asking my congregation to push themselves, and I thought I ought to push myself, too. I found it a lot easier to tack the invite cards up on bulletin boards than hand them out to people, but we did both.

Our expectations were not very high. We hoped that after handing out a couple hundred cards that we'd get at least one person to show up. We waited anxiously on Sunday morning hoping our low expectations might be surpassed.

The results: not one new person showed up! So much for growing our church through invitation.

'Our eyes were being opened and our imaginations were being stretched, but the only way we got there was by risking failure.'

Not so. What Jeremy and I realized as we walked around the MSU campus (with a growing sense of futility about our method) was that this was the very first time in my two years of being a pastor at this church that we had actually gotten out of our office and walked around the community imagining how to build relationships. We really hadn't realized how inward-focused we had become until we walked among these students on campus. Our eyes were being opened and our imaginations were being stretched, but the only way we got there was by risking failure.

And fail we did.

Failure is a key to growth. Joshua Foer, in his book, *Moonwalking with Einstein: The Art and Science of Remembering Everything*, introduced me to the OK plateau, "a place where we are no longer risking failure. We don't take risks anymore, because we're



"OK" as we are.

Take for example our typing speed. Most of us plateaued with our typing speed a long time ago, because we got fast enough to accomplish our daily tasks with little inconvenience. But if you want to get off the OK plateau and increase your speed, you have to plan to fail. Set a metronome to a speed just slightly faster than you can successfully type without errors. Then analyze your errors and look for patterns of mistakes. Make appropriate fixes, and pretty soon you're off the OK plateau and typing faster than you did before.

fore. To grow, you have to plan to fail.

With the MSU campus experiment, Jeremy and I were giving ourselves an opportunity to fail. We spent lunch time that day analyzing our mistakes and suggesting fixes.

The next week I showed up on campus with a to-go box of coffee from a well-known local coffee shop. I handed coffee out for free. While I didn't pass out nearly as many cards, I did actually have several conversations with students and began seeing new possibilities that I hadn't seen before. On my second week, I actually had a student give me his e-mail to send him information about our pub group meetings.

I don't know where this all will lead us, but I'm doing my best at being OK with failing.

It's the only way to grow.

The Rev. Arthur is pastor of Sycamore Creek Church, a worshipping congregation of the United Methodist Church in Lansing, Mich. Reprinted from Faith & Leadership ([www.faithandleadership.com](http://www.faithandleadership.com)).



Tom Arthur



## REFLECTIONS

# Reconciliation is lesson from 'riveting' new book

BY BISHOP WOODIE W. WHITE  
*UMR Columnist*

She was simply known as "Kitty" and later as "Miss Kitty." Many Methodists remember her as the young, unnamed slave woman at the center of the 1844 General Conference debate concerning Bishop James Osgood Andrew of Georgia, and the accusation that he owned slaves. Methodist church law prohibited the owning of slaves by bishops.

The unresolved controversy resulted in the southern delegations of the church withdrawing and establishing a new denomination in 1845, which they named the Methodist Episcopal Church South, distinguishing it from the Methodist Episcopal Church, founded in 1784.

This is familiar history for many United Methodists today. Less familiar are the details of the alleged ownership by Bishop Andrew of the young woman known as Miss Kitty. For some this history is still a matter of concern, as I have recently discovered.

In the community of Oxford, Ga., some 30 miles outside of Atlanta (Oxford being the town in which Atlanta's Emory University was established as Oxford College) the story of Miss Kitty and Bishop Andrew has been kept alive and in a sense has caused unresolved and sometimes unspoken tensions between African American and white citizens. It is no surprise each community has its own narrative of the relationship between Miss Kitty and Bishop James Osgood Andrew.

A riveting new book, *The Accidental Slaveowner: Revisiting A Myth of Race & Finding An American Family*, written by Mark Auslander, currently associate professor of anthropology & museum studies, and director of the Museum of Culture and Environment at Central Washington University, in Ellensburg, Wash., looks in depth at the story.

Dr. Auslander was a professor at Oxford College (still a division of Emory), in Oxford, Ga. There he became acquainted with the ongoing controversy of the two narratives related to Miss Kitty and Bishop Andrew. His interest and scholarly

inquisitiveness led him to his study of not only this relationship, which had caused the division of a denomination, but also the nature of slavery, especially in Oxford and the surrounding community.

In the course of his work, he began to wonder about how Miss Kitty had spent her adult life. Where were her descendants? *The Accidental Slaveowner* answers these questions and more.

In February of this year, I was a part of a round table discussion and worship service held one Sunday afternoon in Oxford's Old Church, a revered historical site that also is important in Georgia Methodist history. It's close to the cemetery where Bishop James Andrew and Mrs. Catherine (Miss Kitty) Boyd are buried.

Gathered were community leaders as well as members and leaders of the United Methodist Church. They had come to seek healing of a wound still open after more than 150 years. The little church was filled to capacity. Some stood outside, unable even to find standing room in the church.

'As I looked about that simple sanctuary I saw many with tears...'

I was seated next to another member of the round table, a descendant of Bishop Andrew, and only a few feet away sat two great-great-granddaughters of Catherine Boyd. Seated close to them was Bishop Mike Watson, current leader of the North Georgia Conference. As I looked about that simple sanctuary I saw many with tears streaming down their cheeks. "Amen" punctuated the service.

I thought about so much that winter afternoon, mostly Miss Kitty, and those enslaved so long ago. But I thought as well about those who held others in bondage. And the desperate need for reconciliation in the world.

You will want to read *The Accidental Slaveowner* for the rest of the story!

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



**Bishop Woodie White**

# Methodist history does matter

BY CHRISTOPHER M. SHOEMAKER  
*Special Contributor*

If I am to be honest, I must begin my response to Dr. Magruder's recent thought-provoking column (*Reporter*, Oct. 14) by agreeing with him. The United Methodist Church has become far, far too concerned with numbers and measurements.

We are so concerned with the "business model" of the Church that we have, indeed, lost sight of what it means to follow Jesus. No argument whatsoever. Our recent conversations have become so bogged down with concern about our future financial support and who is holding our clergy "accountable" that we have completely forgotten that God is the answer to those very questions.

I also agree with him that we cannot live in our past; but, unfortunately, my agreement with Dr. Magruder must end here. While we should not allow ourselves to stare at our history with transfixed gaze, we should not abandon it—good or bad—for the empty prize of imagined relevancy.

Jesus didn't rename Simon "clay" or "sand," but Peter ... "rock." Peter (and the other disciples) would represent what is timeless, not what changes with the whim of the world. I interpret Dr. Magruder's article as suggesting we throw out the existing



**Chris Shoemaker**

church and create something new.

I cannot imagine a bigger mistake. Should we transform to fit the present age, knowing that the present age will someday become the past and leave us to contemplate change yet again? Or should we simply become so flexible and amorphous that we constantly reinvent Christianity?

Shall we vanquish tradition and experience and stand before Scripture with human reason alone? To me, these questions seem to be the next stations on Dr. Magruder's line of thought.

While we have committed dreadful sins in the past, we believe in a God who embraces repentance and forgives sin—be it individual or collective. According to Dr. Magruder's proposal, it's almost as if our past faults and failures are so great we that need to commit denominational suicide. Nothing could be farther from the reality of grace.

As for Methodism's failure to stop essentially all armed conflict in the last 50 years, not even the self-immolation of Buddhist and Quaker pacifists—though shocking and horrific—could stop the Vietnam War. I can't help but wonder if Dr. Magruder is suggesting that the main purpose of his "New Methodism" should be to oppose war.

I would also remind that while United Methodism (and its direct ancestry) is largely Anglo and middle-class, "Methodism" as a whole is a beautiful tree of many glorious hues. Here in America let us not forget the CME, AME and AME Zion churches, the latter two branches being very

nearly as old as the trunk itself.

Dr. Magruder states: "Let's stop comparing our present to our past. Our context is different from those other places and eras." Is our context really that different?

People are still struggling with the deadly burden of sin. We are still tempted away from God by every conceivable distraction, and still searching for freedom and release from worry and fear. And we've been fighting and killing each other since Genesis, not since Vietnam.

As I look through the gallery of history I see the same painting over and over again. Different artists and different colors—but the same picture. We're not special and different because we live in the present age. It doesn't help to trade American exceptionalism for generational exceptionalism. We were, are, and will be human beings in need of a savior.

While Dr. Magruder's final question, "What does it mean to follow Jesus here and now?" is a good one, it's not the question. The question is: "Do we believe God is real?" If we do, then we need to get moving and serve in faith as Wesley (yes, Wesley) taught us: with a balance of solid Gospel evangelism and Christ-centered, loving service. If we don't believe God is real, well, then we do have a lot to worry about.

**The Rev. Shoemaker is pastor of Cuthbert UMC, in Cuthbert, Ga., adjunct professor of religion at Andrew College, and vice president of the Southeastern Jurisdiction Historical Society. Contact him at pastor@cuthbertumc.com**

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■ PASTORS *Continued from page 1B*

most pastors," she said.

For her, making a clean break from her last congregation means tough choices—like ignoring emails from former parishioners who express concerns related to the church.

Some retirees do return to the churches where they last served, after a period of one year. But when firm boundaries aren't established, problems often arise.

"There are horror stories," said Dr. Holbert. "People still want them to baptize their grandchildren and marry their children. Sometimes the former pastor really does begin to take over, to try to guide the church back into the vision he or she had as the senior pastor."

The Rev. Russell Gallimore, a retired pastor, belongs to Aldersgate UMC in Jackson, Tenn., along with two other retired United Methodist pastors. When a new pastor arrived several years ago, he seemed a bit intimidated by the presence of three retired pastors in the pews. So Mr. Gallimore invited the new pastor, the other retired pastors, and their spouses to dinner.

"We had a sit down, to assure him that all three of us were here to worship, to be of help if he wanted, but not be in the way," he said. "We promised we'd be supportive and positive, no matter what. It freed us to know we had shared that, and as a result, we didn't have to walk on eggshells."

When the current pastor arrived two years ago, the Gallimores hosted another dinner and a similar conversation.

This kind of frank communication, between the retired pastor and the current pastor, can head off problems. As Mr. Gallimore says, "It helps take that fence down and makes a bridge."



PHOTO BY LANE GARDNER CAMP

**After retiring, the Rev. Russell Gallimore began competing in Senior Olympics.**

A similar meeting over lunch helped the Rev. Daniel Minor smoothly transition from pastor to parishioner. After retiring from Parchment UMC in Parchment, Mich., in July, Mr. Minor was careful to make a "clean break" from Parchment. When he and his wife, Jolene, began attending Otsego UMC, he took the pastor out to lunch.

"I told him, 'I'm not going to come in and take over the place,'" he said. "'I'm there to do anything you want me to do. Or, I don't need to do a thing.'"

Mr. Minor recalled the pastor's response: "I want you to be my mentor, and I want you to write your own job description." With the pastor's bless-

**'As far as most folks are concerned, when we're retired, we're dead.'**

—The Rev. Reagin Brown

ing, Mr. Minor steps in to help with pastoral visits and preaches the occasional sermon.

### Giver to receiver

Mr. Buck remembers the first Sunday he took communion after retiring.

"When I went up to receive the sacrament, that was the moment when I realized I was redefining my role," he said. "I was becoming not the one who administered the sacrament, but who received it. That was the hardest part for me."

Moments like those can prove jarring, even for pastors who have planned and looked forward to retiring. While many annual conferences offer workshops to help prepare financially for retirement, most pastors find they are on their own when it comes to the psychological transition.

On her initiative, Dr. Holbert, 64, enlisted a therapist, spiritual director, her husband and a covenant group of fellow female clergy as she weighed the decision of when to retire.

"I can't imagine making a big change like this without these strategic helpers," she said.

And it was a big change. Dr. Holbert remembers emerging from a day-long meeting shortly after retiring. A colleague had an iPhone full of messages and 30 emails waiting in her Inbox—but Dr. Holbert's was empty, and had been for hours.

"I thought, 'Oh. This is really dif-

ferent,'" she recalls.

That's a familiar experience for many newly-retired pastors.

"When you retire, the phone stops ringing," said Mr. Brown. "As far as most folks are concerned, when we're retired, we're dead. It kind of punched my ego. But then I laughed about it and went on."

### An interim step

Some retiring pastors find they can ease into retirement more smoothly by moving into part-time or interim pastoring appointments, at least for the first few years.

The Rev. Karen Alden, 65, retired in July, but opted for a part-time appointment as pastor of Woodlandville UMC, a small church in rural Rochesport, Mo.

Going from full time to part time, she said, was easier than going "cold turkey."

"I can't imagine that I could stop doing what I've done for this many years," she said. "I knew I needed to slow down, but I love what I do. I'm not ready to give it up."

Mr. Brown really didn't want to make the leap from pastor to retiree all at once either. After retiring in June, he took a few months off, then accepted an interim pastor position at Cahaba Heights UMC, in Birmingham, Ala.

"When you're the pastor in a local church, you're the 'owner,' but when you're an interim pastor, you're more like a 'renter,'" he said.

Mr. Gallimore retired in 1998, but has served as an interim pastor in three different churches in the years since.

An interim pastor position "is a different kind of relationship, because the pressure's not there," he said. "It's more freeing. You still feel useful—you can love and care for the congregation. But you know you can walk away if you need to."

### Passing the mantle

In a ceremony that's become traditional at the Missouri Annual Conference, the Rev. Michele Sue Shumake-Keller marked her retirement in June by "passing the mantle" to David Hutchison, who was being commissioned on the ordained ministry track.

"I was gratefully and joyfully ready to pass on that mantle," she said. "I wasn't burned out, but I was ready." She's moved to a new home, and enjoys visiting churches as she shops for a new church home.

"I can sit there and just be a regular worshipper," she said, "and that is delightful."

Many retirees who've made the transition successfully agree that finding happiness in retirement means



PHOTO BY FRED KOENIG

**At the Missouri Annual Conference Session, retirees "pass the mantle" to newly commissioned people on the ordained ministry track. Here, Michele Sue Shumake-Keller passes the mantle to David Hutchison in June of 2011.**

finding new ways to serve.

Mr. Gallimore, 76, edits a newsletter for retirees in the Memphis Conference (along with his wife, Carroll) and another newsletter for volunteers at a hospital where he is a chaplain, competes in the Senior Olympics in a variety of sports, and until last year led a specialized ministry teaching church members to drive church buses, which requires a special license. He quit only because, at age 75, insurers prohibited him from driving the buses.

Mr. Gallimore's motto: "It's better to wear out than rust out. I try to follow that as long as I'm able."

After 41 years in ministry, Mr. Minor, 66, can't say enough about the

joys of retirement.

"It's the one of nicest things that ever happened to me," he said. "I'm walking on air."

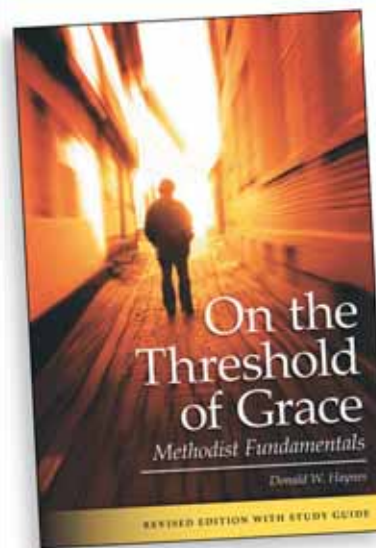
Mr. Minor says enjoys his freer schedule and no longer having the need to multitask. Still, he's busy. Since retiring in July, he began training for a 5K race and started writing a weekly devotional for a local shoppers' guide.

Recently, Mr. Minor found himself mashing squash for the church's annual harvest dinner along with other volunteers in the church kitchen.

"I never had time for that sort of thing when I was the pastor," he said. "I'm having the time of my life."

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