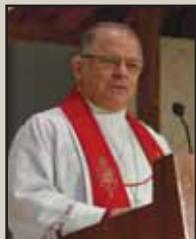


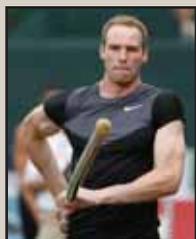
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SCJ Conference: new bishops and other decisions

BY AMY FORBUS
Editor

The 2012 South Central Jurisdictional (SCJ) Conference of the United Methodist Church convened July 18-21 in Oklahoma City, Okla., with an agenda of electing three new bishops to succeed those who are retiring, as well as receiving reports on ministries throughout the eight states that compose the Jurisdiction.

The Arkansas Conference will receive Bishop Gary E. Mueller, who was elected to the episcopacy on the 11th ballot, behind Bishop Cynthia Fierro Harvey, elected on the fifth ballot, and ahead of Bishop Mike McKee, elected on the 23rd ballot. Candidates must receive 60 percent of valid votes to be elected. Voting delegates consist of half lay and half clergy, and were elected at their respective 2011 annual conferences.

Mueller, who hails from the North Texas Conference, has served as senior pastor of First United Methodist Church Plano, Texas, since 2002. His first four-year term as bishop begins Sept. 1.

Nominated by the North Texas delegation and endorsed by the North Texas Conference and Black Methodists for Church Renewal of the SCJ, Mueller has helped his congregation grow from an average weekly attendance of 760 in 2001 to

[See SCJ, page 3A]



Bishop Gary Mueller walks in the recessional of the July 21 Service of Consecration for new bishops of the South Central Jurisdiction (SCJ), held at St. Luke's United Methodist Church Oklahoma City. Mueller was elected to the episcopacy on July 19 at the 2012 SCJ Conference, and will move from Plano, Texas, to Little Rock to serve as Bishop of the Arkansas Area beginning Sept. 1.

AUM PHOTO BY
AMY FORBUS

Q&A: Getting to know Bishop Mueller

On Sept. 1, newly elected Bishop Gary Mueller will begin work as the episcopal leader of United Methodists in Arkansas. He spoke recently with *Arkansas United Methodist* editor **Amy Forbus** about his upcoming transition from the pulpit of First United Methodist Church of Plano, Texas, to the Arkansas Conference offices on the campus of Philander Smith College.

What would you like readers of the *Arkansas United Methodist* to

know about you?

I am excited. Wink, my wife, is excited. We are genuinely thrilled and honored about coming to Arkansas. I can't wait for people there to get to know me as someone who loves the gift of life, loves Jesus and loves ministry, and is really serious about Christ making a difference in people's lives and in the church.

I'm excited to come to a group of people who have a faithful witness, who are in the midst of trying to do ministry in a new way.

I'm ready to roll up my sleeves and go to work with the wonderful folks in Arkansas, so we can help people get hungry about following Jesus.

And let's help folks learn how to pronounce your name, as we heard it a few different ways at Jurisdictional Conference.

I say "Muller," as if there's no "e"—but I have heard it both ways [muller and myoo-ler] for so long that I am comfortable with either. Even Siri on my iPhone recognizes

my name as "myoo-ler."

What do you expect your schedule to look like in the first few months you're here?

I think it's going to be busy—getting to know laity, pastors and churches, and folks who work on the Conference staff. I think there'll be lots of getting acquainted. I feel very blessed to be arriving as this whole new way of doing ministry through Imagine Ministry is unfolding,

[See Q&A, page 4A]

The journey has to go somewhere

BY WILLIAM O. (BUD) REEVES
Special Contributor

We were given at Annual Conference a little book by Bishop Robert Schnase called *Remember the Future*. I have been using it in my prayer time.

Early in the book he quotes Dr. Joy Moore, associate dean of Black Studies and Church Relations at Duke Divinity School: "The church is not the destination any more than the plane and a successful flight are the ultimate destination on your next trip." It's not the journey or the vehicle that matter so much; it's what happens when you get where you're going.

We have been talking in Arkansas United Methodism for a long time about our spiritual and organizational journey, comparing it to the journey of Moses and the Israelites in the wilderness. The pilgrimage is far from over. But without a destination—without a vision of the Promised Land—a journey is just aimless wandering.

We do not know all the steps our journey will take between here and there. But we should have some idea of what our Promised Land will look like.

Motivation matters

Why do we make the trip? Why are we engaged in efforts at reform and renewal in the church, from the local congregation to the general church? It is not, as is reported in the media constantly, an effort to reverse the decline of the denomination. It is not about stemming the loss of

membership. It is not about sustaining the institution in the face of declining resources. It is not about making the church grow again. If our destination is the church, we are lost.

We are taking this journey in the wilderness for one reason. We are willing to expend the energy that it will take to effect the most massive paradigm shift in the church in 500 years for this one purpose: to do the will of God.

We are making the trip in order to make disciples of Jesus Christ, to transform our communities and the world or, as Wesley said, to spread Scriptural holiness throughout the land and reform the nation. That's God's will.

As Moore put it, the journey is about salvation—mine, yours, our brothers' and sisters', our community's and our world's. It is simply about aligning the planet with the will of God expressed through his son Jesus Christ on the cross.

Simple in focus, but not easy to execute.

My journey recently took an unexpected turn. After 32 years pastoring churches, I became a district superintendent. Many offered their condolences for my leaving the ministry. All the sarcastic remarks I had made about district superintendents over the years came back to haunt me as they were repeated to me, mostly in good fun.

There is a steep learning curve involved; pray for the patience of the Northeast District! It is still ministry, in a slightly different mode, but with the same focus.

As a superintendent, I will be excited to see how we can imbed the changes we have talked about for two years in the operation of the churches and Conference. What a grand challenge to be a part of the shift in the way we view and do

ministry. What a thrill it will be to see disciples make disciples, to see churches increase their effectiveness and excellence, to see communities impacted for the good by their local United Methodist Churches.

These things are the will of God, and our mission is to do them.

Gifts of journeying

Knowing the purpose makes the journey important. It matters how we travel, because we see, at least in our mind's eye, the destination. It matters *that* we travel, because no other mission is ultimately worthwhile.

There is a story told about Queen Victoria, who made a visit to Africa to see some of the British colonies. At a seaport town on the west coast of Africa, tribal leaders from all over came to pay her homage.

When one tribal leader came before the queen, her advisors told her that the man had walked for two weeks from the interior of the country to bring his gift.

Receiving the gift, the Queen thanked him also for the arduous trek that had brought him into her presence. The tribal leader bowed before the Queen and in broken English responded, "Your Majesty, long journey part of gift."

Before we ever start the journey, we have received the gifts of God—Jesus Christ, his grace, a Kingdom vision for our time. Our journey is our gift to God, as we travel with perseverance, endurance and discipleship.

It is a gift that we get to travel together and, in the end, to arrive at home.

The Rev. Dr. Reeves serves as superintendent of the Northeast District. He may be reached at breeves@arumc.org.



Bud Reeves



EDITOR'S CORNER

BY AMY FORBUS

God showed up

I admit that I didn't look forward to the 2012 South Central Jurisdictional Conference—known as #scj12 on Twitter. Yes, I knew Arkansas would come home with a new bishop, but greater uncertainty clouded the event.

When Dallas Area Bishop Earl Bledsoe rescinded his voluntary retirement on June 5, I knew that previous conferences couldn't compare to what we would experience in Oklahoma City. With the potential for involuntarily retiring a bishop on the agenda, the tension lay thick over the gathering.

And as human beings, each person who attended carried other sources of tension: Worries about family or church or work. Disagreements with friends and colleagues. Injuries and illnesses.

I carried my share of such problems with me to #scj12 on Wednesday. Then, Thursday morning, just before elections for new bishops began, my initial worries gained company. I had a phone conversation that nobody wants to have. Followed by another one, and an email, and increasingly discouraging text messages.

And in early evening, a close friend's diagnosis.

It was time for another ballot. I carried my camera from the newsroom into the plenary hall so I could be ready in case of an election. I stood near the Arkansas delegation to wait for the ballot results. One of them noticed the look on my face: "Wow, you're awfully serious."

Before I could think of anything more tactful, I blurted out the reason: "I just found out that my maid of honor has stage four ovarian cancer."

The ballot results arrived: no election. I returned to my workstation in the press room.

Within one minute, a member of our delegation called me. If I had time, he asked, would I please come back to the plenary hall? The delegation would like to pray over me.

Of course I had time.

As the Arkansas delegation surrounded me, God showed up at Jurisdictional Conference. As they prayed for my friend, and for me, I felt God's presence. The tears I'd held back all day began to fall.

Other groups formed other circles of the politicking persuasion, trying to guess how the next ballot would go and who would be the next United Methodist bishop. I suppose God was in those circles, too; in spite of all our human-ness where elections are concerned, I can't help but believe the Holy Spirit is involved.

Yes, we elected three new bishops for our denomination. We have a new, well-prepared episcopal leader arriving in September to succeed Bishop Crutchfield. We have a painful process that continues to unfold surrounding a bishop's involuntary retirement.

And even in the midst of change and struggle, I felt God show up.

To reach me, send an email to aforbus@arumc.org.



Volume 159 • No. 14 August 3, 2012
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The *Arkansas United Methodist* is the newspaper of record for the Arkansas Conference of The United Methodist Church. It is printed as an edition of *The United Methodist Reporter* once monthly, on the first Friday of every month, and four special issues during the year for a total of 16 issues per year.

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

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

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



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

Subscriptions
- Annual and biannual subscriptions are available for the print edition of this newspaper.
- The online edition is free.
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Advertising is welcomed. For a rate sheet or more information, contact Martha Taylor at 501-324-8005 or mtaylor@arumc.org. While all advertising is reviewed before acceptance, it should not be considered endorsed by this newspaper or the Church.

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Issue Date	Submission Deadline
Sept. 7	Aug. 22
Oct. 5	Sept. 18
Nov. 2	Oct. 17

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BY CHARLES CRUTCHFIELD

AN OCCASIONAL WORD from the Bishop

Dear Friends:

*"The old order changeth, yielding place to new,
And God fulfills himself in many ways,
Lest one good custom should corrupt the world."*

—Alfred, Lord Tennyson

I think these poetic words fit itinerant United Methodist pastors and bishops as they move or retire. Many of you are aware that Karen and I are moving to Oklahoma City to be close to my 96-year-old mother.

You have been so kind, generous and gracious to us. You have embraced us as family. We are so grateful for our journey with you over the past eight years. They have been special years because you are a very special people. One of my colleagues said to me eight years ago when we were assigned to the Arkansas Conference, "Crutchfield, you made out like a bandit!"

He was right. It has been good. We shall miss you very much. Do remember that the latch string is always out in Oklahoma City.

Karen and I thank you for your gracious donations in our honor to Imagine No Malaria. As you give through your church, the matching gift from the United Methodist Foundation of Arkansas is given. Your \$100 becomes \$200. You and your church continue to save lives through supporting the INM campaign. I am proud to be part of a church that is determined to save 500,000 lives a year. Question: Is there an Arkansas United Methodist Church that will raise \$100,000? Hope so!

As we leave, there is a thrilling sense of joy and anticipation attached to the assignment of Bishop Gary Mueller and his wife, Wink, to the Arkansas Annual Conference. I believe Arkansas "made out like a bandit" in Bishop Mueller's assignment here.

He is an articulate, thoughtful, theologically grounded, Wesleyan United Methodist. His reputation as a very strong preacher and administrator only begins to do justice to his gifts and graces. He is aware, as are we all, that the church must continue to change and evolve as we proclaim a timeless Gospel to the 21st Century.

We are extremely fortunate to have Bishop Gary and Wink Mueller as the next episcopal family of the Arkansas Annual

Conference. I know from speaking with them how excited they are to be coming our way. The Holy Spirit is in this assignment.

When I was a child, every time we left on a family trip, my grandfather would gather us around the car, put his foot on the "running board" and we'd have a "running board prayer" to send us safely on our journey. Cars don't have running boards any more. But, let's pretend. Karen and I would appreciate it if you offered a little prayer for us as we leave, for Bishop and Mrs. Mueller as they arrive, and for the annual conference as it moves into the 21st century.

As Tennyson wrote, *"More things are wrought by prayer than this world dreams of."*

Faithfully,

Charles Crutchfield

SCJ (continued from page 1A)

1,265 in 2010.

He sees hope for reversing the declining United Methodist worship attendance in the SCJ and across the U.S. "You start with the basics, and that's Jesus, and get the congregation to fall in love with Jesus and get excited about sharing Jesus," he said at a news conference immediately following his election.

He presently serves as chair of the board of ordained ministry in North Texas, and previously was chair of the building committee for the Conference Ministry Center.

As a delegate to the 2012 General Conference, he successfully put forth the "Mueller Amendment," which provides for greater oversight of the appointment process as part of the legislation that sought to end guaranteed full-time appointments for ordained elders.

Decisions

In addition to electing bishops, the SCJ Conference delegates faced an unprecedented task: the decision of whether to retire involuntarily a bishop that the Jurisdictional Episcopacy Committee found to be ineffective at his job. By a vote of 82 percent in favor of the decision, the SCJ forced into retirement Bishop Earl Bledsoe, 61, who currently serves the Dallas Area (North Texas Conference).

Reactions varied across the body of the SCJ Conference.

"I see it as an episcopal lynching," said the Rev. Ronnie

Miller-Yow of the Arkansas delegation, who currently serves as national president of Black Methodists for Church Renewal. He questioned the specifics of the process followed by the Jurisdictional Episcopacy Committee.

"Whenever you go in without a sure process, you know that the outcome is not going to be good.... We're not saying the people on the committee are not God-fearing. It doesn't mean that these people are bad," he said. "It means that for the Jurisdictional Conference to vote this man into involuntary retirement was problematic."

Arkansas delegate the Rev. Rodney Steele, who serves on the Episcopacy Committee, took a different view.

"The work surrounding the recommendation for Bishop Bledsoe's involuntary retirement was some of the most emotionally demanding and spiritually discerning work I've ever done," Steele said. "We worked hard to hear from many people from different perspectives."

Steele added that committee members spent more than seven hours hearing from Bishop Bledsoe and his counsel and reviewed some 93 exhibits he submitted. The committee also invited monitors from the General Commission on Religion and Race to help increase cultural sensitivity before and during the hearing, and to have the benefit of their observations. The committee ultimately cast 24 votes in favor of involuntary retirement, four against, with two absentions.

"Despite overwhelming

support for the recommendation within the committee and by the SCJ Conference, this is still a painful experience and I pray for God's healing for everyone," he said.

Bishop Bledsoe is appealing the decision to the Judicial Council, the high court of the denomination, which next meets in October. He will be placed on leave beginning Sept. 1, and the vacancy created in the jurisdiction means that the Northwest Texas-New Mexico Area will be filled on an interim basis by two retired bishops, Dan Solomon and Bill Hutchinson, pending approval by the Council of Bishops.

Other actions

Other decisions approved by the SCJ Conference proved less controversial. Delegates voted to shift oversight of the Wesley Foundation at Southern Methodist University from the Jurisdiction to the North Texas Conference. They also approved the creation of the Great Plains Episcopal Area covering Kansas and Nebraska. Additionally the three conferences in that area will merge; the formation of the Great Plains Conference is to be complete by Jan. 1, 2014.

Further south, the unification of the Southwest Texas and Rio Grande conferences is scheduled to be done before the next South Central Jurisdictional Conference in the summer of 2016. The name of this new conference is yet to be determined.

For the first time in the 44-year history of the SCJ, the conference

agenda included time for service to others. Delegates packaged some 50,000 dehydrated meals for Stop Hunger Now—the same organization that provided one of the mission projects at this year's Arkansas Annual Conference.

Arkansas had a strong presence throughout the SCJ Conference:

- Bishop Crutchfield presided at the Friday plenary session immediately following his retirement address.
- The Revs. Aubrietta Jones and Mike Morey delivered reports from the Committee on Courtesies and Privileges and Volunteers in Mission, respectively.
- Delegation head Asa Whitaker presented a video about canvascommunity UMC Little Rock's work with its homeless neighbors during a Conference Lay Leaders' presentation on vital congregations.
- The Rev. Susan Ledbetter led a prayer for the victims of the Aurora, Colo., movie theater shooting.
- Jim Argue Jr., president of the United Methodist Foundation of Arkansas, presented the report of the National Association of United Methodist Foundations.
- Sarah Steele led the Conference in a sung prayer before adjournment.

Several Arkansans also turned up on the Jurisdictional nominations report, meaning they will serve the

UMC at the Jurisdictional and General church levels.

Jim Argue, who was elected at General Conference to serve on the General Council on Finance and Administration. Argue also was elected recently to serve as secretary of that body.

Others include Jay Clark, General Board of Church and Society; Todd Burris, board of the United Methodist Publishing House; the Rev. Rodney Steele, General Commission on Communication; Sarah Steele, Division on Ministries with Young People; John Crawford Jurisdictional Mission Council.

And as part of an effort to break a deadlock late in the episcopal election process, Rodney Steele's name surfaced briefly in the balloting for bishops.

Ultimately, the top three candidates on the first ballot went on to each receive the 60 percent necessary for election. Twenty-three ballots and one Jurisdictional Episcopacy Committee meeting later, Conferences received their episcopal leaders for the next four years.

Heather Hahn of United Methodist News Service contributed to this report. For photos of the Arkansas delegation's participation in the SCJ Conference, see page 7A.

Installation Service for Bishop Mueller Sept. 8

The Arkansas Conference Episcopacy Committee extends an open invitation to the Installation Service for Bishop Mueller. The worship service, hosted by St. James UMC Little Rock, 321 Pleasant Valley Drive, will begin at 10 a.m. Saturday, Sept. 8.

PEOPLE OF FAITH

Individual Volunteers in Mission prepared for long-term service

Several Arkansans recently completed training through the General Board of Global Ministries to be certified as Individual Volunteers in Mission.

Individual Volunteers serve for a minimum of two months, which can be extended to two years or more. They cover their own costs of transportation and expenses in the place of their assignment.



Kristy Bodge

Because they are viewed as missionaries, Individual Volunteers must possess a strong Christian faith. They have a clear understanding of mission, and are active in their local church, campus ministry or faith community. The ministry of an Individual Volunteer requires maturity and understanding of cross-cultural skills.

Individual Volunteers from Arkansas include Kristy Bodge of Bryant; Glen Duncan, the Rev. Jenni Duncan and Nechi Fullerton of Little Rock; and the Rev. Sue Kelly and Carl Primeaux of Hot Springs Village.

The Rev. Kelly and her husband Primeaux plan to serve at the United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR)'s Sager-Brown Depot in Baldwin, La. In conversations with Bill Dudleson, the depot's director of volunteer services, Kelly and Primeaux have learned that in addition to the relief work Sager-Brown makes possible around the world, the staff there also seeks to help its nearby neighbors.



Nechi Fullerton

"He has indicated that he would like for us to go into the Baldwin community to talk with families about their needs," said Kelly. They hope to begin their work in the spring or summer of 2013.

Jenni Duncan took the training for Individual Volunteers in Mission in 2010 and the following year served two months in Rio Bravo, Mexico. Now, as both she and her husband have received the training, the pair hopes to find an opportunity to serve together in 2013, with each of them using their differing gifts in the same location.

"Glen is more the hands-on repair and construction person," Jenni Duncan said. "I tend to focus on educational programs."

Fullerton has several Individual Volunteer trips in the works. In September, she will attend "Methodists, Mormons and UMCOR WEST" in Salt Lake City, Utah, to assemble disaster relief kits, learn about the history of United Methodism in Utah and gain a new understanding of the interfaith relationship between



Carl Primeaux

United Methodists and the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. She also has plans to travel to Cuba in October, and is exploring a potential opportunity in the Czech Republic during the spring of 2013.

To learn more about Individual Volunteer in Mission training opportunities, as well as opportunities to serve, contact Nancy Eubanks, GBGM consultant for Mission Volunteers-Individual Volunteers and Primetimers, at nteubanks@gmail.com or 731-772-0458.



Glen Duncan



Sue Kelly

Q&A (continued from page 1A)

because I feel like we're going to be spending a lot of time learning together.

I know it's going to be a whirlwind of meeting people, trying to delve deeply in and understand the state and its people, and the Conference culture and history. I'll have extended cabinet meetings, retreats and various meetings on my calendar.

Also, I'll work on trying to understand with ever-increasing clarity the vision that's driving Imagine Ministry, while trying to learn a brand new role in ministry myself. And I want to do that in a way that I can still take care of myself.

How do you take care of yourself?

I run a good number of mornings. In the past I've enjoyed playing golf, but that's been a figment of my imagination in the last year. I enjoy reading for fun, and spending time in nature, which will be wonderful in Arkansas. Spending time with Wink is a priority. I'm at a good point in taking care of myself. I don't want to be so on the go that I lose quality in my life.

One of the best ways I take care of myself is with my devotional time in the mornings. It's been critical in my faith journey. I get up and I read and pray, then I make a daily Facebook post that's as much for me as it is for others.

You mentioned you've looked at the Imagine Ministry plan. Any further thoughts on it?

The thing I love about what I'm seeing there is that it seems to give legs to the notion of making disciples for the transformation of the world, and it seems to encourage churches to get out into the world—the world that needs the hope and joy and justice of the Gospel.

I think it's a bold and brave step forward in getting on board with God's vision for the world. Yes, there will be some things that we need to tweak, and we'll learn as we go. But as this thing is being rolled out, I get to be a part of it. I found myself smiling as I read the Imagine Ministry page on the Conference website.

What are the things you'd like to learn about Arkansas congregations?

I have a sense that across the state, there's uniqueness not only in each of the congregations, but also regionally. I want to know from congregations where's their passion? What's their vision? How are they already helping people to get hungry to follow Jesus? What makes them different from every other church, and what is the special gift that every congregation brings?

Arkansas has one of highest percentages of local pastors of any U.S. annual conference. How do you envision local pastors, elders and deacons working toward fulfilling our mission?

A powerful reminder that the work of ministry is really the work of God's people is laity, clergy and local pastors all working together. In the North Texas Conference, I've been impressed by the way local pastors share the incarnation of Christ.

Whether I'm working with laity or those who are ordained or those who are licensed as local pastors, certified lay ministers or whatever, we're all about the same work. We're all about making disciples, sharing God's love, helping to transform the world.

I'm also aware that there are some unique challenges. For example, when local pastors have part-time appointments, how do we provide the support, education and training that's going to be most helpful to them?

About Bishop Gary E. Mueller

Education: Master of Divinity degree, Perkins School of Theology; Bachelor's degree, University of Kansas

Age: 58

Family: spouse, Wink Mueller; children, Hailey and Nick

Ordained: Deacon, North Texas Conference, 1978; Elder, North Texas Conference, 1981

Previous appointments: First UMC Plano, Texas; First UMC Denton, Texas; Director, Council on Ministries, North Texas Conference; First UMC Roanoke-Trophy Club-Westlake, Texas; McKenzie Memorial/Brewster Memorial UMCs; executive pastor, associate pastor for evangelism, First UMC Richardson, Texas

I served in Red River County [Texas] at McKenzie Memorial UMC for three years. It was a tough place down in the bottoms; there was a lot of bootlegging going on then, and now it's methamphetamine. But there's a farmer from that area who has become a local pastor there, and he is making a huge difference through one of the churches. As for Arkansas, I'm excited about circuit elders, and the way the Conference is trying to build those networks in support of local pastors.

Deacons are fully partners in ministry. In the North Texas Conference, we have a large number of deacons. They are truly my sisters and brothers in ministry serving as that bridge out into the world. We worked closely together on the Board of Ordained Ministry, as well. I believe their calling drives home our seriousness about reaching out to our communities.

How can clergy use their gifts to have a greater impact outside of the church walls?

It seems to me that clergy can do that in two ways. First, I think every clergy has certain skills and spiritual gifts that he or she can use in relating to the community. For example, I've had 10 years of being involved in Rotary here in Plano. Involvement in that group has strengthened my connections outside of the church. Sometimes that community connection could be through sports or community organizations, or maybe as simple as becoming a regular presence at a neighborhood coffee shop.

I think the other thing that we really need to think through together is how we develop systems and processes for connecting beyond the church. One of the most important things we clergy can do is to listen to the laity in our churches and in the community. How do we listen? I think the greatest things we can do are, first, know we're going to naturally have ways of connecting; second, think this through together; and third, hold ourselves accountable by asking, "How can I get out into the community?" I've found that when I publicly ask myself that question, I tend to do a better job of getting out there. And when I don't ask it, I forget. We need to keep asking.

How might you encourage laity to focus on the mission field?

I would encourage laity to start becoming more aware of the mission opportunities right in front of them. Laity are out in the mission field almost every hour of every day. The most effective witness the church has is through laity who live in such a way that they're continually seeking God's mission for their lives. Say to yourself, "I'm going to start looking through the lens of what God would have me do."

Grassroots effort key to eradicating malaria by 2015

Arkansas' team seeks ambassadors, gifts

What would it take to make malaria a disease of the past, rather than a fact of everyday life for millions of people in Africa? United Methodists in Arkansas and around the world are working together to find the answer.

It's a God-sized goal that is "doable," says the Rev. David Freeman, associate pastor at First UMC Springdale.

"Eradicating malaria will be a historic end to suffering, and we are so close," Freeman said. "We've made major strides in prevention through Nothing But Nets, but Imagine No Malaria helps us take the next steps toward full eradication.

"We know exactly how to prevent and treat it. We just need the resources in place."

Malaria gets personal

Freeman witnessed first-hand the devastation malaria has on families and communities while visiting Kenya in 2005. One man, Habbakuk Khamala, with whom Freeman has remained friends, has lost three children to the disease. The surviving family members have all experienced bouts of the disease.

"Habakkuk is why Imagine No Malaria is important to me," Freeman said. "Knowing him keeps a

real face attached to this work. Habakkuk is one of the brightest and hardest working people I've ever met, but malaria has kept him trapped in a cycle of suffering and poverty.

"There are millions of people just like Habakkuk. This is what drives me."

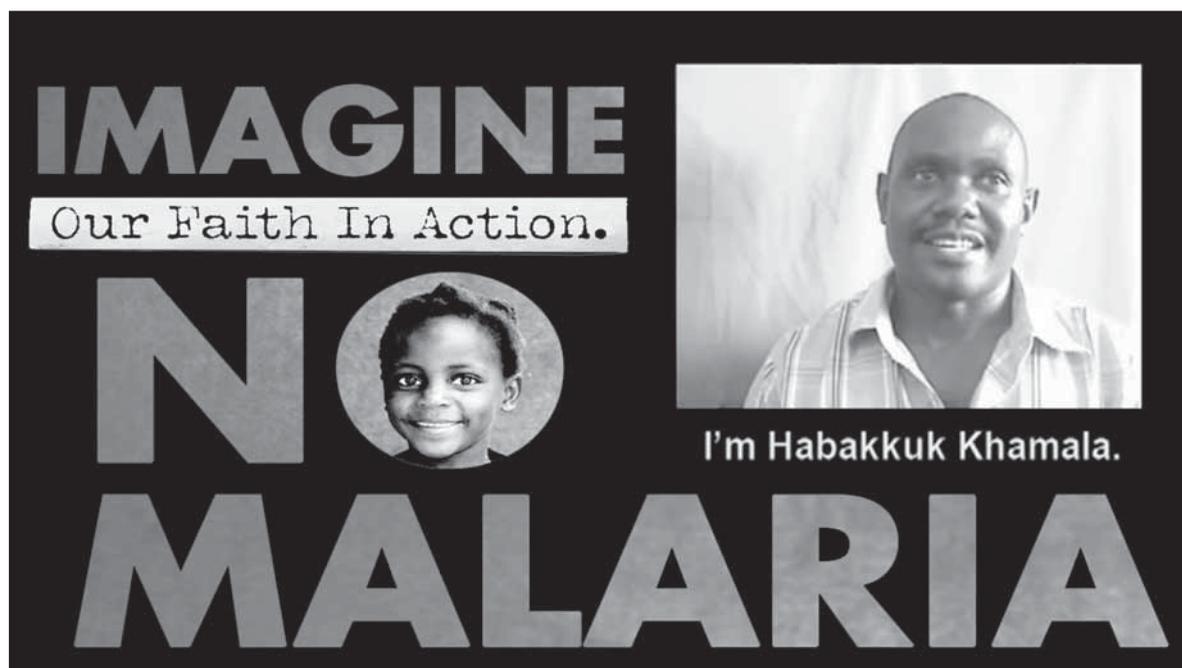
That's also why Freeman has taken on a leadership role to help the Arkansas Conference raise more than \$1 million for Imagine No Malaria, as well as \$100,000 for a medical transport plane that enables supplies and personnel to reach remote villages.

More importantly, he's talking with his friends and peers in United Methodist congregations and encouraging them to join the fight.

"Our connection is the perfect system for mobilizing people. I'm recruiting 'ambassadors' who will commit to leading their own church in Imagine No Malaria work and they will recruit five other churches as well," said Freeman. "We want to raise awareness and funds, but we want people and churches to find a deeper connection to one another through the effort."

Others join in

Along with other ambassadors, local churches, youth groups,



WATCH ONLINE: Habakkuk Khamala, a friend the Rev. David Freeman met seven years ago during a trip to Kenya, spoke via video about his family's struggles with malaria to the Arkansas Annual Conference session. To view the video, visit this page in the digital edition of the Arkansas United Methodist, or find it by clicking on "videos" at the Imagine No Malaria Arkansas Facebook page, facebook.com/ImagineNoMalariaAR.

Vacation Bible schools and individuals have been asking how they can help take advantage of the United Methodist Foundation of Arkansas challenge grant, which will double individual and local church gifts, up to \$333,333.

"One thing we have an abundance of is creativity," said the Rev. Martha Taylor, director of communications for the Conference. "It's energizing to hear how people are responding to the challenge and using their imaginations to come up with ways to make the most of the chance to double their gifts."

Taylor has been contacted by groups needing speakers for presentations at United Methodist Women and youth gatherings, materials for displays and activity and event ideas. Free resources and ideas are available at www.imagenomalaria.org as well as through the Conference office. The Facebook page facebook.com/ImagineNoMalariaAR provides a place for individuals and churches to post ideas, share photos of their activities and invite their friends to get involved in the effort.

"It's going to take all of us to help make malaria a thing of the past," Freeman said. "To see folks

across the state say, 'I can't do it all, but I can do my part' is how the goal can be reached. Every gift will help save a life."

To become an ambassador for the Arkansas Conference's Imagine No Malaria effort, contact Freeman at david@fumcwired.com. For all other Imagine No Malaria inquiries, contact Taylor at mtaylor@arumc.org or toll-free 877-646-1816.

How to double your gift

To have your congregation's gifts credited toward the United Methodist Foundation of Arkansas challenge grant:

- send checks to the Treasurer's Office, Attn: Imagine No Malaria, Arkansas Conference Ministries, P.O. Box 3611, Little Rock, AR 72203, or
- visit arumc.org/donate, click the Imagine No Malaria button and be sure to include the name of your local church to receive the match.

Flip-flop drive for MFH

Lacey Gross, left, and Bret Hall of Faith UMC Little Rock show off some of the flip-flops collected by members of the church in recent weeks. The congregation this summer held a flip-flop collection drive for Methodist Family Health. Donations filled two wading pools to overflowing with flip-flops for the children and youth served by the residential programs of MFH.



COURTESY PHOTO

Disaster Response Academy set for Oct. 1-4 at Mount Sequoyah

The South Central Jurisdiction's Disaster Response Academy, scheduled for Oct. 1-4, will be held at Mount Sequoyah Retreat and Conference Center in Fayetteville. This event makes the training available to many more people than can be accommodated by the United Methodist Committee on Relief training held each November in Baldwin, La.

The academy includes a choice of four tracks, allowing participants to choose the level that will give them the greatest benefit:

- **Basics of Disaster Response** is

geared toward those just beginning this type of work, and is a prerequisite for some of the other tracks;

- **Connecting Neighbors Training** addresses the faith community's responsibility in disaster readiness and response, and suggests tools to meet individual and community needs;
- **Early Response Team (ERT) Leadership** prepares those wishing to become instructors for volunteer ERT training within their United Methodist

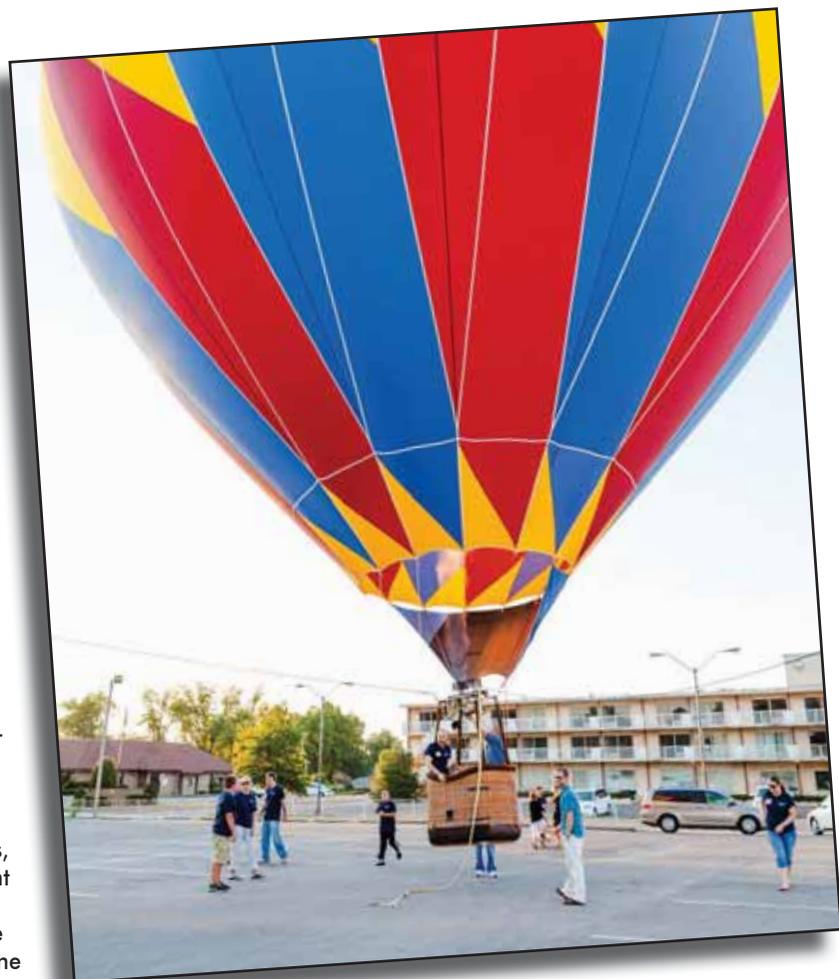
Conference.

- **The Advanced Track** is available for the participant who has been serving as a conference disaster response representative, has already taken the Basic Track and is seeking additional or advanced training.

Annual conference and district disaster response coordinators should receive this type of training at least once a quadrennium. For details about the various tracks, registration, and housing and meals, visit scjdra2012.eventbrite.com.

Vacation Bible School around the Conference

In most Arkansas congregations, Vacation Bible School remains a summer favorite for children's ministry and outreach. Here are just a few of the submissions the *Arkansas United Methodist* received when we issued a call for VBS photos. The request went out through the open Facebook group "ARUMC Church Communicators." To find the group, log into Facebook and search for it by name.



UP AND AWAY: During "Sky VBS" at First UMC Jonesboro, the Rev. John Miles II accompanies some 4-year-olds on a hot air balloon takeoff. The church's VBS included 332 participants, about 15 percent of whom came from outside the congregation. The Sky VBS theme dealt with learning to trust God.



FUN AND GAMES: Kids play beneath a parachute during "Sky VBS" at Central UMC Fayetteville.

COURTESY PHOTOS



PUPPY LOVE: Village UMC this year expanded its Vacation Bible School to include participants in a larger age range. Fifth- through eighth-grade students went on day trips to serve in mission, including this stop at the Hot Springs Village Animal Welfare League to help socialize animals for eventual adoption.



SERVING AND LEARNING: Youth act out a Bible story for children attending Lakewood UMC North Little Rock's Vacation Bible School. In the mornings, youth helped with VBS, then in the afternoons, they gathered for "You Gotta Know God's Story," their own learning experience.



BACK FROM A 30-YEAR VBS BREAK: DeLuce-Prairie Union UMC, a rural congregation in the Southeast District, this July hosted its first Vacation Bible School in 30 years. The church only has one child who regularly attends worship and other activities; the other 17 children who participated in VBS are from the surrounding community.

"We will attempt some type of follow up for those who don't have a church home," said the Rev. Chuck Coffelt, the church's pastor.



GLEANING LESSONS: Children at Quapaw Quarter UMC Little Rock's VBS make muffins to take to residents of an area nursing home. The church hosted VBS for 17 kids, six of whom were not regular attendees of the church's worship and other activities.

"Since we do so much with hunger issues, we used the VBS curriculum put out by the Society of St. Andrew—the gleaning people," said the Rev.

Anne Holcomb. The program is available as a free download, with a suggested donation. The Society of St. Andrew VBS theme "It's a Miracle!" focused on various miracles Jesus performed. Kids also learned about gleaning and how using leftover, overlooked or misshapen produce helps feed people who are hungry. For their offering, they "gleaned" money from couches, carpets, washers, dryers, cars, closets and piggy banks to give \$234.77 to share between the Quapaw Quarter UMC Pet Food Ministry and the Society of St. Andrew.

Arkansas action at SCJ Conference



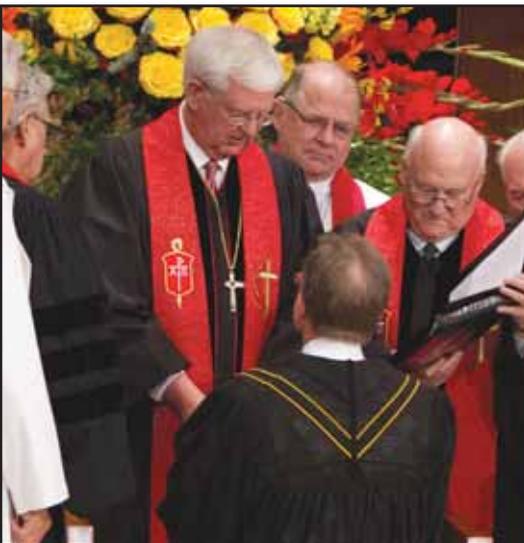
The Rev. Susan Ledbetter leads a prayer for the victims of the Aurora, Colo., movie theater shooting, which occurred while Jurisdictional Conference was in session.



Bishop Charles Crutchfield, center, congratulates newly elected Bishop Gary Mueller as Bishop Max Whitfield looks on. Whitfield was elected in 2000 from the North Arkansas delegation.



Soon after learning of his assignment to the Arkansas Area of the UMC, Bishop Gary Mueller and his wife Wink share a joyful moment with members and friends of the Arkansas Conference delegation.



ABOVE: The Rev. Aubrietta Jones delivers the report of the Committee on Courtesies and Privileges.
LEFT: Bishop Jim Dorff leads the consecration of the Rev. Gary Mueller as a bishop of the United Methodist Church.



Lay delegate Sarah Steele offered a song as the closing prayer to adjourn the 2012 South Central Jurisdictional Conference.

AUM PHOTOS BY AMY FORBUS

Assembly participants engage in mission

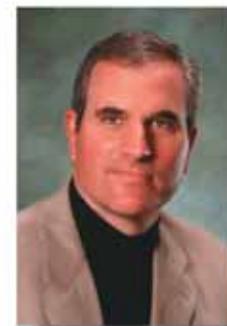


Youth participating in the Arkansas Conference Council on Youth Ministries' Senior High Assembly, held July 22-26 at the University of the Ozarks in Clarksville, spent time in mission with the Clarksville Housing Authority. Here, they sort groceries to be distributed to residents. Other jobs included assembling information packets and cleaning up landscaped common areas.

Junior and Senior High Assemblies were held concurrently this year, with a total of 324 youth participating.

COURTESY PHOTO

Willson Lecture



Leonard Sax

Author of *Why Gender Matters: What Parents and Teachers Need to Know About the Emerging Science of Sex Differences, Boys Adrift, and Girls on the Edge.*

Thursday, September 18 • 7 p.m.

Mills Center, Room A • Hendrix College campus
Free and open to the public

Prior to the lecture, the Steel-Hendrix Awards will be presented to Rod Hocott, Doni Martin and Karen Swales.

The banquet cost is \$25 at the door or \$20 if registered before September 10. For more information or to register, contact Rev. J. Wayne Clark at 501-450-1263.



Songwriter goes deep with UMC slogan



Trent Chudej (right) and other musicians from the Wesley Foundation at the University of Arkansas play his song "Hearts Minds and Doors" at the Arkansas Annual Conference gathering in June.

AUM PHOTO BY AMY FORBUS

BY SAM HODGES
Special Contributor

More than one United Methodist luminary has lamented the absence of anything overtly Christian in the denomination's marketing slogan "Open Hearts. Open Minds. Open Doors."

Trent Chudej, a 22-year-old member of the Wesley Foundation at the University of Arkansas, felt challenged to do something more theological with it.

Already a prolific songwriter, he went to work last fall, expanding the slogan into verses, using the Apostles' Creed for a chorus, and adding a melody that is at times delicate, at times intense. He called the result "Hearts Minds and Doors."

The worship song had its big-venue debut in June at the Arkansas Annual Conference. Chudej (pronounced WHO-JAY) and other musicians from the Wesley Foundation played it to an audience of more than 1,000.

One happy witness was the Rev. Gary Lunsford, who had suggested the band be on the program, and reports a strong response to the song.

"Trent's enthusiasm is incredible," he said. "When he sings,

it grabs everybody."

Chudej remains pumped.

"We stayed the whole three days [of Annual Conference], and even on the day when everybody was leaving, we still had people coming up and wanting chord charts or wanting us to come play it at their church," he said.

Chudej, of Tyler, Texas, recently finished his undergraduate degree in electrical engineering, and will begin a master's in math at the University of Arkansas this fall. At the Wesley Foundation, he's been a leader of the band, but also one who has delved deeply into theological discussion and study.

"He's been an integral part of the rebuilding of the ministry here," said the Rev. Omar Rikabi, campus minister at the Wesley Foundation.

Rikabi notes that even most United Methodist students at the University of Arkansas arrive knowing little if anything about such Wesleyan ideas as prevenient grace. He has tried to correct that, and Chudej has been right there with him.

"He really felt like we were watching people leave the Methodist church, looking for a deeper theology," Rikabi said. "We've got one, but we don't talk about it."

Last September, the associate campus minister, Amanda Cofer, brought up for discussion a blog post written by Dr. Timothy Tennent, president of Asbury Theological Seminary.

Tennent's post dealt, in part, with the UMC's slogan, which debuted in 2001. He wrote: "It says nothing about our great communion with the global church around the world and back through time. It says nothing about the beauty and power of Jesus Christ. It affirms, at best, congenial niceness, while carefully avoiding anything about Christian identity. The phrase 'open hearts, open minds, open doors' could very well have been a sign hanging over a 19th-century brothel."

Tennent's argument resonated with Rikabi, who had long found the slogan lacking. Chudej liked the slogan, particularly its commitment to openness. But he, too, felt Tennent had a point.

"That slogan says nothing about what we believe," Chudej said. "It just says we'll accept people. It's not inviting people to accept Jesus Christ and to truly dive into our Wesleyan theology."

Chudej said it was after a

Wesley Foundation discussion about the need for theological depth that he began to think of writing a song based on the UMC slogan.

"I went to my class, and I actually cranked it out during my teacher's lecture, which is kind of bad," he said with a laugh. "The lyrics came first, then the music came along."

Chudej's verses play off the slogan—"Father open our minds, we long for your sight, help us to see, all around is your glory"—and the chorus draws directly from the Apostles' Creed, the faith statement that began in the early church and affirms belief in the trinity, the resurrection and the communion of the saints.

Rikabi recalls when he first heard Chudej's effort, last fall.

"He walked in one day and said, 'Hey, I've been working on this song where I try to redeem our media slogan,'" he said. "It was like he'd taken the Apostles' Creed and crammed it down the 'Open Hearts, Open Minds, Open Doors' motto's throat."

Chudej performed the song in November at Wiggins Memorial UMC in Fayetteville, Ark., where Lunsford was pastor. Eventually "Hearts Minds and Doors" became part of the repertoire of Broken Together, the informal ensemble of Wesley Foundation musicians, which plays for Tuesday night worship services there and at local churches.

Even before Chudej wrote "Hearts Minds and Doors," Lunsford had recommended that the Wesley Foundation group play at Annual Conference. Their performance of the song prompted a run on the home-made CDs they'd brought along, featuring that number and a few others.

A free demo is online (see www.uawesley.com) and Chudej thinks a music video will come together soon.

For Rikabi, "Hearts Minds and Doors" has mustard seed possibilities, growing into something big and influential.

"Our hope is that this song, as well as some of the other ones we recorded, are a prophetic voice to the church, and a resource," he said.

Hodges is managing editor of the United Methodist Reporter national edition, where this story first appeared.

CLASSIFIEDS

PLACE YOUR CLASSIFIED in the *Arkansas United Methodist* for 60 cents per word, no limit. Call 501-324-8005 or mail to: *Arkansas United Methodist*, 800 Daisy Bates Drive, Little Rock, AR 72202; or email mtaylor@arumc.org.

Children's & Family Ministry Director: Vibrant, growing children's ministry. Full-time. Salary commensurate with experience. First UMC, Bartlesville. Send resume to Staff-Parish Relations Committee, 500 S. Johnstone, Bartlesville, OK 74003 or email to kevin.tully@fumcville.org.

First United Methodist, Hot Springs is seeking the best qualified candidate for the position of Director of Youth Ministries. The eligible candidate should possess at least a Bachelor's Degree with emphasis in Religion or Christian Education being a plus. Experience required would be previous experience in working successfully with church youth groups and in organizing events, coordinating programs, and recruiting volunteers. Excellent people/communication skills and computer skills are essential. This is a full time salaried position with benefits, serving 75 to 100 community oriented and unified young people and their families who love working in local and annual conference youth ministries. For a job description write Michael L. Mattox, Sr. Pastor at 1100 Central Avenue Hot Springs, AR 71901 or mmattox@fumchs.com. A personal letter of interest and a resume are required from the applicants and are being accepted immediately.

Rhine River Cruise 2013: Rev. Siegfried Johnson, Senior Pastor of St. James United Methodist Church will be working with Bishop Will Willimon as a Tour Host on the Enchanting Rhine River Cruise, 9 days from Zurich to Amsterdam (October 31 – November 8, 2013). Bishop Willimon, described as the most read author among United Methodists pastors and former Dean of Duke Chapel, will offer a lecture series on "Christ in the Art of the Reformation," including one lecture at the Rijks Museum while admiring the works of Rembrandt. Those interested in this Christian travel opportunity with Bishop Willimon and Rev. Johnson may contact him at sieg@stjames-umc.org or at (501) 650-0439 for detailed information.

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

Small church provides big help to neighbor

On Saturday, June 30, members of Springfield United Methodist Church built a ramp to improve the accessibility of a 93-year-old community resident's home. Ethel Fleming is blind, and her daughter was afraid of the risk of her mother falling on the steps as family members help her into her home. The project, completed at no cost to Fleming or her family, was planned by Daniel Phillips, a member of Springfield UMC and a professional contractor. Twenty-one persons helped complete the project; Springfield UMC has a membership of only 55 persons.

—submitted by the Rev. Hawk Coleman



Homecoming for Harrell UMC centennial



Harrell United Methodist Church recently celebrated its Centennial Homecoming with a special worship service and "dinner on the grounds." The Rev. Russell Hull, a former pastor of the congregation, was the guest preacher. Long-time members spoke during the service, and the Hull family provided special music.

Harrell UMC was founded in 1912 after the closing of the old Shiloh Methodist Church, located a few miles south of the present congregation. As a testament to that history, their altar Bible is an 1871 King James version donated by a member of Shiloh.

More than 100 persons attended the homecoming celebration. Harrell has recently completed some remodeling and upgrading of sound and video systems, and features a large Vacation Bible School each July.

—submitted by the Rev. Buddy Hamner

Register by Aug. 31 for Act of Repentance event

Presented by Committee on Native American Ministries on Oct. 6

The Arkansas Conference Committee on Native American Ministries is hosting an Act of Repentance to Indigenous People on Saturday, Oct. 6 from 10 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. at Wesley UMC Fort Smith.

Participants include the Rev. Thom White Wolf Fassett, General Secretary Emeritus, Board of Church & Society; the Rev. Stephen Sidorak, Jr., General Secretary, Commission on Christian Unity and Interreligious Concerns; Adam Recvlohe, General Commission on Religion and Race Board Member; Josephine Deere, Interpretation and Programs, Oklahoma Indian Missionary Conference; the Rev. Anita Phillips, Executive Director, Native American Comprehensive Plan; and the Northwest Arkansas Community College Native American Advocacy Group.

"This time of gathering will be a follow-up to the act of repentance that was experienced at General Conference," said J. Harris Moore, chair of the committee. "We have individuals of Native American culture and heritage in the Arkansas Conference and we have a close relationship with the Oklahoma Indian Missionary Conference, so we felt it was important to continue the healing that was begun in Tampa."

The registration deadline is Aug. 31. There is no cost to participate. The registration form is available online at arumc.org/forms.

COMING UP

August

Walk for Children and Families at the Big Dam Bridge Aug. 3

The 6th annual Methodist Family Health Walk for Children and Families will be held Friday, Aug. 3, on the North Little Rock side of the Big Dam Bridge. Proceeds will be used to purchase new bed and dresser sets for rooms at Methodist Behavioral Hospital in Maumelle.

Registration opens at 6 p.m., and the walk begins at 7 p.m. The fee is \$20 for individuals and \$50 for families. Registration forms are online at methodistfamily.org. Parking is available at Crystal Hill Elementary School, and a free shuttle to the Big Dam Bridge will be provided.

A special guest at this year's Walk will be Clint Stoerner, honorary chairperson and former Arkansas Razorback and Dallas Cowboy quarterback. The event will feature live music and free pizza and Frosty Treats ice cream.

For information about the walk or sponsorships, contact Annie Davis at Methodist Family Health, 501-661-0720, ext. 7301 or adavis@methodistfamily.org.

Methodist Family Health provides comprehensive behavioral healthcare services to more than 1,400 children and families each day in Arkansas through an acute psychiatric hospital, residential treatment centers, therapeutic group homes, therapeutic foster care, emergency shelters, counseling clinics and more.

'Come Together' event for youth ministers and mentors Aug. 24-25

Arkansas Conference Ministries and the Arkansas Conference Council on Youth Ministries (ACCYM) invite all full-time, part-time and volunteer youth ministers to attend Come Together, a fellowship and continuing education event. Held at Ferncliff Camp in Ferndale, from 6 p.m. Friday, Aug. 24 to 4:30 p.m. Saturday, Aug. 25, the event includes one night's lodging, breakfast and lunch on Saturday, snacks and programming.

Workshops will deal with cyber-bullying; helping youth develop a faith that "sticks" after high school graduation; and "the mysterious maze of the teenage brain." Cost is \$30, but increases to \$40 after Aug. 1. Visit arumc.org/register to download a registration form.

Administrative professionals invited to PAUMCS annual meeting Aug. 29

The annual meeting of the Arkansas chapter of the Professional Association of United Methodist Church Secretaries (PAUMCS) is scheduled for Wednesday, Aug. 29 from 9:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. at St. James UMC Little Rock, 321 Pleasant Valley Drive.

This year's theme, "Keeps Me Spinning," is drawn from Acts 2:12 as paraphrased in *The Message*. The program will deal with a number of topics in which administrative professionals must be well-versed to handle the complexities of their work. Participants need not be members of PAUMCS to attend, though membership information will be available on-site.

The registration deadline is Aug. 22; cost is \$5, payable at the door. The event is made possible

through the support of the United Methodist Foundation of Arkansas. To request a registration form, contact Cindy Parker in the Southwest District office: 870-230-1118.

Summer Sunday Evenings at Highland Valley UMC

During the month of August, Highland Valley UMC Little Rock will host Summer Sunday Evenings, a series of worship services featuring guest preachers from around the Little Rock area. The services will begin at 6 p.m. each Sunday. Guest preachers include the Revs. Nathan Kilbourne, associate pastor at Asbury UMC Little Rock; Natasha Murray-Norman, pastor of the Parkview and New Hope UMC's in Benton; Lynn Kilbourne, associate pastor at First UMC Conway; and Ben Crismon, associate pastor at First UMC Cabot. Each worship service also will include special music.

The people of Highland Valley UMC cordially invite everyone to attend these services, held in the congregation's sanctuary at 15524 Chenal Parkway in Little Rock.

September

Installation Service for Bishop Gary E. Mueller Sept. 8

The Arkansas Conference Episcopacy Committee extends an open invitation to the Installation Service for Bishop Mueller. The worship service, hosted by St. James UMC Little Rock, 321 Pleasant Valley Drive, will begin at 10 a.m. Saturday, Sept. 8.

Better Community Development's 2012 Recovery Summit Sept. 23-25

Imagine your church offering care for members who suffer from addictions; caring for persons in the community who have an addiction; and caring for and serving children of addicted parents who are being united with their families.

The 2012 Recovery Summit, set for Sept. 23-25 at the Willie Hinton Neighborhood Resource Center, 3805 West 12th Street in Little Rock, is dedicated to addressing addiction and recovery issues and responding to the needs of families, congregations and communities. The summit offers resources for creating your own approach to recovery ministry, incorporating early intervention, prevention, transitional living, healing, recovery support and more.

Participants will hear about recovery programs from some of the most dynamic speakers, practitioners and professionals in the field, and will learn about building a more effective ministry that helps set people free from the power of addictions, the pain of abuse and the effects of wounds and losses.

Sponsors include Better Community Development, Inc.; Hoover Treatment Center; the United Methodist Special Program on Substance Abuse and Related Violence; and the General Board of Global Ministries. The event is held in partnership with Theresa Hoover UMC.

For information or to see the schedule and download a registration form, visit bcdinc.org.

New study sparks older adult conversation

Materials available free for Arkansas churches

BY MARTHA TAYLOR
Arkansas Conference

Since its pilot in the spring of 2012, a new study on aging and dying, "Living with No Regrets," has sparked conversations among the older adults and caregivers reviewing it.

Initiated by the Conference Councils on Adult and Older Adult Ministries, production of the four-week study was funded by a grant from the United Methodist Foundation of Arkansas.

Sunday school classes at Trinity UMC Little Rock, Lakewood UMC North Little Rock, First UMC Pine Bluff and other churches volunteered to view the four-week study and provide feedback on the content. The response has been overwhelmingly positive.

"The only suggestion we had was that we needed more time, because the material challenged us and led to a lot of good conversation," said study facilitator

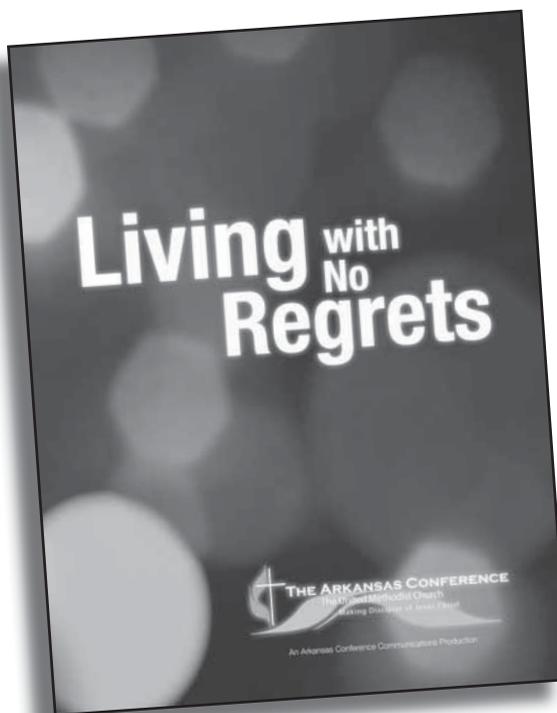
Anne Stocks of Trinity UMC Little Rock. "We realized early on that allowing at least 90 minutes per class was best for our group. The study really got people talking about these important matters."

Developed in Arkansas

"Living with No Regrets" grew from council members' discussions about the growing need in local churches to be in ministry with older adults and their caregivers.

"The first group of 72 million baby boomers has just turned 65," said Doug Collins, former chair of the older adult council. "There is a huge ministry opportunity with those individuals who are not involved in church but are facing caring for their parents or are aging themselves."

The pilot groups were composed mostly of adult Sunday school groups, but Collins said the material was designed so those



outside the local church can be invited to be a part of the conversation that so many families are facing today.

"It's a chance for the

community to come together to talk about aging and dying in a way that invites conversation not only about the specific subject matter, but also from a Christian perspective," Collins added.

One pilot church, Lakewood UMC, has already begun promoting October as Older Adult Ministry month, when they will invite older adults in their community to participate in the study. They already plan to repeat the sessions in January 2013.

Each session is contains a video highlighting older adults, adult children or Arkansas Conference clergy. Leaders in aging ministries and professions provide additional insights and practical

tips. The topics covered in the study include aging in America; how to start a conversation about aging and changing roles; practical matters such as living wills, finances, transportation and housing; and finishing well. Facilitators receive a guide book with leader instructions and reproducible participant guides.

Additional resources will be made available on-line later in the year at www.arumc.org/AOA.

Ready for local churches

All clergy and laity attending the 2012 Annual Conference in June received a copy of "Living with No Regrets" in their registration packets. Additional copies are available at no charge to any Arkansas United Methodist church; the cost is \$60 for all other churches. To obtain a copy of the study, contact the Conference office at communications@arumc.org, 501-324-8000 or toll-free 877-646-1816.

BOOK REVIEW

Author advocates fusion between Spirit and culture

New Wine, New Wineskins: How African American Congregations Can Reach New Generations

F. Douglas Powe Jr.
Abingdon Press, 2012

BY MAXINE ALLEN
Special Contributor

F. Douglas Powe's latest book, *New Wine, New Wineskins: How African American Congregations Can Reach New Generations* should be required reading for all congregations of color.

Powe, the E. Stanley Jones Associate Professor of Evangelism and Associate Professor of Black Church Studies at Saint Paul School of Theology, provides an in-depth analysis of the Black Church and its

resistance to pass the torch to newer and younger "wine stewards" is an authentic assessment from one who is steeped in the imagery, dialogue and history of his own cultural milieu.

Having grown up with Civil Rights-era icon Dr. Joseph Lowery and Integrationist-era Dr. Rodney T. Smothers as his pastors, F. Douglas Powe Jr. is well qualified to suggest an alteration in historians William Strauss and Neil Howe's widely accepted generational categories (Silent, Boomer, Gen-Xer or 13er and Millennial). Powe redefines these generational categories in the ethos of the Black Church as: the Civil Rights Generation (1921-1940), the Black Consciousness Generation (1941-1960), the Integrationist Generation (1961-1980) and the Hip Hop Generation.

He further demonstrates his "street cred" by suggesting that the Black Church must transform the old wineskins into better wineskins through his use of X-Clan, Kwele and Digital Underground lyrics. (If

you do not recognize these names, perhaps it would be good for you to read the book.) Powe demonstrates the fusion that must take place between Spirit and culture to move congregations toward authenticity with younger people. He skillfully explains the "spiritual" versus "established religion" stance of many college-age and young adults.

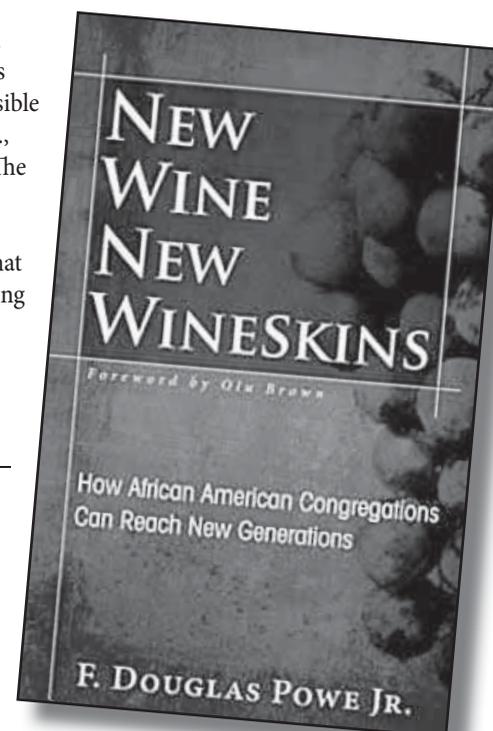
The book includes biblical references, case studies and discussion questions, which make it useful for congregational and small group study. It includes fascinating prescriptive suggestions which may, if followed, move a congregation beyond its four walls into the world.

Powe quotes the Blackeyed Peas from their hit single "Let's Get it Started": "Obstacles are inefficient, follow your intuition, free your inner soul and break away from tradition!"

"Typically, African American congregations have rallied to fight a visible and definable other (e.g., racism)," he suggests. "The challenge in this case is looking inward and seeking to transform what it means to be in a shifting culture."

Powe is on the money. Let's get it started!

The Rev. Allen serves as campus minister at the UALR Wesley Foundation, and as the ethnic ministries coordinator for the Arkansas Conference.



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OBITUARIES

BENTON

Robert B. Moore Jr.

Dr. Robert Bowen Moore Jr., 88, passed away July 19, 2012.

Born on Nov. 20, 1923 in Texarkana, Ark., to the late Rev. Dr. Robert Bowen Moore Sr. and Mary Lillian McAlister Moore, he was a fifth-generation Methodist minister.

After graduating from Pine Bluff High School, he enlisted in the United States Navy in 1942 and served during World War II. He saw action in all theaters of the war, including Europe and the Pacific. He rose to the rank of Boatswain's Mate 1st Class aboard the U.S.S. Raymond (D.E. 341). He was awarded the Presidential Unit Citation for service in the Battle Off Samar, in which his task force defeated a larger enemy fleet.



Robert B. Moore Jr.

After separation from the service in 1946, he attended Hendrix College in Conway, Ark., where he earned a Bachelor's degree. He earned his Master of Divinity degree at Perkins School of Theology, and was then ordained an Elder in the United Methodist Church. He began his ministry at Portland/Montrose. During the course of his ordained ministry, he served churches throughout Arkansas and Texas including Hope, Highland, Magnolia, Baytown, Port Arthur and San Angelo. He retired in 1989 after 40 years of ministry and lived his remaining years in Benton with his wife, Eva.

He was preceded in death by his parents; his first wife and mother of three of his children, Josephine Sahli Moore; two sons, Jim and John; a brother, Rear Admiral Withers Moore; a sister, Martha Sue Jefferies; and a brother-in-law, Robert Jefferies.

He is survived by his wife of 45 years, Eva Power Moore; two sons, Dr. Robert Bowen Moore III and his wife MaryLou of Blacksburg, Va., and Col. Don Kaminar and his wife Toni of Bryant; a daughter, Kie Moore Baxley and her husband Tom of Benton; a sister-in-law, Betty Moore; grandchildren Ashley Waite (Tyler), Kyle and Kate Moore, 1st Lt. Ben (Sarah), Krystal, 2nd Lt. Jonathan Kaminar, and Bo and Jesse Baxley.

A memorial service was held Monday, July 23, at First United Methodist Church Benton, with visitation and reception following. Memorials may be made to First United Methodist Church Youth Program, 200 North Market St., Benton, AR 72015.

OAK PARK, ILL.

Frank Hilliard

The Rev. Frank Vernon Hilliard, 80, passed away on Wednesday, June 6, 2012, at his home by the lake in Greenwood, La.

He was born in Marshall, Texas, to Eugene L. Hilliard and Annie Mae Jordan Hilliard. He grew up in Waskom, Texas, and graduated from Waskom High School. He went on to earn his undergraduate degree at East Texas State and Master's Degree in Divinity at Perkins Theological Seminary at Southern Methodist University.

He held positions at the Institute of Cultural Affairs, in their London and Hong Kong area offices. He later went on to found Ecumenical Ventures/Island Ventures with his wife, Aimee Hilliard, where they worked together with communities in the Philippines for the past 35 years. Frank was a retired member of the Little Rock Conference of the United Methodist Church and active for many years at the First United Methodist Church: Chicago Temple.



Frank Hilliard

He was preceded in death by his parents; his brother, Eugene Louis Hilliard, Jr.; and his nephew, Michael Hilliard. He is survived by his wife of 46 years, Aimee; a daughter, Li Lin Hally and her husband, Mark; two granddaughters, Maya and Simone; a nephew, Gene Hilliard III and his wife, Pat; great nephews, Gene, IV and John, their wives and children; and his cousins, Ann Sisk Sparkman Green and Pat Furrh.

A memorial service was held on Saturday, June 9, 2012, at Waskom United Methodist Church in Waskom, Texas, with the Rev. Jerry Tompkins officiating. Interment followed at a later date in Greenwood Cemetery, Marshall, Texas.

The family requests that memorials be made to First United Methodist Church: Chicago Temple, 77 W. Washington St, Chicago, IL 60602, the Michael J. Fox Parkinson's Foundation, Church St. Station, P.O. Box 780, New York, NY 10008-0780 or Ecumenical Ventures, 159 N. Marion St. # 287, Oak Park, IL 60301.

Asbury UMC Little Rock awards Martin Scholarships

Asbury UMC Little Rock awarded college scholarships on Sunday, July 15, 2012 during the 10:45 a.m. contemporary worship service.

Thanks to the generosity and kindness of the Martin family in Little Rock, 179 Asbury UMC members have been awarded more than \$504,405 in scholarships over the last 25 years to help them realize their educational goals.

The scholarship fund was established in 1987 and was dedicated to the memory of Robert Longley Martin and his mother, Addie Virginia Wright Martin. The fund provides scholarships for deserving members of Asbury UMC for education beyond the high school level. Robert Martin, a long-time member of Asbury, desired to continue his service to Asbury after his death through this scholarship fund. Asbury members are truly blessed with and grateful for his wonderful legacy gift which lives on through the students it helps.

One of the first recipients of the scholarship was the Rev. Jeff Jones, who used his scholarship to attend seminary and today serves as the senior pastor of Grace Community UMC Fort Smith.

Fourteen Asbury students have been awarded scholarships for the 2012-2013 school year.

Attending Baylor University: Ashley Mullen; attending Point Park University: Anna Robbins; attending the University of Arkansas at Fayetteville: Camille Gele, Megan Greenfield, Cari Hunter, Andrew Kurrus, Ben Mackey, Madeline Moffett, Erin Rowland, Hannah Shelton, Laramie Wall; attending the University of Arkansas at Little Rock: Kyle York; attending the University of Central Arkansas: Ben Stansell; attending the University of Tulsa: Alexa Robbins.

Each of this year's honorees received a \$714 award.

Founded in 1888 and originally located at 12th and Schiller Streets in downtown Little Rock, Asbury UMC relocated to 1700 Napa Valley Drive in West Little Rock in November of 1982.



Plaque honors church members' military service

From left, Kathy Finch, Jimmy Finch, Henry Haven and Danny Capps admire the new Roll of Honor plaque that hangs in the hallway of First UMC Forrest City. The Henry Haven family donated funds for the construction of the memorial and remembrance plaque to honor church members who have served in the military since World War II. It is a companion piece to the one honoring individuals who served during World War II. Jimmy Finch designed the plaque, and Kathy Finch and Danny Capps aided in its construction.

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Jeremy Scott will be making his first career appearance at the Olympics. PHOTO COURTESY OF ROBERT BLACK

Jonesboro-based Olympic pole vaulter relies on preparation, prayer

BY AMY FORBUS
Editor

Jeremy Scott finds a seat in the back row when he attends the contemporary worship service at First United Methodist Church Jonesboro. He doesn't want his 6-foot, 9-inch frame to block anyone's view.

But at the Summer Olympics, the pole vaulter would like to get a little taller. He wants to have the medal stand giving him a boost.

"I really believe I have the opportunity to go and do something great, and we're not going to be satisfied until it's all said and done," he said in a July 9 interview.

"He's just jumping so well," says Jeremy's wife, Sarah Scott. "He just needs to be healthy enough to do it."

Since he qualified on June 28 for a spot on the U.S. Olympic team, the 31-year-old athlete has spent much of his time away from Jonesboro, where he has lived since 2006 so he could have Olympic pole vaulter Earl Bell as his coach. About three years ago, the family found a spiritual home at First UMC Jonesboro, when a co-worker of Sarah's suggested they attend.

"We found that we really fit in," Sarah Scott says. "Other people were really welcoming, really supportive of my career, Jeremy's career, of our whole family. Our son was baptized there.... It's a good home for us."

Recently, support from the church has included helping cover the expense of sending Jeremy's coach and extended family to see him compete in London.

Jeremy spent most of July at San Diego's Olympic Training Center, focusing on getting an injured knee

into good enough shape for the running involved in the sport.

He calls making the team "an absolute miracle.

"I've been dealing with some injuries from last year, and I just haven't been able to train like I wanted to, haven't been able to compete," he said. "The Olympic trials really were my first competition this outdoor season. I had one or two that I tried to do, but I was really banged up and they didn't go very well."

He says his training with Bell has him at peak technical efficiency for his pole vaulting. The work in San Diego deals primarily with strengthening his knee.

"If I can get to running more how I have—and they really believe I can do that here in the next four weeks—that when you match that up to the technical efficiency that I'm showing, I really believe that I have a good shot to get on the medal stand," he says. "I still think God has more in store for me here, and we've got victories to taste yet."

Because London is six hours ahead of the Central time zone, much of Arkansas will still be in bed for the first round of the Aug. 8 pole vault competition—it's at 4 a.m. Central time. But the finals are scheduled for Aug. 10 at 1 p.m. Central.

Jeremy Scott says his father has been doing a lot of praying for him, and so have others. He welcomes the prayerful support.

"I think everybody's prayers, my own prayers [have helped]," he said. "It's proof that God can do pretty amazing things with pretty feeble bodies.

"I'm just going to keep asking for those prayers."

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