

IN THIS ISSUE



Small churches,
big mission
3A



Hammers, drills,
saws and service
4A



Ingathering does
good near and far
6A



Jeanine and Rick Budt volunteer each week to bundle sets of towels and linens and to sort kitchenware for Starting Over Ministries.

Ministry helps families begin a future together

BY BETTIE LAND
Special Contributor

Hardships can come at any given time. Some families, faced with rebuilding a life, find themselves in need of a caring hand and a kind heart. Two members of Mountainside United Methodist Church Hot Springs Village recognized such a situation and took action.

When a job loss, tragedy, parental neglect or abuse occurs, the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) may have to remove juveniles from their home to foster care. The parents then must go through a rehabilitation program and have a source of income and a clean, safe, properly furnished home before they and their children can be reunited. Many parents in this situation don't have the means to acquire the necessary furnishings.

In their years of experience volunteering for Court Appointed

Special Advocates (CASA), Mountainside UMC members Nick and Alice Hilt learned of the need for furniture for families who reunite after displacement. They saw that various charities addressed these needs on a piecemeal basis.

The Hilt family recognized that a one-stop, coordinated effort could meet all of these physical needs. This approach would not only help maintain the dignity of the clients, but it also would protect their privacy. This idea marked the beginning of Starting Over Ministries (SOM).

With the support of the Mountainside UMC leadership team, SOM was launched in September 2009. The congregation reached out to friends and family to collect used furnishings. These items were placed in storage to have them readily



Andrew Jones, a member of Mountainside UMC Hot Springs Village, is part of the team making deliveries from the Starting Over Ministries warehouse on an as-needed basis.

PHOTOS BY BETTIE LAND

STARTING OVER

available to meet client needs.

"SOM is based on Matthew 19:14, as well as many other verses where Jesus clearly states our responsibility to children," said Nick Hilt. "Our vision statement is 'Every child deserves a clean, safe, stable home environment.'"

Multi-church involvement

Within its first five months, SOM helped 12 families furnish their homes, receiving donated furnishings from over 30 families. This God-inspired ministry continued to grow as other area churches—Piney Grove UMC and Lake Valley Community Church—became involved in the ministry. Volunteers from all three churches assisted, giving furniture

donations as well as their time.

When tornadoes hit the area in the spring of 2011, the ministry's mission expanded to include families in need of help after storms damaged their homes.

Because of this growth, a more structured business organization was necessary. In May 2011, the ministry incorporated as a 501(c)(3) public charity. Nick Hilt serves as president, and Alice Hilt as treasurer. They officially became Starting Over Ministries, Inc.

With God's continued blessings, the ministry expanded its ability to help needy families provide their children a clean, safe, stable home. With the task of providing furniture to homes came a need for a way to transport it. Trademark Real Estate [See STARTING OVER, page 10A]

People, get ready

BY WILLIAM O. (BUD) REEVES
Special Contributor

Advent is all about readiness. It's time to get ready for Jesus.



Bud Reeves

There is a liturgical readiness, as we “deck the halls” and observe all the traditions of Advent—the candles, hanging the greens, musical programs, Christmas Eve Communion.

These traditions grow more precious year by year.

There is a practical readiness, and we prepare ourselves for the celebration of Christmas—decorating our homes, buying presents, helping the needy. It's a busy time, but our excitement grows with the anticipation of the celebration of Christmas.

Then there is a spiritual preparation. As we wait again for Jesus to be born in Bethlehem, we try to make a special place for him to be born again in our hearts. We worship; we pray; we give so that new space will open up for Christ to dwell in us.

I've been sharing around my district this fall three qualities that will make us ready to welcome the new thing God is doing among us. I believe we are about to see the Holy Spirit do some awesome things in our churches. How does that happen?

First, there's the power of **VISION**. We need to see an image of what God is calling us to be. A vision is a picture of a preferred future, and we prefer it to be God's picture! A Godly vision can give us the power to create the future God sees for us.

Our vision in the Arkansas Conference is “congregations and

surrounding communities transformed by the Holy Spirit to demonstrate holy living, justice, and love of neighbor.” If we keep that image in front of us, it will draw us into that reality.

To pursue the vision, we need **COURAGE**. The future is scary. We get anxious about the challenges ahead of us. We worry about our very survival as a church. In research they conducted for their book *UnChristian*, authors David Kinnaman and Gabe Lyons learned that many people in our culture—especially young people—see organized religion as intolerant, judgmental, materialistic, political, homophobic and irrelevant to real life.

A recent Pew Research Center report indicated that one in five

strength of spirit that frankly we have not seen in many Methodists—clergy or lay—in a very long time.

God told Joshua, as the new leader of the Israelites looked across the Jordan River into a hostile yet promised land, “Be strong and courageous; do not be frightened or dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go” (Joshua 1:10). The strength of courage makes us ready to conquer the land for Christ.

The foundation of courage is **DEVOTION**. We can make ourselves ready for God's new thing this Advent season by practicing the habits of holiness. Pray. Worship. Give. Renew your love for God as God restates his love for the world in the Gift of his Son.

This is our hope for Advent and the New Year. Jesus is Emmanuel—“God with us”—the Word of God made flesh, full of grace and truth, revealing God's glory to the world. Are you ready for that? Grounded in devotion, strengthened by courage, given the power of vision, we can be ready, come what may.

The Advent promise for me also comes from Joshua, as he led God's people into the Promised Land. “Make yourselves holy,” he said, “for tomorrow the Lord will do wonderful things among you.”

Wonderful things are on their way. Christ will be born. We will be re-born. Churches will do ministry with excellence and passion. Wonderful things! People, get ready.

The Rev. Dr. Reeves serves as superintendent of the Northeast District. To reach him, email breeves@arumc.org.

‘As we wait again for Jesus to be born in Bethlehem, we try to make a special place for him to be born again in our hearts.’

American adults (one in three under the age of 30!) are “nones”—people who have no religious preference or affiliation. They also reported that 74 percent of the “nones” were at one time related to a faith community. (See pewforum.org to learn more.)

We will need courage to capture this mission field. It won't be easy; it won't be automatic. It will require a new level of discipleship and a new



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EDITOR'S CORNER

BY AMY FORBUS

Reclaiming Christmas

“What do you want for Christmas?” It's a common question this time of year.

“I don't need anything,” is a common answer among people I know and love.

The response follows, “I didn't ask what you *need*; I asked what you *want!*”

For many readers of this newspaper, abundance is life's default setting. We don't often experience a true need of material goods.

Yet, when Christmas comes, we move from abundance to excess. Why give a kid three toys when you can give her a dozen?

And how ironic is it that the sprig of a Christmas tree from the television special “A Charlie Brown Christmas,” that call to resist commercialization, is now available for purchase at any number of stores?

I want a different kind of Christmas for Christmas.

My friend Sophia Agtarap serves as minister of online engagement at United Methodist Communications and works with the Rethink Church campaign. A recent Rethink Church blog entry of hers, “Rethink Christmas: 10 ways to simplify,” resonated with me.

Her blog entry led me to the main page of RethinkChurch.org, where I saw that the site has been retooled to send a timely message: Reclaim Christmas. It suggests three ways to do so: by simplifying, volunteering and supporting alternative giving—in other words,

less stuff for people who don't need it, and more help for those who do.

Simplifying may mean something different for you than it does for your neighbor. You might increase your daily prayer time, while a friend chooses to fast from technology during meals—that's right, put down the smartphone and have a conversation with the person sitting across from you.

Volunteering takes many forms, too. Those who like to shop may connect with a charitable organization to meet every need on a local child's Christmas list. Someone else might get involved with an adult literacy program.

Alternative giving can mean buying Fair Trade goods like coffee, chocolate or accessories. It also could mean donating to Imagine No Malaria, UMCOR, Heifer International or other meaningful causes to honor your family and friends. In a recent poll conducted by the American Red Cross, 79 percent of respondents indicated that they would prefer to have a charitable gift made in their honor rather than receive a gift they won't use.

Christ's birth is the greatest gift any of us can receive: God with us. Emmanuel.

We already know the truth: The best gifts aren't the kind that can sit under a tree. It's time to live that truth.

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



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www.arumc.org

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Submission Deadlines

Issue Date	Submission Deadline
Jan. 4	Dec. 14
Feb. 1	Jan. 17
March 1	Feb. 15



GROWING TOGETHER IN CHRIST: A word from the Bishop

BY GARY E. MUELLER

Imagining Christmas in a new way

I have a confession to make. I love Christmas. I'm a sucker for the music, decorations, sitting in front of the fire and special family time. I truly believe it's the most wonderful time of the year. After years of trying to figure out why I feel this way, I've finally accepted it's simply that I just love Christmas!

Yet, at the same time, I also find myself becoming more deeply connected to the mind-boggling mystery that is Christmas. I'm talking about the incarnation. The fact that Jesus is so totally in love with us that he left his rightful place with God and willingly became one of us. And, in the midst of our rejection of him, he still gave himself as that ultimate act of sacrificial love that does for us what we absolutely

need, but can never do on our own.

This means I'm faced with a huge contradiction. On the one hand, I love Christmas and everything about it. On the other hand, I know so many of the things I love about Christmas are simply chatter that drowns out the central reality of Christmas.

That's why I've realized it's time for us to imagine Christmas in a new way. We start by enjoying, celebrating and proclaiming the Good News of the season.

But, just as the world around us is putting Christmas back into boxes for another year, we really just start our Christmas celebration. Because that's when we take the mystery of divine love that inserts itself into the midst of real life out into the world.

To intentionally share it through everything we say and do. And to do it 365 days a year!

So enjoy Christmas. Embrace everything about the season. Celebrate through music and worship the mystery of how the one we call "God with us" was born as a baby in a stable. And then, just when it seems the season is over, let's take this reality of "God with us" out into the mission field.

We'll begin in our churches. We'll take it to the streets surrounding every United Methodist Church in Arkansas. And we'll extend our reach to the other side of the globe. We'll mature as Jesus' disciples. We'll share Jesus' love. We'll make disciples. And we'll celebrate as we see lives, churches

and communities filled with transforming power of the Holy Spirit.

May you be filled with the peace, joy and hope of the season. May you be stirred deeply by the God who comes to you. And may you imagine Christmas in such a new way this year that you passionately, gratefully and joyfully become part of a movement that changes lives and changes the world with Jesus' love.

Grace and peace,

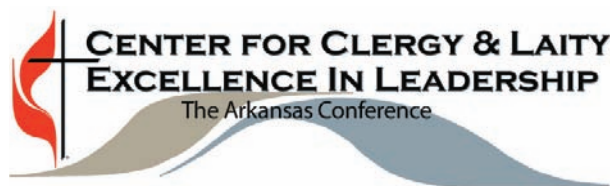
Gary E. Mueller

APPOINTMENTS

The following mid-year pastoral appointment changes have been officially announced:

- St. James UMC
Fayetteville—
Rashim Merriwether,
effective Oct. 1, 2012.
- New Hope UMC
Sheridan—
Jim Harris, supply pastor,
effective Nov. 4, 2012.
- Wheatley/Salem
Charge—
Michael Bolin, effective
Jan. 1, 2013.

To see pastoral appointment changes as they become official, visit arumc.org/appointments.



A message from the Rev. Kurt Boggan, director

United Methodists have much to learn about the unique and diverse mission fields that surround our congregations. For that reason, the focus of the Center for Clergy and Laity Excellence in Leadership is the local congregation—the clergy and laity working as a team—and its mission field.

The Center for Excellence has created a framework for providing laity and clergy training to build disciple-making congregations. The first phase involved recruiting and training 97 circuit elders. Across the Conference, circuit elders now lead Clergy Peer Learning Groups that offer study, prayer and support.

With input from the Conference Lay Leader, Karon Mann, the Center for Excellence joins the Conference Board of Laity in the work of lay leadership development by recruiting congregational coaches—laity who will help churches work to grow vital congregations with excellence and passion toward ministry outcomes. We have trained 39 congregational coaches, and will recruit until we have 80 coaches helping churches understand their mission fields.

Six pilot congregations in January will begin a congregational transformation process with the Center for Excellence. The goal: to encourage vitality and adaptive learning within the congregations' unique mission fields. Five more pilot churches will focus on spiritual

formation in small group settings. They will explore Wesleyan models of fostering spiritual growth and accountability for laity.

Also in January, the new Small Membership Church Academy begins a training and transformation process in partnership with the Commission on the Small Membership Church

(see the Rev. Pat Bodenhamer's message at right). The Academy will encourage small churches to identify unique strengths that can help them reach new and diverse people in the mission field. Each congregation will determine its own level of participation in the process. The Academy will focus on growing and sustaining the ministry of the small membership church through teaching discipleship and leadership development for both clergy and laity. Other resources will be available through the Network of Discipleship and Mission.

In April, the Center for Excellence and the Center for Technology will begin to train those interested in teaching Bible studies online. Younger generations want a church that engages the world where they live. We believe that Bible studies and other online courses will help make this connection. Look for information on this training at arumc.org.

"Courage to Lead," a workshop for clergy under age 40, is scheduled for April at First UMC Springdale. This event is a product of conversation with the appointive cabinet and the Board of Ordained Ministry.

We look forward to helping the Arkansas Conference continue discovering its mission field. If you have questions, please contact me at 501-324-8016 or kboggan@arumc.org. To explore becoming a congregational coach, contact John Crawford, jrcrawford@arumc.org.

Small church, big ministry Making plans for building the Kingdom

BY PAT BODENHAMER
Special Contributor

How many times have you heard, or said yourself, "Well, we are *just* a small membership church..."

Sounds familiar, doesn't it? We say it as if we should be ashamed of that fact, or as if we don't measure up. That is so not true! We should stand tall and proud and say, "You bet, I am a part of a small membership church, and it is a great place to belong!"

The small membership church (SMC) has a place in the Arkansas Conference, and don't let anyone—especially yourself—tell you otherwise! In fact, of our 678 churches, 510 fall into the category of "small membership." We are a vital part of the Conference!

Your Commission on the Small Membership Church is here to help you be the best SMC you can be—to provide resources for you, help you connect with other SMCs around the state and jurisdiction and be an advocate and voice for you. We want to rejoice, laugh, cry and pray with you.

We need to hear from you as we plan our work. Share your joys, your struggles and your needs with us. We hope our work will provide relevant resources for your church and help you transform the world for Jesus Christ.

The Rev. Dr. Kurt Boggan, director of the Center for Clergy and Laity Excellence, has begun developing plans to help SMCs. He has some wonderful ideas to roll out in 2013. In the

meantime, let us know how your circuit elders are doing: How are they filling that pivotal role for you and your church? How do you see a congregational coach working in your church? We want your feedback. Don't be afraid to share with us—if we all work together, there is no telling how God will use small churches to do some big ministry in Arkansas!

I have had several conversations with Bishop Gary Mueller, and he is excited to meet our SMC pastors and laity, and to listen to your stories. He has a passion for the SMC, and we are excited to partner with him. I believe he will be an episcopal leader that will encourage, listen and work side-by-side with us to build up the Kingdom of God.

We are planning a meeting of SMC pastors for late February or early March. It will allow us time to share with our bishop why we believe in the small membership church. We hope pastors serving SMCs will make time to attend. The SMC Commission is here for you. Let us know what we can do for you and your church. You matter!

The Rev. Bodenhamer, pastor of Omaha and Diamond City UMCs, serves as chair of the Commission on the Small Membership Church. To reach her, email pd0615@yahoo.com.



Pat Bodenhamer

Hammers, drills, saws and service

Jonesboro church's Handyman Ministry provides wheelchair ramps and more

BY AMY FORBUS
Editor

For nearly three years now, a group of friends from Cornerstone UMC Jonesboro has gone quietly about their work. At least, it's quiet until the drills fire up and the hammers start swinging.

They call it by a simple name: the Handyman Ministry. And so far, the handymen and handymen involved have completed 33 projects for neighbors in need.

The Rev. Chris Hemund, senior pastor of the church, says that Jo Ann and Charles Van Pelt and Bob Guelle helped start the ministry and remain active in it, setting up projects and drawing plans, then seeing them through to completion.

"I worked with them on a rather large project a few weeks ago, and it was an amazing experience," he said, "not only working with Bob (who is in his 80s and can run circles around me!), but also in interacting with our neighbors we are assisting."

According to Guelle, the ministry has built 19 wheelchair ramps to ADA specifications, and completed 14 other major projects such as door replacement, roofing, painting and more. Workers range in age from early 30s to mid-80s.

"Cornerstone has a core group of lay volunteers who come together bearing hammers and drills and saws, and a heart to help those in need," Guelle says.

The core group is a good size, too, says Hemund.

"We do rotate our volunteers, as we cannot use more than five or eight, depending on the size of the project," he said.

Most of the funding for the Handyman Ministry comes through special gifts by members of Cornerstone. There is no charge to those receiving services, though some have given donations to further the ministry.

There is no formal screening or application process for those seeking help; the Handyman Ministry simply answers needs as they arise.

"We offer our services and invite people to share the word," Guelle says.

"Word of mouth keeps us very busy."



From left, the Rev. Jeanne Williams, the Rev. Chris Hemund, Bob Guelle and Brad Magee assemble the framing for a Handyman Ministry wheelchair ramp project.

PHOTO BY JO ANN VAN PELT

Quapaw Quarter UMC building damaged

Lightning from a Nov. 11 afternoon storm struck the chimney of Quapaw Quarter UMC Little Rock, sending bricks flying. The chimney, bell tower, roof, rafters and telephone system sustained damage from the lightning strike itself, and rain that poured in through the holes in the roof caused water damage in the upper floors of the building.

The structure, originally home to Winfield Methodist Church, is on the National Register of Historic Places.

No ministry activities were interrupted by the lightning strike, says the Rev. Thompson Murray, Quapaw Quarter UMC's senior pastor. He was particularly thankful that the church's assistance ministries, which receive support from a variety of other United Methodist congregations, carried on as scheduled. The Community Breakfast and Stone Soup feeding ministries continued the following Sunday, and the food pantry and QuaPaws Pet Food ministry operated as scheduled.



PHOTO BY THOMPSON MURRAY

Election Day Communion serves as reminder of priorities, unity

BY AMY FORBUS
Editor

On Tuesday, Nov. 6, United Methodists voted for Republicans, Democrats, Libertarians and others. They voted for and against various issues appearing on the ballot. Some chose not to vote at all.

And amid views and votes that highlight division, some United Methodist congregations offered a particular invitation to unity: the celebration of Holy Communion.

An idea that originated with a group of Mennonite pastors, Election Day Communion gained traction through social media. The concept: Regardless of what choices Christians make on their ballots, they share unity in Christ, and participating in Holy Communion reinforces what binds us together.

The Election Day Communion website, electiondaycommunion.org, offered participating churches the opportunity to be listed by state. Four Arkansas UMCs—Cherokee Village UMC, First UMC Jacksonville, First UMC Springdale

and Wesley UMC Russellville—took advantage of the listing, and at least one other—Marshall UMC—also held a service.

The Revs. Mark McDonald and Brad Moore of First UMC Jacksonville offered Communion from 6 to 9 a.m. The "come as you are, stay as you are" format provided flexibility for congregants' work, school and voting schedules.

"It was a very nice morning, with most people attending around 7 a.m., on their way to work or to work the polls," McDonald said.

Wesley UMC Russellville's service took place in the evening. Church member Diane Yarbrough said the chance to participate in Communion interrupted her plan of sitting on the couch and enjoying

snacks while watching election returns.

"It turned out to be a meaningful experience and gave me a different perspective on the evening," she said. "Joining together with other church members and guests from the community, we came to the Lord's table as one people. It was

good to be reminded of our oneness with each other. We prayed for our nation, and it was a time of personal renewed commitment to God."

Yarbrough added that when she returned home from the service, the snacks and television didn't have the same appeal they had had earlier.

"I would hope that other churches may join in this opportunity in the future, and that I can repeat this as a part of my voting experience," she said.

'It was good to be reminded of our oneness with each other.'

—Diane Yarbrough

VOLUNTEERS IN MISSION

For information on any project listed in the Volunteers in Mission update, contact the individual listed or Byron Mann, Conference VIM coordinator, at vim@arumc.org or 870-703-8361.

Hurricane Sandy recovery—ERT update

Now is the time to form Early Response Teams (ERTs) and register with the Arkansas Conference Disaster Response co-coordinators, Janice and Byron Mann (disaster@arumc.org), if you wish to be part of an ERT for Hurricane Sandy recovery. To serve on an ERT, you must have completed ERT training and have an ERT badge.

Even for those who have been trained, now is not the time to travel to the Northeast. For those who have formed teams and registered, the next task is to wait until Disaster Response officials in the affected areas extend an invitation to schedule your team. Teams from within the Northeastern Jurisdiction of the UMC are being invited first, and those from other jurisdictions will follow. Arkansas is part of the South Central

Jurisdiction.

All groups must be self-sustaining, with the ability to provide their own meals adjust to flexible conditions.

Hurricane Sandy recovery—VIM update

Volunteers in Mission (VIM) Teams will be needed in addition to ERTs. A timeline is not yet available. To register for a VIM Team that will take on the tasks of repairing and rebuilding, contact Byron Mann at vim@arumc.org.

VIM Team Leader needed

Arkansas currently has a group of Volunteers in Mission interested in helping in the wake of Hurricane Sandy, but the

group still needs a trained VIM Team Leader. If you're a VIM Team Leader interested in serving, contact Byron Mann at vim@arumc.org.

Cleaning buckets, health kits

Though Ingathering 2012 has passed, there will always be a need for more cleaning buckets and health kits. Relief workers already have distributed thousands of kits to individuals affected by Hurricane Sandy, and will need thousands more. Your prayers, as well as your gifts to United Methodist Committee on Relief, will help UMCOR to be with storm survivors over the long term of their recovery. Give to U.S. Disaster Response, Hurricanes 2012, Advance #3021787, at umcor.org.

A vision for youth and young adult ministry in 2013

This list of projects and goals was submitted by Michelle Moore, Conference youth and young adult ministry coordinator. To learn more about any of these initiatives, or to share ideas, contact her at michelle.moore@arumc.org.

Youth Ministry

Youth Ministry Council: This council will be formed by the Conference youth and young adult ministry coordinator. It will include all District Youth Coordinators and other youth workers from around the state. The initial meeting will include decisions on the frequency of meetings, how the council will work with the coordinator and term guidelines for members.

Youth Worker Database: This database will enhance the Conference's existing information on youth workers in each church. The coordinator will contact each church to learn vital information concerning its youth ministry programs. The database will be used to communicate about training opportunities, resources and opportunities to connect with other youth workers.

Youth Ministry Resource Website: This website will give youth workers instant access to resources for ministry in many different areas, such as missions, fundraising, programs and curriculum. It will be the main place for youth workers to find answers to the questions they have.

Youth Ministry Mentor

Program: This program will pair veteran youth workers with those new to the career or the Arkansas Conference. Mentors will be trained before being matched with a new youth worker. Each participant will agree to an outlined process that includes meetings, study and follow-up.

Young Adult Ministry

Young Adult Ministry Resource Contacts: The coordinator will work with the existing Conference groups concerning young adult ministry to develop and carry out a vision together. This process also will help identify people who are involved in young adult ministry on the local church level who can serve as resources to others.

High School Graduate Database: This database will support the chair of the Higher Education committee by passing along information about graduating seniors to Wesley Foundations and other local young adult ministries.

Young Adult Resource Website: This website will be similar to the Youth Ministry website in that it will become the main location for resources related to young adult ministry. It will have program, curriculum and other ideas, as well as contact information for those with successful young adult ministries.

New background check system for ACCYM event helpers

A new system for all adults attending Arkansas Conference Council on Youth Ministries (ACCYM) events has recently been put into place. Now, all local churches are responsible for performing background checks and child maltreatment registry checks on the adults who will attend ACCYM events.

Background checks can be performed in a variety of ways: through the Arkansas State Police or a private company such as Background Systems of America, Protect My Ministry, Shepherd's Watch or several others.

Child maltreatment registry checks must be run through the Arkansas Department of Human Services. These checks are free as long as you provide the church's proof of 501(c)3 status. To read more about these checks and download the form, visit <http://arkedu.state.ar.us/commemos/static/fy0809/4299.html>.

Both types of checks can take six to eight weeks to complete, so as soon as a church makes plans to attend any Conference youth event, it is wise to ensure this paperwork has been completed on all adults that may accompany the church's youth. For each ACCYM event, the youth worker in charge must complete a verification form to show that these two checks have been performed on all adults attending the event. ACCYM requires a new form be completed for each event.

To obtain the form or ask further questions, contact Michelle Moore, Conference coordinator of youth and young adult ministries, at michelle.moore@arumc.org.

Children's ministry updates: VBS training, goal-setting for 2013

The Conference Council on Children's Ministries has set Vacation Bible School training dates for 2013:

- Northwest District - Fort Smith area - April 13
- Northeast District - Jonesboro or Batesville - April 6
- Central District - First UMC North Little Rock - April 20
- Southwest District - Hope UMC - April 6
- Southeast District - Pine Bluff - April 13

More information, including registration instructions and a complete list of host churches, will be available in January.

The Conference Council on Children's Ministries will meet on Thursday, Dec. 13, 2012, at the Conference office for a visioning and goal-setting session. This meeting agenda focuses on determining the way forward for 2013. Look for updates in future issues of the *Arkansas United Methodist*.

These updates were submitted by Karen Swales, Conference children's ministry coordinator. To learn more about these or other children's ministry events, contact her at karen.swales@arumc.org.

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Jesus' work done at Ingathering 2012

BY AMY FORBUS
Editor

LITTLE ROCK—On the chilly autumn morning of Nov. 17, dozens of United Methodists from around Arkansas gathered at the Arkansas Rice Depot. The reason: Ingathering, an annual tradition of churches collecting a range of supplies to improve the lives of people who deal with disaster or poverty.

Many helpers arrived ready to work, but a brief time of worship marked the official kickoff of the morning. Ingathering coordinator Brenda Norwood and Bishop Gary Mueller offered greetings, and the Rev. Greg Schick of St. James UMC Little Rock led singing before helpers went to work unloading cars, trailers, vans and moving trucks filled with health kits, cleaning buckets, school kits and more.

Bishop Mueller told those

gathered that they were doing Jesus' work.

"When you're reaching out to help, Jesus is already there," he said. "And when you help like this, when you spend your time doing stuff like this, you will grow closer to him than you ever have before. Because he's already where there's a need, and you will meet him there."

Bishop Mueller made a point of thanking the young people who attended, adding, "It is a Saturday and you could be sleeping in, and look where you are. You are awesome."

Krystal Doty, a junior at Henderson State University and a member of First UMC Stuttgart, returned for another year of Ingathering with her fellow students from the HSU/OBU Wesley Foundation. She appreciates being part of Ingathering, and noted that it has an even greater reach than the food pantry where she volunteered

while living in her hometown.

"I love service projects, and it's hands-on," she said. And as a college student, the November scheduling adds to the appeal for her. "It's at a time that helps me build spiritually again after the wear and tear of the semester."

People of all ages participated, including elementary school-aged students who helped pack a multi-ton mountain of sweet potatoes into boxes for distribution to area food pantries. The Society of St. Andrew (endhunger.org) provided the gleaning opportunity, with produce donated by Matthews Ridgeview Farms in Wynne.

Estimates of Ingathering totals available at press time totaled nearly \$1.8 million in cash and relief supplies, and 152,233 service hours worked by individuals in churches across the Arkansas Conference. The Conference Office of Administrative

Services expects even more Ingathering reports to arrive from local churches before year's end.

Most of the relief supplies gathered went to Baldwin, La., to stock Sager Brown Depot, a

distribution center for the United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR). Other items remain at the Rice Depot to provide assistance closer to home.



ABOVE: Students from the HSU/OBU Wesley Foundation campus ministry in Arkadelphia help unload cleaning buckets from vehicles and stack them onto forklift pallets.

BELOW: Brenda Norwood, coordinator for Ingathering 2012, greets the crowd as worship begins. Behind her, the Rev. Greg Schick prepares to lead singing.



This New Year's, make a resolution you'll want to keep. Resolve to save a life.

Every gift made to Imagine No Malaria through the Arkansas Conference office will be matched by the United Methodist Foundation of Arkansas, up to \$333,000. For every \$10 given, two lives will be saved. Now that's something to celebrate.

How to give:

- Donations can be made on-line at www.arumc.org/INM

OR

- Complete the form below and send it with your gift to: Arkansas Conference Treasurer, P. O. Box 3611, Little Rock, AR 72203-3611. Make checks payable to Arkansas Conference - INM.

Donor Information

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Address _____
City _____ State _____ Zip _____
Email _____ Phone _____

Total contribution: \$ _____
(please make copies of form or attach extra pages for additional contributions)

I would like to speak to someone about additional giving opportunities.

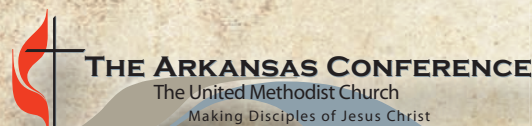
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Church sends mission team to Ingathering way station

Many Arkansas churches contribute to Ingathering, and some take their dedication an extra few hundred miles down the road, as well. One of those churches is Fairview United Methodist Church Camden. Eleven Fairview members traveled recently to Sager Brown Depot in Baldwin, La. (sagerbrown.org), to spend a week in mission.

The depot is a distribution center for UMCOR, the United Methodist Committee on Relief; it receives most of Arkansas' Ingathering supplies and routes them to where they are needed. The work team spent their time packing health kits, sewing, assembling school kits and performing needed maintenance work. They also participated in Sager Brown's food distribution program. The church already has reserved the week of June 23, 2013, for its next trip.



ABOVE: A group of middle-school youth from First UMC Conway arrives at Ingathering with relief supplies and a willingness to work.



TOP RIGHT: Young people from several churches helped package sweet potatoes for delivery to area food pantries. The orange t-shirts of Cabot UMC's Club 56 for fifth- and sixth-graders stood out in the crowd.

FAR RIGHT: Conference director of connectional ministries the Rev. Phil Hathcock, left, and Bishop Gary Mueller help get boxes of school kits from vehicles to the loading dock.

RIGHT: Lauren McElroy, vice president of Arkansas Rice Depot, welcomes workers and provides a few instructions for the morning.

AUM PHOTOS BY AMY FORBUS



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BOOK REVIEW

Devotional book's animals reflect God's love

Paws to Reflect: 365 Devotions for the Animal Lover's Soul

Devon O'Day and Kim McLean

Abingdon Press, 2012

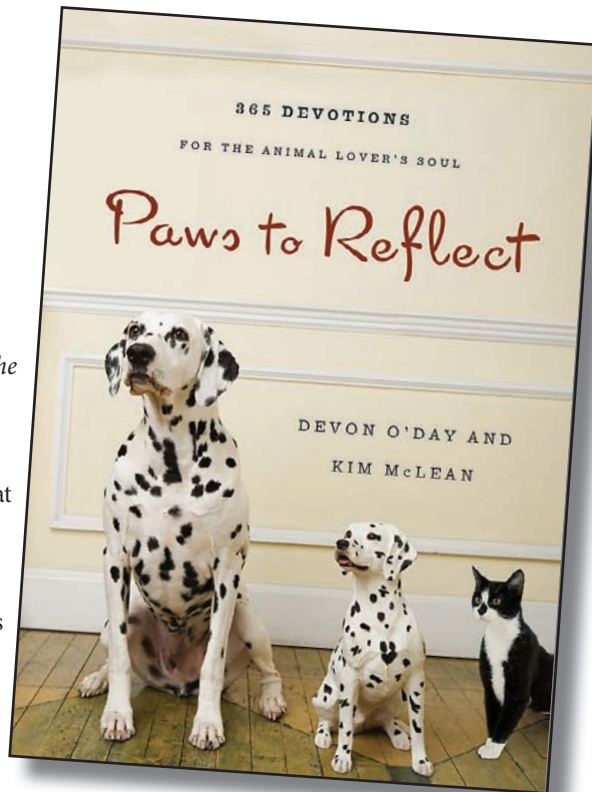
BY CANDACE BARRON
Special Contributor

When I first heard about this book, I jumped at the chance to read a collection of devotionals about dogs. One of my favorite sayings (usually after a particularly trying meeting) is that I like dogs more than most humans, so imagine my delight to find that one of the authors, Kim McLean, writes, "Numerous times I have heard someone tell me they like dogs and cats better than people." And "You might say animals teach us how to be better humans. Ironic, isn't it? I've always suspected that it's not that we don't like people; it's that we want our faith in our own species restored."

My life would be much less full without the love of my dogs. They pull me out of my introverted self and often serve as a catalyst for me to talk to perfect strangers. Animals can break down the barriers that we put up between ourselves.

Paws to Reflect: 365 Devotions for the Animal Lover's Soul breaks down some of the barriers that we have put between ourselves and God. It gives us concrete examples of how God moves in the world by using the example of animals that surround us, both great and small.

I grew up on a ranch in northern New Mexico. My family had me on horses before I could walk. I can't imagine a life without horses, dogs, cats, rabbits, lambs and all sorts of other creatures. I believe God put animals on the planet to serve many of our needs, and to inspire us, comfort us and be



companions for us. I imagine that some of those shepherds to whom the angels first appeared to announce the coming of the Messiah had dogs with them.

For this review, I chose to study several of the book's devotionals at random. It took me until the third try to find one about a dog. But each devotional still managed to touch my heart in a profound way. I tend to use the Bible itself as my devotional guide, but I think that the authors of *Paws to Reflect* have put together a thoroughly scriptural book that I will be using in the future. One of the daily readings was so moving that I choked up while reading it.

One of my favorite events in the life of the church is the Blessing of the Animals. I love seeing the interactions between the people and their pets. The deep love that many people have for their animals mirrors the love God has for us. Unconditional love is hard to understand; our pets give us a brief, fleeting glimpse of the larger truth of the agape love of God.

If you are an animal lover, this is the right devotional guide for you. From frogs to whales, cats to dogs, all living creatures have a story to tell. *Paws to Reflect* gives us a chance to read those stories through the lens of Scripture.

The Rev. Dr. Barron serves as pastor of Geyer Springs and St. Luke UMCs in Little Rock.

Youth event sets new attendance record, provides 'Refuge' for attendees



COURTESY PHOTO

Refuge, a junior high youth event sponsored by the Arkansas Conference Council on Youth Ministries (ACCYM) was held at the Shepherd of the Ozarks Retreat Center in Harriet the second weekend in November. It was the largest Refuge to date, with 270 young people and adults representing every corner of the state.

Jay Clark, youth minister at Pulaski Heights UMC in Little Rock and one of the adults on the planning task force, said the task force really wanted Refuge to live up to its name for the young people who attended.

"They are so busy," he said. "We wanted them to be able to get away from the things that stress them out and experience God in a new place... and through new friendships, being in nature and hearing God's word."

Saturday afternoon was full of various activities like horseback riding, hiking and a ropes course. The featured speaker for gathering times was the Rev. Rob Holifield, a native Arkansan who serves as director of community life at Asbury Theological Seminary in Wilmore, Ky.

"Rob used the theme to really focus on grace and what it means to be 'on fire' in your relationship with Jesus Christ," said Brooke Hobbs, youth chair of the task force.

The theme of the event was "Catching Fire!" based on a quote often attributed to John Wesley: "Catch on fire with enthusiasm and people will come from miles around to watch you burn."

Refuge will be held at Shepherd of the Ozarks again next year, Nov. 8-10, 2013. The next two Conference youth events are MITTO, a mission opportunity for high school students held December 26-30, 2012, in Springdale; and Veritas (ACCYM's largest event) for grades 7-12, scheduled for March 1-3, 2013, in Rogers.

For information about any of these events, or how your youth group can get involved, contact Michelle Moore at michelle.moore@arumc.org.

CLASSIFIEDS

PLACE YOUR CLASSIFIED in the *Arkansas United Methodist* for 60 cents per word, no limit. Call 501-324-8037, email aforus@arumc.org or mail to: *Arkansas United Methodist*, 800 Daisy Bates Drive, Little Rock, AR 72202.

Complete Sound System for sale—6 speakers, Mackie mixer, Crown amps, \$2,500.00 firm. E-mail supertwolfe@yahoo.com for complete list of equipment.

Director of Music Ministries—Grand Avenue UMC Stuttgart (gaumc.com) seeks a faithful person to work with adult and children's choirs and bell groups. The position is part-time, primarily working Sundays and Wednesdays. For more details, contact the church before January 7 at gaumc@centurytel.net or 870-673-6317.

Rhine River Cruise 2013—Rev. Siegfried Johnson, Senior Pastor of St. James United Methodist Church will be leading a Rhine River Cruise with Bishop Will Willimon, 9 days from Zurich to Amsterdam (October 31 – November 8, 2013). Bishop Willimon will offer a lecture series on "Christ in the Art of the Reformation," including one lecture at the Rijks Museum in Amsterdam on the works of Rembrandt. Those interested in this Christian travel opportunity may contact Rev. Johnson 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.

COMING UP

December

'Mitto' youth mission Dec. 26-30; register by Dec. 15

WHAT IS MITTO? Pronounced me-toe, *mitto* is Latin for mission. Mitto is five days full of missions and outreach in a specific regional area. For Mitto's second year, Senior High youth will help the community in and around Northwest Arkansas, using First UMC Springdale as base camp. This event focuses on missions, fellowship, worship and being the hands and feet of Jesus. Mitto 2012 runs from Dec. 26-30. The cost is \$85 for registrations received by the Dec. 15 deadline. Mitto is limited to 60 registrants, with a maximum of five registrations per church. For a registration form, visit arumc.org/register.

'Mrs. Santa's Kitchen' at Sequoyah UMC Fayetteville Dec. 8

Mrs. Santa's Kitchen, an annual event featuring homemade cookies, candy, bread and gifts, will be held on Saturday, Dec. 8, 2012, from 9 a.m. to noon at Sequoyah United Methodist Church, 1910 Old Wire Road in Fayetteville. All proceeds from the event will benefit local missions. For additional information, contact the church office at 479-442-8677.

'Festival of Lessons and Carols' at First UMC Morrilton Dec. 17

The Chancel Choir of First United Methodist Church Morrilton will present a Festival of Lessons and Carols on Monday night, Dec. 17 at 7 p.m. The music will feature cello performances by

special guest Daniel Cline, as well as the premiere of an original composition, "Gloria," by Sean Sweeden, who is currently pursuing a master's degree in music from the University of Arkansas. There is no admission charge, and a reception will follow.

December/January

Russian dance troupe to perform at seven Arkansas UMCs

Central Arkansas has been chosen as the location for a "Russian Children's Christmas Dance tour" sponsored by Peacework, a non-profit organization promoting economic development partnerships and service around the world, and Grand Jete, a famous Russian dance school from Moscow. This wonderful group of dancers will perform in area United Methodist churches from Dec. 28 to Jan. 5.

- Dec. 28: First UMC North Little Rock, 6:30 p.m.
- Dec. 29: First UMC Carlisle, 6 p.m.
- Dec. 30: First UMC Benton, 6 p.m.
- Jan. 2: St. James UMC Little Rock, 6:30 p.m.
- Jan. 3: Christ of the Hills UMC Hot Springs Village, 5:30 p.m.
- Jan. 4: Highland Valley UMC Little Rock, 6:30 p.m.
- Jan. 5: First UMC Hot Springs, 5 p.m.

Upon completion of her professional career with the Bolshoi Ballet, Yekaterina Enseva established Grand Jete in

Moscow. Her students range in age from 5 to 18 and have won top honors in competitions across Europe and Russia. For their third U.S. tour, they will showcase traditional Russian Christmas folk dances as well as tap, jazz, ballet and modern dance. Their costumes, all handmade, add a special element to the wonder of the dances.

There is no charge for the performances; they are a gift from Grand Jete. Donations will be accepted to help defray expenses. If you have questions, contact the Rev. John Dill at 870-833-2678. For information on Peacework's mission, visit peacework.org.

January

Free webinars for church leaders available in January

The General Board of Discipleship of the UMC is offering a series of free, one-hour webinars in January. Each webinar addresses a different aspect of congregational lay leadership.

- Jan. 10: Stewardship and Finance: Getting it Right at the Starting Line
- Jan. 15: SPRC Plans the Year
- Jan. 17: Lay Leader: What Do I Do?
- Jan. 22: Trustees Plan a Year of Ministry
- Jan. 29: Church Council Leads Discipleship
- Jan. 31: Nominations Committee Develops Leaders

The webinars begin at 6:30 Central time. Early registration is recommended. To register, visit www.gbod.org/webinars.

Three grant opportunities to fund justice ministries; apply by Jan. 10

The United Methodist General Board of Church and Society has announced Jan. 10 as the deadline to apply for three different types of ministry grants.

Ethnic Local Church Grants: These grants are given to strengthen ethnic minority local churches through education, advocacy or leadership development as they engage in social justice.

Peace with Justice Grants: Applicants must work toward achieving at least one of the following objectives:

- Assist United Methodists in understanding and responding to violence and militarism, and in moving and leading nations and peoples to reconciliation, transformation, and redemption.
- Involve and develop principal leaders among United Methodists and enjoin the general public in efforts to end conflicts, human rights violations and violent aggression around the world;
- Promote just national and international policies and actions (governmental and non-governmental) seeking to address poverty and restore communities; or support policies that promote systematic economic justice and the self-development of peoples, in particular to respond to the disproportionate effect of injustices on racial, indigenous and ethnic persons.

Human Relations Day Grants: The goal is to supply start-up money for ministries that respond to non-violent young offenders through education, advocacy or leadership training and development.

To learn more about any of these grant opportunities, and to obtain an application form, visit umc-gbcs.org/press-releases or contact the Rev. Neal Christie, nchristie@umc-gbcs.org.

Cokesbury update: Little Rock store closing March 1

Arkansas' Cokesbury Bookstore on March 1 will close its doors as part of the United Methodist Publishing House's decision to end brick-and-mortar retail operations. The Little Rock store, which leases space from First UMC Little Rock at 715 Center Street, will continue its normal staffing, store hours and operations until its closing date.

Beginning in January, customers will begin to see markdowns on selected in-store merchandise. The store will cease taking special orders for store pick-up 30 days before closing. During that time, store customers may still place orders and instead have them shipped directly to their home or church with free shipping and handling.

After March 1, Cokesbury will serve Arkansas customers through a

Little Rock-based sales representative, the Cokesbury Call Center and its website, cokesbury.com.

Cokesbury will continue to be a presence at Annual Conference meetings and events and will be working with churches across the Annual Conference to co-sponsor special events and gatherings.

Little Rock store manager Yvonne Armstrong offers the following message to Arkansas Cokesbury customers:

"Friends, we are honored by the support you have shown us in the Little Rock store over the years. Your outpouring of love and concern over the last month has been amazing. We are humbled by your care for us. Serving you has been a blessing to us all.

"While I mourn our loss, I do

understand the changing demands in our economy and in our society. I believe the website and call center will continue to meet your needs as they have in the past. And so will the new Cokesbury Sales Rep who will be based here in Arkansas.

"Bishop Richard Wilke's wife, Julia, once remarked that when they went to a new charge, she would be in tears halfway there, and then her tears would turn to joy as she anticipated the new adventures and relationships in the next appointment. I think this is where we are, celebrating the past as we move into the future.

"We look forward to visiting with you as you call in or come to the store over the next few months. I know the whole staff prays for the best for you, your families and your churches."

Arkansas church featured in Human Relations Day video

The addiction recovery program of Better Community Development, Inc., conducted in partnership with Theressa Hoover UMC Little Rock, has been chosen as a featured story for the 2013 Human Relations Day special offering Sunday, Jan. 20. To view the video, visit <http://youtu.be/soyYvufRsvw>.

Worship Fair set for Feb. 15-16

"From Generation to Generation: Worship for the Ages" is the theme of Worship Fair 2013, presented by the Arkansas chapter of the Fellowship of United Methodists in Music and Worship Arts. Held at First UMC Little Rock, the Feb. 15-16 event features clinicians the Rev. Dr. Zan Holmes presenting on preaching; Jean Anne Shafferman on adult music; and David Bone, children's

choir. The Rev. Donna Hankins-Hull and Pam Snider will present on children's worship, and the event also features artist and musician Deitra Blackwell.

For a brochure and registration information, contact the Rev. Pat Henry at brassyapat@hotmail.com or Michael Ekbladh at michaelekbladh@att.net. Participants who register before Jan. 1 will receive a discount.

OBITUARIES

CONWAY

Jon D. Guthrie

The Rev. Jon Dickey Guthrie, 77, passed away on Saturday, Nov. 17, 2012.

He was born on Dec. 29, 1934 in Prescott, Ark., to Lee E. Guthrie and Kathryn Dickey Guthrie. He graduated from Delight High School in 1952, Hendrix College in 1956 and Drew University School of Theology in Madison, N. J. (1959), with theological studies at Heidelberg University of Germany (1958).



Jon Guthrie

He was an ordained elder of the Arkansas Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church and served as a Methodist missionary in Zaire, Congo in 1959, as the Belgian Congo declared its independence from Belgium. He returned home in 1962 for further studies and returned in Zaire in 1964, leading a team of three men of A-3 missionary status in war-torn Congo.

He returned to the states and in 1968 was appointed as the associate pastor of First United Methodist Church Conway, and then began serving in 1969 as chaplain of Hendrix College where he retired in 1996. Since 2000, he continued to serve Hendrix College as special advisor to President J. Timothy Cloyd.

Guthrie's dad played minor league baseball, which gave him a love of the sport. He was also an ardent supporter of Riddle's Elephant and Wildlife Sanctuary of Greenbrier.

He is survived by his wife, Jan Reinhardt Guthrie of Conway, and their children: Paul Edward Guthrie and his wife, Susan, of Louisville, Ky., Holly Guthrie Martin and her husband, Mike, of Conway; a sister; Nancy Guthrie Gipson and her husband, Jim, of Searcy; a brother-in-law, Bill Reinhardt and his wife, Susi, of Hot Springs; grandchildren Matt Hill, Eva Guthrie and Anna Guthrie; nieces and nephews Amy Thompson Maxson, Chris Thompson Rambo and David Reinhardt.

Jon was preceded in death by his parents, as well as his

grandparents, John and Kate Dickey and Walter and Nell Guthrie.

A memorial service was held on Monday, Nov. 19, at First UMC Conway. Visitation was held immediately after the service.

Memorial gifts may be given to Hendrix College (hendrix.edu), designated to the Imagine No Malaria campaign to eradicate malaria in sub-Saharan Africa; and to Riddle's Elephant and Wildlife Sanctuary (elephantsanctuary.org).

LITTLE ROCK

Nita Fogleman Stephens

Nita Fogleman Stephens, 88, of Little Rock, passed away on Tuesday, Oct. 23, 2012, at Four Seasons Residential Care Center in Benton.

Born on Oct. 13, 1924, to the late Marvin and Katy Baker Fogleman, she was predeceased by her husband, the Rev. Bryan Stephens; and sisters, Mildred Flanders of Longview, Texas, and Mary Kay Copeland of Garland, Texas. Nita was a member of Pulaski Heights United Methodist Church Little Rock.

She is survived by her daughter, Mary Ann McCullar and her husband, Tommy, of Benton; sons, Scott Stephens of Little Rock and Mark Stephens and his wife, Shirley, of Chichester, England; and grandsons, Bryan McCullar and Jake McCullar and his wife, Paige, of Fayetteville.



Nita Fogleman Stephens

The family offers special thanks to Dee Dee Fairchild for her special care of their mother and grandmother.

A graveside service was held on Friday, Oct. 26, at Lone Tree Cemetery in Stuttgart. In lieu of flowers, memorial gifts may be made to Pulaski Heights United Methodist Church, 4823 Woodlawn Dr., Little Rock, AR 72205, or to your favorite charity.

LONO

Al Harrell

Al "Coach" Harrell, 52, passed away on Thursday, Nov. 8, 2012, at Saline Memorial Hospice.

He was born on Nov. 30, 1959, in Natchez, Miss., the son of Martin Alfred and Inez Adams Harrell.

He was involved in the Noah's Of Ark Walk to Emmaus, a member of St. Paul United Methodist Church Malvern and a lay pastor serving New Hope UMC in Grant County.

He graduated in Vidalia, La., in 1978, where he lettered in football, basketball and track. Upon graduation, he received a football scholarship to Henderson State University and played under the legendary Ralph "Sporty" Carpenter. He earned a BSE in physical education with a minor in social studies in 1983. In 2003, he received his MSE in public school administration.

He started his coaching career at Rogers Junior High in El Dorado. He then spent eight years coaching in Texas, returning to Arkansas as the head junior high and assistant high school football coach for DeWitt. He then accepted the defensive coordinator position at Bismarck High School, and was named head coach in 1996. In 1999, he went to the Bauxite School District as the high school defensive coordinator, winning four district championships, and as head junior high coach for eight years. From 2004 to 2010, he served as Bauxite's high school assistant principal and athletic director. He was named Bauxite's first middle school principal in 2010, where he served for two years before retiring.

Survivors include his parents, Martin and Inez Harrell of Hendersonville, Tenn.; his wife of 32 years, Tammy Melton Harrell; a son, Patrick Harrell of Fort Sill, Okla., where he is in the National Guard; a daughter, Natalie Harrell McClellan of Benton; a brother, Jeff Harrell and his wife, Josara, of Texarkana, Texas; a sister, Donna Vaughn and her husband, Dale, of Hendersonville, Texas; two grandchildren, Julius and



Al Harrell

continued on page 11A

Starting Over (continued from page 1A)

of Hot Springs held its first annual charity golf tournament in the spring of 2011, and chose SOM as the organization to receive the proceeds. The tournament raised the much-needed funds to purchase a cargo trailer to haul furnishings. Money left after the purchase of the trailer went toward buying twin beds, youth beds and cribs, which always seem to be in short supply.

Ministry expansion

Having storage units donated was also a blessing, but the lack of climate control became a challenge when helpers needed to organize

items during the winter's cold and the summer's heat.

In times of extreme temperatures, Mountainside UMC offered up its all-purpose sanctuary to sort and prepare items for delivery. "We had a 'sorting party' with many members showing up to help," Nick Hilt said.

After months of prayer for God to lead the ministry to finding suitable storage, a Hot Springs businessman in February provided SOM with climate-controlled warehouse space. Now, furnishings can be cleaned, sorted and stored until needed, all in one location.

God has continued to provide this ministry with volunteers, donors and support from the local community. In the three years since the founding of SOM, more than 200 families have been served.

"The Starting Over Ministry

allows members of our community of faith to be the hands of Christ to our mission field," said the Rev. J. J. Galloway, pastor of Mountainside UMC. "While the recipients of this ministry may feel blessed, those who receive, sort and fold the donations, deliver furniture, and listen to stories of despair and need are the ones who are receiving by far the greater blessing."

For additional information about Starting Over Ministries, Inc., contact Nick Hilt at nickhilt@suddenlink.net.

Land is a member of Mountainside UMC Hot Springs Village.

RIGHT: Nick Hilt not only keeps Starting Over Ministries' deliveries on schedule, but he also is on hand to make minor repairs as needed before furniture is sent out for delivery.



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OBITUARIES

Jett McClellan; in-laws, James and Patsy Melton; and numerous nieces and nephews.

A celebration of his life was held Sunday, Nov. 11, 2012, at Family Farm in Malvern, with the Revs. Bryan Diffie and Dooley Fowler officiating. A reception followed at St. Paul UMC Malvern. The family gives special thanks to the Bauxite Community, Saline Memorial Hospice, Emmaus, St. Paul and Carthage Charge church families, Dr. Thomas Sneed and Arkansas Oncology.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to St. Paul United Methodist Church, P.O. Box 1374, Malvern, AR 72104; the American Cancer Society; or the Bauxite Athletic Department.

QUITMAN

Gretchen Nelson Chapman

Gretchen L. Nelson Chapman, 90, passed away Thursday, Oct. 4, 2012, at her home.

Born in Rose Bud on Jan. 18, 1922, she was the daughter of the late F. M. and Mary Colon Griffitt Nelson.

Chapman was a homemaker and minister's wife. She was an encourager to her husband, the Rev. John Robert Chapman, who served in United Methodist churches



**Gretchen
Nelson
Chapman**

throughout Arkansas, including Rose Bud, Cherry Valley, Holly Grove, Cabot, Van Buren, Brinkley, Marked Tree, Tuckerman, Batesville and Greers Ferry. She was a member of Quitman United Methodist Church.

In addition to her parents, she was preceded in death by her husband, who passed away on June 26, 2011.

She is survived by three sons: Larry Chapman and his wife, Janice, of Quitman; Robert Chapman and his wife, Vickie, of Farmersville, Texas; and Nelson Chapman and his wife, Linda, of Commerce, Texas; a brother, Oren Leslie Nelson of Yantis, Texas; a sister, Rachel Martin of Bald Knob; eight grandchildren, 19 great grandchildren and two great-great grandchildren; other relatives and her many friends.

Funeral services were held Sunday, Oct. 7, in the Olmstead Chapel with the Rev. Dave Caswell officiating. Interment followed in Cleburne County Memorial Gardens. Her grandsons served as pallbearers; Robert Dale Chapman was an honorary pallbearer.

SEARCY

Rommie C. Cheshier

The Rev. Rommie Carroll Cheshier, 72, passed away on Thursday, Nov. 15, 2012.

He was born in Monticello on Jan. 13, 1940, the son of Rommie Madison Cheshier and Lela Mason Riviere Cheshier, who preceded him in death.



**Rommie
Cheshier**

He was a 1958 graduate of Star City High School and graduated from University of Arkansas at Monticello in 1965.

He began his career as a social worker for the state of Arkansas. His ministry began when he became the Lay Associate for Roselawn Methodist Church in Hot Springs. He was also music and youth director for First UMC Searcy in 1967. He served as pastor at First Christian Church in Searcy for sixteen years. He also served Pleasant Plains UMC, Cornerstone UMC and Bradford UMC. He served in the Air National Guard for 35 years. In addition, he owned his own business. His life's mission was to serve others. His hobbies included fishing and hunting.

He is survived by his wife of 45 years, Mary Lynn Burns Cheshier; a son, Rommie Burns Cheshier and his wife, Melisa, of Charlotte, N.C.; a daughter, Carol Hutchison and her husband, Matthew, of Searcy; one brother, Joe Tony Cheshier and his wife, Billie, of El Dorado; a brother-in-law, Ralph Burns and his wife, Sally, of Searcy; three grandchildren: Josh and Emilie Derington and MariGracyn Hutchison; and four nephews and their families.

Funeral services were held on Saturday, Nov. 17, at The River Church in Judsonia. An interment and committal service was held at Campground Cemetery in Monticello on Sunday, Nov. 18.

J. Frank Warden

The Rev. Justice Franklin Warden, 80, passed away Wednesday, Nov. 14, 2012.

He was born in North Little Rock to J. Frank Warden and Della Caple Warden on Nov. 14, 1932. He is preceded in death by his parents, a sister, Frankie Dell Holsted, and her husband, Leon.

He is survived by his wife of 58 years, Dorothy Yarnell Warden; a daughter, Elizabeth Warden of Dallas, and a son, Clark, of Searcy.

He graduated from North Little Rock High, Hendrix College, Vanderbilt School of Law and Perkins School of Theology. He had an interesting career with Mehaffey, Smith, and Williams, now the Friday Firm. Then, in 1969, the Lord called and he entered the ministry. He served as minister of evangelism at Highland Park United Methodist Church in Dallas, Texas, for 13 years. The Warden family then returned to Arkansas, where he served 16th Section UMC and Ward UMC for seven years. Searcy became their home and he served as associate pastor at First UMC for three years.

During this time, he wrote Trinity Bible Studies used throughout the United States, Korea and Russia. He and Dorothy were guests of Kwang Lim Methodist Church three different years. Not only did they travel to Korea, but also to England, the Holy Land, Greece and Europe. He was the guest minister at Waoli Church on the island of Kauai. He taught seminars throughout the U.S.

His favorite hobby was his music. He played the piano, guitar and ukulele, and sang in several men's quartets. He could never read music, but played and sang by ear. He always had a shop and could repair almost anything. He and Dorothy sang in many groups plus the church choir. They shared so many things. He met her at Hendrix when he stepped on her at a bonfire. From then on, their lives were intertwined.

His memorial service was held on Monday, Nov. 19, at First UMC Searcy, with the Revs. David Orr, Tony Griffin and Fred Arnold officiating.



**Frank
Warden**



Youth group helps preserve Civil War history

Cameron Fontaine of City Heights UMC Van Buren cleans the grave marker of a Confederate soldier in the city's Fairview Cemetery. As a service project, the church's youth group took on the task of helping preserve pieces of history in the Confederate section of the cemetery. They participated in an orientation session to learn the correct way to clean the headstones, so as not to cause damage.

PHOTO BY MIKE HENSON

Christmas missions near and far

Church provides 'Christmas in November' for youth of Methodist Family Health

St. Mark UMC El Dorado held recently a Christmas in November Sunday with residents of Magale Manor Home in Magnolia, one of the eight therapeutic group homes of the statewide Methodist Family Health system. The teen boys worshiped with the St. Mark congregation, and some of them helped lead the service. A special lunch followed, and the congregation provided an early Christmas gift for each of the Magale Manor residents.

Showing love to these neighbors is one way St. Mark UMC strives to follow the great commandment given by Jesus in Mark 12:30-31.

—submitted by the Rev. Mike Proctor

Vilonia church takes part in Operation Christmas Child

Mt. Carmel UMC Vilonia is one of several Arkansas churches that participated in this year's "Operation Christmas Child," a ministry of Franklin Graham's organization Samaritan's Purse. The congregation filled 228 shoe boxes with toiletries and a child's Christmas gift, surpassing their goal of 200 boxes. Members brought the gifts to the front of the sanctuary, where they prayed over each one.

The gift boxes will go to poor children in developing countries. In many cases, it is the only Christmas gift the children will receive. Missionaries will deliver the gifts and teach the children about Jesus. Samaritan's Purse will send photos to Mt. Carmel UMC showing some of the children receiving their gifts. For more information about this ministry, visit samaritanspurse.org/occ.

—submitted by the Rev. Tom Lukas



Trick-or-treating with a twist benefits Imagine No Malaria



Gabi Bradford, left, receives from Bishop Gary Mueller a Halloween donation for the Imagine No Malaria campaign. The denomination-wide effort aims to end deaths from malaria—a preventable, treatable disease that still kills one child per minute.

AUM PHOTOS BY AMY FORBUS

Gabi Bradford, 10, stopped by the office of Bishop Gary Mueller on Halloween to ask not for candy, but for donations to Imagine No Malaria.

Decked out in a mosquito costume made by her grandmother, she carried a bucket bearing the Imagine No Malaria logo and handed out cards encouraging visits to the Imagine No Malaria website. She collected \$80.43 in donations toward the cause.

This marked the second year Gabi has used Halloween to help others. Last year, she collected more than candy; she asked instead for canned goods to give to the Arkansas Rice Depot.

Gabi, the daughter of the Rev. Blake and Kerri Bradford, attends St. James UMC Little Rock, where her father serves as executive pastor.



Faith Funds

Problem Solved

Pleasant Grove United Methodist Church in Jonesboro is home to generations of families who have nurtured its building and grounds with care, making significant renovations and keeping it alive with activities. With an average attendance of 73, the church is thriving and its youth group has started meeting again.

Rev. Nan Nelson, now Senior Pastor at Wiggins UMC in Fayetteville, was Senior Pastor at Pleasant Grove at a time when the congregation was having problems with a local bank. The bank's high fees were eating up a very large part of the annual income from a trust that was to be used to benefit the church. She contacted Jim Argue, President of the United Methodist Foundation of Arkansas, to ask for help.

"The Trustees and Finance Chair talked to Jim and told him we were having trouble moving our money from the bank," she recalled. "Jim successfully moved the large bequest to the Foundation where the people of the church have full say in how it is used."

Now the church has an official Endowment Committee and an additional permanent endowment fund at UMFA that already includes two smaller trusts. "Pleasant Grove has a place to put money where it will grow and a path to follow on how to use it," Rev. Nelson said. If you'd like to learn how UMFA can help your local church, contact Jim Argue at jargue@umfa.org or call him at the Foundation.



The United Methodist Foundation of Arkansas

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 **HENDRIX**

The Hendrix College Choir presents the 48th Annual

Candlelight Carol Service Tour

December 13 at 7:30 p.m.
Belle Meade United Methodist Church
121 Davidson Road • Nashville, Tennessee

December 14 at 7:30 p.m.
Lakewood United Methodist Church
1922 Topf Road • North Little Rock, Arkansas

Reservations are not required.