

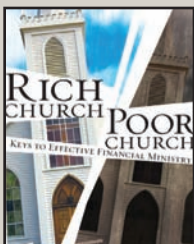
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## Safeguarding God's gifts

### Financial Integrity Team issues standards for churches

BY AMY FORBUS  
Editor

In church life, the term “stewardship” often relates to the charitable giving patterns of households within a congregation. But stewardship doesn’t end when money lands in the offering plate.

Churches have the responsibility—the sacred duty—to make certain that they manage their finances in transparent ways. To help local churches maintain wise and transparent accounting procedures, Bishop Gary Mueller has established a Financial Integrity Team for the Arkansas Conference.

Bishop Mueller noted that in the first two months of his time in Arkansas, he learned of three pending matters involving possible embezzlement in local churches. He soon became aware of a history of financial mismanagement.

“We need to address this as a serious situation,” he said. “It has happened often enough that it has woven itself into the fabric and culture of the Arkansas Conference, and it undermines our efforts to make disciples of Jesus Christ.”

#### One example

In 2004, when district trustees discovered years of embezzlement in the Northwest District office, they soon realized that following even the simplest standardized procedures could have prevented the loss of hundreds of thousands of dollars.

“No finance committee person ever opened or looked at a bank statement,” said Lamar Pettus, who served on the district board of trustees at that time. He now serves as the chair of the Conference board of trustees and as a member of the Financial Integrity Team.

The district administrative assistant at that time was periodically writing large checks to himself, but since he was the only person looking at the bank statements and reconciling the account, it went unnoticed until checks began to bounce.



Pettus noted that the district had had three different superintendents in two years, and the rotation of district leadership dictated by the denomination’s *Book of Discipline* had fallen by the wayside. Leadership stayed the same for consistency’s sake, and no one asked questions about the financial workings of the district.

“If we had just followed the *Discipline* and had the rotation [of leadership], maybe we would’ve gotten someone on the finance committee or the board of trustees who would’ve said, ‘I want to look at the bank statement.’”  
[See FINANCIAL, page 2A]

## New gun law raises questions for Arkansas churches

BY AMY FORBUS  
Editor

A new state law lets individual congregations decide whether to allow concealed handguns in their church buildings.

Arkansas Governor Mike Beebe on Monday, Feb. 11, signed into law the Church Protection Act of 2013, which permits concealed handguns to be carried into houses of worship. The law supersedes an earlier one that prohibited concealed guns in churches. It also gives congregations the power to designate who may

carry a concealed handgun into the place of worship.

#### Denomination’s stand

The United Methodist Church doesn’t dictate the decision for local churches. Nothing in the *Book of Discipline*, the denomination’s law book, deals with the topic of firearms in church.

The *Book of Resolutions*, though, does provide guidance on this issue. Resolution No. 5011, first adopted at the 2000 General Conference and re-adopted in 2008,

declares every United Methodist Church a weapon-free zone.

But because the *Book of Resolutions* is not church law, its contents are non-binding.

“The *Book of Resolutions* is for edification and teaching,” Bishop Gary Mueller said in a recent interview with the *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette*. “It carries educational weight.”

#### Considerations, cautions

Tony Hilliard, chancellor for the Arkansas Conference, says he prays

that local churches will adhere to the weapon-free zone declaration in the *Book of Resolutions*, but acknowledges that they have the freedom to do otherwise. He also cautions against immediate action because related legislation still is being considered.

“There is another bill going through the House now that seeks to clarify the steps for a church to allow guns in its facilities, and to require churches that allow guns to post signs at the entrances giving the public notice that guns are allowed.”

[See GUN LAW, page 8A]

# Mission trip teaches the value of making small differences

BY CHRISTINA COLE  
Special Contributor

“Spend a week serving among the urban poor of San Francisco through the social programs of Glide Memorial United Methodist Church, featured in the movie *The Pursuit of Happyness*.”

This was the sentence that first piqued my interest in the mission trip organized by Hendrix College during our winter break. I had seen the film, and was moved by the story it presented. But what I gained from the week-long trip was more than I expected when I first applied to attend.

During winter break, 11 other students, three adults and I spent a week working at Glide Memorial United Methodist Church. We helped serve more than 3,500 meals. We also helped at Speak Out, an open-microphone time in which visitors can showcase a talent or simply state what is on their mind. Both programs were open to everybody, and those we served during our time there ranged from people who plainly did not have homes to people wearing business suits.

Glide has a long history of opening its doors to the city of San Francisco. The church was opened in 1931 in the heart of San Francisco. In 1963, a young African-American minister, the Rev. Cecil Williams, came to Glide and transformed the church and its mission. During the 1960s, a period of great change and counter-revolution, the church began serving one free dinner a week to everybody who came to the church.

The church has expanded its community outreach, which now includes serving a free breakfast, lunch and dinner every day, operating a free health clinic and offering free classes on topics from self-defense to acupuncture.

We began our week at Glide by attending a church service on Sunday. The people of Glide welcomed our group with open arms. The church



Arkansans Rynnett Clark and Christina Cole (foreground) work with middle-school helpers from the San Francisco area to make lunches at Glide Memorial UMC. A group from Hendrix College traveled recently to San Francisco for a mission experience at the church.

PHOTO BY WAYNE CLARK

welcomes people of all faiths, colors and sexual orientations, and that openness has become part of the church's identity. The welcome extended throughout the week, which made an impression on me during our time volunteering at Glide.

The people who worked at Glide supported the short-term service we offered. When we were getting overwhelmed during a meal service, they were there to help us calm down and offer extra hands. They also helped us feel comfortable by introducing us to guests and joking with us.

Glide does not view the people who come through their doors at charity, but instead as guests who deserve respect. While a hot, fresh meal fulfilled a need for each guest who visited Glide, the meals seemed to be as much about the interaction we had with the guests. Saying hello, looking each guest in the eyes and asking how their day was going seemed to touch the guest as much the food that we were presenting to them.

One of the most important things that I learned while at Glide is that volunteering or mission work is not about changing the whole world all at once; it is about making even one small difference in a community. This difference can come from

something as simple as making eye contact and smiling at somebody who generally feels that they are on the fringe of society.

While we did not solve the problem of homelessness during our time at Glide, I believe we were able to make a small but positive difference in the day of those who came to receive a meal.

My short time serving at Glide taught me to look differently at poverty. Poverty is not limited to those who are obviously homeless; people who appear well dressed may also be facing poverty. We can't know a person's whole story by looking at them.

My experience at Glide also helped me gain a new understanding of the ways I can make a difference in the world. I will not be able to solve the problem of poverty on my own—but as individuals we do not need to always attempt to change the world. Making eye contact, smiling, or saying a simple hello to somebody who is on the fringe of society can change their day and ultimately their life. Simple actions can change the world, too.

*Cole, a senior at United Methodist-affiliated Hendrix College in Conway, is a member of St. James UMC Little Rock.*

## Financial (continued from page 1A)

I want to see something more than a sheet of paper,” Pettus said.

“The guy was a great church member, and his wife was great,” he said. “We just absolutely could not believe it, and could not understand.” The former district administrative assistant wound up spending time in prison for the embezzlement of more than \$300,000.

### A plan with resources

The Financial Integrity Team is sending a letter to all pastors and local church finance committee chairs that includes a partial history of embezzlement in the Arkansas Conference. Amounts of embezzled funds in the past decade range from hundreds of dollars in smaller incidents to six-figure amounts in several congregations, the Northwest District office and the Arkansas Conference office.

The letter recommends certain minimum standard procedures for all churches. The team expects each church in Arkansas to have a written internal controls policy filed in the district office and put into effect in their congregation by Sept. 1, 2013. To that end, the team is producing several resources to help churches develop these policies, including:

- Recommended internal controls for small, medium and large

congregations;

- Sample budgets to use as guides;
- Tools for conducting an end-of-year financial review; and
- An instructional video to guide church leaders through these processes.

The Conference's Center for Technology (CFT) has begun working with the Financial Integrity Team to post resources at [arumc.org](http://arumc.org), as well as produce video resources featuring experts in financial management.

“We want to ensure that these resources are available to every local church's leaders,” said Mark Epperson, director of the CFT. He noted that for churches without high-speed Internet connections, the CFT will provide alternate delivery methods upon request.

Bishop Mueller believes that the Financial Integrity Team has begun to address issues of financial mismanagement with the seriousness they deserve.

“I don't want to be overly dramatic, but church finances are a serious matter. How we handle our money makes a difference in our ability to reach our mission field,” he said. “Mismanagement of funds is not acceptable. It is, however, fixable, so we intend to fix it.”

## Arkansas Conference Financial Integrity Team

- Bishop Gary E. Mueller
- Rev. Mackey Yokem, NW District Superintendent
- Rev. Phil Hathcock, Director of Connectional Ministries
- Todd Burris, Arkansas Conference Treasurer
- Tony Hilliard, Arkansas Conference Chancellor
- Karon Mann, Arkansas Conference Lay Leader
- Lamar Pettus, Conference Board of Trustees Chair
- Rev. Jim Polk, President, Conference Finance and Administration



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### Submission Deadlines

Issue Date	Submission Deadline
April 5	March 21
May 3	April 18
June 7	May 22

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## GROWING TOGETHER IN CHRIST: A word from the Bishop

BY GARY E. MUELLER

# What Imagine Ministry means to me

Dear Sisters and Brothers,  
I heard a great deal about Imagine Ministry in the months leading up to last summer's Jurisdictional Conference in Oklahoma City. I have learned a great deal more since my arrival in Arkansas this past September.

Not surprisingly, I have discovered mixed reviews. Some of you are excited, some of you don't like it and some of you simply don't understand it. I'm realistic enough to know that's the way it is and that's the way it may remain in the months and years to come.

I think it's important, however, to share some of what I have discovered as I have lived my way into Imagine Ministry these past few months.

Imagine Ministry is not a program. It's not something we'll do for a few years and then move

on—in typical United Methodist fashion—to the next quadrennial emphasis. It's a long-term commitment to take seriously our mission of making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world, in a denomination that is growing older and smaller, in a world that is increasingly similar to the mission field the Apostle Paul faced rather than the world many of us grew up in just a few years ago.

Imagine Ministry is necessary because there are too many institutional realities, assumptions and bad habits that are strangling us. As most of us discover each January when we fail at many of our New Year's resolutions, it's hard to do things in new ways. But that is exactly what we will keep working at as long as it takes so we are connected by our mission instead of the institution; as we focus on those

in the mission field who need Jesus' love instead of ourselves; and as we learn how to approach each situation uniquely instead of employing a cookie-cutter approach.

Imagine Ministry is our affirmation that we are all in as the church of Jesus Christ. We are not going to settle for mediocrity or the status quo, but will commit ourselves to work hard and seek excellence in everything we do—whether it's worship, leadership development, spiritual formation, reaching children and youth, communication or better understanding our mission field.

Imagine Ministry will only make a difference if we are willing to be passionate. Jesus loves us so much, he loves us just the way we are. Jesus loves us so much, he is unwilling to leave us the way we are. Jesus gives us what we need, but can

never get on our own—abundant and eternal life. This is not just Good News—it's Great News! It changes everything about everything. And it's time we acted like it.

Imagine Ministry is focused on local churches. This means I will have to do everything I can to ensure that we keep re-directing resources to help local churches become more and more vital. We will make mistakes—and learn a great deal—along the way. And just about the time we think we have answered all the deep questions, more will appear. But, ultimately, it's worth it—because it's local churches that make disciples.

Imagine Ministry is ultimately about revival, renewal and reform. This is where it gets really personal really quickly. I believe we need a revival in which we are re-made as Jesus' disciples by the Holy Spirit. We need renewal in our commitment to reach out into the mission field to share Jesus' love. We need reform in how we organize ourselves so we can

truly carry out our mission to make disciples of Jesus Christ who are equipped to transform the world with excellence and passion.

I am convinced that Imagine Ministry is the journey of a lifetime because it's about doing the work Jesus has created the church to do. I am proud that Arkansan United Methodists are leading the way in this effort. And I am grateful to be on this journey with you.

Please join me in praying every day that we truly will join together to develop local congregations filled with passionate laity and pastors who seek every excellent way to make disciples of Jesus Christ who make disciples who transform lives and our world.

Grace and peace,

Gary E. Mueller

# A 'Justice League' model of ministry

BY NATASHA  
MURRAY-NORMAN  
Special Contributor

One of the challenges in ministry is the concept of partnership. When it comes to partnering for ministry, I believe we can learn about our own realities from an alternate reality: the comic book universe.

Many Saturday mornings of my childhood, we watched cartoon superheroes defending and protecting their area that was their charge. Aquaman defended the sea; Batman defended Gotham City. Superman protected the citizens of Metropolis. And when they worked as a team, they found that they were more powerful than they were alone. If they needed help from others, it would come.

## Realities and possibilities

Partnership was not always an easy concept for superheroes. There was always one group member who made it difficult to work together. For example, Wolverine was a loner and did not trust anyone in his group. As he addressed those problems, he proved to be a great leader.

Batman had similar issues when working with members of the

Justice League. Everyone was either an alien, a god/goddess or had some sort of mystic power. Being human was an obstacle for the Dark Knight, but it didn't stop him from being an asset to his team.

Small churches in the midst of maintenance and survival modes might learn something from



Natasha  
Murray-  
Norman

Wolverine and Batman. How do we live out our call to become missional churches? How do we work to bring peace, justice and the way of Christ to a hurting world? What might happen if we create our own Super League of Ministry?

You would think that the concept of partnership would be easy to live out, but it is difficult for churches to come together. Partnership or collaboration can seem as vile as kryptonite. Why is the maze of partnership so difficult to navigate? Where do we begin in our conversations to build partnerships in our areas?

In my context, I look at the

trends for when the congregations in my community were birthed and the people responsible for casting that vision. In the county where I currently serve, there are a dozen United Methodist congregations, five of which are in my town. Two of those five were launched by former members of the first UMC in that community. All of the churches sit in areas where some of the town leaders projected growth.

In the 100-plus years since these churches launched, the areas around them have flourished. Though the congregations themselves may have declined, the areas have not.

So what do we do?

Of the five UMCs in this town of about 30,000 people, only two can financially support a full-time elder as their pastor. Three of the churches have worship attendance of less than 50 each Sunday. The two churches that I serve are within a two-mile radius of First UMC. Are you thinking what I'm thinking?

Partnership would be a likely option, but for any of these churches to be in full partnership with each other, egos and attitudes would have to be laid aside. Partnership would mean that there would have to be a sense of shared ministry.

The concept of the Acts 2 church would be ideal. For shared ministry to work, credit for the work done cannot rest with either of the partnering congregations. The credit for the work belongs to God.

## Requirements

Partnership requires trust, honesty, mutual respect and an assessment of strengths and weaknesses. No one likes to admit their flaws, but working with someone who may be stronger can prove to be an asset. A larger church should not look at smaller churches with pity. Nor should the large church treat the small church as if decline is their fault.

Partnership between churches also requires transparency in leadership. Pastors and lay leaders must lay aside their egos. Working together requires each to be vulnerable. Smaller churches may fear that their story will become lost, and their uniqueness distorted. But the superhero model of partnership would allow each congregation to maintain its identity while sharing the work. Wonder Woman does not become Batgirl any more than Storm becomes Jean Grey.

Church vitality should not solely be measured on numbers, but also by the effectiveness of partnerships. We can counter the

## APPOINTMENTS

The following changes in pastoral appointments have been officially announced:

- Midland Heights/Mt. Olive (charge realignment)—Dan Williams, effective Feb. 13, 2013
- Berryville UMC—Kenny Lee, effective March 1, 2013
- Memphis Conference director of connectional ministries—Tom Hazelwood, effective June 1, 2013

To see pastoral appointment changes as they become official, visit the appointments page of the Conference website: [arumc.org/appointments](http://arumc.org/appointments).

threat of decline only when we become able and willing to lay aside our differences and focus on our common goal: discipleship.

*The Rev. Murray-Norman serves as pastor of Parkview and New Hope UMCs in Benton. A version of this commentary first appeared on the blog [changingworldchangingchurch.wordpress.com](http://changingworldchangingchurch.wordpress.com).*

# Cloyd steps down from Hendrix College presidency

BY AMY FORBUS  
Editor

J. Timothy Cloyd, Ph.D., who served as president of United Methodist-affiliated Hendrix College for the past 12 years, announced on Friday, Feb. 15, his departure from that office.

“One thing I have learned is that organizations are living, evolving organisms,” he said in a news release. “Twelve years is a reasonable time to run an organization and, during that time, Hendrix has assumed national leadership among private liberal arts colleges and has successfully completed a major capital campaign. The time is right to bring in fresh leadership to forge a new strategic direction for the College.”

During Cloyd’s tenure, the college’s enrollment and faculty grew by almost 40 percent, and Hendrix gained national attention for launching “Your Hendrix Odyssey,” a program cited as a model for engaged learning at the undergraduate level.

After a sabbatical for the remainder of 2013, Cloyd plans to return to the faculty as a professor in

the department of politics and international relations. He also intends to work as a higher education consultant.

W. Ellis Arnold III, a 1979 graduate of Hendrix and the college’s executive vice president, general counsel and dean of advancement, will serve as acting president during the search for Cloyd’s successor.

In a Feb. 18 interview, Arnold confirmed that Dr. Bob Entzminger, the college provost, has postponed his retirement to help provide continuity during the transition, and that the board of trustees’ executive compensation committee will determine the search process for Hendrix’s next president. He emphasized that the college’s United Methodist connection will factor into the search.

“We have strong representation on the board from our clergy and lay leadership,” Arnold said. “Finding someone who understands the church-college connection and relationship will, I’m sure, be an important consideration for the board of trustees.”

In the days after Cloyd stepped down, KARK, Little Rock’s NBC affiliate, broke news of a Dec. 26



Tim Cloyd

incident at the president’s residence. The *Log Cabin Democrat* and the *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette* subsequently reported on the story. According to the police report, officers entered the home in pursuit of a burglary suspect; Cloyd already had drawn his handgun and refused to put it down at the request of Conway police.

College officials have stated that the event had no bearing upon Cloyd’s decision to end his time as president.

“While we have no comment on the specifics of the incident, we are grateful that the Conway police were able to resolve the situation, take the intruder into custody, and that no one was harmed during the incident,” said Frank Cox, chief communications officer for Hendrix, in an emailed statement.

## Bishop Mueller to speak at Good Shepherd benefit luncheon

Good Shepherd retirement community will hold its 13th annual Bishops’ Luncheon on Wednesday, March 20, 2013, at the Cathedral of Saint Andrew in Little Rock. The event honors the leaders of the area’s Catholic, Presbyterian, Episcopal and United Methodist denominations. Bishop Gary Mueller will be the featured speaker.

The bishops continue a tradition begun by their 1970s-era predecessors,

who recognized a need for affordable senior housing and made a commitment to providing independent living options for older adults.

Tickets are \$150 each; tables of 10 are available. To purchase, contact Chandra Vaughn, 501-320-1155.

Good Shepherd, on Aldersgate Road in west Little Rock, has more than 450 residents. To learn more, visit [goodshepherdcommunity.com](http://goodshepherdcommunity.com).

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Reader has questions

How can Heath Bradley be employed by Pulaski Heights UMC and believe and preach universal salvation?

Another question is how Methodists are an itinerant church system and a lot of our ministers stay numerous years and never go to another church? You will notice this only happens at our large churches—never at small churches.

God Bless,  
Rosa Lee Bell  
West Helena UMC

### Appreciation for news in print

In this time of frenzied technological advances and use, I am finding comfort in picking up a “real” book and a “real” newspaper—including the *Arkansas United Methodist* and its B-section, the *United Methodist Reporter*.

Yes, I have a Kindle and yes, I use technology daily; however, I am becoming more sensitive to the assumed reality that the computer has a monopoly on being the information highway. Not all in my congregation use the Internet or even own a computer. I am grateful to have the opportunity to share the articles that come through the printed issues of the *Arkansas United Methodist*.

Thank you for the telling of stories, sharing of information and all that this newspaper offers through its ministry.

Blessings,  
Rev. Harriett Akins-Banman  
Faith UMC Little Rock

### A Lenten reminder

Each Sunday I watch Pulaski Heights United Methodist on KATV Channel 7 Little Rock. Rev. Britt Skarda preached a sermon entitled “Father Forgive Them.” When Jesus went to the cross he was stripped naked. The Romans cast lots for his clothing. He was made to wear a crown of thorns, and the crowd yelled blasphemy. Yet he said, “Father, forgive them.” Rev. Skarda brought out the rest of the verse, “for they know not what they are doing.” It has to do a lot with forgiveness. Jesus said we are to forgive seventy-seven times. We are now in the Lenten season. As we prepare for Easter, let’s not forget the humility Christ did for us.

Sincerely,  
Donald L. Putman

### Letters to the Editor policy:

All letters must be signed (name and city/church) and include the writer’s phone number or email address.

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

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

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

## CLASSIFIEDS

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

**FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH EL DORADO** is currently seeking a full-time **Youth Director**. Salary will be based on experience. For more information please contact Jim Polk at El Dorado FUMC, 201 S Hill Ave, El Dorado, AR 71730 or by email at [fumcedsr@suddenlinkmail.com](mailto:fumcedsr@suddenlinkmail.com).

**GODDARD UNITED METHODIST CHURCH** has an opening for a part-time **Communications Director**. Responsibilities include managing the website, overseeing church advertising, managing all of the church’s social media, designing and creating artwork for multi-purpose use, the church newsletter, the church calendar, and overseeing all communications within the staff, church, and to the general public. A minimum of an AA degree is preferred, must have above-average Internet experience, desktop publishing experience, be a self-starter, and a team player. Must have a commitment to a Christian lifestyle and the life and mission of the church. Send a current resume to [jhurst@goddardumc.org](mailto:jhurst@goddardumc.org).

**DIRECTOR OF UNIVERSITY MINISTRIES** - Central United Methodist Church in Fayetteville, Arkansas, seeks a motivated leader to develop a comprehensive university ministry. The applicant must have a bachelor’s degree, along with two years’ experience in youth or college ministry, paid or volunteer. This is a full-time position with competitive salary and benefits package. Please send letter of interest and resume to Cindy Alphin, Assistant Administrator, at [calphin@centraltolife.com](mailto:calphin@centraltolife.com). Deadline for applications is April 15, 2013.

**TRAVELING ARKANSAS** “Sunday Evening Music & Message” by Dr. David W. Bush. Donations go to the Arkansas Retired Ministers Day. For booking or info: contact David at 870-830-7777.

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

# Hospitality for people with hearing impairment

## Benton church installs hearing loop technology

BY AMY FORBUS  
Editor

The sanctuary at First United Methodist Church Benton now offers an enhanced worship experience for attendees who use hearing aids or cochlear implants: a “hearing loop” system.

In large rooms with reverberation and echoes, such as many church sanctuaries, a hearing aid cannot always do its job well. A hearing loop eliminates those stumbling blocks, sending the sound from the public address system directly to a person’s hearing aid.

The hearing loop itself is a copper wire that is concealed around the perimeter of a given area—in First UMC Benton’s case, most of the sanctuary, excluding the choir loft. The wire and a driver connect to the public address system, creating a magnetic field.

Inside that field, a hearing aid equipped with a telecoil (also called a t-coil, t-switch or telephone switch) becomes the user’s personal receiver. It picks up the sound coming through the microphones while cutting out sources of background noise that can make comprehension difficult for listeners who have hearing impairment.

At the Feb. 7 lunch gathering of the church’s DMA (Don’t Mention Age) group, audiologist Dr. Lisa Richey of Saline Audiology Associates presented information on the newly installed system. Arkansas Loops, a division of Saline Audiology, installed the hearing loop at First UMC Benton.

“It makes everything come in clean and crisp, right in your ear,” Richey said. “So if somebody is in front of you turning pages in the Bible, turning pages in the hymnal or making noise, it doesn’t make any difference. It’s coming straight from the source, straight to your ear.”

Hearing loop technology is well established in Europe, and as telecoils become more common, its use is spreading across the United States. Richey said that most people who come to her clinic for a hearing aid opt for a telecoil-equipped version.

“As of recent times, we are



Audiologist Dr. Lisa Richey shows the sign that notifies individuals with hearing aids that a hearing loop system is available for their use. The “T” in the lower right-hand corner confirms the presence of a telecoil-compatible system.

AUM PHOTO BY AMY FORBUS

giving everybody a telecoil in their hearing aid if at all possible,” she said.

Telecoils usually can be programmed for an individual’s specific level of hearing loss, and unlike Bluetooth or FM-dependent hearing assistance devices, a telecoil doesn’t drain additional battery power beyond what the hearing aid already uses.

For those without telecoils, devices called “loop listeners” also work with the hearing loop system. Loop listeners tend to be less user-friendly because of their conspicuous nature, and they often must be checked out and back in, creating an extra step for the user. Conversely, a telecoil can be turned on and off while the hearing aid remains in the user’s ear.

“If you know that you have a telephone switch in your hearing aid, then all you have to do is push a button, turn it on, and you’re already hooked up—you’re ready to go,” Richey said.

Areas equipped with hearing loops post signs that include a “T” in the lower right-hand corner to notify telecoil users that the technology is available. Churches aren’t the only place loops have been put to use: Amtrak ticket booths, some pharmacy counters, more than 12,000 seats in Michigan State University’s basketball arena and even parts of Walt Disney World include hearing loop technology.

The Rev. David Jones, senior pastor of First UMC Benton, said that a designated gift from an anonymous church member made the hearing loop installation possible. He added that the congregation may now install hearing loops in other parts of the church building.

“We are in the process of offering it to our Sunday School classes,” he said.

Jones has received several positive comments from worshippers who feel reconnected with the worship experience after years of struggling to comprehend what they were hearing.

“One of our long-term members expressed to me that not only could he hear the sermon for the first time in years, but also he could hear the music clearly,” Jones said. “In his words, ‘I did not miss a single note!’”

Tommy Reed, a member of First UMC Benton who has some hearing impairment, recently had his telecoil activated and began using the loop during worship services.

“I feel good about it,” he said, noting that he no longer has a problem hearing what the pastor and the music minister are saying. “I think it’s a real good idea that someone brought it up, and it’s just going to be a help all the way around.”



PHOTO BY JOE ROITZ

## Church creates prime seating for people in wheelchairs

Lakewood UMC North Little Rock has reconfigured its sanctuary seating to provide more friendly space for people who use wheelchairs.

The building already complied with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) before the reconfiguration, but after an accessibility audit done in conjunction with their most recent charge conference reporting, they realized the existing wheelchair positioning options created limitations. Sitting at the rear of the sanctuary or in the aisles could cause a person in a wheelchair to feel “in the way” or conspicuous.

The new configuration opened up wheelchair-accessible space on both sides of the sanctuary, in the sixth and seventh rows.

“It’s much more welcoming, and it’s much more reflective of the changing demographics our society is facing,” said Joe Roitz, the church’s director of communications.

It took only one day for a carpenter to make the modifications to four pews—something that could be done either by a contractor or a skilled volunteer, depending upon a church’s available funding and talent pool.

Roitz shared one member’s reaction after the first week of worship with the new wheelchair area: “What a wonderful surprise as I entered the church Sunday. I did not have to sit behind the post. I can now see everything. Thank you for being so thoughtful. God is so good!”

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## 'Ashes to go' reaches Fayetteville mission field

The Rev. Terry Gosnell, left, and ministry intern Alex Ross of Trinity UMC Fayetteville on Feb. 13 took Ash Wednesday to the heart of the University of Arkansas campus. For more than two hours, they stood outside Razorback Transit's Union Station offering the imposition of ashes to anyone who wished to participate in the ritual that marks the beginning of Lent.

"It really gave us an opportunity to talk about our faith in a non-threatening way," Gosnell said. "It was a great experience."

Some people walked by smirking, laughing or looking uncomfortable, "but our mission field is out there," he said. "We can't just wait on people to come to our door."

About 30 people received ashes, and several stopped to ask questions. A number of them, after learning about the symbolism of the ashes and the meaning of the Lenten season, decided to receive ashes.

Trinity UMC did hold an evening Ash Wednesday service, but Gosnell pointed out that not everyone who might want to receive ashes is inclined to attend a church.

He said that based on this experience, he looks forward to offering "ashes to go" again next year.



## Time again to 'Get Up and Give' for Methodist Family Health

The season of Lent, which this year began Feb. 13, is traditionally a time to give up something. For the fourth year running, Methodist Family Health is encouraging United Methodists in Arkansas to give in a way that will make a difference in the lives of others.

Get Up and Give, as the campaign is known, benefits children and families who seek help through Methodist Family Health, a nonprofit organization providing emotional and behavioral health services for more than 1,400 children and families each day.

Churches, small groups, community groups and individuals can collect necessity items for those served by Methodist Family Health's hospital, as well as its alternative schools, group homes and clinics throughout Arkansas. All items must be new; for a list of most-needed items, see the additional information provided below.

Any person of any age can make an impact through Get Up and Give. Morgan Timbs, a 14-year-old member of First UMC Bentonville, is holding her second online Get Up and Give drive. Last year, she gave up her allowance for Lent and challenged friends and family to match her gift with a minimum of a dollar per person. She raised \$2,144 during Lent 2012.

This year, Morgan has issued the same challenge. To join her effort (or gain some inspiration for your own), search on Facebook for "2nd Annual Lent Project Benefiting Methodist Family Health."

Eight Methodist Family Health locations around the state—in Batesville, Cherokee Village, Fayetteville, Heber Springs, Jonesboro, Little Rock, Magnolia and Mount Ida—will be ready to receive donations during the week of April 1-5, during regular business hours.

For more information, contact Jane Dennis at Methodist Family Health, 501-661-0720, ext. 7157, or [jdennis@methodistfamily.org](mailto:jdennis@methodistfamily.org).

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THE 4TH ANNUAL

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Methodist Family Health invites church groups, families, friends and neighbors to join us in collecting necessity items during the season of Lent! Your generosity will bring a smile to the faces of those we serve in our hospital, alternative schools, group homes, clinics and other programs throughout Arkansas.

After the 40 Days of Collecting, you can drop off the new items you collect at any of our Counseling Clinics from April 1-5 during regular business hours.

<b>Batesville</b> 500 E. Main St. Suite 310 870.569.4890	<b>Fayetteville</b> 74 W. Sunbridge Dr. 479.582.5565	<b>Jonesboro</b> Lighthouse Clinic 2912 King St. 870.910.3757	<b>Magnolia</b> 617 E. North St. 870.234.0739
<b>Cherokee Village</b> 35 Choctaw Trace 870.376.4502	<b>Heber Springs</b> 407 S. 7th St. 501.365.3022	<b>Little Rock</b> 1600 Aldersgate Rd. Suite 100B 501.661.0720	<b>Mount Ida</b> 221 Fairgrounds Rd. 870.867.3465

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- Wireless composition books
- Backpacks/duffel bags
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For more information and event details, please call Jane Dennis today at 501.661.0720 or e-mail her at [jdennis@methodistfamily.org](mailto:jdennis@methodistfamily.org)

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## Center for Technology to offer resources through myARUMC.org



In March, the Center for Technology (CFT) will begin to roll out various resources to local churches and affiliate organizations in the Arkansas Conference. The delivery method for these resources is a new web portal, myARUMC.org. MyARUMC.org will allow users to access a myriad of technology choices, beginning with:

- the ability to sign up for a standardized Conference email address;
- a link to submit a technology support request to CFT staff; and
- the chance to browse and participate in the Conference Equipment Exchange platform.

The portal will launch in Beta mode, and services will be added and adjusted over time as users' needs become better defined. MyARUMC.org will include a survey section to allow your voice to be heard. User feedback will be critical for the ongoing success of the CFT's mission.

Established as a result of the Imagine Ministry process, the CFT is tasked with developing technological resources that help Arkansas Conference local churches make disciples and reach their mission fields. The CFT appreciates your contributions and feedback in this process. To learn more or ask questions, contact the CFT at [techcenterinfo@arumc.org](mailto:techcenterinfo@arumc.org).

# Emphasis on learning and worship at Annual Conference

The theme "3D Faith: Discerning, Discipling, Daring" is shaping the agenda of the 2013 Arkansas Annual Conference, set for June 9-12 in Little Rock.

**Discerning:** Monday and Tuesday afternoons will feature breakout groups and learning opportunities. Participants will study factors that drive church vitality, with the goal of taking home ideas and inspiration for ministry that fits their particular context. Feedback from attendees of previous Annual Conferences has led to a plan for shorter business sessions, creating more time to focus on equipping local churches and inspiring them to reach their mission fields.

**Discipling:** As announced in the Feb. 1 issue of the *Arkansas United Methodist*, this year's Annual Conference will feature a number of guest preachers and teachers for multiple worship opportunities each day. The planning committee encourages United Methodists from throughout the state to consider attending one or more of these special worship opportunities.

Observers are welcome at Annual Conference. Worship will take place at the Statehouse Convention Center instead of a local church to allow for expanded seating; some 400 seats will be available for observers and worshippers, in addition to the approximately 1,200 seats for members of Annual Conference.

**Daring:** The gathering also will devote time to the Imagine No Malaria initiative, including worship with Bishop Thomas Bickerton and a Wednesday morning 5K run that will raise money to help reach the audacious—but achievable—goal of ending deaths from malaria by 2015.

For details on Annual Conference as they become available, visit [ac2013.arumc.org](http://ac2013.arumc.org).

Arkansas Annual Conference 2013



Discerning-Discipling-Daring

## Send an email before Easter, help save a life

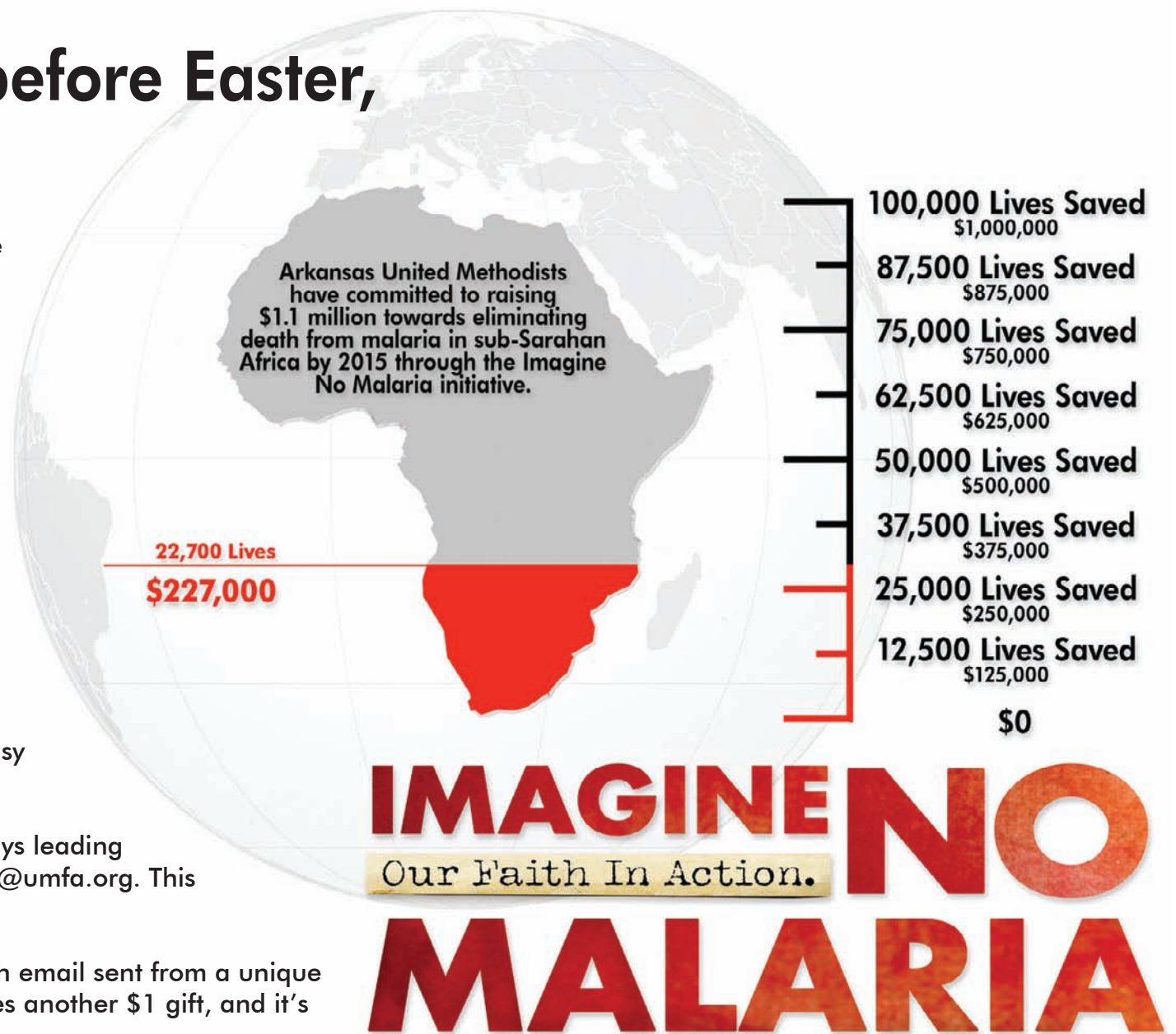
As of Jan. 31, the Arkansas Conference has raised \$227,000 to save lives through the UMC's Imagine No Malaria initiative. We can celebrate that success by continuing to build upon it!

Here's one way to drive our total higher: The United Methodist Foundation of Arkansas (UMFA), which has already pledged a generous \$333,333 in matching funds, is celebrating its 50th year of ministry by having an email campaign to generate even more dollars for the cause.

You can help UMFA celebrate in two easy steps:

1) During the season of Lent (the 40 days leading up to Easter), send an email to [malaria@umfa.org](mailto:malaria@umfa.org). This year, Lent ends March 30.

2) Tell your friends to do the same! Each email sent from a unique address to [malaria@umfa.org](mailto:malaria@umfa.org) generates another \$1 gift, and it's free for the sender!



## Gun law (continued from page 1A)

he said. "There is further language in that bill regarding charitable immunity that we hope to get amended before it goes before the full House. If a church intends to allow guns, I strongly encourage the church wait until the second bill either dies or passes, so we know all the rules for churches that elect to allow guns."

Hilliard strongly recommends that churches consider the numerous safety issues associated with the presence of handguns, and check with their insurance carrier before allowing weapons in the building. If a church chooses to allow guns, it should specify what types of events would justify a member using a gun.

"If someone is there to steal, give them the money," he said. "It is

not worth the risk of harming innocent people to stop the robbery."

### Reactions

Several clergy have weighed in on the issue in church newsletter columns and in writings posted online.

"This is a violation of the sanctity which has been, and should continue to be, the sanctuary that is inherent to all houses of worship," wrote the Rev. Mike Daniel, pastor of Asbury UMC Magnolia. He called the bill's wording reactionary.

"The disturbing language of the bill which claims to address an 'immediate necessity... to public safety' and declares 'an emergency' is, in my humble opinion, a

panicked, emotional overreaction so soon after the Sandy Hook tragedy and amidst the talk in Washington D.C. about gun control and the Second Amendment," he wrote.

The Rev. David Hoffman, pastor of Winfield UMC Little Rock, is also an attorney. He shared his perspective on the matter via the church's newsletter before the bill became law.

"Even with the most careful handling, a risk of injury or death from unintended discharge from accident or mishandling always exists," he wrote. "Even worse is the risk of injury or death from an exchange of gunfire. But my most significant objection lies in what amounts to a rejection of the providence of God in our churches."

First UMC Mena hosted a Feb. 6 discussion on concealed weapons in church. Attendees heard from

three presenters: a sheriff's deputy; an attorney familiar with concealed carry laws; and their pastor, the Rev. Gary Harrison, who read from the *Book of Resolutions*.

"The few questions were mostly directed toward the legal questions," Harrison said of the discussion, "and the consensus seemed to be that all agreed with our stance of church being a weapon-free zone."

Of the 31 state legislators who list Methodism as their religion on their legislative profile, four voted against the Church Protection Act. Among them was Representative

Hank Wilkins, who is an ordained elder in the Arkansas Conference and serves as pastor of St. James UMC Pine Bluff.

Wilkins told an Associated Press reporter in January that he might consider allowing some parishioners to carry handguns if the bill became law.

"It's a sad commentary on our society I feel to even think that that's something I have to consider, and yet when I see what's happening in our society I can't help but consider it may be a necessity," Wilkins said.

# Be, do, go: seminar teaches steps of evangelism and mission

BY CAITLIN DELLAR  
Special Contributor

FORT SMITH—Goddard United Methodist Church on Saturday, Feb. 9, hosted an Evangelism and Mission Seminar featuring three experts who educated people in the community on evangelizing to those around them. The 120 attendees came from a variety of area Protestant churches.

Sonna Blue, a Perkins School of Theology student who serves as an intern at Goddard, could see when she began her internship that the mission-minded church wanted to do more for its community. She and the pastors at Goddard began planning to equip people with the tools needed to have. They decided to bring in speakers to educate the members of the church on the "being, doing and going" aspects of evangelism.

Blue first contacted her former professor, the Rev. Dr. Elaine Heath, the McCreless Associate Professor of Evangelism at Perkins. She then spoke with her mentor, the Rev. John Perkins, the founder of Voice of Calvary Ministries in Jackson, Miss., and the Christian Community Development Association; and a fellow Perkins student, Dr. Larry Duggins, who serves as director of the Missional Wisdom Foundation and executive pastor for Emerging Worship at White's Chapel United Methodist Church in Southlake, Texas.

"I wanted them to bring what I

know they're good at to the table," Blue said. "Any one of them could have done any one of the parts, but they embodied those specific things so well that I wanted them to be the ones to bring it."

Each speaker shared insight on their section of the "being, doing and going" movement in relation to ministry and to sharing the gospel with the community.

The sequence begins with the idea of "being" addressed by Duggins, who rooted his guidance in the practice of balance. He said that there are four different aspects of leading a Christian life that people need to give equal attention: loving God, loving others, pouring out and filling up.

"We need to spend time in each quadrant," Duggins said, "so that we are loving God and loving others, filling up and pouring out... and so that by doing those things, we're moving closer and closer and closer to the unity of the love that Jesus prayed for us for our relationship with God and our relationships with other people."

Each speaker referenced this idea of balance as being a necessary component to evangelism.

Heath, an ordained elder in the United Methodist Church, defined evangelism as "the holistic process of initiation of persons into the reign of God, revealed in Jesus Christ, empowered by the Holy Spirit and anchored in the church for the transformation of the world."

She described the importance

of living out a Christian life in order to fulfill this call to evangelize.

"To be a Christian, to be a disciple of Jesus, means to align ourselves with the interests and the expression, the lifestyle and the commitments, that God revealed in Jesus Christ," she explained.

Heath continued, "[Becoming a Christian is] a process of initiation. People won't learn unless they follow us living that way. If not, we don't have a leg to stand on to invite others to live that life."

After the process of "doing," Perkins, of Voice of Calvary Ministries and the Christian Community Development Association, addressed how Christians should get "going." He considered the idea of discipleship as the main factor.

"After evangelism comes discipleship. Discipleship is to teach them how to be Christian," Perkins said.

He went on to explain that natural leaders will need to be raised from within the community.

"A leader is a person who stands up, defines the problem... and defines it in a way the collective can be brought in," Perkins said. "A leader is a person who takes a vision and turns it into passion. And people begin to follow."

*Dellar is a student at Arkansas Tech University in Russellville, where she is active in the Wesley Foundation campus ministry.*

## 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.

### Teams needed for Mississippi tornado recovery

Janice and Byron Mann traveled recently to Hattiesburg, Miss., to survey the tornado damage there and attend a Disaster Assessment training session hosted by Mississippi Conference Disaster Response. Statistics from the recent tornado outbreak there include:

Fatalities: 0  
Injuries: 82  
Homes destroyed: 288  
Homes with major damage: 529  
Homes with minor damage: 897  
Other homes affected: 17

A total of 1,731 homes were affected by the storm. If your church is planning a mission trip this spring or summer, please consider helping in the Hattiesburg area. More information on needs will be available over the next few weeks and months. Contact Byron Mann, vim@arumc.org, to receive news of opportunities to help.

### Disaster Response and ERT Training March 9

Richmond UMC Ashdown is hosting a Disaster Response and Early Response Team (ERT) certification training on Saturday, March 9. ERTs help families clean out flood damaged homes, remove debris, place tarps on homes and otherwise prevent more damage following winter storms, tornados, floods, fires and hurricanes. They operate under specific guidelines to be productive and caring while causing no further harm or burdening the affected community. Training from UMCOR-authorized trainers is required to participate in this type of response. Participants are issued identification badges as evidence of training. The mission of the ERT is to provide a caring Christian presence in the aftermath of a disaster. Their presence and actions help restore hope. To register for this session, contact Yvonne Coleman, 903-276-9452.

### Volunteers In Mission trip to the Holy Land

Each year Volunteers In Mission offers an "open" trip for those who would like to participate in a VIM experience but who cannot coordinate with enough people from their area to make up a full team. This year's open trip, scheduled for Sept. 21-Oct. 4, is to the Holy Land, and will include international partners. Having an international component adds to the team dynamics and gives folks a chance to learn from others with differing experience. This trip seeks to combine the spirituality of a pilgrimage, the educational aspect in meeting with our partner organizations and the ministry of being in service to others.

For details, contact Byron Mann, Arkansas Conference VIM coordinator, at vim@arumc.org, or Janet Lahr Lewis, Methodist liaison in Palestine and Israel, at Jlahrlewis@yahoo.com.



BOOK REVIEW

# New Christopher book navigates from finances to faithfulness

*Rich Church, Poor Church: Keys to Effective Financial Ministry*

J. Clif Christopher  
Abingdon Press, 2012

BY MARK NORMAN  
Special Contributor

We are living in a shift. With cultural changes in the U.S. and our global financial situation in turmoil, it is important that the work of the church expands to talk about every aspect of discipleship, including church finances.

In *Rich Church, Poor Church*, Arkansas' own the Rev. J. Clif Christopher addresses a transforming understanding of stewardship. Some may say that the economic condition of the church and community determine whether or not the church is poor or rich, but

in *Rich Church, Poor Church*, such is not the case. Throughout the book, Christopher compares tendencies associated with various types of congregations, leading the reader to discover that churches are not merely measured by finances, but also by intentional mission and focus.

Christopher begins the book by sharing some of his many experiences with local churches during stewardship campaigns. Once, a faithful giver in a declining congregation asked this question: "Pastor, can you honestly tell me that my church is the best place for me to give my money?" This person could see the mission and focus in other organizations she supported, but she saw decline in the church.

It's an honest question that local churches need to answer. Christopher names three reasons why people give to the church: a belief in the mission, regard for staff leadership and financial responsibility. He then explains how a congregation can move beyond a poor mentality to a

rich reality.

*Rich Church, Poor Church* works to shift congregations from a mindset of survival to a missional focus, driven by lives and not money. It addresses stewardship as a part of the overall workings of a church, not as a separate issue. Each chapter begins with a comparison between qualities of "rich" and "poor" churches. These tables help the reader understand how congregations can develop a more holistic approach to finances in the life of the church.

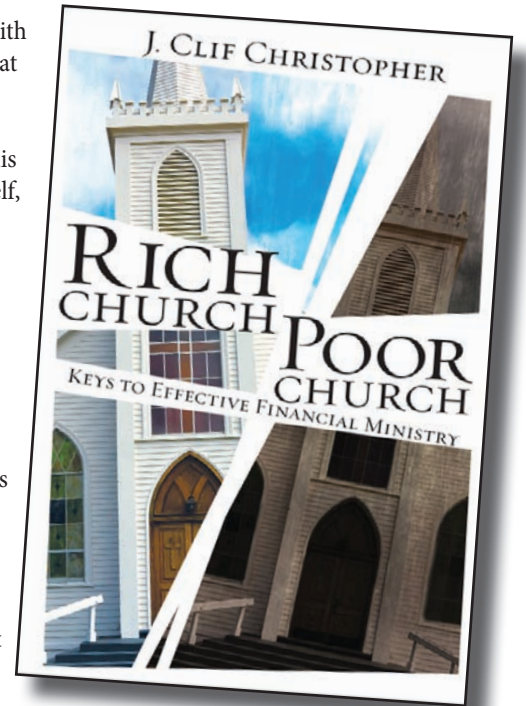
The rest of the book explores some tools needed to make your church rich: leadership built on effective communication, talking about God instead of numbers and casting a vision for the world, not just for the day. It then moves to practical tools essential for stewardship without apology: asking, expecting and transformation. A financial transformation doesn't just pay bills; it changes lives.

The book closes with a 63-week plan to becoming a rich church.

These weeks are filled with visioning, planned retreat times and collaboration between lay and clergy.

As I was reading this book I kept asking myself, "This is a book about stewardship and church growth?" It explores so much more than numbers; it redefines what it means to be the church.

I confess that I usually separate finances from the function of ministry, seeing ministry as one thing and money as something separate. But in this book I have discovered one major lesson: Rich churches are not measured by their bank accounts, but by their mission "to serve the present age." Stewardship is a part of the overall work of the body of Christ, and we become better



stewards by focusing on Christ instead of on survival in a struggling economy.

*The Rev. Norman serves as associate pastor of First UMC Benton.*

## 'Brick Bash' gives old bricks life in new construction



Forty-four people affiliated with Living Waters at Centerton UMC gathered on Feb. 2 for a special kind of party.

The "Brick Bash" arose from a desire to incorporate pieces of the church's old building into its new facility. The old building was lost to arson in September 2011; no arrests have been made in connection with the fire.

Sponsored by the congregation's United Methodist Women, the Brick Bash included refreshments for the workers of all ages who came to help. They spent three hours on the messy task of scrubbing about 1,000 bricks.

"We have already had requests to do it again soon," said Sarah Stephenson, a member of the congregation. "We are a church that

thrives on fellowship, so this kind of event suits us well."

The old building's bricks will be used for the front wall of the new building, and also in the interior as a backdrop for the baptismal fountain behind and above the altar.

"We were not able to save much from the old structure, so the bricks will be our 'tie that binds,'" Stephenson said.

The congregation hopes that the new building, currently under construction, will be ready for occupancy by June.

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## Outreach to housing authority residents provides life skills training

St. Mark UMC Pine Bluff and Healing Place Ministries have begun working together to provide Family Life Skills workshops at Pine Bluff Housing Authority's Belle Meade complex. The workshops, held from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. on the first Monday of each month, address an array of topics relevant to today's changing world, approaching them from a biblical context. Each evening of study concludes with a fellowship meal.

"The major emphasis of this program is to provide opportunities for parents and children to learn and practice life skills in a community setting, to participate in activities to reinforce their learning, and to become more resilient and self-motivating," says the Rev. Edna Morgan of Healing Place Ministries. "We are excited that God has opened this door for us to meet new families and share the love of Jesus Christ with them in exciting ways."



"Beautiful Me," the February topic of St. Mark UMC Pine Bluff's mission outreach at the Belle Meade Housing Authority complex, provided a self-esteem lesson, including the segment of the Creation story where God created humankind (Genesis 1:26-29). The Rev. David Morgan of St. Mark UMC led the evening's program. Here, children and their parents work on a "Me Tree" exercise, which involves each person identifying seven of their own unique characteristics.

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## Mountainside UMC joins Food for Kids program, feeds children in their neighborhood

One in four children in Arkansas faces hunger. Adopting a school through the Food for Kids Program of the Arkansas Rice Depot is a simple but effective way to ensure funding is available to meet the needs of hungry kids in Arkansas.

Asbury United Methodist Church Little Rock created a unique way to raise funds for the Rice Depot Food for Kids program. When they decided to adopt a school, they created a schoolhouse image from butcher paper to mark their progress toward the goal.

This idea was shared with Rice Depot staff, and they created a schoolhouse with individual bricks printed on vinyl. With donations of \$10 at a time, participating churches build the school, brick by brick. The

schoolhouse project launched in May 2012.

Each completed schoolhouse gives the Rice Depot \$2,400, which ensures funding of a program for one school for the entire year. A backpack containing a weekend's supply of food will be sent home with children who need it. Some receive food on a daily basis, depending on the situation.

The children's ministry coordinators of Mountainside UMC Hot Springs Village obtained a schoolhouse kit, and the children went to work, raising more than \$3,000.

"Our children challenged our church to reach out to and remember the ones who may go unnoticed during times of need, the

littlest of Jesus' lambs," said the Rev. J.J. Galloway, pastor of Mountainside UMC.

And, as it turned out, the school Mountainside helped, Jessieville Elementary, lies within their own community.

"Our elementary school sends home approximately 50 backpacks each week with children," said Terry Crumpler, principal of Jessieville Elementary School. "We just want to thank the children's ministry of Mountainside and the congregation for their efforts and generosity! With programs like this, we can be sure there is funding to meet the needs of hungry children."

Arkansas Rice Depot began the Food for Kids program in 1994, and it has grown to include every county



Lynda Boone, Mountainside UMC's Children's Ministry Coordinator, presents the completed schoolhouse to the congregation while the children wait to put the bell in place. Each brick in the schoolhouse represents \$10 given toward the Food for Kids program.

PHOTO BY BETTIE LAND

in Arkansas. It serves 32,000 children, in over 650 schools. Fifty schools were added last year, and the need continues to grow.

To help with Food for Kids, contact Brandi Johnston at 501-565-8855 or brandi@ricedepot.org.

—submitted by Bettie Land

## COMING UP

### March

#### "Raising Hell" conversation in North Little Rock March 3

Argenta UMC North Little Rock presents "Raising Hell: Will All Be Saved? A conversation with author Rev. Heath Bradley" on Sunday, March 3, at 5:30 p.m. Bradley will discuss the controversial topic he addresses in his new book, *Flames of Love*, which challenges the church's traditional view of hell and makes the case for universal salvation. The event will take place at Argenta Community Theater, 405 Main Street in North Little Rock (just down the block from Argenta UMC). Books will be available for purchase, and a signing will follow the discussion.

#### Confirmation Day with the Bishop happening March 9

Confirmation Day with the Bishop, an annual event for any and all youth presently in a confirmation class, who have just finished a confirmation class or are getting ready to begin a confirmation class, is set for Saturday, March 9, from 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. at Pulaski Heights UMC Little Rock. Confirmation Day offers opportunities to learn about the United Methodist Church. Besides spending time with Bishop Gary Mueller, attendees will worship, get to know recording artist and songwriter Celia Whittler, and test their knowledge in games and workshop sessions loaded with information about what it means to be Christian and United Methodist. Cost is \$10 for students and adults, and includes lunch. Register at [arumc.org/register](http://arumc.org/register). Questions? Contact Jay Clark at [jclark@phumc.com](mailto:jclark@phumc.com).

#### Small Membership Church pastors to meet with Bishop Mueller March 16

Bishop Gary Mueller and the Small Church Commission of the Arkansas Conference have arranged a time for pastors of small membership churches to meet with Bishop Mueller. The gathering will take place on Saturday, March 16 from 10:30 a.m. to noon, and will include refreshments. All pastors serving churches with an average worship attendance below 100 are invited and encouraged to attend the event, which will be held in the Nugent Room of the Kendall Center on the campus of Philander Smith College, 800 Daisy Bates Drive in Little Rock.

#### "Consumerism and the Christian" free webinar March 21

Do you think Consumerism and Greed are the same? They are actually opposites. But they both can be a destructive force on

the people in your church family. Learn why we should have a conversation about consumerism in our churches if we hope to shape generous disciples. The webinar begins at 6:30 p.m. CST.

The United Methodist General Board of Discipleship's series of free one-hour webinars addresses different aspects of lay leadership. To register, or to view archives of webinars you've missed, visit [www.gbod.org/webinars](http://www.gbod.org/webinars).

### April

#### UMC Historical Society of Arkansas' annual meeting April 6

Local church historians and others interested in the history of Methodism in Arkansas are invited to the luncheon and annual meeting of the United Methodist Historical Society of Arkansas, Saturday, April 6 at First UMC Little Rock. The guest speaker this year is the Rev. George Hankins-Hull, director of chaplaincy at UAMS. A native of Ireland, Hankins-Hull will share some of the history and present state of Methodism in that sister country. The cost of the meal, payable at the door, is \$10. For information, contact the Rev. Don Nolley, 501-351-4493.

#### Asbury UMC Little Rock to mark 125 years April 7

As part of a year-long celebration of 125 years in ministry, Asbury United Methodist Church Little Rock will hold a single worship service on April 7 at 10:45 a.m., with Bishop Gary Mueller preaching. The congregation invites anyone who has ever attended or served at Asbury to join in that day's celebration. A birthday luncheon will follow the service; tickets are available March 10 through April 1 (\$10/adults, \$5/child or \$25/family), and can be purchased in person on Sundays, or through the church office by calling 501-225-9231.

The people of Asbury UMC will maintain throughout 2013 a special history display with photographs and memorabilia. Established in 1888 as a "west Little Rock" church located around 10th and Bishop Streets, Asbury was located at 12th and Schiller during most of the 1900s. As Little Rock grew westward, Asbury moved to its current location, 1700 Napa Valley Drive.

#### Callahan among speakers at Small Church Leadership Institute April 14-18

Dr. Ken Callahan is coming to Arkansas for the South Central Jurisdiction's Small Church Leadership Institute, April 14-18 at

Mount Sequoyah Retreat and Conference Center in Fayetteville.

A sought-after church consultant, speaker and author of 15 books, Callahan is best known for his ground-breaking *Twelve Keys to an Effective Church*, helping congregations advance their focus on mission growth. Thousands of congregations and tens of thousands of church leaders and pastors around the world have been helped through his writings and workshops.

Presenters include Ken Sloane, Lindsey Bryan, Carmen Johnson, Jeremy Basset and Bob Crossman. Worship will be led by the Revs. Ramiro Lizcano and Rob Williams of First UMC Springdale's Agape Campus. To register, visit [mountsequoyah.org](http://mountsequoyah.org).

#### 'Courage to Lead' at First UMC Springdale April 22-25

The Arkansas Conference Center for Clergy and Laity Excellence in Leadership is sponsoring "Courage to Lead," an April 22-25 workshop geared toward young United Methodist pastors in Arkansas. The Rev. Janice Virtue, an experienced facilitator who has developed pastoral leadership centers at Perkins School of Theology and Duke Divinity School, will help participants explore personal leadership style and development, in addition to what it means to be a leader in the church. Through identification of gifts and limits, participants will discover and develop their particular leadership capacity.

The event is underwritten by First UMC Springdale and the Center for Clergy and Laity Excellence in Leadership. Lodging is participants' only expense. Registration is limited to 25 participants. To register, contact Che Dolan, [cdolan@arumc.org](mailto:cdolan@arumc.org).

#### Cizik to keynote at GreenFaith event in Little Rock April 27

Evangelical environmental leader the Rev. Richard Cizik is coming to Arkansas to speak at Ground for Hope. The initiative is sponsored by GreenFaith, an interfaith coalition that works with houses of worship, religious schools and people of all faiths to help them become better environmental stewards.

The day-long event, set for Saturday, April 27, 2013, St. Margaret's Episcopal Church in Little Rock, includes workshops on the Bible and the environment; environmental challenges facing Arkansas; environmental health and justice; energy savings in congregations and households; worship, spiritual practices and the environment; and environmental advocacy and the faith community. To view the schedule and to register, visit <http://greenfaith.org/programs/ground-for-hope>.

OBITUARIES

**CHERRY HILL**

**Dean Egger**

The Rev. Dean Egger, 84, of Cherry Hill passed away Saturday, Jan. 26, 2013, in Fort Smith.

He was born June 29, 1928 in Highland, to the late Charles Amos Egger and the late Grace Simpson Egger. He served as a minister for 28 years and he never met a stranger, always willing to share God's word to all. He was a loving husband, father, grandfather, great-grandfather, uncle, brother and friend to all who knew him. He was an inspiration to all who met him and will be dearly missed.



**Dean Egger**

He is survived by his wife of 64 years, Vada Boggess Egger; a son, Randy Egger of Mena; two daughters, Vadena Hogan and her husband, Ben, and Rhonda Cochran and her husband, Don, all of Mena; a sister, Helen Philpot of Mena; grandchildren Brison, Brian, Billy and Bobby Hogan,

Daniel Egger, Alecia House and Tonja Tomblin; 11 great-grandchildren and one on the way; several nieces and nephews and a host of cousins, friends and family.

He was preceded in death by his parents; a grandson, Benji Hogan; a brother, Ronald Egger; and a sister, Susie Snelgrove.

Funeral services were held on Tuesday, Jan. 29, 2013, at Cherry Hill United Methodist Church, where he had served as a local pastor from 1989 to 1999. Interment followed in the Highland Cemetery in Cherry Hill.

**HOT SPRINGS**

**Bob C. Clark**

The Rev. Bob C. Clark, 71, of Hot Springs passed away on Wednesday, Feb. 13, 2013.

He was born Oct. 4, 1941, in Hope, to the late Aaron Clyde and Ercille (Yeager) Clark. He was a sanitarian for the Health Department for 26 years, working in Garland, Hot Spring and Clark counties.



**Bob C. Clark**

He was an associate member of the Arkansas Conference of the United Methodist Church, and served as pastor of the Shorewood Hills/Magnet Cove Charge. He enjoyed working with young people and in prison ministry. Bob was involved with the animal shelter, the Humane Society and the Lake Hamilton Volunteer Fire Department. He loved hunting, fishing and family.

He is preceded in death by his parents and an infant sister, Donna Jeanette Clark. He is survived by his wife of 47 years, Melodee Clark; two sons, Robert Carl Clark, and Thomas Aaron Clark and his wife, Kristi, all of Hot Springs; a sister, Linda Hale, of West Memphis; and two grandchildren, Kristian and Aaron.

A service was held on Saturday, Feb. 16, 2013, at First United Methodist Church Hot Springs, with the Rev. Reggie Russell officiating. Interment followed in Morning Star Cemetery.

**TEXARKANA**

**Ellen Becker Dodson**

Ellen Becker Dodson, 89, of Texarkana, Ark., passed away Jan. 28, 2013, after a lengthy illness.

She was born on the family homestead in Becker, Texas, on Jan. 22, 1924. She graduated from Kaufman High School. While attending Texas Christian University in Fort Worth, Texas, she met her future husband, Edwin B. Dodson, a young SMU ministerial student, at the Becker Methodist Church. She

graduated from Texas Christian University in 1946 and she and Ed married in the Becker Methodist Church on June 18, 1947. She was a member of First United Methodist Church Texarkana, Ark., where she touched many young lives serving in the church nursery and kindergarten classes.

Ellen is predeceased by her parents, George and Florence Becker, and her brothers, George Becker, Jr.; Dr. Walter F. Becker; Major General (Ret.) William A. Becker; Rear Admiral (Ret.) Charles Becker; and Bryan Becker.

She is survived by her husband of 65 years, the Rev. Dr. Edwin B. Dodson, a retired elder in the Arkansas Conference;



**Ellen Dodson**

and by her children, Don Dodson of El Dorado; Bob and Kathy Dodson of Texarkana, Ark.; and Dick and Cheryl Dodson of Texarkana, Ark. She was blessed with five grandsons and their wives, Mark Dodson of El Dorado; Robert and Katie Sutton Dodson of Becker, Texas; John Dodson of Stephenville, Texas; David and Hayden Hamilton Dodson of Texarkana, Texas; and Mason Dodson of Texarkana, Ark. She was able to enjoy two great-grandchildren, Mattie McKenna Dodson

and Banks Allen Dodson. She is also survived by a sister-in-law, Marjorie Becker.

A memorial service was held on Wednesday, Jan. 30, 2013, at First United Methodist Church Texarkana, Ark., with the Revs. Bruce Bennett and Vida Williams officiating. Interment followed on Thursday, Jan. 31, at the Becker Family Cemetery in Becker, Texas.

In lieu of flowers, memorials may be made to the Becker UMC, PO Box 327, Kemp, TX 75143; or First UMC Texarkana, 400 E. 6th St., Texarkana, AR 71854.

**VBS Regional Training offers choice of three dates, five locations**

*Mini grants available for up to five churches*

The Arkansas Conference Children's Ministry Council presents five opportunities for leaders to begin preparing this summer's Vacation Bible School experience.

Information covered in the 9 a.m. to noon training is the same at every location, and includes VBS curriculum options from three different publishers. Each event takes place on a Saturday.

**April 6:** First UMC Jonesboro

**April 13:** Goddard UMC Fort Smith; First UMC Pine Bluff

**April 20:** First UMC Hope; First UMC North Little Rock

Online registration is available; choose your date and location from the list at [arumc.org/register](http://arumc.org/register) and pay online or at the door. The fee is \$10 per person, or \$8 per person for groups of five or more registering together from the same church.

Registration closes one week before each event. Walk-up registration is \$25 per person.

Topics include decorating/crafts (how to create the atmosphere and crafts for VBS); storytelling (new ways to tell old stories, with an emphasis on creative storytelling rather than a specific curriculum); and "Directors 101" (how to run a successful VBS, from budget, schedules and registration to publicity and volunteers).

**Mini grant applications**

In addition to providing materials for the event, registration fees also provide funds for the 2013 VBS Mini Grants. Up to five \$250 grants (one per district) will be awarded. To apply for a mini-grant, complete the "2013 VBS Mini Grant Online Application" available at [kidz.arumc.org](http://kidz.arumc.org) by April 15.

For more information, contact Karen Swales, Conference children's ministry coordinator, at 479-751-4610, Ext. 308 or [karen@fumcwired.com](mailto:karen@fumcwired.com).

**Call for nominations: Steel-Hendrix and Youth Minister of the Year awards**  
*Awards recognize religious education, social awareness, youth ministry; deadline March 29*

Hendrix College is accepting nominations for the 2013 Steel-Hendrix Awards and the Youth Minister of the Year award.

The Mary and Ira A. Brumley Award recognizes outstanding religious education, and the Ethel K. Millar Award honors outstanding religion and social awareness. The Steel-Hendrix Committee selects these honorees, and the awards will be presented in the 2013-2014 academic year.

The Youth Minister of the Year Award will be given during the 2013 Arkansas Annual Conference. This award goes to an outstanding youth minister, youth director or youth counselor. Full- or part-time, paid or volunteer youth workers who have exemplified outstanding leadership are eligible. Nominees should be a member of and work in a UMC in Arkansas. They must be involved with the connectional system and participate in district and conference youth events and be intentional about "making Disciples of Jesus Christ" through missions, Bible studies, outreach, evangelism and Christian fellowship. Nominees also must have participated in some type of continuing education in the area of youth ministry.

Nominations for all awards should include a letter detailing the individual's career highlights and reason for nomination. Submit nominations to the Rev. J. Wayne Clark, Hendrix College, 1600 Washington Ave., Conway, AR 72032, or to [clark@hendrix.edu](mailto:clark@hendrix.edu) by March 29.

Sponsored by the Marshall T. Steel Center for the Study of Religion and Philosophy, the Steel-Hendrix Awards were inaugurated in 1984 to celebrate the Hendrix College's 100 years of relationship with the United Methodist Church.

**Nominations open for OMP Allan Bruner Youth in Mission Award**

May 1 is the nomination deadline for the 2013 Allan Bruner Youth in Mission Award, given by Ozark Mission Project (OMP).

The award was established in honor and memory of Allan Bruner, who was instrumental in developing OMP. Allan had a passion for serving people in need and encouraging youth and adults to understand mission work as integral to Christian life.

A pastor, youth leader or other church member must make the nomination. The honoree will be recognized with a plaque and a gift in their honor to OMP from proceeds of the Allan Bruner Memorial Fund.

Visit the "Downloads" section of [ozarkmissionproject.org](http://ozarkmissionproject.org) for a nomination form and a full explanation of the award criteria. Nomination forms, as well as gifts to the Allan Bruner Memorial Fund, may be sent to OMP, c/o Rev. Mark Lasater, SAU Box 9290, Magnolia, AR 71754.



**Dr. John Holbert**  
*will lead the*  
**John and Marjem Gill  
 Preaching Workshop**

Topic:  
***That Troubling Man  
 from Uz: Preaching  
 the Book of Job***

**April 15 & 16**

*at Hendrix College in the Student  
 Life and Technology Center*

**For More Information or to Register:**

Visit: [hendrix.edu/gillworkshop](http://hendrix.edu/gillworkshop)

Call: 501-450-1263

Write: [clark@hendrix.edu](mailto:clark@hendrix.edu)

**Registration:**

**\$60 before April 1; \$75 after**  
 (includes all meals)



1600 Washington Ave.  
 Conway, AR 72032

Dr. Holbert will also preach in Greene Chapel, April 15 at 6:30 p.m.  
 The worship service is open to the public at no charge.



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## Faith Funds

### *Provide and Protect*

Amanda and Joey Scott, both 31, were among the youngest to attend a United Methodist Foundation Provide and Protect Seminar at their church, Pulaski Heights United Methodist in Little Rock.

"We wanted to learn more about estate planning to provide for our children, Ella Kate and Anna Claire," said Amanda. "And I wanted to get information for my parents who own a family business and don't have an up-to-date will," added Joey, an instructor at Arkansas State University in Beebe.

After attending the seminar, the Scotts talked about leaving a portion of their estate to the Church, something they had not considered before. "We don't have a big estate now, but in 20 or 30 years we could be in a position to leave a gift through the Foundation," Amanda said.

They also explored the Online Wills Planner at [www.umfa.org](http://www.umfa.org) after the seminar. "How easy!" said Amanda. "I answered all the questions in about 15 minutes, and then forwarded the PDF and login info to Joey so he could make it more complete." After gathering information using the Online Wills Planner, the Scotts plan to send the document to an attorney to draw up their will.

If you'd like to schedule a Provide and Protect Seminar for your local church, contact UMFA Vice President of Development Janet Marshall at [jmarshall@umfa.org](mailto:jmarshall@umfa.org) or call her at the Foundation.



**The United Methodist Foundation of Arkansas**

5300 Evergreen Drive • Little Rock, Arkansas 72205

501-664-8632 • Toll free 877-712-1107 • Fax 501-664-6792 • [www.umfa.org](http://www.umfa.org)