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



BY GARY E. MUELLER

## We can wait no longer

Brothers and Sisters,

It was another installment of a great American institution—the Boston Marathon. Then the unthinkable occurred yet again. A terrorist attack that killed three people, injured more than 140 and sought to mortally wound the soul of our nation. It was horrific beyond words.

Yet, look what happened. First responders, those volunteering at the race and even some of the runners, became heroes as they immediately reached out to help, comfort and save lives. Facebook and Twitter were filled with prayers, words of hope and support. And once again, the human spirit soared in the face of chaos, panic and fear.

But here we are today. And since that day there have been countless tragedies. In fact, even if you could count them, the act of doing so simply would overwhelm you. Some—like the Boston Marathon bombing—have been intentional in order to bring death, chaos and fear. Others—like the explosion of the fertilizer plant in West, Texas—may have been caused by human error, but people would have done anything to stop it if only

they had known. Still others—like the earthquake in China—are simply and sadly the results of humanity being in the path of nature. And, then, there are the countless daily personal tragedies—like sexual abuse, addiction, the death of children from starvation, the breakup of families and terrible illnesses—that never make the news.

I keep asking myself over and over, “How are we to carry out our mission of making disciples of Jesus Christ equipped to transform lives and the world with excellence and passion in a world this dangerous?” For me, the answer is simple—but not necessarily easy.

We need to keep praying for those who are mourning the loss of loved ones, recovering from injuries and struggling to deal with what has occurred. We need to reject fear and embrace hope in every possible way we can, whether it’s pinning on purple ribbons, carrying on with our normal lives or wearing a race jersey.

But, most of all, we need to do the most important thing we can ever do, but the one thing we struggle to do more than anything else. We need to completely open ourselves to God to give us what we absolutely need, but can never get on

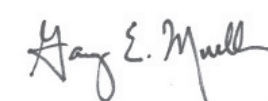

our own: an outpouring of the Holy Spirit that transforms every follower of Jesus from the inside out. It’s not about dogma, doctrine or denomination. It’s about God. And God’s love that can transform anyone and everyone. And God’s love that alone offers ultimate hope.

It’s time for Christians to be Christians, the church to be the church and United Methodist congregations to be United Methodist congregations. It’s time for us to stop majoring in the minors, and instead focus on actually living as disciples of Jesus Christ who understand that we’re not just another organization, but the living, breathing and serving Body of Christ in the world called to reach out into the mission field to share his love.

It’s time to be passionate. It’s time to be bold. It’s time to be daring. My sisters and brothers, the time is here. The time is now. We can wait no longer.

And I am ready to join hands with you to do it.

Grace and peace,

Gary E. Mueller

## Congregation grows by feeding hunger, sharing Christ



One of the first four young people ever to complete a confirmation class at Centerville UMC is confirmed last year as part of a Sunday morning worship service. Just a few weeks later, that same group of youth embarked on their first mission trip.

BY CANDACE BARRON  
*Special Contributor*

As Christians, we are a people steeped in the miracles of faith: virgin birth, walking on water, the resurrection of Christ. Usually, though, when we talk about being an Easter people, we don’t mean it in a literal kind of way—until you start looking hard at a tiny church like Centerville UMC, near Greenbrier.

Four years ago, Centerville United Methodist Church was on the verge of collapse, with an average attendance in the single digits. But since the Rev. Lana Gartner was appointed as Centerville’s part-time local pastor in 2008, worship attendance has quadrupled to an average of more than 35, and the church now has 42 members. Gartner attributes the turnaround to

a lot of hard work, prayer and the intangible miracle of faith.

### Eager for revival

“People were extremely hungry for the church to be revived,” Gartner says about the congregation upon her arrival. She started from a missional point of view, floating different ideas to the congregation and encouraging them to truly look out at their mission field.

They channeled that hunger for revival into a ministry to literally feed the people: a community garden.

The Rev. Lu Harding of Mount Eagle Retreat Center visited to teach the church about community gardening.

“My vision for churches

[See GROWING, page 9A]



# Beep...

BY CHARLES COOPER  
Special Contributor

I notice less now those rings, tunes, buzzes and beeps in stores, restaurants, churches, funeral homes and all the rest. I notice less that people are talking on their phones, which means that after 30 years, this technology has been accepted into my life, blending with traffic noises, the hum of electric appliances, the neighbor's dog and the whole soundtrack.

Noticed or not, though, I am concerned that we walk around all day with telephones on our belts or in our purses, or attached to our ears. I hear many people feel phantom phone vibrations in their pockets the way some report phantom pain in a lost limb. Our devices have become appendages. They have become us.



Charles Cooper

I remember how it started for me years ago. My wife Becky, who was a teacher, said that a wireless company was offering a special to teachers. We talked about security on trips. We signed up to feel secure. (So Eve said to Adam, "The snake is offering a special deal on apples.")

I do not fear that the human spirit will be lost to technology any more than I fear that God will be lost to the hard facts of science. Hundreds of years after the dawn of the Age of Reason, most people on this earth still believe in the Unreasonable, and I am among them.

So, I think hundreds of years from now, people will no less need and respond to each other, no matter how many devices are plugged into their power strips and recharged overnight, or perhaps I should say, no matter how many of these devices are plugged into them—by that time we may experience a movie without a screen and answer a call without a phone. Such devices will be wired into our nervous systems. With molecular-sized computer chips, that vision is quite real to one of my engineering friends.

The prophet Hosea did not write on an electronic page, as I do. Yet, when I read about his love for his unfaithful spouse, Gomer, I believe him, and when I read his

sermons on God's forgiving love, I believe he understands the difficulty of the absolute demand for justice and for mercy better than I do. His words seem written in stone and mine on less than paper. Hosea's domestic problems reveal God's unrequited love for humankind in a timeless way that binds the generations. How amazing that such an expanse of time can be crossed in instant with ink and paper.

I doubt that technology will damn the human race; if anything, it will be the old transgressions. Our sins, as well as our virtues, will simply be less distinguishable among the multitudes of beeps and buzzes, and so less worthy of being called sin and virtue. That is my concern: that we are no longer conscious of being distracted by the sounds of our age does not mean that we are no longer distracted.

Think of the statistical increase in automobile accidents. Are we not a bit naïve to think that our devices only distract us when we are driving? Think of all of those serious collisions in conversations at the dinner table that could have been avoided if we had turned off our phones.

I do not think that texting will make us lose the Spirit. One cannot lose the ocean. It is too vast a thing. Its power to refresh and destroy lives on. I can hear it thundering in the voices of the prophets. I can feel the breeze of its freshness in the kind deeds of compassionate people.

So, I do not fear we have lost the Spirit, but that we stand in its shallows, twiddling our toes in the sand and thinking what wondrous people we are because we have ear buds, 4G and elusive affairs with avatars.

I remember the ice storm of 2000. We were in Waldron. That first night without electricity, I stood on the porch of the parsonage and looked at the silhouette of the town. I thought, "So this is how it was a hundred and fifty years ago." It was dark because the earth was dark. I heard the limbs falling from the trees onto the snow. I could hear the wind clearly in the trees. Across the street, I saw my church, older than electric lights in Scott County. I felt secure. The cell phone towers were down; the lines were down; the roads were impassable. I felt secure.

*The Rev. Cooper is a retired elder in the Arkansas Conference.*

## Offering comfort to those who mourn



The Rev. Edna Morgan, president of Healing Place Ministries, gives the benediction at an April 23 crime victim memorial service, one of the observances of National Crime Victims' Rights Week, April 21-28. Held this year at Wesley Chapel United Methodist Church on the campus of Philander Smith College, the service included reading the names of the victims of violent crimes in Jefferson, Lincoln and Pulaski Counties since the beginning of 2012; the presentation of prayer shawls to victims' families; and the release of doves as part of a prayer for peace and healing.

Since 2006, Healing Place Ministries has co-sponsored this annual service which not only offers comfort to the grieving, but also provides an opportunity to connect victims' families with resources that can help them in the aftermath of violent crime. The organization's mission is to provide education to the community through workshops that address wholeness of body, mind and spirit, with emphasis on crime victims' advocacy, physical fitness, nutrition, recreation, retreats, counseling and support groups. Housed in Pine Bluff, the ministry also provides services in Pulaski County. For more information, visit [www.healingplaceministries.com](http://www.healingplaceministries.com).

AUM PHOTO BY PHILIP HATHCOCK

### CORRECTIONS

The *Arkansas United Methodist* strives for accuracy in its reporting. We regret that two articles in the April 5 issue contained errors:

- The print version of the feature story "Faith seeking understanding: SUMMA engages students in theological debate" incorrectly listed Channa

Childs' high school as Pulaski Academy. She attends Little Rock Central High School. The error was corrected in the digital edition.

- The "Skeeter Beater" fun run/walk, scheduled for June 12 in conjunction with the 2013 Arkansas Annual Conference, was listed as a 5K. The actual distance of the course is 2.92 miles.

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Volume 160 • No. 01 May 3, 2013  
Amy Forbus • Editor  
Melissa Sanders • Circulation  
[www.arumc.org](http://www.arumc.org)

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

Send correspondence & subscription updates to:  
Arkansas United Methodist, 800 Daisy Bates Drive,  
Little Rock, AR 72202; or email to  
Melissa Sanders at [msanders@arumc.org](mailto:msanders@arumc.org).

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

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



Arkansas Conference Communications  
800 Daisy Bates Drive  
Little Rock, AR 72202-3770  
[www.arumc.org](http://www.arumc.org) 501-324-8000

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**Submission Deadlines**

Issue Date	Submission Deadline
June 7	May 22
July 5	June 20
Aug. 2	July 18



# Mission: vital to our faith journey

An update from Byron Mann, Volunteers In Mission coordinator for the Arkansas Conference

I recently learned a new piece of information about Volunteers In Mission (VIM) from the United Methodist General Board of Global Ministries: The old term “mission

trip” is being phased out, in favor of the new term “mission journey.”

The reasoning for this change? When we work in mission, we are not simply going on a brief

trip, but on a longer journey—a spiritual journey. Serving others through mission is a part of that journey. For many, that first mission journey is a vital step forward in their spiritual journey. Participating in VIM is one of the ways we can grow as disciples of Jesus Christ. Here are a few ways you can serve through VIM and continue your journey.

## Statewide team

Several people have stepped up to assist local churches with developing mission opportunities across all five of our districts. To get in touch with a committee member near you, see the information at right.

Don Weeks, retired Conference VIM coordinator, and Larry Acton, retired Oklahoma VIM coordinator, have agreed to serve as consultants to this team. These two men have years of hands-on experience that we can draw from. And by serving as co-coordinator of Arkansas Conference Disaster Response (DR) along with my wife, Janice, I have made contacts across the South Central Jurisdiction and other jurisdictions that will aid in our efforts to continue building VIM in Arkansas.

We would like to add to the committee. We prefer volunteers with past mission experience and VIM Team Leader training, but we will train those who are willing to serve. We have one main requirement for prospective members: You must have a passion for this ministry!

The VIM committee and teams seek people with skills and experience in specific areas such as site assessment, construction, site and team safety, equipment operation and maintenance, cooking

and logistics.

## Journey options

One of the existing programs that we want to continue is This Olde Church, a program started by Don Weeks. For This Olde Church, teams partner with some of our older churches to do repairs.

We also hope to continue the work in Costa Rica and Manos Juntas in Mexico, which Don helped start several years ago. Larry Acton has been active with both of these sites over the last several years, and we plan to return to both areas for mission journeys.

For another international option, the Rev. Dr. Walter (“Bubba”) Smith and I have discussed leading a “potential future leaders” mission journey to Haiti after we return from a September visit there. This journey would consist of trained Team Leaders who would then take teams back to Haiti over the next few years.

Closer to home, we are planning work weeks at our district camps: Wayland Springs, Bear Creek and Shoal Creek. These events will not only help the three facilities make repairs and improvements, but also will provide training for new volunteers. We would use these work weeks to teach some specific skills VIM team members need.

One other developing ministry is called Hands and Feet, an excellent way for congregations to get started in mission. It began in southwest Arkansas with two small rural churches, and has grown into a four-county partnership of six UMCs with support from churches of other denominations. Teams of volunteers build wheelchair ramps and make minor home repairs. Donations from individuals and churches cover the cost of materials.

I have been in discussions with Camp Tanako and our Jurisdiction’s VIM coordinator to qualify Camp Tanako as an approved VIM national site. This designation would mean that Tanako could host teams from across the nation to come and work on the buildings and grounds, and would add available sites for VIM teams that want to work in Arkansas.

## Get involved

We are building a database of Volunteers In Mission who have been on a mission journey, are

currently involved in mission service in a local church community, planning a mission journey, or wish to connect with a church in mission. Several churches go regularly to UMCOR’s Sager Brown Depot, and we would like to track those missions as well. Please send me information on what your church is doing.

Janice and I plan to visit each district before the end of the year to hold a DR Preparedness and VIM workshop. It will cover opportunities to serve, training, resources and protocols. These workshops include two sessions on each ministry so participants may learn about both DR and VIM. To make it easier to connect with VIM, we are creating a Facebook Page and a presence on the Conference website.

I will come to any church in the Conference to present VIM information and hold question-and-answer sessions. To schedule a workshop or a presentation, contact me at [vim@arumc.org](mailto:vim@arumc.org), 870-703-8361 (mobile) or 870-777-9305 (home).

**There’s no time like the present to get involved with Volunteers In Mission and Disaster Response ministries. See page 5A to learn how you can help with current VIM and DR needs, both in the aftermath of tornadoes that struck north central Arkansas and in response to disasters in other states.**

## APPOINTMENTS

The following appointments, effective June 30 unless otherwise noted, have been announced as of press time on April 26, 2013:

- Asbury UMC Little Rock - Chase Green (Associate Pastor)
- Bay UMC - Donald Lewert
- Cabot UMC - Andrew Kjorlaug (Associate Pastor)
- Fairview UMC Camden - Allen Crum
- Charleston UMC - Chuck Coffelt
- Cherokee Village UMC - Angie Gage
- Christ of the Hills UMC Hot Springs Village - Sheila Jones (Associate Pastor)
- Christ/Mt. Tabor UMCs Cabot (charge realignment) - Jeff Warrick
- Clarendon/Holly Grove UMCs - Nan Nelson
- Cornerstone UMC Jonesboro - Mark Cloninger (Associate Pastor)
- First UMC Benton (Associate Pastor) - Daniel Thueson
- First UMC Carlisle - Kirk Doering
- First UMC DeQueen - Ron Newberry
- First UMC Ozark - Paul Coy

- First UMC Paragould - Heath Williams (Associate Pastor)
- First UMC Sheridan - John Embrey
- First UMC West Memphis - Michelle Morris (Associate Pastor)
- Green Forest UMC - Steve Cook
- Lake Village/Montrose UMCs - Ted DeWeese
- Leslie/Marshall UMCs - Mike Proctor
- Marvell/Lexa UMCs - Danny Partlow
- Mountain View/St. James UMCs - Bob Burton
- Tuckerman/Swifton UMCs - Mike Jennings
- Parkview/New Hope UMCs Benton - Walt Garrett
- Redfield UMC/St. Luke UMC Pine Bluff - Ryan Rush
- Salem/Viola UMCs - Cherie Baker
- Vilonia UMC - Nathan Kilbourne
- Walnut Ridge UMC - Jeanne Williams
- White Hall UMC - Ben Crismon

To see clergy appointment changes as they become official, visit [arumc.org/appointments](http://arumc.org/appointments).

## Connecting with your Conference VIM committee members

### Conference VIM Coordinator:

#### Byron Mann

[vim@arumc.org](mailto:vim@arumc.org), 870-703-8361 (mobile) or 870-777-9305 (home)

### Central District:

**The Rev. Alex and Kim Workman** serve Sylvan Hills UMC North Little Rock and have several years of VIM experience, leading teams from the Rocky Mountain Conference on mission journeys both domestic and international before coming to Arkansas. Contact them at [pastorwork@gmail.com](mailto:pastorwork@gmail.com).

Also in the Central District, **Dave and the Rev. Donna Alberts** are retired, but Donna still serves Oakland UMC near Greenbrier. Dave and Donna have a passion to serve and have expressed an interest in working with our district camps. Contact them at [pastordonna@windstream.net](mailto:pastordonna@windstream.net).

### Northeast District:

**Rebecca Garrison** from Batesville over the last several years has led numerous youth and church mission journeys to New Mexico, Red Bird Mission in Kentucky and Black Foot Reservation in Montana. Rebecca (“Becky”) will be a great resource for local churches needing help planning missions. Contact her at [copsmom54@gmail.com](mailto:copsmom54@gmail.com).

### Northwest District:

**Dan and Kathy Dunn** from Bella Vista have served with VIM in the Wisconsin Conference, as well as being Individual Volunteers with VIM. The Duns have a wealth of experience and knowledge to share. Contact them at [kathycdunn@yahoo.com](mailto:kathycdunn@yahoo.com).

Also from the Northwest District, **Lori Harrison** from Mena has experience with local church mission teams, and has first-hand experience rebuilding Mena after the 2009 tornado. Contact her at [mslori61umc@gmail.com](mailto:mslori61umc@gmail.com).

### Southeast District:

**Paul Moore** of Star City has volunteered recently to serve on this committee and has been involved in VIM for several years. Contact him at [pwmoore53@yahoo.com](mailto:pwmoore53@yahoo.com).

### Southwest District:

**Kay Hardin** has been active in First UMC El Dorado for several years. She and her husband, Scott, have led several mission journeys, both domestic and international. Kay will be another valuable resource for helping churches plan missions. Contact Kay at [nursehardin@hotmail.com](mailto:nursehardin@hotmail.com).

# United Methodist Deaconess movement turns 125



## LOVE JUSTICE & SERVICE

In 2013, the United Methodist Deaconess movement celebrates 125 years of ministry. The Office of Deaconess was instituted in 1888, and in the years that followed, the movement spread through the branches of American Methodism. In 2004, the Office of Home Missioner was added as an opportunity for laymen called to this servant ministry.

Today, nearly 200 active service Deaconesses and Home Missioners continue to fill a vital and important role in the mission and ministry of the United Methodist Church. They hold the



**Kandi Mount**

highest office a layperson can achieve as a full-time employee in any order of the United Methodist Church.

### What is a Deaconess or Home Missioner?

The *Book of Discipline* states in Paragraph 1314.2, "Deaconesses, who are laywomen, and Home Missioners, who are laymen, are professionally trained persons who have been led by the Holy Spirit to devote their lives to Christlike service under the authority of the Church."

Deaconesses and Home Missioners are screened mentally, physically and spiritually in order to be qualified as a candidate, and then attend seminary before they are

consecrated by a United Methodist Bishop. The Order of Deaconess and Home Missioner is supported through United Methodist Women.

### Who are Arkansas' Deaconesses?

There are currently two active Deaconesses in the Arkansas Conference. Deaconess Kandi Mount of Bella Vista has served for several years as a chaplain with Mercy Health System.

"The motto of our office—I serve neither for gratitude nor reward, but from gratitude and love; my reward is that I may serve—truly defines each of us in our relationship with God," Mount says.

Deaconess Colleen Caldwell serves in community care and mission at Christ UMC Cabot, and as the coordinator of mission personnel for the Arkansas Conference.



**Colleen Caldwell**

"The people in my community humble me," Caldwell says.

"Whether they are helping others, or the ones being ministered to, I consistently see the love of Christ in action. I am grateful to the United Methodist Church and the Order of Deaconess, which has given me the opportunity to live out my calling."

Iris Bell Hightower is a retired United



**Iris Bell Hightower**

Methodist Deaconess. She worked with 14 communities in the Spring River Group Ministry, and served for almost seven years as a Deaconess in rural church and community ministry in eastern Arkansas, stationed at Imboden and Batesville. She currently lives at the Methodist Village in Fort Smith.

"By following the model of Jesus Christ, I have received so much more from those I worked with than what I ever will be able to give," Hightower says.

### Want to learn more?

Anyone interested in learning more about the Deaconess/Home Missioner relationship, or who might be discerning a call to ministry, may request more information from:

**Offices of Deaconess and Home Missioner  
United Methodist Women, National Office**  
475 Riverside Drive, 15th floor  
New York, NY 10115  
Phone: 212-870-3850  
deaconess@unitedmethodistwomen.org  
www.dhmumc.org

## CLASSIFIEDS

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

**Director of Music Ministries: Grand Avenue United Methodist Church, Stuttgart,** 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. Application deadline is May 15. For details or to apply, contact the church, [gaumc@centurytel.net](mailto:gaumc@centurytel.net) or 870-673-6317.

**Hazel Edwards Memorial UMC, Newark, is seeking a part-time Youth Director** (20 hours/week). Duties include, but are not limited to: planning and helping to lead weekly youth-oriented worship/praise service, planning and leading at least one youth-oriented weekly event, teaching youth Sunday school class, attending and possibly assisting in Sunday morning worship. The Youth Director will be charged with creating an environment in which youth will experience creative fun along with spiritual growth. This individual should exhibit positive leadership and organizational skills in working with the youth and adult volunteers. Preference will be given to candidates with musical abilities or background. Salary range is \$12k to \$14k/yr DOE. Mandatory background check. Send application to: Rev. Rob Ernest, 212 E. 4th Str., Newark, AR, 72562 or [rsernest@gmail.com](mailto:rsernest@gmail.com).

**Full-time Director of Ministries to Senior Youth and Young Adults position available at St. James United Methodist Church** ([stjames-umc.org](http://stjames-umc.org)), a 3500-member congregation in Little Rock, Arkansas. As part of a youth ministry team, the director will strategically lead creative ministries for senior high youth and young adults, including missions, small groups, recreational ministries, and discipleship formation. Applicants should have a calling to youth ministry, in addition to strong team building skills, excellent communication skills, and an ability to relate well to youth, young adults, parents and volunteers in a large church program. Competitive salary and health benefits offered. Send letters of interest and resumes to Rev. Greg Schick ([greg@stjames-umc.org](mailto:greg@stjames-umc.org)).

**Swamp Angel Ministries is traveling Arkansas!** Donations go to the Annual Arkansas Retired Ministers Day. For info: contact David Bush at [thepastor@stuttgartfumc.org](mailto:thepastor@stuttgartfumc.org).

**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).

## Register now for 'Mission U'

Registration is now open for Arkansas Conference Mission U, set for July 31–Aug. 3, 2013, at Hendrix College in Conway.

Sponsored by the Arkansas Conference Board of Global Ministries, Arkansas Conference United Methodist Women and the United Methodist Foundation of Arkansas, the annual event, formerly known as the Arkansas Conference School of Christian Mission, provides mission education for all ages—including special activities for children and youth—in a spiritually enriching setting.

The spiritual growth study, *The Call: Living Sacramentally and Walking Justly*, will offer tools to deepen spiritual identity, as well as encourage engagement in community and involvement in mission. The geographic study will examine the culture, lifestyle and spirituality of the Roma, with *The Roma of Europe* as its curriculum.

The social issue study on poverty will examine the connections between Scripture, church tradition, compassion for the poor, social outreach and social justice. In keeping with this study's theme, Mission U will collect child-friendly, ready-to-eat foods to benefit the Arkansas Rice Depot's Food For Kids program.

Mission U is open to children pre-kindergarten through senior high school, as well as adults. Meals and housing are included in the registration fee, and commuters are welcome to attend.

For a detailed brochure, a registration form and a scholarship application, visit [www.arumc.org/2013\\_mission\\_u.php](http://www.arumc.org/2013_mission_u.php).



## VOLUNTEERS IN MISSION & DISASTER RESPONSE UPDATES

For information on any VIM project below, contact the individual listed or Byron Mann, Conference VIM coordinator, at [vim@arumc.org](mailto:vim@arumc.org) or 870-703-8361. For Disaster Response projects, contact Byron or Janice Mann, DR co-coordinators, at [disaster@arumc.org](mailto:disaster@arumc.org).

### Stock of UMCOR relief kits needs replenishing

There is an ongoing need for cleaning buckets and health kits to distribute where disasters strike. Flooding in the northern U.S., tornado season in the Midwest and snowstorms in Colorado are depleting inventory. For kit assembly instructions, visit [umcor.org/UMCOR/Relief-Supplies](http://umcor.org/UMCOR/Relief-Supplies).

### April 11 tornado damage, Van Buren County, Ark.

Arkansas Conference Disaster Response has deployed Care Teams and Early Response Team-certified volunteers to the Clinton/Walnut Grove area of Van Buren County, where more than 60 homes were damaged by the April 11 storms. They provided a caring Christian presence and labor to help cover damaged homes with tarps and remove debris. If you have a team of people willing to help with the work that continues in this area, email Janice and Byron Mann at [disaster@arumc.org](mailto:disaster@arumc.org) to let them know you are available. At least one person per team must have completed ERT, Care Team or VIM training.

Workers are distributing tornado tubs, cleaning buckets and health kits. Learn how to provide these supplies at [www.arumc.org/n\\_new\\_tornado\\_tubs\\_meet\\_post-disaster\\_need.php](http://www.arumc.org/n_new_tornado_tubs_meet_post-disaster_need.php) and [www.umcor.org/UMCOR/Relief-Supplies](http://www.umcor.org/UMCOR/Relief-Supplies). Several local churches are serving as drop-off points for completely assembled kits and tubs: Central UMC Fayetteville, First UMC Harrison, First UMC Mena and St. Paul UMC Fort Smith. If you have kits and tubs ready in another part of the state, email [disaster@arumc.org](mailto:disaster@arumc.org) to coordinate delivery.

### Update from West, Texas

The Rev. Laraine Waughtal, disaster response coordinator for the Central Texas Conference, has shared the following update concerning the April 17 fertilizer plant explosion in West, Texas: "First, thanks to all for their prayers and offers of help in light of this terrible disaster in West, Texas. We are not yet to the time when volunteers will be invited to help in the recovery. We ask for your patience and understanding that we are still in the search and recovery mode. Assessments and interviews will need to be completed before we can determine what help will be needed. In the meantime, prayers are always appreciated."

The United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR) has requested cleaning buckets, health kits and to donate blood at your local center. For kit assembly instructions or to help financially, visit [umcor.org](http://umcor.org); designate gifts to Advance Special #901670. It is not yet time to help with long-term recovery in West, but if you wish to be placed on the volunteer list for a later date, contact Byron Mann at [vim@arumc.org](mailto:vim@arumc.org).

### Work opportunities at McCurdy School, N.M.

Vickie Luviano, volunteer manager of McCurdy School ([www.mcsk12nm.org](http://www.mcsk12nm.org)) has asked for volunteer work teams to come to Espanola, N.M., to work on the McCurdy School campus. All volunteers must be 19 years of age and Safe Sanctuary trained and certified.

Dates teams are needed include May 19-25 and May 26-June 1, 2013; and Dec. 26, 2013-Jan. 10, 2014. Volunteers are always needed and welcome. To coordinate a VIM visit, contact Luviano: [Vickie@mccurdy.org](mailto:Vickie@mccurdy.org).

### VIM teams needed for Miss. tornado recovery

A total of 1,731 homes were affected by a spring storm near Hattiesburg, Mississippi. If your church is planning a mission journey this spring or summer, please consider helping in the Hattiesburg area. More information on needs will be available in the coming months. Contact Byron Mann, [vim@arumc.org](mailto:vim@arumc.org), to receive news of opportunities to help.

## PEOPLE OF FAITH

### Feeser wins AFISRA Edwin R. Chess award

BY AIRMAN 1ST CLASS SAMUEL DAUB  
Special Contributor

**Editor's note:** Chaplain (Capt.) Ron Feeser is an ordained elder in the Arkansas Conference.

FORT GEORGE G. MEADE, Md.—It is difficult to compare any other career requiring a deeper understanding of humility and service than that of a military chaplain.

Putting others before themselves is more than a select set of core ethos, it's a literal job requirement. Not only do chaplains commit their service to a denominational higher-power, they honor an oath to support and defend the Constitution of the United States and preserve the religious freedoms of service members regardless of their religious alignment.

When so much of oneself is devoted to serving others it can be easy to lose track of personal accomplishments, so when a chaplain from the 70th Wing first heard the news he won the Air Force ISR Agency's Edwin R. Chess Award for outstanding company grade chaplain, he admitted it was much to his surprise.

"I have to be honest, the news did come with a shock," said Chaplain (Capt.) Ronald Feeser, from the 70th Wing Chapel office, adjusting his position in his seat. "I'm just grateful that it shows we are making a difference in the lives of Airmen and we're having a real effect."

The Edwin R. Chess Award, named after the Air Force's Chief of Chaplains from Aug. 1, 1966, to Aug. 1, 1970, is awarded to officers who best display the USAF Chaplain Corps values of glorifying God, serving Airmen and pursuing excellence. Chaplain (Lt. Col.) Bill Burrell, 70th ISR Wing chaplain, recognized the work Feeser had done for the Wing and sent a submission package to AFISRA Jan. 1.

Burrell praised Feeser by writing that his "professionalism, leadership and care for the Wing's Airmen has touched and changed countless lives" and "Feeser is an outstanding chaplain and officer."

Feeser discovered he had won the award Feb. 21. "I could hear Chaplain Burrell talking on the phone in the other office and at one point in the conversation he asked, 'How would you like to talk to the best Chaplain in the Air Force?'" Feeser said, recounting how he had come to learn the news. "[Burrell] is always making jokes and motivating us by saying we're the best chaplains the Air Force has to offer, but I thought there was something a



Chaplain (Capt.) Ronald Feeser, 70th Intelligence Surveillance Reconnaissance Wing Chapel office, stops for a photo during a break from his work at Fort George G. Meade, Md. Feeser, an elder in the Arkansas Conference, recently won the Air Force ISR Agency's Edwin R. Chess award for outstanding company grade chaplain for excelling in areas like professionalism, leadership and caring for the Wing's Airmen.

U.S. AIR FORCE PHOTO BY AIRMAN 1ST CLASS SAMUEL DAUB

little different in the way he was going about it now. Then that of course was when he came in to tell me I won."

This award may just show that Burrell's jokes weren't too far off.

Feeser's focus and commitment to his ministry is why Burrell submitted him and was the least surprised he was successful. Burrell said he feels Feeser was called to ministry describing his character as dynamic and proactive, words he said he doesn't use lightly. He noticed Feeser is constantly diligent in the time they've been working together, saying he actively prevents issues and spends extra time with Airmen to determine and meet their emotional needs.

Feeser's selection put him at the top of his MAJCOM and the next level of competition is the Air Force.

When discussing the potential win at the Air Force level, Feeser simply said it's not about him.

"I hope it all reflects well but the comparison is apples and oranges," Feeser said. "Wings are different and I think we do good work here. Whether we win has little impact on what we do for our Airmen. I feel blessed to work with such a great staff and it's awesome to have a team who motivates the ministry forward."

Daub works with the 70th Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance Wing, Public Affairs. Reproduced from [www.afisr.af.mil](http://www.afisr.af.mil), the Air Force ISR Agency website.



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# Film festival world premiere features UM clergy



Before the world premiere screening of "Black Marks on White Paper," retired Bishop Bennie Warner poses next to a movie poster for the documentary that focuses on his life and work.

BY AMY FORBUS  
Editor

BATESVILLE, Ark.—This year's Ozark Foothills FilmFest, held April 3-7, featured 34 films, one of which holds special connections for United Methodists in Arkansas.

"Black Marks on White Paper," an hour-long documentary, made its world premiere April 5, with both the filmmaker—retired clergyman the Rev. Bob Hager—and the film's subject—retired Bishop Bennie Warner—in attendance.

The film's title refers to an observation made by young Bennie Warner the first time he saw someone reading and writing in his village in Liberia. He told his father he wanted to learn how to make "black marks on white paper," and his father explained that people who could read and write had gone to school.

Thus began Warner's dream to attend school—which, when fulfilled, turned out to be at a Methodist mission. His education set him on a path to his work as a teacher, his call to ministry, election to the vice-presidency of Liberia and more.

While serving as both a bishop of his church and vice-president of his country, Warner had come to the U.S. for the 1980 United Methodist General Conference. During that time, a military coup overthrew the Liberian government, all government officials were executed and Warner was cautioned not to return lest he join them. He and his family made a new home in the U.S., serving in Texas, Oklahoma and Arkansas.

Hager, the filmmaker, first met Warner when the exiled bishop became superintendent of the Camden District. At a clergy retreat, he and his fellow pastors learned Warner's story.

After Hager retired, he studied documentary filmmaking at Arkansas State University. While talking with a fellow student who was working on a project about a man from Nigeria, Hager realized Warner's life would make a great documentary: "I've got a story that's in my lap!" he told his classmate. He called Warner, and the project began to take shape.

## Premiere night

Warner and his wife, Anna, who now live in Oklahoma, spent the moments before the premiere visiting with Arkansas friends, including a busload of parishioners from St. Paul UMC Maumelle, where they served before Warner became a district superintendent.

He took some time to reflect on the experience of having his life become the subject of a documentary.

"I had to stop to look back, to learn about myself," Warner said. "I began to look at myself in retrospect. When you are busy doing something, you don't look back, take a back-track and see what things are going to look like.

"I'm going to have to pinch myself: 'Is that me, really?' It's amazing."

Warner had not received an advance screening of the documentary, and looked forward to seeing it along with the rest of the

audience.

"I saw Blake [Lasater, pastor of Living Waters at Centerton UMC] in one interview, a clip on one of the ads, and he's talking about me. I said, 'Really? Did we do that? Did we really do that?' It's exciting, and you're grateful to God for letting your life be a record that has meaning to other people," he said. "You don't start off with that in mind, but you just do what God wants you to do, and that's the outcome."

Hager noted that the United Methodist Foundation of Arkansas, which provided grant funding for the documentary, at Annual Conference will provide a copy of the DVD to each charge. He also called attention to the many people who helped make the film possible.

"You saw the long list of people in the credits," he told those who stayed after the premiere. "Documentaries don't get made by one person, and I'm humbled by those who have donated their time and their effort and their love."

## New Hope Academy

While Black Marks on White Paper does share one man's life story, it also looks to the future, and the legacy that he intends to establish.

In the question-and-answer session that followed the premiere, Warner said he considers "the investment I've made in people" as his biggest legacy. "The way I will thank you is to keep doing the good things that you witness in this film," he told those gathered.

One of those good things has taken center stage in Warner's life: his work to establish New Hope Academy, which will be the first school built to serve his home village in Liberia.

"I left that village at around 15, thereabouts, going to look for a school. And now, my determination is to bring the school to them," Warner said. "We are talking about 14, 15 different villages that the school will serve. So, who knows? Thousands of students will go through there."

The school's foundation and cinder block walls already are in place, and a roof is the next step toward finishing the facility. It will have classroom space for pre-kindergarten to 9th grade students, a library, a technology center and a soccer field. There also will be a health clinic, Warner said, "because sick children can't go to school."

New Hope Academy will be United Methodist-affiliated, like the one Warner attended. Attendees of the post-screening talk peppered him with questions about the school, and many gave donations. He emphasized that small gifts from individuals have driven the project. After the Living Waters at Centerton United Methodist Women held a fundraiser, he was on his way to his car and the pastor's young daughter, Grace Lasater, chased after him to give him 25 cents. "You don't know how much that means," he said. Small gifts made possible his own church-funded education.

When Warner went to school in 1950, the tuition was \$3 US. He didn't have money, let alone know that he needed it. But when the missionary in charge saw that he was determined to learn, she put him on a work scholarship. She later told them that the Woman's Society of Christian Service—one of the predecessors of today's United

Methodist Women—had given money to that mission station for needy boys and girls.

"So I say to the United Methodist Women, look at the return on your three-dollar investment," he said. "The return on your three-dollar investment is a bishop!"

In the aftermath of a 14-year civil war, Liberians need ways to teach their children. Warner sees education as the solution to war and global violence "because much of the unrest is due to ignorance, illiteracy and misunderstanding. If we have education, things will be better for the world. And we can do it one school at a time," he said.

"I hope that people can be inspired that every life is worth something, and has value in it—and that people's lives can be transformed and changed for the better," Warner said. "And that no life is useless; it's what you make of it."

## Next screening of "Black Marks on White Paper" Sunday, May 19, 3 p.m. First UMC Paragould

**HOST A SCREENING:** In addition to the Paragould screening, Hager hopes to arrange a screening in each of the Arkansas Conference's districts. If your church is interested in showing the film, contact him at [bhager28@yahoo.com](mailto:bhager28@yahoo.com) or 870-375-3446.

**GIVE TO NEW HOPE:** Contributions to help build New Hope Academy may be sent to Oklahoma Volunteers in Mission, 1501 NW 24th Street, Oklahoma City, OK 73106. Checks should include "New Hope Academy Liberia" in the memo line. For continuing updates, visit [blackmarksfilm.com](http://blackmarksfilm.com).



The Revs. Bob Hager, left, and Bennie Warner greet attendees following the April 5 world premiere of "Black Marks on White Paper," the documentary produced by Hager and featuring Warner.

AUM PHOTOS BY AMY FORBUS



# A mother's story

## Missouri mom's encounter with malaria makes the fight personal

By the Rev. Martha Taylor, Arkansas Conference; with excerpts by Jennifer Long, Imagine No Malaria field coordinator for the Missouri Conference, which originally appeared in the newsletter Jacob's Hip.

The year 2005 was going to be busy for Jennifer Long. In addition to caring for her husband, Chris, and their three children, she was expecting her fourth child in August. Little did she know a trip to Honduras the previous June would have a near catastrophic effect on her and her unborn child.

Jennifer first began to feel unwell in March 2005, with flu-like symptoms. At four months pregnant and with a busy schedule, there was no time to be sick, so she called her doctor right away. As her fever continued to climb, she began to shiver uncontrollably and had a terrible headache. Her doctor advised fluids and rest.

For the next several days, Jennifer suffered a roller coaster of symptoms: times of feeling okay followed by temperature spikes over 103 degrees, uncontrollable shaking and headaches.

After several days of feeling awful, Jennifer drove herself to the

emergency department of her local hospital.

Despite her fever and a fast, irregular heart rate which was affecting the baby's heart rate, she was sent home with a diagnosis of "flu-like symptoms." She was scared of what was happening and that her baby's life was in danger.

Jennifer returned two days later to the emergency department with the same symptoms. This time her illness was taken more seriously and she was admitted to the hospital.

A physician came in to take her medical history, which included a six-month history of headaches and a gall bladder concern evidenced by chest pains. Casually, she mentioned being treated for a parasite she picked up in Honduras the previous June. The doctor began to ask more pointed questions. Had she been bitten by any mosquitoes? The light dawned on them both.

"I have malaria," Jennifer thought. "And I'm pregnant."

Once the diagnosis was confirmed, her doctor prescribed chloroquine, a medication that has been used to combat malaria since World War II. The doctor told her its effects on unborn children hadn't been widely documented, largely because many of the pregnant women treated for malaria have other health issues such as malnourishment that make it difficult to attribute to the medication. With no other options, Jennifer began the treatment.

While confined in the hospital, Jennifer learned all she could about malaria. She read that more than 1 million people die each year from malaria, many of them pregnant women. Her heart sank as she realized that meant over 3,000 babies were dying each day in Africa.

She realized that as she prayed for her baby's health, women across the world also were praying for their children, that they, too, might be born healthy and live to adulthood.

After a week-long hospital stay,

Jennifer returned home, so weak it would take an hour for her heart rate to return to normal after a three-step journey to the bathroom. She slowly gained strength with the help of friends and family.

Jennifer was vigilant with her prenatal visits and prayed constantly for her unborn child. Her journal reflects her thoughts.

"This little baby is going to have a special place in the lives of many people," Jennifer wrote. "He has already taught us so much about the care and nurturing of our loving God and he has given us hope and faith that I don't think we would have had otherwise. Thank you, little one."

Still not knowing the status of her child's health, Aug. 30 arrived and Jennifer gave birth to Jacob Long—a healthy boy with no effects from either the malaria or the medication.

"As I said hello to Jacob for the first time, I was overwhelmed with gratitude," Jennifer said. "But I was also overwhelmed by the thought of

the 3,000 mothers that day who were also holding their babies or children and saying goodbye for the last time."

*Note: Following Jacob's birth, Jennifer was determined to do something about ending death and suffering from malaria. Raising money for Nothing But Nets, now Imagine No Malaria, became Jennifer's passion. She has raised nearly \$30,000 with the help of her church, her friends and her community. She was recently named the Missouri Conference Imagine No Malaria field coordinator.*



Jennifer and Jacob Long

## INM total climbs, looking to big Annual Conference goal

The early months of 2013 proved to be generous ones for the Arkansas Conference's Imagine No Malaria initiative. **As of March 31, approximately \$363,000 had been given toward the conference's \$1.1 million commitment.** The fund-raising aspect of the initiative continues through June 2014, with all gifts and commitments fulfilled by June 2015. The total includes the match from the **United Methodist Foundation of Arkansas.**

**First UMC Springdale** has stepped up with a major pledge, as well. "The members of the church had been praying about what God was asking them to do with regard to Imagine No Malaria," said the Rev. Martha Taylor, former Imagine No Malaria field coordinator, "and early this year, we received their commitment of raising \$50,000 by June 2015." The \$50,000 pledge is not reflected in the \$363,000 total, but will be added as funds are received.

"The steering committee was praying that 2012 gifts would be in the \$250,000 range," said the Rev. David Freeman, Arkansas' Imagine No Malaria steering committee chair. "By God's grace and the generosity of local churches across the state, we are right on target for for saving 100,000 lives."

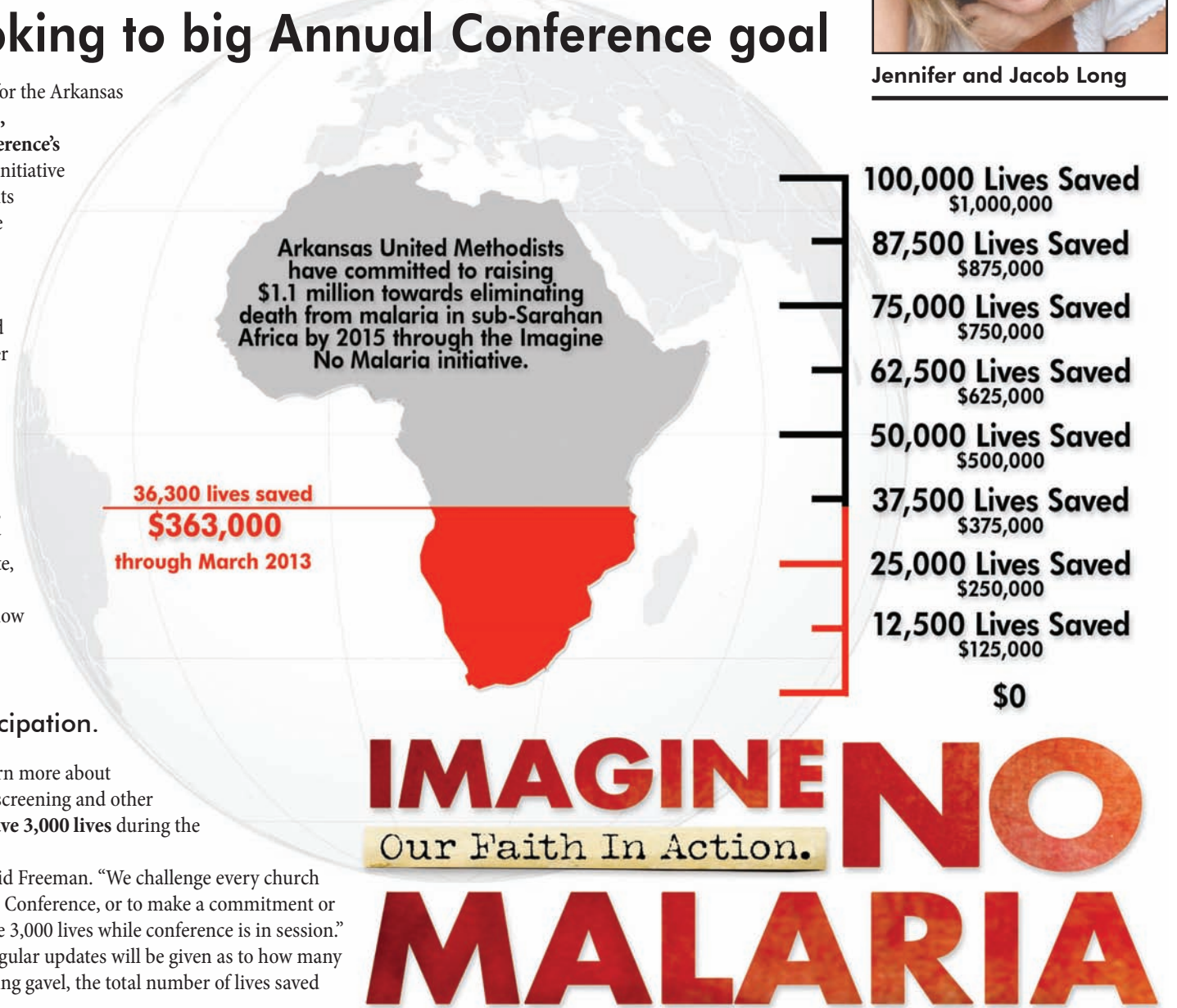
Freeman said the group has been busy speaking to fellow clergy and lay members about the initiative and planning activities and events for Annual Conference and beyond.

**3,000 minutes. 3,000 lives. 100% participation.**

Annual Conference attendees will have chances to learn more about Imagine No Malaria through interactive displays, a movie screening and other activities. What's more, **attendees will be challenged to save 3,000 lives** during the approximately 50 hours Annual Conference is in session.

"We know a child dies every minute from malaria," said Freeman. "We challenge every church in the Conference to bring a gift or commitment to Annual Conference, or to make a commitment or gift while they are at Annual Conference. The goal is to save 3,000 lives while conference is in session."

A timer clock will start with the opening gavel, and regular updates will be given as to how many lives have been saved. The organizers hope that by the closing gavel, the total number of lives saved equals 3,000 or more.





## BOOK REVIEW

# Lead like Jesus, not like Fortune 500 CEO, says author

*Unleader: Reimagining Leadership... and Why We Must*

Lance Ford

Beacon Hill Press, 2012

BY ERIC VAN METER  
Special Contributor

Our church leadership culture has failed. It is past time that we set aside the idolatry of corporate leadership structures and rediscover the vastly different way of leading modeled by Jesus.

If such language sounds harsh, that is because author and pastor Lance Ford intends for it to be. In *Unleader*, Ford challenges virtually every assumption of contemporary church leadership, then builds a new vision for leading based on the patterns set forth in the New Testament.

Ford draws his key ideas from

Matthew 20:25-28, in which Jesus contrasts the hierarchy of Gentile power structures with the servant leadership that is to mark his disciples. In the first half of the book, he particularly emphasizes verse 26: "It shall not be so among you."

Even though most church staffs are structured with a single leader (usually the senior pastor) at the top, Ford argues for a flattened way of relating in which all paid and volunteer staff treat one another with love and respect. Any practice of leadership that emphasizes power, rank and chain of command belongs, in Ford's mind, to the military or corporate world, and has no place among disciples of Jesus.

So how did American church culture become so unquestioningly hierarchical? Perhaps, Ford posits, because of a natural human tendency to crave the clarity that comes with following a single leader. Just as Israel cried for Samuel to appoint a king over them, so do modern churches hand power over

to individuals for the sake of certainty.

What we fail to fully embrace, however, is Jesus' insistence that his heavenly Father is already our king and leader. Jesus lives in submission to the will of the Father, and releases his rightful authority as the Son in order to live among his disciples as brothers and sisters. If Jesus himself eschewed the authority of his position, then his disciples must resist the temptation to wield power over others, no matter how benign that hierarchy may seem or what circumstances bring it into being.

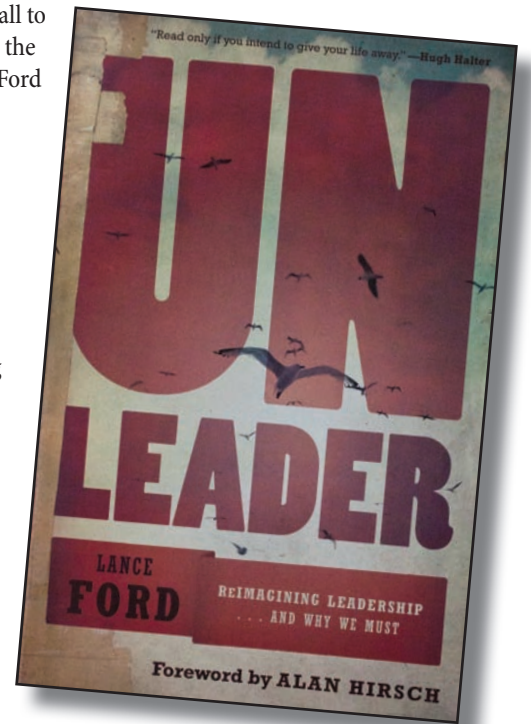
In the second half of the book, Ford makes a case for replacing modern concepts of leadership with what he calls "servantship." The New Testament ideal is one of diffused power held in common among those who recognize Jesus as the only chief shepherd. Humility among co-laborers brings about a way of living in which every member of the community is not just allowed to participate with his or her gifts, but expected to do so.

Is a shift to Jesus' call to servanthip possible for the American church? Yes, Ford writes, but not without significant changes and potential costs. We will have to forego the superstar culture that surrounds our most visible pastors. We will have to recognize the limitations of preaching or programming in really making disciples. We will have to learn to share life together in humility—and probably in smaller groups—if the disciple apprenticeships Ford suggests are to become a focus for us.

Ford comes across as a gentle radical, a passionate advocate for servanthip who expresses his arguments in a clear way. Although *Unleader* is at times repetitive and includes many examples from the author's own experience that don't correlate directly with United Methodist polity, it challenges our leadership addiction in refreshing and insightful ways. It is

a worthwhile read for thoughtful Christians ready to question how we conceive of power and whom we entrust with it.

*The Rev. Van Meter serves as director of the Wesley Foundation campus ministry at Arkansas State University.*



## ADDRESSING THE FUTURE OF THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH The Confessing Movement of Arkansas Annual Breakfast

Monday, June 10, 2013 at 6:45 a.m.

Governor's Hall IV of the Statehouse Convention Center, Little Rock

### "Doctrine: Its Role and Future in the UMC"

The Rev. Dr. Andrew C. Thompson, guest speaker

Thompson, an ordained elder, received his Th.D. from Duke Divinity School, where he focused on the thought of John Wesley, the history of early Methodism, and contemporary Wesleyan theology. As an associate professor at Memphis Theological Seminary, he currently teaches Historical Theology and Wesleyan Studies. He also serves as pastor of discipleship at Marion United Methodist Church and is the appointed Wesley Scholar for the Arkansas Conference.

Thompson writes a regular column for the *United Methodist Reporter* as well as a personal blog. His writing has appeared in *Methodist History*, the *Wesleyan Theological Journal*, and *Methodist Review*. He is the editor of *Generation Rising: A Future with Hope for the United Methodist Church*.



Tickets are \$15. Purchase tickets as part of your registration for the Arkansas Annual Conference; or by contacting Carolyn Elias, 501-525-2944 or carolyneli@msn.com; or Karen Millar, 501-268-4859 or karenmillar@hotmail.com, by Friday, June 7.

## Massed choir forming for Annual Conference 2013

### Sign up by May 10 to sing at ordination service

Vocalists from across Arkansas are invited to sing in the massed choir for the Service of Ordination at the 2013 Annual Conference, held June 11 at the Statehouse Convention Center in Little Rock.

Choirs from four churches in Little Rock and North Little Rock already have committed to participate, and the group welcomes individuals and entire choirs from other churches, as well.

The choir will sing two anthems: "Lord of the Dance" [arr. Don Hart – Hope Publishing C 5027 (SATB)]; and "The Summons" [John L. Bell – GIA G-5410 (2-part)]. **Participants must reserve their place in the choir and order copies of the music by May 10.**

The only pre-Annual Conference rehearsal is set for Saturday, May 18, from 10:30 a.m. to noon at St. James UMC, 321 Pleasant Valley Drive in Little Rock.

The pre-service rehearsal will convene Tuesday, June 11, at 6 p.m. in the Statehouse Convention Center, Governor's Hall I and II. The worship service, held in the same location, begins at 7:30 p.m.

To reserve your place in the choir, contact Tracy DePue, director of music, worship and the arts at St. James UMC Little Rock: tracy@stjames-umc.org or 501-217-6733.



# 3D FAITH

Discerning-Discipling-Daring

The next special issue of the *Arkansas United Methodist* will focus on Annual Conference, scheduled for June 9-12, 2013, in Little Rock. While only members of the Annual Conference can vote on business matters, the meeting is open to visitors and observers. Because anyone may attend part or all of Annual Conference, we will share:

- A map of the venue (business sessions and worship services will take place at the Statehouse Convention Center)
- Profiles of featured speakers
- Information about worship services, including the service of ordination and commissioning

- List of clergy to be ordained in full connection, and those to be commissioned as provisional members
- Activities outside the business sessions
- Ways to follow Annual Conference proceedings from home

Smartphone users: Scan this code to reach the 2013 Annual Conference website, [ac2013.arumc.org](http://ac2013.arumc.org), to receive the latest updates.



## Growing (continued from page 1A)

everywhere is to start using some of their property for vegetable and/or herb gardens, instead of expensive and non-native landscape," Harding said. Part of her time with the people of Centerville UMC included walking them through a guided meditation about the difference their garden could make.

"It was fun to hear and watch them envision the future impact of their garden on the community," she said.

Just two weeks after Harding's class, Gartner arrived at the church and was amazed to find the ground already tilled and prepped for planting, and even a well in place for watering.

Jennifer Freeman, a Centerville UMC member, has seen the impact of the community garden. She has helped deliver baskets of produce that included business cards explaining the garden's purpose. Gradually, people began responding to the invitation to come pick their own vegetables, and the garden became a community gathering space, as well. She says one household began attending worship only after interacting with the church through the garden.

"There were many times that several cars would come by and visit while I was watering, both members of church and non-members," she said. "Lots of visiting! Our hope is that people will come work it from the community and feel comfortable."

The garden has exceeded the church's expectations, providing food to give away to the community and local food pantries, and for members to take home some produce for themselves. They expect even more community involvement with this year's garden, and planting has begun.

### New space and ministries

Centerville UMC includes a multi-generational range of people, from age 2 to 94. By December 2011, attendance growth meant the one-room children's Sunday school had run out of space. As the congregation sought possibilities for adding a classroom, one member spotted a used portable school building for sale. It turned out to be exactly the size they wanted, for exactly the amount of money they had saved at that point.

"The building was well used," Gartner said, "but it fit our purpose perfectly and we praised God for his gift. That gift made it possible to separate the younger children from the older children, and now we have two children's Sunday school classes."

Her husband, Rick, teaches youth Sunday school, and Centerville last year held its first series of confirmation classes, bringing four young people into full church membership. The youth ministry has doubled in size, and young people from Centerville UMC now participate in activities such as Ozark Mission Project.

Centerville UMC models the parable of the sower found in Matthew 13: a tiny seed has been planted in fertile soil. They are building the Kingdom of God in their own little corner of Arkansas. Gartner attributes the current success to the work



Last spring, Centerville UMC planted its first community garden.

COURTESY PHOTOS

previous pastors did preparing the soil at Centerville.

"We have had good pastors in recent years who have taken deep interests in the community and have invited their peers and others to attend," says longtime member Ben McNew. He noted that the church reaches out to host events that have an impact on more than just the members and regular worship attendees.

"Our church is planning its first reunion for the Centerville Public Schools, which were consolidated with other districts in the early 1950s," he said. The reunion, slated for late June, in previous years took place at another site that has discontinued hosting. Centerville UMC stepped in to meet the need and extend a welcome.

"We hope to bring graduates, relatives, and friends back to the campus as guests of the church," McNew said.

### Evangelism efforts

In addition to reaching out simply to help their neighbors feel welcome, the church also holds two evangelism events per year. In the fall, on World Communion Sunday, the congregation meets at nearby Lake Dennis to worship outside of their four walls, which makes them more visible to the community.

The service includes offering Communion to everyone present, regardless of their church affiliation—a practice common in United Methodist congregations, but not allowed in many other denominations. For those more familiar with other traditions, open Communion celebrated in a public space sends a radical message of welcome.

Springtime brings another special service, "Worship at the Farm." A working farm, which has been in a local church member's family for 150 years, serves as the backdrop for the

worship service, attracting people who may not feel comfortable walking into a church building.

Whatever the location, Gartner takes an approach to preaching that emphasizes how God can transform everyday life.

"I don't call myself a preacher. I am a teacher," she says. "I believe people don't want to be preached at. They want to know how to use God's Word in a way that will make them better people in the world today."

### Seeking connection

Most visitors to small churches know that they won't blend into the crowd. Often, they are seeking something basic: a connection to the body of Christ.

"They are looking to be a part of a community of believers that are growing in Christ together," Gartner said. "They are looking for someone who will love them just as they are, and in whatever situation they may find themselves in at the moment in their lives.

"In a community church like Centerville, that connection is vital. They want to know that they can call on one another both in good times and in bad."

As a part-time local pastor, Gartner serves at Centerville while also working as a school nurse in Conway. The bi-vocational arrangement works, in part, because community matters so much to members of Centerville UMC. Many of them work at the local school, which gives them opportunities to connect with children and youth and make a positive impact. When a laity-driven congregation engages its mission field on a person-to-person basis, it changes lives.

"This church really pulls together in a loving and nurturing way, which is the true secret of Centerville UMC," Gartner says.

"We are simply growing together in Christ."

*The Rev. Dr. Barron serves on the Arkansas Conference Small Church Commission. Amy Forbus contributed to this report.*





## COMING UP

## May

**'Wings of the Morning' Congo missionaries available to speak to Arkansas congregations in May**

When U.S. missionaries serve internationally, they plan occasional stateside trips to visit local churches, sharing with them what they have been called to do, where they live and whom they serve. Beginning May 12, two missionary doctors associated with Wings of the Morning, a United Methodist medical transport ministry in the Democratic Republic of Congo, will be available for speaking opportunities at local churches within the Arkansas Conference.

To invite one of these missionaries to speak at your church, contact Conference coordinator of missionary personnel Deaconess Colleen Caldwell at 501-529-0604 or DeaconessColleen@gmail.com; or Conference Board of Global Ministries secretary Marleene Calvin at 501-771-1644, 501-425-0157 or igot5onit@sbcglobal.net, as soon as possible.

For more information on Wings of the Morning, visit [www.northkatangaumc.org/wingsmorn.html](http://www.northkatangaumc.org/wingsmorn.html). To learn how the Arkansas Conference has contributed to that ministry, visit <http://tinyurl.com/hopewithwings>.

**Camp Healing Hearts for grieving children May 17-18**

Kaleidoscope Grief Center, a service of Methodist Family Health, has announced plans for this year's Camp Healing Hearts, a free overnight grief camp, set for May 17-18 at Camp Aldersgate in Little Rock.

Camp Healing Hearts brings together children ages 5 to 18 and their families who have lost a loved one. It provides a safe environment where children and families can develop coping skills, both individually and within a community. The work of

play encourages a new sense of normality and allows children to find a voice for their grief. Camp Healing Hearts unites families in the grief process by encouraging parents and guardians to attend the event alongside their children.

Participants will convene at 5 p.m. Friday, May 17, and stay until 5 p.m. Saturday, May 18. Campers participate in therapeutic and recreational activities, as well as traditional camp activities such as a campfire with s'mores, fishing, swimming, arts and crafts and a ropes course.

For information and event details, visit [www.methodistfamily.org](http://www.methodistfamily.org) or contact Jane Dennis at Methodist Family Health, 501-661-0720, ext. 7157.

## June

**Partners in Ministry event for clergy spouses June 9**

All spouses of active and retired clergy are invited to the Partners in Ministry Reception, held in conjunction with the 2013 Annual Conference. The reception is set for Sunday, June 9, from 4 to 5:30 p.m. at First United Methodist Church, 7th and Center Streets in downtown Little Rock. Parking will be available across the street from church, and shuttles will be provided from the Statehouse Convention Center, where this year's Annual Conference is being held.

The reception will provide a relaxed and informal time to visit with friends from other districts. The Southwest District is hosting the event; no tickets or RSVP required. For additional information, contact Charlotte Morey at 501-230-5012.

**Laity celebration at Dickey-Stephens Park June 10**

This year's Laity Dinner at Annual Conference is taking the form

of an informal gathering at Dickey-Stephens Park in North Little Rock, home of the Arkansas Travelers minor-league baseball team. Located just across the river from the Statehouse Convention Center, where most of this year's Annual Conference will take place, it provides a unique setting for what traditionally has been a banquet-style gathering.

A buffet of "ballpark food"—hamburgers, hot dogs, baked beans, chips and more—will be served inside the shaded concourse area of the park. The event is open to more than lay members of the Annual Conference; family, friends and United Methodists in the community may attend.

The event is slated for Monday, June 10, during the Annual Conference dinner break (approximately 5:15 p.m.). Tickets cover the cost of the event, and will be available for purchase at [ac2013.arumc.org](http://ac2013.arumc.org).

**Evangelism workshop at First UMC Searcy begins June 30**

First UMC Searcy will host the Rev. Bob Crossman, Arkansas Conference Minister of New Church Starts, for a three-session "Evangelism Boot Camp." Crossman will help the local church to prepare for Advent and Easter by sharing his presentations on hospitality and evangelism. Dates and topics for the events are:

- June 30: 68 ways to increase worship attendance without a change in pastors
- July 14: Witness: Inviting persons to church
- Aug. 4: Evangelism: Putting the pieces together

These events are free and open to all churches. Events will begin with a light supper at 5 p.m., with presentation from 5:50 to 7:30. For more information and to register, email [kmarilees@gmail.com](mailto:kmarilees@gmail.com). To help us prepare, please register number attending and if child care is needed, number and ages of children.

# ANNUAL ARKANSAS RETIRED MINISTERS DAY



Bishop Gary Mueller

**Monday May 20, 2013 at 12 noon  
First UMC of Benton**



**Keynote – Bishop Gary Mueller**

**Everyone is welcome to this great celebration!**

***"O Come, Come, Come, Come"***

**To RSVP – Contact David Bush:**

**870-673-1131**

or

**[thepastor@stuttgartfumc.org](mailto:thepastor@stuttgartfumc.org)**



## PAUMCS Institute offers Professional Church Secretary certification

### *Registration open for July 14-19 course*

Each year, the United Methodist General Council on Finance and Administration (GCFA), in conjunction with the Professional Association of United Methodist Church Secretaries (PAUMCS) sponsors a certification institute for United Methodist administrative professionals from across the denomination.

The 2013 PAUMCS Institute will be July 14-19 in Nashville, Tenn. All United Methodist church secretaries and administrative assistants are encouraged to attend. Class size is limited to 30 participants, and registrations will be honored in the order in which they are received.

Participants are introduced to business concepts required for understanding the financial operations of the church as well as relationships with the pastor, church employees and members of the congregation. Studying such concepts with professors selected from a strong business school faculty and other experts encourages secretaries to become better informed and more effective church

administrators.

The experience of learning and networking with others in similar office settings provides a broader understanding of the connectional United Methodist Church. Local church professionals learn the functions of district, conference, agency and episcopal offices, while these various office personnel learn about the many responsibilities of a local church secretary. The PAUMCS Institute provides a place to see how all members of the church body are in ministry together.

The PAUMCS Institute provides outstanding advanced professional training and enrichment. A participant who completes the program and meets the requirements set forth by the General Council on Finance and Administration is eligible to apply for certification as a Professional United Methodist Church Secretary. (Membership in the national chapter of PAUMCS is required for certification.)

For a brochure, visit <http://tinyurl.com/paumcsinstitute>.



## OBITUARIES

### NORTH LITTLE ROCK

#### Raymond A. Dorman

The Rev. Raymond Arthur Dorman, 101, of North Little Rock, departed this life on Tuesday, April 16, 2013 at Baptist Health Medical Center. He was a retired United Methodist minister.

He was born June 25, 1911, in Roby, Texas, the son of Bert Vernon and Fannie Mae Combs Dorman. The family moved to Fort Smith, Ark., when he was a child. On Oct. 29, 1933, he married Margaret Dorothy Petler, with whom he had one son, Reverend Wendell Ray Dorman Sr.



**Raymond Dorman**

After receiving his education at the University of Arkansas at Fort Smith, Hendrix College and SMU's Perkins School of Theology, he was admitted into the United Methodist Church's North Arkansas Annual Conference on Nov. 2, 1933. He was ordained an elder on Nov. 6, 1937. He served a number of congregations throughout the state during his 54-year ministry.

He held the position of Pastor Emeritus at First United Methodist Church North Little Rock and at Levy United Methodist Church where, on June 25, 2011, he delivered one of his final sermons on the occasion of his 100th birthday.

A 33rd Degree Scottish Rite Mason, he was a member of Mt. Sinai Masonic Lodge #749 in North Little Rock, where he received the Pillars of Solomon Award. He also attended the Big Rock and Crescent Masonic Lodges.

He was a member of the Disciple Sunday School class at Levy UMC and the Ambassadors Sunday School Class at First UMC North Little Rock.

He was preceded in death by his wife of over 70 years, Margaret Dorothy Petler Dorman, and daughter-in-law, Barbara Bush Dorman. He is survived by a son, Reverend Wendell Ray Dorman Sr. of North Little Rock; a grandson, Wendell Dorman Jr., and his wife, Marolyn, of North Little Rock; a granddaughter, Margaret Dorman of Houston, Texas; a special friend, Louise Furnell of North Little Rock; and numerous friends and loved ones.

A service of celebration was held on Friday, April 19, 2013 at Levy UMC. Interment followed in Rest Hills Memorial Park.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests donations be made

to Hendrix College, 1600 Washington Avenue, Conway, AR 72032 for the Dorman Endowed Scholarship; to Levy UMC, 701 West 47th Street, North Little Rock, AR 72118; or to First UMC, 6701 JFK Boulevard, North Little Rock, AR 72116.

### SARDIS

#### A.M. Block

The Rev. A.M. Block, 81, of the Sardis community, passed away Wednesday, March 27, 2013.

He was born on Feb. 19, 1932, in Clovis, New Mexico, to Walter and Floriene Block, who preceded him in death, as did a brother and four sisters. He married his high school sweetheart, Barbara Couch, on Dec. 19, 1951, after a courtship that began with a fishing trip. Together they raised three children by modeling hard work and sharing great wisdom. He then became the grandfather of three grandsons who share his gracious and giving spirit. He shared with everyone he encountered, stranger or not, countless stories of adoration about those he loved most: his family.



**A.M. Block**

Block was a man of service. He served his country as a Korean War medic by tending to fallen and injured soldiers, and he honorably served his personal Savior, Jesus Christ. As he would explain, God called him into preaching while he made deliveries on a wholesale truck. Accepting his calling, Bro. Block, a scholar by nature, attended Henderson State University and SMU's Perkins School of Theology. He was ordained an elder in the Little Rock Conference in 1981, and served faithfully for over 30 years. His ministry included churches in Dierks, Dalark/Manchester, Hampton/Harrell, Sardis, Eudora/Parkdale, Pine Bluff and Junction City.

Upon his death, the Sardis community lost a dear friend, a giving neighbor and a pillar of high regard. He and his family settled in the community in 1980. His infectious sense of humor and wit created everlasting friendships. His love for his church, Sardis United Methodist, will be one of legacy. He pastored, counseled and encouraged others with his kind, wise words that left everyone thirsty for biblical knowledge and understanding. His humble demeanor reached out to the hearts of others and his generosity filled the food pantry shelves that brought comfort to so many. His daily friendly phone calls and visits proved how much he truly cared for his

friends and neighbors. With his passion for gardening, it wasn't unusual to see him working in his yard or tending his roses wearing faded overalls and a joyous smile. So, it would only be fitting to say that the sower found in Matthew 13 was the example by which Bro. Block lived his life and inspired others to follow.

He is survived by his wife of 61 years, Barbara Couch Block; three children, Kenny Block and his wife, Michelle, and LaNita Davis and her husband, Jerry, all of Sardis; and Michael Block and his wife, Theresa, of Bryant; three grandsons, Daniel, Stephen and Christian Davis; and two sisters, Pauline Smith of Tulia, Texas, and Naomi Kelm of Pringle, Ore.

Services were held Saturday, March 30, at Sardis United Methodist Church. In lieu of flowers, the family requests that you continue Bro. Block's ministry by supporting the Sardis UMC Food Pantry, 10715 W. Sardis Road, Bauxite, AR 72011.

### STAMPS

#### Dorothy Lee Hawkins

Dorothy Lee Hawkins, 82, passed away April 13, 2013, in Stamps.

She was born Feb. 18, 1931, in Lamb, Ark., to Levi and Ider Powell Slater. She was a pastor's wife and dedicated United Methodist whose membership was at Parks UMC. She was a wonderful cook and painter. Dorothy loved gardening, flower arranging and other crafts. She was a dedicated wife and mother.

She was preceded in death by her parents; her husband, the Rev. Raymond Hawkins, a retired elder in the Arkansas Conference; a daughter, Linda R. Hawkins; a brother, Bruce Slater; and two sisters, Viola Hughes and Virginia Woods.

Survivors include a daughter, Marsha Wilcox and her husband, Danny; a son, the Rev. David Hawkins and his wife, Beth; grandchildren Amy, Mark and Todd Wilcox, and Christy Isbell; and great-grandchildren Matthew Hall and Wyatt Wilcox.

Visitation will be on Friday, May 10, 2013, from 6 to 7:30 p.m., at Martin Funeral Home in Waldron. A memorial service will be held at the Hawkins Cemetery on May 11, 2013, at 10 a.m.

In lieu of flowers, memorial donations may be made to the Hawkins Cemetery care fund P.O. Box 1640, Waldron, AR 72958; or to Parks UMC, P.O. Box 654, Waldron, AR 72958.

## Maundy Thursday drama gives three perspectives on Christ's Passion

Piney Grove UMC Hot Springs traditionally offers a special dramatic performance each year as part of its Maundy Thursday worship service. This year's service featured *Trilogy* by Renae Meredith, in which three characters witness and describe the Passion of Christ.

The drama provided a moving experience for the actors and the congregation, which included more than 100 people. The cast of *Trilogy* included, from left, John Landrum as Peter, Keena Kinsey as Mary Magdalene and Barry Kirksey as the Roman Centurion.



COURTESY PHOTO



## Joyful sacrifice made on Easter morning

Emily Grace Schick, age 10, spent months growing her long hair, planning to donate it to Locks of Love, a non-profit organization that provides hairpieces to financially disadvantaged children who suffer from long-term medical hair loss. Emily made the donation during Easter Sunday worship to help her father, the Rev. Greg Schick of St. James UMC Little Rock, illustrate his Easter sermon topic: the joy we give to others when we make a sacrifice of ourselves, even in some small way.

COURTESY PHOTO



## BCD celebrates opening of EmPowerment Center



AUM PHOTO BY AMY FORBUS

LITTLE ROCK—"I have one question: Do you believe in miracles?" asked Deborah Bell, director of programs for Better Community Development (BCD) Inc. at the beginning of the April 5 ribbon cutting ceremony for BCD's new EmPowerment Center at 3604 12th Street.

The EmPowerment Center will be in the business of miracles, providing state-licensed substance abuse treatment, prevention and intervention programs, life skills and career training, community programs and many other skills to empower individuals and improve lives. It also includes permanent housing for people with special needs. The new 25,000 square-foot LEED-certified facility features supportive housing, office space, conference rooms and classrooms.

City Director Ken Richardson called the EmPowerment Center an important part of 12th Street Corridor redevelopment. "We're going to advocate for marshaling more resources in the inner part of our community," he said.

A number of other community leaders offered congratulations to BCD, including Gov. Mike Beebe, who toured the facility before the event, and Little Rock Mayor Mark Stodola, who participated in the ribbon cutting.

Originally founded as Black Community Developers, an outreach program of Theresa Hoover United Methodist Church, the organization in 2010 changed its name to Better Community Development to reflect the inclusive nature of its programs. BCD provides outpatient services and residential treatment for up to 58 people with substance abuse problems, a homeless shelter, an HIV/AIDS ministry, job training, permanent and supportive housing and a gang intervention program. BCD also invests in the community's physical infrastructure by building affordable housing for low-to-moderate income families.

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## Faith Funds

### *Spirit of Collaboration*

What characterizes the United Methodist Foundation in its 50th year? Board Chair Dr. Sandy Smith of Russellville believes it is the spirit of collaboration between the Foundation and the Arkansas Conference to strengthen Conference ministries, resources and leadership.

"And I think the Foundation is instilling a renewed spirit of giving in Arkansas Methodists," she said. "People in local churches are excited that their gifts, along with the generosity of others, may be the reason their new pastor was able to graduate from a United Methodist seminary debt free." Sandy serves on the Conference Board of Ordained Ministry Committee. She thinks the growth in Arkansans attending United Methodist seminaries is based, in part, on the UMFA Seminary Scholarship Fund.

"A good number of our grants are in the area of leadership development," Sandy explained. "Programs like Advancing Pastoral Leadership, Crossing Jordan, Small Church Leadership, the Spiritual Direction Partnership with Perkins, and the Academy for Spiritual Formation all work to harness the potential of lay and clergy leaders in our Conference."

The wife of Rev. Roy Smith, senior pastor at First United Methodist Church-Russellville, has been active at churches throughout Arkansas. She moved from her native North Carolina to Arkansas in 1981 after meeting Roy at Duke. Sandy utilizes her doctorate in Nursing as Department Head of Emergency Management at Arkansas Tech University. They have two adult children.



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