

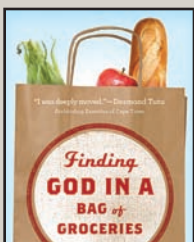
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Sister Judith Marie Keith of the Sisters of Mercy has her blood pressure taken by Deborah Martin, a registered nurse and a member of Grace Community UMC Fort Smith. Martin and other Healthy Congregations Ministry volunteers offered blood pressure readings at a July 18 community event.

PHOTO BY BRENDA HOOK

United Methodists at forefront of Fort Smith-area health ministry

BY AMY FORBUS
Editor

A United Methodist congregation is a chief supporter of a health ministry that connects Fort Smith-area faith communities with parish nurses and health promoters.

Healthy Congregations Ministry (HCM), an ecumenical program that began in 2004 with a focus on parish nurses, has re-launched to expand its opportunities for outreach. Its mission: to transform communities by transforming lives.

Numerous members of Grace Community UMC Fort Smith already have helped with the ministry, led by fellow members Brenda Hook and Dr. Margaret Tremwel.

Hook, a former director of the local charitable health clinic, used her grant writing skills to seek funding for HCM. A grant from the Degen Foundation, a Fort Smith-based organization dedicated to addressing health and education

needs in the River Valley region, will pay to train 60 parish nurses, providing educational and spiritual resources. The Rev. Janice Sudbrink, a registered nurse and a United Methodist deacon, will conduct those training sessions, with the first one set for Sept. 19-21.

Body, mind, spirit

Once trained in ministering to the needs of body, mind and spirit in their communities, parish nurses will make congregational needs assessments.

“For a church that’s got an aging population, their needs will be different than a church that’s got 20- and 30-year-olds with small children,” Hook said, adding that assessments provide the best way for parish nurses to learn what kind of health focus the people of a congregation truly need.

HCM is modeled after Promotores de Salud (Promoters of

Health) in Central and South America, which Tremwel saw up-close during two years she spent living in Nicaragua. The Promotores de Salud program empowers lay leaders with self-worth and value while promoting health and faith development.

Tremwel points out that churches uniting to share the love of Christ in their communities can help tackle problems that a single church alone couldn’t begin to address, such as the need for community mental health services in addition to basic health screenings.

“Our ultimate goal is not taking blood pressure,” she says. “Our ultimate goal is to form disciples as the Body of Christ, each from our unique traditions with our unique gifts. As individuals, we cannot succeed, but as a group, we can.”

Parish nurses, who must be RNs, are not the only type of health advocate available through HCM. For example, Tremwel and Hook are

among those who will be trained as “congregational health promoters.” This role is open to persons interested in the health of their congregation—whether an LPN, an MD, a personal trainer or simply someone with a calling to help others achieve and maintain good health, regardless of professional background.

Four-county plan

HCM plans to equip parish nurses and health promoters in four counties: Sebastian and Crawford in Arkansas, and Le Flore and Sequoyah in Oklahoma. They hope to reach 80 congregations in the coming year, emphasizing outreach efforts to assist uninsured and underserved residents—including African-American and Latino communities, as well as the elderly.

Mission UMC Fort Smith, a predominantly African-American congregation, and its pastor, the Rev. [See HEALTH MINISTRY, page 4]

When the waters recede: a glimpse inside disaster recovery

Stories from a United Methodist checking on neighbors in Scott County, Arkansas

BY PEGGY CATRON
Special Contributor

Editor's note: Peggy Catron, supply pastor of Parks UMC, shared these thoughts on Facebook during the last week of June, as she and church members continued to care for the surrounding community in the wake of flooding. Flood victims' names have been changed in the version that follows.

It's after 2 p.m. when I turn the Subaru toward Cedar Creek. The area is just five miles from our little church, and one of the areas hardest hit by the recent flood. Some homes couldn't even be reached the first day after the flood when we opened the church to provide whatever relief we could to the victims.

Now, the water has receded, leaving devastation that a few families will be dealing with for months—even years—to come. With help from the community and UMCOR, Parks UMC has stood by the victims, providing food, labor and emotional support. Today I'm checking in on my friends, learning what needs remain unmet.

'Change of plans'

My first stop is at the home of Tom Barnes. His house is right on the Little Cedar Creek, and sustained extensive damage. The water rose to at least two feet inside the house. After many hours donated by UMCOR-certified disaster recovery teams and Parks UMC members, the drywall has been stripped and replaced in all but four rooms.

I'm surprised when Bill Barnes, Tom's father, answers the door. Bill, in his late 60s or early 70s, slight of frame with snow white hair, motions to the chair in the living room. "Change of plans," he says. There in the chair is Tom, sitting with his leg propped up and cradled in an air cast. "What happened?" I ask.

"I broke my ankle," Tom says, barely taking his eyes off the television. Bill motions for me to sit, and I notice the despondency in his demeanor. "He goes in for surgery Thursday," Bill says. "Are there any more teams coming? I've been trying to put up sheetrock in the back room, but it's kinda tough by myself."

"Besides work teams," I ask,

Today she shows me some samples of vinyl flooring.

"This is what I'm hoping to get to put down in the kitchen. It's waterproof," she says. "If I ever get flooded again, all I have to do is pick it up and wipe it off and put it right back down."

We've had groups working at Lena's as well, and while much

Core Measure 2
We will establish the mission field as the primary focus of our attention and resources instead of directing the majority of our attention and resources to mere maintenance of congregations and clergy.

"What is the greatest need you have right now that would make life easier?"

He leads me to the garage, where the kitchen cabinets sit in pieces. "They had to cut these out to replace the sheetrock," he says. "I don't even know if we can use them still. It sure would help if we had a kitchen sink. Right now we can't even get water to wash dishes."

Like all the other houses I will visit today, there's no furniture; all the beds, chairs, and couches have long been carried out, destroyed by filthy flood water. I wonder as I leave how they sleep at night.

'You don't realize how much it meant'

The next stop is across the street at Lena's house. She is a single mom in her late 40s, and runs the small convenience store just down the road. The door is open, and I announce myself with a loud "Hello!"

"Hey there!" Lena chirps as she comes around the corner. The house used to be a small Pentecostal church. Lena attended there as a child, and when the opportunity arose, she converted it into a cozy home. She's working hard, as she has every day after work since the flood.

progress has been made, there's still a considerable amount to be done. I also notice her cabinets sitting in the middle of the floor.

"How are your kitchen cabinets?" I ask. "I thought they were going to be OK," she says as she leads me behind them, "but look. See how they are buckled and separated? My father says they might have to be replaced." Her brow creases, and she continues. "I don't really know. I just need skilled labor at this point. I don't know anyone who does cabinets..." her voice trails off, and I hear the enormity of the task close in on her.

But Lena shakes it off quickly, and soon she's showing me the decorative boards she's dried out and plans to replace on some of the walls, and the painted concrete that she did herself with a kit. I finish my notes, and as we're walking to the door, she says again, "You all will never know how much we appreciate all you've done."

"We haven't done that much," I say. "We just cooked a little food and help where we can."

Lena gets very serious, looks me straight in the eyes, and says, "No, you don't realize how much it meant unless you've been down here in the muck. All day long, in the muck and the dirt, dead tired, I couldn't even think about trying to fix something to eat. None of us could. In fact I didn't eat—all day—except when I got away and came down to the church to eat a meal. You don't know what that meant."

Lena is tough, and doesn't complain; but her eyes reinforced the story. As I leave, I promise that somehow we'll get the cabinets in and the sink hooked up. As for beds, couches, chairs and so much else that is needed... well, I tell myself, we'll think about that tomorrow.

Strength of spirit, depth of gratitude

For four hours I visit with those who have similar stories—and similar heart and grit. The Parkers, who sustained four feet of sewer water in their home, lost a brand new vehicle that had no flood insurance. But Sue Parker proudly shows me the kitchen tile they bought with the insurance money from Mike's totaled Harley. They are retired, with a limited income; yet, they are so grateful for the help they've received that they swear when this is all over, they'll roast a pig for their friends who were flooded and all those who have helped and brought them food.

Then there are the Moores, who, in addition to losing the contents of their home in the flood, lost all their sheep and lambs. When I come to the door, they invite me in; I sit in an office chair next to the two lawn chairs that constitute living room furniture.

Melissa's eyes mist over when she talks about losing all the books she's collected over the years. She tells me that they've had offers from people who want to donate sheep to replace their livestock, but they have no place to put them because all their fences have been destroyed. "I can't even think about replacing the fences until the house is back together," Larry says.

I visit a few more houses before heading back toward the church. In the car, with my list of needs, I'm overwhelmed by what remains, and by the strength of spirit and depth of gratitude I've witnessed. Amid the devastation, the theme on everyone's lips is how blessed they've felt by the community that has surrounded them and lifted them up. I'm humbled by the outpouring of gratitude, and yet I know that what we've done would not have been possible without the immediate support and outpouring of resources by the United Methodist Committee on Relief and our Conference Disaster Response team. Today, I am proud to be a United Methodist.

To learn how you can help with Disaster Response ministry or Volunteers In Mission, contact Janice or Byron Mann at disaster@arumc.org or vim@arumc.org.

Would you  Like to receive daily reflections from Bishop Mueller?

 [facebook.com/arkansasumc](https://www.facebook.com/arkansasumc)

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Replenish**



Be sure to recycle your *Arkansas United Methodist* when you're through reading it (or give it to a friend).



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Submission Deadlines

Issue Date	Submission Deadline
Sept. 6	Aug. 21
Oct. 4	Sept. 18
Nov. 1	Oct. 17



A word from the Bishop

BY GARY E. MUELLER

Leading with Jesus

It's been a newsworthy summer. The Supreme Court upheld the legality of gay marriage. George Zimmerman was found not guilty in the death of Trayvon Martin, and the issue of racism once again became a topic of conversation. A variety of people, including the now reviled Edward Snowden, shed light on the extent to which the federal government is gathering information on citizens of the United States.

While not surprising, it's interesting to see how Christians have weighed in on these issues from very different—and often diametrically

opposed—perspectives. In fact, this is so true that the person you sat next to in church on Sunday probably holds very different opinions from you on these and many other matters.

It's easy, and therefore very tempting, to believe there's a single Christian answer to every issue and that it can be easily discovered. Unfortunately, however, it's just not that simple.

The reason for this complexity is that everyone comes at these issues from a different cultural perspective, life experience, political leaning and personality, in addition to what we believe as Christians.

These factors work in concert with each other to influence what you believe, how you react and when you will respond.

That's why it's so important to begin by asking, "What do I lead with?" This five-word question is so important because what you lead with often determines where you end up.

If you've had a particularly painful life experience, you may end up in one place. If you've been a staunch member of a political party for a number of years, you may end up in another. If you've grown up in just one region of the country, you

may end up at still another. And then, when you throw in your unique personality, there's no telling where you'll end up!

Maybe, just maybe, it's time to get serious about leading with Jesus. This does not mean simply quoting those parts of Scripture about Jesus with which you feel comfortable. It's more about trusting Jesus to lead you by truly trying to see through Jesus' eyes, listen with Jesus' ears, think with Jesus' mind, feel with Jesus' heart and touch with Jesus' hands.

But beware. Leading with Jesus will be a challenge. You're going to

need a good dose of humility. You'll be dealing with difficult, even painful, issues. And you may end up with very different answers from what you ever imagined possible.

Can I tell you exactly how leading with Jesus is going to change things? Of course not.

Does it mean everyone will agree about everything? That's ridiculous.

Does it mean Christians will come together to solve all our problems? Not in your lifetime.

But I trust Jesus. I trust you. And I think you're ready to follow where Jesus leads.

APPOINTMENTS

The following appointments have been announced since the adjournment of the 2013 Arkansas Annual Conference:

- Marion Fleming - Hardy UMC (effective July 1)

- Emily Burch - Central UMC Fayetteville (associate pastor; effective July 15)

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

The church that died to live

BY WILLIAM O. "BUD" REEVES
Special Contributor

"If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake, and for the sake of the gospel, will save it."

—Mark 8:34-35 (NRSV)

"No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends."

—John 15:13 (NRSV)

One of the joys I experience as a District Superintendent is to see the Holy Spirit moving in a variety of churches. Don't let anybody tell you the church is dead! Day by day, United Methodist people across Arkansas are making decisions that will bring fruitfulness, vitality and transformation to their churches and communities.

Shortly after I moved to the Northeast District in July of 2012, I had two conversations that eventually became one. The Rev. John Miles II, senior pastor at First United Methodist Church Jonesboro, told me they were thinking about starting a satellite campus somewhere in Jonesboro to better address the needs of the mission field. And the Rev. Harmon Whitehurst, pastor at Nettleton UMC Jonesboro, told me he was ready, at age 88, to retire again, and that Nettleton was questioning the possibility of their survival.

In February of this year, the Rev. Bob Crossman, conference director of new church starts, and I met with the Nettleton folks to discuss their future. We talked about their past, and their present trajectory of decline. When we asked about their future, one man brought his fists together to symbolize the shutting of their doors.

So we began to explore the option of Nettleton UMC turning over their church to First UMC Jonesboro—literally handing them the keys to start a new ministry there that would address the mission field in the neighborhood (where very few of the church members live any longer), bring new energy through different forms of worship and transplant some of the successful DNA of First UMC into a new location.

On June 2, 2013, the Nettleton UMC charge conference voted to discontinue the congregation. But they did not vote to die. They voted to live on in a new form. I was touched and, frankly, amazed at the spirit of this group of disciples who were willing to give up control of a church they loved to see something better happen. It was a step of faith and courage. It was a vote for resurrection.

The Rev. Blake Langston, who will be the new campus pastor for the Nettleton project, shared his vision for the new church and introduced a couple of the launch team members who will be helping him. We have been very honest about the amount of change that is about to take place. In fact, most of the changes are yet to be worked out. At this point, it really is all about faith, hope and trust. But the people of Nettleton decided to take that leap!

Closing a church is a sad occasion, and after the vote, we held a little worship service. Pastor Harmon Whitehurst led us in a litany of thanksgiving for the church. And there were testimonies about the blessings people had received from

Nettleton. Harmon himself had joined that church as a young man in 1954. Another man shared that he was confirmed there in 1953. Some were baptized there, or their children were. Some were married in the church. It was touching to hear the stories of deep connection that the church had with people's lives.

Harmon finally asked if it would be all right to have his funeral there. We hope it's a while before that happens, but the new church—as "different" as it may be—will still baptize, share the Lord's Supper, preach the Word, marry people, and bury them.

We closed this time of holy conferencing by singing, "Blest be the tie that binds our hearts in Christian love. The fellowship of kindred minds is like to that above." And the new pastor, Blake, led us in prayer.

What has happened at Nettleton is not the answer for every declining church. We do hope that some other large churches will see this model and pursue partnerships for the good of the Kingdom. What it all says to me is that no matter what the situation, there are creative ways to address the mission field to make transformation happen.

There are partnerships that can be formed, even outside of United Methodist organizations. There are connectional resources, at the district and Conference level, to help churches seek and find new

direction and energy for ministry. I believe we will continue to see more creative things happen, and I will give God the glory in advance!

The Rev. Dr. Reeves now serves as superintendent of the Northwest District. He was appointed to the Northeast District when another version of this commentary appeared in the district's newsletter, Northeast News.

'The Nettleton UMC charge conference voted to discontinue the congregation. But they did not vote to die. They voted to live on in a new form.... It was a vote for resurrection.'



Bud Reeves

Health ministry (continued from page 1)

Ulysses Washington, have partnered with Grace Community UMC in helping with HCM's re-launch. And while HCM currently exists as a ministry of Grace Community UMC, it is seeking separate nonprofit status so it can become ecumenical.

"We want to give this ministry away and become partners with churches of all denominations in our area," said the Rev. Jeff Jones, senior pastor of Grace Community UMC.

Stroke, high blood pressure, heart disease, diabetes and obesity have reached epidemic levels in the counties where HCM is focusing its initial efforts. To address these problems, Hook secured a grant to provide churches with blood pressure cuffs, glucometers and test strips.

"We are going to start off by training one licensed RN from each of the interested churches," she said. "Then what we are asking them to do is adopt a church that doesn't have an RN in it. They'll train that church and be a mentor for congregational health promoters."



Dr. Margaret Tremwel talks with a member of the community during a recent blood pressure screening.

PHOTO BY BRENDA HOOK

In addition to its local ties, HCM is connected with the Faith Community Nursing program of the Church Health Center in Memphis, Tenn. And parish nurses and health promoters aren't limited to their churches; they also can work through community-wide events.

"We all know that our country has major healthcare issues," Jones said. "Is there a role for the church to play in helping to address the health

care issues of our day? We think so, especially in the area of preventive medicine and encouraging healthy lifestyles. We are called to care for whole persons.... To impact one area of a person's life in a positive way for Christ is to impact all the others as well."

To connect with HCM, visit its Facebook page: [facebook.com/HealthyCongregationsMinistry](https://www.facebook.com/HealthyCongregationsMinistry).

Many review 2013 Annual Conference positively

Based on the more than 300 responses from an evaluation emailed to clergy and lay members and other Annual Conference attendees, the 2013 Annual Conference was one of the best in recent memory.

The nine-question evaluation included five questions about content, worship and the convention center facilities. The survey allowed respondents to offer comments or suggestions on each question. Respondents took the opportunity to give feedback, generating 100 pages of comments. Here's a representative sampling of the reviews.

Responses to the statement, "**I left Annual Conference with new energy for making disciples**":

- "I left Annual Conference feeling this is the way John Wesley and others intended Annual Conference to be all about."
- "We were certainly challenged, especially by the outstanding speakers and breakout sessions."
- "I am reminded of Rev. Dr. Alyce McKenzie's illustration that unless there is fire in the furnace, it makes little difference how much we jack up the thermostat. Sometimes I sensed we were monkeying with the thermostat and neglecting the furnace."
- "Motivation to accomplish this task was high."

Responses to the statement, "**I left Annual Conference with new ideas for making disciples**":

- "The breakout sessions with information presented and shared among churches were beneficial."
- "Not sure about new ideas, but each of us have more of a feeling of personal responsibility to do so."
- "I'm encouraged—and anxious—for opportunities to be bold."
- "The guest speakers helped to advance new ideas. I shall not apologize for being a United Methodist!"

Responses to the statement, "**The Conference agenda/schedule enabled me to use my time faithfully and wisely**":

- "Conference agenda was best I've ever seen. Great speakers, stayed on time very well and used time to the best."
- "The thoughtful sermons we heard during the day deserved some time for reflection and conversation, rather than going immediately into business sessions."
- "Several offsite meetings did not allow time to get back in time for conference schedules."
- "Many changes this year were either very good or at least gave us permission to explore our schedule."

Most of the survey respondents rated highly the additional emphasis on worship, with the exception of the way Communion was served. The 2014 planning committee has made addressing that issue a priority for next year's gathering.

Reviews of the Statehouse Convention Center were mixed, but mostly positive:

- "It was great to have meeting and display rooms together."
- "Good facility. Downtown Little Rock location was not too difficult. The \$5 parking helped."
- "Much better than last time (yes, I am that old). Parking still an issue, but planning ahead with advance information helped. Temperature was not sub-arctic—yay!"
- "Possibly not optimal for worship, but honestly not bad. The Statehouse Convention Center exceeded my expectations. I must admit, though, I'm a fan of hosting the conference in Hot Springs. Parking is free-convenient, traffic patterns are simpler, and there are many hotels within walking distance." [Note: the Conference body voted to hold the 2015-2017 meetings in Hot Springs; 2014 will be at the Hammons Convention Center in Rogers.]

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

DS affirms Scouts' decision

I affirm the recent decision by the Boy Scouts of America not to deny membership on the basis of sexual orientation alone. It is congruent with our Social Principles, which affirm that all persons are created in the image of God and need the ministry of the church. Further, we do not reject our gay and lesbian members and friends, but offer all persons the grace of God.

No matter how we feel about homosexuality, we can agree that the values and activities of Scouting are good for kids.

Sexual orientation is not sexual activity. Nobody is suggesting any sort of sexual conduct—heterosexual or homosexual—be allowed in Scouting.

Critics who claim this decision is a slippery slope toward openly gay Scout leaders should look at the UMC. We've been on that slope for 40 years.

Openness to all boys (and girls) through Scouting programs is a witness to the all-inclusive love of God and an opportunity for outreach. Though faith is a Scout value, the only contact many Scouts have with church is through their troop.

By encouraging Scouting ministries and being open to all who come, we can impact young lives for Christ. That is our mission.

William O. "Bud" Reeves
Northwest District Superintendent
Life Scout

The Land of Two Dollar and Fifty Cent Coffee

The land of two dollar and fifty cent coffee was

almost a biblical land for some of us who had to cross a great river to get there. This truly had to be a land flowing with milk and honey for the people to be able to afford the extravagant prices we encountered: \$2.50 coffee and \$20 sandwiches, along with \$10 parking which you could get at half price if you validated your ticket. This was also a land of historical giants: Presidents, Presidential candidates, and war heroes just to name a few. It was a land of art and beauty filled with skyscrapers and log cabins, museums and international foundations. As we arrived for Annual Conference, we were ushered to an underground room with music, preaching, prayer, videos, speeches, and votes on issues of the day. It looked like Holy Conferencing just as it had been described to us over the last few decades. However, there was still a feeling of expectation that this year would be different, and for me and the small church delegates around me, it was.

Mark Quick
Pastor, Stoney Point and Floyd UMCs

Letters to the Editor policy:

All letters must be signed (name and city/church) and include the writer's phone number or email address. Letters may be sent to editor@arumc.org, or to 800 Daisy Bates Drive, Little Rock, AR 72202.

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.

Tips to keep your email and web browsing secure

BY MARK EPPERSON

Director, Arkansas Conference Center for Technology

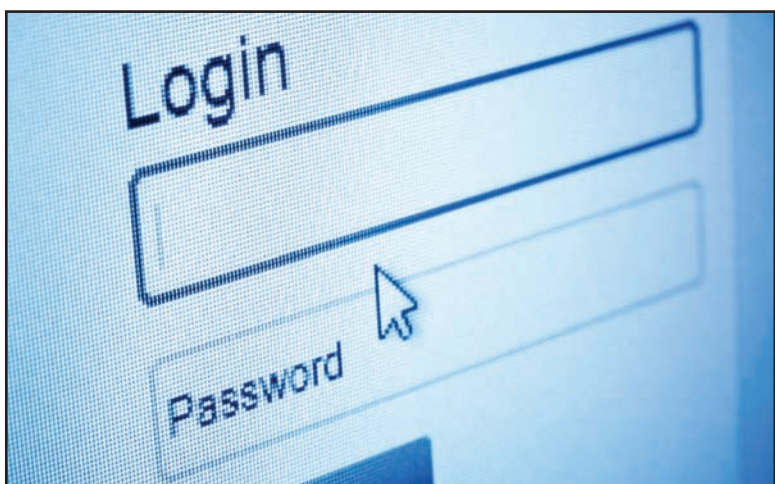
In light of the recent email phishing scams that have hit some arumc.org email accounts, Internet and email security is high on the discussion list in information technology and clergy circles. Gone are the days when a simple antivirus program would ensure your computing device could not be compromised. With today's advanced technology, hackers and cyber thieves are using much more sophisticated tactics.

You can, however, have a pleasant and safe browsing session each time you access the Internet and your email account by following a few simple rules. Here are some items to consider when you are working online:



Mark Epperson

1. Don't open any email attachments or click on emailed links unless you can be sure of **all** of the following:
 - a. You know the email is from the person it says it's from (when in doubt, call or text the person to verify).
 - b. You are expecting an attachment from that person or have received attachments and links from them before.
 - c. You recognize no unusual changes in the person's writing style (e.g., sentences not starting with a capital letter like i instead of I, incorrect punctuation, verb tenses, etc.).
 - d. You have a compelling reason to open the attachment; you know they generally send attachments that are trustworthy or are from a credible source; and the attachment has met virus protection standards.
2. Don't download anything from sites you are unfamiliar with, period.
3. Install all operating system security updates (e.g., Windows Updates, Mac OS Updates).
4. Make sure your operating system's firewall is turned on.
5. Think before you click, and notice where the hover box says the click will take you. It may not lead where you expect.
6. Be very careful when using removable storage media that came from someone else (e.g., thumb drives, media cards, etc.).



It also is important to never share your password with anyone. Be sure you have a strong, secure password for any account you keep online. You can test your password strength at www.howsecureismypassword.net.

Many IT professionals throughout the corporate and nonprofit sectors agree that the first and main thing you can do to ensure safe browsing and emailing is to use plain old common sense. Always browse defensively, as if someone is out to steal your personal information. If a site or link looks malicious, chances are it probably is malicious. Think before you click, and try to understand what is going to happen if you click. Don't just click for click's sake; make sure you are doing it with a purpose and not to just explore.

Most importantly, understand that the Conference and our email platform vendor, Google, take your privacy, safety and security very seriously, and will go to all lengths possible to provide IT systems, platforms and applications that you can use with confidence. If you have questions, contact us at helpdesk@arumc.org.

Church's team effort makes difference for a neighbor

The average attendance at the 55-member Springfield United Methodist Church stands at 32 so far this year. But the congregation's relatively small size doesn't keep it from transforming the world.

On June 15, Springfield UMC assembled a team of 21 people—two-thirds of the church's average weekly attendance—to build a wheelchair ramp for one of their elderly neighbors in the small town of Springfield, Ark. It became a time of fellowship in addition to service, said the Rev. Hawk Coleman, pastor of Springfield and Mallettown UMCs.

"[It] was driven, planned and executed by the lay people of the church," he added.

A church member had learned of a woman with limited mobility whose home lacked a ramp, making it difficult for her to leave or return. That member shared the need with others in the congregation to see who could help.

Two church members, both professional builders,



Bo White (left), Bill Ed Smith and his son, Hunter Jackson Smith, age 5, were among the Springfield UMC wheelchair ramp building crew. COURTESY PHOTO

led the building team, and another church member secured a lumber donation from a Searcy building supply company. Others set up a grill and provided lunch for the workers and neighbor. Persons of all ages and abilities contributed to the success of the project.

The arumc.org email address: Why should pastors, lay leaders have one?

One of the significant initiatives of the Imagine Ministry process, made possible through the Center for Technology, is a common email system to keep all pastors and lay leaders connected. Many clergy and lay members took advantage of the opportunity to register for an arumc.org email address at Annual Conference, while others have since registered for an address using the request form located in the Center for Technology portal at myarumc.org.

A goal envisioned by the Imagine Ministry team is for clergy members to have a single email address to follow them from one appointment to the next. It eliminates the need to change email addresses due to a move, and simplifies the creation of a Conference directory. Having a Conference-branded email account allows you to keep your Conference and personal emails separate, and it gives you a searchable global address list for all other clergy and lay leaders in the Conference. It also eliminates what seems like a never-ending need to chase down email address changes due to clergy moves.

Other advantages to using the Conference-branded email address include:

- Access to a robust calendar system, including all internal shared calendars created by the districts and Conference office.
- Credentials for all future technology systems created by the Conference and Center for Technology will revolve around this address. A prime example is the Learning Management System. You should soon receive credentials and a link to this system, where the credentials begin with your arumc.org email address.
- The address automatically enrolls you in the Google Drive system, which will allow you to create and share documents and spreadsheets.

- Users have access to instant messaging/chat with anyone across the system, as well as personal video conference capability through the Google Plus Hangout interface.
- A universal email address creates awareness of the United Methodist Church in Arkansas. As our various networks and constituents across the state and beyond see the arumc.org email address, it establishes the impression of a connective entity. In today's world the standardization of a "corporate" or branded email account system is the norm for most religious, not-for-profit and charitable organizations with multiple locations. A prime example here in our backyard is Heifer International (heifer.org).
- If you prefer to maintain your current email as your primary address, after creating your arumc.org email, you can forward emails from that address to your current preferred account.

If you haven't already done so, please visit myarumc.org now to register for your free arumc.org email account. The 2013 Conference Directory will be finalized soon, and moving forward, your primary email address listed in the directory will be the one provided to you by the Conference: firstname.lastname@arumc.org.

Grace and peace,

Mark Epperson, director,
Arkansas Conference Center for Technology
The Rev. Susan Ledbetter, member,
Imagine Ministry Team
The Rev. Martha Taylor, training and marketing,
Arkansas Conference

A message from the Rev. David Freeman

Chair, Arkansas Conference Imagine No Malaria Task Force

Imagine that you are a young mother living in a remote village in Tanzania. You hold your child in your arms, trying to calm him. He's having a flare up of malaria. He shakes with chills from his fever. Nothing you do can console him as he screams from the stomach cramping and headache.

Your only choice is to take him to the nearest town where there is a health clinic. As you travel, you pray there will be something more there than overwhelmed nurses and no doctor or medicine. You also know that that will cost a month's worth of your family's wages should your child be lucky enough to receive treatment and medication. You just pray that this will be enough to carry him through to the next time his malaria flares up....and mostly you pray that there will be a next time.

But when you get to the clinic, something unimaginable happens. There's actually a doctor there. More than that, there's real medicine there—not just medicine to treat the malaria symptoms, but to actually treat the parasite that lives in your son's liver. He'll have to be there for several days to receive treatment. You protest and say that this will cost too much. But they smile and say it doesn't cost anything. How can this be? Is this luck or providence?

Could it be that all of this happened because some church far away in a remote village called Gravette held a spaghetti supper? Could it be that because some college students slept outside for a night to raise some money, your son's life will be spared? Could it be that because a church in Little Rock held a golf tournament, your child has a chance at a future? Could it be that because some people called Methodists in a strange land called Arkansas came together to fight malaria, your greatest hopes are real?

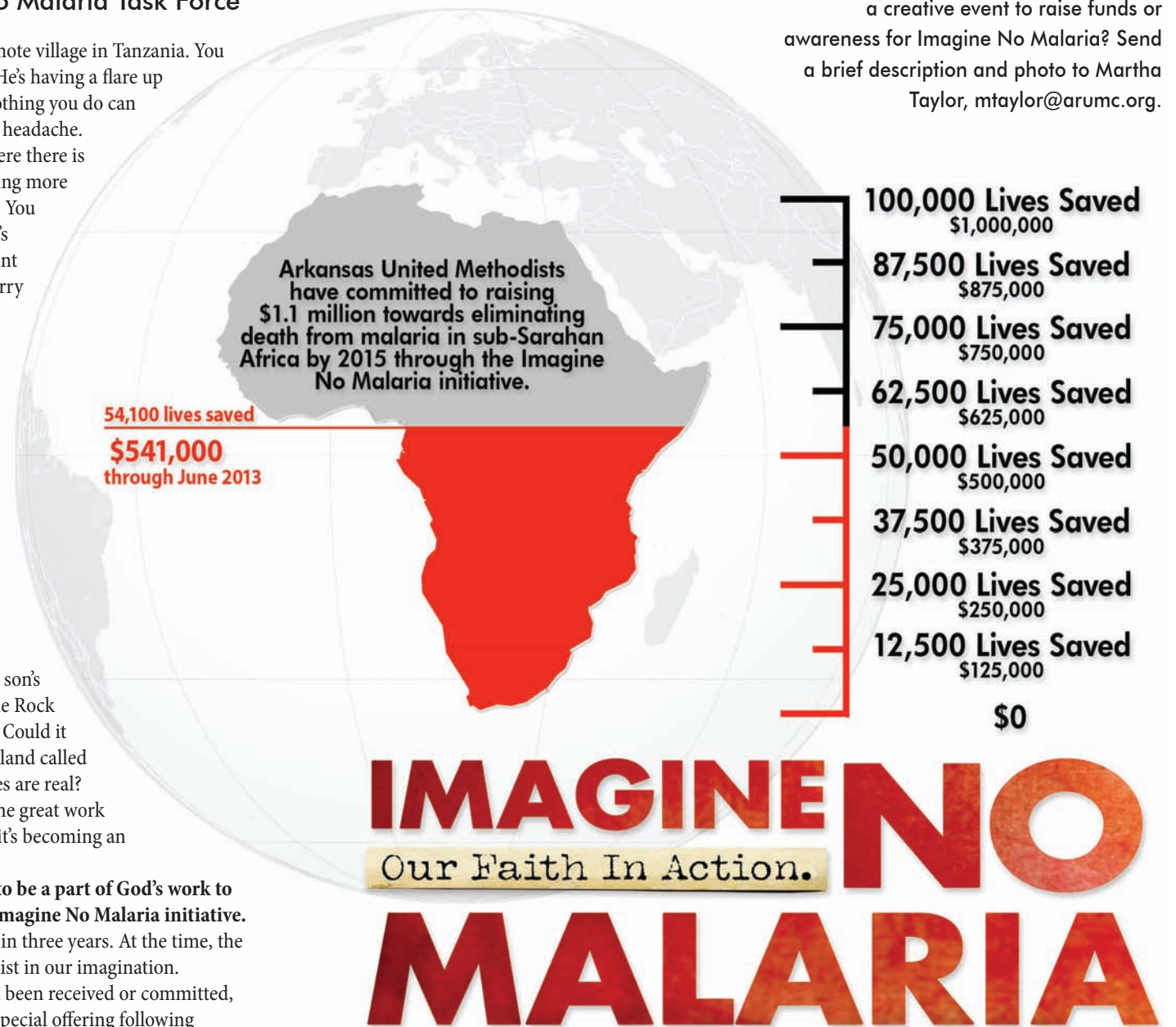
This is not a scenario we have to imagine. Because of the great work United Methodists are doing through Imagine No Malaria, it's becoming an everyday reality in sub-Saharan Africa.

The people of the Arkansas Conference committed to be a part of God's work to end deaths from malaria in Africa by 2015 through the Imagine No Malaria initiative. The Conference committed to raising more than \$1 million in three years. At the time, the task seemed so large and the possibilities seemed only to exist in our imagination.

At Annual Conference, I announced that \$390,000 had been received or committed, and that more than \$38,000 had been received thanks to a special offering following Bishop Tom Bickerton's sermon on Tuesday, June 11. But there is more to be done.

There is still a need and time to raise additional funds for Imagine No Malaria. For ideas and resources, visit www.imagenomalaria.org, or contact the Rev. Martha Taylor at mtaylor@arumc.org or 501-324-8035.

Has your church or small group organized a creative event to raise funds or awareness for Imagine No Malaria? Send a brief description and photo to Martha Taylor, mtaylor@arumc.org.



The above total reflects a dollar-for-dollar matching grant from the United Methodist Foundation of Arkansas. UMFA will match every gift received through the Arkansas Conference, up to \$333,333.

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Global Ministries
The United Methodist Church

Connect a college student with UM campus ministry

Pastors, college students or parents of college students—If you know of students in your churches who are attending a college or university, the Conference Board of Higher Education and Campus Ministry invites you to send their names and contact information to the chaplain or Wesley Foundation of the respective institution. United Methodist campus ministries try to reach out to all students, but need your help in this endeavor. It takes all of us to make disciples of Jesus Christ and help people continue in their spiritual growth.

On behalf of everyone involved in campus ministry in Arkansas, thank you.

Arkansas State University Wesley Foundation
The Rev. Eric Van Meter: astatewesley@yahoo.com

Arkansas Tech University Wesley Foundation
The Rev. Jason Molitor: atuwesleyminister@yahoo.com

HSU/OBU Wesley Foundation
The Rev. Jessica Durand: jessicadurand@hotmail.com

Hendrix College
The Rev. Wayne Clark: clark@hendrix.edu

Philander Smith College
The Rev. Ronnie Miller-Yow: rmiller-yow@philander.edu

Southern Arkansas University Wesley Foundation
The Rev. Mark Lasater: sau_wesley@hotmail.com

University of Arkansas Fayetteville Wesley Foundation
The Rev. Omar Al-Rikabi: omar@uawesley.com

University of Arkansas at Little Rock Wesley Foundation
The Rev. Maxine Allen: mallen@arumc.org

University of Arkansas at Monticello Wesley Foundation
The Rev. Kavan Dodson: edwardkavanaugh@hotmail.com

University of Central Arkansas Wesley Foundation
The Rev. John Palmer: wesfound@conwaycorp.net

University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff Wesley Foundation
The Rev. Hank Wilkins: senrevhank@aol.com

The Bridge, University of Arkansas Fort Smith
The Rev. Claire Caldwell: ccaldwell@fsfumc.org



New churches featured in video series

A new series of short videos shows the transforming effects new churches have on lives and communities in the Arkansas Conference. The videos feature interviews of pastors and laypersons at five Arkansas churches: Grace UMC East End (pictured above); Argenta UMC North Little Rock; CanvasCommunity UMC Little Rock; Christ Way UMC Jonesboro; and Journey Hispanic Mission Fort Smith. To view the videos, visit arumc.org/catchthevision.

The Catch the Vision initiative supports the launch of new churches in Arkansas through a special offering taken at Annual Conference, other gifts throughout the year and the willingness of established churches to serve as “mother churches” to new congregations. Catch the Vision makes it possible for new churches to reach into underserved and diverse mission fields.

Congregations interested in helping launch a new church may contact the Rev. Dr. Bob Crossman at bcrossman@arumc.org or 501-908-8177.

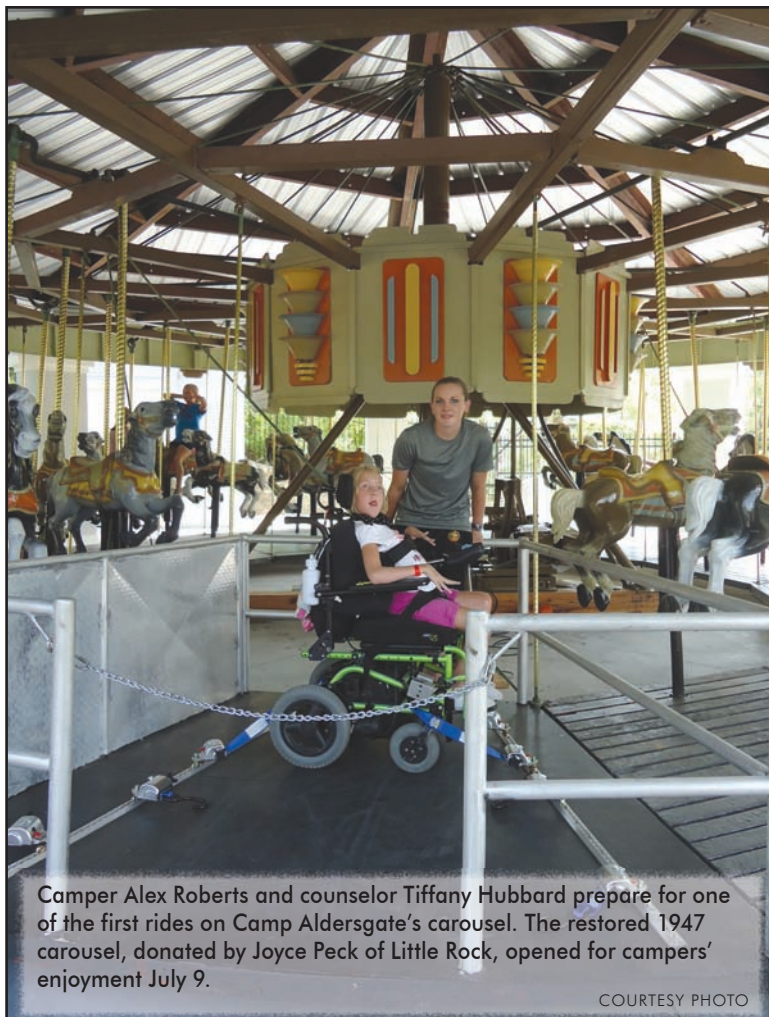
Camp Aldersgate dedicates restored carousel

Gift to camp will provide rides accessible to all

In 2009, Joyce Peck made a generous donation of a 1947 Allan Herchell carousel to Camp Aldersgate in Little Rock. This antique carousel was one of the two used at War Memorial Amusement Park, and was acquired in the 1990s by Peck and her husband, the late Cliff Peck.

On July 9, Joyce Peck cut the ribbon at a ceremony dedicating and presenting the carousel to Camp Aldersgate. Campers took rides on 30 horses and two wheelchair-accessible chariots, accompanied by music from the fully-operating calliope.

Camp Aldersgate, which creates life-changing experiences for individuals with special needs, looks forward to offering the carousel as an activity for campers during camp sessions. There also are plans to rent the carousel for special events, which will help with upkeep and provide supplementary funds for Camp Aldersgate. Another option for supporting the carousel: Sponsorship is available for five large horses and one chariot, which gives the sponsor naming rights for the horse or chariot and helps with operation and maintenance costs. Call 501-225-1444 for more information.



Camper Alex Roberts and counselor Tiffany Hubbard prepare for one of the first rides on Camp Aldersgate's carousel. The restored 1947 carousel, donated by Joyce Peck of Little Rock, opened for campers' enjoyment July 9.

COURTESY PHOTO

Three-point charge works together for growth

Many churches that share a pastor tend to keep their activities separate. But the Center Grove/Mt. Zion/Trinity Charge, near Gurdon, has found that working together means more opportunity for ministry.



For example, the charge hosts dinner and activities on Wednesday nights during the school year. The churches take turns providing the meal, and an average of 43 people attend. On a typical night, children and youth make up more than half that number.

One source of help for the ministry comes through the generosity of a larger church: St. Andrew UMC Arkadelphia lends their church van to transport children and youth, which resulted in an immediate attendance boost.

“Without the van, there would be at least eight to 10 [young people] who wouldn't get there, or who would have difficulty getting there,” says the Rev. Travis Langley, the charge's pastor.

Core Measure
1

We will be enriched by our Wesleyan heritage of Scriptural holiness so that we are connected by our mission of making disciples instead of being connected by our apportionments, appointments, and benefits.

The churches have a diverse group of youth, in ethnicity as well as in age. One church has younger children who will soon join in youth activities. All three churches reap rewards from this charge-wide approach to youth ministry. The youth wrote and performed last year's Christmas Eve program; they provide leadership on the district level, and attend Conference-wide events. In the photo above, they're reaching beyond their community by preparing relief kits to send to tornado-stricken areas.

COURTESY PHOTO

Prayer shawl tally hits 500



Mrs. Chester Arthur Small—“Miss Mittie” to her friends at First UMC Russellville—celebrated recently the milestone of crocheting her 500th prayer shawl for the church's prayer shawl ministry.

Miss Mittie has been a member of First UMC Russellville since 1965, and is a current member of the PK Merrill Sunday School Class and the Deaton Roush UMW Circle. She learned to crochet at the knee of her mother at age 8, using thread from fertilizer and feed sacks, some of which her mother would hand-dye. She joined the First UMC Prayer Shawl Ministry after receiving a shawl herself in 2008. In addition to making 500 shawls for this worthwhile ministry, Miss Mittie has made more than 100 shawls for friends and family.

This ministry began in 2005 with eight women, and has since grown to 25 participants. They meet each Wednesday morning, and all are welcome, regardless of skill level. The prayer shawls are blessed as they are completed and given when a need arises, such as an illness, a death, a marriage, the birth of a baby or as a gift to anyone in need of God's love.

—PHOTO BY LACY DICKS; STORY BY NANCY CORNWELL

Congregation takes a long look, sets five-year goals

BY AMY FORBUS
Editor

St. Paul UMC Searcy averages 223 in worship attendance, and has 34 small groups meeting regularly. And by 2018, they want those numbers to have doubled.

Earlier this year, the church formed a six-person team to discern long-range goals for the congregation. They have studied the demographics of their area using Mission Insite, a program available through the Arkansas Conference Center for Excellence in Clergy and Lay Leadership, and are working with congregational coaches John Crawford and Charles Long.

Crawford also serves as associate director of the Center for Excellence.

"The intergenerational nature of this six-person team makes a difference," said Crawford, adding that he's seen breakthroughs happen when group members belonging to different generations begin to learn from each other.

St. Paul's pastor, the Rev. Don Hall, asked the church's lay leadership committee to develop a list of members diverse in age, gender and years affiliated with the congregation, who would work well in a team environment.

"The committee did an excellent job of finding people who would talk, think things through, make a difference," he said.

"We're trying not to focus on ourselves," said team member Becky Gross at a July meeting.

Fellow team member Jennifer Knife put it simply: "We want to

bring people to Jesus."

"...not to our church roll," Gross added, as others in the room agreed.

They outlined the goals at a recent all-church meeting, and will keep the congregation updated as they discern steps toward becoming more fruitful. As they seek input from fellow church members, the team asks them to pray about how they feel called to help with the effort.

In addition to doubling attendance and small groups, they hope to double the number of people involved in missions, as well--if they can get an accurate count for their starting point. "I keep turning up new things we're doing, that I didn't know we were doing," Hall said.

Several team members have attended Evangelism Boot Camp sessions led by the Rev. Dr. Bob Crossman and hosted by First UMC Searcy. One important reminder they've received: Many people they'll be trying to reach are brand-new to the faith, so St. Paul members will need to learn to think differently to connect with them.

The group plans to issue a call to action to the congregation that lists the goals for the next five years, followed by an invitation for each member to become part of reaching those goals.

All the team members emphasize the congregation's mission: to make disciples of Jesus Christ, spread the Good News and reach the unchurched in their community. While the numbers will help them measure how they live up to that mission, what matters most is that they progress toward helping everyone they meet become a disciple of Jesus Christ.

VOLUNTEERS IN MISSION & DISASTER RESPONSE UPDATES

For information on any Volunteers In Mission (VIM) project below, contact the individual listed or Byron Mann, Conference VIM coordinator, at vim@arumc.org or 870-703-8361. For Disaster Response (DR) projects, contact Byron or Janice Mann, DR co-coordinators, at disaster@arumc.org or 870-703-8359 (Janice). To connect with these ministries on Facebook, search for "Volunteers in Mission & Disaster Response - Serving Arkansas & Beyond," and join the group for updates.

Teams needed in Scott, Garland Counties

VIM repair teams are still needed in the aftermath of flooding in Scott County, and there are also projects to aid in recovery from storm damage in Garland County. Contact Byron Mann to learn more.

Join a mission journey to Colombia

Consider joining Dan and Kathy Dunn of Highlands UMC Bella Vista on a mission adventure to Cartagena, Colombia, Feb. 19-25, 2014, to view the street children's mission and see how it operates to serve the children of Cartagena. The group will take school supplies to the mission, help with remedial education, create visual aids to be used in their ministry and complete some light construction projects. Other activities include attending a local church service and touring a campground project being developed on a nearby island for the street children. There will be some time to see the old fort and city. For information on cost, or to reserve your spot, contact Dan or Kathy Dunn: kathycdunn@gmail.com, 479-586-4471 or 479-899-3974.

New VIM opportunity in Magnolia

The Caring Place in Magnolia is a "daycare" for adults with Alzheimer's Disease. The Rev. Barbara Lewis, pastor of Emerson and Mt. Pisgah UMCs, directs this ministry. It operates out of a large house that needs some repairs and painting, carpet installation, gates built on the porches, landscaping, etc. The ministry would also like to tear down an old garage building and replace it with a gazebo structure.

The Caring Place operates completely on donations, so teams wishing to help must be able to contribute toward the cost of the project they select. Out of town teams may stay in the house, which has a full kitchen and five bedrooms. For details, contact Byron Mann at vim@arumc.org or Barbara Lewis at barblewis@sbcglobal.net.

Disaster Response training retreat in Little Rock Sept. 21

Arkansas Conference Disaster Response will sponsor a day-long training in the Library Conference Room on the campus of Philander Smith College (across the parking lot from the Arkansas Conference office) on Saturday, Sept. 21, from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Byron and Janice Mann, Conference disaster response coordinators, will provide training on the Incident Coordination System (ICS) functions, along with briefings on the roles of district and Conference operations/coordination teams in preparedness and response. District-based small groups will spend time together to develop procedures and structures for District Disaster Operations Teams, and the schedule will allow time for questions and discussion. Sessions

are geared toward those who wish to serve on a disaster operations team on a district or Conference level. To register or for more information, contact Janice Mann at disaster@arumc.org or 870-703-8359.

Relief supplies needed in Arkansas and at Sager Brown Depot

Additional cleaning buckets are needed to replenish the stock used in the May 30 flooding in Scott County. UMCOR's Sager Brown Depot in Baldwin, La., is experiencing relief supply shortages, as well. For a list of relief supply kits, visit umcor.org/UMCOR/Relief-Supplies. Email disaster@arumc.org to coordinate delivery of cleaning buckets and other supplies.

August and September mission opportunities at Sager Brown

Due to some recent cancellations, there are several weeks in 2013 available for a mission team experience at UMCOR Sager Brown in Baldwin, La. Available dates include Aug. 11-16, Aug. 18-23, Sept. 2-6 and Sept. 8-13. To reserve space for a team or to learn more, email volunteers@sagerbrown.org or call 337-923-6238, ext. 202 and ask for Vickie Smith.

Disaster Response Academy Oct. 7-10

The South Central Jurisdiction's Disaster Response Academy will be held Oct. 7-10 at Mount Sequoyah Retreat and Conference Center in Fayetteville. Courses are \$30, and range from basic to advanced—including Connecting Neighbors training, which helps local churches prepare before a disaster strikes. Housing and meals are available at Mount Sequoyah for an additional fee. For details or to register, visit <http://scjademy2013.eventbrite.com>.

Help replenish disaster response fund

The Arkansas Conference UMC Disaster Response Fund has replaced two mobile homes destroyed by the April 10 tornado in Van Buren County, in addition to funds and labor to repair a third mobile home. Donations to replenish the fund are appreciated. Send gifts to the Arkansas Conference, P.O. Box 3611, Little Rock, AR 72203-3611; or visit arumc.org/donate and click on the link under "Arkansas Conference Disaster Fund."

Making a mission journey in 2013? Let VIM know!

VIM wants to know if your church has made a mission journey this year, or is planning one for the future. Please send 1) your destination, 2) the number of volunteers participating and 3) the estimated cost of the journey to Byron Mann at vim@arumc.org. Mann also can provide information on planning mission journeys in Arkansas, the U.S. and internationally.

CLASSIFIEDS

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

YOUTH DIRECTORS ~ Need help planning a summer trip or already thinking about Spring Break 2014? We've been sending groups packing for 31 years and we're still going strong, thanks in large part to United Methodist youth groups! If all you need is transportation, we've got that covered, too. Kimberling Kids Travel ~ kimberlingkids@aol.com ~ 501-227-8447.

Swamp Angel Ministries is traveling Arkansas! Donations go to the Annual Arkansas Retired Ministers Day. For info: contact David Bush at thepastor@stuttgartumc.org.

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

BOOK REVIEW

Sharing food can (and should) open door to deeper ministry

Finding God in a Bag of Groceries: Sharing Food, Discovering Grace

Laura Lapins Willis

Abingdon Press, 2013

BY STEPHEN COPLEY
Special Contributor

As a co-chair of the Conference Hunger Task Force and Advocate with the Poor, I've read a number of shallow, self-absorbed stories about an author's superficial relationship with low-income families. When I opened *Finding God in a Bag of Groceries* by Laura Willis, I wondered if it would be more of the same. Would I find any transformational stories about deep relationships? As I began to read, her words allayed my concerns.

Willis served for more than a decade as director of the Community Action Committee in Sewanee, Tenn. The project, housed in an Episcopal Church, was formed to assist low-income persons with food, utilities and medical bills.

The author uses 15 different vignettes to discuss the two main themes of the book: 1) her wrestling with vocation and 2) how we see God. These stories delve into the depths of relationships she formed, and they have power to transform the reader. I found my spiritual journey strengthened as a result of reading the book. It holds many powerful lessons, and I'll share two of them here.

First, the reminder that **our mission is to fulfill God's**

mission. I once heard a story of the prayer of a retired pastor: "Lord, show me where you are working today, so that I might join you." Through the guidance of the Holy Spirit, we are shown daily where God is alive and at work in the world. Our challenge is to recognize it, and have the courage to join God.

The author describes how she became a priest to those who came for food as she listened to them, engaged in their lives, went to funerals and weddings and developed relationships like Christ would have.

A powerful lesson for the church today: God is in the midst of people with low incomes. We can and must develop transformational relationships—and yes, a bag of groceries can serve as an entry point, if we allow it to do so. We must take time to care about people's joys and concerns and their lives, rather than trying to fix their lives. Our church needs to show genuine caring today. This is where God is alive and at work.

Second, **we all are called to be in God's ministry, whether lay or clergy.** We have different roles and functions. The author



shares stories of meaningful relationships she developed over the years with people she ministered to, and the ways that God was ever present. As she stated, "Ministry is about a living, breathing God, accessible to anyone." We need reminders that we can find God in the most unexpected places. Each of us needs to be ready to display the love of Christ.

The author realized that God "comes in extraordinary ways and in the most ordinary experiences." When we open our lives to this possibility, we can be transformed. God came to the author in a bag of groceries and the transformational relationships that followed. Many of these relationships offered challenges, but she realized that the mission of God overshadowed those challenges.

I hope that we too will realize that God "comes in extraordinary ways and in the most ordinary experiences." That we will ask each day where God is working so that we might join him. John Wesley knew this question mattered. We, too, must ask it daily; lives will be transformed, including our own.

The Rev. Copley, a Church and Community Worker with the General Board of Global Ministries, serves as the Executive Director of the Arkansas Interfaith Conference and Arkansas Justice For Our Neighbors.

PEOPLE OF FAITH

Kurrus, Yokem elected to UMFA Board

Ginny Kurrus and the Rev. Mackey Yokem, both of Little Rock, recently were elected members of the United Methodist Foundation of Arkansas (UMFA) Board of Directors. UMFA manages \$120 million in endowment funds and other charitable assets that benefit local churches and other

United Methodist ministries.

Kurrus is education director of the U.S. Green Building Council-Arkansas Chapter. A native of St. Louis, she graduated from the University of Missouri in 1979 with a BSBA in Finance and Economics and worked in commercial lending for banks in Dallas and Little Rock.

For the past 25 years she has served as a community volunteer, primarily in the area of education. She served as state president for Arkansas PTA in 2007-2009, is a past president of the Little Rock PTA Council and was awarded the Jane Mendel Award for outstanding volunteer in the Little Rock School District in 2004. Kurrus also serves on the Arkansas Department of Education's Common Core Implementation Task Force. She was named recently as chair of the inaugural Leadership Board for the Crohn's and Colitis Foundation, Central Arkansas Chapter.

Kurrus has been a member of Asbury UMC Little Rock for 28 years, where she has served in the past on both the finance committee and the board of trustees. She and her husband, Baker Kurrus, have three adult children: Madeline, Sarah and Andrew.

Yokem serves as executive director of mission and ministry for the Arkansas Annual Conference, where he focuses on strategic alignment of the Imagine Ministry process across the Conference, connectional ministries and serving as assistant to the bishop. Before his current appointment, he served as superintendent of the Northwest District.

A native of Little Rock, he grew up in St. Luke UMC. He received his license to preach in 1968. He is a graduate of Hendrix College in Conway and Perkins School of Theology at Southern Methodist University, and has served as executive director of Camp Aldersgate, director of church relations at Hendrix College, pastor at Primrose UMC Little Rock and senior pastor of UMCs in Gurdon, Lonoke, Warren and Russellville.

Yokem was elected a delegate to the 2012 General and Jurisdictional Conferences of the United Methodist Church. He has served as a member of the Arkansas Conference Council on Finance and Administration, the University of Arkansas Wesley Foundation Board of Directors and the Board of Trustees of Mount Sequoyah Conference and Retreat Center.



Mackey Yokem

He and his wife, Cindy, are the parents of four adult children: Erin Yokem Weber, Jenny Yokem Kyle, Grace Ann Yokem Depper and Taylor Pearce Yokem; and the grandparents of Abbott Caroline Kyle, Graham Bennett Kyle, John Mackey Weber and Mattie Kathleen Weber.



Rebecca Davis

Davis joins Central District staff

Rebecca Davis has joined the Central District office as its part-time administrative assistant. She began work in her new position on March 25.

A native of Little Rock and a graduate of Little Rock Central High School, Davis attended Rhodes College in Memphis, receiving a bachelor's degree in Business Administration.

Davis' work experience includes 14 years with Prudential Healthcare, a former subsidiary of The Prudential Insurance Company of America, where she served in a number of positions, including marketing, account management, provider relations and network development for the company's managed care plans in Tennessee and Arkansas. She also worked as a substitute teacher for the Child Development Center at Conway First United Methodist Church. She is an active volunteer in the Conway Public School System, as well as Conway First United Methodist Church. She may be reached at rebecca.davis@arumc.org.

Crismon joins Southeast District staff

Mary Crismon began work on July 8 as part-time administrative assistant for the Southeast District office.

A Hamburg native, she graduated from Hamburg High School, then attended Dallas Baptist University, earning a bachelor's degree in Christian Education with an emphasis on children's ministry. She has worked in the banking world since age 16 and also has worked for Ozark Mission Project. Her tasks for the Southeast District include making website updates, assisting with district communications, social media outreach, coordinating the district calendar and assisting the regional mission coordinator with communications and social media.

She is married to the Rev. Ben Crismon, current pastor of White Hall UMC. At press time, the Crismons were expecting the birth of their first child, a daughter, in early August.



Mary Crismon

COMING UP

August

Human Relations Day grant application deadline Aug. 10

Aug. 10 is the deadline to apply for a 2014 Human Relations Day Grant from the United Methodist General Board of Church & Society (GBCS). The grants are to support ministries that respond to non-violent young offenders through education, advocacy or leadership training and development. To qualify for a Human Relations Day grant, the applicant must be either:

- a United Methodist local church, district, annual conference or other affiliated group/organization; or
- an ecumenical group/organization working with and through at least one United Methodist agency or organization, whose program affects at least one United Methodist local church.

To be considered for funding, a project must be initiated by or developed in partnership with a United Methodist church. The project must focus on needs of non-violent juvenile youth offenders as they address one or more chronic social problems or concerns, such as housing, employment, health care, human rights, education, the environment and racism. Applicants must have a supervisory board consisting of a majority of members of the UMC that shall make all policy decisions.

All funding from GBCS must be used for programmatic components. The intent of the grant is to provide start-up money. For an application, contact Marvlyn Scott in the office of Education & Leadership Formation, 202-488-5643 or mscott@umc-gbcs.org. For more information, contact the Rev. Neal Christie, assistant general secretary, Education & Leadership Formation, at nchristie@umc-gbcs.org or 202-488-5611.

Rison UMC to mark 125th anniversary Aug. 11

Rison UMC will be celebrating its 125th anniversary with a Homecoming on Sunday, Aug. 11, 2013. All are invited to join in the special occasion. Activities will begin at 10 a.m. with a visit from John Wesley, founder of the Methodist movement. A time of fellowship and feasting is set for noon to 1:45 p.m.; guests are asked to bring a side dish if able. A 2 p.m. concert by The Dooleys will round out the day.

The Rison church was established Jan. 7, 1888, as part of the Toledo Circuit, which included six other churches.

All events of the day are free. To learn more or RSVP, contact the Rev. Richard Rogers by phone, 870-325-6568, 870-325-7475 or 501-772-2340; by email, richardandcecilia@yahoo.com; or by mail, P.O. Box 468, Rison, AR 71665.

Mountainside UMC golf tournament for missions Aug. 19

Mountainside UMC Hot Springs Village is gearing up for its 11th annual golf tournament. All proceeds will benefit local and global missions.

The four-person scramble, held at Diamante Country Club on Monday, Aug. 19, will have a shotgun start at 9 a.m. Golfers can sign up as a team or individually; there will be three flights (couples flight included). Otto Thorwarth, retired jockey who played the role of Ron Turcotte in the movie Secretariat, is returning as the tournament's celebrity guest.

Missions that will benefit include:

- Imagine No Malaria—an effort of United Methodists worldwide to eliminate death and suffering from malaria in Africa. With the help of millions of people, we can beat malaria through prevention, education, communication and treatment.
- The Rev. Charles Wiggins and his wife, Karen, missionaries in Tanzania. They have devoted several years there to building schools, housing, teaching lay pastors and pastors, and teaching hygiene, proper diet, and general life skills.
- Jackson House in Hot Springs. An interfaith community crisis center, Jackson House provides short-term emergency assistance for the very basic needs—food, clothing, shelter and medicines. They feed 30,000 to 40,000 free lunches annually.
- Starting Over Ministries, Inc., based in Hot Springs Village, provides basic necessities for a clean, safe home for children who are moving back with their rehabilitated families after being displaced due to job loss, neglect or abuse. These families often have nothing, and no financial means to purchase needed items.

To register for the tournament or sign on as a sponsor, call the church office at 501-922-2626.

Stewardship for a new generation: free webinar Aug. 22

An upcoming free webinar from the United Methodist General

Board of Discipleship (GBOD) will focus on financial stewardship for a new generation.

The Aug. 22 webinar, "Generosity in Emerging Generations," will look at how members of emerging generations make decisions about generosity, how they share their ideas about generosity with each other and explore whether God has anything to do with it. Ken Sloane, GBOD's director of stewardship, will lead the session.

The one-hour webinar begins at 6:30 p.m. Central time. To register for this and other free learning opportunities, visit www.gbod.org/lead-your-church/webinars. Questions? Contact Ken Sloane, ksloane@gbod.org or 615-340-7165.

September

'When God and Cancer Meet' seminar set for Oct. 5; register by Sept. 1

Cancer patients, survivors, family members, friends, healthcare or ministry professionals who have been touched by cancer in any way are invited to participate in "When God and Cancer Meet," set for Saturday, Oct. 5, from 8:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. at Piney Grove UMC Hot Springs. Lynn Eib, who is an author, cancer patient advocate and cancer survivor, will be the featured presenter for this day of emotional and spiritual encouragement for those confronting cancer. Registration closes Sept. 1; visit pineygroveumc.com for a registration form. For information, contact Sharon Parrett at sparrett@msn.com or 501-617-3237.

Faith formation: free webinar Sept. 17

The free webinar, "Creative Thinking in Faith Formation: An Ancient/Future Approach" will be presented by the United Methodist General Board of Discipleship on the evening of Sept. 17.

Beginning with an exploration of Jesus' teaching methods, participants in this webinar will move to reflection on what we know about how adults learn and what it means to "turbo-charge" strategies for effective teaching and learning today.

The one-hour webinar begins at 6:30 p.m. Central time. To register for this and other free learning opportunities, visit www.gbod.org/lead-your-church/webinars. For more information, contact Carol Krau, ckrau@gbod.org, or 615-340-7171.

'Equip' youth ministry training Oct. 25-26

Equip, a training event for all who work in youth ministry—as paid or unpaid servants—is set for Oct. 25-26 at Camp Aldersgate in Little Rock. Sponsored by the Arkansas Conference Youth Ministry Resource Team (ACYMRT), Equip will focus on empowering participants to build a sustainable youth ministry that can withstand transitions and challenges.

Equip includes optional Friday night Sabbath activities, including a meal and worship with Bishop Mueller. The Rev. Dr. Andy Stoker, Saturday's keynote speaker, will base his address on the book *Sustainable Youth Ministry* by Mark DeVries. Registration opens Aug. 15; the low fee includes lodging, all meals and a copy of the book. A Saturday-only reduced fee is also available.

The ACYMRT recognizes the importance of giving leaders a solid foundation for ministry with young people, and will soon expand its continuing education offerings. To register, or to sign up to receive the Arkansas Conference Youth Ministry Email Newsletter, visit arumc.org or contact Michelle Moore: 501-425-5975 or michelle.moore@arumc.org.



When Lakewood UMC Little Rock purchased a new van late last year, it looked exactly like many other church vans. So instead of simply adding the church name to the outside, the church decided to convey some messages. The lettering includes the church's name, but their motto and website,

"ExpandingTheLight.org," holds the prominent space below the windows. And drivers who find themselves following the van see the congregation's mission statement: "Seek, Serve and Share the Message of Christ."

"Shouldn't we be using that mobile billboard to say, everywhere we go, that these are God's people doing God's work?" asked church member Dennis Schick, who raised the funds for the lettering. He hopes other churches will use their vans to send meaningful messages, as well.

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OBITUARIES

BEEBE**Kelly Jones**

The Rev. Thomas Kelly Jones, 94, passed away Friday, July 12, 2013.

He was born Dec. 15, 1918, to Thomas and Emma (White) Jones. "Brother Kelly," as he was known, was a World War II U.S. Navy veteran and a retired United Methodist minister, having served churches in the Melbourne Charge, Sedgwick Charge, Hoxie Charge, Kensett Charge, Vilonia Charge and Antioch.

**Kelly Jones**

He was a farmer before he answered his call into the ministry. He completely and totally enjoyed his 80-acre farm in the Wattensaw community.

He is preceded in death by his wife of 60 years, Margaret (Burns) Jones; a daughter, Martha Ann Jones; and his parents.

He is survived by a daughter, Lynda Sue Reeves and her husband, Tom, of Lonoke; two grandsons, Brad Reeves and his wife, Mandy, and John Reeves; and a great-granddaughter, Callie Reeves, all of Lonoke; a host of nieces and nephews; very special neighbors, Jackie and Kathy Skasick, and John and Jeannie Pruitt; and special church friend, Charles Long.

The funeral was held Monday, July 15, at First United Methodist Church Beebe. Burial followed in New Hope Cemetery.

FAYETTEVILLE**Katherine Eggensperger**

Katherine Fiser Adams Eggensperger, 95, passed away on July 10, 2013.

She was born June 15, 1918, in Morrilton, Ark., to Headley and Maude Fiser. She is predeceased by two husbands, Milburn Adams and the Rev. Dr. Harold Eggensperger, an elder who served in the North Arkansas Conference; her parents; three brothers, Poindexter Fiser, Paul Fiser and Harold Fiser; and one sister, Maude White.

Known to her family and friends as "Nanny," she made her home the last two years at Katherine's Place at Wedington, a long-term care facility named in her honor. The spirit of the Lord was evident in the blessings of love and care received from each care provider within the home. She considered these special angels to be family.

**Katherine Eggensperger**

Nanny took the fruits of a life filled with favor to turn and bless others in her daily walk. She touched many lives through faithful prayer and her spirit of optimism. She was a member of Central United Methodist Church and its Asbury Sunday School Class, and was a member of PEO Chapter DG.

She is survived by her five children, Frances Gibson Ross and her husband, Ed, and Pat Armbrust and her husband, Ron, all of Fayetteville; Mil Adams of Conway; Kathy Meyer and her husband, Steve, of Springdale; and Stephen Eggensperger and his wife, Tami, of Cabot; her grandchildren, Gip Gibson and his wife, Kelly; and Kelli James and her husband, Tony, all of Tulsa, Okla.; Kim Renner and her husband, Kevin; Greg Gibson and his wife, Libby; Druanne

Stockland and her husband, Jim; Dave Armbrust and Mitchell Meyer, all of Fayetteville; Bryan Adams and his wife, Christy, of Conway; Brandon Adams and his wife, Brandi, of Jonesboro; Matt Meyer and his wife, Jennifer, of Springdale; Adam Meyer and his wife, Ashley, of Greenland; Caleb and Noah Eggensperger of Cabot; and 24 great-grandchildren.

A memorial service was held Friday, July 12, in the sanctuary of Central United Methodist Church, with the Rev. Dr. Steve Pulliam officiating. Committal at Elmwood Cemetery in Morrilton, Ark. followed the service.

In lieu of flowers, memorials may be made to Central United Methodist Church Youth Ministry, 6 West Dickson St., P.O. Box 1106, Fayetteville, AR 72702.

FOREMAN**James Shaddox**

The Rev. James Henry Shaddox, 92, passed away Friday, July 5, 2013, in the Ashdown hospital.

**James Shaddox**

He was born Feb. 27, 1921 in rural Arkansas. He was ordained as a member of the Little Rock Conference, and served at churches across the area, including Murfreesboro, Stephens/McNeil, Altheimer/Wabbaseka, El Dorado/Vantrease, Eudora/Parkdale, Stamps, Camden and Portland. He retired while serving First United Methodist Church Foreman and remained connected with that congregation.

He is survived by his brother, Bill Shaddox and his wife, Judy, of Greenville, Texas; two nieces, Patsy Crawford of Duncanville, Texas, and Angela Shaddox of Greenville, Texas; a great-niece, Courtney Crawford of Burbank, Calif.; and two nephews, David Shaddox of San Antonio, Texas, and John Shaddox of Gun Barrel City, Texas. His wife, Irene, preceded him in death by just over one month.

Services were held Tuesday, July 9, at First UMC Foreman, with the Revs. Lynn McClure and Lavon Post officiating. Burial followed in Dollarhide Cemetery.

HOPE**Darleen Lyons**

Mary Darleen Lyons, 85 of Hope, Arkansas passed away Saturday, July 6, 2013, in Hope. Darleen was born Aug. 19, 1927, in Patmos, Ark., to Eneer Edward "E.E." and Lois L. Rogers Wheelington.

She was a member of Hinton United Methodist Church, a retired school teacher from the Hempstead and Lafayette school systems, a member of Arkansas Retired Teachers Association and very active in ministry with her husband, Paul, an elder who served Little Rock Conference churches in Hope, Pine Bluff, Benton, Dermott and Stamps before his retirement.

She was preceded in death by her parents and one son, Danny Lyons.

She is survived by her loving husband of 67 years, the Rev. Paul Lyons of Hope; one daughter, Carolyn Howard and her husband, Bruce, of Hot Springs; one son, Steve Lyons of

**Darleen Lyons**

Hope; one brother, Waymond Wheelington and his wife, Patricia, of Rosston; one sister, Betty Lough and her husband, Delmor, of Hope; eight grandchildren; 18 great-grandchildren; and a host of cherished family members, church families and friends.

Services were held Tuesday, July 9, at Hinton UMC with Bro. Joe Miller officiating; interment followed in Memory Gardens Cemetery.

The family wishes memorials to be made to Grandpa's Place, 1489 Highway 355 East, Hope, AR 71801.

PENSACOLA, Fla.**Esther H. Dennis**

Esther H. Dennis, 88, passed away peacefully Saturday, June 22, 2013, while surrounded by her loving family.

Born July 18, 1924, in Gum Log, Ark., she graduated high school in 1942, showing a passion and great talent for the piano and singing. She later graduated from Arkansas Technical College with a degree in music. While serving as a soprano in the Russellville Presbyterian Church choir, she fell in love with the handsome associate pastor, Billy V. Dennis.

They married on Aug. 27, 1950, while Billy was a probationary member of the North Arkansas Conference of the United Methodist Church. She served as the music director for Green Forest Elementary School, Green Forest, Ark., from 1959-1962, and taught second grade at Atkins Elementary School, Atkins, Ark., from 1962-1964.

At the height of the Vietnam War, her husband, who had been serving as pastor of Atkins and Pottsville UMCs, joined the U.S. Navy as a chaplain. Esther then retired from teaching and became a devoted military wife and stay-at-home mother during her husband's 20 years of military service. After he retired as a commander, they returned to Arkansas, where Esther used her God-given talent and served as a treasured choir member in the churches where her husband would preach. They moved to Pensacola in 1998 to be closer to family.

She is preceded in death by her parents, Oliver and Nettie Hollowell; four sisters, Nadine, Velma, Rheba and May; a brother, Othel; and her loving husband of 59 years, Chaplain Billy V. Dennis. She is survived by three sons: David; James and his wife, Merri; and John and his wife, Tracy, all of Pensacola; three grandsons: David Jr. and his wife, Samantha, of Australia, Donald and his wife, Lynnette, of Milton, Fla.; and Andrew of Pensacola; two granddaughters: Alicia Williams of Pensacola and Anna Whitlock and her husband, Joseph, of Kailua, Hawaii; great-grandchildren: Brittany and Deazel of Australia; Donald Jr. and Destiny of Milton, Fla.; and Abigail and Joseph Jr. of Kailua, Hawaii. She is also survived by adopted family, Bob and Marlene Thompson and John Niemeyer of Pensacola, and her beloved dogs, Ginger and Midget.

A memorial service was held at Warrington United Methodist Church on Saturday, June 29. In lieu of flowers, please donate to the Covenant Hospice of Pensacola, 5041 N. 12th Ave., Pensacola, FL 32504; or Warrington UMC, 301 E. Winthrop Ave., Pensacola, FL 32507.

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The UMC's General Council on Finance and Administration (GCFA) Office of Corporate Partnership has launched UMCmarket, a new program that gives parishioners the opportunity to generate a donation to their local church as they shop online.

UMCmarket provides a portal to access popular retailers. With each purchase, a percentage of the sale can go to the church the shopper chooses. Membership is free. To learn how a church can add the link to its website, email info@umcmarket.org.

Members can immediately begin supporting their church's ministries by signing up at www.umcmarket.org. For details about UMCmarket or other programs, contact Bobby Lee Smith, 615-369-2407 or blsmith@gcfa.org.





Tony Privatte, a member of Mountainside UMC Hot Springs Village, installs new cabinets and countertops at the Arkadelphia Wesley Foundation. COURTESY PHOTO

Mountainside UMC improves kitchen for Arkadelphia campus ministry

BY BETTIE LAND
Special Contributor

The Wesley Foundation of Arkadelphia is a United Methodist campus ministry serving both Henderson State University and Ouachita Baptist University. One of its biggest events is the free lunch provided each Tuesday during the school year. It includes a devotional and opportunities to build strong Christian relationships.

Area churches provide food for these meals. This spring, when members of Mountainside UMC Hot Springs Village provided lunch, they had an opportunity to visit with Wesley Foundation director the Rev. Jessica Durand, who mentioned the need to update the kitchen.

The wish list began with a new upright frost-free freezer and some additional cabinets so the kitchen could be efficiently organized. Within a few days, Mountainside members were raising funds for this project. They soon purchased and delivered the freezer.

After researching the cost of cabinets and countertops, Mountainside member Mary Sue Privatte found an option that met the kitchen's requirements and coordinated with the existing fixtures. Tony Privatte and Denton Hushaw installed the cabinet and countertop in the Wesley kitchen. In addition to these improvements, Mountainside UMC's mission team donated \$500 to the Wesley Foundation.

"I would like to thank Mountainside's generosity in raising funds for these items and getting everything delivered and installed for us," Durand said. "Our kitchen is used regularly during the school year, and the new freezer and storage space will be put to good use."

The Wesley Foundation offers much more than a free lunch. As part of a Christ-centered community, students engage in a deeper relationship with God and with each other. While some students lead or assist in worship services in area churches on Sunday mornings, the ministry is not limited to a particular religious affiliation; it is open to students of other faiths and to those who don't have a connection with a church.

The Wesley Foundation has a small budget and relies on donations from the community and area churches to maintain some of their programs throughout the year. They still need helping hands to paint the existing cabinets, doors, and a small wall area; replace existing countertops; and install new kitchen flooring. To help with any of these projects, call Durand at 870-246-6731.

Land is a member of Mountainside UMC.



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WASHINGTON NEWS
Congress Avoids Fiscal Cliff With New Tax Act
On January 1, 2013, both the Senate and House passed the American Taxpayer Relief Act of 2012 (ATRA). The bill resolved the "fiscal cliff" and includes a number of provisions that will be favorable for philanthropy and charitable giving. [Read More](#)

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