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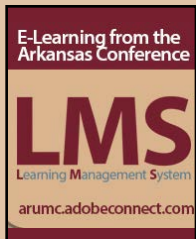
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ABOVE: Nate Carter with his parents, Anthony and Bitsy, on his first trip outdoors during his August 2012 recovery from the effects of Wegener's granulomatosis at Arkansas Children's Hospital.

RIGHT: Nate returned to football in the fall of 2013, as starting eighth-grade quarterback for Hope's Yerger Middle School Bobcats.

COURTESY PHOTOS



## Story of healing takes Hope teen to Super Bowl

BY AMY FORBUS  
Editor

Nate Carter had a tough year in 2012.

The athletic middle-school student saw his seventh-grade football season disappear like the 70 pounds he lost during the month he spent in Arkansas Children's Hospital. But he'd fought a life-threatening illness, and won.

Doctors had told Bitsy and Anthony Carter that their son might not pull through. A rare disease, Wegener's granulomatosis (also called granulomatosis with

polyangiitis, or GPA), had caused inflammation of Nate's blood vessels, leading to a number of serious complications. When he was admitted to the hospital, his lungs were nearly filled with blood.

Wegener's granulomatosis is not curable, but it is treatable and manageable. With expert attention to his medical needs and a lot of prayer—much of it from his fellow church members at First United Methodist Church Hope, where his mother serves as pianist—Nate has experienced a full recovery.

### From ICU to QB

It took serious effort, though, for him to reach a point where his doctors gave him the thumbs-up to play football. His dream of returning to the football field served as his primary motivation to rebuild his strength. In 2013, Nate's work paid off, and he earned the position of starting quarterback on his school's eighth-grade football team.

The experience also led him to [See HEALING, page 4]

## Theresa Hoover: 'larger than life... gentle as a dove'

BY LINDA BLOOM  
*United Methodist News Service*

Theresa Hoover was the first and she made sure she was not the last.

The first African-American woman to become a top staff executive for the United Methodist Church was a mentor to many young women, promoted the leadership of laywomen and engineered a secure future for the women's organization of the denomination during a period of tumultuous change.

Hoover led the Women's Division of the United Methodist Board of Global Ministries, the corporate body of United Methodist Women, for 22 years, from 1968 to 1990.

"She had a presence that could be larger than life, but she also had a presence that could be as soft and gentle as a dove," said Andris Salter, a UMW executive who witnessed how Hoover ministered to women struggling with issues such as physical and sexual abuse.

Hoover, 88, died Dec. 21 in Fayetteville, Ark., the hometown that had proclaimed May 30, 2008, as Theresa Hoover Day. Her funeral took place Dec. 30 at Sequoyah United Methodist Church, where she was a member.

One of five children born to James C. Hoover and Rissie Vaughn, Hoover's [See HOOVER, page 10]



## John Workman: pastor, writer, former AUM editor, 1927-2014

Known most widely for his work as the *Arkansas Gazette's* first full-time religion editor and columnist, the Rev. John S. Workman, a United Methodist elder and former editor of the *Arkansas United Methodist*, died Jan. 9, 2014. He was 86.

He was born in Fayetteville in 1927 to the Rev. James W. Workman and Meta Sue Sparks Workman of Fordyce. After serving in the U.S. Army from 1945-47, then graduating from Hendrix College and Southern Methodist University's Perkins School of Theology, he became a Methodist pastor—part of a five-generation family legacy reaching back to Methodism's early days.

He served in pastoral ministry for two decades, beginning in 1953 with the Newark/Oil Trough Charge in the North Arkansas Conference, and continuing with appointments at Cabot UMC, Berryville UMC, Sylvan Hills UMC Sherwood and Markham Street UMC Little Rock.

In 1973, Workman began his six years at the helm of the *Arkansas United Methodist*. According to Nancy Britton's book *Two Centuries of Methodism in Arkansas*, he became known for his strong social consciousness, commitment to a free press and his thoughtful, plain-spoken editorials.

[See WORKMAN, page 9]





# Congregation's cross laden with meaning

BY DENNIS SCHICK  
Special Contributor

**Editor's note:** This year, the season of Lent begins March 5. As we look forward to this time that often brings greater awareness of the symbols of our faith, Dennis Schick, a member of Lakewood UMC North Little Rock, shares the story behind one of that congregation's most prominent symbols.

The cross is a fundamental symbol for the Christian church, so it is not surprising that we find them in most of our worship spaces.

Lakewood United Methodist Church North Little Rock started in 1955, but didn't build a formal sanctuary until 1964. When it did, a cross—a *huge* cross—became the centering focal point.

The 14-foot high cross was mounted on the floor, right behind the altar. Each Good Friday, the cross was draped in black; on Easter, it was draped in white.

When the sanctuary was remodeled in 2006, the choir seating moved from one side of the chancel area to the center, so the cross had to be moved. It was mounted high on the wall, 11 feet off the floor, where it remains today.

So that's the story of "The Cross Under the Steeple," right? Well, not exactly; there's a backstory which makes the cross even more special.

The cross—which will be 50 years old this year—began in the mind of the late Bob Millett, an early pillar of Lakewood UMC and a successful architect in North Little Rock who designed the church's sanctuary. Bruce Holsted, a longtime member of the church, interviewed Bob's widow, Marion, before her death in 2012. She revealed interesting details about the cross, and confirmed many stories passed down over the years.

## Vision, research

Bob envisioned a large cross as the focal point for the sanctuary he was designing, but it couldn't be just any cross—it had to be a special, "authentic" cross. He wanted it to be as close as possible to the actual cross on which Jesus Christ was crucified.

After painstaking research—remember, this was before the Internet—he found what he concluded were accurate dimensions. The cross was to be 14 feet tall and 7 feet across. The beams would be six



PHOTO BY SCOTT ADAMS

inches square, and the cross would weigh about 300 pounds.

Bob Millett personally supervised the cross being built at Monarch Mill and Lumber Company of Little Rock. The mill was owned by his father-in-law, which gave him unfettered access to the construction process.

After he had a cross built with lumber be bought locally, he decided it wasn't good enough, that it should be made from wood from trees in the days of Jesus. So again he researched what wood probably was used 2,000 years ago.

The Bible never says what wood was used for crosses. Historians have argued everything from dogwood and Aleppo pine to olive wood and cedar of Lebanon. Bob settled on olive wood, bought it in Italy and had it shipped here. Once again, he had it constructed and mounted there in the front of the sanctuary, for everyone to see.

## Getting it just right

But he still was not satisfied. The cross looked too perfect, too smooth, too modern. So he had it taken down and took it outside. He and a few workers beat on it with hammers and other tools to "rough

it up" and make it look like the proverbial "old rugged cross." With several coats of stain, now it was ready. And there it hangs today, reigning over five decades of weddings and funerals and concerts, as well as Sunday worship services.

"The cross is certainly the main feature of the sanctuary. It's impossible to be in the sanctuary without noticing it," said the Rev. Richard Lancaster, Lakewood UMC's senior pastor since 2007. "Some people come when the sanctuary is empty, just to pray in silence. In times like that, the cross especially becomes an awesome presence."

The fashioning of this cross became part of Bob Millett's faith journey, and the result of this architect's work invites others to become closer to Christ even today. But while the details of this story are unique to Lakewood, the power of symbolism is not. All of us hold the potential to point the way to Christ—through personal effort, through the symbols we share, through actions we may not even see as significant.

May "the cross under the steeple" remind us all that our passion and our pursuit of excellence can make a difference in the name of Christ.



**Show your care for God's creation!**  
Be sure to recycle your copy of the *Arkansas United Methodist* when you're finished reading it (or share it with a friend).

# Training for small church leaders focuses on vitality



Using an example from a participating church, the Rev. Dr. Candace Barron walks attendees through assessing the relationships that influence a congregation's level of vitality.

Jan. 18 marked the first of five Small Church Leadership training opportunities offered by the Arkansas Conference's Center for Clergy and Laity Excellence in Leadership (CCELE). Hosted by First UMC Arkadelphia, the event drew more than 75 participants, including some from outside the boundaries of the Southwest District.

Attendees spent time learning about what makes a congregation's ministry "vital," and how they may go about making changes to increase the vitality of their ministry. They reviewed concepts outlined in the books *Get Their Name: How to Grow Your Church by Building New Relationships*, and *Renovate or Die: Ten Ways to Focus Your Church on Mission*. Two co-authors of these books, Bob Farr and Kay Kotan, presented workshops at the 2013 Arkansas Annual Conference session. The books are available for purchase at the training events, and at the Conference office.

**This training session is being offered in each of the five districts of the Arkansas Conference. For information on the remaining events, see page 9.**



Participants in the Jan. 18 training session work on assessing the driving forces behind the ministry of their churches.

PHOTOS BY MIKE MEEKS

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**Submission Deadlines**

Issue Date	Submission Deadline
March 7	Feb. 18
April 4	March 18
May 2	April 15





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

BY GARY E. MUELLER

# Revival's not 'rocket surgery'

I wish I didn't have to do it. But I do. Because I now realize there's something I need to confess.

So here goes.

I'm sometimes guilty of spending too much time talking about bad news when it comes to the United Methodist Church in Arkansas. I'm sometimes guilty of thinking we can work our way out of it by simply doing things the right way. And I'm sometimes guilty of adding to the new vocabulary that confuses more than helps you with words like "vitality," "spiritual leadership," "district mission strategist," "trajectory" and "next steps."

So now it's time to right this wrong by being as straightforward as I can.

Far too many of us have lost the energy, passion and vision that come from our relationship with Jesus Christ. It's not that we don't believe. We do. But our faith doesn't tug at us, compel us to be contagious or cause us to share the wonderful thing God's doing in Jesus Christ.

The result of all of this is that we're in a major spiritual crisis. And there's only one way to solve a spiritual crisis. And that's to find a spiritual solution. Which is why we have to get back to the most important thing of all—whose we are.

The single most important reality about us as individuals, a church or a connection of churches is that we belong to Jesus. He loves us so much he became human to share the fullness of divine love. He was willing to go all in

on the cross in order to defeat evil, hatred and sin by love. And he was resurrected in a victory that transcends time, space and every other limitation you can ever imagine.

When we understand this, we can't wait to give ourselves fully to Jesus. Just as we are. Warts and all. And, when we do, that's when amazing grace starts to happen.

We experience forgiveness, healing and transformation. We become more compassionate, generous and grace-filled. We are filled with passion and joy we just can't contain. And we begin to discover we're in the process of being revived.

That's how revival happens. It's not "rocket surgery." It's simply giving ourselves completely to the One who has given himself completely to us.

Grace and peace,

Gary E. Mueller

# Mitto: youth learning that small actions can change lives

BY RACHEL TENISON  
Special Contributor

Mitto 2013 impacted my life in so many important ways. Named after the Latin word for "mission," Mitto is a five-day mission outreach by the Arkansas Conference Council on Youth Ministries. This year, we helped the community in the Pine Bluff area, and participated in worship, fellowship and being Jesus' hands and feet in the world.



Rachel Tenison

We spent countless hours learning how to serve others in everything we do. Throughout the week we used our theme, "The Least of These..." and the verse, Matthew 25:37-40, to inspire youth to go beyond what we think we are capable of as teenagers. As co-chair of this year's Mitto task force, I know that almost six months of planning

went into this event.

Part of Mitto that changed me and my views was "Life in a Bag," an activity that started when we woke up on Dec. 31 and lasted all the way into the new year. We began by splitting the 26 youth into different sized family groups. Each family received a real-life scenario of a family today, ranging from a homeless family of three to a family of five that can't afford their child's medical bills. These families lived off of SNAP (often called "food stamps"), which adds up to \$1.75 per person, per meal.

As a group, we took a trip to Walmart to shop for our meals for that night. Each family group was to cook a dinner on only their food stamp money. Trying to feed a family of three on \$5.25 wasn't as easy as I thought. There were a lot of foods that we weren't able to buy. It gave me a new way to appreciate all the things I have.

Our task force wanted to invite each of the youth to see the new year as a time for change. We decided to

celebrate Communion as our first meal of 2014. Our worship started at 11 p.m. on Dec. 31 and lasted till 1 a.m. on Jan. 1, 2014. I have been going to Conference Council on Youth Ministry events since I was in sixth grade, and never once had worship hit me so hard.

We spent time in silence, thinking about our year, letting go of what happened in the past and welcoming the new events. The time I got to spend with God that night was overwhelming. I could feel his presence in everyone who was there. I let some things go that night that lifted the weights right off my shoulders.

But the way we did Communion was the most moving. We were to take a piece of bread, lift it up God, say what we were letting go of, and place it back on the tray. Then we proceeded through the line again,

taking someone else's piece from the tray for our Communion meal.

When I think of all the things we did at this event, I realize that actions we may think are small really can change lives.



Cate Skinner, left, and Madison Akins-Banman help separate and price clothing for a local thrift store in Pine Bluff during Mitto, a five-day mission journey sponsored by the Conference Council on Youth Ministries.

PHOTO BY CODY BAUMAN

## APPOINTMENTS

The following appointment changes have been announced since the deadline for the previous issue of the *Arkansas United Methodist*:

- Beth Perdue (elder)—Lakeside UMC Lake Village (effective Feb. 16)
- Brittany Richardson Watson (elder)—Sylvan Hills UMC Sherwood (effective March 1)
- Charles Watt (retired elder)—Sylvan Hills UMC Sherwood (interim)
- Robbin Haley (part-time local pastor)—Mt. Zion UMC Lonoke County (effective Jan. 26, 2014)
- Bob Musser (lay supply pastor)—Adona UMC (effective Jan. 26, 2014)

Retirements effective before Annual Conference 2014:

- Norma Gillerson (effective Dec. 1, 2013)
- Joe E. Glover (effective Dec. 1, 2013)
- Elizabeth Ann Stegall (effective Dec. 30, 2013)
- Larry L. Morris (effective Jan. 1, 2014)
- George Mitchell (effective Jan. 1, 2014)
- R. Leon Gray (effective March 1, 2014)

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

Tenison, a senior high student, is a member of Sequoyah UMC Fayetteville. To learn more about Mitto and other ACCYM events, visit [www.accym.org](http://www.accym.org).

## Healing (continued from page 1)

enter an essay into a "Why I Love Football" contest sponsored by the National Football League. Five winners would be chosen to attend Super Bowl XLVIII at MetLife Stadium in East Rutherford, N.J. In his essay, Nate wrote of his illness, and how his desire to play football aided in his recovery.

When he was chosen as a finalist, the NFL sent a video crew to Hope to capture Nate's story. The video, now available at [www.togetherwemakefootball.com](http://www.togetherwemakefootball.com), was voted a winner by NFL fans.

"Football has taught me that with God's help, you can do anything," Nate says at the close of the video.

At an early January surprise party, Nate and his parents received tickets to the Super Bowl, and his win was announced on national television Jan. 19.

### Supportive church

Nate professed his faith in Christ and was baptized following his participation in First UMC Hope's 2012 confirmation class, said the Rev. Steve Johnson, the church's pastor. Nate has served as an acolyte in the past, and now participates in the church's youth group.

"He and his family give God the glory for his recovery, as well as acknowledging the excellent medical care he received," Johnson said.

"They've been my backbone," Bitsy Carter said of First UMC Hope. "The church loves him and is completely supportive."

One Sunday during Nate's hospitalization, the entire congregation posed for a photo while dressed in custom-made "Team N8 Dawg" t-shirts. They emailed the image to the Carters as a show of their support.

"I opened up that picture and just started crying," Bitsy Carter said. "To physically see people standing behind you like that, and knowing that they were praying... they're an amazing church family. My music led me there, but I'm thankful we're there now because they've supported us. He's their baby."

For his part, Nate is aware of—and grateful for—the amazing healing he has experienced. While he isn't entirely comfortable with all the attention, his mom says he's handled it "with the ultimate grace, giving God credit."

Flare-ups of Wegener's granulomatosis can be unpredictable, but for now, Nate's condition remains under control. Bitsy Carter is grateful that their family can now be part of raising awareness of the disease. Her constant prayer for Nate: "Keep him happy, keep him healthy, keep him normal."

"I've said that over and over, and God has answered our prayers over and over," she said. "We can't get enough word out about how good God is."

To view a video of Nate's story, along with those of other winners and finalists, visit [www.TogetherWeMakeFootball.com](http://www.TogetherWeMakeFootball.com).

### SW District moves from two offices to one

The Southwest District has closed its Magnolia satellite office and is now conducting all business through the Arkadelphia office: 904 Caddo Street, Arkadelphia, AR 71923. The phone number is 870-230-1118. Staff members are the Rev. Mike Morey, district superintendent ([mmorey@arumc.org](mailto:mmorey@arumc.org)), Cindy Parker, district administrator ([cparker@arumc.org](mailto:cparker@arumc.org)) and Dawn Branton, administrative assistant ([dawn.branton@arumc.org](mailto:dawn.branton@arumc.org); see announcement on this page). Former Magnolia office employee Yvonne Nipper has retired.

## CLASSIFIEDS

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

**ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT** sought for the executive director of mission and ministry in the Arkansas Conference office. Job description and benefits information available through Rose Kuonen, 501-324-8019 or [rkuonen@arumc.org](mailto:rkuonen@arumc.org). Application deadline: Feb. 15.

**YOUTH DIRECTORS:** Book your summer trips now! Avoid added stress — charter a bus! Kimberling Kids Travel @ 501-227-8447 or [kimberlingkids@aol.com](mailto:kimberlingkids@aol.com).

**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).

## PEOPLE OF FAITH

### Branton joins Southwest District staff



**Dawn Branton**

Dawn Branton has begun work for the Southwest District office in the role of administrative assistant.

Her work experience includes six years as a teacher's aide, working with students who had physical and mental disabilities; and nine years in clerical and production work for a newspaper publishing company. She attended Northwestern State University of Louisiana, where she earned a Bachelor's degree in general studies with a minor in social science. She has spent most of her life in Louisiana, but moved to Arkansas to be closer to family, and currently stays busy raising a three-year-old granddaughter. She enjoys sightseeing in her new home state, since Arkansas is full of natural beauty and rich history. She attends Friendship United Methodist Church Arkadelphia.

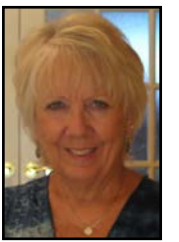
Branton may be reached at [dawn.branton@arumc.org](mailto:dawn.branton@arumc.org) or by phone at the Southwest District office, 870-230-1118.

### Mission interpreter Harrell available to Arkansas churches

Becky Harrell, a member of the Ingleside UMC in the Southwest Texas Annual Conference, has been assigned as a Mission Interpreter for the South Central Jurisdiction of the UMC, which includes Arkansas. She conducts her work through the United Methodist Church's General Board of Global Ministries (GBGM), and was commissioned as a GBGM missionary in October 2006.

She came to mission service after serving as an individual Volunteer In Mission, which led her to Iquique, Chile, in 2002. She served there with the EMANA Project until her assignment to Costa Rica in 2009. Before her full-time mission service, she worked as a public library director.

Harrell is available to preach, participate in mission events or share about mission projects and UMC Missionaries. She welcomes invitations from groups such as United Methodist Women, United Methodist Men and United Methodist Youth Fellowships, as well as from congregations and districts in Arkansas. She may be reached at [BHarrell@umcmmission.org](mailto:BHarrell@umcmmission.org) or 830-643-9717.



**Becky Harrell**

## Preaching workshop features Lauren Winner

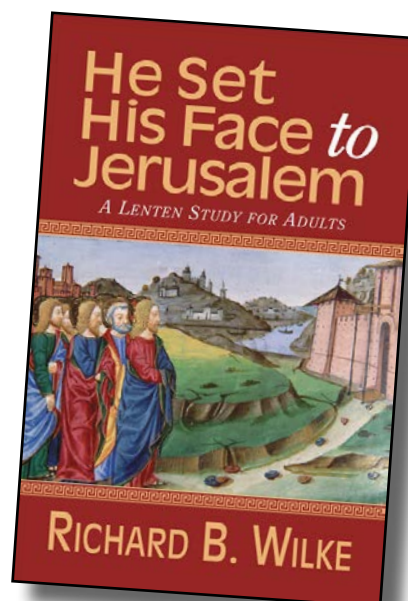
The John and Marjem Gill Annual Preaching Workshop will be held Thursday evening, Feb. 13, and Friday, Feb. 14, 2014, at Hendrix College in Conway. This year's speaker is Dr. Lauren Winner, author and assistant professor of Christian spirituality at Duke Divinity School.

Thursday night's lecture, "The Bible and the American Prison," is open to all and begins at 7 p.m. in the Mills Center, Room A. The workshop, "Preaching as a Spiritual Discipline," takes place Friday, Feb. 14, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. To register, contact the Rev. J. Wayne Clark at [clark@hendrix.edu](mailto:clark@hendrix.edu) or 501-450-1263. The Friday workshop is \$50; there is no cost for the Thursday lecture.



## Looking toward Lent

This year, the season of Lent begins March 5. Traditionally, Lent is a time of penitence, of asking God's forgiveness, of seeking a new way of life in Christ, culminating in the joy of Easter.



### New work by retired Arkansas bishop

Abingdon Press has released its 2014 Lecture Study, *He Set His Face to Jerusalem* by Bishop Richard Wilke. Bishop Wilke served the Arkansas Area of the United Methodist Church from 1984 to 1996.

The study explores Jesus' commitment to go to Jerusalem, and how it applies to our lives. It includes seven chapters—one for each week in Lent, and one for Holy Week and Easter. With discussion questions, hymns and prayer, it is designed for youth and adult Sunday school classes, small groups, and individual study. It can be ordered through [www.cokesbury.com](http://www.cokesbury.com).

### Study helps feed the hungry

The Society of St. Andrew also has released its annual Lenten study guide. The 2014 title, *Create in Me a Clean Heart*, comes from Psalm 51:10: "Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me." Its daily meditations and prayers explore the themes of forgiveness and new life in Christ. It encourages commitment to study, reflection, prayer and giving.

The giving component helps the Society of St. Andrew provide healthy food for hungry people. The devotional booklets and accompanying coin banks are free at [www.endhunger.org/lent.htm](http://www.endhunger.org/lent.htm).



# New options for making your voice heard

## Resolutions, nominations now have online submission capability

BY MARTHA TAYLOR  
Special Contributor

Having the ability to electronically submit resolutions and nominations for Annual Conference is now a reality.

When the Annual Conference 2014 webpage launched last month, it included the option for the forms to be submitted as an online form as well as to be downloaded, completed by hand and emailed or faxed to the appropriate persons. The forms are located at [www.arumc.org/ac2014](http://www.arumc.org/ac2014), on the right-hand sidebar of the page.

“The online forms are easy to complete and help streamline the work of the Nominations Committee and the group reviewing resolutions,” said Mark Epperson, director of the Center for Technology. “We have had requests for some time to make electronic forms available.”

### Changes to resolutions process

There are some changes to the resolutions for this year. Some additional questions have been added to the form to help the petitioners articulate how the resolution advances the trajectory of the Annual Conference: “Creating vital

Visit [www.arumc.org/ac2014](http://www.arumc.org/ac2014) for resolution and nominations forms. March 15 is the deadline for submitting information to be included in the Pre-Conference Journal.

congregations that make disciples of Jesus Christ who make disciples equipped to transform lives, communities, and the world.”

In addition, those submitting resolutions are asked to provide supporting Scripture and references from the 2012 *Book of Discipline* or *Book of Resolutions* that may be helpful to the reviewers.

Once a resolution is received, the resolutions committee will review it and offer suggestions as needed to the person(s) submitting the resolutions.

Resolution forms submitted by mail, fax or direct email must be received no later than March 15 to be included in the 2014 Pre-Conference Journal. Hard copy forms may be sent to Arkansas Conference, Attn: Journal Editor, 800 Daisy Bates Drive, Little Rock, AR 72202. Resolutions emailed as PDF files may be sent to [mtaylor@arumc.org](mailto:mtaylor@arumc.org).

### Broadening leadership base

Nomination forms are also located on the Conference website at [www.arumc.org/ac2014](http://www.arumc.org/ac2014). Individuals may nominate themselves or another person they think meets the qualifications and has the gifts for leadership on a Conference board or committee. Young adults, students and people of color are strongly encouraged to complete a nomination form. The deadline for submitting a nomination is March 15, so it can be included in the Pre-Conference Journal.

“Under the leadership of the nominations committee, we are seeking leaders who can advance the trajectory of the Annual Conference,” said the Rev. Mackey Yokem, executive director of mission and ministry for the Conference. “Our hope is that with this new process, we can solicit a broader base of lay and clergy leaders.”

## Southeast District: serving neighbors on MLK Day

The Mission Center of the Southeast District hosted a “Dirty Hands” mission event Monday, Jan. 20, 2014, for those in the Pine Bluff area. The Martin Luther King Jr. holiday observance was planned as a call to a day of service and action to feed those in the community.

Nearly 200 people were served a meal of soup, cornbread and dessert. While First UMC Pine Bluff hosted, the food donations came from United Methodist churches throughout Jefferson County. All of the churches participated, not only by providing food, but also by supplying workers who helped serve a hot meal to attendees.



While the meal was being served, those in attendance were entertained by youth and young adults from House of Levi, a non-profit organization that provides services to newly released inmates, and St. Luke UMC Pine Bluff. The Rev. Welton Boyce, pastor of Wabbaseka A.M.E. Church, spoke words of encouragement that highlighted the work of slain civil rights leader Dr. Martin Luther King.

## Spring 2014 events at Mount Eagle

Mount Eagle Retreat Center, a United Methodist facility near Clinton, Ark., has announced this spring's events. Many of them were planned in response to conversations about ways the retreat center can help local congregations and individuals in their ministry. For information and registration forms, visit [www.mounteagle.org/events.htm](http://www.mounteagle.org/events.htm) and scroll down to find the specific event; or call Mount Eagle at 501-723-4580.

- Feb. 27-March 1 – **Food for the Heart and Soul – A Cooking Retreat:** for anyone who wants to learn new cooking skills and tips; ways to create healthy recipes; and make a stronger case for cooking as spiritual practice.
- March 7 – **Enneagram – What's Your Number:** a day-long workshop for clergy and laity who want to learn more about the ancient personality typing system, taught in conjunction with Perkins School of Theology's Office of Spiritual Formation.
- March 13-14 – **Lay Servant Ministry School - Session I:** one basic and two advanced classes will be taught. Stay for the second session and pick up another course.
- March 14-15 – **Lay Servant Ministry School - Session II:** one basic and two advanced classes will be taught. Come a day early for the first session and pick up another course.
- March 30-April 2 – **Hands-on Faith:** a three-day spiritual formation retreat based on the Academy for Spiritual Formation/Benedictine model where the new small group curriculum, *Hands-on Faith: A Practical Guide to Everyday Christianity in Community*, will be introduced.

## Pastor walks 31 miles, raises \$13K for charities, scholarships

The Rev. Jim Cross, pastor of First UMC Ashdown and Richmond UMC, chose 1 Peter 4:10, “Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others,” as the Bible verse for Impact: Walking for Christ 2014. This is the second year he has embarked on a more than 30-mile walk to raise funds for charitable causes and scholarships for young people.

Cross chose Saturday, Jan. 25, for the 2014 walk. He began by walking around his neighborhood, then to the city park, around each school, to the community of Ogden, and back to the Ashdown High Track—a distance of 31.1 miles. Others accompanied him on parts of the walk, and he received numerous messages from those praying for him. The walk took just over 10 hours.

T-shirts, wrist bands and various foods were donated and sold, and a 5K walk was held in conjunction with Cross's effort. As with last year's walk, which raised \$16,000, the bulk of donations came from church members, the community and from acquaintances and friends across a wide area. This year's total topped \$13,000.

In a time span of a little over a year, almost \$30,000 has been raised in answer to a pastor's question to God: *What can I do to make an impact in the lives of others?* The blessings have been spread over a world that needs all of us to ask and live out this same question. Sometimes, the answer is not as hard as it might seem.



The Rev. Jim Cross, right, was accompanied by friends and supporters along parts of his 31-mile walk. Impact: Walking for Christ is his fundraiser for a number of charitable causes. This is Impact's second year.

COURTESY PHOTO

## Do you want to be part of lasting revival?

Check [www.aldersgatecovenant.org](http://www.aldersgatecovenant.org) this month for registration information on the May 16-17 Aldersgate Covenant prayer gathering, hosted by Church of the Resurrection in Leawood, Kan.



# What is 'spiritual revival'?

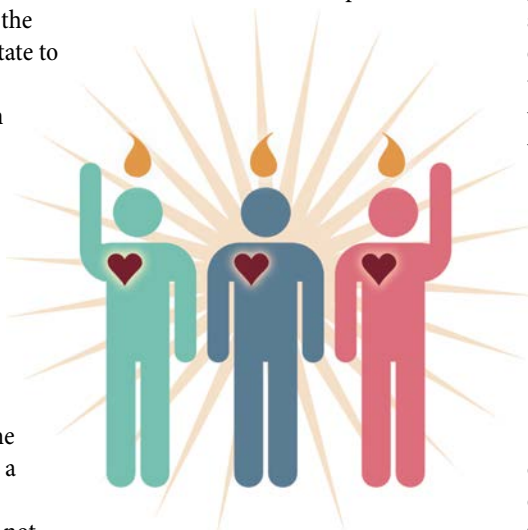
BY MARTHA TAYLOR  
Special Contributor

Where two or more are gathered, you will no doubt hear something about the Bishop's Mission Plan. Bishop Mueller and others involved in developing the plan have been traveling the state to talk with groups of laity and clergy about what it will mean for United Methodists of Arkansas to move ahead on the trajectory God has charted.

Consisting of ten "Next Steps" shared with laity and clergy in September 2013, the plan outlines the key actions needed for individuals, local congregations, districts and the Annual Conference to live out a shared mission and vision.

Most everyone agrees it's not easy work, especially when the first step is to "Experience Spiritual Revival," something that can only be achieved by allowing the Holy Spirit to work without restriction.

"The future is not dependent upon how smart we are, how we utilize technology, or how strategic we can be in our thinking and our planning—all of which is important," said Bishop Gary Mueller. "Our future depends on the



power of the Holy Spirit reviving us. And more than anything else, we as Christians and our churches here in Arkansas really need to experience spiritual revival."

The Rev. Jeanne Williams, pastor at Walnut Ridge United Methodist Church, has just begun to discuss the bishop's plan with her congregation. Her appointment began in June 2013, so she is still getting to know her congregation and mission field. Even so, she is encouraged by the positive reception the church's more than 90 worshippers have had to the new work.

Williams said she is working closely with the Center for Clergy and Laity Excellence in Leadership and with a process around vitality transformation. Even so, she believes spiritual revival is Holy Spirit work—and that being open to it begins with prayer.

"We challenged the congregation to pray: to pray for each other, pray for the community, pray for the Arkansas Conference and pray for the United Methodist Church in general," she said.

Williams acknowledged that spiritual revival involves vulnerability, which can be difficult in today's society.

"For [spiritual revival] to happen you have to invite the Holy Spirit into the moment, into the situation," Williams said. "You have to open yourself up and be willing to be vulnerable. That's so hard in our culture today, to be truly vulnerable, to peel back all those layers."

Even though the work has just begun and will be challenging, Williams hopes that spiritual revival can and will happen in the Walnut Ridge community, and she credits Bishop Mueller for leading the way.

"I think our bishop is someone who is following God's plan and God's will for our Conference and for the United Methodist Church as a whole," she said. "I think that it's evident by the mission plan that he set forth and by the energy and excitement that you hear when you talk to laity, not just clergy, who suddenly have that note of excitement and energy in their voice."

Williams added, "I think we are in a very good place and on a really good path, and that gives me hope."

What will spiritual revival look like for a district? The Rev. Bud Reeves, superintendent and mission strategist for the Northwest District, is sure it won't be about the status quo.

"Revival in the church in Arkansas is not going to come through programs or structures or organizations," Reeves said.

## Telling—and becoming—the story

In a Jan. 15 email to the Conference, Bishop Mueller announced a new way he would be sharing the Bishop's Mission Plan. In addition to regular stories that will appear in this publication, a series of 10 videos will be released at regular intervals throughout the spring and summer.

Each video will highlight one of the "Next Steps" outlined in the plan and will be followed by an online discussion where laity and clergy from around the state and the bishop will help unpack each of the 10 mission plan points. To view the introductory video by Bishop Mueller, visit [www.arumc.org/missionplan](http://www.arumc.org/missionplan).

The full schedule for the videos and online discussions is:

Video: Experience Spiritual Revival – Feb. 3  
Online discussion – Feb. 6 at 10 a.m.

Video: Tell the Imagine Ministry Story – Feb. 24  
Online discussion – Feb. 28 at 9 a.m.

Video: Broaden Disciple-Making through District Mission Plans – March 3  
Online discussion – March 7 at 3 p.m.

Video: Make Mission-Field Appointments – March 17  
Online discussion – March 19 at 3 p.m.

Video: Look Like the Neighborhood – March 31  
Online discussion – April 4 at 9 a.m.

Video: Grow by "1" – April 14  
Online discussion – April 15 at 11 a.m.

Video: Unleash Lay Leadership – May 1  
Online discussion – May 13 at 2 p.m.

Video: Grow Passionate and Excellent Clergy – May 19  
Online discussion – May 28 at 11 a.m.

Video: Create Vital African-American Congregations – June 2  
Online discussion – June 3 at 1 p.m.

Video: Reach the "Nones" – June 16  
Online discussion – June 17 at 9 a.m.

Reminders about the videos, along with login instructions for the online discussions, will be sent electronically several days before each event.

The videos, as well as recordings of the online discussions, will be available at [www.arumc.org/missionplan](http://www.arumc.org/missionplan).



"Renewal is the work of the Holy Spirit. Unless we make ourselves available to the Holy Spirit, nothing else is going to make much difference."

Reeves is among those who are high hopes for what local churches might look like when they experience spiritual revival.

"We will see some churches growing numerically, [and] all will be growing spiritually that experience revival," Reeves said.

"There will be enthusiasm and excitement about the ministry. That's what we want to see."

It's about a new relationship with God, says Mueller.

"Revival is not about having a certain emotional experience or running away from the world," Bishop Mueller says. "It's about deeper discipleship in following Jesus, and a passion for sharing the love of Jesus with the world that needs it so much."

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## Milestone reached toward Imagine No Malaria goal

**IMAGINE NO MALARIA**  
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The Arkansas Conference is heading for the finish line more than 15 months ahead of schedule in achieving its goal of raising \$1 million for the Imagine No Malaria initiative.

As of December 2013, Arkansans have given more than \$333,333.33 toward the goal of ending malaria deaths and illnesses by 2015. That amount is doubled thanks to a matching grant from the **United Methodist Foundation of Arkansas**, putting the Arkansas Conference at over 70 percent of its goal.

“There are so many people in so many churches that have done some incredible work to get us this far this fast,” said the Rev. David Freeman, chair of the Imagine No Malaria task force. “I am so proud of the churches of the Arkansas Conference. The Foundation’s matching gift has made all of their work a double portioned blessing.”

Initiative leaders appreciate the generosity of UMEFA’s matching grant, which helped jumpstart the fund drive.

“Almost every time I turn around I see a new way the United Methodist Foundation of Arkansas is extending the United Methodist witness in our state,” Bishop Gary E. Mueller said. “And it’s happened again. I want to offer a hearty ‘thank you’ to the Foundation for its matching gift of more than \$333,000 towards our Conference’s \$1 million goal for Imagine No Malaria. Your visionary challenge has enabled the United Methodists of Arkansas to save lives on the other side of the globe.”

The task force believes it may be possible to meet the goal by the 2014 Annual Conference, June 19-22—a full year early, and reason to celebrate.

## Icy December led to low special offering for Methodist Family Health

On Dec. 8, one of the two designated special offering Sundays for Methodist Family Health, many churches in the central and northern parts of the states cancelled services due to ice and inclement weather. As a result, many church-goers missed the opportunity to support Methodist Family Health through a church offering.

“The Christmas offering is vital for the large population of children and families in our care,” says Maggie Beeler, director of development for Methodist Family Health. “We do not receive apportioned funds from the Conference, so we rely heavily on this special offering and support from local churches, UMW groups, individual church members and mission teams.”

As of Jan. 21, Beeler said, the organization is more than \$50,000 shy of its Christmas offering goal for 2013, a shortfall she blamed on the early December snow and ice. The funds are needed to provide care through a network of therapeutic group homes, a behavioral hospital,

residential treatment centers, emergency shelter, day treatment programs, community- and school-based counseling clinics and other programs.

“We invite churches and individuals to help us catch up in February,” Beeler said. She suggests the following ways to help:

1. **Make a gift online at [www.methodistfamily.org](http://www.methodistfamily.org).**
2. **Hold a special church offering for Methodist Family Health in February.**
3. **Make a contribution via mail to the Methodist Family Health Foundation, P.O. Box 56050, Little Rock, AR 72215.**

Contact Beeler at 501-412-6178 or [mbeeler@methodistfamily.org](mailto:mbeeler@methodistfamily.org) to learn other ways to support this mission in your own backyard.

Methodist Family Health has served children and families in Arkansas since 1899. Initially created as an orphanage, today’s Methodist Family Health offers comprehensive psychiatric and behavioral healthcare to more than



Bishop Gary Mueller greets several children who are part of Methodist Family Health’s Arkansas CARES program.

PHOTO BY JANE DENNIS

1,400 clients daily via inpatient, residential and outpatient venues of care, including the programs of the Methodist Children’s Home. For more information, visit [www.methodistfamily.org](http://www.methodistfamily.org).



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# Series on grace coming soon

*Learning tool designed for Arkansas churches, led by Wesley scholar*

BY MARTHA TAYLOR  
Special Contributor

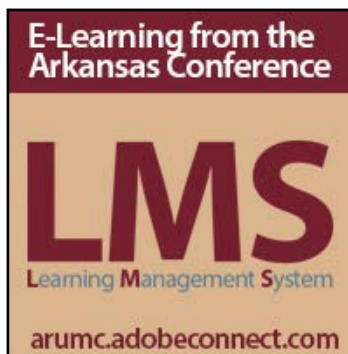
Later this month, a new video series, "Grace: What is it and what does it do for us?" will be the newest addition to the growing list of educational offerings on the Arkansas Conference Learning Management System (LMS).

The five-part series is the work of the Rev. Andrew Thompson, Wesley scholar for the Conference and assistant professor of historical theology and Wesleyan Studies at Memphis Theological Seminary.

"Coming to understand how the Scriptures talk about grace can help us understand a great deal about the ministry of Jesus Christ and about salvation itself," Thompson says in the video segment on the nature of grace. "Grace is a rich topic in the Bible and can be best understood by looking at it from different points of view."

In the first two segments, Thompson discusses the work and nature of grace. The third segment focuses on the means of grace. The fourth segment, "Christian

Community," helps the viewer better understand what Scripture has to say about Christian community and how Methodists have some important doctrinal statements about the nature of "church."



"In the Wesleyan view, Christian community is crucial because it is only within community that we can reasonably expect to receive a living faith in Jesus Christ, and thereafter to grow in grace," Thompson says in the fourth video segment.

The nature and work of the Holy Spirit is discussed in the fifth and final segment.

"If Methodist folk are

unfamiliar with the central place of the Spirit in Wesley's own theology, that's our fault rather than his," Thompson says in the video. "It's also a reason to become more familiar with why Wesley believed the Spirit is central to what it means to become holy in heart and life."

Meant to be accessed by laity and clergy, the series helps viewers better understand how fundamental grace is to Methodist theology, and that it is one of the cornerstones of our unique faith perspective.

The LMS is available for laity and clergy and contains videos on a number of church-related subjects. The most recent addition to the LMS is a 12-part Communications Training series. Scheduled for mid-2014 is a how-to module that will guide participants in the steps of conducting a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) analysis for churches, and a piece on key drivers of church vitality.

**The LMS is accessible to anyone with an arumc.org email address. To request one, visit [www.mymarumc.org](http://www.mymarumc.org).**

## Murfreesboro church serves community with toy fair, Advent feast

First United Methodist Church Murfreesboro hosted its 12th annual Toy and Clothing Fair Dec. 13-14, 2013, through its mission house, Blessed Beginnings.

Blessed Beginnings is one of the church's many outreach programs for the communities of Pike, Hempstead, Clark and Howard counties.

"This has been the largest toy fair thus far," said Pat McKnight, mission coordinator

for the church. She and others worked long hours preparing for this event, which provides those in need with new and used toys, new and used clothing, shoes, bath and beauty products and household items.

McKnight also coordinated with the Gideons, who donated 200 Bibles that were given away the first day of the fair. About 200 bags of groceries were distributed, exhausting the inventory of the Blessed Beginnings pantry.

"The one thing that the volunteers were disheartened about was that we gave out all the toys before the event was scheduled to close, and some families were not helped," Pastor James Wainscott said. "Over 300 families, which translated, means almost 800 people, were helped this year—more than ever before."

The same weekend, the church hosted its 37th annual Advent Feast, a fellowship meal for the residents of Murfreesboro and surrounding communities. The church fed about 175 people, some of whom had also visited the toy fair earlier in the day. In addition, church members took food to the local jail for the inmates and guards.

"In the Gospel of Matthew, chapter 25, Jesus gives us an example of what we are to do as members of the body of Christ," Wainscott said. "By helping those in need, we are helping Jesus. In order to show the love of Christ, we must show love ourselves."



COURTESY PHOTO

## First UMC El Dorado helps at UMCOR Depot

A group from First UMC El Dorado embarked on a mission journey in December to Sager Brown Depot in Baldwin, La., a facility of the United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR). Among their tasks: receiving and sorting the relief supplies donated by churches across Arkansas as part of Ingathering 2013. Arkansas Conference Volunteers in Mission coordinator Byron Mann transported Arkansas' Ingathering kits to Sager Brown Depot, where the El Dorado team readied them for deployment around the world. In addition to their work at Sager Brown, the group helped a local resident with home repairs during their time in Louisiana.

Part of the team is pictured above during a break for their warehouse work. From left: Byron Mann, JoAn Skinner, John Lusk, Becki Lusk, Kay Hardin and Angie Green.



COURTESY PHOTO

## Three-point charge co-hosts Delta revival

A revival was held Jan. 12-17 at the Portland, Wilmot and Dermott Charge in southeast Arkansas under the direction of the Rev. Phil Worley. Each church hosted two nights of the revival.

The revival began on Sunday morning in the Portland church, with Southeast District Superintendent the Rev. Mark K. Norman delivering the message at all three churches' worship services. The Rev. Carlton Cross was the visiting evangelist, delivering messages each evening to churches filled with worshippers. The amazing attendance hinted at great work being done in the Delta area through United Methodist congregations.

The three churches in this charge worked together and across denominational lines to make the revival meaningful for the community. By worshipping as one group, these three churches were able to demonstrate ways in which to share the gospel in their local communities.

Attendees of each service came forward to the altar, praying for spiritual renewal for their own lives and other lives in Arkansas. The revival opened up the ability for these communities to have a continued dialogue on how to witness to the masses and further the mission and ministry of the Arkansas Conference. It was a week that will not be forgotten by the small churches in the Delta—a lasting memory of the Holy Spirit at work.

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## Workman (continued from page 1)

“John Workman was a steady, thoughtful and conscientious man who shared his considerable gifts with the church and all the people of Arkansas,” said Jane Dennis, editor of the *Arkansas United Methodist* from 1988 to 2009. “He had a terrific sense of humor and a passion for tolerance, peace and justice. He was never afraid to write from the heart, and that’s what endeared him to us.”

Writing from the heart also endeared him to readers of the *Arkansas Gazette*. In 1979, he took a leave of absence from appointment within the United Methodist Church to work for the statewide daily newspaper as its religion editor. He soon became Arkansas’ best-known religion columnist, a respected and influential voice on religion and its importance in American life.

“John was an outstanding person, a leader in the Methodist Church and a leader in the field of journalism for many years,” the Rev. Frank Jones of Conway told the *Log Cabin Democrat*. Jones first met Workman when they were students at Hendrix College.

Although he often drew criticism for writing on controversial subjects, Workman had a reputation for fair and evenhanded reporting. He was best known, however, for his columns and opinion pieces, which were thoughtful, undogmatic and often characterized by a self-deprecating humor. A selection of these materials appeared in Workman’s three books: *Fireflies in a Fruit Jar*, *Open Windows* and *Travels in a Tree House*.

Arguing strongly that all topics had a religious dimension, Workman broadened the *Gazette’s* religion coverage to include state and national politics, American foreign policy, gun control, capital punishment, the proliferation of nuclear arms, the equal rights amendment, abortion, race relations and an array of other social issues.

“He was always one to push back boundaries, and he was very witty about it,” Jones said.

Workman held honorary doctorates from both of Arkansas’ United Methodist-affiliated colleges, Hendrix and Philander Smith; and in 1992 Hendrix awarded him the Ethel K. Millar Award for Religion and Social Awareness. He also received national recognition for his work, and was inducted into the United Methodist Association of Communicators Hall of Fame in 1993.

He is survived by brothers James W. Workman, Jr. of Arlington, Wash., and Walter E. Workman of Kerrville, Texas; his wife of 64 years, Ruth Elizabeth Teague Workman of Conway, and their children: John S. Workman, Jr. of Ridgewood, N.J.; Paul Steven Workman of Owasso, Okla.; Susan Workman Jones of Miami, N.M.; and Charles M. Workman of Valeys-sous-Montagny, Switzerland; seven grandchildren; and one great-granddaughter.

A memorial service was held Jan. 18 at First United Methodist Church Conway. In lieu of flowers, the family would welcome memorial gifts made to First United Methodist Church Conway, Hendrix College or Heifer International.

*Michelle Corbet of the Log Cabin Democrat contributed to this report.*

## COMING UP

### Ethnic and Language Committee Summit Feb. 22

The 2014 Ethnic Summit will take place Saturday, Feb. 22, at Philander Smith College’s Kendall Center from 9:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. The theme is “Body Talk,” based on 1 Corinthians 12:1 and 13. Persons representing the National Ethnic Plans of the UMC will be part of the event. The committee requests that each congregation send a minimum of three persons: the pastor and two officers of the church; and a young adult, if possible.

The committee is also pleased to announce a collaboration with the Center for Technology and the Cabinet: one-time grants to 10 ethnic churches of a computer and a printer. Superintendents will identify two churches within their districts to receive these computers. To qualify for consideration, a church must:

- Register a minimum of three persons, including the pastor, for the Summit
- Attend the Summit
- Attend the technology session during the Summit
- Register for an arumc.org email address
- Participate in on-site technology and follow-up needs assessment training at your church

To register, visit <http://tinyurl.com/EthnicSummit14>. There is no charge for registrations received by Feb. 15, and a \$20 charge for late or walk-up registration.

Questions? Contact the Rev. Maxine Allen, Conference Coordinator of Ethnic and Language Ministries, at 501-539-0280 or [mallen@arumc.org](mailto:mallen@arumc.org).

### Small Church Leadership: free training events Feb. 15 and 22, March 1

All laity and pastors are invited to attend “Small Church Leadership,” a workshop led by the Rev. Dr. Candace Barron, associate director of the Arkansas Conference Center for Clergy and Laity Excellence in Leadership (CCLEL).

First UMC Conway hosts the Central District event Feb. 15; First UMC Ozark hosts the Northwest District event Feb. 22; and Central Avenue UMC Batesville hosts the Northeast District event March 1. Topics include: Introduction to the Center for Clergy & Laity Excellence in Leadership; Small Church Leadership; and Best Practices for Hospitality & Evangelism.

All events begin at 9:30 a.m. and conclude at 12:30 p.m. While there is no participation fee, pre-registration

is recommended.

To sign up for the Central District session, visit <http://tinyurl.com/CCLELFeb15>.

For the Northwest District session, visit <http://tinyurl.com/CCLELFeb22> to reserve your seat.

For the Northeast District event, visit <http://tinyurl.com/CCLELMarch1> to register.

### Confirmation Day with the Bishop set for March 8

Confirmation Day with the Bishop, an annual event for any and all youth presently in a confirmation class, who have just finished a confirmation class or are getting ready to begin a confirmation class, is set for Saturday, March 8, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. at Pulaski Heights UMC, 4823 Woodlawn in Little Rock.

Besides spending time with Bishop Gary Mueller, attendees will worship; get to know recording artists and songwriters The Weatherfolk (Ken and Casey Weatherford); and have the chance to test their knowledge in games and workshop sessions loaded with information about what it means to be Christian and United Methodist.

Cost is \$10 for students and adults, and includes lunch. To register, visit <http://tinyurl.com/ConfDay>. Questions? Contact Jay Clark at [jclark@phumc.com](mailto:jclark@phumc.com).

### Flu prevention and health promotion summit March 14

The Arkansas Department of Health presents a Faith and Community Based Flu Prevention and Health Promotion Summit in Little Rock on Friday, March 14, from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. There is no charge to attend. Presenters include the Rev. Dr. Cynthia D. Davis, a United Methodist district superintendent from the Memphis Conference; José L. González, director of the Office of Minority and Multicultural Health for the Minnesota Department of Health; and Venerable Geshe Dr. Dorgee Thurpten, Geshe Lharampa (Ph.D), director of the Tibetan Cultural Institute of Arkansas and assistant professor, University of Arkansas - J. William Fulbright College of Arts & Sciences.

At press time, the location had not yet been set. For more information, RSVP to [joy.carrington@arkansas.gov](mailto:joy.carrington@arkansas.gov).

### Spring Handbell Festival April 26

Central UMC Fayetteville’s annual Spring Handbell Festival is set for Saturday, April 26, 2014, with optional Extreme Ring on Friday evening, April 25. This year’s

festival features nationally in-demand composer/arranger Joel Raney as clinician. Full and partial handbell choirs of all denominations are welcome. Ringers will learn new techniques and refine existing techniques, work together and network with other ringers, build choirs’ music repertoires, equip bell choir members to ring with confidence and to glorify God to the best of their abilities... and to have fun! Registration forms and other information available at [www.centrallife.com](http://www.centrallife.com); click on Ministries, then Worship Ministries, then Handbell Festival.

## VOLUNTEERS IN MISSION UPDATES

For information on any Volunteers In Mission (VIM) project below, contact the individual listed or Byron Mann, Conference VIM coordinator: [vim@arumc.org](mailto:vim@arumc.org) or 870-826-0268. For Disaster Response (DR) projects, contact Byron or Janice Mann, DR co-coordinators: [disaster@arumc.org](mailto:disaster@arumc.org) or 870-703-8359 (Janice). To connect on Facebook, search for “Volunteers in Mission & Disaster Response - Serving Arkansas & Beyond,” and join the group for updates.

### Connecting Neighbors training set for March 1

Connecting Neighbors, a local church disaster preparedness training program, will be offered Saturday, March 1, from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. at St. Paul Maumelle UMC, 9721 Pinnacle Valley Rd. in Little Rock. Teams of up to five people per local church are encouraged to attend; individuals also welcome. For information, contact Brenda Norwood, 501-773-5749 or [bnorwood3g@gmail.com](mailto:bnorwood3g@gmail.com); or Janice Mann (see above).

### ‘This Olde Church’ projects

Local churches may request a VIM team to lend a hand with a “This Olde Church” project: small repairs to the church and grounds, such as painting, cleaning, yard work, landscaping or building wheelchair ramps. To give or receive help through “This Olde Church,” contact Byron Mann, 870-826-0268 or [vim@arumc.org](mailto:vim@arumc.org). Current needs include:

- **DeAnn UMC** in Hempstead County is in need of some remodeling work in the sanctuary and some exterior paint and maintenance. For information, contact Jacky Simmons at 870-703-4134.
- **Southbend UMC** fell victim to arson on Oct. 16. Teams are still needed to help with recovery. To schedule your team, contact the Rev. Garren Hagemeyer at [garren.earle@gmail.com](mailto:garren.earle@gmail.com) or 501-247-7134.
- **Oak Grove UMC** in Hempstead County is in need of some roof repair work. To learn more, contact the Rev. Revel Kidd at 870-777-4950.

### April 5 chainsaw safety certification

The Conference Disaster Response Team will be holding a Chainsaw Safety Training course Saturday, April 5, at Mount Eagle Retreat Center near Clinton. Chainsaw safety certification is required for anyone working with a chainsaw on a Disaster Response Team. Contact Janice Mann with questions.

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# Hoover (continued from page 1)

options might have seemed limited in the segregated South, especially after her mother died when she was a small child. But her father, a city hospital orderly, taught her to be fearless and gave her the confidence to do what she needed to do.

A 1946 graduate of Philander Smith College, she helped the Little Rock Methodist Council, a coalition of 19 black and white Methodist congregations, convert a former turkey farm into Camp Aldersgate, dedicated in 1947 as a camp for African-American youth and a racially integrated training center.

## The national stage

Segregation remained firmly entrenched in the Methodist Church when Hoover joined the staff of the Woman's Division of Christian Service, part of the Board of Missions, in 1948 as a field worker for the denomination's Central Jurisdiction.

Traveling across the United States in Jim Crow days as an African-American woman meant "she had a job for the Women's Division that required sacrifices that none of the other women had to think about," said Peggy Billings, who became "fast friends" with Hoover in the 1960s as they worked together on racial justice issues.

Even later, at the board offices in New York, "it was not an easy time for a black person to agree to come on an all-white staff or to take on an organization that had historically been white," she noted.

The year that Hoover was elected the Women's Division top executive—1968—was a pivotal year as the Methodist Church merged with the Evangelical United Brethren Church.

Barbara Campbell, who was Hoover's "second in command" at the Women's Division for many years, noted that Hoover had to rebuild the division staff practically from scratch from the merger to the massive reorganization for the new UMC in 1972.

As with other reorganizations over the years, such tumult endangered the membership and institutional relationships of United Methodist Women. "There were always those who thought they could handle our money better than we could," she added.

Hoover's "outstanding leadership" on church union for the Methodist Church was crucial in an era when it was difficult for both a woman and a person of color to command influence and power, said Betty Thompson, communications director for the Board of Global Ministries during that time.

Possessed with an active prayer life and deep grounding in the faith and history of Methodism, Hoover was not afraid to "speak truth to power," but did so with grace, compassion and respect, women close to her recounted.

"She didn't suffer fools gladly, but neither did she take herself (too) seriously," Campbell said.

Administratively, she was "a great boss," Billings said, who supported and appreciated competent staff and, Campbell added, always operated under the assumption that others should know the mechanics of running the division.

She made United Methodist Women a strong organization by emphasizing the need to understand its membership, mission and intent and by "training other women to take your place, do the work and share the message when you no longer do it," said Salter, who was hired by Hoover in 1982.

In her private life during the New York years, she was an avid reader, frequent theatregoer and skilled Southern cook, relying upon a wide circle of friends that she called "her community" for support.

## Mentor and promoter of laywomen

Hoover took young women of all races under her wing, nurturing leadership skills that would have an impact on the denomination for years to come.

When M. Garlinda Burton first met Hoover while covering a Women's Division meeting for United Methodist News Service, she was amazed to see an African-American woman have so much influence in the church.

## OBITUARIES

### JONESBORO

#### James T. Randle

The Rev. Jim Randle, 77, passed away Monday, Jan. 20, 2014, at Lakeside Nursing Center in Lake City, Ark.

A retired elder, he served for 42 years as an active United Methodist pastor, primarily in the North Arkansas Conference. His appointments included Hardy, Bay, Earle, First UMC Fort Smith, Tuckerman and Clarendon.

He is survived by his wife, Virginia, a son and daughter-in-law, a brother, two grandsons and two nieces.

Services were held Jan. 25 at St. Paul United Methodist Church Jonesboro. The body was donated for medical science research. Memorial gifts may be made to a church or charity of your choice.



Jim Randle

### LITTLE ROCK

#### Marie Harrell Christie

Marie Harrell Christie, 90, passed away Thursday, Dec. 26, 2013.

She was the daughter of the Rev. Van Wesley Harrell and Lula Brady Harrell, and was married for almost 60 years to the Rev. James Edward Christie, who preceded her in death.

She was a wonderful wife, loving mother, sister and aunt; and a friend to many. At age 15, her father's church bought an organ with no one available to play it. After traveling to Little Rock weekly for lessons, she became the church's organist. At that time, funeral homes also began buying organs. She would skip and then make up high school classes to help with funerals until she could teach someone to play for them.

Marie graduated from Stuttgart High School and attended Hendrix College, colleges in Louisiana, Southern



Marie Christie

Methodist University and Columbia University. She was active in the American Guild of Organists in Dallas, Texas, and in every church choir where she and her husband served. She also was a talented and trained soprano, singing in church choirs and, later, the Cantorias women's choir in Little Rock.

Together she and her husband served churches in Louisiana and Arkansas, and later traveled all over the U.S. for the General Board of Global Ministries. Home was wherever she and James were together. Family, service and hospitality were the cornerstones of her life.

She is survived by a son, James Kenneth Christie and his wife, Phebe Duff; a grandson, Aaron Christie; and a sister, Virginia Shreeve, and her children, Kay Marie, Michael and Jane Lea.

Following burial at Rest Hills Memorial Park, a memorial service was held Jan. 10 at St. James UMC Little Rock.

### MOUNTAIN VIEW

#### Royce Lynn McSpadden

Royce Lynn McSpadden, 76, passed away Sunday, Jan. 5, 2014.

He was born April 2, 1937, in Bethesda, Ark., to the Rev. Byron Luster McSpadden and Frances Irene Brightwell McSpadden, who preceded him in death.

As the son of a Methodist preacher, Lynn lived in many towns in north Arkansas. He graduated from high school in Corning; from Hendrix College in Conway; and from Duke University Divinity School in 1962. He pastored churches in the former North Arkansas Conference of the United Methodist Church and in Missouri. He was associate pastor of Barony Kirk (Church of Scotland) in Glasgow, Scotland; and taught high school English in Farmington, Mo.

Lynn crafted mountain dulcimers from 1962 through the end of 2000. He was responsible for the creating of more than 42,000 dulcimers, bringing much joy to many hundreds of people throughout the world.

He was a faithful son, a caring brother, the true love of his wife of nearly 42 years, a [continued on page 11]

Hoover encouraged Burton, who recently retired as top executive of the United Methodist Commission on the Status and Role of Women, to see herself as a leader. She also learned from Hoover that women like herself—laywomen, women of color, women from small towns—"are the legs the church stands on and that position deserves respect."

For the Rev. Maxine Allen, now on staff with the Arkansas Conference, Hoover was one of three women, along with Bishop Leontine T.C. Kelly and Euba Harris Winton, "who laid the legacy where, particularly, black women could see themselves outside of the local church environment."

Allen went back to school at the age of 40 and then on to seminary. A UMW scholarship helped her graduate without debt.

Hoover's niece, Melba Smith, who started work with the Women's Division at the Church Center for the United Nations in 1970, also felt fortunate for the guidance provided by her aunt. "I was privileged to have been a member of her staff for so many years," Smith said. "She was one of my greatest mentors."

Jan Love, who first met Hoover when she was 17, followed her lead in encouraging the UMC to bring its gifts and "considerable weight" to the table in ecumenical matters and served with her as United Methodist representatives on the World Council of Churches Central Committee.

Love also was the Women's Division's top executive from 2004 to 2006 before becoming dean of Candler School of Theology at Emory University.

In recognition of her mentoring prowess, the Women's Division created the annual Theresa Hoover Community Service and Global Citizenship award when she retired in 1990.

## Back home to Arkansas

Hoover was inducted into the Arkansas Black Hall of Fame in 2000, but a more visible sign of her zeal for mission can be found at the Theresa Hoover United Methodist Church Little Rock, thought to be one of the denomination's first local churches named for a laywoman. Hoover "had played a big part" in the life of the Rev. William H. Robinson, Jr., who chartered the congregation in December 1981 and served as its pastor for 32 years.

Over the years, Theresa Hoover UMC has built 70 new homes in the community, supported projects for women, children and youth and started a certified faith-based licensed substance-abuse program.

"I think that she spelled out mission work for this denomination," Robinson said. "She tackled strategic problems in a sensitive way to get it done and she certainly trained and provided leadership and gave inspiration to many minority women, especially, who followed in her footsteps.

"She was just a jewel."

*Bloom is a United Methodist News Service multimedia reporter based in New York.*

*In lieu of flowers, the family wishes that gifts be made to The Legacy Fund of United Methodist Women in memory of Theresa Hoover, care of United Methodist Women, Room 1504, 475 Riverside Drive, New York, NY 10115; to St. James UMC, P.O. Box 335, Fayetteville, AR 72702; or to Sequoyah UMC, 1910 Old Wire Rd., Fayetteville, AR 72703.*



## OBITUARIES

chronicler of family history and genealogy, a fair and conscientious employer, a concerned and involved step-parent, and a kind, gentle, brilliant and funny man.

Lynn was active in the Ozark Foothills Handicraft Guild, the Gateway Tourist Council, the Mountain View Chamber of Commerce, and First United Methodist Church Mountain View. He loved flying single-engine planes and restoring antique cars.

Survivors include his wife, the Rev. Mary Catherine McSpadden, a retired local pastor in the Arkansas Conference; a brother, Larry McSpadden and his wife, Ginny; a nephew, Brad McSpadden and his wife, Tasha; a grand-niece, three grand-nephews, a stepdaughter, Kate Hurley; a stepson, Jim Hurley and his wife, Ami; three step-grandsons; several aunts and uncles; many cousins; and a host of friends.

The family wishes to thank Dr. Zini and everyone at White River Health Care in Calico Rock. They made Lynn's last days comfortable and safe, and treated him always with skill and respect. Thanks also to Gina Gall and White River Area Agency on Aging for their care for Lynn in his home. The staff and doctors of Senior Haven at White River Medical Center in Batesville gave kind care to Lynn and good advice to Mary Catherine.

The prayers, support and kind words of Lynn's many friends have given comfort and some smiles to Mary Catherine during his health struggles.

If you do not smoke or use tobacco in any form, don't start. If you are already a smoker, QUIT NOW! Emphysema is a miserable disease.

A memorial service was held Jan. 14 at First United Methodist Church Mountain View, with visitation following the service.

In lieu of flowers, please make donations to: Scholarship Fund, United Methodist Church, P.O. Box 74, Mountain View, Ark. 72560; Methodist Family Health, 2000 Aldersgate Road, Little Rock, AR 72205; Heifer International, 1 World Avenue, Little Rock, AR 72202; or a charity of your choice.

### NORTH LITTLE ROCK

#### Lois Lee King McDonald

Lois Lee King McDonald, 85, an Arkansas public school teacher, mother of seven sons and a United Methodist minister's wife for 62 years, passed away Thursday, Dec. 19, 2013, at Fox Ridge Senior Living Center in North Little Rock.

Born Aug. 29, 1929, in Phoenix, Ariz., she grew up in Conway, graduating high school there before attending Arkansas State Teachers College (now the University of Central Arkansas) and earning her bachelor's degree from Hendrix College.

She was known for her unwavering support of her husband and his ministry; for her quick smile and healthy sense of humor; and for an undying love of her large and inclusive family. To her dying days, she maintained an optimistic disposition and a strong belief in the God-given goodness of all people.

In 1950, she married the Rev. Charles P. McDonald Jr. Over the years she gave birth to six sons and took in a seventh as they traveled the "Methodist circuit" to churches and appointments all over Arkansas, including Holly Grove, Ozark, Pocahontas, DeWitt, Rogers, Fort Smith, Searcy, Fayetteville, West Memphis, Conway, Cave City, Paragould, Bear Creek and Jacksonville. They also moved to Las Vegas, N.M., in 2004-06, where the Rev. McDonald served as interim pastor of the First United Methodist Church.

In between and after raising "the boys," Lois attended the University of Arkansas, earned her teaching certification and



**Lois McDonald**

taught at schools in Rogers, Farmington and West Memphis.

She was preceded in death by her parents, Chester and Beulah King; her sister, Betty Welch; and a foster son, David Driver.

Survivors include her sisters-in-law, Betty Lilly of Tulsa, Okla., and Mary Price of Fort Worth, Texas; six sons, David McDonald of Little Rock, Ron McDonald of Memphis, Don McDonald of Memphis, Tom McDonald of Las Vegas, N.M., Jim McDonald of Mountain Home, and Mark McDonald of Jacksonville; 20 grandchildren; four great-grandchildren; and numerous nephews and nieces.

A memorial service was held Monday, Dec. 30, at First United Methodist Church Conway, where she was baptized as a child. The body is being donated to science.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests that donations be made to Mount Eagle Retreat Center, 935 Beal Rd., Clinton, AR 72031, or a charity of your choice.

### ATWOOD, Tenn.

#### Brenda Kay Robertson Rainey

Brenda Kay Robertson Rainey, 70, passed away Wednesday, Dec. 25, 2013.

She was a member of the First United Methodist Church in Milan, Tenn., and was a retired librarian with the Mississippi County Library in Osceola, Ark.

She was preceded in death by her father, Bobby Robertson, and by a daughter, Daphney Simpson.

She is survived by her husband, the Rev. Allen Rainey, a retired elder in the Arkansas Conference of the United Methodist Church; her mother, Roberta Robertson; two brothers, Phil Robertson and Gene Robertson; two sisters, Debby Bingham and Edie Stinnett; three grandchildren, Windy Briley, Rosanna Simpson and Samantha Simpson; and two great-grandchildren, Sidney Briley and Hayden Simpson.

A funeral service was held Saturday, Dec. 28, 2013, at Bodkin Funeral Home in Milan, Tenn. Burial followed in the Pleasant Hill Cemetery near Lavinia, Tenn.

### GERMANTOWN, Tenn.

#### Robert B. Howerton Jr.

Chaplain (Col.) Robert B. Howerton Jr., USA, Retired, passed away Tuesday, Dec. 24, 2013, at the age of 85 in San Antonio, Texas.

He was born March 8, 1928, in Adona, Ark. He graduated from Greene County High School, Paragould, in 1945, Hendrix College, Conway, in 1951 and Southern Methodist University, Dallas, Texas, in 1954. He served his country proudly and retired in 1981 from Fort Sam Houston, Texas, with 26 years of service. He received numerous medals, including the Bronze Star for meritorious service in ground operations against hostile forces in Vietnam.



**Bob and Gerry Howerton**

Robert was also retired from Methodist Health Systems in Memphis, Tenn., and the Arkansas Conference of the United Methodist Church. Robert served several churches in Arkansas, including Mountain Home and Cotter. He was the son of a United Methodist minister. Robert was a member of Germantown United Methodist Church for 34 years and the Gilbert Sunday School Class.

Robert was preceded in death by his parents, the Rev. Robert B. Howerton and Myrtle Woodard Howerton; his wife, Gerry D. Howerton; two sons, Charles R. Howerton and Robert B. Howerton, III; and all of his brothers and sisters. He is survived by daughter, Mary Jane Howerton Carroll and her

husband, Michael. Also surviving him are his extended family, grandchildren and one great-grandchild.

A Celebration of Life service was held at Germantown UMC on Jan. 25, 2014. A dual graveside service celebrating the lives of Robert and Geraldene Howerton (Geraldene passed away Nov. 28, 2013) was held at Fort Sam Houston National Cemetery, San Antonio, Texas, on Jan. 31, 2014. Robert was buried with full military honors.

The entire Howerton/Carroll family is forever grateful to the members of Germantown UMC, and Robert's friends. Memorial contributions may be sent to Germantown UMC, 2331 South Germantown Road, Germantown, TN 38138, designated to the Senior Pastor Discretionary Fund.

### TARPLEY, Texas

#### Rena Sandidge Scott

Rena Sandidge Scott, 88, passed away Sunday, Jan. 12, 2014.

She was born June 10, 1925 in Kerrville, Texas, to Plenny and Bessie Nelson. Soon after Rena's birth, Bessie died, and all eight children were taken in by Bessie's older sister, Emma, and her husband, Tom Caffall. Tom and Emma already had six boys, but their love and loyalty to family ties led them to share their home and whatever they had.

In time, Plenny remarried and the oldest six kids returned to live with their dad and stepmother. But babies Rena and Vera stayed with Tom and Emma and were raised as Caffalls.

Rena lived in various places while growing up, including Rio Hondo, Tarpley and San Antonio, Texas, and Roswell, N.M., but the family primarily lived in Bandera, Texas, where Rena graduated from Bandera High School in 1943. During the following years, she lived and worked in Bandera. While there, Rena met G.T. Sandidge Jr., and they were married on Feb. 12, 1949. They had three children, and in 1962 they moved to Tarpley. G.T. preceded her in death in April 1986.



**Rena Scott**

In 1989, Rena married the Rev. Bob Scott, an ordained elder in the Little Rock Conference of the United Methodist Church. They lived in Arkansas for two years until his retirement, when they moved to Tarpley. They enjoyed traveling and sharing their many interests together.

Rena's interests were varied, but one of her greatest loves was people—her family, friends and loved ones. One of the easiest ways to put a smile on her face was for a loved one (especially her kids and grandkids) to walk in the door. She had a special relationship with all her brothers and sisters, Caffalls and Nelsons alike. They were all pretty partial to "Baby Sister"; the loud uproar and shouts of joy were likely significant when Rena left this earth and traveled to the next.

An active member of the United Methodist Church, she served on many district, conference, national and world-wide committees and boards. She served two terms as president of the Southwest Texas Conference United Methodist Women, and also served on the Board of Global Ministries, the World Methodist Council and the Board of Christian Unity and Interreligious Concerns (where she first met the Rev. Bob Scott).

Rena is survived by her husband, Bob; two sons, Rob (& Roxy) and Dan (& Ella) Sandidge; a daughter, the Rev. Janna Sandidge Hawes (& Leslie); a stepson, George III (& Barbara) Sandidge; a stepdaughter, Robin Scott; four grandchildren and a step-granddaughter; 10 great-grandchildren and two step-great-grandsons; and many nieces, nephews and friends.

A funeral service was held Jan. 15 at Bandera United Methodist Church, with the Revs. Ken Dahlberg and Austin Frederick officiating. Interment followed at Tarpley Cemetery.



## The Word in the World Lecture Series On Living Christian Faith

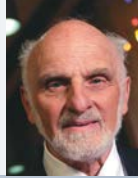
This spring at Hendrix College, three renowned theologians explore different perspectives on what it means to live a vibrant Christian life.

*A reception and book signing will follow each lecture.  
All events are free and open to the public.*



**THE BIBLE AND THE AMERICAN PRISON**  
**Lauren Winner:** Thursday, February 13  
7:00 pm • Mills Center, Room A

**DIALOGIC LIFE IN A MONOLOGIC CULTURE**  
**Walter Brueggemann:** Thursday, March 20  
7:00 pm • Mills Center, Room A



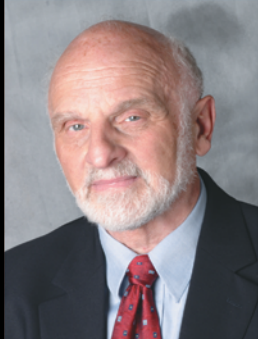
**THE DIVINE MAGICIAN: CHRIST & THE VANISHING ACT OF GOD**  
**Peter Rollins:** Thursday, April 10  
7:00 pm • Mills Center, Room A

For more information contact Dr. Robert Williamson Jr. at (501) 505-1559 or visit [www.facebook.com/wordinworld](http://www.facebook.com/wordinworld)



*The 2014 Word in the World Lecture Series "On Living Christian Faith" is sponsored by the Margaret Berry Hutton Odyssey Professorship. Lauren Winner's lecture is cosponsored by the Hendrix Chaplain's Office and the Miller Center for Vocation, Ethics, and Calling.*

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### The 29th Steel-Hendrix Awards

will be presented to

Mauzel Beal, Zach Schrick, and the Rev. Ed Matthews

Banquet & Awards at 5:30 p.m. • Worsham Performance Hall

*The banquet cost is \$20 if registered before March 12 or \$25 at the door. For more information or to register, contact Rev. J. Wayne Clark at 501-450-1263.*



## Faith Funds

### Growing in Christ

Eva Lee Paysinger is always growing something good – right now she's using her glassed-in porch and a flower bed just outside her Batesville home to grow vegetables. Early in their ministry she and her husband, the late Rev. Vernon Paysinger, were more often growing churches.

"I was the first member of Rosewood UMC in West Memphis," recalled Eva Lee. "The DS sent us to West Memphis in 1955 with a vacant lot and money for an apartment. It took a while, and we had to get out and knock on a lot of doors. But before we left four years later, they had a fellowship hall that we used for worship and five classrooms."

The Paysingers grew up together as school mates and members of the Evening Shade UMC in Sharp County. After a lifetime of serving churches throughout Arkansas, they retired in Batesville to be near family.

Vernon and Eva Lee dedicated their lives to Christian ministry long ago, and it was only natural for them to plan to leave their estate to the United Methodist Foundation. After her death, the Vernon and Eva Lee Paysinger Endowment will underwrite United Methodist missions in Arkansas. It will express their love for the United Methodist Church forever.

"Vernon and I decided to put our money to good use through the Foundation," said Eva Lee. "It's our way of saying thanks to a church that has done so much for us."



**The United Methodist Foundation of Arkansas**

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