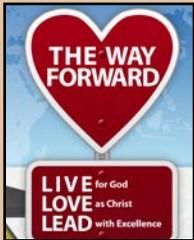


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For more photos and information on this year's flagship event for Arkansas United Methodist youth, see VERITAS, page 14.

AUM PHOTOS BY MIKE MEEKS

Allen to lead mission field engagement



Maxine Allen

Bishop Gary E. Mueller has appointed the Rev. Maxine Allen to a reconfigured position within the Arkansas Conference, Assistant Director of Mission and Ministry for Mission Field Engagement. This appointment, effective July 1, 2014, will be a full-time position on the Arkansas Conference staff.

Allen's focus will be in four main areas:

- Mission field engagement;
- Establishing ethnic congregations;
- New church starts; and
- Ministry to the "Nones" (the religiously unaffiliated—just under 20 percent of all U.S. adults, according to polling by the Pew Research Center).

A key element of this new appointment is to guide churches in aligning their ministries with several steps of the Bishop's Mission Plan.

"Rev. Allen brings diverse gifts to this new role," said Bishop Mueller. "I'm confident that her work will help guide the Arkansas Conference to reach out to new people in new ways, so that our churches can become transformation agents in the lives of their people, their communities and the world."

"I am excited about the opportunities Arkansas churches face today," Allen said. "Those opportunities often come with challenges, but with God's help, we can learn to see new ways of reaching our increasingly diverse mission fields. I believe God's vision

[See ALLEN, page 10]



BY ANDREW C. THOMPSON

PRACTICAL DIVINITY

Connection: What it is, why it matters

“Connection.”

It’s one of those words whose meaning is dependent on context.

If I tell you I’ve made a new connection with a colleague at work, you’ll probably ask me what his name is and how I came to meet him. If you call me on the phone and I remark that the connection is bad, you might blame it on the lack of a nearby cell phone tower.

Methodists have another use for that term, though. We refer to “the Connection” as a synonym for “the Church.”

Speaking about Methodism as a connectional movement goes all the way back to John Wesley. He referred to the group of preachers who were “in connexion” with himself, meaning that they were engaged in a common mission under his recognized leadership.

That sense of unity remained at the heart of the connectional idea after Wesley’s death, when leadership moved from Wesley the individual to the conference itself. American Methodism developed a multi-layered system of conferences. Methodist preachers became identified with the annual conferences where their membership was held, but from the year 1792 all the various annual conferences began to gather in a General Conference that met (and continues to meet) once every four years. The General Conference is the fullest expression of our connection, and it alone has the authority to speak for the whole Church.

Common witness

I have found both pastors and laypeople who think of the connectional nature of the Church primarily in terms of apportionments and other

obligations to Methodist commitments beyond the local congregation. When we think of the connection as the thing that allows “them” to tell “us” what to do, resentment can build quickly.

The true heart of the Methodist connection is much different than that. Connectionalism means that we do not see ourselves operating as independent congregations (or pastors). We are engaged in common work. The local church is the most significant arena for making disciples (cf. *Book of Discipline*, Paragraph 120), but the local church is fundamentally connected to the whole Church’s mission and ministry. Common cause is essential—in doctrine, discipline and spirit.

Connectionalism is therefore the foundation of the entire Methodist conception of the Church. Our *Book of Discipline* refers to the connection as a “vital web of interactive relationships” (Paragraph 132) and describes each local congregation as “a connectional society of persons who have been baptized, have professed their faith in Christ, and have assumed the vows of membership in the United Methodist Church” (Paragraph 203). It is only because each of those congregations exists as part of a broader connection that the entire United Methodist Church can make a common witness to the world.

We can better understand our connectional nature if we contrast it with a popular alternative: congregationalism. In a congregational church, the highest level of authority is the local congregation itself.

Congregationalism teaches that a local church stands alone. It is not beholden to any authority greater than itself. According to this view,

the congregation is the fullest expression of what the body of Christ is meant to be.

More than once in recent years, we have been witness to new church starts in the UMC that have broken away from the connection to organize themselves as independent congregations. That’s a tragic occurrence—and it shows how deeply we need the connectional identity to be planted and nurtured in the hearts of both pastors and their congregations. As a seminary professor, it is a reminder to me of the need for me to explain to my students the fundamentally connectional nature of Methodism.

Responsibility

There’s another “C” word related to connection that also figures prominently in the Bible. It can help us grasp what we mean by connectionalism. That word is “Covenant.”

A covenant is an agreement or pact of mutual trust, entered into by two or more parties who commit to abiding by the terms of their relationship and who pursue certain goods together by virtue of that commitment.

Covenants are contracts, in a certain sense. In a Christian framework, we would say that a covenant is a contract that is formed and maintained by steadfast love. This is the character of God’s relationship with us, as modeled in Scripture. It is also intended to be the character of each baptized Christian’s relationship within the body of the Church.

Methodists employ the idea of covenant when they speak of their connection. We are called into the covenant relationship of the connection. That’s the case for all

members of the United Methodist Church—both laity and clergy. Our *Discipline* explains this feature of the Church: “United Methodists throughout the world are bound together in a connectional covenant in which we support and hold each other accountable for faithful discipleship and mission” (Paragraph 125).

The ordained elders and deacons of the Church have a special

responsibility to our connectional life. Our ministers pursue their ministries in covenant with the whole Church, and they also live in covenant with one another to uphold one another “in covenant of mutual care and accountability” (Paragraph 303.3). The *Discipline* links the vitality of the Church itself with this aspect of ordination: “The effectiveness of the Church in mission depends on these covenantal commitments to the ministry of all Christians and the

ordained ministry of the Church” (Paragraph 303.4).

We live in a time when the connection is under a great deal of strain, by forces both inside and outside the Church. We can endure this period of trial and perhaps come out of it stronger than we were before. But it will require all of us to recommit ourselves to our connectional covenant. If we find ourselves

unable to abide within that covenant, on the other hand, then the very integrity of the connection itself will fly apart at the seams.

The Rev. Dr. Thompson, Wesley scholar for the Arkansas Conference, teaches at Memphis Theological Seminary and serves as associate pastor of Marion UMC. He writes “Practical Divinity” quarterly for the Arkansas United Methodist. He may be reached at athompson@arumc.org.

‘We are called into the covenant relationship of the connection. That’s the case for all members of the United Methodist Church—both laity and clergy.’



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Submission Deadlines

Issue Date	Submission Deadline
May 2	April 15
June 6	May 19
July 4	June 16

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GROWING TOGETHER IN CHRIST: A word from the Bishop

BY GARY E. MUELLER

A simple message

Dear Ones,

As we draw closer and closer to Holy Week, I find myself thinking more and more about that last week of Jesus' life in the context of a world in which it seems to mean less and less.

For a variety of reasons, many of those around us seem to have no need for faith. Some of those reasons we cannot control. But some of them are the direct result of how we live our faith as disciples of Jesus Christ. They see who we are and what we do, and they want none of it.

This is why I'm so deeply committed to calling for revival and why I talk about it so much. Revival is not just an event that's held once a year. It's not an attempt to get others to have the same experience we've had so they believe what we believe. And it's certainly not an excuse to hide in the church instead of engaging the mission field around us.

Revival is what needs to happen in us. It happens when we open our hearts, minds and lives to God. It occurs when we call upon the Holy Spirit to

give us a bold and passionate faith. And it is the result when we get more serious than we've ever been about living as Jesus' disciples.

Jesus went to the cross because that's how much he loves us. But that love's so great that death cannot contain it. And so he has risen from the dead. This is a simple message. But it's also the single most important message in life. May you be revived by it so that after Easter Sunday, you will never again be the person you were!

He is risen.
He is risen, indeed.

Grace and peace,

Gary E. Mueller

APPOINTMENTS

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

Appointments effective before Annual Conference 2014:

- Larry Williams (retired elder)—Salem UMC Conway (interim; effective March 16 to June 30, 2014)

Appointments effective after Annual Conference 2014:

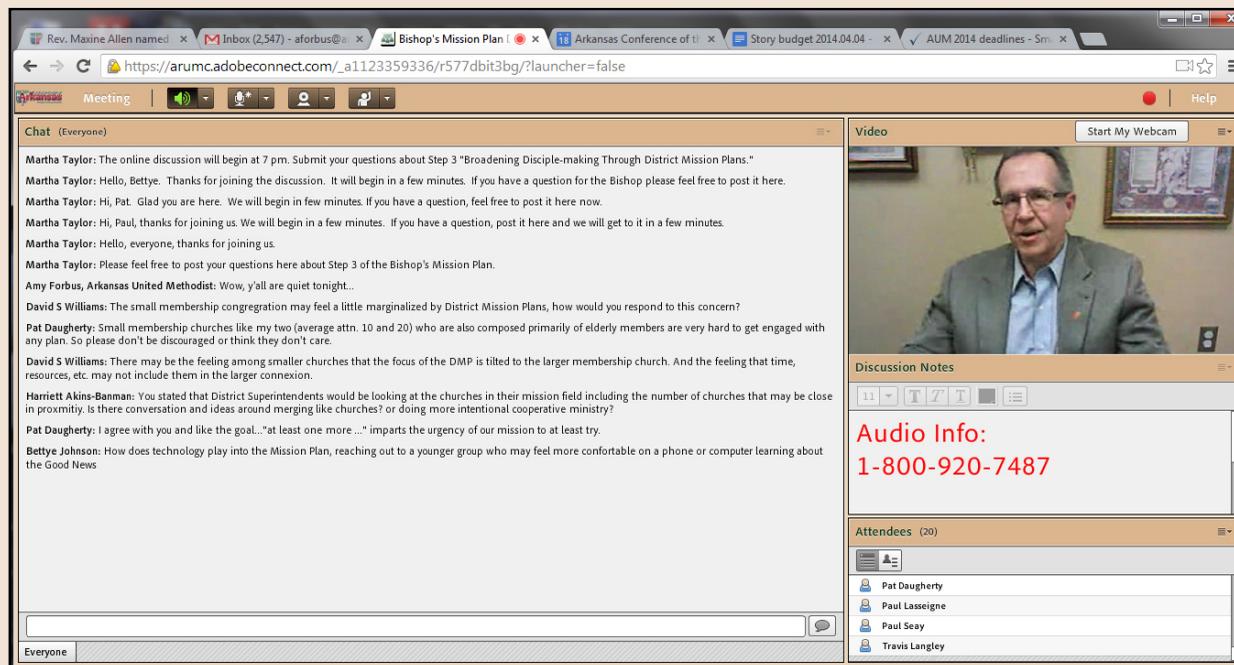
- Mark McDonald (elder)—Grace UMC Conway (senior pastor)
- Kathleen McMurray—Grace UMC Conway (associate pastor)
- Herschel Richardson—First UMC Jonesboro (associate pastor - Christ Way campus)
- Claire Caldwell (elder)—St. James UMC Little Rock (associate pastor)
- Maxine Allen (elder)—Assistant Director of Mission and Ministry for Mission Field Engagement
- Emily Burch (elder)—director, University of Arkansas Wesley Foundation; continuing at Central UMC Fayetteville (associate)
- Matthew Johnson (elder)—St. Paul UMC Searcy
- Danny Partlow (elder)—Marked Tree/Joiner UMCs

To view the official listing of pastoral appointment changes, visit arumc.org/appointments. The listing is updated as the Cabinet confirms newly announced appointments.

Bishop's Mission Plan: updated schedule for remaining videos and online discussions

In addition to regular stories that appear in this publication, such as the items found on page 8 of this issue, the Arkansas Conference Center for Technology is producing a series of videos relating to the Bishop's Mission Plan.

Each video highlights one or more of the 10 "Next Steps" outlined in the plan. An online discussion with Bishop Mueller, open to all Arkansas UMC laity and clergy, follows each video release. **The remaining online discussions have been rescheduled for evening hours and near the lunch hour to allow for greater lay participation.**



Video: Look Like the Neighborhood/Grow by "1" (Steps 5 and 6) – April 21

Online discussion – April 23, 7 p.m.

Video: Unleash Lay Leadership/Grow Passionate & Excellent Clergy (Steps 7 and 8) – April 28

Online discussion – April 29, 7 p.m.

Video: Create Vital African-American Congregations/Reach the "Nones" (Steps 9 and 10) – May 19

Online discussion – May 22, 11 a.m.

Reminders about the videos, along with login instructions for the online discussions, will be publicized several days before each event in two ways:

- Messages from the Conference Email Network (to subscribe, visit www.arumc.org/subscribe_email_updates), and
- Status updates posted on the Network for Discipleship and Mission (network.arumc.org) and the Arkansas Conference's Facebook page (facebook.com/arkansasumc).

The complete video series, as well as archive recordings of the online discussions, will be available at www.arumc.org/missionplan.

CORRECTION

In the March 7 issue of this publication, we included on page 3 a list of congregations that paid more than 100 percent of apportionment giving in 2013. **St. James UMC Pine Bluff**, in the Southeast District, should have appeared on that list. We regret the omission.



First UMC Fort Smith provides medical, dental care in Guatemala

A Volunteers in Mission (VIM) team from First United Methodist Church Fort Smith traveled to Cunen, Guatemala, Feb. 15-22 to provide much-needed general medical care and dental care to members of that community. This marks the third year the congregation has sent a team to the same area.

Working with the Salud y Paz clinic in Guatemala and aided by interpreters, team members saw 560 medical patients and 197 dental patients. The dental team pulled 507 teeth. Shown at left is some of that work, with Dr. Bryan Bishop and Tara Summit preparing to pull a child's tooth.

The church has begun planning its next trip to Guatemala in February of 2015.

—submitted by the Rev. Claire Caldwell

First UMC Paragould's 2013 dollar offering giveaway brings total to \$27K

First United Methodist Church Paragould during their regular worship services March 9 and 16 distributed \$11,322 to seven community organizations in Greene County.

The money was the 2013 total of the church's \$1 a Week

Offering, in which all of the single dollar bills collected from the offering plate are given away to causes that benefit the surrounding community. This is the third year for the church to give away money from this offering, which has totaled \$27,056 since the late Bill Leslie began it. The Rev. Leslie served as the senior pastor at First UMC Paragould from 2011 until his death in 2012. He wanted the church to be seen as a giving church, and founded the \$1 a Week Offering as a way to reach that goal.

This year, money was given to Arkansas Early Learning, the Agape House, Acts 5:39, the Greene County Rescue

Squad, Greene County Goodfellows, Inc., Paragould School District and B.E.E.S. Senior Citizens, Inc. Organizations were chosen from applications submitted earlier in the year.

— submitted by
Karole Risker



The Rev. John Fleming, right, speaks to representatives of the Agape House, Senior B.E.E.S., Arkansas Early Learning and Paragould High School, organizations receiving grants from First UMC Paragould's \$1 a Week Offering for 2013.

COURTESY PHOTO

'If I Had Only One Sermon to Preach' series begins April 27

Preachers preach. That's what they do week after week. But what word would they share if they had only one sermon to preach, only one opportunity to tell others what they believed about God, Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit and humanity?

Central Arkansas residents will have the opportunity to learn the answer from three pastors during the first annual "If I Had Only One Sermon to Preach" sermon series which begins at 6:30 p.m. April 27 at Faith United Methodist Church, 9820 W. Markham in Little Rock.

"The idea was inspired by the book *The Last Lecture* by Randy Pausch," said the Rev. Harriett Akins-Banman, Faith UMC's pastor. "The author, suffering from a terminal illness, gives the lecture of a lifetime trying to put into words all that he believed to be true."

Pausch's talk was modeled after an ongoing series of lectures that invites top academics to think deeply about what matters to them, then give a hypothetical "final talk," answering the question, "What wisdom would you try to impart to the world if you knew it was your last chance?"

Akins-Banman said, "We were intrigued by the idea and wondered what pastors would share if presented with a similar scenario: What would you preach if you knew it was your only opportunity to give a sermon?"

Bishop Gary E. Mueller kicks

off the series on April 27. Mueller has served as resident bishop for the Arkansas Conference since 2012. His passion is leading spiritual revival that results in vital congregations that make disciples of Jesus Christ, who then make disciples equipped to transform lives, communities and the world.

On May 4 at 6:30, attendees will hear the Rev. **Deidre "Dede" Roberts** preach. Roberts has served in several Arkansas churches and is currently appointed as the superintendent/chief mission strategist for the Central District.

The series closes May 18 with an outdoor worship experience at Maumelle Park, led by the Rev. **Natasha Murray-Norman**. Known for her passionate preaching, Murray-Norman is currently appointed as the Southeast District's regional mission coordinator.

Worship on May 18 begins at 4 p.m., and is followed by a cookout. If you plan to stay for the cookout, make a reservation by emailing info@faithumcl.org. Families are encouraged to come early to play horseshoes or let the kids use the playground. Bring your own lawn chairs or blankets. Maumelle Park is located at 9009 Pinnacle Valley Road, off of Highway 10 West in Little Rock.

To learn more, contact Akins-Banman at harriett@faithumcl.org or 501-225-4286.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

A witness to Wesley Foundation fruit

The ministry that is the Wesley Foundation has touched my life in ways that is hard to express. I met my wife and love of my life here, Michele, back in 1988. We both met our son here. I learned what it meant to be a disciple of Christ here. I made my decision to go into ministry here, in this building. I have been blessed to witness Michael C. Dodson, Ryan Spurlock, Timothy Rushing and Deonna White enter the ministry through the care of UAM Wesley.

Recently, I've been made aware of the fear over where the church will be in the future. The next generation is just as hungry for the gospel and to make a difference as my own when we were here. They are there just waiting on the Wesley Foundations, or ministries like it, to offer the good news and an opportunity to make a difference. The building may be showing her age, but her mission is as vibrant and young as each new freshmen class. Every time I think I've seen the limit of the UAM Wesley's growth I am reminded by God that I haven't seen anything yet. Here's to the next generation.

In Christ,

Rev. Kavan Dodson

Campus Minister, University of Arkansas at Monticello Wesley Foundation

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.

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.

Brinkley First United Methodist Church is seeking applicants for the position of Music Director. The job responsibilities include rehearsing with the chancel and handbell choirs on Wednesday evenings, as well as leading the choirs and congregation and playing the organ and piano for worship services. For additional information, please contact the church office at 870-734-2632 or fumcbrinkley@sbcglobal.net.

All Souls Interdenominational Church in Scott is searching for a pastor. Parsonage available. Please send resumes to: Pastor Search Committee, c/o Stuart Vess, 11221 Craig Road, Scott, AR 72142 or email to svess@aol.com.

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

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

AC2014: registration open April 15-May 31

Registration for the 2014 Arkansas Annual Conference will open April 15 and continue through May 31. Members of the Annual Conference may register using the packet that will be mailed to them, or online at www.arumc.org.

Hotel reservations must be made separately, and hotels near the John Q. Hammons Convention Center are beginning to fill. For lodging information, visit www.arumc.org/ac2014 and click on "2014 Annual Conference Hotels.pdf."

What about Sunday? Options for worship without a preacher during AC2014

BY AMY FORBUS
Editor

The 2014 Arkansas Annual Conference is set for June 19-22 in Rogers—beginning on Thursday and continuing through Sunday.

Sunday? Yes, you read that right.

All members of the Annual Conference—defined as all clergy, and a number of elected laypersons equal to the number of clergy—are required to attend the Conference sessions, in accordance with Paragraph 602.8 of the *Book of Discipline*, the church's law book.

Without their usual pulpit occupant, local churches may wonder about their options for Sunday worship. Members of the Annual Conference Planning Committee have several suggestions.

Lay Servants available

"Churches do not have to have clergy present to worship," said Jimmie Boyd, director of Lay Servant Ministries for the Arkansas Conference. "We know that every Christian is a minister, but we may not always act like it. June 22 gives us an excellent opportunity to see laity take the lead."

Boyd is currently compiling a list of trained and certified Lay Servants who are available to preach on June 22. To request a Lay Servant for your congregation, contact him at 870-718-3649 or jimmie.boyd@arumc.org.

The Rev. Jeff Warrick says that the charge he pastors, Christ UMC/Mount Tabor UMC Cabot, has "a deep bench of laity who are certified candidates for ministry but who will

not be at Annual Conference. It's a great opportunity for them to lead, and a great time for me to show them an example of keeping the clergy covenant," he said. "I'll be where I'm supposed to be that Sunday morning: at Annual Conference."

Get creative with the worship hour

When we hear the word "sermon," the first mental image is probably of one person standing before a congregation to speak. But sermons can take other forms: Consider a choral cantata, or a collection of music that the whole congregation may sing together.

"So many of our hymns and contemporary songs have lyrics drawn straight out of Scripture," said the Rev. Jeanne Williams, pastor of Walnut Ridge UMC and chair of the worship planning team for Annual Conference. "A song can be as rich of a teaching tool as a sermon."

Other creative options include dramatic readings or storytelling in place of traditional preaching. As a first step in searching for ideas, visit the worship website of the United Methodist General Board of Discipleship, www.gbod.org/worship, and click on "Arts & Artists" in the left-hand sidebar.

Take advantage of technology

"The live stream of Annual Conference will have a more robust, commercial-free connection this year," said Mark Epperson, director of the Conference's Center for Technology. "Churches with high-speed connections should be

able to stream ordination."

The Service of Ordination and Commissioning will be held at 1 p.m. June 22, to conclude the Annual Conference gathering. A local church that wishes to incorporate live streaming of that service might begin the day with a less traditional Sunday morning gathering, such as a service project or a hymn sing, move on to a potluck or other lunch and then connect to the live stream as those gathered finish their shared meal.

In addition to the streaming option, Epperson says that Bishop Mueller has agreed to pre-record a sermon for churches that wish to use it at their regularly scheduled worship service on June 22. To request this option on a DVD or as a download, contact the Center for Technology at 501-324-8030 or helpdesk@arumc.org.

Throw a party!

The pastors of First UMC Conway have incorporated June 22 into a special sermon series entitled "Everybody Loves a Party."

"What do you do when the pastors are away? You throw a party!" said the Rev. Lynn Kilbourne, the church's associate pastor. "Without giving away too much about the series, I can say the focus that Sunday is on the gifts everyone brings to the party—their spiritual gifts."

So what will worship look like at your local church June 22? To share your church's plan, visit the Network for Discipleship and Mission (network.arumc.org), and post a comment in the "Ideas" section.



Celebrate striking out malaria with UMC Night at the Naturals

June 21, 6:05 p.m. Arvest Ballpark, Springdale

United Methodists of Arkansas have reached their minimum fundraising goal for Imagine No Malaria, the denomination's effort to end malaria deaths in sub-Saharan Africa. And on Saturday, June 21, in conjunction with Annual Conference being held in Rogers, everyone's invited to join in the celebration at UMC Night at the Naturals. The Northwest Arkansas Naturals, a Double-A Texas League baseball team affiliated with the Kansas City Royals, will play the Tulsa Drillers at Arvest Ballpark in Springdale. United Methodists are invited to cheer for the home team while reveling in a job well done.

The Arkansas Conference will offer preferred seating at reduced-price rates (no minimum group size). Beginning May 1, the ticket purchase form will be available for download at arumc.org/ac2014. If you have questions, contact Cathy Hughes: 501-324-8020 or chughes@arumc.org.



AC2014 request for prayer shawls

Calling all knitters and crocheters! Our Conference has an annual tradition of presenting a prayer shawl made by a Conference member to the family of each person we remember at the Memorial Service during Annual Conference (which is on Saturday afternoon this year). Please send your shawls to Annual Conference registration on Thursday afternoon with your pastor or your church's lay member of Annual Conference. The Rev. Sam Meadors will be collecting the shawls in the registration area. Questions? Contact the Rev. Jeanne Williams at jeanne.williams@arumc.org.

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Brueggemann urges church toward dialogue

BY KATIE PEARCE
Special Contributor

CONWAY—Students, pastors and laypersons gathered March 20 to hear Dr. Walter Brueggemann speak on “Dialogic Life in a Monologic Culture.” The Old Testament scholar and theologian appeared at Hendrix College as part of the Word in the World lecture series, which explores the topic, “On Living Christian Faith.”

Most came for the chance to hear a prominent scholar speak, possibly without fully understanding the subject of his talk, but by the end of the lecture Brueggemann had convinced the audience that “breaking the silence of a monologue is the primary human task,” and also a primary task of the church.

Brueggemann described the tendency of today’s culture not to question the status quo; instead, the absolutism of consumer culture rules the day. This condition has led to a life of commodity without compassion for our neighbors—and this is the monologue that Brueggemann challenged churches and schools to break, and replace



Hendrix College chaplain the Rev. J. Wayne Clark, left, Dr. Walter Brueggemann and Dr. Robert Williamson, assistant professor of religious studies at Hendrix, during a visit before Brueggemann’s lecture for the college’s Word in the World series.

PHOTO BY MICHAEL TARNE / COURTESY HENDRIX COLLEGE

with voices of distress.

The primary task of the church is to pay attention to the cries of the wounded, which often are drowned out by the monologue of culture. Such attentiveness is modeled for us in the Bible because, Brueggemann says, “God of the Bible is a dialogic God.” He advised preachers to look outside of the “safe” lectionary texts, saying that if we read psalms of lament and other difficult passages, we will find cries of the wounded that summon God into action and interrupt the monologue. This summoning occurs in the story of Exodus, in the covenant, in the voices of the prophets and, of course, in the person of Jesus Christ.

All great literature has the story of many voices, Brueggemann pointed out; the problem with society today is there is often only one voice.

“There are many voices that need to be honored,” he said, and warned those gathered that the church is the only group left to hear them. For example, Brueggemann spoke of the early church’s decision to admit Gentiles as one of the bravest and most significant acts in

the Bible because the admission proved that “people radically different from us belong.”

Brueggemann held up the church and the liberal arts college as the two institutions remaining in today’s society that can “cherish and critique our historical remembrance.” Both have the capability of hearing the multitude of voices and stories in the world, and can challenge the notion that there is only one voice worthy of attention.

During the question and answer period following the lecture, Brueggemann offered practical advice to church leaders on how to engage in a dialogue, especially in today’s culture, which values argument over collaboration. He noted that one thing all churches and all people have in common is pain: “That’s the meeting place for Christians who disagree about everything,” he said.

While pain may not be a happy place, it is an honest place to begin dialogue.

The Rev. Pearce, a provisional elder, serves as pastor of Bismarck UMC.

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Vacation Bible School mini-grants available to 10 churches Applications due by April 15

The Arkansas Conference Council on Children’s Ministries (CCCM) will be awarding 10 mini-grants of \$200 each to be used for curriculum and/or supplies for a local congregation’s 2014 Vacation Bible School. Grants will be awarded on the basis of need. The application deadline is April 15.

Grant application forms are available online at <http://kidz.arumc.org/vacation-bible-school-2014>.

Seminary scholarship application deadline extended

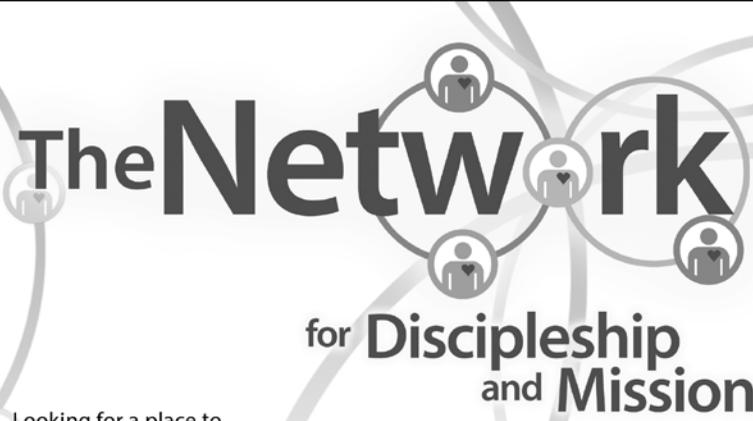
The deadline to apply for the United Methodist Foundation of Arkansas (UMFA) Seminary Scholarship has been extended to April 30, 2014.

Any certified candidate for ministry seeking Elder’s orders is eligible to apply for the full-expense scholarship from funds held by UMFA. The candidate must be accepted in a United Methodist seminary as a full-time student. An interview selection team shall make the determination of the awards. These scholarship recipients pledge to return to Arkansas to pastor United Methodist churches.

Those awarded the scholarship will begin receiving the funds for the fall semester of 2014. For more information and forms, visit www.arumc.org/bom_financial_assistance.

‘Isn’t it great to be a Methodist?’ seminar April 9 at Asbury UMC Little Rock

Asbury United Methodist Church, 1700 Napa Valley Drive in Little Rock, will offer a spring seminar Wednesday, April 9 at 6:30 p.m. in the church’s Wilson Activity Center. The Rev. Chase Green will address a variety of topics related to Methodism, including John Wesley, the founder of the Methodist movement (“even highlighting some very interesting quirks about him most people do not know,” Green says); American Methodism and how it has evolved; key United Methodist beliefs; and where the United Methodist Church might be going as a denomination. The evening will include a time for questions, too. All are invited to this seminar—persons who are “beginners” in learning about Methodism, as well as experts and those who are simply curious!



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Q&A: Recovery ministry opens doors to transformation

The Rev. Carl Palmer, associate pastor of Central United Methodist Church Fayetteville, has recently been named a state representative for Celebrate Recovery, a biblically-based recovery ministry founded in 1990 by California-based Saddleback Church.

While it is used by churches across much of the state, CR's only currently active ministry in an Arkansas UMC is the one at Central UMC Fayetteville. Palmer hopes to see that change as United Methodist congregations learn more about CR and its potential for transforming lives. He spoke recently with *Arkansas United Methodist* editor **Amy Forbus**.



Carl Palmer

First, in a nutshell, explain for our readers what Celebrate Recovery is.

It's a Christ-centered 12-step program, and it is non-issue-specific. It addresses a variety of issues, including chemical dependency, but also different emotional hurts—depression, anxiety, codependency. And relational hurts, too—people who are going through divorce or grief, or even issues that may have been suppressed for a long time, like childhood physical or sexual abuse.

We say it's for all of life's hurts, hang-ups and habits. And all of us have them.

What benefits have you seen come from it?

We hold confidentiality as a very high value, but without giving specifics, I can say I've seen people grow. None of us are healed completely, but I've seen people who have had much success in healing the hurts of divorce, anxiety, depression, being the adult child of an alcoholic, anger issues, various performance-based issues.

I'll include myself in the list of people Celebrate Recovery has helped. I was struggling with some issues of my own. I struggled in silence for a very long time, and it came out in very unhealthy ways.

How did you first become involved with CR?

When I was the pastor at Elm Springs UMC, a small group of key leaders met to really pray about a vision for the church. We put together a ministry plan to try to get

ourselves to where God desired us to be, and a recovery ministry was in the plan. One of the leaders came in one morning with a big book on Celebrate Recovery. She dropped it on the table and said, "This is what we have to do."

The largest [Celebrate Recovery] in our area is held at Fellowship Bible Church in Rogers. We went up there as a team, and I went up there individually beforehand. As soon as I walked in, I felt the vitality in what they were doing. There were people with all kinds of struggles and issues. I experienced it on several different Friday nights, and I came to the conclusion that if this was going to work in our church, I was going to have to be vulnerable and admit my own struggles. If I didn't, not only was God not going to honor it, I was going to feel like a fraud.

So we planned and launched. The first week, I stood up not just to lend support, but to be a participant. I was terrified, because I thought, "Either people are going to hate me, because this is their pastor and they don't want to know that I struggle with some of the same things they do, or they're going to love me and it's going to give them freedom and permission to be honest about their own struggles." And thankfully, it was the second one.

Since then I've seen hundreds of people who have investigated CR, and at least 100 who have committed themselves to the program and have really experienced healing, and have gotten to the other side where they can see hope and a future.

How does the theology behind CR fit with Methodism?

When John Wesley was active in England, he saw first-hand the disastrous effects that alcohol and other addictive substances had on the populace, and he was one of the very first church leaders to address it.

Celebrate Recovery has kind of the reverse structure of the old Wesley class meetings, in that we start with a large group for worship, then the small groups break off from that, and they are gender- and issue-specific. From there, we go into an even smaller group, what's called a "step study." It's a committed process of working through the 12 steps [of recovery] from a biblical standpoint. It's not a Bible study; it's a self study that uses the Bible.

It talks very much about having a support team around you, and



The Celebrate Recovery ministry gathers weekly at Central UMC Fayetteville, beginning in a worship setting. After some singing and a talk or testimony, participants divide into small issue-focused groups and study groups.

COURTESY PHOTO

about being honest. It's very methodical, especially when you get to the maintenance steps, Steps 10 through 12, because then it talks about taking a daily inventory: "What hurts have I caused today?" It's very similar to John Wesley's question, "What sins have you committed since last we met?" You answer questions

'We deal plainly in forgiveness—forgiving others, forgiving yourself.'

like "Who have I harmed today? Who have I blessed today? Do I owe anyone amends, or do I need to seek forgiveness from anyone?" It's very much about finding and then maintaining a clean slate.

It's very Christ-centered in its approach. We deal plainly in forgiveness—forgiving others, forgiving yourself. It's a spiritual program of healing.

Does a church have to be a certain size to start a CR ministry?

No. We've got some churches in this area that have maybe 50 people on a Sunday morning. The average CR size is about 35 nationwide. The key is not size; the key is health.

One of the pillars of Celebrate Recovery is senior pastor support. You've got to have the support of the pastor and of the congregation. That's one of the limiting factors. Another one is the size of the community around you. If you're in a town of a couple hundred people,

you may get 10 percent of those people actually willing to admit they struggle with anything.

Early on, a large majority of CR participants come from within the church that sponsors it—probably 80 percent. But as the ministry grows, it usually hits about the 50/50 mark.

In the year that we've been doing it, we've had several folks come through CR to join Central. We had our first Celebrate Recovery baptism a couple of weeks ago—someone who tiptoed into the waters of faith through Celebrate Recovery and found a relationship with Christ, wanted to be baptized at CR, and wanted to join the church through CR. We received two members a couple weeks ago through our Celebrate Recovery ministry. It was awesome.

And we had a couple who when they first came to us, were separated, but they made [CR] a joint venture; they wanted to try something before going down that road. Within six months, not only were they reconciled, but they did a vow renewal at Celebrate Recovery. It was really powerful.

I've seen more fruit out of Celebrate Recovery than I've seen in a lot of churches. It's very much an in-your-face, get real or get out kind of ministry. It's not for the casual observer.

Several years ago I was at a

ministers' conference where George Hunter was the presenter. A statement he made stuck with me. He said that the next great awakening in America is going to come through faith-based recovery movements. The more I get involved with Celebrate Recovery, the more I believe that completely.

What should a church do if they may want to get started with CR?

The first thing is to go to a Celebrate Recovery ministry in your area—and there are bunches of them. Sadly, we don't have a whole ton of them in southern Arkansas, but I know that we have many in the Jonesboro area, in the River Valley and the Northwest corridor... and one of our state reps runs the one in Hot Springs.

Go, and experience it. That's what I tell people who call me. Come and see for yourself, because all of the preconceived notions that you might have are going to go out the window. Almost everyone I've talked to who has had no experience with Celebrate Recovery will say the same thing: "This was nothing like I thought it was going to be."

To learn more about Celebrate Recovery, contact the Rev. Carl Palmer at 479-442-4237 or cpalmer@centraltolife.com, or visit www.celebraterecovery.com.

5

Step 5 of the Bishop's Mission Plan: Look Like the Neighborhood

Acts 9 depicts a scene of literal—and perhaps figurative—restoration of sight. Jesus has sent Ananias to Saul who has been blind for three days. Ananias doesn't want to go to Saul, Saul isn't a Christian and has been actively working to harm them. Yet Ananias does as Jesus asks, goes to Saul, places his hands on him, and baptizes him. Then Scripture says: "And immediately there fell from his eyes something like scales, and he regained his sight" (Acts 9:18).

Step five of the Bishop's Mission Plan, "Look Like the Neighborhood," challenges local congregation to experience something similar: to look on their neighborhoods that in most cases are filled with people very different than those who attend Sunday worship, and see the community with new eyes.

It's a work only the local congregation can do, according to Bishop Gary Mueller.

"The only way we can reach the mission field, to share the good news of Jesus' love is through the congregations that are in communities," Mueller said. "That's a challenge because it means you are going to be reaching out to get to know new people and to invite new people into the body of Christ."

Mueller acknowledges that the work may be uncomfortable as congregations are moved from their comfort zones into ministries with mission fields that are diverse in their demographics.

In a videotaped interview, Mueller suggests a simple exercise to begin to



see the neighborhood with new eyes. After looking closely at those inside the church during worship, he suggests driving the neighborhood surrounding the church.

"Is there a match, a similarity?" Mueller asks. If not, then Mueller believes there is work to do and that the only body that can do that work is the local congregation.

"The very heart and soul of this process is the local church," Mueller said. "The local church has been placed by God in the midst of a mission field. That neighborhood around the church is filled with people that God has given the church responsibility for."

Just as Jesus sent Ananias to Saul, local congregations can respond and fill their mission fields with the Holy Spirit.

"It's important because God calls us to reach the people nearby, to touch them with the love of Christ, to help them deal with the pains and wounds and hurts in their lives and to help them come into a relationship with Christ," Mueller said.

6

Step 6 of the Bishop's Mission Plan: Grow by '1'

When he introduced the 10 steps of his Mission Plan, Bishop Gary Mueller cited a statistic that many saw as a wake-up call: Just 310 of our 683 churches reported a profession of faith in 2012. He then called on churches to set a minimum goal to grow by one in four specific areas: adult professions of faith, average worship attendance, small groups and ministries that reach into the mission field.

"What if every UM congregation in our state over the course of the next couple of years had one profession of faith, one more person in worship, one more small group, one more outreach in the community?" Mueller asks. "We would see so much energy and passion and so many lives being touched that we would make a difference."

"How can you consider yourself a church if you're not doing these things?" says John Crawford, associate director of the Arkansas Conference Center for Clergy and Laity Excellence in Leadership (CCLEL). "It needs to be a revival of a thought process of why we're in existence. Part of what we are doing is asking people to look at these hard questions."

Crawford points out that growing by one is the minimum standard—a congregation already growing every year in each of these areas is called to do more.

"If the largest 25 churches in Arkansas were to set a goal of

growing by one percent in those areas, we would see some serious progress in disciple-making," he said.

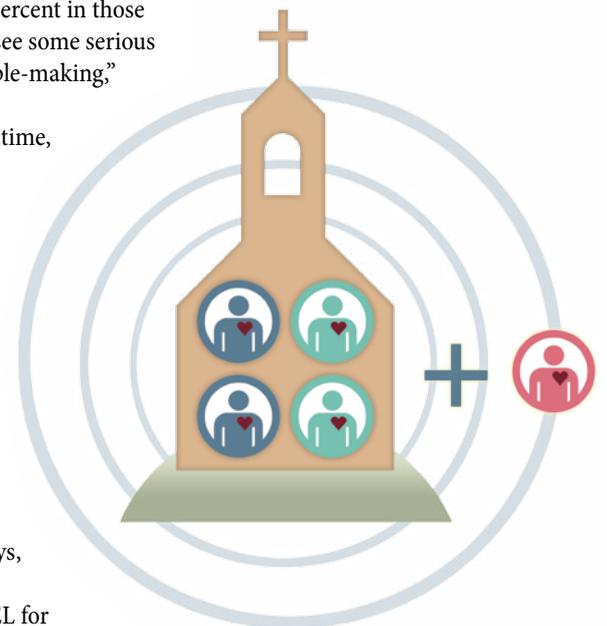
At the same time, the "Grow by '1'" goal is attainable for even the smallest of congregations. Crawford says that when a church makes the intellectual decision and the spiritual commitment to grow in these ways, they should then contact the CCLEL for support.

"Look at the Center as a connector—to connect you with the resources that will help you," he said. Small churches, in particular, can find resources through the Rev. Dr. Candace Barron, Crawford's fellow associate director, whose focus is on vital ministry in small congregations.

Mueller concurs about the importance of small congregations in this effort.

"Small membership churches can lead the way in growing by one," said Mueller. "It doesn't matter how big you are, small congregations are capable of inviting the entire community into the church."

Churches interested in working with someone from outside their



congregation who is familiar with the shared goals of the UMC in Arkansas may also ask their district superintendents to request a congregational coach from the CCLEL. A congregational coach is a layperson trained by the CCLEL to work with churches to assess their strengths and weaknesses, as well as their opportunities for outreach and connection with their mission fields.

Crawford says that churches sometimes fear seeing people in terms of numerical growth, so it's important to remember that the numbers represent changed lives.

"It gives hope, but it also gives accountability," he says. "I'm a big believer that people will do what you expect them to do."

To view a series of videos addressing the steps of the Bishop's Mission Plan, visit www.arumc.org/missionplan.

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Visit by actor Bridges spotlights child hunger

BY AMY FORBUS
Editor

Numerous community and faith leaders gathered March 17 at the Statehouse Convention Center for a panel discussion on child hunger in Arkansas.

Hosted by the Clinton School of Public Service Speaker Series in conjunction with the Arkansas Hunger Relief Alliance, the panel featured two local voices: Arkansas Gov. Mike Beebe, and Cynthia Collins, principal of Franklin Elementary School in Little Rock; and two individuals with a national focus: Billy Shore, co-founder of Share Our Strength, and actor Jeff Bridges, national spokesperson for Share Our Strength's No Kid Hungry campaign.

Shore told those gathered that Beebe is one of the most active governors in the U.S. surrounding the issue of child hunger, and that Share Our Strength is telling stories of what's happening in Arkansas as a way of inspiring other states to address child hunger.

"We are seeing milestones that are really putting what you're doing here on a path to a really historic achievement," Shore said.

Collins spoke of some hesitation from teachers to adopt No Kid Hungry's "Breakfast After the Bell" program, but said that when it launched at Franklin Elementary, they saw how well it worked and embraced it. She also noted visits to the school nurse have decreased.

"We rarely see kids who have a tummy ache anymore," she said.

Beebe emphasized that it takes both government and private-sector organizations—including community centers and churches—to make progress. For example, the logistics of getting food to where it is most needed "requires a whole lot of help outside the normal channels."

Bridges referred the audience to www.nokidhungry.org for ideas and resources, including a crowdsourcing map for Breakfast After the Bell that allows individuals to connect with and help nearby schools.

"There's a lot of work to still be



Actor Jeff Bridges, left, national spokesperson for Share Our Strength's No Kid Hungry campaign, listens as Governor Mike Beebe explains how he became involved in addressing the issue of childhood hunger in Arkansas. Also participating in the March 17 panel discussion hosted by the Clinton School of Public Service were Billy Shore, co-founder of Share Our Strength; and Cynthia Collins, principal of Franklin Elementary School in Little Rock.

AUM PHOTO BY AMY FORBUS

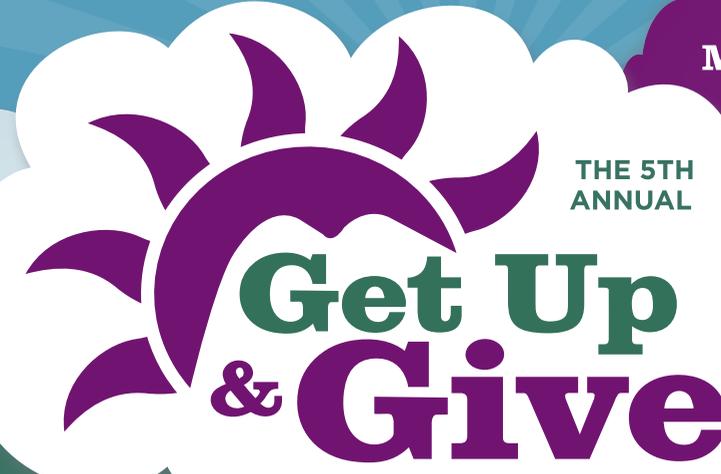
done, and the way to close that gap—I had the privilege of doing a movie that was based on a book written by one of your guys, Charles Portis, and what we need to close the gap is True Grit," he said. "That's how you do it. That's what we've got here, and it's the hope to turn this thing around."

When a pastor in the audience asked how local churches can partner with local government, Beebe called on Kathy Webb of the Arkansas Hunger Relief Alliance to provide the answer.

"We need people to sign up immediately, because there is a

deadline for signing up," Webb said. The Hunger Relief Alliance can connect churches with government and community partners to help feed kids over the summer when they don't have access to food at school. To participate, contact the Alliance at 501-399-9999 by April 20.

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For information: contact Jane Dennis at 501.906.4210 or jdennis@methodistfamily.org. Monetary donations may be sent to: Methodist Family Health Foundation, P.O. Box 56050, Little Rock, AR 72215 (put "Get Up & Give" in memo line).

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PEOPLE OF FAITH

Davis joins Conference staff

Vicki Davis has been named the administrative assistant for mission and ministry with the Arkansas Conference. She began her work in the Conference office March 24, 2014.

Most recently, Davis has worked for Rock-Pond Solutions in Conway, a provider of medical software with a national market. She was the executive administrator and assistant to the president, tasked with planning and implementing the company's marketing plan.

Previously, Davis served as administrative assistant of the Miller Center for Vocation, Ethics, and Calling at Hendrix College. During her time at with the Miller Center, she managed a \$2,000,000 grant budget, supervised five student workers and assisted in the planning and implementation of the Miller Center's mission trips. She was on the staff at Hendrix for a total of 13 years, including time in the role of assistant to the chaplain.

Davis has been very active in First United Methodist Church Conway, particularly in the church's youth ministry, as well as Ozark Mission Project, Amazing Grace Cafe, Camp Aldersgate and Heifer Ranch in Perryville.

"Vicki brings great skill to the Conference office," said the Rev. Mackey Yokem, executive director for mission and ministry. "Her passion for the ministry of the church is evident, and she will be a great addition to our efforts to create vital congregations that make disciples, who make disciples for the transformation of lives, communities and world."

Yokem noted that the position, part of the Imagine Ministry Transition Team's original staffing plan in 2012, had gone unstaffed in 2013 even though it was approved as part of the Annual Conference budget. "As the Bishop's Mission Plan develops and the Conference continues to pursue its trajectory, it is now time for us to add this assistance," he said.



Vicki Davis

Bell, Waddell honored by Just Communities of Arkansas

Just Communities of Arkansas (JCA) on March 12 presented its 2014 Father Joseph H. Biltz Awards to three recipients, two of whom are active United Methodists: Deborah Robinson Bell and Bill Waddell.

Through her work with Better Community Development, Inc., Bell works to transform Little Rock's 12th Street Corridor, revitalizing not only buildings and infrastructure but also the lives of residents through job and life skills training, HIV/AIDS outreach, substance abuse intervention and treatment, environmental issues and other community-based programs. Bell operates on the principle that a community's greatest strength is its people. She is a member of Theresa Hoover UMC Little Rock.

Through his work with the Arkansas Access to Justice Commission, Bill Waddell, a partner with the Friday, Eldredge and Clark law firm, has represented countless Arkansans who otherwise would not be able to access remedies through the legal system. Waddell has provided pro bono legal assistance for those who are poor or otherwise marginalized because, as he puts it, helping others "just grows on you." He is a member of St. James UMC Little Rock.

In addition to Bell and Waddell, JCA honored Susan Sims Smith, creator of The Interfaith Center, an organization dedicated to reducing hatred and fear among the world's religions. The Center's events encourage interaction and dialogue among people of all faiths.

Past recipients of the Biltz Award who are also United Methodists include Freddie Nixon, Jim Argue, the Rev. Bill Robinson Jr., Bishop Kenneth Hicks, the Rev. Stephen Copley, the Rev. Ed Matthews and Pat Lile.

JCA works to advance diversity in the community and establish a place where every person is valued, every voice is heard and everyone has a fair chance to succeed.



Deborah Bell



Bill Waddell

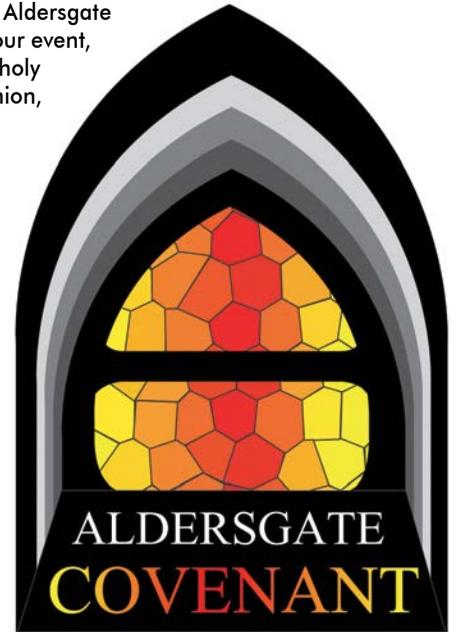
Register now for Aldersgate Covenant prayer gathering

Registration is now open for the Aldersgate Covenant Gathering. This 20-hour event, which includes prayer, worship, holy conferencing and Holy Communion, begins Friday, May 16, at 4 p.m. and concludes at noon on Saturday, May 17.

The gathering will be held at the United Methodist Church of the Resurrection in Leawood, Kan. Bishop Gary Mueller of the Arkansas Area of the UMC and the Rev. Andrew Thompson, an elder in the Arkansas Conference who teaches at Memphis Theological Seminary, are part of the steering team.

By registering to attend the gathering, participants enter into a covenant with others who are seeking spiritual revival for the United Methodist Church. The covenant is included in the online registration form.

To register, visit www.aldersgatecovenant.org and click "Join the Gathering." Registration does not include lodging, but list of nearby hotels is available through the website.



Allen

(continued from page 1)

can and will become our vision as we work through the Bishop's Mission Plan."

Allen, the first African-American woman to be ordained an elder in the United Methodist Church in Arkansas, believes that God has called her to be a stained glass ceiling shatterer.

At the age of 39, she returned to school to complete an undergraduate degree in philosophy and religion from Philander Smith College, Little

Rock, Ark. At 45, she completed a Master of Divinity degree from United Methodist-related Gammon Theological Seminary in Atlanta, Ga. She has served as a pastor, a teacher of religion and mentor of young clergy, and has participated in mission trips to Haiti, Jamaica, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Russia.

She currently serves as the director of the Wesley Foundation, the United Methodist campus ministry at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock; and as ethnic ministries coordinator for the Arkansas Conference. She has served previously as the Conference disaster response coordinator, leading disaster relief efforts in the wake of multiple tornadoes and Hurricanes Gustav and Ike; and as associate chief operating officer and dean of the chapel at Philander Smith College.

She is a gubernatorial appointee to the Arkansas Judicial Discipline and Disability Commission, and a member of the coordinating committee of Black Clergy Women of the United Methodist Church. She has worked extensively for social justice in her local community, and globally for women, children and those living in poverty, and is an advocate for educational opportunity for all. She has two adult children, Tufara Waller Muhammad and Danita Waller Paige, and a granddaughter.

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COMING UP

April

Wilson featured in El Dorado preaching series April 13-15

The Rev. David B. Wilson is the featured speaker for this year's Adele McFarlane Preaching Series, set for Sunday, April 13 through Tuesday, April 15 at First United Methodist Church El Dorado.

The four-sermon series begins Sunday morning, April 13, at 10:50 a.m. with "When Disappointments Punctuate Life" (Luke 19:29-44). It continues Sunday evening with "Does Everything Happen for a Reason? Dealing with Life's 'Why' Questions" (Psalm 88:1-12), Monday evening with "We Can't Unring a Bell, But... A Sermon on Forgiving Ourselves" (Matthew 26:31-35, 69-75) and concludes Tuesday evening with "What to Do When Faith Loses Its Vitality" (Psalm 42, Matthew 26:26-35). All evening services begin at 6 p.m.

A retired member of the Arkansas Conference, Wilson served as an associate pastor of First UMC El Dorado upon completion of his seminary education. His wife, Carolyn, is an El Dorado native. He served 15 years as senior pastor of First UMC Hot Springs before retiring in 2006, and in 2010, he became a part-time associate pastor of Christ of the Hills UMC Hot Springs Village, where he served for six months as interim senior pastor. A former district superintendent, he has been elected five times as a delegate to General and Jurisdictional Conferences.

The series has been an annual event in El Dorado since 1982, when Eulalie MacFarlane Nobles and James Hutton Nobles set up a trust to support a program of annual lectures or sermons in memory of Adele MacFarlane.

One-night "Stations of the Cross" art installation at CanvasCommunity UMC April 18

A Good Friday art installation will give attendees the opportunity to walk through the Stations of the Cross at CanvasCommunity UMC, 1111 W. 7th Street in downtown Little Rock. The event, which will open from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. on April 18, features faith-inspired creations by local artists, including paintings, drawings, sculpture and mixed media, all providing contemporary interpretations of Jesus' journey to crucifixion. The exhibit/meditative walk is expected to take approximately 20 minutes for the average attendee to complete, but each person will be encouraged to complete the path at their own pace. Admission is free.

Spring Handbell Festival at Central UMC Fayetteville 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.centraltolife.com; click on Ministries, then Worship Ministries, then Handbell Festival.

May

Fred Day to speak at United Methodist Historical Society of Arkansas annual luncheon May 1

The United Methodist Historical Society of Arkansas will hold its annual luncheon at First United Methodist Church Little Rock on Saturday, May 1 at noon. Everyone is welcome. The Rev. Dr. Fred Day, pastor of Historic St. George's UMC Philadelphia, Pa., will be the featured speaker. Day's vision for St. George's is for it to be both a vital congregation in resurgent Old City Philadelphia and a first-class museum, archive and destination for tourists.

Following lunch, the United Methodist Museum of Arkansas, located in the oldest part of First UMC Little Rock's facility, will be open for tours.

The luncheon is \$10 per person, and reservations are due by April 10. Mail reservation payments to Barbara Clark, 2605 Normandy, Newport, AR 72112, or contact the Rev. Don Nolley with questions at 501-351-4493.

Golf tournament to benefit ASU Wesley Foundation May 6

The Wesley Foundation United Methodist campus ministry at Arkansas State University will hold its fifth annual Golfing for Wesley tournament on Tuesday, May 6, at Sage Meadows Country Club in Jonesboro. Check-in starts at 11:45 a.m., lunch begins at noon and teams will tee off at 1 p.m.

Proceeds from the tournament will be used to support mission projects, spiritual formation and worship experiences for college students at ASU. Funds will also support Delta Pride Summer Camp, a college student-led summertime opportunity for 7th through 12th graders in northeast Arkansas that includes worship together, skill building, and having fun in a Christian environment on the Arkansas State campus.

For non-golfers, tournament sponsorships provide a way to support this ministry that shares Christ with young adults. Businesses, congregations and Sunday school classes are welcome as sponsors. The sponsorship deadline is April 15, and the tournament registration deadline is April 30.

The entry fee is \$75 per person, or \$300 per team of four. Cost includes lunch. For information or to receive an entry form or sponsorship form, visit astateswesley.com or call 781-832-2061.

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: vim@arumc.org or 870-826-0268. For Disaster Response (DR) projects, contact Byron or Janice Mann, DR co-coordinators: 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.

Disaster Response ERT Training April 26

Cornerstone UMC Jonesboro will host an Early Response Team (ERT) training session April 26 from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. This training is open to all Volunteers In Mission, and is limited to 25 participants.

The ERT mission is to provide a caring Christian presence in the aftermath of a disaster. The ERT purpose is to establish the presence of the church, serve those affected and do whatever tasks are assigned.

The cost is \$25 per person and covers training materials, lunch and a background check. To register, contact Janice Mann at disaster@arumc.org or 870-703-8359 before April 15.

Openings on medical VIM team to Liberia, Nov. 1-15, 2014

The Oklahoma United Methodist Conference Volunteers in Mission is planning for a medical team to go to Ganta United Methodist Hospital, Liberia from Nov. 1-15, 2014. The team will work with the health professionals at the hospital and to observe Community Based Primary Health Care at the Nenhwa Project that serves 110 communities in the region.

All are invited, but dentists, family practitioners/internists, nurses and surgeons are particularly welcome.

Cherian Thomas, M.D., from the Kingswood Institute of Mission will coordinate and accompany the team.

Information on the Ganta United Methodist Hospital is available from www.umcor.org, as well as on YouTube. For details, contact Loris Foster, Coordinator, Oklahoma Volunteers in Mission, at lfoster@okumc.org.

Individual VIM opportunities abroad

The Individual Volunteer Program of the General Board of Global Ministries offers opportunities for individuals and couples to serve in mission in placement settings around the world, for time frames ranging from two months to two years.

One placement site that is in need of a volunteer is the UBL - Universidad Biblica Latinamericana (Latin American Biblical University) in San Jose, Costa Rica. The volunteer will provide administrative support in the Department of Development and Promotion, and coordinate the logistics for mission and study groups. Some Spanish language proficiency is preferred. The duration of this volunteer placement will be at least one year.

To learn more about this placement and others, visit www.umcmmission.org/individualvolunteers. The next training will be in Flint, Mich., April 23-27, 2014. If you are being called to this important and vital ministry, contact Malcolm Frazier at mfrazier@umcmmission.org or call 212-870-3659.

Spring Work Week at Mount Sequoyah

Mount Sequoyah Retreat & Conference Center in Fayetteville invites all members of the South Central Jurisdiction to its annual spring work week, April 20-25.

Attendees will have opportunities to help with grounds maintenance, planting, mulching, weeding and more. Though the event runs from Sunday evening through Friday, late arrivals and early departures can be accommodated. Guests will have the opportunity to interact with the Mount Sequoyah Board of Trustees as well as enjoy some of the surrounding Fayetteville community.

Cost varies depending upon selection of a private or shared room. Meals are included. For details, contact Emily Gentry at 479-443-4531 or emily.gentry@mountsequoyah.org; or visit www.mountsequoyah.org.

'This Olde Church'

Local churches may request a VIM team to lend a hand with a "This Olde Church" project: small repairs to buildings and grounds, such as painting, cleaning, yard work, landscaping or building wheelchair ramps.

To give or receive such help, contact Byron Mann, 870-826-0268 or vim@arumc.org.

Arkansas UM camps: summer 2014 experiences for children and youth

Camp Tanako

Camp Tanako is located at 4301 Hwy. 290 in Hot Springs. Cabins are equipped with central heat and air conditioning, tiled floors, vaulted ceilings and bathroom/shower/vanity areas. Summer session campers can enjoy kayaking, fishing, canoeing and rowing on Lake Catherine. Multiple playing fields provide plenty of room for traditional field sports, relay races and group activities. Camp Tanako is accredited by the American Camp Association. For full descriptions of each camp, including day camps not listed below, or to register for a camp, visit www.tanako.org.

CIT (Counselor in Training) Leadership Experience (Grades 10-12)

May 30 - June 1

Any student planning to be a CIT this summer must attend this training.

MAD Camp (Grades 6-8)

June 7 - 13

MAD = Music, Arts, Drama.

Fishing Camp (Grades 3-7)

June 13 - 15

Learn the basics of safety, knot-tying, casting and catch-and-release. Throughout the camp, we will be discussing becoming not only great anglers, but also fishers of men!

Sr. High Camp (Grades 9-12)

June 23 - 27

Campers will be able to do a host of activities including horseback riding, kayaking, and so much more! Between all of the craziness, young people will be immersing themselves in intimate and uplifting worship and small group study. Campers will return to their local churches transformed by the Holy Spirit and equipped to make disciples of Jesus Christ.

Middle Elementary I (Grades 3-4)

June 30 - July 2

Campers will be finding their identity in Christ while getting to participate in camp activities such as pool parties, scavenger hunts, games, talent shows and carnivals. Everyone chooses which recreation activities they want to participate in, such as swimming, arts/crafts, fishing, archery, field games and hiking.

Jr. High Camp (Grades 7-9)

July 7 - 11

Campers will be able to do a host of activities including horseback riding, kayaking, and so much more! Between all of the craziness, young people will be immersing themselves in intimate and uplifting worship and small group study. Campers will return to their local churches transformed by the Holy Spirit and equipped to make disciples of Jesus Christ.

YEE: Younger Elementary Extravaganza I (Grades 1-2)

July 11 - 13

Ready for your first experience at camp?

Tanako's Younger Elementary Extravaganza is a great starter camp for 1st and 2nd graders! Campers will explore God's word, go swimming, hiking, make arts and crafts and more!

Mission Discovery (Grades 6-9)

July 14 - 18

Campers will learn about mission opportunities in their own neighborhood while having a chance to help out with a service project. Each day is a new focus, with resources and ideas campers can take back home to share.

Older Elementary I (Grades 5-6)

July 14 - 18; see Middle Elementary I description.

Middle Elementary II (Grades 3-4)

July 21 - 24; see Middle Elementary I description.

Holy Healthy You (Grades 3-7)

July 24 - July 27

As children of God, we are called to care for creation, which includes the natural environment and each other. Campers will learn about the importance of balancing their spiritual, physical and emotional health in order to be a part of growing God's kingdom. There will also be classic camp activities like swimming, arts and crafts, kayaking, hiking and campfires!

Older Elementary II (Grades 5-6)

July 28 - Aug. 1; see Middle Elementary I description.

YEE: Younger Elementary Extravaganza I (Grades 1-2)

Aug. 4 - 6; see YEE I description.

Shoal Creek Camp

Shoal Creek Camp is located in the Northwest District of the Arkansas Conference, approximately 14 miles east of Paris or 20 miles west of Dardanelle on AR Hwy. 22. Camp is a mile south of the highway.

Shoal Creek offers horseshoe pits, a ball diamond, disc golf goals, children's play equipment, a fire pit and hiking trails. Shoal Creek has 10 wooden cabins, two separate bath houses, a large climate-controlled kitchen, dining hall/meeting room, an outdoor covered pavilion, large lighted recreational court and a swimming pool.

In addition to participating in the activities below, churches and groups may reserve Shoal Creek for their own use. To reserve facilities or request information or a registration form for any camp listed below, contact Cindy Marsh, cindy.marsh@arumc.org or 479-783-0385.

Day Camp (Grades K-2) "Growing in God's Creation"

Without spending the night, campers will experience Bible stories by using their senses. Bring a swimsuit, towel and sunscreen. Campers can look forward to worship, making new friends, enjoying lunch and swimming.

June 5, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Director: Sharon Balloun, 479-229-2637

To Register: McClurkins, P.O. Box 33, Alma, AR 72921

Music Camp (Grades 3-7)

A week of singing, instruments, hand chimes, Bible study, praise and worship, games, crafts, swimming, recreation, making new friends and just plain fun! Each day everyone has a variety of small group and musical activities.

July 7, 1 p.m. to July 11, 11 a.m.

Director: Suzanne Jones, 479-263-6805 /

Mark Waynick, 479-783-5908

To Register: Suzanne Jones, 103 Angus Dr.,

Prairie Grove, AR 72753;

email: sjones1961@yahoo.com

Breakout Camp (Grades K-6)

Breaking out of our normal routines and

finding out how God works with us and through us. Campers will break boards through Tae Kwon Do and BREAK OUT: in song in worship, creativity in crafts, new skills in sport and so much more as you form friends during this amazing camp. This is the first time for a total elementary camp, so join us in this groundbreaking event!

July 13, 4 p.m. to July 16, 11 a.m.

Directors: Carl & Denni Palmer, 479-790-0741 or 479-790-2149

Director: John Noggle, 479-209-2142;

email: john.noggle@arumc.org

Director Tae kwon do: Eric Meyer, 479-795-

8673; email: ericmeyer65@gmail.com

To Register: Denni Palmer, 1550 E.

Woodbrook Dr., Fayetteville, AR 72703-3760;

email: umteach@hotmail.com

Day Camp (Grades K-2) "Growing in God's Creation"

Without spending the night, campers will explore how to open their lives to God's grace. Bring a swimsuit, towel, and sunscreen, and plan to eat, sing, hear a Bible story, and make new friends.

July 17, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Director: Sara Peters, 479-806-4604

To Register: Sara Peters, 930 N. Cedar Ave.,

Alma, AR 72921; email: sara@cox.net

Day Camp (Grades K-2) "Growing in God's Creation"

Kindergarten through 2nd grade children will love this day camp. They will meet new friends, enjoy Bible stories, swim and enjoy lunch. Remember to bring a swimsuit, towel and sunscreen!

Aug. 4, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

To Register: Judy Hall, P.O. Box 439,

Magazine, AR 72943;

email: jchalleemail@yahoo.com

Junior High Camp (Grades 7-9) "The Me I Want to Be"

Campers should bring a small item hidden in a box or bag that belonged to someone special. Campers will reveal what is special about the item and the person it represents.

Oct. 31, 7 p.m. to Nov. 2, 9 a.m.

Director: Judy Hall, 479-438-1429

To register: Judy Hall, P.O. Box 439,

Magazine, AR 72943;

email: jchalleemail@yahoo.com

Bear Creek Camp

Bear Creek Camp is a year-round retreat facility located in the St. Francis National Forest, on Bear Creek Lake. Seven miles from Marianna, Bear Creek offers facilities, services and programs for a variety of groups such as church, community, professional, civic and school. Bear Creek is part of the Southeast District of the Arkansas Conference of the United Methodist Church.

Bear Creek offers 10 air-conditioned and heated cabins with bunks for 70 campers, and separate boys' and girls' bathroom facilities. There is a basketball court as well as other designated activity areas. The Assembly Hall can accommodate 150 people for meals and is equipped with a commercial-style kitchen. The Assembly Hall is suitable for craft activities, entertainment and worship, as well as for use as an activity location during inclement weather. Bear Creek has an outdoor chapel for worship services, plus special prayer points throughout the camp.

For more information, contact Denise Jones, First UMC Marianna, 59 South Poplar, Marianna, AR 72360; or call 870-295-3681. Denise can provide information on rates and available dates, as well as answer any questions about Bear Creek Camp.

Wayland Spring Camp

Wayland Spring Camp is located in the Northeast District of the Arkansas Conference, three miles south of Imboden on Highway 115. It has six air-conditioned cabins on 120 acres, with basketball, volleyball, a swimming pool, table tennis and a nature trail. The Spring River and the Eleven Point River are within 30 minutes of the camp. Whether it is excitement or relaxation you're looking for, Wayland Spring Camp has what you and your group need.

If your church would like to reserve Wayland Spring Camp in 2014, make plans now. The months of May, June, July and August fill up quickly. You may view dates already reserved by various groups on the website, www.waylandspring.org. Day camps and District camps are open to all, and the two scheduled District camps have registration available through the website. If you have questions concerning scheduling, email the camp administrator, Jane Steinegger: steinegger@suddenlink.net.

May 30-June 1: Rising 3rd & 4th Grade District Camp

June 18: Day Camp (K-6th Grade)

June 24: Day Camp, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. (K-2nd Grade): "All Things New—God's Creation & You"

led by Pat Steele and Betty Bradford

July 7-9: Rising 5th & 6th Grade District Camp

July 16: Day Camp (K-6th Grade)

August 12: Day Camp (K-6th Grade)

Rison UMC hosts area gathering for cancer prayer

RISON—Pastors from churches in the Rison area on Feb. 24 took part in a Power Prayer meeting for those suffering with cancer. The meeting was held at Rison United Methodist Church.

Rison UMC member Penny Pitchford, who helped organize the event, said the meeting was simply a time for local Christians to come together to lift up loved ones who are suffering or have suffered from cancer.

The pastors prayed over three lists containing the names of nearly 90 people from the community who are suffering from cancer, were cured from cancer and those being remembered who died from the disease.

“The response from the community was awesome, but even more so was the participation from our pastors,” said Pitchford. “I was overjoyed to see seven churches represented. I am so grateful for everyone who participated and everyone who attended. I know the Holy Spirit was with us at the Power Prayer meeting.”

Luminaries lined the walkway for the approximately 70 people who attended the prayer meeting. Each pastor led a prayer, and those



The Rev. Richard Rogers, foreground, of Rison United Methodist Church takes a turn in leading prayer at the Power Prayer meeting held Feb. 24. Pastors from various churches in the Rison area took part in the event, lifting prayers for members of the community who are suffering from cancer, have survived cancer or have passed away with the disease.

COURTESY PHOTO

attending the meeting were encouraged to take a “Prayer Square” to someone they know who has cancer to let them know the community is praying for them. Prayer Squares were small knitted squares made by Rison UMC member Amy Fletcher.

“Every prayer was unique and special, but each one invoked the Lord’s healing power in the lives of those suffering from cancer and for their family’s strength while caring for them,” Pitchford said.

Everyone attending received a special card with Jeremiah’s Prayer from Jeremiah 17:13-15 on one side, and the Cancer Support Helpline number on the other, 1-888-793-9355.

Pitchford said she received more names at the event and will be

sending an updated list to each church so they may continue to remember these members of the community in prayer.

Those leading the prayer meeting included Jonathan Hall of Cornerstone Church of God; John Fulmer of Bethel No. 1 Missionary Baptist Church; Lanis Lindsey of Rison Church of Christ; Ken Swiger of Trinity Faith Assembly of God; Bro. Lewis and Frank Phillips of Tates Temple Church of God in Christ; Danny Allen of Rison Baptist Church; Richard Rogers of Rison United Methodist Church and Rison Mayor Vernon Dollar.

Story courtesy of Britt Talent and the Cleveland County Herald, Rison, Ark., where the original version of this article appeared.

‘Means of Grace’ podcast series by Andrew Thompson now available

A three-part audio series by the Rev. Andrew Thompson, the Wesley scholar for the Arkansas Conference, is now available online.

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

Each installment of the series has been posted on the Network for Discipleship and Mission, network.arumc.org.

To reach all three podcasts in the series, plus an introductory blog post by Thompson, visit <http://bit.ly/1mvxf1q>. The posts appear in reverse chronological order; scroll to the bottom to start the series.

UMFA grants allow youth ministers to attend continuing education events

Grants from the United Methodist Foundation of Arkansas (UMFA) recently provided scholarships for eight youth workers to attend continuing education events. Ten additional scholarships are available for 2015, according to a recent news release.

“Leadership development is one of our areas of emphasis for Foundation grants,” said Jim Argue, Jr., UMFA president and CEO. “We were pleased with the feedback we received from the recipients that this training strengthened their ministry.”

Four scholarships went to youth workers who attended Perkins School of Youth Ministry (PSYM) in January. Three veteran youth workers attended the four-day training event, and another with only six months of experience attended a specially designed, in-depth workshop for those new to youth ministry.

“As a new youth minister, the PSYM scholarship gave me the opportunity to learn and understand the fundamentals of youth ministry,” said Max Hocott of Farmington UMC.

“After more than nine years of youth ministry, I was able to attend PSYM for the first time,” wrote Lori Fallon of First UMC Monticello, in a note of thanks to UMFA. “I learned a lot, was affirmed with things I am already doing and made some wonderful friends.”

Three scholarships were given to youth workers in the Certification in Youth Ministry program that runs in conjunction with PSYM. One recipient used the scholarship to finish her final year of the process, and the other two were able to begin pursuing certification because of the extra help with registration costs.

“Without [the scholarship], I would have never even considered attending certification due to the cost,” said Zach Schrick of First UMC Magnolia. “I would have missed out on an amazing opportunity to further my calling and myself in the process.”

Kristen Farris, a student at Arkansas Tech University involved with the youth ministry at Wesley UMC Russellville, received a scholarship for the EQUIP 2013 Conference training in youth ministry.

“These UMFA scholarships allow youth workers to attend training that their local churches otherwise cannot afford,” said Michelle Moore, youth and young adult ministries coordinator for the Arkansas Conference. To apply for next year’s scholarships, contact Moore at michelle.moore@arumc.org.

Waller’s Chapel UMC brightens Christmas for Kentucky families

On Dec. 19, 2013, a team from Waller’s Chapel UMC Crossett traveled to Booneville, Ky., to work with the Lacey and Kerri Williams Memorial Mission. To prepare, members of the church donated a variety of food goods to make food boxes for families of two to five persons. The food boxes included flour, sugar, spaghetti, canned ham and other items needed for a Christmas dinner.

Waller’s Chapel members also made “baby boxes” for the team to distribute in Kentucky—collections of clothes, lotions, bottles and other items needed for baby boys and girls from newborn to toddler ages. The students who went on the mission trip helped with face-painting while the parents shopped and made crafts with the children. Each family received gifts, a fleece throw and a fruit bag for each child. The Waller’s Chapel team was able to serve 547 families in need—a total of 4,971 people, 2,797 of them children.

Fourteen people traveled to Kentucky for the mission trip, but it took the work of the entire congregation to make it happen.



Peyton Huffstetler, Kelsey Babb, and two other students from another church painted faces of children who came to the Lacey and Kerri Williams Memorial Mission with their families. Families were able to select toys, blankets, baby boxes, coats and food boxes.

COURTESY PHOTO

CORR Action Fund grants available

The United Methodist Church’s General Commission on Religion and Race (GCORR) is seeking to fund innovative, bold, high-impact initiatives that will increase intercultural competency or support vital conversations about race, cultural diversity and systemic equity. GCORR wants to support initiatives that result in long-term change and can be replicated across our church and the world.

If your church is trying to reach more people, younger people and more diverse people, consider applying for a \$20,000 to \$80,000 CORR Action Fund grant.

Learn more at www.gcorr.org/CORRActionFund. Applications must be received via email to grants@gcorr.org no later than June 30, 2014.

—submitted by Lindsey Bohler

Veritas 2014: worship and renewal for youth



Bishop Gary Mueller, right, joins in prayer with youth attending Veritas.



In keeping with the theme "Incognito," an image was hand-painted on stage in six cardboard-box segments, then assembled to "reveal" Jesus during closing worship on Saturday night. Artists were Erin Pike and Jordan Davis.

BY AMY FORBUS
Editor

More than 1,500 youth and youth leaders packed into the John Q. Hammons Convention Center in Rogers on Feb. 28 for Veritas, the premier United Methodist youth

event in the state of Arkansas.

With worship as the focus, this year's event included less time in workshop settings, and an additional mid-day worship opportunity on Saturday.

"Because our main focus at Veritas is to provide meaningful

worship experiences, we wanted to make as much time for worship as possible," said Michelle Moore, youth and young adult ministries coordinator for the Arkansas Conference. Worship featured the Dove Award-winning band Seventh Day Slumber and speaker Preston

Centuolo.

This year's theme, "Incognito," was based on the story of the Walk to Emmaus as told in Luke 24:13-35.

"The idea shown to us through Veritas was that Jesus is always present in our everyday lives, even if we don't see him, or in other words, if he's 'incognito,'" said Jacob Turner, a member of First UMC Sheridan and the Veritas task force.

"This is the largest meeting of United Methodists in the state of Arkansas—a time where we can lay aside our daily burdens and focus on Christ together," said Miller Wilbourn, a member of Pulaski Heights UMC, president of the Arkansas Conference Council on Youth Ministries and youth chair of the Veritas task force. "Through Veritas, we can form connections with one another and embody the 'United' element of our name, the United Methodist Church."

Though it was scheduled for

Friday, Feb. 28 through Sunday, March 2, Veritas adjourned Saturday night because of an approaching winter storm.

"The task force decided to switch Saturday night programming to allow one more worship opportunity before most groups decided to head home, so they could be out of the area before the winter weather started," Moore said. "As much as we hated to have to cut the event short, we were relieved to know that all groups made it home safely and that the decision was what was best for all of our participants."

Veritas will meet again March 6-8, 2015, at the Hot Springs Convention Center.

Emily Johnson, coordinator of the Southeast District Council on Youth Ministries, contributed to this report.

Youth share their experience of Veritas:

"When I was backstage watching the crowds through the curtain, I began singing along to 'How He Loves Us'.... I could feel the Holy Spirit moving."

—Jenny Hoover, sophomore, First UMC Magnolia

"It's life changing, and it would be a mistake not to go."

—Kyle Vaughn, senior, Prairie Grove UMC

"[There's] no other worship experience like it. You wouldn't think that the word of God could be spoken to you so deeply in such a short amount of time, but at Veritas, it happens."

—Kinsey Marsh, senior, First UMC Little Rock



Preston Centuolo, left, was the featured speaker for Veritas 2014, and Taylor Mason, right, who appears in the comedy DVD series *Thou Shalt Laugh*, was a featured performer.



AUM PHOTOS BY MIKE MEEKS

On the cover

Top: Youth join together in worship at Veritas 2014.

Center: The band Seventh Day Slumber, featuring frontman Joseph Rojas, provided worship music.

Bottom: Jake West of First UMC North Little Rock, left, and Max DeKunffy of First UMC Conway speak about the importance of giving to the Youth Service Fund (YSF). Veritas raised more than \$6,000 for YSF. Seventy percent of funds raised stay with the Arkansas Conference Council on Youth Ministries to fund local projects, while 30 percent of funds support youth ministry projects around the world through the global Youth Service Fund.

OBITUARIES

BENTONVILLE

Robert Cheyne

Robert Douglas "Bob" Cheyne, 86, passed away Saturday, March 15, 2014, in the palliative care unit of Fayetteville Veterans' Medical Center.

A member of First United Methodist Church Bentonville, Bob taught a Sunday school class and sang in the choir for many years. Beyond the local church, he served as North Arkansas Conference lay leader in the mid-1970s, and as a lay delegate to the 1976 and 1980 United Methodist General Conferences.

In 1948, Bob became the University of Arkansas' first sports information director, a position he held for 22 years. During his tenure with the athletic department, he covered nearly 900 sporting events. After 11 years as director and broadcast analyst, he became the first play-by-play "Voice of the Razorbacks" in both football and basketball, and was named Arkansas sportscaster of the year six times. He went on to work in advertising, public relations and corporate marketing.

He was preceded in death by his wife of 60 years, Jennie; his parents, James and Dorothy Cheyne; two brothers, Don and Jim Jr.; and two sisters, Dorothy Wilkins and Edith Ficken.

Survivors include a daughter, Cathy Deweese and her husband, Tommy; sons, Robert Cheyne Jr. and his wife, Sharon, and Gary Cheyne and his wife, Rhonda; seven grandchildren; 12 great-grandchildren; two brothers, the Rev. Bill Cheyne and his wife, Earline, and the Rev. Dr. John Cheyne and his wife, Marie; a brother-in-law, Don Ficken; and numerous nieces and nephews.

A celebration of his life was held Thursday, March 20 at First UMC Bentonville, with the Rev. Rex Dickey and the Rev. Bill Cheyne officiating.

Memorials may be made to First United Methodist Church, 201 NW 2nd Street, Bentonville, AR 72712, for the maintenance of the Jennie Cheyne Memorial Garden.

CONWAY

Thomas E. Lukas

The Rev. Thomas E. Lukas, 73, of Conway passed away Wednesday, March 5, 2014.

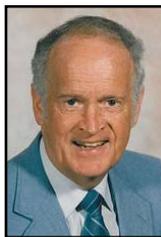
He was born Sept. 27, 1940, in North Little Rock to the late Frank and Maurine Hendricks Lukas.

Thomas was retired from the North Little Rock Fire Department, where he was a fireman and did some teaching and training. He was a Marine Veteran and also partner at (SEA) Safety Environmentalist Associate. A retired Local Pastor in the Arkansas Conference, he was appointed to serve Mount Carmel United Methodist Church Vilonia. He was a loving husband, father, brother and friend.

He is survived by his wife, Nancy Lukas; son, Randy Lukas and his wife, Valerie; two brothers, Jim Lukas and his wife, Alice, and Bill Lukas and his wife, Loretta; a brother-in-law, Bob Bahil and his wife, Ann; a host of other family and friends; and also his loving dog, Gunner.

Interment was held Friday, March 14 at Edgewood Memorial Park in North Little Rock. A memorial service followed on Saturday, March 15, at Mt. Carmel UMC Vilonia.

Special thanks to the doctors and LVAD Coordinators at Higginbotham Clinic, and the nurses and staff on the 8th Floor at Baptist Hospital in Little Rock. The family suggests memorial contributions be made to Mount Carmel UMC, 349 Hwy 107 S., Vilonia, AR 72173.



Bob Cheyne

HOT SPRINGS

Dale L. Diffie

The Rev Dale L. Diffie, 79, of Hot Springs passed away Saturday, March 8, 2014.

He was born Oct. 31, 1934, to the Rev. Rayford and Gussie Massey Diffie, who preceded him in death. He was a retired United Methodist elder and veteran of the United States Air Force. He served for 56 years as a United Methodist pastor in Arkansas, appointed to churches in Buckner, Junction City, Village, Roe, Taylor, Gillett, White Hall, McGehee, Hot Springs, Prescott and Malvern. In addition to his parents, he was preceded in death by his first wife, Rogene Fay Diffie; brother, the Rev. Carl Diffie; and sister, Janetta Schisler.

Survivors include his wife and best friend, Marie Albey Diffie (whom Clay Helm gave Dale his approval to date his granny); two sons, Gary Diffie of Hot Springs and his wife, Pam, and the Rev. Bryan Diffie and his wife, Gretchen, of Star City; two daughters, Karen Monroe and her husband, Davey, of Dewitt, and Lesa Eastman and her husband, David, of Warner Robbins, Ga.; three stepchildren, Ron Albey and his wife, Claudine, of Malvern, Mary Jeffries of Royal and Dr. Mark Albey and his wife, Kellye, of Benton; 15 grandchildren and numerous great-grandchildren.

A funeral service was held Wednesday, March 12 at First United Methodist Church Hot Springs, with the Revs. LaVon Post and Loyd Perry officiating. Burial followed at Beaton Cemetery in Bismarck. Honorary pallbearers were Brian Albey, Clay Helm and clergy members of the Arkansas Conference of the United Methodist Church.

JACKSONVILLE

Tina Mae Davis

Tina Mae Davis, 93, of Jacksonville passed away Feb. 24, 2014. She was preceded in death by her husband, the Rev. Edward Davis, a full-time local pastor in the North Arkansas Conference who served the Marianna Parish, Wesley Chapel and Livingston Chapel before his retirement in 1988.

She also was preceded in death by a son, Garfield Ingram; and her brothers, James and Benard Moore.

Survivors include her daughters, Gwendolyn Davis and Anita Williams; four grandchildren; four great-grandchildren; family and friends. The funeral service was held Saturday, March 1 at McCabe Chapel United Methodist Church North Little Rock, with the Rev. Kenneth Dunn officiating.

MAGNOLIA

Robert Arthur Terry

Dr. Robert Arthur Terry, 76, passed away Thursday, Feb. 13, 2014, at Magnolia Health and Rehabilitation.

He was born on Feb. 10, 1938, in Texarkana, Ark., to Hallie (Oates) and Dr. Arthur Terry. He graduated from Pine Bluff High School and Hendrix College. After graduation, he attended Union Theological Seminary in New York City. He received a master's degree in English from the University of Arkansas at Fayetteville and his Ph.D. in British literature from the University of Arizona at Tucson. He taught at the University of Alaska in Fairbanks before accepting a position in the English Department at



Dale Diffie



Tina Mae Davis



Bob Terry

Southern Arkansas University in Magnolia.

While teaching at SAU, he was a reader for Educational Testing Service. He read and graded Advanced Placement English exams, as well as other national English tests.

In addition to his teaching position, he was a retired local pastor in the Arkansas Conference. He pastored Village and Ebenezer United Methodist Churches, both in Magnolia, conducting services at both churches for approximately 33 years.

He developed a tutoring program at SAU, Supplemental Instruction, whereby a student who did well in a particular course could sit in on that course the following semester and act as a tutor to students who were having difficulty. When he retired, former students established a scholarship in his name to benefit an outstanding Supplemental Instruction leader each semester.

In addition to his parents, he was preceded in death by his sister, Elizabeth Ann Terry. He is survived by his wife, Carolyn; daughter, Natasha Chandler and her husband, Jason; son, David; brother, Dr. James Terry and his wife, Carmen; and a grandson, Bishop Sites.

A memorial service was held Saturday, Feb. 15 at First United Methodist Church Magnolia. In lieu of flowers, the family suggests memorials may be made to the Robert A. Terry Scholarship Fund at Southern Arkansas University, or the Columbia County Animal Protection Society.

The family offers heartfelt thanks to the caring staff at Magnolia Health and Rehabilitation and Life Touch Hospice.

SARDIS

Barbara Ann Block

Barbara Ann Block, 79, passed away March 11, 2014.

She was born April 18, 1934, in Joplin, Mo., to Sylvester and Edith Little Couch. Barbara was a member of Sardis United Methodist Church.

She married the love of her life, the Rev. Altus Block, on Dec. 19, 1951. Barbara was committed to serving her Lord, her husband and his chosen profession as a Methodist pastor. Barbara faithfully followed him without complaint, diligently serving her church families and communities wherever they resided. Her love and devotion showered Christ's love through the many sweet treats she delivered to those who needed a token of love and uplifting smile. She worked in the church nursery and adored each babe she held. When the Rev. Block retired, Barbara continued to attend Sardis United Methodist Church, where she became a beacon of God's joyous love, a dear friend to many and a beautiful role model of a genuine Christ follower.

She was preceded in death by her parents, and by her husband, the Rev. Aultus Block Sr., a retired elder in the Arkansas Conference of the United Methodist Church.

Survivors include her sons, Aultus "Kenny" Block, Jr. of Sardis, and Michael Block and his wife, Theresa, of Bryant; daughter, Lanita Davis and her husband, Jerry, of Bauxite; three grandsons, Daniel, Stephen and Christian Davis; her special niece, Imogene Brady; and many nieces and nephews.

Services were held Friday, March 14 at Sardis UMC, with the Rev. Stephen Dickinson officiating. Burial followed at McPherson Cemetery in Sardis.

A special thank you to the Saline Memorial Hospice facility in Bryant for the dignity, care and respect given to our mother and friend.

In lieu of flowers, memorials may be made to Sardis United Methodist Church, 10715 W. Sardis Road, Bauxite, AR 72011.



Barbara Block



The Rev. Rich Mitchell crosses the finish line at the 2014 Little Rock Marathon. Mitchell, pastor of Gardner Memorial UMC North Little Rock, used his goal of completing the 26.2-mile distance to raise awareness and cash for Imagine No Malaria.

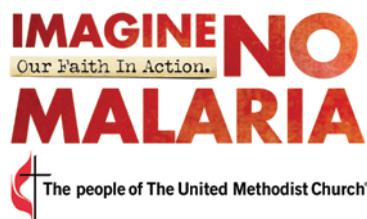
PHOTO BY SHARON MITCHELL

Pastor makes marathon a weapon against malaria

In the rain, wind and chill of March 2, 2014, the Rev. Rich Mitchell topped off months of training by finishing the Little Rock Marathon. But it wasn't just the realization of a personal goal.

The pastor of Gardner Memorial UMC North Little Rock used his marathon run as an opportunity to raise funds for the Imagine No Malaria initiative of the Arkansas Conference. He raised \$500 to help reach our denomination's goal of ending deaths from malaria by 2015.

"I got gobs of 'What's on your cap?' which gave me the opportunity to talk about Imagine No Malaria," Mitchell wrote in a Facebook status update detailing his experience. His cap bore the cross-and-flame logo of the United Methodist Church on the front, as well as a custom-made mosquito perched on top. Controlling the mosquito



population, which spreads malaria, is one of the ways the UMC and its partner organizations are making progress in the fight against this preventable and treatable disease.

Mitchell's fundraising total will be counted in the Arkansas Conference total, which is climbing beyond the Conference's minimum goal of \$1 million. An updated total will be announced at the Arkansas Annual Conference gathering in Rogers, June 19-22. We already know there will be reason to celebrate, so see page 5 of this issue for information on UMC Night at the Naturals and join the party!



The Rev. Rich Mitchell's marathon gear included a white cap emblazoned with the United Methodist cross and flame, and topped with a homemade mosquito, which gave him the opportunity to answer questions by telling people about Imagine No Malaria.

COURTESY PHOTO



Faith Funds

Transforming Lives for Christ

Rev. Mark Norman, Southeast District Superintendent, sees the United Methodist Foundation of Arkansas as moving beyond support of the ministries of United Methodism in our state and toward transformation that makes disciples for Jesus Christ.

"I see the Foundation connecting people and communities to transform the Body of Christ, a living organism, not an organization," said Rev. Norman. "One example is the lay members and clergy from a three-point parish in the Delta who studied at the Church of the Resurrection in Kansas City. From that experience, funded by UMFA, the congregations were able to create a new direction."

He said the Foundation helps churches in his district more efficiently manage their endowment funds, allowing the earnings to be used to better serve their mission fields. Rev. Norman also highlighted innovative regional programs like the partnership between Pine Bluff area congregations and UMFA to create mission opportunities for churches with different backgrounds to work together to address issues like crime and poverty.

"Through sponsorship of programs like Imagine Ministry, UMFA is helping us change – showing us the best is yet to come for the Arkansas Conference," Rev. Norman said. "I shudder to think what the Conference would become without change."



The United Methodist Foundation of Arkansas

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