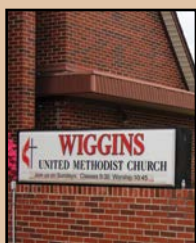


### IN THIS ISSUE



Retirees learn more about proposed benefits changes

2



A congregation dying to live

7



'Tornado Tub Throwdown'

9

## After tornado, a church carries on

BY AMY FORBUS  
Editor

VILONIA, Ark.—“Welcome to Vilonia United Methodist Church,” said the Rev. Nathan Kilbourne. It was a typical greeting for the beginning of worship, but on May 4, it brought laughter from congregants and pastor alike because Kilbourne was standing at the front of the sanctuary belonging to Center Point Free Will Baptist Church.

“In all reality, this is the church sitting right here before me,” he said as the laughs subsided, gesturing to the people gathered there, which included members of United Methodist Disaster Response teams from Arkansas and Louisiana.

It was the first Sunday after the April 27 tornado, and Vilonia UMC’s campus had sustained severe damage, leaving them without their own space to meet. So at 8:30 a.m., they packed out the borrowed sanctuary to carry on with their traditional worship service.

There were some changes: They passed a notebook around the room to record prayer requests instead of speaking them aloud—naming all those in need of prayer following the tornado would have undoubtedly taken up most of the time available in the borrowed sanctuary.

Another change: Kilbourne did not lead the service alone. Bishop Gary Mueller offered an opening prayer and a word of hope to the congregation.



Wearing the storm-damaged stole he found outside the building of Vilonia UMC following the April 27 tornado, the Rev. Nathan Kilbourne prepares to offer the sacrament of Holy Communion alongside Bishop Gary Mueller on Sunday, May 7. After meeting in borrowed space for several weeks, the congregation now has a temporary building on its own property to use during reconstruction.

AUM PHOTO BY AMY FORBUS

“I think that it is not when times are good that we discover our faith, but when times are tough,” Mueller said. “In the midst of the struggles and the pain and brokenness and the grieving that’s going on, you are being the church, just the way the church needs to.”

He commended the church for carrying through with honoring their graduating high school and college seniors as scheduled that Sunday, and told them of gifts given and prayers lifted for them by fellow

United Methodists around the nation and world.

“As I looked Tuesday when I was walking around with Nathan, I began to realize that our God is indeed a resurrection God, and that out of the rubble will come God’s greatest dreams for you,” he said, predicting that in a year or two they will be the church they’ve dreamed of being, and then some.

As a gift from Arkansas United Methodists through the Conference [See TORNADO, page 4]

## Aldersgate Covenant event calls on Holy Spirit

BY AMY FORBUS  
Editor

LEAWOOD, Kan.—“I have never been to a United Methodist meeting like this.”

That was a commonly heard, positive statement among the more than 160 people who attended Gathering of the Aldersgate Covenant May 16-17 at the United Methodist Church of the Resurrection in Leawood, Kan.

Twenty years ago, the first Aldersgate Covenant gathering resulted in legislation adopted by General Conference, the denomination’s top lawmaking body. But this weekend’s event focused not on church rules and governance, but on prayer for the Holy Spirit to revive the people called United Methodist.

“The kind of revival that we’re talking about is a renewed depth of faith,” preached retired Bishop Violet Fisher.

She declared that United Methodists have preached too much negativity. “When you want something to happen, you’ve got to talk positive,” she said.

God is not finished with the United Methodist Church yet, she said, but intellect, personalities and power have gotten in the way. She shared her belief the church has been called to a time of repentance because concern with numbers and statistical reports replaced what really matters.

“Renewal’s not going to come because you passed some legislation,” she said. “We’ve got to get on our face before God.”

### Preaching and prayer

Fisher was one of four preachers on Friday evening. The preachers included the Rev. Matt Miofsky, lead pastor of The Gathering United Methodist Church in St. Louis; the Rev. Rob Fuquay of [See COVENANT, page 11]



# An instant change in attitude

BY BEN CRISMON  
Special Contributor

A few months ago I made a conscious decision to do something that I thought signified my entry into full adulthood. I was already happily married, blessed with a daughter, and the pastor of a congregation. There was still one thing I needed to accomplish to become a “real adult”: I needed to start watching a late night television program.



**Ben Crismon**

Having never watched Letterman or Leno, I didn't really know where to start. But when I heard Jimmy Fallon was going to take over “The Tonight Show,” I thought it would be a great time to enter into the arena of watching late night TV. Since Fallon started hosting, I have not missed a show (although I do record them and watch the next evening, because who can stay up past 10:30 with a 9-month-old child?).

Jimmy Fallon often has amazing sketches with his guests, allowing them to show their true personality and have fun. But recently, he did a sketch with Seattle Mariners second baseman Robinson Cano that I thought was truly phenomenal.

If you haven't kept up with baseball lately, here's the short version of the story: Cano was a former New York Yankee who left in the off-season to get a bigger contract. Many Yankee fans felt jilted by his departure.

Fallon capitalized on the fans' sentiments as the basis for a sketch, which you can now find archived on

both YouTube and nbc.com.

Upon Cano's first return to New York to play the Yankees, Fallon asked random Yankee fans on the street if they were going to “boo” Cano as he came to the plate. Of course, they were more than willing. He then invited them to “boo” at a cardboard picture of Cano that he had set up on the sidewalk. Little did they know that Cano himself was behind the screen.

Their reactions are priceless, first so full of disdain and anger, but just a moment later welcoming Cano and apologizing for their actions. From shouts of rage to hugs of praise in just one second.

As I watched this scene play out

cordial?

Instead of “speaking the truth in love” as Paul urges us to do in Ephesians, we speak about and around, instead of to, each other. We join in negativity without ever understanding the enemy.

God wants more from us. God wants our attitudes to change instantly—to see the enemy step out from behind the screen, and to engage in conversation and reconciliation. God's spirit will be with us as we meet again.

So think twice before you “boo” at your next sporting event, unless you would do it to the athlete's face. And think twice about your words, and whether or not you would be

**“Instead of ‘speaking the truth in love’ as Paul urges us to do in Ephesians, we speak about and around, instead of to, each other. We join in negativity without ever understanding the enemy.”**

several times with different Yankees fans, I couldn't help but think about our lives as Christians. How willing are we to speak words of negativity and hate behind each other's backs, words we would never dare speak to each other's faces? How often do we fall into a group mentality and join the “boos” of the crowd, but if left one-on-one with the enemy, we would be nothing but kind and

comfortable having them said to everyone. God wants us to be a people of grace and love, in word and deed. We can all work on this together.

*The Rev. Crismon serves as pastor of White Hall UMC. A version of this commentary originally appeared on his blog, brotherbencrismon.wordpress.com.*

## Retiree meetings shed light on proposed plan changes



The Revs. Sam Teague, left, and Calvin Mitchell confer with Conference benefits officer Mona Williams after a May 13 meeting on proposed changes to retiree health benefits.

AUM PHOTO BY AMY FORBUS

More than 60 retired clergy and spouses attended a May 13 meeting to learn about proposed changes to retiree health insurance benefits to be considered at Annual Conference 2014. It was the first in a series of informational meetings held around the state, facilitated by Conference benefits officer Mona Williams and the Rev. Dennis Spence, chair of the Conference Board of Pension and Health Benefits.

“I think you'll find it to be true that this is good for the retirees, it's good for the local churches and it's good for the Annual Conference,” Spence said. “If it's not, I don't want it, either, because in four years I'm going to be joining this group.”

Under the new proposal, retirees would receive a premium gift through a Healthcare Reimbursement Account set up by the Conference, then would choose their own Medicare supplement plans and dental coverage.

As part of the meeting, health insurance agent R.D. Roulston presented information on the Plan F

supplement to Medicare. Though retirees may use an agent of their choice, Roulston will be available at Annual Conference on Friday, June 20 for those wishing to discuss options.

The Rev. Roger Glover says he is inclined to support the proposal.

“It looks like that it actually is going to be better than the one we have, which is a surprise, because usually when we're promised that, it never is,” he said.

“I think it's going to cost us less,” said clergy spouse Marie Jordan.

Her husband, the Rev. Ben Jordan, agreed. “It's going to cut the costs for the local church, which is very important,” he said, “but more than that it will provide an affordable insurance for all the retirees and all the actives, too.”

Retirees may now choose new plan options, which would only go into effect if the proposal is approved. They may set a start date ranging from Aug. 1, 2014 to Jan. 1, 2015. Those with questions may contact Mona Williams at 501-324-8028.

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**Submission Deadlines**

Issue Date	Submission Deadline
July 4	June 16
Aug. 1	July 16
Sept. 5	Aug. 20

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# Assembly 2014 displays impact of United Methodist Women worldwide

BY DANITA WALLER-PAIGE  
Special Contributor

"People from every nation and tongue, from generation to generation, we worship YOU! Hallelujah, hallelujah, we worship YOU for who you ARE!" As I entered the worship center and began to take in the many different cultural garments, the different hues of skin, the different age groups this contemporary worship song by Israel Houghton came to mind. It was amazingly wonderful; and emotion began to set in. I am in a place where the nations are represented in the name of our Lord! Women whose hearts are after God's, and who are not afraid to do God's work and speak God's Word!

Assembly 2014, held April 25-27 in Louisville, Ky., was a life-changing experience for me.

It was my very first time to attend Assembly, and I found it inspiring. It offered a much broader concept of the powerful impact the women of the United Methodist Church make. I enjoyed every interaction that took place: the wonderfully diverse worship experiences, the thought-provoking classes that were offered, and even mere hallway conversations were a delight to my spirit. I was able to meet missionaries from across the globe, deaconesses, women clergy, a prayerful yoga instructor, and even a "laughter specialist."

The Arkansas delegation was large and in charge! We were extremely proud when our state and nation's former First Lady, Hillary Clinton, presented to the larger group. She was thought-provoking, inspirational, and on fire! She represented the United Methodist Church in her role as a proud member of United Methodist Women. I personally appreciated the fact that as a gesture towards her commitment to the cause of the United Methodist Women, she paid for her own travel and other expenses.



Danita Waller-Paige at United Methodist Women Assembly 2014.  
COURTESY PHOTO

Additionally, she did not receive any form of payment for her appearance. This in itself spoke volumes to me and others about the woman who is Hillary Rodham Clinton.

As a first-time attendee, I would strongly encourage every woman (young, middle aged, older, lay or clergy) to make plans to at one point or another to attend an Assembly—something we only have the opportunity to do every four years. I loved my experience and plan on making every effort to attend Assembly 2018 in Columbus, Ohio, if at all possible.

Ultimately, I have been set on fire in an area of ministry in which I honestly had minimal interest. I'm moving forward charged to do as Hillary Clinton boldly encouraged, "Wake up our country and wake up our world about the work that can and should be done; and we each are called in our own ways to lead."

*Waller-Paige serves as Spiritual Growth Coordinator for the United Methodist Women of the Arkansas Conference. She is a member of Theresa Hoover UMC Little Rock. To see video and stories from Assembly 2014, visit <http://prod.umwomen.org:88/assembly>.*



Hillary Rodham Clinton (center) waves to participants at the United Methodist Women's Assembly at the Kentucky International Convention Center in Louisville, Ky., following her address to the group. She is flanked by Yvette Richards (left) and Harriett Jane Olson of United Methodist Women.

UMNS PHOTO BY MIKE DUBOSE

## APPOINTMENTS

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

Appointments take effect after Annual Conference 2014 unless otherwise noted.

- Gary Maskell—Marvell/Lexa UMCs
- Melvin Moss—Primrose UMC
- Lynn McClure—Bismarck UMC
- George Whitney—New Salem UMC
- Eric Meyer—Gravette/Sulphur Springs UMCs
- Naomi Rogers—Atkins/Bell's Chapel UMCs
- Gary Harrison—Warren UMC
- Bob Hager—Beech Grove UMC
- David and Carol Moore (co-pastors)—Shiloh Paragould/Pruett's Chapel UMCs (new charge alignment)
- Luke Conway—Lakewood UMC North Little Rock
- Todd Vick—Salem UMC Conway
- Samantha Meadors—Interim Director, ASU Wesley Foundation
- Joe Miller—Fairview UMC Texarkana
- Phillip Salmon—Mineral Springs/Wakefield UMCs
- Carol Stewart—Faith UMC Hot Springs
- Garry Wiles—Hoxie UMC
- Richard Rogers—Cave City/Bear Creek UMCs
- Billy Vanderbilt—Marmaduke UMC
- Roger Hook—Southside UMC Batesville
- Mike Meeks—Manchester UMC
- Reggie Russell—Wesley/Hawley UMCs Pine Bluff
- Ike Mohr—Rison UMC/Mount Carmel UMC Rison
- Paul Horner—Fisher Street UMC Jonesboro
- N. Wayne Clark—Mount Carmel UMC Jonesboro
- Beth Waldrup—First UMC Maumelle
- Danny Dunlap—Hollywood UMC
- Tracy Roden—St. John UMC Hope
- Kathryn Burchfield—

- Foreman/Wade's Chapel UMCs
- Jerry Collins—Bethel UMC Jacksonville
- Joe Kaiser—Brookland/Union Grove UMC
- Jimmy Turner—Garner UMC
- O.D. Turner—Pangburn UMC
- Donna Harvey—McRae/Mount Pisgah UMCs
- Cory Pfeifer—Sedgwick UMC
- Steve Long—Concord/Jamestown UMC
- Everett Blakely—Shiloh UMC Jonesboro
- James Wheeler—Cornerstone UMC Pleasant Plains/Cushman UMC
- Billy Vanderbilt—Marmaduke/Christ United UMCs
- Melissa Maskell—East Phillips County Parish (associate)
- Wayne Bell—Bell's Chapel (Ouachita County)/Red Hill UMCs
- Tommy Halsell—Mount Carmel/Scott's Memorial UMCs Lockesburg
- Andrew Orr—Mount Zion/Trinity/Okolona UMCs
- Floyd Ray—Lisbon/Marysville UMCs
- Eric Meyer—Gravette/Sulphur Springs UMCs
- Gary Lunsford—Morrow UMC (addition to existing charge)
- Don Cremer—Valley Springs UMC (addition to existing charge)
- Judy Rudd Platt—Bland Chapel UMC
- Frank Cook—Alpena UMC (charge realignment)
- Aaron Madden—Midland Heights UMC Fort Smith (associate)
- Bryan Seewald—Heritage Van Buren (youth minister)
- Vitolino Mendez—Nueva Vida at First UMC Dardanelle (effective June 1, 2014)

To view the official listing of pastoral appointment changes, visit [www.arumc.org/appointments](http://www.arumc.org/appointments). The online listing is updated as the Cabinet confirms newly announced appointments.





This May 19 aerial view of Vilonia UMC includes sections of a portable building (lower left) that have since been assembled for use as a temporary worship space.

AUM PHOTO BY AMY FORBUS / COURTESY LARRY GRACE AND SCOTT KINGSBOROUGH



The Rev. Nathan Kilbourne, left, shows Bishop Gary Mueller what remains of Vilonia UMC's worship space following the April 27 tornado.

AUM PHOTO BY AMY FORBUS



One of Vilonia UMC's signs was reduced to pieces of twisted metal, much like its worship space.

PHOTO BY TODD BURRIS

## Tornado (continued from page 1)

Disaster Relief Fund, he then presented Vilonia UMC with a check for \$25,000 to help rebuild their facility—a gift met with a collective gasp and applause from the congregation, as well as a few tears.

Kilbourne preached on the story of the walk to Emmaus, as found in Luke 24, applying the disciples question, "Were not our hearts burning within us?" to experiences in the days following the tornado. The disciples' hearts burned within them because they knew Christ was there, even though they couldn't quite see him through all their pain and grief.

He spoke of witnessing the

people of Vilonia UMC looking out for each other, checking on one another within minutes after the storm passed.

"My heart burns within me because I've seen in our community the Risen One, and the Crucified One," Kilbourne said.

He shared with the graduating seniors his prayer for them, "that when you don't think you see the Lord, when you just can't quite recognize him, you feel your heart begin to burn within you and you will know it is the Risen One, that the Risen One is with you."

As he and Bishop Mueller began the celebration of Holy

Communion, Kilbourne donned his storm-stained Communion stole, which he had found outside after the tornado. "I think it speaks to who we are as a people," he said. "Battered, worn, in need of the grace of God."

In the benediction, Bishop Mueller reminded the congregation of the words of Paul, that nothing would separate them from the love of God in Jesus Christ. "Go and live it, and do it with joy and hope and resolve," he said as he sent them forth.

The people of Vilonia UMC and guests met together once more that day for some fellowship and Sabbath time at the high school cafeteria, featuring a meal donated and served by Mike's Place restaurant of Conway.

June 1 was Vilonia UMC's first Sunday in its new temporary building, nicknamed "The Ark" after Noah's Ark: "a place of safety and security in the midst of all life's storms, knowing one day there will be restoration and renewed creation," said the Rev. Nathan Kilbourne. The Ark was professionally assembled, then a number of volunteers built stairs and decking, and cleaned the building to help prepare it as a worship space. "In terms of the last 10 days, we have had more fantastic work crews," Kilbourne said on May 29. "We also have been very grateful for Center Point Free Will Baptist opening their facilities. They were extremely hospitable and were very glad we were able to meet there."

COURTESY PHOTO







ABOVE: Seen here through a shattered window at Vilonia UMC, the Arkansas Rice Depot van was among those that arrived on the scene to deliver disaster relief supplies. PHOTO BY COLLEEN HOLT

ABOVE: Ida Rose, right, receives a hug from Sheri Mathews, Spiritual and Emotional Care Team supervisor for the Arkansas Conference Disaster Response Team. Rose is an early response team member, but on April 28 she was at the severely tornado-damaged home of her son and his family, who live in the River Plantation neighborhood in Maumelle.

AUM PHOTO BY AMY FORBUS



RIGHT: Former President Bill Clinton was among the dignitaries who visited the Vilonia area following the tornado. He is pictured here with Vilonia UMC's pastor, the Rev. Nathan Kilbourne.

PHOTO BY LYNN KILBOURNE



Along with financial gifts that arrived in the wake of the disaster, the Arkansas Conference has received numerous notes and prayers from around the U.S., including from areas of the country that have previously experienced storms and floods.



The day after the tornado, members of Vilonia UMC gathered on the church lawn for a prayer service.

PHOTO BY BETH WALDRUP

## Call center workers coordinate action following disaster

*A look inside the disaster response call center that operated April 28 through May 5, 2014*



Disaster response co-coordinator Janice Mann, left, confers with call center volunteer Annie Meek, a college student who is a member of Trinity UMC Little Rock. Meek was among the first to arrive to help at the temporary call center, which was set up to coordinate disaster response efforts following the deadly April 27 tornado.

PHOTO BY MARTHA TAYLOR

BY AMY FORBUS  
Editor

LITTLE ROCK—When disaster occurs, offers for help begin immediately. To report needs and to meet them, people and teams have to connect with each other. And communication can be a challenge when everything's happening at once.

On April 28, the morning after an EF4 tornado cut a path of destruction through several Arkansas communities, the Arkansas Conference disaster response team, assisted by the Conference Center for Technology, set up a call center to keep track of the many moving parts of disaster relief. From one of the smaller meeting rooms in the Conference offices, volunteers began answering phone calls, responding to emails,

attempting to verify reports of damage and logging requests for assistance.

"Have we been through all the emails from this morning and last night?" asks Janice Mann, co-coordinator of disaster response for the Arkansas Conference, as she walks into the call center. She keeps track of the communication flowing there while her husband and co-coordinator, Byron, provides reports from the field and receives directions and information to pass on to others in the affected areas.

On a conference call with Arkansas VOAD (Volunteer Organizations Active in Disaster), the call center team learns that at that particular time, more than enough organizations are providing meals in the Vilonia area. They make a note to schedule cooking and

[See CALL CENTER, page 14]

## Great-nephew of UM pastor among tornado deaths



Jeffery Hunter

One of the 16 persons killed in the April 27 tornado was 22-year-old Jeffrey Hunter of Vilonia, great-nephew of the Rev. Fred Hunter, pastor of Oaklawn UMC Hot Springs.

Jeffrey was a senior at the University of Central Arkansas and worked part-time at Fred's in Vilonia.

Fred Hunter wrote in an email message to the *Arkansas United Methodist* that the Hunter Clan (Scottish heritage) considered canceling its annual family reunion this year, but Jeffrey's father, Tim, had the need and the desire to see it go on. It was held May 17.

"Jeffrey's passing has been a major shock on the entire Hunter Family," he said, adding that at last year's reunion, the family had gotten to meet his great-nephew's girlfriend for the first time, "and he was the happiest I have seen him.

"Jeffrey was an introvert until he got to know and trust you, then that magnetic personality of his came out.... When God needs a smile he creates people like Jeffrey; now only God has the luxury of

seeing Jeffrey smile. We the family will keep the memories of that smile in our hearts and give praise to God and the Lord Jesus Christ, for Jeffrey's time with us and our one day reunion."



## PEOPLE OF FAITH

### Students complete Arkansas Course of Study School

Three students completed coursework recently through the Arkansas Course of Study School, an extension school of SMU's Perkins School of Theology.



Pictured, from left, are Kathy DeBusk, who serves as a part-time local pastor for Rose Bud UMC; Dave Caswell, who serves Quitman UMC as a part-time local pastor; and Sue Welborn, who serves in the Missouri Conference.

Approximately 60 students currently participate in the Course of Study School, which offers classes each semester at Hendrix College in Conway. To complete the school, students must pass 20 classes. If a student takes all of the classes at Hendrix and never misses a semester, it takes 10 years to complete the school. Students also may take classes online or at other schools to count toward the coursework.

### 35 Arkansas students attending UM schools named 2014 Dollars for Scholars recipients

The United Methodist Higher Education Foundation recently named 35 Arkansas students as recipients of Dollars for Scholars scholarship awards. For each recipient, the students' local churches give \$1,000 and the United Methodist Higher Education Foundation matches that contribution. Then, the United Methodist Foundation of Arkansas (UMFA) gives \$1,000 and the student's selected school contributes \$1,000 for a significant \$4,000 award.

"More Arkansas students than ever before received Dollars for Scholars awards this year," said Jim Argue Jr., president of UMFA. "We are pleased make a total of \$35,000 in grants to Arkansas students who will attend United Methodist colleges and universities."

Hendrix College students receiving the scholarships include Blaine K. Sadler of First UMC Benton; Steven R. Ragsdale of First UMC Bryant; Michala J. Roberts of First UMC Conway; William B. Lovvorn and Collin M. Moore of Grace Community UMC Fort Smith; Malachi J. McDonald of First UMC Jacksonville; Liam R. Hankins-Hull, Michael R. McMurray and Caitlyn B. Hendrickson of First UMC Little Rock; Jonathan T. Spradley, Thomas P. Spradley and Victoria L. Spradley of Pulaski Heights UMC Little Rock; Rebecca R. Meredith and Lance Sanders Dunbar of St. James UMC Little Rock; Megan L. Steely of Trinity UMC Little Rock; and Ethny M. Ashcraft of Lakeside UMC Pine Bluff.

Philander Smith College scholarship recipients include Kayla A. Baker, Jonathan S. Barker, Joshua Dumas, Trevor A. Ivy, Kaelin K. McNeal, Candace L. Parchman and Tasha D. Washington, all of Wesley Chapel UMC Little Rock.

In addition, Lawrence E. Knox of First UMC Fort Smith will attend Boston University; Alexander M. Shannon of Pulaski Heights UMC Little Rock will attend Centenary College in Shreveport, La.; Archer W. Tribett of Pulaski Heights UMC Little Rock will attend Central Methodist University in Fayette, Mo.; Madelyn R. Bagwell of Central UMC Fayetteville will attend High Point University in High Point, N.C.; and Natalie E. Clark of First UMC Conway will attend Wofford College in Spartanburg, S.C.

Seminary students receiving Dollars for Scholars awards are Corey A. Tyson of First UMC Jacksonville, attending Duke Divinity School in Durham, N.C.; Kathryn E. Dunn of Pulaski Heights UMC Little Rock, attending Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary in Evanston, Ill.; Andrew J. Smith of St. Paul UMC Little Rock and Myron E. Rhodes of First UMC Maumelle attending SMU Perkins School of Theology in Dallas, Texas; Marcia A. Grassel of First UMC Eureka Springs and Laura Jo Prange of First UMC Dewitt, attending Saint Paul School of Theology in Overland Park, Kan.; and

Christopher P. Gillespie of Cornerstone UMC Jonesboro, attending United Theological Seminary in Dayton, Ohio.

The United Methodist Higher Education Foundation is dedicated to helping students achieve their dreams by providing scholarship aid for United Methodist students attending 122 United Methodist-related institutions. UMFA is one of the largest United Methodist Foundations in the country. Founded in 1963, UMFA is responsible for more than 650 funds with combined assets in excess of \$130 million.

### Borg, Clark, Wright named to board of Methodist Family Health Foundation

Three new members have joined the Methodist Family Health Foundation board of directors: Laura Borg of Little Rock, the Rev. J. Wayne Clark of Conway and Tara Wright of Fayetteville.

Borg has a background in financial management and accounting and is a member of Trinity United Methodist Church, Little Rock.

Clark is chaplain and adjunct professor at Hendrix College and a clergy member of the Arkansas Annual Conference.

Wright is a homemaker, speech-language pathologist and community volunteer. She is a member of Central UMC Fayetteville.

The Methodist Family Health Foundation exists to support the work of Methodist Family Health, a 115-year-old nonprofit that provides psychiatric and behavioral healthcare to children and families in Arkansas.



Laura Borg



J. Wayne Clark



Tara Wright

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### An open letter to Bud Reeves

Bud, your commentary concerning our current "crisis" [May 2 issue of the *Arkansas United Methodist*] was thought-provoking and insightful. However, it's not new. When you, John Miles, Owen Talley and I were ordained elders in 1985, these same controversies about homosexuality between what you describe as "so-called progressives" and "so-called traditionalists" were every bit as vehement. We worried about schism even then, nearly 30 years ago!

What has changed is the willingness of some "progressives" to defy our doctrine and discipline. When pastors, churches, conferences and even some bishops decide to counsel and practice open defiance of our connectional covenant, that is more than just talk. This is contrary to the vows that all elders make to uphold the doctrine and discipline of the UMC.

Such open defiance by United Methodist elders begs the question of whether we are united at all. If some freely flout the *Discipline* where they dissent from it, where is our unity? Are they not, in fact, already schismatic? De facto if not de jure?

Speaking for myself, as a Wesleyan United Methodist, I have no intention to leave the church I love. So, yes, we should talk, and pray for revival. But I fear that talk of unity is just that: talk.

Rev. Tom Letchworth  
Marion UMC

*This letter was abbreviated because of space constraints. To read the original letter, or correspond with the Rev. Letchworth, visit <http://marionmethodistchurch.com/ministries/pastor-page>.*

### Tornado a reminder of emergency preparation guide for churches

The April 27, 2014 tornado that caused destruction in western Pulaski County, Mayflower and Vilonia is a reminder that we all need to be prepared for emergencies, such as tornadoes, fire and other potential disasters. This preparedness applies to homes, businesses and churches. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has published a "Guide for Developing High-Quality Emergency Operations Plans for Houses of Worship" ([http://www.ucciaconf.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/06/Developing\\_EOPs\\_for\\_Houses\\_of\\_Worship\\_FINAL.pdf](http://www.ucciaconf.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/06/Developing_EOPs_for_Houses_of_Worship_FINAL.pdf)) that can assist churches with developing plans to handle potential emergencies. In addition, the State of Arkansas, each county, and major cities have Emergency Management Offices that can help churches with their emergency plans.

My mother, a member of Winfield UMC Little Rock, used to tell me "A stitch in time saves nine." The same is true with emergency planning. Emergency planning done ahead of time can save lives and injury for people at a church during a hazardous situation.

Glen Harrison  
First UMC Lawrence, Kan.

#### 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](mailto: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.

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# Wiggins UMC closes to make way for resurrection

BY OMAR RIKABI  
Special Contributor

FAYETTEVILLE, Ark.—Lea Criss opens the box on the big cake and sets it on the table. She stares at the words frosted around two images of the church: “Wiggins Memorial United Methodist Church. 1941-2014.” Through tears, the 18-year member of the church and president of the United Methodist Women whispers that God is finally answering their prayers to fill the halls with young people again.

“We’ve been praying for this for years, but we didn’t think it would happen like this,” she said. “It’s so sad to be losing our church.”

On Sunday, April 27, Wiggins Memorial UMC Fayetteville celebrated its final worship service. In 1941, the young congregation then known as “Bethel Methodist Church” moved into a building still under construction. Before the building was completed in 1945, a teenaged Doris McConnell and her mother passed by the church, and immediately decided to join.

“My mother drove by and saw all the construction,” she said. “She must have seen something we could do to help out. She was the one who picked the church.”

McConnell has served as the church secretary for almost 40 years, a job she started by volunteering to make the bulletins for Sunday morning. “This place has been a second home,” she said. “This is like losing a best friend and having a funeral, but also celebrating a resurrection.”

## Decline and decision

Over the decades, Wiggins has seen a great decline in membership. A once vibrant and overflowing congregation, the church has fallen to about 30 members. As many in the congregation grew older, few young families joined. The church worked hard to serve the poor and hungry on their side of Fayetteville, but resources have been harder and harder to come by.

On April 27, there is only one small Sunday school class meeting in an otherwise empty and quiet hallway of classrooms. But that’s about to change.

Last year, the Arkansas Conference of

the United Methodist Church proposed that Wiggins become a satellite ministry of Central UMC Fayetteville. After much prayer and discussion, the church leadership voted to close and transfer the property and assets to Central. Central will fund and oversee a

renovation to the sanctuary, and this fall will reopen it as “Genesis Church.” Central also will provide staff, including the Rev. Jody Farrell, who will serve as pastor. During construction, Farrell and his team will hold worship services in the Wiggins fellowship hall.

That the idea was presented right before Christmas, and the church closed right after Easter, has made these two holy seasons harder on some. Despite the decline, the remaining members of Wiggins are proud of this place where their salvation stories unfolded. But with the new renovation, many also have new hope.

“I’m already seeing people we haven’t seen in years. This is going to be a good day,” says Mona Holt. She proudly declares that she is 82 and has been a member since the seventh grade. This morning she serves as a greeter, and is all smiles and hugs as people who have not been to this church in years file in for one last time. As she talks, Holt is visibly excited about the future: “This fall is going to be a wonderful new beginning.”

But not everyone is as excited. Doris McConnell is hopeful, but hesitant. “My goal is to try [Genesis Church] and see if I like it. There are a lot of things to get mad at, but it will

be okay if we have the right attitude.”

## Final gathering

As the service prepares to start, there is a buzz in the sanctuary. Over a hundred people talk, hug, re-connect and re-orient themselves to this place. “Didn’t these pews used to be blue?” one person asks. In the background, the prelude music is the hymn of the prophet Isaiah’s question when God asked who would go forward, which this morning seems fitting: “Here I am, Lord/Is it I, Lord?... I will go Lord/If you lead me/I will hold your people in my heart.”

After the call to worship comes the passing of the peace, and a ritual that usually takes 30 seconds goes on for almost 10 minutes. More hugs, more tears, more reconnecting, more laughing.

As the service continues, the current pastor, the Rev. Lyn Poplin, reads a history of the church, followed by a brief video message from Bishop Mueller. Then the Rev. Bud Reeves, superintendent of the Northwest District, delivers the message: “Dying to Live.”

Reeves encourages the congregation to see what they are doing as a faithful sacrifice: “It’s a courageous step to give up control of the building to make disciples of Jesus Christ,” he preaches. “This is a precious place with lots of memories. You’re giving that up. It’s a sacrifice.” He goes on to declare, “We are an Easter people. We celebrate the resurrection of Christ, and we anticipate the resurrection of Wiggins.”



After receiving Holy Communion, worshippers surround the altar at Wiggins Memorial UMC Fayetteville. The April 27 worship service marked the final gathering of that congregation.



The Revs. Lyn Poplin and Bud Reeves serve Communion to those attending the final worship service of Wiggins Memorial UMC Fayetteville.

AUM PHOTOS BY  
OMAR RIKABI

But the focal point of today’s service is Holy Communion. A final time for this church body, who is sacrificing what they hold dear, to share in the sacrifice Jesus Christ made for the sake of the world. One by one, they make their way up to receive the body and blood of Christ. After being served by Poplin and Reeves, many make their way to the altar to pray there one last time.

And just like that, after 73 years, Wiggins Memorial United

Methodist Church has worshipped together for the last time. But one thing remains: There is a catered lunch downstairs in the fellowship hall, and the cake. As people line up to eat, they stop and look at it. Some even take a picture. But no one seems eager to cut into it just yet.

*The Rev. Rikabi is a provisional elder in the North Texas Conference, where he will be appointed in July to First UMC Heath.*

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# Six provisional clergy to be ordained in full connection June 22

Pending approval during the June 19 clergy session of the Arkansas Annual Conference, the following provisional clergy will be ordained in full connection to the Arkansas Conference of the United Methodist Church (three as elders and three as deacons). The service of Ordination and Commissioning is set for 1 p.m. Sunday, June 22, at the John Q. Hammons Convention Center in Rogers. All are invited to attend.



**Michael Blanchard**

**Michael Blanchard**, elder  
*Hometown:* Jonesboro, Ark.  
*Education:* Arkansas Tech University; Perkins School of Theology, SMU  
*Current appointment:* Pruett's Chapel and Beech Grove UMCs  
*New appointment (July):* Oak Forest UMC Little Rock and University Parish



**Donna Hendricks**

**Donna D. Hendricks**, deacon  
*Hometown:* Senatobia, Miss.  
*Education:* University of Mississippi; Perkins School of Theology, SMU  
*Appointment:* First UMC North Little Rock (minister of children and families)



**Katie Pearce**

**Katie Goss Pearce**, elder  
*Hometown:* Springdale, Ark.  
*Education:* Hendrix College; Vanderbilt Divinity School  
*Current appointment:* Bismarck UMC  
*New appointment (July):* Highland Valley UMC (associate pastor)



**David A. Ruehr**

**David A. Ruehr**, elder  
*Hometown:* Little Rock, Ark.  
*Education:* Asbury College; Asbury Theological Seminary  
*Appointment:* First UMC Bentonville (pastor of discipleship)



**Martha Taylor**

**Martha S. Taylor**, deacon  
*Hometown:* Little Rock, Ark.  
*Education:* University of Central Arkansas; Memphis Theological Seminary  
*Appointment:* Arkansas Conference Center for Technology and Faith UMC Little Rock



**Garry Teeter**

**Garry Dean Teeter**, deacon  
*Hometown:* Bryant, Ark.  
*Education:* University of Arkansas at Little Rock; University of Central Arkansas; Memphis Theological Seminary; Asbury Theological Seminary  
*Appointment:* First UMC Benton and Daily Bread Counseling

# Candidates to be commissioned as provisional clergy members June 22

**Clark Atkins**, elder track  
*Hometown:* North Little Rock, Ark.  
*Education:* Arkansas State University; University of Arkansas; Asbury Theological Seminary  
*Current appointment:* St. James UMC Little Rock (associate pastor)  
*New appointment:* First UMC Harrisburg



**Clark Atkins**



**Bill Cato**

**William Cato**, elder track  
*Hometown:* Searcy, Ark.  
*Education:* Henderson State University; Memphis Theological Seminary  
*Appointment:* First UMC Fordyce



**Blake Langston**

**Blake Langston**, elder track  
*Hometown:* Pine Bluff, Ark.  
*Education:* Vanderbilt University; Ouachita Baptist University; Asbury Theological Seminary  
*Current appointment:* First UMC Jonesboro (associate pastor)  
*New appointment (July):* Director, University of Central Arkansas Wesley Foundation

**Kathleen McMurray**, elder track  
*Hometown:* Little Rock, Ark.  
*Education:* Louisiana State University; Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary  
*Appointment (July):* Grace UMC Conway (associate pastor)



**Kathleen McMurray**

Pending approval of the June 19 clergy session of the Annual Conference, the following persons will be commissioned as provisional members of the Arkansas Conference, one of the final steps in the journey to ordination as an elder or deacon in the United Methodist Church. The service is set for 1 p.m. Sunday, June 22, at the John Q. Hammons Convention Center in Rogers. All are invited to attend.



**Bill Sardin**

**Bill Sardin**, elder track  
*Hometown:* Little Rock, Ark.  
*Education:* University of Arkansas at Little Rock; Memphis Theological Seminary  
*Appointment:* Calico Rock and Spring Creek UMCs

**Todd Vick**, elder track  
*Hometown:* Fort Smith, Ark.  
*Education:* John Brown University; Asbury Theological Seminary  
*Current appointment:* Vesta UMC (pastor) and St. Paul UMC (associate pastor)  
*New appointment (July):* Salem UMC Conway



**Todd Vick**



**Michelle Whitfield**

**Michelle Whitfield**, deacon track  
*Hometown:* Sherwood, Ark.  
*Education:* St. Louis University; Boston University School of Theology; Boston University  
*Appointment (Fall 2014):* Wellspring Renewal Center, Little Rock



**Dane Womack**

**William Dane Womack**, elder track  
*Hometown:* Cave City, Ark.  
*Education:* University of Central Arkansas; Duke Divinity School  
*Current assignment:* Duke Divinity School Field Education Intern, Bethlehem UMC, Climax, N.C.  
*New appointment (July):* First UMC Fort Smith (associate pastor)



# Pastors, churches have friendly 'throwdown' to help tornado victims

BY MARTHA TAYLOR  
Special Contributor

It didn't take much for the gloves to come off. And when you consider that the chief instigators were the Rev. Pat Bodenhamer and the Rev. Angie Gage, the outcome of the Tornado Tub Throwdown was really never in doubt.

It seemed logical for Bodenhamer, pastor of Diamond City and Omaha UMCs in the Northwest District, to look east to Gage, pastor of Cherokee Village UMC in the Northeast District. With both pastors located in the same geographic area but with a district boundary separating them, a friendly competition seemed appropriate. Those who know them know that underneath their serene, pastoral countenances lie two competitive spirits. Especially when it comes to helping others.

The throwdown, issued through Facebook and the districts' email distribution lists, called for each district to collect the most tornado tubs and gifts for those whose lives were tossed upside down in the April 27 tornado. The prize would be bragging rights.

Over the course of 10 days in May, pastors and laity located in both districts collected tubs, the items to fill them and financial gifts. Spurred on by some (Christian) trash-talk, at least 22 churches participated.

The results speak for themselves:

- 161 Completed Tornado Tubs (plastic totes filled with specific supplies to help with clean-up following a tornado, and valued



The Revs. Dave Smith and Don Creamer take a break from loading some of the the tornado tubs donated during the 10-day Tornado Tub Throwdown. Not including volunteer hours, close to \$28,000 was donated.

COURTESY PHOTOS

at \$55 each)

- 281 Empty Tubs (valued at \$9 each)
- \$12,911.99 and an additional \$3,500 sent to the Arkansas Disaster Relief Fund

In all, in-kind and financial gifts came to \$27,795.95. This total was in addition to the reported 425 volunteer hours spent in hands-on service in the affected communities; distribution of 20 dozen freshly-baked cookies; and pizza purchased and delivered to volunteers working in the Mayflower area.

"I know our churches would have responded to the need even without a challenge," Bodenhamer

said. "I believe it has brought an awareness to all our churches that we can do great and mighty things for the Kingdom when we all work together."

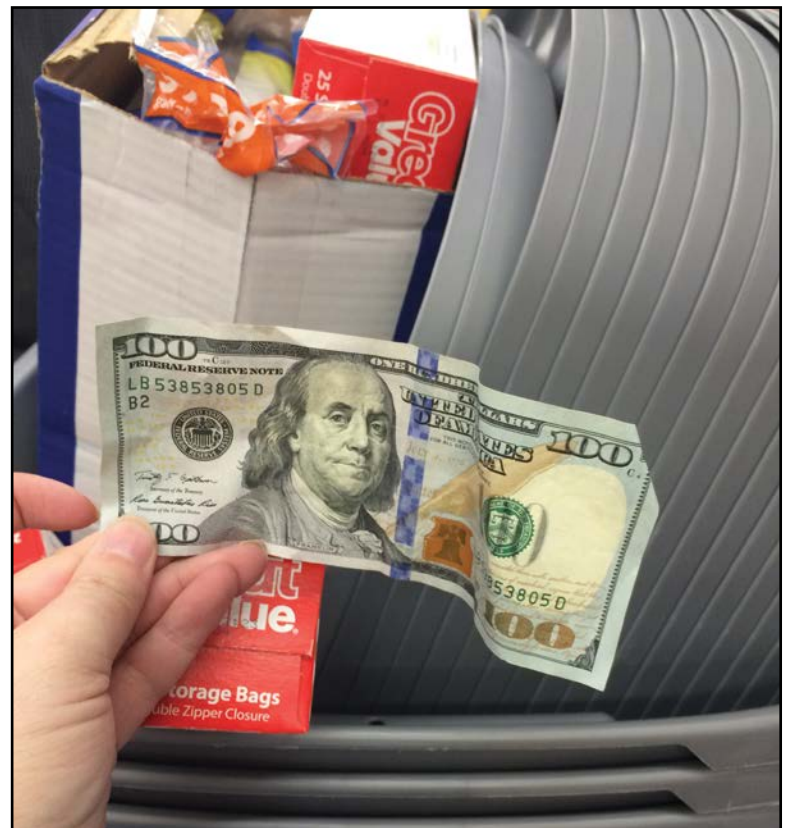
Always up for a challenge, Bodenhamer thinks that Conference members should not be surprised if more challenges arise in the future.

"Our pastors and churches dug deep to help our brothers and sisters who have lost so much," said Bodenhamer. "We did it because that is what God would want us to do. We were, and are, the active body of Christ!"

Bragging rights were important in the beginning, but as the totals

'Our pastors and churches dug deep to help our brothers and sisters who have lost so much.'

—Rev. Pat Bodenhamer



Gifts were given by strangers who heard about the Tornado Tub Throwdown. A Texas United Methodist vacationing in Branson offered her financial support during one of many tornado tub shopping trips.

grew more impressive, the "winner" seemed to matter less. In the end, they called it a draw. Both pastors agree that the fun, creative element of the challenge motivated some to

participate, but stress that the primary goal was to get people involved in missions for the purpose of honoring God and loving neighbors in need.

## Everyone invited! Celebrate striking out malaria at June 21 game

### Make your group's ticket purchase by June 16

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 celebrate 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 at 6:05 p.m. All are invited to come cheer for the home team!

**To buy tickets for your youth group, Sunday school class or other large group that wishes to have seats together, download the ticket purchase form available at [arumc.org/ac2014](http://arumc.org/ac2014) and mail it with your payment to the address provided.** Tickets also are available as part of Annual Conference online registration.

In addition to \$5 tickets available through the Arkansas Conference, perks for UMC Night at the Naturals include free parking (normally \$3), as well as free wristbands that give children access to the Kansas City Royals Kidszone (also normally \$3). **If you have questions, contact Cathy Hughes: 501-324-8020 or [chughes@arumc.org](mailto:chughes@arumc.org).**





## COMING UP

## June

**The Kinsmen in concert at Sherrill UMC June 7**

The Kinsmen gospel group will be performing Saturday, June 7, 2014 at Sherrill United Methodist Church.

All ages welcome! Something for everybody. Admission is free, and a love offering will be taken. Program begins at 6 p.m. Seating is limited, so arrive early to get a good seat.

Sherrill, Ark., is located 15 miles from Pine Bluff and 11 miles from England on Highway 15 North (3 miles from Tucker).

To learn more about The Kinsmen and hear some of their music, search for The Kinsmen on YouTube or visit [www.thekinsmen.com](http://www.thekinsmen.com).

**Salem Camp Meeting set for June 8-14**

The Rev. (Col.) Wesley Hilliard, senior pastor of Heritage UMC Van Buren and Senior Army Command Chaplain for the Arkansas Army National Guard, is the evangelist for this year's Salem Camp Meeting, held June 8-14, 2014, in the open-air arbor of Salem United Methodist Church, 1647 Salem Road, approximately 5 miles north of Benton. Services begin with music each night at 7 p.m., and a different music group will perform each evening.

In addition to the special music offerings, Lynn Hoggard will lead congregational singing, and

Kathleen Dockery will serve as pianist.

On June 8, to kick off the week-long meeting, Salem UMC will provide a dinner at 5:30 p.m., featuring Richard Bondurant speaking on the history of the more than 150-year-old gathering.

A nursery is provided, and group activities are scheduled for children ages 6 and under. Refreshments and fellowship will follow each service.

The Salem UMC youth group invites all youth of surrounding communities to join them for a week of fun and spiritual fellowship connected with the camp meeting. For information on youth activities, contact Rachel Powell at the church office.

For additional information on Salem Camp Meeting, contact the church office at 501-316-2282 or Anne Beyers at 501-316-8316.

**Head of UM Men to speak at First UMC Searcy June 26**

Gil Hanke, General Secretary of the General Commission on United Methodist Men (GCUMM), will be the special guest on Thursday, June 26 at 6:30 p.m. at First United Methodist Church Searcy. Hanke will meet with the public and give a presentation, "Growing Your Church through Men's Ministry." The event is free, and all United Methodist Men and clergy are invited to attend.

For additional information, contact Paul Hill at First UMC Searcy: 501-268-5896. To learn more about men's ministry in the United Methodist Church, visit [www.gcumm.org](http://www.gcumm.org).

## Applications for Arkansas Conference Peace with Justice grants due June 18

The work of ending hunger, racial intolerance, economic and environmental injustice and several other social justice issues continues to be life-transforming work of moving from despair to hope, from brokenness to reconciliation. If you are involved with a program or ministry dedicated to this important work for shalom in God's kingdom on earth, the Arkansas Board of Church and Society would like to help, and invites you to apply for a Peace with Justice grant.

This year, the Peace with Justice Sunday is June 15. On this Sunday, one of six special offerings in the United Methodist

Church is collected. Half of the Peace with Justice offering is sent to the General Council on Finance and Administration for the General Board of Church and Society, and the other half remains in the Arkansas Conference. The Conference Board of Church and Society uses this offering to provide Peace with Justice grants to selected applicants. Peace with Justice grant amounts given through the Arkansas Conference typically range between \$250 and \$1,000.

Over the past several years, many Arkansas United Methodist projects, as well as ecumenical activities including

United Methodists, have received small grants to further the work of reducing and eliminating the disproportionate effects of injustice in our communities.

The 2014 Peace with Justice Small Grants application form is available for download at [www.arumc.org](http://www.arumc.org) (see the "Forms" section on the front page). Applications must be returned by June 18 to the Rev. Stephen Copley, P.O. Box 2441, Little Rock, AR 72203, or [scopley438@gmail.com](mailto:scopley438@gmail.com). If you have questions about the application form or process, contact Copley at 501-626-9220.

### REVIVAL IN THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

## The Confessing Movement of Arkansas Annual Breakfast

Friday, June 20, at 6:30 a.m.

Grand IX and X, John Q. Hammons Convention Center

### "Revive Us Again"

Dr. Janice Gilbert, guest speaker

Dr. Janice Gilbert is the senior pastor at St. James United Methodist Church Beaumont, Texas, where she serves as a teacher, preacher, evangelist, writer, counselor and visionary with a passion for empowering and equipping individuals through life changing faith. She received her Ph.D. in Christian Counseling from Cornerstone School of Theology in Oklahoma and her M. Divinity from Perkins.

Dr. Gilbert has been active in United Methodist Women and Black Methodists for Church Renewal. She has received the Copeland Award for growth in a mid-sized church twice and is a delegate to General Conference from the Texas Conference. She serves as a board member of Good News. Dr. Gilbert has written several manuscripts on "Prayer", a Young Adult Bible Study series, and Kingdom Workers Bible Studies.



Dr. Gilbert—A Servant Leader

Tickets are \$15.00. Purchase tickets as part of your registration for the Arkansas Annual Conference, or by contacting Karen Millar, 501-268-4859 or [karenmillar@hotmail.com](mailto:karenmillar@hotmail.com) by June 13.

### The Arkansas Conference Board of Church and Society Breakfast - June 21 at 7a.m.

Rev. Stephen Copley will be the speaker.



### "Let's Give Arkansas a Raise."

Mimi's Cafe, 2105 South Promenade Blvd. Rogers AR 72758. Tickets are not necessary, attendees will order off the menu.

RSVP to Melissa Thomas, [mthomas668@gmail.com](mailto:mthomas668@gmail.com), to reserve a seat.



# Covenant (continued from page 1)

St. Luke's United Methodist Church in Indianapolis and the Rev. Lisa Yebuah of Edenton Street United Methodist Church in Raleigh, N.C.

Miofsky preached on the theme "Awake," using the Numbers 11 story of God awakening the Israelites to the reality of their blessings. He encouraged those gathered to use the time "to consecrate ourselves, sanctify ourselves, to prepare ourselves for what God is going to do."

Fuquay preached about the importance of asking God questions—because, he said, creating answers isn't our job, but God's.

"So what are you asking today?" he said. "What are you asking for yourself? What are you asking for your family? What are you asking for children in Uganda, or Haiti, or Asia or the poor who are in our own neighborhoods? What are you asking for your church? What are you asking for our United Methodist Church? We always could share the answers we think should come. But what if we all just asked?"

Yebuah closed out the evening by encouraging attendees to watch for God's vision. She pointed out Christ's heavenly banquet in the United Methodist communion liturgy and the promises of the future in our baptism liturgy. She said she does not worry about the state of the church and will not spend any more time fretting about it.

"If God gave us a vision for where the church is going to go, the church is going to go," she said. "We watch and we wait with the one who will bring the vision to pass."

Saturday's session included time for reflection and prayer. "If we pray together, I think we will see the revival of The United Methodist

Church," said Richmond (Va.) Area Bishop Young Jin Cho. He also has called for all churches in the Virginia Annual Conference to pray together on May 25 for revival.

He told those gathered that "sometimes our prayers are too polite, too gentle; we need desperate prayer."

But prayer isn't all about speaking to God, he cautioned. "Is your prayer a monologue or dialogue?" he asked. "Listening is important. God's first language is silence."

Cho closed with a simple prayer: "Dear God, your will: nothing more, nothing less, nothing else."

## Origin of the Covenant

Though planning for this event began about a year ago, its origin goes back two decades, to the first meeting of a group called the Aldersgate Covenant on May 24, 1994, on Aldersgate Day—the anniversary of the day John Wesley experienced assurance of his salvation.

That group put forth the United Methodist mission statement eventually adopted by the 1996 General Conference, "To make disciples of Jesus Christ." It included two future bishops, Scott Jones and Gary Mueller; as well as Mary Brooke Casad, who would serve as executive secretary of the denomination's Connectional Table from 2007 to 2012. All three sat on the steering team for this year's event.

Jones emphasized that all of the work of the Aldersgate Covenant needs to be surrounded in prayer. He confessed he has a tendency to ask God to bless what he's doing, thinking, "Isn't God lucky to have me on God's side?" He said the more faithful approach is to ask: "God,



Retired Bishop Violet Fisher preached on the need for repentance.

what are you doing? Help me to be a part of what you're blessing."

Mueller urged those present to resist celebrating the past. Instead, he asked them to talk about what God has in store for the future. He said the steering team acknowledged the feeling that the UMC is losing ground, and he noted the atmosphere of polarization in the church and brokenness in the wider culture.

"There was this sense that maybe what we need to do is spend a season truly opening ourselves to the presence of the Holy Spirit, to help us get where we want to get and long to get, but are struggling to get on our own," he said.

## Thoughts from attendees

By the end of the event, a number of participants were expressing their hope that the gathering would begin a fresh movement of the Spirit in the denomination.

"I thought it was an awesome start to a great movement in the church, a good revival—a start to a revival," said Malachi McDonald of Jacksonville, Ark., a student at Hendrix College who is exploring a calling to ordained ministry.



Bishop Deborah Wallace Padgett of the North Alabama Conference and the Rev. Maxine Allen of the Arkansas Conference help serve Communion at the close of the covenant renewal service.



The Rev. Sky McCracken of the Memphis Conference offers a thought for discussion as the Rev. Mace Straubel of Rector UMC listens.

AUM PHOTOS BY AMY FORBUS

"I'm leaving here with one question: 'Lord, what do you want me to do?'" said the Rev. Mark Norman, superintendent of the Southeast District of the Arkansas Conference. He told those gathered to "expect the grace of Jesus Christ to put us on fire again."

The Rev. Sky McCracken, a Memphis Conference district superintendent, appreciated the cordial spirit of the gathering. But he looks forward to deeper holy conversation in the future.

"The dialogue has been wonderful, but we're tiptoeing," he said. "I would like to see next year approach and tackle some things in depth... have a ladies and gentlemen

agreement that we're going to conference, and we're going to do this as brothers and sisters who love each other, despite how painful it is.

"We've got to do something and seize on this spirit to see what we're going to do next."

The gathering closed with a Service of Covenant Renewal and Holy Communion. Bishop Mueller instructed participants to read the covenant regularly, pray for revival daily and talk with others about it.

"Whose are you?" he asked. "Know it. Live it. And then, my friends, share it."

Kathryn Witte of the Great Plains Conference contributed to this story.

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## 8

## Step 8 of the Bishop's Mission Plan: Grow Passionate and Excellent Clergy

**Editor's Note:** *The videos of Bishop Mueller explaining the 10 steps of the mission plan will be available on DVD at Annual Conference, and will include discussion starter questions.*

Every pastor's call is different. Yet there are ways in which the response to the call is the same, especially in the United Methodist Church. Pastors are required to receive education, whether through the course of study or seminary, and there is an expectation that learning and growing more proficient in key areas of pastoral leadership will be a lifelong process. Step 8 of the Bishop's Mission Plan focuses on providing new and better resources to help clergy meet the needs of a changing world.

The level of responsibility for pastors in the United Methodist Church today is much more like the world of Paul in the earliest days of the church than it was in the more recent past, says Bishop Gary E. Mueller.

"A pastor is called to be the spiritual leader to a congregation and sometimes, perhaps often, they feel ill-equipped to lead a congregation with excellence and passion," he said. "And perhaps the training or resources currently provided don't support the pastor as much as they could in this rapidly changing world."

Step 8 calls for coaching and mentoring of pastors so they can gain expertise and competence in key areas for spiritual leaders: personal discipleship, preaching, evangelism, mission-field engagement, stewardship and equipping laity for ministry.

According to the plan, demonstration of these basic competencies is needed to create and sustain vital churches that engage with the mission field.

"The tools, training and resources that pastors need so that they can lead with passion and excellence will be developed and provided," said Mueller. "We will be helping pastors to be the kind of spiritual leader God is calling them to be, and to be the type of leaders they want to be."



## 9

## Step 9 of the Bishop's Mission Plan: Create Vital African-American Congregations

Arkansas is home to nearly 500,000 African-Americans; approximately 3,000 of those individuals identify themselves as United Methodists. According to Bishop Mueller, this low ratio must be thoughtfully examined, and addressed with urgency, if the church in Arkansas is to accomplish Step 9 of the Bishop's Mission Plan: Create Vital African-American Congregations.

"When we look at context, there are some unique factors that we must take into account," Mueller said. "We do not have nearly as many strong, vital, self-sustaining African-American churches in Arkansas as we need."

Recognizing the historic realities of racism in Arkansas that have played a role in the involvement of African-Americans, Mueller acknowledges that this step of the plan is hard and important work.

He also believes now is the time to invest in African-American churches in order to strengthen them—not only for their own sake, but also for the potential they hold for the future.

"Strong churches can create more strong, self-sustaining churches," he said. "In Arkansas

today we have to invest, provide training and lift churches up in prayer so that we can reach out into the mission field."

Because of the importance of this task that affects not only African-American churches but also the entire Conference, Mueller has announced the appointment of the Rev.

Maxine Allen to a reconfigured position of Assistant Director of Mission and Ministry for Mission Field Engagement, a full-time appointment effective July 1.

"I'm excited to begin this new work in the Arkansas Conference," Allen said. "I believe that with the guiding of the Holy Spirit, we can move forward in new and exciting ways that will extend beyond African-Americans and deepen our engagement in many of our mission fields."

The Step 9 launch team has met three times in various configurations. Allen said their discussions have ranged from an examination of the historical background of how African-Americans in Arkansas experienced the 1968 merger that gave birth to the United Methodist Church to envisioning what might be in store for the church in the

future.

"A young man on our team was raised outside of Arkansas and was not aware of deep-seated feelings and perceptions some historical events in Arkansas have created for African-American church members," said Allen. "Our discussions have been wide-ranging and enlightening, and I believe they

will bear fruit as we continue to work on this step of the mission plan."

In her new role, Allen will be responsible for connecting with existing African-American churches in Arkansas, as well as seeking new opportunities to increase ministry with Arkansas African-Americans through the UMC.



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# 10

## Step 10 of the Bishop's Mission Plan: Reach the "Nones"

The Rev. Maxine Allen says the discussion she's participated in regarding African-American churches is just as valid for the final step of the mission plan: Reach the Nones.

"We must recognize that there is one or more generations who consider themselves religious but do not identify with any particular religious denomination," she said.

Who are "the nones?"

According to a 2012 study by the Pew Research Center's Forum on Religion and Public Life, "nones" include about 13 million atheists and agnostics, and nearly 33 million who claim no particular affiliation. Many are under age 35; they pray, believe in God and have regular spiritual routines, but are not affiliated with any particular religious denomination. And the number of "nones" continues to rise to more than 20 percent of the U.S. population today.

Bishop Mueller agrees this is a

group of individuals for whom the church's engagement is vital.

"The growing ranks of nones is due in part to the world in which we live," said Mueller. "But another piece of it is that we as the church have dropped the ball. We became more focused on ourselves than on the young people in our midst."

Conference Lay Leader Karon Mann cites the recent experience of a young friend of hers as an example of how the church must change in the way it communicates with those beyond the walls of the church.

Mann's young friend lives in the downtown of a small community, within a mile of four churches. One day there was a note on her car windshield inviting her to attend one of those churches. But the note writer went on to say that if she chose not to attend worship, would she be so kind as to move her car from that parking space so that churchgoers might park there.

"It's made me really stop and

reflect about how we need to examine our motives, thoughts and ways that we communicate, particularly with those who do not have a church background or home," said Mann. "We need to be looking for ways to meet needs, not to be asking for their parking space."

Carissa Rodgers has an interesting perspective on the subject of the "nones." She's 25, African-American and close to finishing her studies at SMU's Perkins School of Theology, with plans to return to the Arkansas Conference to complete the necessary work to become an ordained elder. And she left the church at age 17 because of what she terms "church hurt."

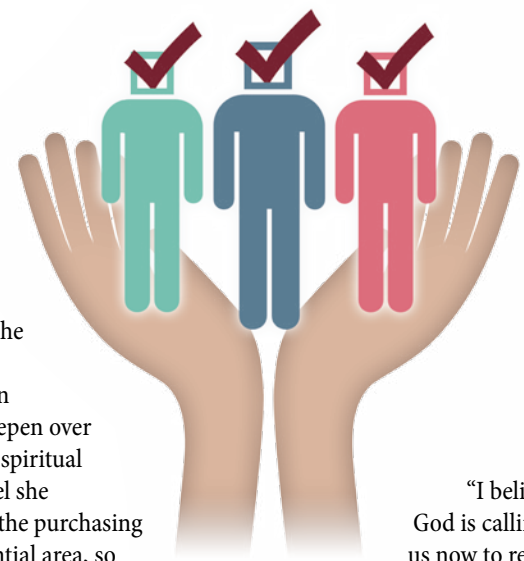
"I left the church because I felt it wasn't being what I expected it to be," said Rodgers. "There are churches everywhere but it's not always visible how people are benefiting from church. Many people my age are asking if people

aren't benefiting from church, what's the point?"

Rodgers is enthusiastic when talking about new church models that she says "look more like Jesus." The focus is on relationships that deepen over time and evolve into spiritual discipline. One model she mentioned involved the purchasing of homes in a residential area, so the minister is a resident of the neighborhood as well as pastor to the community.

"The more we begin to change the way we do church, I think we will be in a much better position to reach the nones," added Rodgers.

Mueller believes United Methodists of Arkansas are up for the challenges and are showing their excitement and commitment for reaching the people God has called them to reach.



"I believe God is calling us now to reach out to the nones,

young adults, youth and children to share the good news of Jesus' love," he said. "To help them find their place in the community of faith, to help them discover new communities of faith within the Christian tradition that allow them to be passionate about making disciples for Jesus Christ who make disciples for the transformation of lives, communities and the world."

To view a series of videos addressing the steps of the Bishop's Mission Plan, visit [www.arumc.org/missionplan](http://www.arumc.org/missionplan).



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## Call center (continued from page 1)

feeding crews for weeks in the future, not days.

A Google spreadsheet with multiple tabs helps call center workers track drop-off locations for supplies, volunteers and their levels of training, needs, offers of help, supplies, service providers, media inquiries and housing offers for teams coming from a few hours away or from out of state. A corresponding Google Calendar shows the names of individuals or team leaders on the dates they are scheduled to arrive in one of the disaster areas.

"Weekdays are looking pretty empty," says Annie Meeks, a college student and member of Trinity UMC who was one of the first to arrive as a call center helper.

While workers are going to be needed for the foreseeable future on all days of the week, it's true that teams able to come on weekdays will likely be scheduled sooner.

As they field offers of nearly everything—spiritual care, tarps, people, mobile kitchens for feeding storm victims and workers, gloves—volunteers use laptops to update information that's instantly shared with the rest of the team.

"OK, so you all are self-sufficient... right, right," says Becky Neighbors, administrator for the Northwest District and a call center volunteer, on the phone with a local church's team leader. "What we're telling people is gloves, trash bags, make sure you have some goggles, and yard tools—shovels, rakes—because right now it's removing debris." For later teams, the supply list may change, but in the early days following the storm, basic clean-up help is one of the most urgent needs.

While the Manns are adhering to the Arkansas Conference's existing disaster response plan, they're also learning as they go.

"This is the first call center I've had to set up since we started in this position," Janice Mann said. While things have gone relatively well, she plans to put more planning into call center needs and training so she can be even more prepared in the face of future disasters.

On one of many calls from Byron, she asks, "Are they going to stage at the church? Yeah, you talked to Nathan about that already."

Vilonia UMC is in the unique position of being both a disaster site and a drop-off point for needed relief supplies, so coordination with that church's pastor, the Rev. Nathan Kilbourne, is essential.

Other special situations present themselves every few hours.

"There's a Hispanic community out that way that's kind of leery of letting people know who they are and that they're there, so if you could ease in and see what we can do to help, that would be great," Janice Mann tells a trained early responder calling in from the field.

"Do we need someone speaking Spanish?" Upon hearing that question, volunteers begin offering names of area clergy who are bilingual.

Near the end of the work week, incoming calls to the line set up for the center had slowed down. Volunteers used their own mobile phones to return calls and verify information. In calmer moments, they discuss what kind of training would be helpful for future call centers, then take a break from disaster mode and tell a quick story unrelated to the tornado.

As churches call to offer work teams, some express concern that there may not be a place for them to serve.

"Believe me, you're gonna get a chance," Janice Mann tells one caller. "This is gonna be a long-term thing." As an organization affiliated with the United Methodist Committee on Relief, the Arkansas Conference Disaster Response team sees recovery through until the end. In a few weeks, public interest in this particular disaster will decline, but United Methodist involvement will not.

Because several people are keeping track of evolving needs, team coordination and support is crucial. Tracking each call helps avoid duplication of effort and wasted time.

At one point, Mann looks across the meeting room table and asks, "What are you doing, writing a story on the chaos in the call center?" She chuckles, then returns to the work at hand.

While there may be chaos, it's of the controlled variety. And such coordination makes it possible for as many United Methodist teams as possible to stay on the ground, working with other groups, making progress together toward recovery and healing for the communities they serve.

## 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](mailto:vim@arumc.org) or 870-826-0268. For Disaster Response (DR) projects, contact Byron or Janice Mann, DR co-coordinators: [disaster@arumc.org](mailto:disaster@arumc.org) or 870-703-8359 (Janice). To connect on Facebook, search for "Volunteers in Mission & Disaster Response - Serving Arkansas & Beyond," and join the group for updates.

### A special message from Janice and Byron Mann, disaster response co-coordinators for the Arkansas Conference

The response to the tornado that hit west Pulaski County, Mayflower, Vilonia, El Paso and Center Hill has been tremendous. Workers connected with the Arkansas Conference logged over 5,000 volunteer hours in the first two weeks. Volunteer time logged for the second two weeks post-disaster (through the Memorial Day holiday) stood at 1,118.25 hours.

Volunteer offers are slowing, and we are in the transition from relief (meeting immediate needs of food, water, shelter, helping to prevent further damage to property and clean up) to recovery (repairing and rebuilding), and the teams we have scheduled can finish up what is left to do right now. If we have unmet needs for workers or work teams, we will pass that word along through our various means of communication.

With that said, please know that **we are far from being finished with our response**. We will be working with the Arkansas Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (ARVOAD) and through the Long Term Recovery Committees in the local areas to make sure that any unmet long-term needs are addressed. If you want to help in the long-term effort, please register by completing the volunteer form available at [www.arumc.org/arkansas\\_disaster\\_response](http://www.arumc.org/arkansas_disaster_response).

The repair and rebuild stage will require more skilled workers, but also general work teams. We ask that teams come with leaders who are VIM Team Leader trained or who have ample experience to direct their team effectively. We also would like to build a database of skilled individuals who might be available to serve; again, please register at [www.arumc.org/arkansas\\_disaster\\_response](http://www.arumc.org/arkansas_disaster_response).

In addition to the many hours of labor, we have been able to offer storage (tubs, boxes, larger containers) and temporary housing (hotels and travel trailers). We have built steps, ramps and porches, as well as lean-to shelters for survivors to work under out of the rain and sun to sort and pack their belongings. We have been able to offer equipment needed to clean up and run water and sewer lines. We are getting ready to start doing some minor repairs as needed. We will be offering funding for the long-term recovery effort, as well as labor and materials as needed.

We would like to offer a personal word of heartfelt thanks to everyone who has helped in any way during the response. Not only do you all represent the Arkansas United Methodist Church and the United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR), but you also represent our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ to those who are hurting. This effort would be absolutely impossible without you.

## Arkansas Conference releases new Apple and Android mobile apps

Now you can easily stay up to date on breaking Arkansas Conference news, messages from the bishop, and upcoming events with our new mobile apps available free of charge for iPhone, iPad and Android phones and tablets.

In addition to the Conference news and calendar, the app includes connections to Conference clergy and church locators. Users can easily interact with Conference Facebook, Twitter and YouTube accounts. The "tell a friend" feature allows you to share a download link for the app with any of your contacts via email, text message, Facebook or Twitter. You can also make secure online donations to Conference ministries through the app.

In the U.S., nearly 200 million persons own smartphones, and use them not only for telephone calls, but also as hand-held computers. Most smartphone users have downloaded 40 or more apps to connect to their favorite news sources, entertainment and organizations.

To find the apps, search for "Arkansas UMC" in the Apple App Store or Google Play. Or, scan the appropriate code at right to begin downloading the app to your smartphone or tablet.



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## OBITUARIES

### CONWAY

#### V. "Jeanette" Parr

Vida "Jeanette" Doyle Parr, 74, of Conway, passed away April 22, 2014, at home in Albuquerque, N.M., with family at her side.

She was born on Nov. 19, 1939, to the late Earl and Vivian Doyle. A member of Salem United Methodist Church Conway, she was a contributing editor to Guideposts Magazine.

She was preceded in death by her husband, the Rev. Byzie Parr, a retired full-time local pastor who served churches in the Little Rock and North Arkansas Conferences from 1976 to 1985; and a grandson, Samson Coleman.

Survivors include three daughters, Karen Bisbee of Albuquerque, N.M., Kathey Phoenix-Doyle and wife Rita of Cedar Crest, N.M., and Kristen Parr of Conway; one son, Alan Parr of Arkansas; eight grandchildren; and one great-grandson.

A service to celebrate Jeanette's life was held Saturday, May 3, 2014, at Salem United Methodist Church Conway.

### FORDYCE

#### Elizabeth "Libbi" Culpepper

Elizabeth "Libbi" Ann Richardson Culpepper, 69, of Fordyce passed away Thursday, May 22, 2014, at Greenhouse Cottages of Southern Hills in Rison.

Born June 13, 1944, in Indianola, Miss., she was a daughter of the late Rev. H.O. Richardson and Sarah Holland Richardson. Raised as a minister's daughter, she later became a minister's wife, and her love of music was fostered and grew throughout her life and marriage. As a wonderful cook, her ministry included the making of communion bread in all the churches she and her husband, Jay, served, including Sulphur Springs, Bearden, First UMC Pine Bluff, Western Hills,

Asbury UMC Magnolia, Carlisle and England.

She was preceded in death by her husband, the Rev. Jay Glynn Culpepper Sr., a United Methodist pastor; and a brother, Bill Richardson. She is survived by a stepson, Jay Glynn Culpepper, Jr. of Moataca, Va.; four daughters, Leslie Johnson Brown and Melissa Johnson Chu of Harrison and Mynde Culpepper Emerson and Candi Culpepper Finley of Fordyce; a brother, Buddy Richardson of Texarkana, Texas; a sister, Kay Herrin of Pine Bluff; 12 grandchildren; one great-grandchild; and many nieces and nephews.

A memorial service was held Sunday, May 25, at Center Grove United Methodist Church Sheridan. In lieu of flowers, memorials may be made to the Children's Day Out Preschool at First United Methodist Church Fordyce, 104 E. 4th St., Fordyce, AR 71742.

### JONESBORO

#### Elouise Anderson Albright

Elouise Anderson Albright, 84, of Jonesboro, passed away Thursday, Dec. 12, 2013, at St. Bernard's Medical Center. She had lived in Jonesboro for four years, moving there from Harrisburg. Elouise was a member of the First United Methodist Church Jonesboro.

Having been a United Methodist minister's wife for many years, she was very active and covered many roles in the churches pastored by her husband, the Rev. Gail Anderson. He preceded her in death, as did her parents and one sister, Gracie Tate Bernardo.

Survivors include her daughter, Janis Gail Hill and her husband, Steve, of Jonesboro; a brother, J. B. Tate of Black Rock; sisters, Emma Lou Smith of Cahokia, Ill., and Gwendolyn Strange of Clear Lake, Calif.; two granddaughters, Jessica Gail Hill and Courtney Dianna Hill; and one great-

grandchild, Violet Lux Callantine.

Graveside services were held Friday, Dec. 13, 2013, in Swifton Cemetery at Swifton, Arkansas, with the Rev. Nancy Rainwater officiating.

For lasting memorials, please consider Arkansas Alzheimer's Chapter Headquarters, 210 N. Walton Blvd. #25 Bentonville, AR 72712 or the First United Methodist Church Choir Fund, 801 S. Main, Jonesboro, AR 72401.

### PEA RIDGE

#### Martha Olivia Miser

Martha Olivia Miser, 92, passed away Sunday, April 6, at Circle of Life Hospice in Bentonville.

She was born July 31, 1921, in Pea Ridge to Lee Greene and Eula Williams Greene. She loved her boys and raised beef cattle for 72 years, working hard to keep the farm going after the death of her husband, United Methodist full-time local pastor the Rev. Eugene Miser, in 1972. She enjoyed church work, teaching Sunday School, Vacation Bible School and was a member of First Baptist Church in Pea Ridge. She is preceded in death by her parents; her husband; and three brothers, Alvin, Daryle and Paul Greene.

#### Martha O. Miser

She is survived by four sons: James Miser of Bentonville, Gene Miser of Pea Ridge, Lyle Miser of Eureka Springs and Larry Miser of Rogers; and two grandchildren.

The service was held Saturday, April 12 at First Baptist Church in Pea Ridge. Burial followed in Buttram Chapel Cemetery.



# UM Historical Society hosts consultant from 'Cradle of American Methodism'

BY HELEN GUENTER  
Special Contributor

The United Methodist Historical Society of Arkansas on May 1 met jointly with the Commission on Archives and History of the Arkansas Conference and the United Methodist Museum of the Arkansas Conference for its Board Meeting and Luncheon/Annual Meeting at First United Methodist Church Little Rock. The speaker for the occasion was the Rev. Alfred T. (Fred) Day III, of Historic St. George's UMC Philadelphia, which is housed in America's oldest Methodist church building in continuous service and whose museum contains the most extensive collection of Wesleyan artifacts in the U.S.

As a consultant and as a member of the General Commission on Archives and History of the United Methodist Church, Day made site visits to the United Methodist Archives at Hendrix College and to the United Methodist Museum of Arkansas, located in First UMC Little Rock. He also visited the John Wesley Prayer Room and the recently refurbished historic sanctuary at First UMC.

In his follow-up report to the Historical Society, Day addressed the work of the Archives and the Museum, which is "to help us discover our Methodist DNA." Not mere collections of moldy, dusty old stuff, the Archives and the Museum are "living things (not coffins) which tell who we are and what we do," he said. "They

shape the stories we have to tell and help bring people to some kind of 'felt' experience which plummets them into the love of God."

## Day announced as new general secretary

Harrisburg Area Bishop Jeremiah Park, president of the United Methodist General Commission on Archives and History, announced later in the month that the Rev. Alfred T. Day III, the speaker at the May 1 meeting in Little Rock, has been unanimously elected by the Commission to be its next general secretary. The announcement follows a national search to fill the position. Day will succeed Robert J. Williams, who is retiring after almost nine years in that role. It is expected that the transition will take effect as early as July.

## Historical Society, Museum open to all

Anyone who is interested in studying and preserving the heritage of the various branches of the Methodist movement is welcome to participate in the activities of the UM Historical Society of Arkansas, visit the UM Museum of the Arkansas Conference, or use the resources at the UM Archives of the Arkansas Conference. For additional information, please call Helen Guenter at 870-367-5982.



The Rev. Fred Day, pastor of Historic St. George's UMC Philadelphia and member of the General Commission on Archives and History of the UMC, is pictured above with Mabel Harris-Webb, long-time member of the UM Historical Society of Arkansas and founder of the John Wesley Prayer Room at First UMC Little Rock. The chalice they are holding, used in the service of Communion at the joint Board Meeting, is a replica of the chalice John Wesley sent to Francis Asbury in America about 1785, when Methodism became a denomination. The chalice is preserved at St. George's UMC Philadelphia.

PHOTO BY LESLEY ANDREWS





## Six-year-old inspires her church to Imagine No Malaria

At the tender age of 6, Rylee Burns seems to know a great deal about Jesus' message of loving God and neighbor.

When the pastor of Rylee's church, the Rev. Dave Smith of First UMC Brinkley, challenged the congregation to donate a \$1 per day during Lent for the Imagine No Malaria effort, saying that for every \$40 donated, an Easter egg would be placed in a glass vase, Rylee was carefully listening.

With her March 17 birthday on the horizon, she told her parents, Eric and Heather Burns, that she had all she needed and what she wanted most for her birthday was to be able to donate her gift money to Imagine No Malaria. Her parents agreed, and little Rylee Burns gave her \$300 to the initiative.

Her generosity inspired the church, which collected more than \$2,100 for Imagine No Malaria, assisting the Arkansas Conference in meeting the goal of saving 100,000 lives, or raising \$1 million. Bishop Gary Mueller was able to personally thank Rylee for leading the way during a visit to First UMC Brinkley.

Arkansas United Methodists will celebrate meeting their goal at this year's Annual Conference gathering in Rogers, Ark., a full year ahead of the goal's deadline of June 2015.



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## Faith Funds

### *Good Advice*

The United Methodist Foundation of Arkansas provides financial advice to local congregations and individuals, according to John Stroud, a UMFA Board member, attorney, and former Arkansas Supreme Court Justice and Arkansas Court of Appeals Chief Judge.

“Janet Marshall and other staff members travel the state to meet with local churches and tell them about their mission to start endowments,” he said. “They also offer expert advice and assistance on lifetime and testamentary gifts. Many people put off making these decisions and are hesitant to see an attorney to get the process started.”

John calls the Finance e-Tips newsletter emailed from UMFA to 12,000 Arkansas United Methodists “full of good advice and information about taxes and other matters.” If you would like to begin receiving this fact-packed electronic e-newsletter, email [jmarshall@umfa.org](mailto:jmarshall@umfa.org).

As one of his first actions when he joined the board in 2006, John helped his church, First UMC in Texarkana, move \$837,000 from several money managers to UMFA for investment management. Through excellent investment performance and the addition of new funds raised for an endowment to provide for maintenance of church facilities, the church's total endowment had grown to \$1,773,000 at the end of 2013.

If your church is interested in learning about investment management options at the Foundation, email [ctrice@umfa.org](mailto:ctrice@umfa.org) or call Clarence Trice at 501-664-8632 or toll-free at 877-712-1107.



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