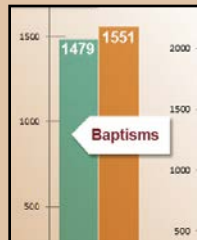


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Philander Smith College opens new campus center

BY AMY FORBUS
Editor

LITTLE ROCK—United Methodist-related Philander Smith College celebrated Aug. 14 the grand opening of its new campus center. After more than two years without a dedicated building for student life and community—the old campus center was demolished in January 2012—the college now has a gathering space that includes a dining hall, bistro and adjoining patio, conference center and more.

“The lifeline of Philander Smith College has returned,” said Kevin Hamilton, vice-president for student affairs. An alumnus himself, he recalled the importance of the old campus center to life at the college when he was a student.

Zafarya Sampay, a junior at Philander Smith and vice-president of the college’s Student Government Association (SGA), announced that [See PHILANDER, page 11]



Those present at the grand opening of Philander Smith College’s new campus center extend a hand toward the building as Bishop Gary Mueller leads a prayer of blessing.

AUM PHOTO BY AMY FORBUS

Weekly meal welcomes all

BY AMY FORBUS
Editor

BENTON, Ark.—It’s late on a Monday afternoon, and the kitchen at First United Methodist Church Benton is hopping.

Several helpers are dishing out bowls of fruit and desserts, which were made by participants in the church’s Kids’ Day Out program. Some prepare toppings for the hamburgers as another worker brings them from the grill parked outside near the kitchen door.

It’s almost time to eat at The Table, a weekly community meal started in April of this year by the Resolutions Sunday school class of First UMC Benton.

While three members of that class—Hannah Fulks, Greg Gillis and Chris Williams—share the lead in making sure the meal happens each Monday evening, scores of others pitch in from week to week.

“We have 148 total team members,” said Fulks, flipping

through a three-ring binder filled with the menu rotation, team contact information and other details that keep The Table running. “We try to do about 10 families per team, so we split the Baptist church into two groups.”

Most of those helping on this night are from nearby First Baptist of Benton. A friend who is an active Baptist saw Fulks’ posts about the weekly meal on social media, and asked if her Sunday school class could assist; the group now covers two installments of the schedule’s nine-week rotation.

Laity-driven

The Table grew out of Resolutions class members noticing a potential need of the church’s neighbors. Two other organizations held weekly, free community meals that were well attended, and they suspected that a third such meal would be welcomed. They chose Mondays, and began promoting it by inviting those who were eating

Tuesday suppers at Highland Heights Baptist Church and Thursday suppers at Christian Care Center.

The class had participated in several short-term projects, such as helping with a community Thanksgiving meal, but nothing so involved on such a regular basis.

“They’re doing a great job here,

and I’m awful proud of them,” said the Rev. David Jones, the church’s senior pastor. “They’ve stayed with it from Day One and never stopped.”

He pointed out that the class didn’t ask for help or ideas from the church staff—they already had those elements in place.

“It came through the office just to let us help publicize it, but they’re doing it; they got it going,” Jones

[See TABLE, page 12]



Greg Gillis, left, a member of the Resolutions Sunday school class at First UMC Benton, gets to know some of his fellow guests at The Table, a weekly free community meal that draws dozens of attendees.

AUM PHOTO BY AMY FORBUS

'How do you stay sane?'

BY WILLIAM O. "BUD" REEVES
Special Contributor

Have you ever been through a rough patch, a season in your life that is full of difficulty, drama, or even despair? Of course you have, if you're able to read this column!

Every one of us has personal struggles we face: deep anxiety of the spirit, conflicted relationships with friends and family, battles with addictions, grief over death. In the world, we face deadly diseases, racial tension, persecution of Christians, war, natural and human disasters (just reading today's news). The Psalmist called it "the valley of the shadow of death." These and more are part of life.

In the last few months I have been through a divorce, and now I am embroiled in a contested guardianship process for my elderly mother. It has been a rough patch. I have tried to be appropriately transparent about my struggles, not sharing "too much information," but being honest and open about who I am and what's going on. There are two good reasons for doing that: One, people can't give you support if they don't know you need support.

And two, there are opportunities to make a witness of faith in the midst of our difficulties.

Being a Christian doesn't protect you from struggles, but faith gives you resources in the struggle to help you cope. In the rough patches, God can work for good—and does!

Recently, my district administrator asked me, "How do you stay sane?" It was not an idle question: I had asked it myself many times. Here are some answers.

Enjoy the support of friends and family. When I became open enough to share my struggles with people, I did not find judgment (which I had sort of feared), but I found love and kindness and others who have gone through the same trials and survived. Expressions of love and support never get old and smooth out the rough places.

Get your exercise. When you're

sad or anxious, it's easy to forego physical activity. But I find that without regular workouts, I just get sluggish and more depressed. In the rough patches, get some sweat therapy.

Don't neglect spiritual disciplines. In the tough times, it has to be a discipline. I'll confess, many days my prayer time stinks! I can't get my mind off my troubles and onto God. But sometimes, through Scripture, prayer, worship, sacraments, or Christian conversation, God sheds light into my darkness. Wesley didn't call them "means of grace" for nothing. These are the means God uses to fill us with grace that is amazing!

Use whatever means necessary. Sometimes means of grace are not just spiritual disciplines. Medical care, counseling, and medication can be the ways God helps us stay sane. The recent death

who love me. I have never missed a meal except intentionally. I have always had a safe home with running water. I have a meaningful occupation. I have a nice truck and a good set of golf clubs. Jesus and I are on speaking terms. Maybe it's not so rough after all.

Have fun. When we're struggling, sometimes we get so immersed in the difficulty that we never take a break just for grins. Set your troubles aside for a moment and do something you enjoy. Go to a movie or a concert. Take a hike. Go fishing. Have a great meal. My three favorites involve golf, guitars, and grandkids. Find an activity that makes your heart happy.

Remember the fundamental promise of faith. It's very simple. God is present with us in our rough patches. God walks every step with us. God is never far away when we call. As the Psalmist said from the valley, "I fear no evil, for you are with me." Paul put it, "Nothing will separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord." Or from the creed: "God is with us. We are not alone. Thanks be to God!" When all else fails, when nothing else comforts us, we can believe in that.

Are you facing trials today? Are you living through a rough patch? I'll be honest, I am. But I believe God gives us means to live through the rough patches. We can use every faithful means available,

because it's all the grace of God at work. God has a dream for every life; it involves wholeness, spiritual vitality, deep joy, strength, courage, wisdom, eternal life. May God's dream come true in us.

The Rev. Dr. Reeves serves as superintendent of the Northwest District. Email: breeves@arumc.org.

'Being a Christian doesn't protect you from struggles, but faith gives you the resources in the struggle to help you cope.'

of actor Robin Williams re-opened the conversation about getting treatment for depression and mental illness. If your rough patch gets overwhelming, get the help you need.

Count your blessings. Even in the darkest valley, there is probably more right with your life than wrong. I have friends and family

Would you  Like to receive daily reflections from Bishop Mueller?



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EDITOR'S CORNER

BY AMY FORBUS

Runnin' down a dream

That's the song on my playlist that best matches my natural jogging pace: "Runnin' Down a Dream" by Tom Petty. As a hit from my high school era, it now gets plenty of play on classic rock radio. Members of the Millennial generation either learned it by being subjected to their parents' music preferences or by playing the video game Guitar Hero 5.

Some runners who really pay close attention to how music melds with their workouts will post their playlists online to share with others. Less serious types, like me, elect to do a web search to get just a peek into that corner of the world when they have a gift card for some music downloads. No matter the method, I can testify to the fact that music makes a big difference to a small-time runner like me.

First, the songs tend to suppress my inner monologue—which, when running, consists largely of, "I hate this, I hate this, I should just stop right now," and thus needs suppressing.

Second, music brings variety to a monotonous task. I tend to keep the playlist set to "shuffle," so I never know exactly what will come through my earbuds next—only that it will be something proven to keep me moving, because new songs that don't meet this standard soon get shuffled right off the list.

Third, each song helps create a different path for me to wander. I've discovered I can see the same stretch of trail in a new way when my soundtrack changes. And when just the right song comes on at just the right moment, it can change my whole attitude about the road in front of me.

Metaphorically, the same is true. Though most of my playlist is what many would consider secular music, I find these pieces of music can guide me toward the presence of God as I run—and often more easily than a hymn or praise song might. In the song "River of Dreams," Billy Joel claims he's never been a spiritual man... but I'd disagree.

I think it's interesting that the word "dream" figures prominently in two songs that keep me moving. Do our dreams keep us moving? My playlist-inspired daydreams can help me do better on my run, by simply inviting my mind to take a break from the mundane.

Do God's dreams for us keep us moving? I believe so. When we take time to daydream, it can help with discerning what God's dreams are for us—and give us the Spirit-driven power to run toward them.

To reach me, send an email message to aforbus@arumc.org.



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Submission Deadlines

Issue Date	Submission Deadline
Oct. 3	Sept. 18
Nov. 7	Oct. 21
Dec. 5	Nov. 14



The crowd that gathered for worship at Assembly 2014 stops for a moment to take selfies with the band. COURTESY PHOTO

Youth make friends, experience God at Junior High Assembly

BY ALI TAYLOR
Special Contributor

The Arkansas Conference Council on Youth Ministries (ACCYM) hosted its annual Junior High Assembly on the campus of the University of the Ozarks in Clarksville, July 23-27. (Senior High Assembly, a separate event, shared the same dates and location.) The theme for the week was L.I.F.E., an acronym for “Living in Faith Every Day.”

This year, youth from all over the state gathered at the campus to participate in worship, prayer and art workshops and small groups. Led by the band, Abandon, and speaker, former Biggest Loser contestant Mark Cornelison, the participating youth experienced powerful worship, some for the very first time. Small groups participated in prayer workshops led by the Rev. Harriett Akins-Banman of Little Rock, Andrew Suite of North Little Rock and Emily Johnson of Marvell.

As a senior high youth, I had the privilege of working with the junior high as a member of the Junior High Assembly Task Force, a group of senior high youth who put on the event. Going into it, I had no idea just how much of an impact this event would have on me. While I was getting ready to apply to colleges and begin

my senior year of high school, these junior high students were getting ready one of their very first events as United Methodist youth.

My biggest blessing was getting to be in a junior high small group, spending the week with amazing youth who were excited about God and forming a relationship with him.

“Assembly was a blessing in my life,” said Carlie Crump of North Little Rock. “I’ve made friendships that last a lifetime, and events like these have helped me to open my heart to Jesus.”

“Having the opportunity to come together in fellowship with so many amazing youth around Arkansas is a life-changing experience,” said another youth, Brooke Church of Conway. “Our speaker, Mark Cornelison, really made me realize that anyone and everyone can make a difference in the lives of others. I have never been more inspired to be a disciple of Jesus Christ and spread his love to others.”

The Junior High Assembly 2015 Task Force has already begun preparing for the next Assembly, July 22-26, 2015, at Hendrix College. For more information, visit www.accym.org or contact Michelle Moore, coordinator of youth ministry for the Arkansas Conference: michelle.moore@arumc.org or 501-425-5975.

Taylor is a member of First UMC Conway.

Senior High Assembly 2014 goes ‘Old School’

The theme for Senior High Assembly, “Old School,” was based on Hebrews 10:32. Elements of the week included:

- Remembering the excitement of our faith when it was new (Hebrews 10:32)
- The freedom we have gained in Christ (Hebrews 10:32)
- The ancient (“Old School”) practices and experiences that have guided our faith
- Stories of God’s grace in the lives of those who have lived out faith before us (Hebrews 10 and 11).

We experienced these elements through our speaker, Tim Palmer, from the chaplain’s office at McMurry University in Abilene, Texas; through small group discussions; and through our practices of Sabbath time, experiencing a labyrinth, creating Anglican prayer beads, participating in Lectio Divina and going through a modified Stations of the Cross.

Students also raised more than \$900 for Imagine No Malaria through the Air Band competition among small groups, and by

“I made lots of new friends while I was at Assembly that I will continue to communicate with outside of church events. I also saw that everyone **wanted to be there** and everyone seemed to feel included. There really was **something for everyone** at this Assembly. It was a privilege to plan this event and to **see my own faith grow** through working with the people on my task force and meeting all the students who attended.”

—Hannah Hite, St. Paul UMC Searcy

donating to vote on which 1980s movie the the group would watch (“Ghostbusters” won).

The last night featured a trip to Subiaco Abbey, to worship in a setting very different from what most students were used to.

Senior High and Junior High Assembly came back together for closing worship. The Rev. Richard Lancaster, Central District

Corrections made to ARUMC statistics

Reported increases in 2013 based on flawed comparison

BY AMY FORBUS
Editor

The Arkansas Conference Center for Administrative Services has found an error in statistical reporting for 2012 worship attendance, membership, baptisms and professions of faith. The inaccurate comparison to 2013 statistics was shared in the March 7 Arkansas United Methodist story, “Stats show vital ministry on the upswing in Arkansas.”

While the 2013 figures were accurate, they were being compared to an incomplete 2012 statistical report. The 2012 report did not include figures from several congregations that were started between 2002 and 2012. This omission created the appearance of an increase in several statistics measured by the United Methodist Church, when in fact the numbers actually represented small decreases.

The report was generated from a Microsoft Access database that contained the accurate statistics. However, a default setting of that database instructed it to include in the report only the records of churches that were present for all years, according to Todd Burris, director of administrative services

for the Arkansas Conference. Because of that setting, the database query contained incomplete data.

“I hate that this mistake was made,” Burris said. “Everyone on my team works hard to make sure that the information we present is precise. In this case, one little checkbox drastically changes our perception of last year’s statistics.”

“Once we discovered this, we wanted to share the information with the Conference, because transparency matters,” said Bishop Gary Mueller. “I regret this happened. I’m so glad we now have the clean information. Along the way we’ve learned some things about the importance of how we measure our progress.”

Mueller added that the revised numbers indicate “we have a lot of work to do” to fulfill the stated trajectory of the Arkansas Conference, “Creating vital congregations that make disciples of Jesus Christ, who make disciples equipped to transform lives, communities and the world.”

“It’s important for us to have accurate information. We now know where we stand and will be using this information going forward as our baseline,” he said. “It looks like we’re in good shape to move ahead.”

“I’m so thankful to have had such an **awesome group** to spend time with. It was really cool to be able to have a discussion about faith with a group of people I had never met before, knowing **we automatically cared for one another** because we shared the same God.... The times I had to dance, sing and worship with **a bunch of youth in love with Jesus** connected all of us in a way that would be hard to do so otherwise. Senior High Assembly is definitely an event I wouldn’t want anyone to miss out on.”

—Sarah Ramey, St. James UMC Little Rock

superintendent, shared words to wrap up the week, gave an invitation to the students who may have never made a profession of faith, and led the group in an upbeat, celebratory Communion service.

Assembly 2015 will be held July 22-26 at Hendrix College.

—submitted by Brandon Bates

Each year, many churches across Arkansas work to ensure that children from their communities have what they need to start a new school year. Here are just two examples of what can happen when congregations reach out in this way.



Children could get new backpacks (top left) and back-to-school haircuts (above) at the Russellville event sponsored by several area churches and community partners.



In addition to school supplies, the Back-to-School Bash in downtown Russellville featured games, snow cones and other free treats.

PHOTOS BY AMBER FEEZOR



Members of First UMC Forrest City got to know the residents of the Forrest Hills neighborhood by holding a back-to-school event at the now-closed Forrest Hills UMC. They are making more plans to use the building as a mission outpost.

COURTESY PHOTO

Russellville back-to-school bash fueled by partnerships

BY AMY FORBUS
Editor

Several Russellville churches worked with community organizations and businesses to offer an Aug. 3 Back-to-School Bash that served approximately 1,000 people—double the size of last year's crowd.

Participating churches included Wesley UMC, First UMC, New Prospect Baptist Church and The Crossing, which is the downtown coffeehouse branch of Wesley UMC. Members of Ola and Plainview UMCs used the published school supply list as their guide to pre-assemble complete bags of school supplies for lower elementary grades.

The street in front of The Crossing and the Russellville Depot was closed to traffic for the celebration, which featured free hot dogs and snow cones, haircuts and health screenings. Two bands provided live entertainment: a student band called The Projects, and Remnant, a band from Main Street Mission's Adullam Youth Outreach. Members of church youth groups led games for the many children who attended.

The churches partnered with the Russellville Police Department and River Valley United Way for a "Stuff the Bus" school supply drive in the days just before the event. And after seeing the benefits of the event last year, New Prospect Baptist built money into their 2014 budget specifically for the Back-to-School Bash. They used that money to buy the types of school supplies that were less plentiful among the items donated.

Several downtown Russellville businesses participated, as well, many by donating money to buy shoes for students who needed them. About \$4,600 went toward distributing 400 pairs of shoes to children and youth.

"For me, it's just the incredible thing that can happen when people come together—church, non-church, business, individual, whatever—and focus on a need," said the Rev. DeeDee Autry of Wesley UMC. "It's amazing what can happen when we disperse our energy, but partner together for a cause, to make a difference in a child's life."

Forrest City congregation uses closed church property for neighborhood back-to-school event

BY BILL BUCHANAN
Special Contributor

At the corner of Park and Sycamore Streets in Forrest City stands an empty church building on a corner lot. It was home to the old Forrest Hills United Methodist Church, which closed around 2006 after decades of demographic changes and economic decline. A few years later, a new church start, Victory, was attempted at the location. It was discontinued in October 2013.

The Forrest Hills neighborhood includes about 400 households, many of which are in rental property, and is about two miles south of where First UMC is located in old downtown Forrest City. At the south end of the neighborhood is an abandoned elementary school.

On June 1, Southeast District superintendent the Rev. Mark Norman met with our church council and asked if we would take charge of overseeing the property in terms of building use and as a mission outpost of First UMC.

A missional task force began to meet, pray, examine the building and grounds, begin cleanup efforts and seek a vision for ministry in the mission field. The Task Force worked with Norman and the Rev. Natasha Murray-Norman, regional mission coordinator for the Southeast District, to develop an initial mission plan and strategy.

The group chose Wednesday, Aug. 6 as the date for a back-to-school event on the property's large vacant lot. The objectives: to meet people, start building relationships, establish trust, listen for ministry needs and perhaps find some residents who would be interested in partnering with us to do ministry in the community. First UMC held a

drive for school supplies to be distributed at the event. Youth planned games for kids, and one of the church's small groups provided cookies and desserts.

On Sunday, July 27, more than two dozen volunteer missionaries from First UMC gathered at the Forrest Hills church building and went in pairs from house to house on a hot afternoon, inviting our neighbors to the back-to-school event. This outreach was new to everyone, but they returned sweaty and smiling, having received a friendly reception from almost everyone they met.

We shared hot dogs, drinks, chips, cookies and school supplies with approximately 300 persons from the neighborhood. About 50 persons from First UMC helped in some way, including cooking and serving, yard cleanup, gathering, sorting and distributing school supplies, going door-to-door to invite our neighbors, providing financial support and leading games for the kids.

We asked our neighbors to fill out a brief survey to help us learn more about what they would like to see in terms of ministry in the community. We received 53 responses with many ideas. We'll be in prayer about how to interpret and follow up on these responses, but we believe it is a good start in learning more about our mission field.

Some suggestions have already been offered in terms of ministry possibilities, but we feel our first task is simply to love our neighbors, earn their trust and listen. It is a small first step, but one that we are very excited about!

The Rev. Buchanan is pastor of First UMC Forrest City.

Walk raises \$70,000 for Methodist Family Health

Nearly 800 participants of all ages on Aug. 1 rambled over the Arkansas River, walking the Big Dam Bridge on behalf of the children and families served by Methodist Family Health.

The 8th Annual Walk for Children and Families launched from Cook's Landing Park on the North Little Rock side of the bridge, situated high above Murray Lock and Dam. Families and individuals, church youth groups and walkers of all ages and from all across the state took part in the event, which raised more than \$70,000 for Methodist Family Health.

The funds will be used to renovate the school building on the Methodist Children's Home campus in Little Rock and to build a playground at Methodist Behavioral Hospital in Maumelle, according to Ashley Coldiron, executive director of the MFH Foundation. The children's home and hospital are both programs of Methodist Family Health.

"The Walk is a fun outdoor event that shows the children and families in our care that folks all

over the state care about them and want to bring health and hope to their lives," Coldiron said. "This year's turnout was fantastic, and we appreciate everyone who came out and walked with us."

Volunteers welcomed the participants and handed out free pizza, ice cream and T-shirts. The Gable Bradley Band provided live musical entertainment. Even with mild temperatures for August in Arkansas, many attendees took advantage of the water games available for cooling off.

Methodist Family Health provides comprehensive psychiatric and behavioral healthcare to children and families in Arkansas. Established in 1899 as the Methodist Orphanage, today's Methodist Family Health provides services across the state through a 60-bed hospital, residential treatment centers, therapeutic group homes, community- and school-based counseling clinics, an emergency shelter and other specialized programs. Methodist Family Health cares for more than 1,400 children and their families daily.



ABOVE: Participants in Methodist Family Health's annual Walk for Children and Families position themselves at the starting line on the North Little Rock side of the Big Dam Bridge.

LEFT: Walk for Children and Families attendees line up for free frozen treats. The Aug. 1 event also featured live music and games. It raised funds that will be used to improve MFH facilities in Little Rock and Maumelle.

AUM PHOTOS BY AMY FORBUS

Methodist Family Health's Walk for Children and Families was a huge success again this year thanks to our dedicated participants, volunteers and generous sponsors. We offer our heartfelt appreciation to everyone for taking steps with us to support our ongoing mission of providing compassionate care to children and families in need.

MethodistFamily.org • 501.661.0720

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Hispanic Heritage Month event helps LR church reach out

BY JENNI DUNCAN
Special Contributor

Independence Day in September? The holiday has been associated in the United States with July, fireworks and cook-outs. Although St. Andrew UMC Little Rock did a community cook-out in July, the big bash will be Sept. 14, from 4 to 8 p.m. Why?

Sept. 15 launches National Hispanic Heritage month, which continues through Oct. 15. Mexico, Chile, Brazil, and six Central American countries celebrate their Independence Days in September. That means it's a time for fiesta!

National Hispanic Heritage observances in the U.S. begin with President Lyndon Johnson's declaration of a week-long celebration in 1968. In 1988, President Reagan expanded it to a full month. It celebrates the history, cultures and contributions of American citizens with roots in Mexico, Latin America and the Caribbean. Learn more at www.hispanicheritagemonth.gov/about.

St. Andrew UMC Little Rock's Hispanic Heritage Celebration will feature performances by Ballet Folklorico from 5 to 6 p.m., a Latino D.J. from 6 to 8 p.m., children's

activities (including inflatables), a soccer activity by Arkansas United Soccer Club, volunteers from the Spanish Club at a local high school and, tentatively, volunteers from UALR's students in LULAC, the League of United Latin American Citizens. Seis Puentes Hispanic Outreach Center will sell tostadas as a fundraiser, and students in English as Second Language (ESL) classes at Seis Puentes and St. Andrew will help with food services.

Still in the planning stage is a procession of flags and crafts for sale by El Jardín de Enseñanza y Fe (Garden of Teaching and Faith), which is the group of Latino women involved in sewing, jewelry-making, and Bible study at St. Andrew. Since the spring Food Fair pulled in 140 persons and a recent Back-to-School party drew more than 300, St. Andrew is hoping Sept. 14 will be one more significant step in their transformation into a multicultural congregation.

For information or to reserve a table for your organization, contact me at jenni.duncan@arumc.org or 501-551-2141.

The Rev. Duncan, a deacon, serves at Seis Puentes Hispanic Outreach and as minister of Hispanic outreach at St. Andrew UMC Little Rock.

Spanish-language training for transforming small groups into new churches, Oct. 22-23

The United Methodist General Board of Discipleship is sponsoring a training event in Spanish for those involved in Hispanic ministries, Oct. 22-23, 2014, at the General Board of Discipleship offices in Nashville, Tenn.

Participants will gain practical knowledge on how to develop effective small groups with multiplication DNA; develop skills for leading and training effective small group leaders; and have an opportunity to network with colleagues.

Presenting will be Dr. Iosmar Álvarez, author of the book *Governmental Leadership of the Kingdom* (Liderazgo gubernamental del Reino, available only in Spanish); www.fuentedeavivamiento.org.

The cost is set at \$225 per person, which includes one night of lodging, three meals, instruction and materials. Registration ends Friday, Oct. 3; visit <http://bit.ly/1q5CVdc> to register.

For additional information, contact Pax Escobar, bilingual assistant for Path 1/New Church Starts, at pescobar@gbod.org or 877-899-2780, ext. 7139.

Evangelism resources in Spanish on Path 1 website

Path1, the new church start area of the General Board of Discipleship, now has available for download four evangelistic brochures in Spanish:

- 1) Hacia Una Nueva Vida (Towards a New Life): <http://tiny.cc/hacianueva>
- 2) Mi Jornada de fe con Cristo (My journey of faith with Christ): <http://tiny.cc/jornadafe>
- 3) Mis dones en Cristo (My gifts in Christ): <http://tiny.cc/misdones>
- 4) Nueva Vida, Nuevos Hábitos (New Life, New Habits): <http://tiny.cc/nuevavida>

The Path 1 team wants to know how they can help you engage in ministry among the Hispanic/Latino population. Email info@path1.org or call 877-899-2780, ext. 7120.

Hispanic/Latino Lay Missionary Planting Leader Training in Alma, 2014-15

The Arkansas Conference Office of Mission Engagement, in collaboration with the Northwest District, Path 1 and the Ethnic and Local Church Committee, will offer a series of classes designed to train Hispanic/Latino persons and others in planting new congregations. All classes will be in Spanish but may be attended by non-Spanish speakers who desire an immersion experience. The 10-week experience begins Sept. 6 and includes:

- Basic structure and polity of The United Methodist Church
- Theology and spiritual disciplines of prayer, worship and study in the Wesleyan tradition
- Reading and evangelizing the mission field and creating action plans to reach the community
- Teaching and preaching the Bible
- Pastoral care basics for laity in partnership with clergy

All classes will be held at Alma UMC, 416 Short Street in Alma. Travel scholarships are available for persons traveling more than 50 miles. To register, contact the Rev. Jim Benfer: jbenfer@centurytel.net or 479-229-3720.

Lay Missionary Planting Network Hispanic/Latino Leader Training Schedule

All sessions are scheduled to be held at Alma UMC from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. on the dates listed.

- Session 1, Sept 6: Desarrollo de nuevas congregaciones
Teacher: Rev. Vitalino Méndez
- Session 2, Sept. 13: Metodismo Unido 101
Teacher: Rev. Jim Benfer
- Session 3, Sept. 20: Es estilo de vida wesleyana
Teacher: Rev. Jim Benfer
- Session 4, Sept. 27: Evaluación de la comunidad y comunicación
Teacher: Rev. Julio Ibarra
- Session 5, Jan. 10: Enseñanza y predicación de la Biblia
Teacher: Rev. Julio Ibarra
- Session 6, Jan.17: Una comunidad que cuida y ama
Teacher: Rev. Ramiro Lizcano
- Session 7, Jan. 24: El Desarrollo de líderes
Teacher: Rev. Vitalino Méndez
- Session 8, Jan. 31: La multiplicación de ministerios
Teacher: Rev. Ramiro Lizcano
- Session 9: La mayordomía Cristiana
Student homework to be reviewed on Feb. 28
- Session 10, Feb. 28: Celebración y Comisión
Teacher: Rev. Alma Perez

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Holy conferencing and scriptural authority

The last four years, in Methodist circles, we have been hearing the term "holy conferencing" tossed around a great deal. To my surprise the term was not listed in the *Book of Discipline*. So what are we to think about the idea of something like a holy conference where God's will is reaffirmed for our 21st century world? If this is an attempt to run around Scripture some people disagree with, then it would be anything but holy, and it would not be Methodist.

Article V of the *Discipline* states very clearly: "The Holy Scripture containeth all things necessary to salvation; so that whatsoever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any person that it should be believed as an article of faith."

We should covenant together that we will strive for honest exegesis. Starting with the situation that was being dealt with, and try to determine what the writers meant when they said it and why. Then, we can apply that to our 21st century. We cannot overturn scriptural authority by a simple majority vote.

Rev. Roger Glover
Mount Carmel UMC Benton

Why international mission?

I recently led four faithful young people and three adult counselors from First UMC Benton on a mission to Caye Caulker, Belize. As many do at times, I found myself questioning the value of such events; they are not cheap, and there are real challenges involved.

Our group led VBS classes. In each session, one of the youth would read a Bible story; a simple craft time and treat followed. Many parents of the children stopped by and thanked us for our time and effort.

One of our activities involved simply walking along the street picking up trash. As one group member began the task, a small boy who had been in VBS joined him. Surprised, the Benton person asked, "Why are you helping me pick up this trash?" The boy answered, "I love to help anyone who comes down here to teach me about Jesus!" That reply made every penny of the cost worth it.

Yes, it's easier to give money. But sometimes giving money just can't get the job done like picking up trash in a children's playground in a faraway place. If your church wants to explore such an experience, I'll be glad to visit with you.

Rev. John Dill (retired, Arkansas Conference)
Global Missions Coordinator for Peacework.org
870-833-2678

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.

VOLUNTEERS IN MISSION AND 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.

Long-term recovery: skilled labor needed for smaller projects

Long Term Recovery in Central Arkansas has some smaller projects that need skilled construction labor. A leader who knows how to build and some helpers would be great. Most of these projects involve porches, steps, ramps or storage sheds. Some involve roof repair or building roof-overs.

If you can help, contact Janice Mann at disaster@arumc.org or 870-703-8359.

Sign-ups for tornado recovery still welcome

Long Term Recovery repair and rebuilding projects associated with the April 27 tornado should be starting mid- to late September, and will continue for several months, possibly as long as a year to 18 months.

Teams wishing to assist with tornado recovery efforts should continue to register at www.arumc.org/arkansas_disaster_response (click on the "Volunteer Form" tab). Teams should be able to offer skills needed for major repair and rebuilding projects, and should have a designated team leader that has had VIM Team Leader Training or has equivalent experience leading teams. Teams larger than 15 members should be willing to divide into multiple teams and have an additional appropriate number of trained or experienced team leaders for those multiple teams. All team members must have medical insurance coverage. Additional trip insurance is available if desired.

Please consider contributing to the recovery efforts by continuing to pray for those affected and those working to help, by volunteering with a team or by donating funds for building materials and other needs.

Mount Sequoyah under interim leadership

Lamar Pettus of Fayetteville has been named interim executive director of Mount Sequoyah Conference and Retreat Center. July 31 was the final day for former CEO Abby Foster, who had been placed on administrative leave.

Pettus, a member of Central United Methodist Church Fayetteville, has been a member of the Mount Sequoyah board of trustees since 2008. This is his second time to serve as interim executive director; he held the position for seven months in late 2011 and 2012.

The board of trustees will soon begin a search for a new executive director for the center, which is owned by the South Central Jurisdiction of the United Methodist Church (SCJ). The SCJ is composed of the annual conferences covering Arkansas, Kansas, Louisiana, Missouri, Nebraska, New Mexico, Oklahoma and Texas. For information on Mount Sequoyah's lodging options, facilities, programs and availability, visit www.mountsequoyah.org.



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

PEOPLE OF FAITH

Bush reaches 75-county preaching goal

The Rev. Dr. David Bush, pastor of First UMC Stuttgart, on June 4 reached a personal goal of preaching in all 75 counties in Arkansas. First UMC Blytheville hosted Bush and his "Swamp Angel Ministry Team" in Mississippi County, the final stop on this journey.

"It was a joy that I will remember all of my days," Bush said, adding a word of thanks to Bishop Gary Mueller and the Cabinet for providing encouragement for this mission.

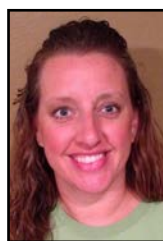
"I never really thought about preaching in all the counties until 2005," he said. "After [Annual] Conference that year I starting checking off the number of counties and congregations I had been in and thought, my goodness, it would be fun to try to go to them all."

Over the course of the last nine years, Bush has preached in 108 different United Methodist congregations in Arkansas. In 2014, he is scheduled to preach in nine different counties. Most of his traveling preaching occurs in special Sunday evening services, which over the years have included musicians such as Bill Mann, Jess Essex, Debbie Briggs, Amy Law and the SOUL Sisters.

"Thank you to the pastors and congregations of the Arkansas Conference that invited our team to come and lead worship," he said. "We enjoyed traveling to the small rural congregations and to the big steeple churches of the state... God is good—all the time!"



David Bush



Tracy Lengstreth

Blanks Scholarships awarded by Hamburg church

Tracey Givens Lengstreth and Haley Rice have been selected to receive Mildren K. Blanks Memorial Scholarships from First United Methodist Church Hamburg. Lengstreth is pursuing a Master of Science in Nursing from Walden University and plans to be a family nurse practitioner; Rice is a student at the University of Tennessee College of Pharmacy in Memphis.

The scholarship fund was established at First UMC Hamburg with a gift from Liz Witherington. Scholarships in the amount of \$5,000 are available to eligible members or former members of First UMC Hamburg who have a strong tradition of Christian service and are pursuing postgraduate degrees in the helping professions. Recipients will go on to provide services for the needs of others in areas such as medicine, ministry, dentistry, nursing and social work.



Haley Rice

First recipients of Waddell Scholarship selected

Connor Crossett and Sam Petty have been selected as the inaugural recipients of the William A. "Buddy" and Marilyn Locker Waddell Memorial Scholarship for the academic year 2014-2015.

Crossett, the son of Susan and Jon Crossett, will attend Mississippi State University, where he plans to major in kinesiology. Petty, the son of Linda and Lee Petty, attends the University of Central Arkansas where he is majoring in chemical engineering. In addition to their outstanding academic achievement, Petty and Crossett were selected based on their impressive records of involvement in the community and in church youth activities, where each has held various leadership positions both locally at the West Helena United Methodist Church and statewide.

The scholarship was established by the Waddells' children, Bill Waddell and his wife, Patty; Barbara Waddell Culver and her husband, Chuck; and Mike Waddell and his wife, Anne, in honor and memory of their parents, who lived lives of grace and commitment to faith, church and community. Friends of the Waddells and their family also have made contributions to the scholarship fund.

Marilyn and Buddy Waddell, long-time residents of West Helena before their deaths in 2002 and 2012, respectively, were very involved in the local community and in the West Helena United Methodist Church, where both were members for over 50 years. Because of the importance the Waddells placed on their faith community, special consideration will be given to scholarship



Buddy and Marilyn Waddell

applicants who have been involved in that congregation, as well as those considering serving the church in a professional capacity through United Methodist ordained ministry, mission work, youth ministry or college ministry. The scholarship will be awarded annually to one or more recipients chosen by a committee including members of the family and of West Helena UMC.

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Piney Grove UMC in Hot Springs, AR has a Konica Minolta biz hub 600 copier, approximately 5 to 7 years old, for sale. The copier was recently checked out by a local copier company and is good running order. We have all the manuals and an extra print cartridge. If you are interested please call Piney Grove UMC, 501-767-4765.

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

Bible school innovation

BY AMY FORBUS
Editor

To many, the term vacation Bible school, or VBS, brings to mind thoughts of a program for children, usually a week long and lasting for a few hours each morning or evening. Often, VBS leaders work from a pre-packaged theme that includes a Scripture verse or story of the day, songs, craft projects, lessons and games.

But not every child adjusts easily into that format. At First United Methodist Church Batesville, where VBS enrollment this year hit an attendance record of nearly 150 children, several of the youngsters who participated did so in a way that

worked better for them: a new “sensory-friendly” class that took into account the special needs of children with autism or sensory integration disorders.

Church member Stacy Pretty was keenly aware of these challenges because her daughter, Kennadi, has autism. Pretty took charge of planning a calm, quiet classroom environment with a variety of sensory-friendly activities. The room included bean bags, stacking and building toys, kinetic sand, a water table, books and stuffed animals. A low student-to-teacher ratio—Pretty and two other adults led the class, which averaged 10 students per day—gave everyone time for one-on-one interaction.

“The children in this class followed the preschool curriculum in the VBS program, and went to music class without other kids,” said Katie McLean, children and family ministries director at First UMC Batesville. “The singing, dancing and loud noises of large groups made for an atmosphere that was too intense for them.”

The sensory-friendly class delivered a complete Bible school experience; the children participated in art projects, took part in the petting zoo and played games.

“They had an amazing VBS experience in an atmosphere that was tailored to their needs,” McLean said.

Churches considering how they might offer a sensory-friendly option may wish to use First UMC Batesville’s experience as a resource; to contact McLean at 870-793-3803 or katie.ouceuponatime@gmail.com.

RIGHT: Kelli Swaim, director of First UMC Batesville VBS, presents an award to a student in the church’s sensory-friendly VBS class.

Church creates VBS setting for children with special needs



LEFT: Vacation Bible School helper Sandy West shares a comforting moment with Kennadi Pretty, who participated in First UMC Batesville’s sensory-friendly VBS experience. Kennadi’s mother worked to help create the class for children like Kennadi, whose autism makes it difficult for her to interact in large groups.

PHOTOS BY KATIE MCLEAN



Church offers VBS for grown-ups

While children enjoy vacation Bible school at St. Paul UMC Little Rock, their parents and other adults are learning, too. For several years now, the church has held VBS at the same time as its Summer School of Christian Living (SSCL). This year, three Sunday evenings in a row featured an intergenerational mealtime in the fellowship hall, followed by VBS for the children and SSCL for the adults.

The VBS theme was God’s love for all, and those in SSCL this year learned about showing that love through mission and outreach, both locally and abroad. The first week featured St. Paul’s new pastor, the Rev. Russ Breshears. He invited persons who work with Shepherd’s Hope, a medical outreach ministry at his previous appointment, Oak Forest UMC Little Rock, to share about that experience.

“The two congregations are only four miles apart, but worlds apart in social and economic terms,” Breshears said. “Several members from St. Paul have signed up to volunteer at Shepherd’s Hope. It is a God thing to see two very different congregations working together toward offering Christ’s healing to the working poor.... We can accomplish so much more if we can cross social and economic barriers for the sake of Christ.”

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QuadW interns connect churches to community in Pine Bluff area

Missional interns from the Texas-based QuadW Foundation spent seven weeks working alongside two Pine Bluff congregations and a nonprofit agency, thanks to a partnership between QuadW and the Mission Center of the Southeast District.

Interns were challenged to help the congregations find new ways to make an impact by opening their doors and reaching out to their neighbors. They worked alongside congregations to provide camps for children and youth in the Pine Bluff area, and built relationships with community members as they worked. They also received training on missional outreach and mentoring from area clergy.

The interns worked alongside members of St. Luke UMC Pine Bluff and Lakeside UMC Pine Bluff; and with the House of Levi's Hope Empowerment Project, which focuses on drug and alcohol prevention for children and youth.

Those who worked with St. Luke helped create an academic enrichment program that focused on bridging the gap for students who were behind their grade level in the subjects of English and mathematics. The interns also

hosted a barbecue that helped those within the congregation get better acquainted with their neighbors.

Hope Empowerment Project partnered with the Cottonwood Housing Authority to provide not only academic support, but also essential life skills training to prepare program participants to handle real life situations. QuadW missional interns helped create and plan enrichment field trips and workshops on self-esteem, financial accountability and fine arts, and held an end-of-summer celebration to honor the work of the students and celebrate with their parents and guests.

At Lakeside UMC Pine Bluff, QuadW missional interns helped build a prayer labyrinth, to be a symbol of peace and to offer prayerful support to the city of Pine Bluff and the residents surrounding the Lakeside church. The labyrinth dedication was led by the Rev. Pam Estes, the church's pastor.

The Mission Center of the Southeast District hopes in future summers to expand this internship opportunity to other sites in the district and Conference.

—submitted by the Rev. Natasha Murray-Norman
Southeast District Regional Mission Field Coordinator

TOP LEFT: QuadW intern Josh Mathers prepares ice cream sundaes for Cottonwood Housing Authority program participants as they wait to serve their parents and guests for the end of the year celebration.

LEFT: QuadW interns load dirt to build the prayer labyrinth at Lakeside UMC Pine Bluff.

COURTESY PHOTOS



KIDS ON A MISSION

Destination: Mission involves grade-schoolers in serving

BY DENNI PALMER
Special Contributor

If you look on social media, you will see that many families spent spring break and summer at the beach, traveling to see relatives or playing video games. But if you look up a certain group of about 200 adults, youth and children, you will see that they spent time in mission.

Destination: Mission is a component of the Conference Council on Children's Ministries that provides third- through sixth-graders with opportunities for service. The first group, formed in 2008 at First UMC Siloam Springs by children's minister Kaylea Hutson, included about a dozen kids. The idea soon caught on with other churches, and this past March marked the 10th Destination: Mission trip.

At the opening of Central UMC Fayetteville's Destination: Mission, four of the original students from Siloam Springs came back to speak to the 137 participants. They shared

how being exposed to mission as kids changed their views on how they should live their lives in service to others, and how they have continued their involvement in mission as youth.

Throughout this year, more than 200 people from three districts and 19 churches have participated. In 2014 alone, Destination: Mission served 17 agencies in Benton, Independence, and Washington Counties. They have packed hygiene kits, served at a humane society, cleaned shelves in a thrift store, served at soup kitchens, sorted at food pantries, folded clothing at a donation site and so much more.

During daily debriefings, they share where they served and what they saw. Many were surprised to find out that one in four people in Arkansas deal with food insecurity, and that the average age of a homeless person in the U.S. is nine years old.

A part of the mission is to help people realize that the world doesn't stop at the end of your nose.

Destination: Mission is also committed to helping people listen for God's call, and several students have shared more ways they would like to serve. Some students have even been identified by their peers as having a heart for ministry.

Some say that grade school is too young for exposure to mission work, but when we see the children reaching and serving their peers with such enthusiasm and genuine care, it is apparent that these students are the right age for Destination: Mission. If your children's ministry is interested in participating, plans are already in the works for First UMC Jonesboro to host spring break 2015, and for First UMC Beebe to host in the summer. Find more information at kidz.arumc.org and at facebook.com/destination.mission.

Palmer, a diaconal minister, has been involved with Destination: Mission since 2010 and has coordinated trips since 2011.



Participants in Central UMC Fayetteville's Destination: Mission made treats for animals (top) before serving at a local animal shelter, and conducted a food drive (above) as they learned about child hunger in Arkansas.

COURTESY PHOTOS

COMING UP

UM Museum of Arkansas 'Meet the Artist' reception Sept. 7; exhibit by clergy artist Polk open through Jan. 5

A "Meet the Artist" reception honoring the Rev. John S. Polk is set for Sunday, Sept. 7 from 2 to 4 p.m., at the United Methodist Museum of the Arkansas Conference (UMMAC). The artist will address the reception group at 3 p.m. All are invited to attend.

The reception comes just days after the opening of Polk's special loan exhibition, "Methodism On the American Frontier," which runs through Jan. 5, 2015. This exhibit includes 10 works of art by Polk, who is retired but serves as visitation minister at First UMC Hot Springs. His works transport viewers back in time to early Methodism in America and Arkansas.

To visit the exhibit at another time or book a tour for your group, call Linda Baker, curator, at 501-372-4685. The museum is located at 7th and Center Streets in downtown Little Rock, inside First UMC.

Peter Rollins at First UMC Little Rock Sept. 10

Peter Rollins has been described as a "Post-modern bar-room philosopher whose edgy take on Christianity is the talk of the Emergent Christian Movement." He makes the argument for an understanding of faith as a type of life in which one is able to celebrate doubt, ambiguity and complexity while deepening care and concern for the world.

On Sept. 10, three Conversations with Peter Rollins will take place in the First United Methodist Church Cokesbury Center, located at 7th and Center Streets in downtown Little Rock. Register online at www.fumclr.org/registrations; admission is free, and childcare is provided upon request. The 9 a.m. conversation includes coffee and doughnuts; bring a brown bag meal to the noon conversation; and at 5 p.m., a light supper will be provided. If you have questions, call the church office at 501-372-2256.

Rollins is presented by First United Methodist Church of Little Rock and University of Arkansas Medical Sciences Department of Pastoral Care and Clinical Pastoral Education.

Holiday Hills UMC 50th anniversary homecoming weekend set for Sept. 12-14

Holiday Hills UMC Greers Ferry is planning a homecoming weekend Sept. 12-14, in conjunction with the congregation's 50-year anniversary. All are welcome to attend.

Established in 1964, shortly after Greers Ferry Lake was built, Holiday Hills originally served "weekenders" coming to relax at the lake. "We still love our weekenders," says Holiday Hills pastor the Rev. Dan Brand. "While most churches' Sunday attendance drops in the summer months, we experience an increase."

The homecoming celebration kicks off Friday, Sept. 12 at 6 p.m., with the Rev. Ronnie Miller-Yow and the Philander Smith College Choir. Saturday features a free fish fry at 5 p.m., followed by the Northeast District Superintendent the Rev. Susan Ledbetter preaching at the 7 p.m. service.

Sunday morning worship will feature preaching by the Rev. Mackey Yokem, with a potluck meal following. Sunday evening, Brand will lead an "old time religion" service. Other homecoming-related events include the planting of memorial tree and the burial of a 50-year time capsule. For details, contact the church at 501-825-7301 or holidayhillsumc@att.net.

'But They Don't Look Like Us' cultural competency training Sept. 13

"But They Don't Look Like Us: Developing Cultural Competency for Your Mission Field," is set for 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturday, Sept. 13, at Philander Smith College in Little Rock. Noted author Chris Crass will lead this learning opportunity specifically designed for those facing challenges with intercultural relationship in their mission fields. 0.3 CEUs are available. Cost is \$15 and includes lunch and materials. Visit <http://bit.ly/1jPuPET> to register.

Worship planning with Marcia McFee in Louisiana Sept. 28-Oct. 1

Get a head start on planning vital worship for an entire year by attending the worship planning retreat set for Sept. 28-Oct. 1, 2014, at the Wesley Center near Alexandria, La. Worship expert Dr. Marcia McFee will lead the event.

McFee, an author, worship designer and leader, professor, artist and United Methodist, has provided worship design and leadership at numerous international and regional gatherings, including United Methodist annual and general conferences. She combines her background and experience in professional companies of music, theater and dance with a variety of worship and preaching styles to help churches bring a fresh experience of the Gospel to their worship settings, while planning more intentionally, as well. Her passion for helping the church to worship God fully is especially directed toward the education of local congregations.

Individual pastors or teams are welcome at this event, and CEUs are available. For more information, visit <https://ny163.infusionsoft.com/app/page/register-for-wesleycenter>.

Older Adult conference featuring Carol Orsborn Oct. 3-4

The Arkansas Conference Older Adult Council is hosting "Builders, Boomers and Busters: Bridging into the 21st Century," at St. James United Methodist Church Little Rock Oct. 3-4, 2014. Among the workshop leaders and keynote presenters is Dr. Carol Orsborn, Ph.D., an author and national expert on the Boomer generation, and editor-in-chief of *Fierce with Age: The Digest of Boomer Wisdom, Inspiration and Spirituality*.

Also presenting will be Will Randolph of the Office of Aging and Older Adult Ministry, United Methodist General Board of Discipleship; and Randy Frazier, a motivational speaker from Little Rock known for his wisdom, humor and storytelling.

Visit www.arumc.org/calendar for more information and a link to register.

Mathison to keynote retired pastors' luncheon Oct. 6

The annual Retired Ministers Appreciation Day luncheon is set for Monday, Oct. 6, at Pulaski Heights UMC Little Rock. All retired pastors, spouses and surviving spouses and sponsors are invited to attend this luncheon. The keynote speaker will be the Rev. Dr. John Ed Mathison, who retired after serving 36 years as senior pastor of Frazer Memorial UMC in Montgomery, Ala.

If you would like to attend, RSVP by contacting the Rev. Dr. David Bush at thepastor@stuttgartfumc.org or Lee Bradley at 870-673-1131. There is no cost to attend the meal.

Silent Centering Prayer Retreat at Mount Eagle Oct. 26-29

Mount Eagle Retreat Center near Clinton will host a Centering Prayer Retreat Sunday, Oct. 26 through Wednesday, Oct. 29. The bulk of the retreat time will be conducted in silence, and will end in debriefing and fellowship over lunch. Each day includes an opportunity for three hours of centering prayer in community, as well as live and video teaching on the contemplative journey. The retreat will be facilitated by the Revs. Bill Buchanan, Gail Brooks and David Fleming.

"Centering prayer" is a contemplative form of spiritual practice that has its Christian roots in the experiences of the desert fathers and mothers in the fourth century Middle East. For details, including cost, scholarship information and recommended readings, visit www.mounteagle.org.

Michael Belk 'Journeys with the Messiah' at Trinity UMC Little Rock Nov. 2

An award-winning fashion photographer whose images have appeared on the cover of *Vogue* magazine, Michael Belk was living the high life when he found he could no longer ignore God's voice asking, "What are you doing with the gifts I've given you?" The response to that question changed his life and led him to create a powerful collection of photographs of first-century Jesus interacting with all walks of 21st-century people. During this production, the 2008 economic downturn caused Belk to lose half of his life savings, including the money for the project. Trust in God and a determination to follow where God led took Belk on a personal journey of faith.

Belk will share his book, *Journeys with the Messiah*, featuring photographs illustrating stories from the Bible as well as behind-the-scenes footage and artist's commentary, on Sunday, Nov. 2 at Trinity United Methodist Church, 1101 North Mississippi in Little Rock. He will speak at the 9 and 11 a.m. worship services, and at a 2 p.m. presentation. Visit www.journeyswiththemessiah.org to see Belk's images.

For information on the Nov. 2 events, contact Trinity UMC Little Rock at 501-666-2813, or visit www.tumclr.org.

Travel the Holy Land with Bishop Mueller, Jan. 19-29, 2015

Members of the Arkansas Conference are invited to join Bishop Gary Mueller for an 11-day journey of a lifetime to the Holy Land, Jan. 19-29, 2015. The Sea of Galilee, Bethlehem, Jericho, Jerusalem, the Mount of Olives, the Garden of Gethsemane, Nazareth—these are just a few of the many biblical sites the group will visit. Extension trips are available to either Egypt and the pyramids or Jordan and Petra.

Bishop Mueller emphasizes that the journey is a spiritual pilgrimage. "It's not just about what Jesus did back then," he said. "It's also about how you can grow deeper in your discipleship now."

If you're interested in joining the bishop's 2015 Holy Land trip, e-mail the Rev. Siegfried Johnson at sieg@stjames-umc.org for more information and a brochure. Space is limited.

Art on Saturdays at CanvasCommunity UMC Little Rock

Would your church or Sunday school class like to help homeless individuals through creative expression? A new arts project will soon take place each Saturday morning from 9:30 to 11:00 a.m. at CanvasCommunity UMC, 1111 W. 7th Street in Little Rock. The effort needs artists, art supplies and helpers, including someone who can play the keyboard for old-time gospel singing. For information, contact Dot Robbins at dot.robbins@gmail.com or 501-551-2366.

'Service and a Cinema' fills summer Tuesdays with mission, movies



Connor Gustafson, Bradley Freier, Hannah Shelton and Natalie Pettit help bag potatoes during an Aug. 5 trip to the Arkansas Foodbank. COURTESY PHOTO

The youth group of Asbury UMC Little Rock spent Tuesdays this summer reaching out to a community in need. From June 10 through August 5, Asbury youth, parents and volunteers visited a different local ministry each Tuesday to serve Christ and neighbor. This project, called "Service and a Cinema," would end each Tuesday evening with the students who served spending some fellowship time seeing a movie together.

The project grew out of the youth group's desire to become more involved with missions. Students met for service opportunities with six different organizations: Habitat for Humanity of Saline County, Arkansas Rice Depot, Arkansas Foodbank, Heifer International, Methodist Children's Home and Arkansas Food Bank; and also included a day of service at Asbury UMC. Students spent time bagging rice and potatoes, digging a flower bed, raising the walls of a home and leading a time of worship and games for children, to name just a few tasks.

"Little Rock has so many great ministries that serving our own city seemed like a perfect place for our students to jump in and continue the work of transforming lives, our own community and the world," said Asbury UMC youth ministry intern Hannah Shelton, who served through the Miller Center Internship program at Hendrix College.

Asbury students also had the chance to go on trips, but the Tuesday service projects gave opportunities for students who weren't able to travel to participate, and took the place of the group's traditional Wednesday night meetings for the summer. Although summer break has ended, the group looks forward to continued service throughout the school year, with commitments to serve at Stone Soup and Methodist Family Health on the calendar for the fall.

Philander (continued from page 1)

SGA has made a five-year pledge to help with the cost of the 16,000-square-foot facility.

"The student center has opened a door to what can and will come," she said, adding that the SGA looks forward to seeing the new building foster a greater sense of community and connection among the student body.

Bishop Gary Mueller led the crowd in prayer to bless the building,

and Dr. Lloyd Hervey, interim president of the college, recited the opening verses of Psalm 103, and had those gathered repeat each line: "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless his holy name. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits"

"This is one of his benefits," Hervey said, gesturing toward the building. "We give God thanks today."

UM Men host intergenerational fishing trip for church's youth



The United Methodist Men of First United Methodist Church West Memphis on Aug. 1-3 hosted a fishing weekend for the youth of their church. More than 50 church members attended the event, held at Bear Creek Camp in Marianna, to fish, cook, serve meals and share fellowship with youth and other church members. The time at Bear Creek included worship in the camp's chapel, led by retired pastor the Rev. Bob Burnham.

COURTESY PHOTO

Mark your calendar for **Ingathering** **2014** Saturday, Nov. 22 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.



Arkansas Rice Depot, 3801 West 65th Street in Little Rock, will once again host this annual day of service. United Methodists from across the Conference will be delivering, sorting and packing disaster relief supplies that will provide help to those affected by disaster, both here at home and around the globe. Join fellow United Methodists for a day of service, fellowship and celebration! **Look for details in the Oct. 3 issue of this newspaper, and at www.arumc.org.**

Holy conversation, older adult studies free to Ark. churches

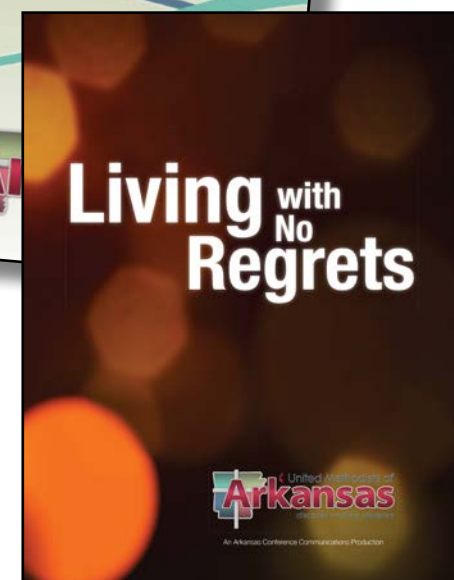
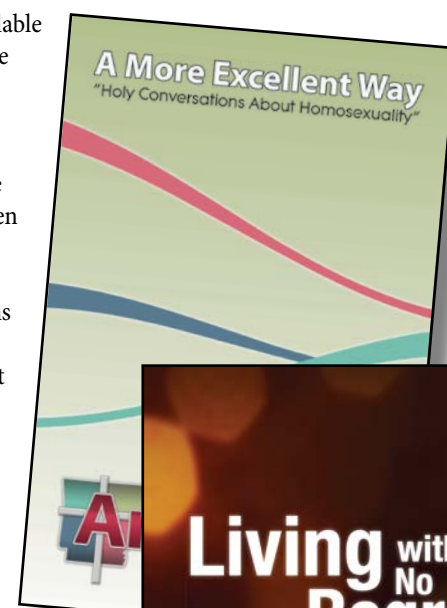
Two studies, one new and one revised, are available through the Conference office and through the online Learning Management System.

"A More Excellent Way: Holy Conversations about Homosexuality" includes readings, a video about holy conversations, a three-session small group discussion guide and a bibliography for further study including papers written by members of the Human Sexuality Task Force and other scholars. Dr. Andrew Thompson, the Conference's Wesley Scholar, is the presenter in the 20-minute holy conversations video. The task force released 16 different resources, all of which may be downloaded from the Learning Management System at arumc.org; or order a copy of the discussion guide by email: communications@arumc.org.

The small group study "Living with No Regrets" focuses on issues and challenges facing older adults and their families, and offers ideas for how local churches and communities might minister to them. The 2014 revised study features updated statistics and a facilitator's help video with Jenni Smith, director of congregational care and Living with No Regrets study leader at St. James UMC Little Rock.

Living with No Regrets was created by the Arkansas Conference Older Adult Ministry Council and funded by a grant from the United Methodist Foundation of Arkansas. It received a 2012 national Telly Award.

Arkansas local churches and ministries may order the study at no charge by emailing communications@arumc.org. Those outside the Conference may order the study for \$25 at www.arumc.org/LWNR.



A number of United Methodist congregations in Arkansas have dealt recently with facility fires, such as New Haven UMC Hensley, Hickory Plains UMC and Living Waters UMC Centerton. These fires have occurred while the buildings were vacant, but Asbury UMC Little Rock decided to do more to prepare for the possibility of a fire occurring while their facility is occupied.

After discussing the idea in staff meeting, pastors and other staff arranged to meet with officers from the fire prevention division to learn about fire safety, and held a building walk-through with the assistant fire marshal to determine the most effective evacuation procedures for their buildings.

On Sunday, Aug. 10, with the observation and assistance of Little Rock Fire Department Station 9, they held fire drills at the conclusion of their 8:30 and 10:45 a.m. worship services. With a combined total of 320 worshippers that morning, the congregation completed each of the drills in less than two minutes.

Asbury UMC Little Rock is willing to share its evacuation plan and bulletin inserts with churches interested in using them as resources to develop their own plans. To request copies, contact Scott Odena, the church's communications coordinator, at 501-225-9231 or Scott@asbury-lr.org.

Fire drill a valuable exercise for churches



COURTESY PHOTO

Table

(continued from page 1)

said. "And we have 60 to 70 people coming some nights."

"When we first approached the staff here and said, 'This is what we're thinking about doing,' one thing they said was, 'We're concerned about burnout,'" said Greg Gillis of the Resolutions class.

"So we've got nine teams."

Gillis says that with this setup, the teams show continued eagerness to serve.

"If anything, a lot of the people are saying, 'Is it my turn yet?' It may be the opposite of burnout. It may be there are so many teams that we're not getting to do it often enough to fill our spiritual tanks, I guess," Gillis said. "For the most part, other than just a couple of us, every week is a different team."

While the Resolutions class covers much of the cost through its offerings, they do have contributions from other sources. Another Sunday school class that formed one of the nine teams always pays for the meal they serve. Still other classes and groups provide desserts. And a local restaurant donates potatoes for baked potato night.

The Table also benefits from some memorial gifts given to the church. One of those funds was designated specifically for hunger ministry, and the class didn't even know it existed when they began serving the meals.

Logistics

The Table's early shift helpers arrive around 3:30 p.m. to begin meal preparations. That group consists primarily of stay-at-home parents, teachers, youth and others with flexible afternoon schedules. More helpers come as they can, when they finish up at work.

Each team prepares the same assigned meal in the rotation, which makes the process easier each time. They pray over the meal around 5:45, and serve for nearly an hour after that. Around 6:40 they start offering leftover food in to-go boxes. They're usually cleaned up and heading home by 7 p.m.

As The Table organizers got to know their neighbors, one of the things they learned was that for many of those interested in coming to dine with them, transportation was a concern. So in July, they began sending a church van to Highland Heights Baptist for residents who live within walking distance of that church's building. The first two weeks, the shuttle was empty, but they tried the idea a bit longer. By the fourth week, it was at capacity.

Initially, Fulks says, it was challenging to pull together all the processes for making and serving a big meal, but now they rely on the binder she organized, which includes directions for setting up the dining area, recipes, necessary quantities of food and more.

"She's very meticulous with her notes," Gillis said of Fulks, "and I think eventually that binder could probably be duplicated and handed to other churches [as a guide for a new ministry]."

Meeting neighbors

In addition to providing a free meal, the Resolutions class hoped to create a comfortable space for their neighbors who don't attend worship at First UMC Benton. It's helping the church become a place where people feel OK asking for help if they need it, Fulks said, noting that the church's food pantry traffic has grown since The Table meals began.

She is encouraged to see people from the church who aren't on the cooking crew attending The Table, simply to sit down and socialize with

others. When you get to know your neighbors, she says, "their needs become your needs."

"I watch them go out and sit with the people," said Jones, the pastor. "It's not just feeding them. They're building relationships with them."

Bill McKee, a cradle Methodist and 30-year member of First UMC Benton, was among those there to socialize. He noticed a couple communicating using American Sign Language (ASL) and decided to go visit with them. He doesn't know ASL, but he has a pen and paper, and that is enough. He sits down and writes a greeting, and the conversation takes off.

The first wave of burgers and hot dogs served 46 people who had lined up at the serving window, and more diners trickled in later. "It's grown," said McKee. "I see some new faces here tonight."

Community member Debra Barnes has dined at The Table four times now.

"I enjoy coming up here," she says. She feels comfortable in the church building, and says of the kitchen crew, "They are awesome, awesome people." Barnes pointed out Fulks across the room, saying, "She is so sweet. I love her. As a matter of fact, everybody back there is."

Barnes, who lives in the Southside area of Benton, shared that she enjoys singing, and has even won a talent show at her workplace in Little Rock. Indeed, she later strolled around the dining area with a song on her lips, a gift to anyone within earshot. Not long after she sang, another diner pulled his guitar out of its case and began playing rock and roll classics.

Initial variations in attendance have leveled out, and Fulks believes it's because of the growing sense of community. At one point, numbers had dropped to the single digits.

"I was just frantic," she said. "We knew this was needed, so what was wrong? What could we do?"

Hannah Fulks, a member of the Resolutions Sunday school class at First UMC Benton, looks through the information in the organizational binder for The Table, a Monday night free community meal she helped to start.

AUM PHOTO BY AMY FORBUS



Hunger initiative gaining momentum

Backpacks have been blessed and kids are back in school. But according to Arkansas statistics, there are still more than 200,000 children going hungry each day. This fact was the catalyst for a three-year, Conference-wide initiative to reduce child hunger in Arkansas.

Working with such agencies as the Arkansas Rice Depot, local church food pantries, Arkansas Foodbank and the Arkansas Hunger Relief Alliance, the initiative will:

- **Support ongoing and new immediate relief efforts**—existing feeding programs and new activities.
- **Provide long-term, local support**—so that local churches can go beyond immediate relief and become active in long-term, relationship-building ministries that reduce hunger in their mission fields.
- **Use the United Methodist connection**—the more than 680 UMCs in Arkansas hold huge potential for improving access to available resources, and for being a public witness about hunger in Arkansas.
- **Provide resources**—ideas, success stories and ways to connect with ongoing ministries in local communities.

A group of clergy and laity have begun to develop a plan of action for the coming year, which includes submitting a grant request for start-up funds to the United Methodist Foundation of Arkansas.

What can UMCs do now?

- **Continue, grow or start hunger ministries**—feeding programs, community gardens, assisting local schools with agencies' backpack programs and the like. Not sure where to begin? Contact the Conference office for resources on how to get started.
- **Complete the online hunger survey at** <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/ARHungerSurvey>. The responses will be used to connect churches ready to get involved with those prepared to share their knowledge.

They figured out that attendance had dropped right after payday, when people could better stock up on groceries. But that dip in participation seems to have disappeared, and Fulks believes people are now coming

simply because they enjoy being a part of the community there.

"The weeks I've been here, that's what we've seen," she said. "People are here for fellowship as much as they're here for food."

Mission u sets goal for 'transformation of the world'

BY DONI AND FRED MARTIN
Special Contributors

"A spiritual retreat" is the description many attendees gave this year's Arkansas Conference Mission u (formerly the School of Christian Mission), July 23-27.

Held on the campus of Hendrix College and sponsored annually by the Conference Board of Global Ministries, the United Methodist Foundation of Arkansas and Arkansas Conference United Methodist Women, the event drew more than 200 participants dedicated to the theme "Learning Together for the Transformation of the World."

Diana Hendricks served as dean, guiding a staff and leaders who taught studies, worked with children and youth, led music and provided assistance and support wherever needed. With each day's morning prayer and praise beginning at 7:10 a.m., the more than 200 Mission u participants—women and men, children and youth, laity and clergy—faced a full schedule of learning and growth.

"It was always our hope that minds would be challenged and that we would grow in our Christian faith," Hendricks said. "Our goal is to apply what we learn and be transformed to be Jesus' hands and feet in the world."

To that end, Mission u each year educates participants in three major areas: spiritual growth, social issues and a focus on the people of a



As part of the Mission u study "The Church and People with Disabilities," Mary Shaver of First UMC Jonesboro spent some time navigating the world without her sight. Here, Carolyn Baldwin of First UMC Wynne, right, helps Shaver find a fork, knife and spoon in the cafeteria.

specific geographical region of the world.

This year's Spiritual Growth Study, "How Is It with Your Soul?" by Priscilla Pope-Levinson and Jack Levinson, took participants back to the Methodist class meetings that became the heart of the early Methodist movement in England, providing the most basic setting for spiritual formation. These groups set the stage for a movement of transformation, which grew out of prayer and capturing a vision from Scripture. Leaders of this study included clergy from around the Conference and an active United Methodist laywoman who teaches spiritual formation in her local church.

The Social Issue Study, "The Church and People with Disabilities," by Peggy Johnson, bishop of the Philadelphia Area of the UMC, opened the eyes of many who had never recognized the on-going struggles of a large percentage of the population. Classes focused on sharing awareness, accessibility and advocacy to develop ministry with and for persons with disabilities.

Leaders of this study had experience in working with persons with disabilities, whether through their education and career paths, previous mission work or having relatives who live with disabilities. They challenged their students to help change attitudes in our culture and congregations. In an exercise



Youth participants in Mission u help load an Arkansas Rice Depot van with donations for the Food for Kids program, which provides backpacks filled with child-friendly, ready-to-eat foods to students identified as food insecure.

PHOTOS BY JAMES HENDRICKS

associated with this study, students navigated the process of choosing and eating a meal in the cafeteria while dealing with a simulated disability, such as a visual impairment.

For the second year, the Geographic Study was "The Roma of Europe: An Overview" by Larry Berman. The curriculum shares the plight of nomadic people of eastern Europe and their fight against forced labor or expulsion, enslavement, forcible and permanent removal of children and even their genocidal suffering during World War II.

As participants arrived on the Hendrix campus, many brought bags and boxes filled with food from local United Methodist Women units

around the state for distribution through the Arkansas Rice Depot. This mission project provided items for the Food for Kids program, which reaches into participating schools throughout the state. Food delivery continued throughout much of the four days of the event; children and youth participated in hands-on mission by sorting the food into bags that contained a day's worth of food for one child.

The next Mission u will take place in late July 2015. Studies will include "Finding Joy in Christian Living," "Latin America" and "The Church and People with Disabilities."

The Martins are long-time leaders and participants in Mission u.

Scholarships available for Native American youth leadership event

The Rev. Ronnie Miller-Yow, chair of the Arkansas Conference Ethnic and Language Ministries Committee, has announced that the committee will be providing scholarships for Native youth from Arkansas to attend the "PEG-LEG FLAMINGOS® Native American Indian Youth Leadership Training," Oct. 16-19, 2014, at Gretna Glen Camp and Retreat Center in Lebanon, Penn.

This event, sponsored by the Native American International Caucus of the United Methodist Church, is for Native American youth in grades 7 through 12. It features activities such as horseback riding, canoeing and a ropes course. The program focuses on a number of issues important to youth, including resisting drug and alcohol abuse, dealing with bullies and providing mutual support with spiritual nurture.

For event details, visit <http://tinyurl.com/nativeum2014>. For information on applying for the scholarship, contact the Rev. Maxine Allen, mallen@arumc.org or 501-539-0280.

Healing Place Ministries' Summer Community Camp reaches at-risk youth

Pine Bluff-based Healing Place Ministries continued its collaboration with a number of government agencies, churches and community organizations to hold a four-week Summer Community Camp for at-risk and disadvantaged children and youth.

For the past 10 years, activities on the rustic 10-acre campsite have included fishing, archery, basketball, hiking, baseball, jump rope, relay races, long jump and team sports. Indoor activities included workshops on drug prevention, anger management, gang prevention, yoga for kids, making good choices, crime prevention and arts and crafts. The goal: to help build resiliency, self-esteem, effective teamwork, and healthy lifestyle foundations for campers in a positive, supportive environment.

"We are grateful to all of our volunteers and donors, as well, and we look forward to opportunities during the year to improve life for our children, youth and families," said the Rev. Edna Morgan, a retired United Methodist pastor and co-director of the camp.

To learn more, contact Morgan at 870-535-0101 or healingplacepb36@yahoo.com; or visit healingplaceministries.com.



The Rev. David Morgan, co-director of Healing Place Ministries' Summer Community Camp, encourages a camper learning to fish. The four-week camp is now in its 10th year of reaching out to disadvantaged youth.

COURTESY PHOTO

Meeting connects, equips church office workers for their calling



Sue Thompson, executive assistant to the Rev. Adam Hamilton, delivered the keynote address at the annual meeting of the Arkansas chapter of the Professional Association of United Methodist Church Secretaries (PAUMCS).
AUM PHOTO BY AMY FORBUS

BY AMY FORBUS
Editor

A record number of administrative professionals attended this year's Arkansas Chapter annual meeting of the Professional Association of United Methodist Church Secretaries (PAUMCS), held Aug. 12 at Philander Smith College in Little Rock.

Nearly 80 participants spent time making connections among peers, hearing from a keynote speaker within their profession and learning about administrative changes that will affect local churches.

Sue Thompson, executive assistant to the Rev. Adam Hamilton at United Methodist Church of the Resurrection in Leawood, Kan., delivered the keynote address. She shared some of her experiences starting out as part-time helper and

growing into a full-time partner in ministry with the senior pastor of one of the largest and most high-profile congregations in the denomination.

Thompson told of her career plan to become certified as a paralegal and then consider law school—and how her plan began to change when she decided to brush up on her job interview skills by applying for the opening of pastor's assistant at the church she had recently begun attending. To her surprise, she received a call back and, ultimately, the job offer.

She and her new boss were in unfamiliar territory: Hamilton had never had an assistant, and Thompson had never worked as one. But they agreed to figure it out as they went along. After 18 years and exponential church growth, they remain a team. While she did

complete her paralegal certification, she has yet to move on to a position in that field.

"After about four weeks [on the job], it occurred to me that this is what I was called to do," she said of her work at Church of the Resurrection.

Thompson shared stories of how she learned to serve as a resource not just for her pastor, but also for the entire church. She found it helpful to take a class on spiritual gifts; the results confirmed that she had the gifts to take on her work as a call from God, not just as a job.

"This just can't be a job for a paycheck, because there is just so much emotion, stress, highs and lows," she said. "Often this ministry is full-time work and full-time plus. But that's OK.... You are an integral part of your ministry team."

Thompson also spent time sharing her approach to the nuts-and-bolts aspects of being an effective assistant. She explained how she divides her work into a grid with four quadrants:

- What is urgent and important;
- What is not urgent and is important;
- What is urgent, but not important;
- What is neither urgent nor important.

A crucial question in her boss's work has become, "What is it that only *you* can do?" When Hamilton answers that question, Thompson and other staff and church members can handle the tasks that remain.

Thompson encouraged her audience to recognize the difference between leadership and management

in the work of the church. Leadership creates chaos, while management takes the chaos and creates order from it. Her goal is to manage for her boss so he can lead.

For example, she blocks out 20 hours per week on Hamilton's calendar for sermon writing. If a pressing need comes up, she has to find ways to reallocate time from other tasks, because sermon time takes priority.

She encouraged those gathered to take on the role of gatekeeper in the most positive and helpful way possible.

"Gatekeeper' is not a negative [role]," she said. "It's where people learn that they can come to you for answers."

PAUMCS meeting attendees received a copy of Thompson's book, *The Ministry of Administrative Assistants* (Abingdon Press, 2008). For further reading, she recommended the book *Managing Up* by Rosanne Badowski, who worked as the assistant to General Electric CEO Jack Welch.

She also emphasized the spiritual aspects of working in the church, such as the need to be prepared to listen attentively to others, and the willingness to pray with anyone who needs it, either over the phone or in person. And she reminded those gathered that lifting the pastor in prayer is also a necessity.

"I cannot stress enough that you must pray for your pastor daily," she said.

In keeping with the meeting's theme, "Using Your Super Powers in the Church Office," the agenda

included presentations on a variety of topics valuable to church staff, such as changes to forms every church must submit each year; new aspects of the Lay Servant Ministries program; new information on clergy benefits and pensions; and an introduction to using Google Docs and other applications associated with Gmail, which serves as the Conference's platform for arumc.org email addresses.

"Nothing's more important to your local church than you continuing to grow in your skills and your spiritual life," said Fonda Kirkman, Arkansas PAUMCS president, as she welcomed the group. She thanked the United Methodist Foundation of Arkansas for their continuing sponsorship of the annual meeting, encouraged those present to get involved at the national level of PAUMCS and announced that the Arkansas chapter is offering one \$500 scholarship to this year's national meeting in Atlanta.

Bishop Gary Mueller shared his appreciation for those present and the important, but often unnoticed, work that they do. He encouraged them to see their role as integral to the church's mission and the Conference's trajectory, "Creating vital congregations that make disciples of Jesus Christ, who make disciples equipped to transform lives, communities and the world."

"Every day I hope you'll remind yourself that you are there to help your congregation carry out our mission," he said. "You have one of the greatest privileges in the world: to share God in Christ."

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OBITUARIES

BRYANT

Mary Margaret Douglas

Mary Margaret Douglas, 79, of Bryant passed away on August 4, 2014.

She was born on March 17, 1935, to the late Gillis Clifford Underwood and Katie Eaton Underwood. Margaret was a fun person who loved to laugh and loved for people to laugh with her. She was an exceptional cook who enjoyed a good meal with loved ones. She had a heart for animals, treasured her pets and was a huge baseball fan, enjoying the Travelers at Ray Winder Field. A minister's wife, she had a heart for her Lord and her family and spent her life making a home for them.



Mary Margaret Douglas

She was preceded in death by her husband, Eldon H. Douglas, III, a retired local pastor in the Little Rock Conference UMC who served part-time appointments at Bethlehem and Traskwood UMCs.

She is survived by her children, Dana Leigh Brown, Eldon H. Douglas IV, Thomas Patrick Douglas and Susan Naomi Cary and her husband, Jeffrey Cary; her grandchildren; her great-grandchildren; her great-nieces and -nephews and a host of extended family and friends, all of whom will miss her dearly.

Graveside services were held Thursday, Aug. 7, at Pinecrest Memorial Park.

JONESBORO

Gerald K. Rainwater

Reverend Gerald K. "Jerry" Rainwater, 74, formerly of Fort Smith, passed away Aug. 19, 2014, in Jonesboro.

He served 22 local church congregations as a United Methodist pastor during his 39 years of ministry. He was a graduate of Fort Smith High School Class of 1957, the University of Arkansas, and Perkins School of Theology at SMU in Dallas, Texas.

He is predeceased by his father, Harley S. Rainwater and mother, Mary F. Rainwater, and his brother Billy J. Rainwater, all of Fort Smith.

He is survived by his wife of 55 years, the Rev. Nancy Major Rainwater of Imboden; three married children, David and Becky Rainwater of North Little Rock, Danny and Susan Rainwater of Jonesboro, and John Rainwater and Randy Lyles of Memphis, Tenn.; three granddaughters, Ashleigh Oleson, Aubrey Rainwater and Abbeigh Rainwater, all of Jonesboro; a great-granddaughter, Bekket Soles; and one sister, Flo Chism of Roanoke, Texas.

A celebration and memorial service will be held at the First United Methodist Church Conway, where he was ordained an Elder of the North Arkansas Conference. The service will be held in the chapel on Saturday, Sept. 6, 2014, at 2 p.m.

As a tribute to the Rev. Rainwater's love for local churches and their congregations, memorial gifts may be made in his name to the local church of the donor's choice, or alternatively, to the Alzheimer's Association of Arkansas at



Gerald Rainwater

201 Markham Center Drive, Little Rock, AR 72205 or www.alzark.org.

SPRINGDALE

Melba A. Ramsay

Melba A. Ramsay, 88, of Springdale, passed away Friday, Aug. 15, 2014 at her home.

She was born March 15, 1926, in Prescott, Ark., to the Rev. William Lee and Oma Elizabeth Willis Arnold.

Melba graduated from Conway High School in 1942 at the age of 16, and then from SMU in pre-med with a minor in Latin at the age of 19. She had many talents, and used them in employment outside the home to include teaching and serving as a congressional liaison. She had a strong belief in social justice and partnered in the ministry of her husband, the Rev. Charles E. Ramsay, who preceded her in death. Together they served the communities and United Methodist fellowships of Mabelvale, Altheimer, Pine Bluff, Warren, Russellville, Batesville, Jonesboro, Springdale and Forrest City. She unselfishly supported her husband and children throughout her life.



Melba Ramsay

Survivors include four daughters, Janet M. Nickell and her husband, Jacob, of Tucson, Ariz.; Ruth R. Sharp and her husband, Walt, of Williamsburg, Va.; Mary R. Huey and her husband, Thom, of Springdale; and Martha L. Ramsay of Springdale; five grandchildren, Kate Keith and her husband, Bryan; Dr. Ralph Teed Jr.; Sarah Teed; Daniel Sharp; and Rachael Sharp.

Graveside services were held Saturday, Aug. 23, 2014, at Bluff Cemetery in Springdale, with the Rev. Herschel McClurkin officiating.

In lieu of flowers, the family asks that donations be made to your local church.

COLUMBUS, Ga.

Ruth Elizabeth Hilton

Ruth Elizabeth Hilton, 87, of Columbus, Ga., formerly of Pine Mountain Valley, passed away Monday, July 7, 2014, at St. Francis Hospital in Columbus.

She was born June 29, 1927, the daughter of William Morris Keith and Mildred Lucille Braughton Keith. She was a retired middle school teacher with gifted endorsement with the Harris County School System. She was a member of the Pierce Chapel United Methodist Church, where she was active in the Happy Achers Group, and a former member of the Hamilton United Methodist Church. Hilton was also a member of the Delta Kappa Gamma Education Sorority.

She was preceded in death by her husband, retired U.S. Army Chaplain Maj. Gerald K. Hilton, who retired from the Little Rock Conference in 2002. Before his military service, he spent one year as a student pastor for the Mount Carmel Circuit in the North Arkansas Conference, and two years as pastor of Shorewood Hills UMC Malvern in the Little Rock Conference.



Ruth Hilton

She is survived by her two daughters, Margaret Horne of Columbus, Ga.; Millie Jones and Stephen Van Camp of Fernandina Beach, Fla.; two brothers, Rev. Jim Keith of Rogers, Ark., and Robert Keith of Hernando, Miss.; five grandchildren, Christie Stettes, Scott Stettes, Bradley Bunn, Todd Paddock and Elizabeth Foskey; 12 great-grandchildren; and several nieces and nephews.

Graveside services were held Thursday, July 10, 2014, at the Hamilton Cemetery.

SILVER SPRING, Md.

Clifford Ray Tribble

Clifford Ray Tribble, 87, passed away July 9, 2014, at his home in Silver Spring, Md.

Born May 10, 1927 in Limestone County, Ala, he was the son of Hopkins and Bertha Tribble.

Ray served in the United States Marines from 1945-47, and after his service received a Bachelor of Arts degree from Athens College and did graduate study in social work at the University of Tennessee in Nashville and Scarritt College. Beginning in 1948, he worked for the United Methodist Church as a minister,

home missionary and social services director, primarily through the Women's Division of the UMC, at locations in Alabama, Iowa, Tennessee, Nebraska and Arkansas. He and his wife served as missionaries providing community service and education in Iowa, Tennessee and Nebraska, before moving to Little Rock, Ark., where he worked as the executive director of Camp Aldersgate for 18 years.

In 1974, he was named Arkansas Social Worker of the Year. From 1982 until his retirement in 1992, he worked as administrator of Children's Medical Services with the Arkansas Department of Social Services. Before moving to Silver Spring, Md., he worked part-time as associate pastor of Hunter United Methodist Church Little Rock and served as a board member on the UMC General Board of Global Ministries World Division.

He is survived by his wife of 63 years, Betty Gardiner Tribble of Silver Spring, Md.; his daughter, Elisabeth Luther of Phoenix, Ariz.; two sons, Dr. David Ray Tribble and his wife, Laura Walters, of Rockville, Md., and Jon Charles Tribble and his wife, Allison Joseph, of Carbondale, Ill.; a grandson, Jonathan Luther of Olympia, Wash.; and granddaughters, Katherine of Arlington, Va. and Caroline of Rockville, Md. He is also survived by his sisters, Erlene Hayes of Grant, Ala., and Joyce Abernathy Clanton of Vero Beach, Fla; and several in-laws, cousins, nieces and nephews and many dear friends.

He was preceded in death by his parents; his sister, Irene Cole; and his brothers, Morris, Alonzo, Dean and Billy Tribble.

A funeral service was held Monday, July 14, 2014 in Madison, Ala., at Parker Chapel United Methodist Church.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made in Ray's name to Camp Aldersgate (2000 Aldersgate Road, Little Rock, Ark. 72205; www.campaldersgate.net) or Parker Chapel United Methodist Church (c/o Glennis Cole, 10655 Segers Rd., Madison, Ala. 35756).

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\$100, your church will get a check. The more shopping done through this portal, the more support goes to the global ministries of the United Methodist Church.

—From the UM General Council on Finance and Administration, www.gcfa.org

Local churches: Technology resources just an email away

The Center for Technology (CFT) continues to resource local churches in the Conference and strives to always stay on top of the rapidly changing world of technology. This year we were able to add a Conference Mobile App (available on iTunes and Google Play) to our list of technology resource offerings, and a new online event registration platform used for Annual Conference and many other Conference-related events.

If you or your church has yet to engage the CFT for assistance, here is a brief summary of some of the technology resources we offer:

- A free Wordpress-based website for your local church. We host it for free, and we help set it up and provide training for your local website administrator. We can provide this website as a subdomain of arumc.org or use your personalized domain name.
- A free Gmail email account with the Conference-branded arumc.org domain. This account comes with Google Calendar, Google Apps and Drive. For those churches wishing to have Gmail under their own domain name, we can provide that as well, all at no cost to the local church.
- Assistance for your small day-to-day technology inquiries through our Helpdesk platform. Just email your requests to helpdesk@arumc.org.
- A video production studio at the Conference center for your use; again, email helpdesk@arumc.org to reserve your time.
- Video conferencing/web collaboration accounts with WebEx, Adobe Connect and Google Hangouts available for your use to organize online meetings.
- A solution for audio conference calls, called AccuConference, is free for local church use.
- An up-to-date list of preferred vendors for needs related to church audiovisual equipment and installation.
- Access to the deep discounts Verizon offers via their nonprofit organization contract for mobile devices and wi-fi hotspots.
- An equipment purchasing portal with TigerDirect.com for discounts on hardware and software purchases, and a way to purchase nonprofit-priced software licenses through CCB.com.

Some of the ongoing staples from the CFT include the Conference website, arumc.org (look for a new design coming soon), subscriptions to the *Arkansas United Methodist* newspaper and access to our Email Network. We can assist you with graphic design, logo design and branding, and give you access to our Survey Monkey account if you have a need to conduct an online survey. We will soon have a newly redesigned Learning Management System that will be more intuitive, easier to access and full of great content.

For information on any of these resources, email helpdesk@arumc.org or call 501-324-8000 and ask for the Center for Technology.

—Mark Epperson
Director, Arkansas Conference Center for Technology



**2014 Annual Conference
DVDs are available now!
Order online at:
arumc.org/ac2014**



Faith Funds

A Congregation of Lawyers

Bill Waddell has been getting United Methodist attorneys together to talk about how to better serve their local churches since 2008, and in recent years the United Methodist Foundation of Arkansas has been a financial sponsor of the seminar.

“Jim Argue at the Foundation saw the value in lawyers knowing how to apply the Discipline and telling them about issues and roadblocks they may face in helping their local churches,” Waddell said.

Topics have included employment, Safe Sanctuary, planned giving, music copyrights and church endowments. But the value of this meeting is more than educational. Waddell feels the fellowship among the attorneys who participate creates valuable relationships and builds community.

Waddell is the legal advisor to the UMC Council of Bishops. He lives in Little Rock where he and his wife Patty have raised three daughters. He’s a long-time member and former administrative board chair at St. James UMC. But his childhood church was West Helena UMC. “I like to say Patty and I met in the Nursery. We grew up together in that church.”

The free seminar for UM lawyers earns Continuing Education Units for those who attend. The 2014 event will be held in Little Rock on Thursday, September 18. Contact Katie Holley at kholley@umfa.org if you are a United Methodist attorney interested in participating.



The United Methodist Foundation of Arkansas

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