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## Theme, guest leaders set for 2015 Annual Conference



**Bishop Young Jin Cho**



**Paul Rasmussen**



**Lisa Yebuah**

Two nationally known United Methodist pastors and the bishop of the Virginia Area will serve as featured teachers and preachers at the 2015 Arkansas Annual Conference, set for June 14-17 at Summit Arena in Hot Springs, Ark.

“A Call to Spiritual Revival” is the event’s theme, echoing the first point of the Mission Plan launched by Bishop Gary E. Mueller in 2013.

In keeping with that theme, Bishop Young Jin Cho will lead a special Monday morning call to

prayer, before the first business session of the Annual Conference.

Cho was elected to the episcopacy in 2012, and is the first Korean-American elected as a bishop in the Southeastern Jurisdiction. Born in Onyang, South Korea, he graduated from Methodist Theological Seminary in Seoul. He came to the United States in 1979 and earned Master of Divinity and Doctor of Ministry degrees from Wesley Theological Seminary in

[See AC2015, page 9]

## Fire destroys Southside UMC Batesville building

BY AMY FORBUS  
Editor

Nov. 23 was a normal Sunday morning at Southside United Methodist Church Batesville, with about 50 folks present for worship. The church’s pastor, the Rev. Roger Hook, said nothing in particular stood out about the day.

But just as he and his wife, Deloris, were getting ready for bed that night, he received a phone call summoning him to the church building. A fire was overtaking the structure.

“When we left at noonish, nobody expected we’d be returning within approximately 12 hours to watch the church burn,” Hook said, his voice cracking with emotion. “It’s very traumatic for the people who have been here.”

The 46-year-old building is a total loss; only the shell of the exterior brick remains, and all but five percent of the roof caved in. The fire’s cause has yet to be determined.

Northeast District superintendent the Rev. Susan

Ledbetter went to the property early Monday morning to visit with congregants, many of whom have been part of the church since childhood. Some are grandchildren of the founding members. She said they had been talking during the past year about an expansion of their fellowship hall, and possibly the sanctuary as well.

“Now they have opportunity to embrace a completely new concept for their future church that will really meet their growing needs,” she said. “When the Lord closes a door, a window opens’ is a guiding thought this morning. Every church member who pulled up to the burned remnants of their beloved church today stepped from their vehicles and said, ‘We are going to be OK.’”

Hook agrees, saying the congregation is feeling support from the surrounding community and other United Methodists around the state.

“The response from across the state of people saying ‘we’ll help’ in varying ways has just been



The exterior walls of Southside UMC Batesville are still standing, but the building’s contents have been left charred and out in the open by a blaze that ignited some time on Nov. 23. As of press time, the fire’s cause had not yet been determined.

PHOTO BY SUSAN LEDBETTER

overwhelming,” he said.

Nearby churches went searching for extra hymnals they

could give to the congregation, and a representative from Cokesbury, the

[See FIRE, page 8]

# Mission experience offers help, results in blessings

BY MARK AND ROBIN MIZELL  
Special Contributors

After the St. James mission team returned from Guatemala last year, our pastor said, “You guys should go. You would be great.”

Really? We’re not medical professionals, don’t speak Spanish and were concerned about the time and financial commitment. However, service is important to us, and we’re open to new experiences. So with a leap of faith, we were all in.

## Mark: Life with the ‘flexi cookie’

Two weeks before the journey, a team retreat provided time for us to get to know each other and to



Mark and Robin Mizell

learn about the trip logistics, dos and don’ts and precautions to take. We also had devotion time and team-building exercises. And we tried flexi cookies.

What’s a flexi cookie? We learned from our team leaders that what looked like ordinary, bite-size Chips Ahoy, Oreos and Nutter Butters actually had extra-strength powers to help

international travelers remain flexible when introduced to foreign cultures and amenities. One little cookie lasts weeks. When we caught ourselves getting grumpy or facing challenging circumstances, we’d simply say “flexi cookie” in a calm tone, and a wave of patience would wash over us all.

Our trip began at the Little Rock airport at 4 a.m. and culminated in a four-hour bus ride that took us to a mountain village outside of Guatemala City. The narrow, shoulderless roads proceeded up the steep mountains with countless super-sharp turns. *Flexi cookie.*

Our driver wasn’t Moses, but he safely delivered us to The Promised Land, our home base for the week, where our gracious Impacto Ministry hosts took great care of us. On a pristine lake, surrounded by beautiful green mountains and majestic volcanoes, it’s a rejuvenating place.

We worked at health clinics set up in mountain villages—likely the only medical and dental care these villagers will have for a year. Many arrived in severe pain, yet they were joyful and patient. More than 700 patients received treatment, including some 500 teeth pulled.

We also had a construction team, which built a 200-square-foot house from cinder blocks and tin roofing. We held a dedication and presented gifts for the family of six, who had previously rented a house that was basically a tool shed. They were jubilant. The crying grandmother tightly hugged me and said Spanish words I didn’t comprehend. But despite the language barrier, I understood what she meant.

As the gravity of our work sank in, I no longer questioned how this family could be excited over such a tiny house. I want to hug the Lord and thank him for giving me so much, because I now understand the joy of serving others. During our work, I had broken out of the paradigm that limited my understanding of the power of

being a servant.

God gave my soul a much needed flexi cookie.

## Robin: Learning, giving, receiving

A journey to Guatemala wasn’t on my spreadsheets and calendar, but there were things I could help with, and everything worked out.

You’d think I’d learn Matthew 6:19-21 by now and not worry about money, but I was nervous about paying for our travel. After we withdrew from our savings, though, God gave us a surprise bonus, completing our expenses.

I was nervous about collecting hygiene items, suitcases and other supplies. But I soon discovered it created opportunities to talk about the mission, and Mark and I ended up being the biggest collectors on our team. And fundraising for medical supplies? Yikes! But we met that goal, too.

I get motion sickness. Every minute of every bus ride, my stomach was in knots. Thank you, Lord, for looking out for me. I never got sick.

An elderly woman hugged and kissed me after I gave her eyeglasses, a hygiene kit and bread. “Gracias, gracias.” I asked for help to understand her other words: “I don’t know where you came from or how much it cost you to come here on a plane, but you have blessed me.”

I didn’t think I was good at kids’ stuff, but these children were eager to participate in our activities and wanted to have fun. Santo, 7, was the most artistic with his paper-plate baby Moses. Every sheet, color, paint and idea, he wanted to try it. They all wanted to show me their work. I went back to The Promised Land with cross stickers on my shirt and face—mostly from my fast friend, Rosarita.



I learned how easy it was to demonstrate “God is love” and how much we communicate without words. Smiling, touching and clapping are a universal language.

We went to provide outreach to Guatemalans, but God has given us much more through this experience. I can’t express how warming the reactions were when we handed folks glasses, enabling them to read or see from a distance.

These women with back and knee pain carry babies on their backs, wood on their heads and food in their hands—all while wearing old flip-flops. I paused at seeing a woman’s holey shoe. I thought I was frugal, yet at home I choose from shoes in two closets.

On the last night, we were asked how we’re different. “More grateful,” I said.

By saying “Here I am” (our theme from Exodus 3:4), we experienced joy. The mission experience warmed our hearts, lifted our spirits and strengthened our faith.

*The Mizells are members of St. James UMC Little Rock.*



## EDITOR’S CORNER

BY AMY FORBUS

# The temptation of being ‘done’

Humans love categories. They help us make sense of life and our surroundings. Though putting people into categories can cause harm, in some contexts it can help further our understanding. On author Thom Schultz’s blog, [holysoup.com](http://holysoup.com), I recently came across a category I hadn’t seen before: the Dones.

Step 10 of the Bishop’s Mission Plan, “Reach the ‘Nones,’” gives a mention to the Dones, though not by that name. The italics here are mine: “The churches of the Arkansas Annual Conference will connect with the *previously churched, de-churched* and never churched, especially the ‘nones.’ Twenty percent of adults in America—including more than one-third of those under 30—identify themselves as religiously unaffiliated.”

Previously churched and de-churched. I know some of these people, and I’m pretty sure you do, too. If you’re reading this column, you probably used to see them around your church. You don’t now, and it’s not because they’re going to worship somewhere else in town. They may have chaired your finance committee or taught your Sunday school class, but they aren’t doing that type of thing now. They’re just done with church.

I’m not sure I agree with everything Schultz writes about the Dones. The Dones I know don’t all fit the mold he attributes to researcher Josh Packard’s recent work.

So why did that blog post keep my attention? I think it’s because for me, the scariest thing about the Dones is that it can be so tempting to become one.

I periodically indulge the fantasy that I could walk away from all things church-related. I spend a few minutes daydreaming about what else I’d do with the hours I spend working on administrative tasks, sitting in visioning meetings, leading prayer services and doing the reading to prepare for my weekly small group.

But every time I have those thoughts, something happens. Whether it’s an obvious instance of the Holy Spirit barging in on my world, or simply the insistent pull of knowing I take my membership vows as seriously as my wedding vows, something always gets my attention.

This week, it was a 20-minute prayer service where I got to see the Kingdom of God in a semi-circle of seven people: one in a nice suit on his lunch break from the office, sitting next to someone who didn’t yet know where she would sleep that night, next to another who came by to bring warm socks and gloves for those who need them. All praying together; all embracing each other and sharing the peace of Christ.

That’s the church I’ll never be done with.

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**Submission Deadlines**

Issue Date	Submission Deadline
Jan. 2	Dec. 12
Feb. 6	Jan. 20
March 6	Feb. 17



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

BY GARY E. MUELLER

# Christmas confusion

True confession: I enjoy Christmas more than any other time of the year. But I'm also enough of a realist to understand how this "most wonderful time of the year" can easily obscure the truth of what the season is really all about. In other words, I think I sometimes suffer from a condition known as "Christmas confusion."

I'm not alone in experiencing this malady. Many people who are followers of Jesus experience exactly the same thing. And it's perfectly understandable. That's because we live in a culture in which the proclamation "Christ the Savior is born" gets laid aside as Christmas traditions become increasingly more blended into a generalized winter celebration.

So what can you do?

You can begin by making a very simple decision. And that's to intentionally commit yourself to spending time between now and Christmas dwelling in the great mystery of the Incarnation—the fact that God actually has come to us in a tiny baby in a manger long ago to unleash the fullness of God's unconditional, transformational and invitational love. When you do, you'll discover something miraculous. That love that came into the world in the most unlikely of ways still crosses the boundaries of time and culture to literally bring life out of death.

I know how hard it can be to find time to do this type of thing, because there's so much else to

do. But I hope you will do everything possible to keep the main thing the main thing this Christmas.

My deepest prayer is that you will personally experience how the angels' proclamation about "good news of great joy" is true for you—and that it marks the beginning of a powerful season of spiritual revival.

Merry Christmas!  
Grace and peace,

Gary E. Mueller

## APPOINTMENTS

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

- Michelle Whitfield (provisional deacon)—Wellspring Renewal Center (primary appt.); First UMC Little Rock (associate, children/family min., secondary appt.); effective Nov. 15, 2014
- Andrew Kjorlaug (provisional elder)—Lakewood UMC North Little Rock (associate), effective Jan. 1, 2015

For the most recent changes, as well as the full list of appointments announced at the 2014 Annual Conference, see [www.arumc.org/appointments](http://www.arumc.org/appointments).

# Who is your neighbor?

BY HANK GODWIN  
Special Contributor



Hank Godwin

"Hank, we did God's work today."

This was that moment that I've grown accustomed to experiencing every time I work with Ozark Mission Project (OMP). BK Simmons and I were sharing a parting handshake when he said these words.

BK is the brother of Shannon, our OMP Neighbor. He is a bright and passionate twenty-something who seems to be involved in everything: serving as a mentor for young impressionable minds; active in politics; and now my assistant on a short wheelchair ramp. In fact, BK's political involvement is how we received the Neighbor request. His mentor is State Rep. Eddie Armstrong, and OMP heard Shannon's story from him.

This past May, Shannon was walking with her five-year-old twins to attend Little Rock Central High School's graduation. She was struck by a car and her life was forever changed. She later remarked how thankful she was that her twins had jumped out of the way unhurt.

Finding help for mid-week work is a problem for our OMP Pop-Up ministry, so I was prepared to build the short ramp by myself. But BK was there without my asking. It is his nature, a part of his DNA. He had always planned to help.

OMP Neighbor family members have helped me with projects before, and I was open to a special time with him as well. Because of previous experiences, I was also prepared for doing more coaching than hammering. That was not the case with BK. That morning while we discussed the plan for the ramp, he said, "I'll follow your lead," and that is exactly what he did. We made a great team, and his skills were much better than I expected.

### Building ramps, relationships

I've always said that OMP is not about the wheelchair ramp or the painted house. Those are just the vehicles for the real joys of OMP: the relationships formed. These relationships come from all directions. Certainly, I formed a lasting relationship with BK. It took me literally seconds to find out how we are connected. I find this happens more often than not in Arkansas. He had attended North Little Rock High School, where my sons attended and wife Liza had worked. Several of his friends were youth active at our church, Lakewood United Methodist, or neighbors of ours.

We talked politics, religion, family and a myriad of other subjects in the

four hours we spent together. Fortunately, our quick response to building the ramp fit in well with BK's schedule. He was about to leave for Los Angeles to begin a new technology startup venture. As with many of the young adults I meet through OMP, he gave me so much hope. I hung on every word he spoke. There was no cynicism, judgment or even a hint of lack of confidence in his words. God placed BK in my life at just the right moment.

Shannon surprised us by arriving home from the hospital early. She was so appreciative! I took comfort in the playful banter between her and BK. I witnessed this love all day long. We had many curious visitors. "Someone get a camera, BK is working!" teased his brother-in-law. Every car that drove by honked in greeting or tossed a funny barb out the window toward BK and his sister. Shannon is surrounded by a loving community of family and friends. Again, I found so much hope there.

### Neighbors are everywhere

Bailey Faulkner, OMP's executive director, stopped by with lunch and iced tea. This old man needed the break. As Shannon once again offered her thanks, Bailey leaned in for a hug. I find hope in this simple gesture, too. Bailey is comfortable in these amazing relationships, and she seeks them out.

It strikes me now after this experience that we may need to expand our definition of "the OMP Neighbor." The opportunities to experience that bi-directional transformative relationship with a neighbor were everywhere. I certainly found it with BK. Yes, we did God's work and yes, God was at work in many lives through this ministry.

I had the familiar combination of feeling physically exhausted and spiritually filled as I pulled away from the job site. I glanced in my rear view mirror to see BK raking leaves and cleaning up around the new ramp. I need to add "boundless energy" to my hope-filled observations of BK Simmons. I pray God's blessings to him and his family.

*Godwin volunteers for Ozark Mission Project, a ministry of Arkansas United Methodists that began serving Neighbors through one summer camp in 1986. It now includes 12 camps each summer and pop-up projects year-round. Godwin dedicated his original version of this commentary to BK Simmons; it first appeared on OMP's website, [www.ozarkmissionproject.org](http://www.ozarkmissionproject.org).*



Hank Godwin, left, and BK Simmons work on a wheelchair ramp to give Simmons' sister access to her home.

PHOTO COURTESY OMP



Show your care for God's creation!

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## PEOPLE OF FAITH

### Five students finish Arkansas Course of Study School in Fall 2014 session



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

Pictured, from left, are Bill Ferguson, who serves as pastor of Sherrill UMC; Roy Sherfield of the Missouri Conference; Travis Jackson, who pastors Bailey Chapel UMC; Andy Newbill, serving the Piggott/Wright's Chapel Charge; and Michael Callahan, who serves at Harmon UMC.

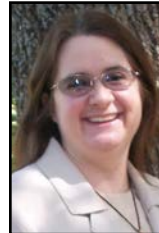
Approximately 60 students currently participate in the Course

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

### Morris presents at Society of Biblical Literature national meeting

Dr. Michelle J. Morris, associate pastor at First United Methodist Church West Memphis, presented a paper at the national meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature, held this year in San Diego from Nov. 21-25. Her paper is entitled, "Power Play: Jesus, the Hemorrhaging Woman, and Defining Disabled Identity." Her paper examines how both power and disability travel back and forth between Jesus and the woman. She is one of six presenters in the session for Healthcare and Disability in the Ancient World.

The Society of Biblical Literature meets every year in tandem with the American Academy of Religion, gathering religious scholars from all over the world to share and discuss innovations in biblical and religious scholarship. This marks Morris's third time to present at this annual gathering.



**Michelle Morris**

### OMP announces new mission coordinator, board members

Ozark Mission Project (OMP) has hired a new mission coordinator and named three new members to its board of directors.

Douglas Turner is the new mission coordinator. A Mississippi native, she graduated from the University of Mississippi in Oxford with a degree in elementary education. She is an active member of Pulaski Heights UMC, where she has served in many leadership roles through missions and children's ministry. After nine years of teaching, Douglas has decided to follow her passion for nonprofits through working with OMP.

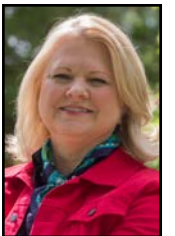
The three new board members are the Rev. Ben Crismon, pastor of White Hall UMC; Holly Ross, a pharmacist and member of Pulaski Heights UMC; and Brendan Monaghan, vice president at Bancorp South Insurance Services and a member of Pulaski Heights UMC.



**Douglas Turner**



**Ben Crismon**



**Holly Ross**

## VOLUNTEERS IN MISSION & DISASTER RESPONSE NEEDS

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

### Rebuilding begins; help needed for supply organization, case management

Interfaith and Partners Disaster Recovery is starting the first complete rebuild of a house in Faulkner County following the April 27 tornado. Funding for materials is provided by a grant from the United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR), and the labor for the effort is being led by Christian Aid Ministries, an Amish organization. This house is the first of six in the Mayflower area on the Interfaith and Partners Disaster Recovery list for a complete rebuild. The organization hopes to have all foundations in place by Jan. 5 so other phases of construction can proceed.

Workers are needed now to **organize donated tools and supplies** and move them from various storage units to the long-term recovery warehouse in Conway. This task is ideal for youth and young adult groups looking for a day-long project.

Volunteers also are needed as **case managers**. Case managers work with individuals and families to help them recover from the April tornado. No experience required. Training will be provided.

Contact Janice Mann ([disaster@arumc.org](mailto:disaster@arumc.org)) to respond to either of these needs.

### Projects in central Arkansas ready for VIM teams

Several Volunteers In Mission assignments are currently open. Here are just a few options.

**Malvern:** Our teams repaired the roof of this house some time back—the new damage is a delayed effect from the winter storm that dropped a tree on the house. This project includes building a storage shed; moving belongings out of the house into the storage shed; and making interior ceiling repairs.

**Leola:** One of our VIM teams recently built a porch and wheelchair ramp at this residence. Now, we need a team to build a roof over the porch to finish the project.

**Little Rock:** Flooring and bathroom repairs are needed after a tree fell on a home's roof. Some of the damage comes from other problems with plumbing, etc. Our teams have completed the roof, ceiling and fascia repair. Three dead trees also need to be removed; seeking professionals for that task, as the trees are in precarious locations.

### VIM journey to Sager Brown set for March 2015

Arkansas Volunteers In Mission is sponsoring a journey March 23-27, 2015, to serve at the United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR) Sager Brown Depot in Baldwin, La. We still have nine spots available. Registration and fees are due by Dec. 10, 2014. Contact Byron Mann for additional information.

## St. Luke UMC Pine Bluff sees signs of revival

Nine young people recently completed Credo confirmation class at St. Luke United Methodist Church Pine Bluff. The weekly two-hour confirmation sessions met during the months of September and October.

Vikki Hamilton and the Rev. Barbara Douglas led each class, with help from Rebecca Simmons, Regina VonTungeln and Roberta Douglas. The Rev. Douglas said it was exciting to see other Christians share their faith journey with the church's new confirmands.

"God is doing a new thing here at St. Luke," she said. "The confirmation class has started a new flavor of revival, and you can feel the spirit of God in the church. We have a sign-up form to start two adult classes in confirming and reaffirming your faith. One of the classes is for our retired senior citizens, and the second is for our working adults that are attending the church and want to know more about Methodist methodology. Both classes will start in February 2015 and end with a celebration during Easter Holy Week."

Eight of the nine youth who just completed the Credo confirmation program were baptized Nov. 9, 2014, during worship at St. Luke. The youth included: Dawson Hamilton, Manuel Robertson, Syann Mason, Jaylen Johnson, Tatyana Hill, Zaria McCants, Myra Corpulis and Ramiro Corpulis. The ninth young person, Hannah Lowe, had already been baptized.

"It was so exciting to welcome this group of young people into the family of Christ," the Rev. Douglas said.



# Redevelopment on the horizon for Theresa Hoover Memorial UMC

As 2014 draws to a close, a United Methodist church in the heart of Little Rock's 12th Street corridor will celebrate a milestone and an exciting new opportunity.

Theresa Hoover Memorial United Methodist Church on Dec. 14 will celebrate 34 years of ministry and serving the people in the Midtown area of Little Rock. The Rev. Candace Lewis, associate general secretary, New Church Starts/Path One, General Board of Discipleship in Nashville, Tenn., will be the guest preacher for the church's 11 a.m. anniversary worship service, "Love with Us."

On Dec. 21, the church will celebrate a recent name change and the signing of a covenant agreement with the Central District and the Arkansas Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church. The covenant agreement will enhance the church's ability to move forward on the annual conference's trajectory to create vital congregations that make disciples of Jesus Christ, who make disciples equipped to transform lives, communities and the world.

Resident Bishop Gary E. Mueller will bring the message, "What Child is This?" during the 11 a.m. Dec. 21 worship service.

Founded in 1980, the church was originally named Theresa Hoover United Methodist Church (Hoover Church) in honor of Theresa Hoover, an Arkansas native and human rights advocate whose influence was felt across the denomination and extended world-wide for nearly 50 years. At



**Theresa Hoover Memorial**  
United Methodist Church  
Worship • Empower • Love

one time, Hoover Church was the only United Methodist Church named for a living African-American woman. Following Hoover's death on Dec. 21, 2013, the church elected to change its name to Theresa Hoover Memorial United Methodist Church.

Working conjointly with Bishop Gary E. Mueller; executive director of mission and ministry the Rev. Mackey Yokem; assistant director of mission and ministry for mission field engagement the Rev. Maxine Allen; and Central District superintendent the Rev. Richard Lancaster, a special redevelopment committee from Theresa Hoover Memorial UMC, led by senior pastor Bishop Felton E. May and Darryl Swinton, developed a five-year plan with specific ministry goals and benchmarks. Former Central District superintendent the Rev. Dede Roberts, who now serves as the director of the Center for Clergy and Laity Excellence in Leadership, helped to lay the groundwork for the plan.

In addition to developing goals and benchmarks, the committee created a budget for each year of the plan, which was reviewed by the Conference Committee on Finance

and Administration. The plan and budget were unanimously approved by members of the extended cabinet on Nov. 17, 2014.

Bishop May is excited for the

future of Hoover Church.

"I am committed to fulfilling the vision of Theresa Hoover Memorial United Methodist Church," May said, "to provide an accepting, healing and caring ministry that equips individuals to live a spiritually prosperous life. Further, we seek to empower individuals to use their God given talents for the good of family, church and community."

Mueller is also pleased with the agreement for a number of reasons.

"Theresa Hoover Memorial

UMC has a history of reaching their mission field," Mueller said. "This new plan will help provide greater engagement with the neighborhood, and we pray it provides a model for a new way of doing ministry—not just for churches in predominately African-American contexts, but for churches throughout the Conference."

The church agrees that these steps will help Theresa Hoover Memorial United Methodist Church to W.E.L.Come all to Worship, Empower and Love with us.

## New year brings Conference staff changes

### Moore takes on new role for camping and retreat ministries

The Arkansas Conference of the United Methodist Church has named Michelle Moore the director of program and marketing for camp and retreat ministries, effective Jan. 1, 2015. This full-time position was created in June by action of the 2014 Arkansas Annual Conference.

In this new role, Moore will create a comprehensive promotion and branding plan for the Conference's camping and retreat ministries, as well as develop creative programming to focus on discipleship development for all age levels and stages of faith. She will work collaboratively with the boards of the Conference's five camps (Bear Creek, Mount Eagle, Shoal Creek, Tanako and Wayland Spring), and will coordinate with the Conference Committee on Camp and Retreat Ministries to resource local churches as they seek to follow the Conference trajectory of increasing in vitality and making disciples of Jesus Christ.

"I'm looking forward to helping our camp and retreat ministries pursue a common direction," Moore said. "In our camps, we have five pieces of holy ground where we can help people grow spiritually. Churches can benefit from these resources as they take the next steps of the Bishop's Mission Plan and follow our Conference trajectory. We can use camp and retreat experiences to feed congregational vitality and help churches make more disciples who transform lives, communities and the world."

While Moore will take on new duties, she is not new to the Conference staff; she has served as the coordinator for youth and young adult ministries since its redefinition as a part-time position in 2012. She will continue working in this role to connect, network, train and resource those who work with youth and young adults while she works full-time with camping and retreat ministries.

She will leave her current position as the director of youth ministries at First UMC Conway at the end of December, but will remain the adult coordinator for the Conference Council on Youth Ministries (ACCYM), an unpaid position she has held since 2009.

A 2006 graduate of Hendrix College in Conway with a Bachelor of Arts in religion, Moore also holds a Masters degree in specialized ministry with an emphasis in youth ministry from United Methodist-related Southwestern

College in Winfield, Kan., and certification in youth ministry from SMU's Perkins School of Theology. She lives in Maumelle with her husband, Brad, and their son, Tucker.

### Crawford retiring from CCLEL

John Crawford, who for 12 years has served on staff for the Arkansas Conference, has announced he will retire at the end of 2014.

Crawford developed the laity component of the Conference's Connected in Christ program, which was the predecessor to the current Center for Clergy and Laity Excellence in Leadership (CCLEL). He now serves as assistant director of the CCLEL.

Connected in Christ was how Northeast District lay leader Charles Long developed a solid working relationship and friendship with Crawford.

"I told John if, in the future, he needed some help to let me know. Not to let a volunteer get past him, he called me the next week," Long said. "John and I have planted a lot of seeds together, and the harvest will come someday. I can truly say John was instrumental in strengthening my relationship with God and the Methodist Church. What more can be expected of a friend?"

The Rev. Davis Thompson of First UMC North Little Rock calls Crawford an important voice of the laity and their ministry.

"His passion is to allow his gifts and talents, honed in the secular arenas, to be applied for good in the ministry of Christ's church," Thompson said. "While I often cringed when he said, 'I'm just a layman,' it reminded me that while I have been blessed to be ordained to full time ministry in the church, laity are called to full time ministry to the world through the church. I am thankful to John for this continuing revelation."

The Rev. Dede Roberts, director of the CCLEL, also first met Crawford through his work with Connected in Christ. She appreciates his positive spirit and candor, as well as his firm belief that pastors and churches can make a real difference in lives, communities and the world.

"He has been willing to invest his time and considerable talent into helping us get where God was calling us to go," she said. "I will miss him on the CCLEL staff, but I am pleased that he and Susan will have more time for travel and gardening and family."



**Michelle Moore**



**John Crawford**

## Clergy directory for 2014-15 now available; 2014 Conference Journal arriving soon

A PDF file of the 2014-15 Clergy Directory is now available for download from the Arkansas Conference website, [www.arumc.org](http://www.arumc.org). Printed directories may be ordered by printing and completing the order form found at [www.arumc.org/conference-directory](http://www.arumc.org/conference-directory) and enclosing \$5 payment to Arkansas Conference, Attn: Clergy Directory, 800 Daisy Bates Drive, Little Rock, AR 72202.

In addition, a PDF of the 2014 Conference Journal will soon be available for free on the Conference website. Online ordering for print copies will be through [amazon.com](http://amazon.com) and the CreateSpace store. At press time, the web addresses for those two online stores were still being determined.

Those wishing to order a Journal by mail for \$25 may use the same order form as for the directory, which is available at the above link.

## Ingathering brings together United Methodists to serve



The Nov. 22 Ingathering began with a brief time of worship, followed by organizing relief supplies for use here in Arkansas and around the world. This year's Ingathering also included boxing sweet potatoes from the Society of St. Andrew, and dividing bulk rice into packages for distribution. Our host for the day, the Arkansas Rice Depot, will distribute the food. Relief supplies will go to the United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR) depot in Baldwin, La., for worldwide distribution, as well as to Arkansas' UMCOR warehouse in Conway for local relief.

AUM PHOTOS BY AMY FORBUS



For more photos from Ingathering 2014, visit the

Photos tab of the Conference Facebook page:

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

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## Refuge offers worship, community to junior high youth

BY NATALIE MCCORMICK  
Special Contributor

Refuge, a junior high youth event sponsored annually by the Arkansas Conference Council on Youth Ministries (ACCYM), was held Nov. 7-9 at the Shepherd of the Ozarks retreat center near Harriet, Ark. Refuge has continued its growth, with approximately 400 attendees this year—almost double the attendance two years ago.

With the theme “Dust,” the event took the phrase “May you be covered in the dust of your Rabbi” as its mantra. Just as young students used to follow their rabbis so nearly that they were covered in the dust from their teacher’s feet, so we ought to follow Jesus.

The weekend was filled with worship, games and activities such as a ropes course and a cliff swing.

“I built a lot of new relationships and got to see the way God was working in so many young people,” said ninth-grader Lauren Berry. “It was an experience I’ll never forget.”



Casey Paige led worship music for Refuge 2014’s nearly 400 participants.

PHOTO BY MIKE MEEKS

Speaker the Rev. Rob Holifield and worship leader Casey Paige truly gave the “Dust” theme energy and depth.

“This weekend helped me understand how to become closer to God: kneel, stand, jump,” said junior higher Kelly Davis, echoing one of the messages from Holifield.

As Refuge continues to grow, it

continues to share the love of God with junior high students through worship and community.

For more information on Refuge and other statewide youth events, visit [www.acycm.org](http://www.acycm.org).

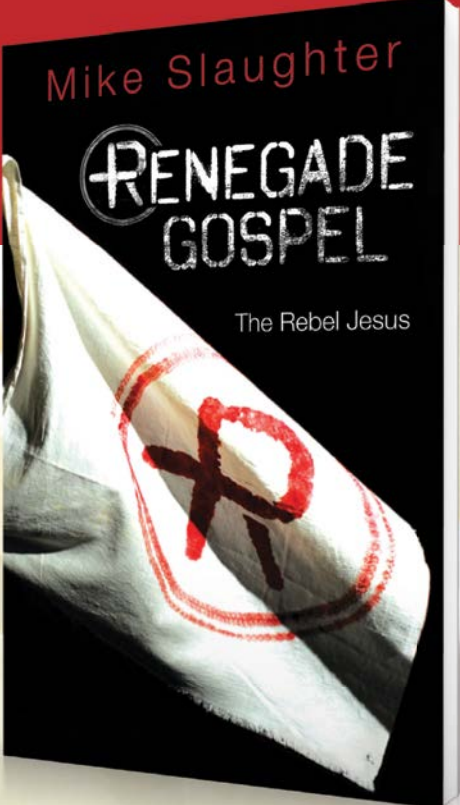
*McCormick, a senior at Mount St. Mary Academy, is a member of Pulaski Heights UMC Little Rock.*


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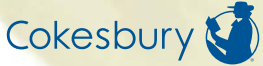
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**Mike Slaughter** is the lead pastor at Ginghamburg Church. He is the author of multiple books, including *Dare to Dream*, *Change the World*, *Christmas Is Not Your Birthday*, *Spiritual Entrepreneurs*, *Momentum for Life*, and *Upside Living in a Downside Economy*.

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# Bickerton lectures bring in \$7k to fight malaria

## Timely message touches on ebola's impact

A recent Arkansas visit by Bishop Thomas Bickerton helped with fundraising for the cause of ending deaths from malaria.

In his role as lead spokesperson for the United Methodist Global Health Initiative, which includes the Imagine No Malaria campaign, Bickerton spoke Nov. 9-10 at St. James UMC Little Rock. He was the inaugural speaker for the church's Fiser-Christie Endowed Lectureship. Special offerings taken during the two days of presentations totaled \$7,000, according to the Rev. Blake Bradford, executive pastor of St. James.

Drawing from statistics posted at [www.ImagineNoMalaria.org](http://www.ImagineNoMalaria.org), Bickerton shared the initiative's progress. Imagine No Malaria has trained 11,600 health workers, maintained and operated 300 clinics, impacted 4.6 million lives through improved communication and education and distributed 2.3 million insecticide-treated bed nets.

Yet he also reminded listeners how fragile such gains can be. A bad rainy season that improves mosquito

breeding conditions could cause a new malaria outbreak, as could failing to replace old bed nets, which lose effectiveness after five years.

"Unless we remain persistent in our work, we could erase many of the gains we've made," said the Rev. David Freeman, chair of the Arkansas Conference's Imagine No Malaria task force. He noted that the Arkansas Conference is closing in on its target of raising \$1 million for Imagine No Malaria, but we cannot lose sight of the real goal: eliminating deaths from this preventable and treatable disease.

"The Spirit has moved through the people and churches of Arkansas to get us to this point," Freeman wrote in an email to the *Arkansas United Methodist*. "Seeing the excitement and people getting swept up in the work of Imagine No Malaria has awakened within me a great deal of joy and confidence for our Conference."

Bickerton also addressed the effect the current Ebola outbreak is having on efforts to fight malaria. Every dollar given to Imagine No Malaria still goes toward fighting

malaria, but other resources have been diverted to address Ebola. Sadly, some areas have seen increases in malaria deaths because of the necessary shift in focus.

Ebola also complicates plans for workers who have limited time available to help. Bickerton shared that he spoke recently with a man who was preparing to spend four weeks in Sierra Leone volunteering in a clinic supported by Imagine No Malaria. However, the new Ebola quarantine recommendations would require an additional four weeks away

from home and work; this volunteer could not commit to eight weeks.

"Bishop Bickerton urged us all to keep it in perspective as 5,000 people have died from Ebola, but

over 1,000 people die from malaria every day," Freeman wrote. "We must find a way to address both diseases and avoid further inflaming a crisis within a crisis."



Bishop Thomas Bickerton speaks at St. James UMC Little Rock Nov. 9. Sponsored by the church's Fiser-Christie Endowed Lectureship, his visit focused on the work the United Methodist Church is doing through Imagine No Malaria.

PHOTO BY MARCIA DUNBAR / COURTESY ST. JAMES UMC



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A packet of Christmas offering materials will arrive at your church by December 5. For more information or to request a Sunday speaker, contact Maggie Beeler at 501.906.4220.



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# Unpaid co-pastors make perfect team for lay-driven church



Kay Brogdon, left, bows her head in prayer as Nancy Cameron gives the benediction Nov. 23 at Hardy UMC. Brogdon, a part-time lay pastor, and Cameron, a licensed local pastor, began sharing pastoral duties at the church earlier this year.

PHOTO COURTESY HARDY UMC

BY AMY FORBUS  
Editor

Two co-pastors. Ten Certified Lay Servants. An administrative assistant and a finance assistant. Eighty worshippers on an average Sunday.

No paid staff.

Hardy United Methodist Church may be on to something.

"They have pulled together to lead, grow and adapt," said the Rev. Susan Ledbetter, superintendent of the Northeast District. "This could be an emerging model for our smaller congregations."

## A unique arrangement

Kay Brogdon and Nancy Cameron go way back. They taught at the same high school: English classes for Brogdon, music for Cameron.

Brogdon had become a Certified Lay Speaker several years ago, before the title changed to Lay Servant and before she retired from teaching in 2009.

In her retirement, she served occasionally as a supply preacher for Hardy United Methodist Church. When the pastor at that time left, the district superintendent asked Brogdon to take on regular preaching duties to provide some stability during a time of transition.

"Susan knew that we were trying to be a laity-driven church," she said. That goal, combined with the financial hardships the congregation had faced in previous years, led the district superintendent to allow Brogdon to take on the role the way Brogdon wished: with no salary.

Not long after Brogdon's appointment to Hardy became

official, the church's pianist retired.

Brogdon soon thought of her musician friend Cameron, who had become a licensed local pastor after her retirement. Cameron had served at Horseshoe Bend UMC, but when her husband died, she retired from that role, too, and eventually moved to Iowa to be closer to family.

But the house in Horseshoe Bend never found a buyer.

While in Iowa, Cameron found herself engaged in a study on hearing the voice of God. One morning she woke up with the thought, "You have to go back to Arkansas." She heeded that voice.

Within a week of her return to the area, she was playing piano for the Hardy church's worship services.

In Cameron, Brogdon gained not only a church pianist, but also a backup for the pulpit—which comes in handy when Brogdon and her husband need to travel on weekends to help care for some family matters.

As they traded off various pastoral duties, the women discovered how well they worked as a team.

"Nancy and I have just sort of said, 'Tag, you're it,'" says Brogdon.

"Suddenly Nancy appeared. God sent her; that's all," said Marilyn Lynn, the chair of Hardy UMC's Staff-Parish Relations committee. She's quick to add that God sent Brogdon, too.

Lynn approached district superintendent Ledbetter about changing the appointment to a co-pastoring setup. On Oct. 12, it became official.

A typical Sunday at Hardy UMC involves Brogdon preaching, Cameron at the piano and a layperson serving as liturgist. At the close of the service, Brogdon

summarizes the lesson of that day's worship, then steps back for Cameron to give the benediction.

The Northeast District has reinstated Cameron's local pastor's license, meaning she has officially come out of retirement. The license enables her to preside over baptisms and marriages, so she takes care of those particular duties in the division of responsibility.

## Lay Servant leadership

Much of the credit for Hardy UMC's vitality belongs to the people in the pews—or more accurately, the work they do when they're not sitting in the pews.

Cindy Holland is a night nurse at St. Bernard Medical Center in Jonesboro. When Lay Speaking Ministries changed to Lay Servant Ministries, it got her attention; she had never considered lay speaking as something she was called to do, but serving was another matter. She started by taking the Basic Lay Servant course.

"It focused me a little bit more," Holland said. "It was a class that helped me target in on what my talents were." She has since become involved in teaching Sunday school, and when she retires from nursing next year, she plans to focus on leading a Bible study. She also makes pastoral care visits on behalf of the church to those who are hospitalized or in nursing homes in Jonesboro.

Holland believes the co-pastoring arrangement has been good for the whole church, and it helps parishioners see how different people can use their gifts in different ways.

Jonathan Rhodes, another Certified Lay Servant, has left his

membership with his childhood church, Cherokee Village UMC, but became active in the Hardy church after a move back to Arkansas. He serves as a liturgist, and hopes to use his training to help Hardy and other area UMCs collaborate for youth ministry activities.

He believes the co-pastoring model is working well for the congregation.

"In a small community that struggles financially anyway, for us to be able to have a full-fledged minister is not a financial reality," he said. "What is unique about our church is that it's small, but it is so dedicated. They believe in the role of that church in the community and are determined to keep it going."

Rhodes sees the value of laity doing ministry in areas where they are passionate about something, so no one person gets overwhelmed. "Let's find out where people have a passion or a strength and try to really encourage them," he says.

Cameron agrees.

"I think small churches really need to look at the laity they have and empower them to take responsibility for their churches," she says. "There's responsibility, but there's also the joy that goes along with that."

## Plans for the future

Hardy UMC hosted the Basic Lay Servant Course where their members received training, and they hope to host it again in 2015.

"We love the new aspect of Lay Servant instead of Lay Speaker," Brogdon said. "They all do different things. Some are good at administration, others at leading in

other ways." She said that the new title has attracted some folks who had previously stayed away because they weren't interested in preaching.

"Nancy and I have really stressed to the church how service-oriented we need to be for our community, and to let our community know that we're a viable, working, serving church," she said.

To that end, Hardy UMC is launching two new ministries: Compassion Sunday and Souper Wednesdays.

In every month with five Sundays, that fifth Sunday will be Compassion Sunday. After a community breakfast and a brief devotional time, teams will go out to be the hands and feet of Christ in their community, helping others with chores, errands or other particular needs. Then they will return to the church for lunch—if possible, bringing those they helped that morning to join them for the meal.

And this winter, the church will host Souper Wednesdays, offering a weekly hot meal during the cold winter months. The free lunch will include homemade soup, bread, tea, cookies and coffee. "It's not a soup kitchen," Brogdon stressed, nor will it be used to prod people to attend worship, though there will be information on the church within easy reach. It's simply an extension of Christian hospitality.

Lay Servants will play key roles in both of these ministries.

"They feel so needed and useful. And they are! They are needed, and they are useful," Brogdon said.

"We keep saying that we are going, glowing, and growing in Christ."

## Fire (continued from page 1)

retail arm of the United Methodist Publishing House, already had sent information about the Cokesbury Cares program, which provides replacement resources to churches affected by disasters.

The church will gather for worship at Southside High School, across the highway from the church's property, while they make plans for the future.

In the darkness of Monday morning, the Hooks stood outside the building with congregants for a few hours, just to be together. "There was just nothing you could do and everybody felt so helpless," he said.

But even with the ashes still smoldering, it didn't take long for Southside members to turn their thoughts toward rebirth. The old building had been set a little too far back from the highway; perhaps the footprint of new construction can stand in a more visible spot.

"In the midst of every tragedy and every difficult circumstance, there's opportunity," Hook said.

"This church family will take advantage of that, without a doubt, and will do good things for the building of God's Kingdom again. There's already some dreaming and some positive discussion taking place."



# AC2015

(continued from page 1)

Washington, D.C. He was ordained in the East Annual Conference of the Korean Methodist Church in 1977 and transferred to the Virginia Conference in 1983.

He spent 22 years as senior pastor of Korean United Methodist Church of Greater Washington in McLean, Va. His tenure there saw the church's worship attendance grow from about 100 to more than 1,000; baptisms of 276 adults and youths; and completion of three building projects. The church has the largest worship attendance in the Virginia Conference and is one of its most vital congregations.

In 2005 he became a district superintendent and focused his ministry in three areas: developing new faith communities, revitalizing existing churches by transforming clergy leadership and strengthening connectionalism. Under his leadership, the Arlington District started more than 10 new faith

communities and introduced many training events for clergy and laity to strengthen spiritual foundations of ministry. He emphasizes that Christ should be the Lord in our mission and ministries, and prayer should go first.

The Rev. Paul Rasmussen, senior minister at Highland Park United Methodist Church in Dallas, Texas, will preach at Sunday evening opening worship, and again for Monday evening worship.

Before entering seminary, Rasmussen served five years as an assistant men's basketball coach at Centenary College of Louisiana. During his tenure, Centenary was one of seven NCAA schools to graduate 100 percent of its players.

Rasmussen left coaching in 1997 for a career in sports marketing, then left the corporate world in 2000 to pursue his call to ministry. He began an internship at Highland Park UMC while attending SMU's Perkins School of Theology. In 2001, he began preaching at Cornerstone, Highland Park's contemporary worship service. Under his leadership, Cornerstone has expanded to include three

services each weekend, with a combined weekly attendance of 2,000. He also led the project to renovate and restore the Munger Place Church satellite campus in East Dallas.

A native of Shreveport, La., Rasmussen is a fourth-generation United Methodist minister. He holds an undergraduate degree from Centenary College, a Master of Arts from the University of Richmond, and a Master of Divinity from SMU's Perkins School of Theology.

The Rev. Lisa Yebuah will preach the closing worship service. A native of Nashville, Tenn., Yebuah claims Summerville, S.C., as her hometown. She is a 1999 graduate of Wofford College and a 2004 graduate of Duke University Divinity School.

Yebuah's travels to Haiti and South Africa during her seminary career fueled her desire to make the Wesleyan understanding of "love of God and love of neighbor" tangible to United Methodists in the local church. She has served as the pastor of inviting ministries at Edenton Street United Methodist Church in Raleigh, N.C., since 2009.

## Clergy housing allowance tax exemption prevails—for now

Last year, in response to a suit filed by the Freedom From Religion Foundation (FFRF), the Federal District Court for the Western District of Wisconsin declared unconstitutional the tax exemption currently permitted for clergy housing allowances. Judge Barbara Crabb immediately stayed her decision pending an appeal to the Seventh Circuit Court of Appeals.

On Thursday, Nov. 13, 2014, the three-judge appeals panel struck down the lower court's ruling, citing the FFRF's lack of standing, thereby allowing the clergy housing allowance tax benefit to remain in effect.

This ruling marks the second time this case has been defeated because the plaintiff has not established that they are being directly harmed by this statute. The appeals court did not address the main issue of whether or not the clergy housing allowance benefit is constitutional. The justices did outline possible steps the FFRF could take in order to gain standing in this case. Therefore, many experts believe that this case will reappear.

The Arkansas Conference Office of Administrative Services is following developments in this area and will keep clergy and churches apprised of how any developments affect United Methodist clergy and churches.

## Gurdon UMC the latest subject of video series



Gurdon United Methodist Church had been described by some as a dying church.

Then, they started reaching out to their community, offering ministries to children and youth. What happened next is remarkable: increased and more diverse attendance, new Sunday school offerings and more. The church van, seldom driven in recent years, now gives rides to kids who enjoy spending their time at Gurdon UMC.

"We're actually making multiple trips to be able to pick up all of the children that are coming to

To watch or download 'A New Day,' the story of Gurdon UMC, visit the Conference's YouTube channel: [www.youtube.com/arkansasumc](http://www.youtube.com/arkansasumc).

DVDs will be mailed to local churches upon request; to order, call 501-324-8036 or email [communications@arumc.org](mailto:communications@arumc.org).

Sunday school," says member Lena Simpson.

The video is a production of the Arkansas Conference Center for Technology, in conjunction with Tiny Seed Films.

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## COMING UP

## December

**Alternative Christmas Market at St. Paul UMC Little Rock Dec. 6-7**

St. Paul United Methodist Church Little Rock's annual Alternative Christmas Market will return this year on Saturday, Dec. 6 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. and Sunday, Dec. 7 from 9 a.m. to noon, at the church, 2223 Durwood Road in Little Rock. Admission is free, and all are welcome.

This annual event provides shoppers with opportunities to find rare and unique gifts for Christmas, with proceeds from sales going to deserving organizations in the community.

Some of the participating organizations, such as the Arkansas Rice Depot, Sister Maria Liebeck (all proceeds benefitting The Helping Hand Food Pantry), Broken China Jewelry (benefitting the Women's Shelter of Central Arkansas), Camp Aldersgate and others will be selling their own unique gifts. Other beneficiaries of the Alternative Christmas Market include Heifer International, Arkansas State Hospital Auxiliary and the congregation's Samaritan Fund. The market's silent auction will be focused on Fine Arts/Crafts items, including paintings, stained glass, photography and hand-crafted items. For more information, call the church at 501-666-9429.

**Mrs. Santa's Kitchen at Sequoyah UMC Fayetteville Dec. 13**

Visit "Mrs. Santa's Kitchen" at Sequoyah United Methodist Church, 1910 Old Wire Road in Fayetteville on Saturday, Dec. 13, from 9 a.m. to noon to shop for homemade cookies, candy, bread and gifts. All proceeds go to local missions. For more information, contact Sequoyah UMC at 479-442-8677.

**Father Richard Rohr webcast at Lakewood UMC North Little Rock Dec. 16**

"Is There Another Way? Teaching an Alternative Orthodoxy within the Christian Tradition," a live video webcast with Father Richard Rohr, will be offered at Lakewood UMC North Little Rock on Tuesday, Dec. 16 from 6 to 7:30 p.m. in the theater. Admission is free, and the public is invited.

In the webcast, Rohr and others will explore what it means to offer a different—but nevertheless "orthodox"—way to think about and practice our Christian faith. When wisdom and mystical traditions are front and center, rather than peripheral to mainline Christianity, can they bring hope and healing to a world and church that seem stuck in negativity and suffering?

The webcast is sponsored by the Lakewood Center for Spiritual Wholeness (find them on Facebook). The Center's mission is to expand the light of Christ by teaching, exploring and experiencing Christian contemplative practice. Begun while Rev. Richard Lancaster was at Lakewood UMC and currently shepherded by lay leader Ken Pearson, it hopes to serve as a local focal point for those interested in studying theological thinkers and authors.

## January

**Ethnic Local Church, Human Relations Day, Peace with Justice: grant applications due Jan. 10**

Jan. 10 is the next deadline to apply for several grants available from the United Methodist General Board of Church and Society (GBCS):

- **Ethnic Local Church Grants** are given to ministries that strengthen ethnic/minority local churches through education, advocacy or leadership development as they engage in social justice.
- **Human Relations Day Grants** are to support ministries that respond to non-violent young offenders through education, advocacy or leadership training and development.
- **Peace with Justice Grant** applicants must work toward achieving at least one of the following objectives: 1) Assist United Methodists in understanding and responding to violence and militarism, and in moving and leading nations and peoples to reconciliation, transformation, and redemption; 2) Involve and develop principal leaders among United Methodists and enjoy the general public in efforts to end conflicts, human rights violations and violent aggression around the world; 3) Promote just national and international policies and actions seeking to address poverty and restore communities; or support policies that promote systematic

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**YOUTH MINISTER**—Park Hill Presbyterian, 3520 JFK, North Little Rock, seeks energetic person of faith to lead youth ministry. 10 hours weekly, salary negotiable, focus on Sunday night youth meetings. Have a heart for youth, want to lead a team nurturing Christian faith through Bible study, recreation, service, mission trips, youth conferences? Resumes to Search Committee via pastor, Gordon Garlington, at [ggarlington3@hotmail.com](mailto:ggarlington3@hotmail.com).

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

economic justice and the self-development of peoples, in particular to respond to the disproportionate effect of injustices on racial, indigenous and ethnic persons.

For more information on any of these grants, contact the Rev. Neal Christie, GBCS assistant general secretary for education and leadership formation, at [nchristie@umc-gbcs.org](mailto:nchristie@umc-gbcs.org) or 202-488-5611; or download grant applications at [www.umc-gbcs.org/conference-connections](http://www.umc-gbcs.org/conference-connections).

**Music or dance ensembles sought for General Conference 2016; apply by Jan. 12**

United Methodist choirs and worship ensemble groups from around the world may now audition online for an invitation to perform at the 2016 General Conference, the United Methodist Church's top legislative assembly, which meets in Portland, Ore., from May 10-20, 2016.

To apply for an invitation to General Conference, groups should submit a letter of application that includes: 1) name of group; 2) name of primary contact person with email address and phone number; 3) brief history/bio of the group including number of members, general age range, group's location, and any unique characteristics; and 4) a link to a private YouTube video of the group performing. The application should be emailed to [gc2016worshipdirector@gmail.com](mailto:gc2016worshipdirector@gmail.com) by Jan. 12, 2015.

Performance opportunities for invited choirs and ensembles include morning worship and/or a lunchtime showcase venue. Groups are responsible for their own expenses.

**Beyond! Children's ministry conference set for Jan. 30-31, 2015; register by Dec. 15**

The Arkansas Conference Council on Children's Ministries presents Beyond! 2015 Children's Ministry Conference, to be held Jan. 30-31, 2015, at Mount Sequoyah Conference and Retreat Center in Fayetteville. Early check-in is available Jan. 29, with some pre-conference programming the morning of Jan. 30.

The keynote speaker will be Mark Burrows, director of Children's and Family Ministries at First UMC Fort Worth, Texas. He has gained national recognition for his books and recordings for and about children and children's ministry, and has a special passion for engaging children in meaningful worship experiences. Other featured presenters include the Rev. Mackey Yokem, executive director of mission and ministry for the Arkansas Conference; Karen Anderson, director of Christian education at Central UMC Rogers and a certified instructor for the Created By God human sexuality curriculum; and Jena Barber of Elm Springs, presenting on "FaithYoga" meditation.

Breakout session options will include: Bible Boot Camp, Created by God, Finding and Keeping Volunteers, Equipping Families for Faith Formation at Home, Children's Ministry 101, Parenting in the Pew, Early Childhood Education, Puppets, Worshiping with the Family of God, Safe Sanctuaries and more. For registration information, including a scholarship option, visit <http://kidz.arumc.org>.

## February

**Confirmation retreat at Camp Tanako Feb. 13-15, 2015**

Camp Tanako, the United Methodist camp in Hot Springs, is offering a Small Membership Church Confirmation Experience for the weekend of February 13-15, 2015. The weekend is designed for those small membership churches that may benefit from gathering with other small churches for Confirmation activities. The cost will be \$100 for two nights and six meals. Pastors or mentors are encouraged to attend with their confirmands. Beginning the first week of January, participants may register at [www.tanako.org](http://www.tanako.org). For more information, please visit [tanako.org](http://www.tanako.org) or call 501-262-2600.

## Trinity UMC LR shows appreciation to partner school's faculty, staff

David Glaze, left, Trinity UMC Little Rock's minister of music, pins a blue ribbon button on Tyrone Harris, Principal of Brady Elementary School, as Gayle Fiser and the Rev. Betsy Singleton Snyder look on. Staff and members of Trinity UMC on Oct. 17 dressed in state fair-themed outfits to surprise the staff of Brady Elementary School with a "flash mob" visit. They showed appreciation to faculty and staff with "Blue Ribbon Best in Show" buttons.

Trinity and Brady have been Partners in Education since 2008. In addition to staff appreciation activities like this one, church members also volunteer at the school and provide uniforms and supplies for students in need.



COURTESY PHOTO

## OBITUARIES

### LITTLE ROCK

#### Virginia Davidson Steele

Virginia Faye Davidson Steele, 88, of Little Rock, passed away Friday, Nov. 14, 2014.



**Virginia Steele**

She was born April 10, 1926, in Manila, Ark., to W.M. and Mazie Davidson. She was preceded in death by her parents; her spouse of 64 years, the Rev. Norris Steele, a United Methodist elder; her daughter, Allidel Steele Whitwell; a brother, Bill Davidson; and a sister, Anabeth Holt.

She was an extremely loving woman, deeply devoted to her friends, family and faith. She was very compassionate, a giving person and a gracious disciple of Jesus Christ and his church. She is survived by three sons, all United Methodist clergy: the Rev. Bill Steele and his wife, Mary; the Rev. David Steele and his wife, Diane; and the Rev. Rodney Steele and his wife, Becky; one son-in-law, John Whitwell; one sister, Kaye Adams; nine grandchildren and eight great-grandchildren.

A celebration of her life was held Monday, Nov. 17, 2014, at Henderson United Methodist Church Little Rock. The family received friends at the church following the service. A graveside service was held Tuesday Nov. 18, 2014, at the Manila Cemetery.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests memorials be made to Henderson United Methodist Church, 13000 West Baseline Road, Little Rock, AR 72210; or First United Methodist Church Manila, 209 S. Baltimore, Manila, AR 72442.

### NASHVILLE

#### Dorothy Swain

Dorothy C. Swain, 89, of Nashville, Ark., passed away Thursday, Oct. 23, 2014, at her home.

She was born July 24, 1925 in Jackson, Miss., to the late Howard C. Caillouet and Edvige G. Caillouet.

A preacher's wife, she took on numerous duties as her husband served appointments around the Little Rock Conference from 1946 to 1986. The Rev. James B. Swain Sr. pastored a number of Methodist and United Methodist congregations during that 40-year period, including the Rowell Circuit, Lincoln County Circuit, Mount Tabor, Rondo Circuit, Bingen Circuit, Parkers Chapel/Bethel Charge, Emmet Circuit and Horatio. Dorothy also was a member of the Eastern Star for several years.

In addition to her parents, she was preceded in death by her husband. Survivors include her son, Jimmy Swain of Warren; two daughters, Claudine Oswalt of Greenville, Miss., and Princess Ward of Nashville, Ark.; seven grandchildren; several great-grandchildren; and a host of other relatives and friends.

Graveside services were held Sunday, Oct. 26, 2014, at Restland Memorial Park in Nashville.

### SPRINGDALE

#### Shirley L. Lindsay

Shirley Lowman Lindsay, 92, of Springdale, passed away Thursday, Nov. 6, 2014.

She was born on June 26, 1922, in Pine Ridge to Guy



**Dorothy Swain**

Rutland Lowman and Dollie Crutchfield Lowman. She graduated from Watson Chapel High School, then Draughton School of Business. She worked at Parkin Printing Company in Little Rock before marrying John W. Lindsay on Aug. 21, 1946.

Shirley was active in the churches where her husband served as minister: St. John's UMC Fort Worth, Texas; First UMC Little Rock; Jackson Street UMC Magnolia; First UMC Malvern; First UMC Pine Bluff; and Village UMC Hot Springs Village.

She was preceded in death by her parents; her husband; and her brother, Rex P. Lowman. She is survived by her children: Karen Knight and her husband, Jeff, of Arlington, Texas; and Circuit Judge Mark Lindsay and his wife, Sherrie, of Fayetteville, Ark.; five grandchildren: John Mark Lindsay Jr. and his wife, Brittany; Lindsay Curtis and her husband, Jeff; Joel Knight and his wife, Hannah; Sarah Segoe and her husband, Jay; and Laura Martin and her husband, Chris; and great-grandchildren Kate, Clara and Caroline Lindsay; Sloane Curtis; Henry and Sophie Knight; and Addison Bell Martin.

A memorial service was held Monday, Nov. 10, 2014, in the chapel of First UMC Pine Bluff.

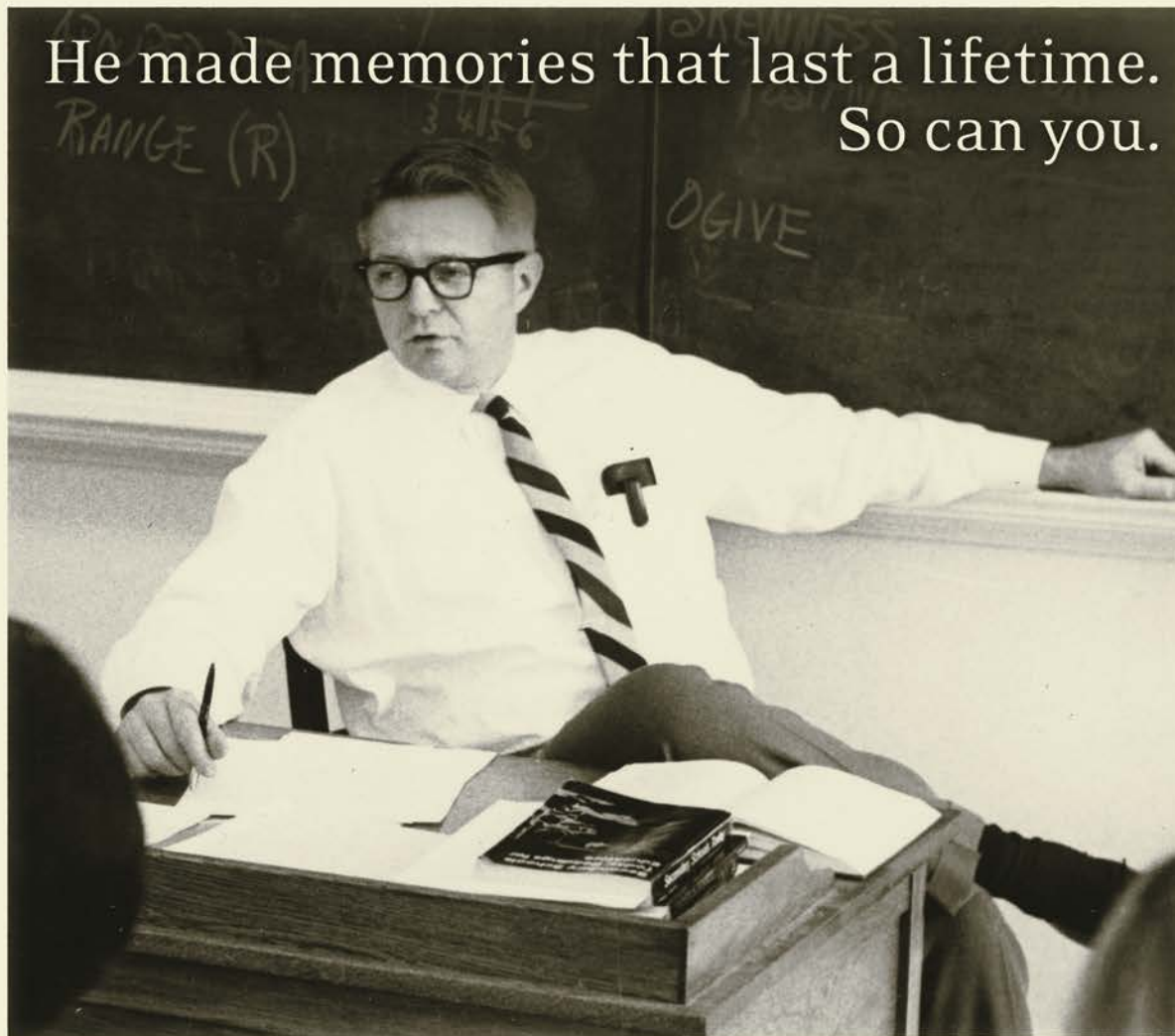
The family would like to thank the owners and staff of Homestyle Assisted Living; and the doctors, nurses and staff of Northwest Medical Center and Willard Walker Hospice Home.

Memorials may be made to First UMC Pine Bluff, 200 W. 6th Ave., Pine Bluff, AR 71601; Central UMC Fayetteville, 6 W. Dickson, Fayetteville, AR 72701; or Willard Walker Hospice Home, 325 East Longview St., Fayetteville, AR 72703.



**Shirley Lindsay**

He made memories that last a lifetime.  
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Joyous Advent and Merry Christmas  
to you from the Arkansas Conference!



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## CANDLELIGHT CAROL TOUR SERVICES

DECEMBER 18 AT 7:30 P.M.  
CENTRAL UNITED  
METHODIST CHURCH  
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FAYETTEVILLE

DECEMBER 19 AT 7:30 P.M.  
SAINT JAMES UNITED  
METHODIST CHURCH  
321 PLEASANT VALLEY DRIVE  
LITTLE ROCK

FREE AND OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

celebrating

**50**  
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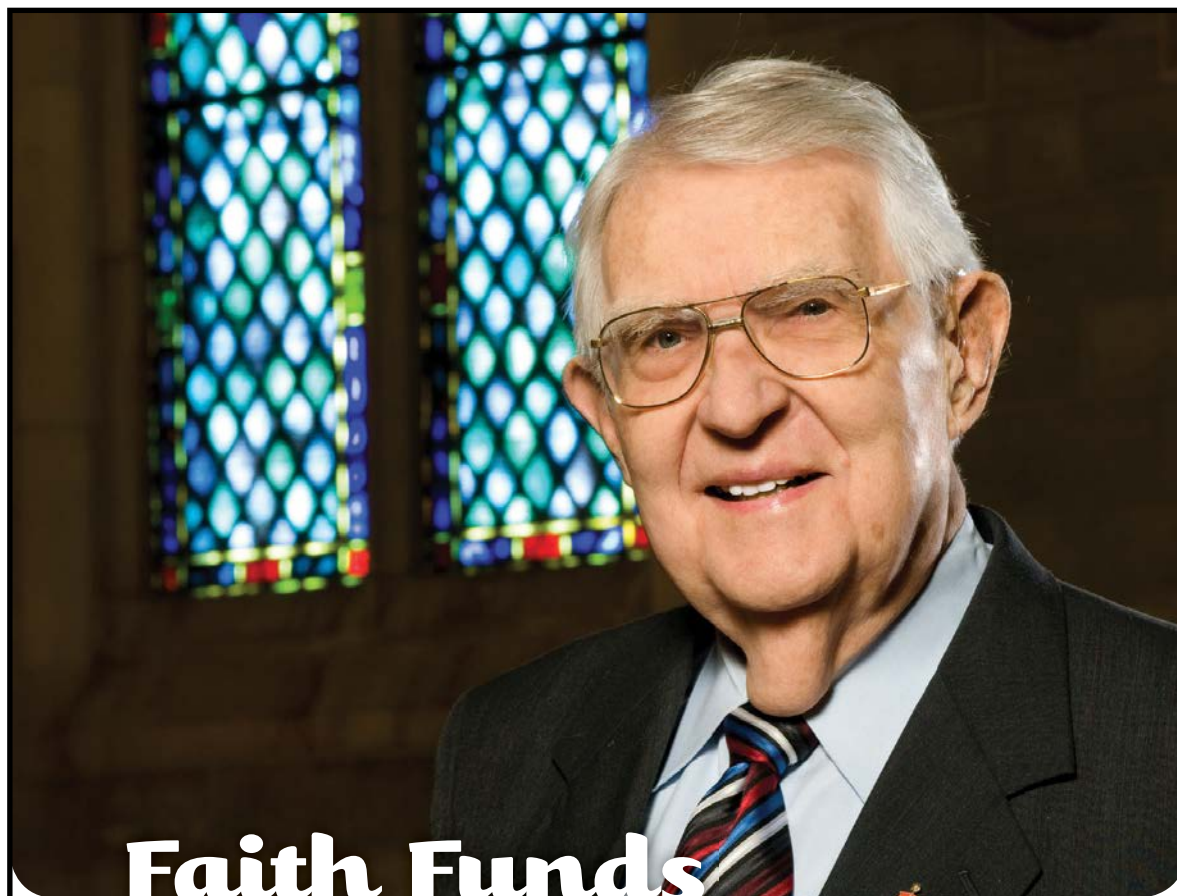
Announcing the opening of Hendrix Memorial Garden – a columbarium designed to be the final resting place for individuals and families who feel a spiritual connection with Hendrix College. Located next to Greene Chapel in the heart of the Hendrix campus, our Memorial Garden is as convenient for family and friends as it is peaceful and beautiful.

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## Faith Funds

### *Room for Growth*

Bishop Kenneth Hicks has a substantial – and concrete – role in the history of the United Methodist Foundation of Arkansas. In 1981 when UMFA President Jim Argue Jr. joined the Foundation, there were very limited operating funds and office space. Soon Bishop Hicks had a door cut from his office to a small conference room to provide additional space for the Foundation. He also allowed his assistant, Janice Goldman, to provide administrative support.

“I helped Jim a bit by offering ideas on who we needed to contact to help grow the Foundation,” said Bishop Hicks. “I wanted to encourage him to stay with it. I saw the promise that the Foundation represented, and I believe continuity in leadership has been a key to its great success.”

Bishop Hicks thinks the flexibility of the Foundation to fund important ministries that are not budgeted by the Conference is one of its greatest assets. He marvels at the faith of the donors who put their confidence in the Foundation in its early years and those who continue to keep it strong.

“The Foundation holds high the banner for stewardship in our Conference,” said Bishop Hicks. “It is the caretaker of hundreds of legacies left by faithful and generous United Methodists across Arkansas.”



**The United Methodist Foundation of Arkansas**

5300 Evergreen Drive • Little Rock, Arkansas 72205

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