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EVERY LITTLE BIT MATTERS: These Imagine No Malaria offering boxes are available in limited quantity and at no charge from the Arkansas Conference; contact Martha Taylor (mtaylor@arumc.org) to request some. Additional boxes are available for free online at www.imagenomalaria.org and <http://shop.umc.org/giving>, as are several other free promotional items for local churches. More resources are coming soon, including materials for remembering Imagine No Malaria during Lent.

AUM PHOTO BY AMY FORBUS

Nearly there...

ARUMC passes \$950k mark toward million-dollar Imagine No Malaria goal

BY MARTHA TAYLOR
Special Contributor

The new year is looking bright for the Arkansas Conference's Imagine No Malaria effort. The latest numbers from Conference treasurer Todd Burriss and Imagine No Malaria headquarters in Nashville, Tenn., show that as of Nov. 15, the Conference is within \$43,000 of its \$1 million goal.

The total includes financial gifts already given and pledges that have yet to be fulfilled. Organizers of the three-year effort set June 2015 as the deadline for crossing the \$1 million threshold.

"As I have come to fully expect, United Methodists in Arkansas are making a huge contribution to this effort," Bishop Gary E. Mueller wrote in a recent letter. "We are close to achieving our goal, just as the United Methodist Church is getting closer and closer to its \$75 million goal."

The Imagine No Malaria effort captured the hearts of United Methodists across the country with the 2006 launch of "Nothing But Nets." In 2010, that campaign gave way to Imagine No Malaria, which expanded the scope and sustainability of the work. Overall, \$65 million has been given or pledged.

The numbers are astonishing. In eight years, malaria deaths in Africa have dropped by 50 percent; 2.3 million insecticide-treated bed nets have been

[See NEARLY THERE, page 7]



Light of hope

The Rev. Roger Hook, pastor of Southside United Methodist Church Batesville, on Nov. 30 holds up the Candle of Hope from the church's Advent wreath as he preaches to the congregation just one week after their building burned. Hook said that on their first Sunday in their temporary location, lighting the Candle of Hope seemed appropriate not just because it was the first Sunday of Advent, but also because of their situation: They would be moving forward full of hope.

The church will meet at Southside High School as they pursue rebuilding on their land situated just across the highway.

The week after the fire, the church formed its building committee, which began the process of selecting an architect and has visited other churches to get an idea of the possibilities for their new space. They also have held one meeting to dream about the new facility, and expect to hold another such meeting in late December or early January. Clean-up of the old building's remains began Dec. 17.

"We hope to have building plans selected and begin construction in late winter, weather permitting, or early spring," Hook said.

PHOTO BY SUSAN LEDBETTER

Violent grace

BY JENNIFER ARMSTRONG BOULDEN
Special Contributor

A few weeks ago a 17-year-old boy stabbed my 30-year-old little brother twice in the back during a 1 a.m. carjacking, leaving him to bleed out alone on a cold convenience store floor.

That sentence still feels impossible, ridiculous to fathom.

My brother isn't someone who gets stabbed. No one really is, right?

We waited hours for news in the UAMS ER that night. Word began spreading as the day broke. Love hit us from every direction. Within 24 hours, it felt like the entire planet Earth was praying for Michael to recover. We felt drenched in grace, and were pretty sure we'd broken Facebook.

The attack was the worst of it. After that, things kept breaking our way. A store clerk kept Michael alive with ice and pressure until paramedics could get there. Police caught the suspect within minutes. The weapons narrowly missed Michael's major organs. The wounds were deep but not fatal. An internal bleeding scare later that morning turned out the best way possible. Michael could come home with me the next day.

I can't even describe the relief our family experienced. Our story was on the local news, and the well-wishes and prayers continued to skyrocket.

But as the week progressed, a secondary narrative began to emerge, especially online. I read ugly diatribes about race, about staying out of the "bad parts of town," about crime taking over our city, about how the world was not safe anymore for good people and you should never help a stranger because they'll literally stab you in the back. Though understandable, these sentiments seemed neither helpful nor true.

In that gas station, when Michael realized he was very likely about to die, he focused on all the love he'd received and all the love he still wanted to share. He wished he'd given more hugs. He began to be less scared, feel less alone. Gasping in pain, he worried about the person who'd stabbed him. My ever-compassionate brother asked us to pray for his attacker.

'Wave of love'

That's the thing. We were all angry, shocked, terrified, rattled, upset about his attack, yet there was support all around us, many layers deep. As we rode that wave of love through the darkness, we felt renewed appreciation for the fragility of life and amazed gratitude at the kind hearts of strangers.

Maybe it's counterintuitive, but it felt wrong to draw from this crime too many condemning conclusions about our world, or too many self-congratulatory conclusions

about ourselves.

I don't know what frenzy made a 17-year-old kid now facing two felonies think that killing someone to steal an old van was a smart idea. I know it was not because he was black, or because Michael had dared be in a bad part of town, or because the city had become too dangerous for good people, or because helping strangers is a bad idea. And it wasn't because God had rejected him.



Jennifer Armstrong Boulden

Michael, our sister Laura and I grew up as preacher's kids, moving all over Arkansas in a family of active United Methodist ministers—four of them. We were surrounded by love, always.

It struck me how privileged our childhoods were compared to what this boy likely experienced. I imagine that growing up, he did not feel layers of loving support and prayers coming at him from every direction. Things were probably not in the habit of breaking his way.

I imagine that our collective isolationism within our communities had something to do with influencing his background, turning him toward aggression to combat fear and need. I imagine he is not a creature of evil, but one who has never felt the kind of universal love and support we have received throughout this horrible event. I imagine being a criminal didn't have to be his self-identity.

Hope

My personal belief centers on hope. I believe there is no heart or evil from which truth, goodness, and even beauty cannot grow, if nurtured. Conversely, no heart is immune to evil and desperation when segregated from the love and support we share.

This troubled kid almost murdered my brother. He deserves his full punishment, and I hope for everyone's safety he grows wiser instead of angrier.

That said, we've constructed a world full of boundaries and divisions where fears flourish. It's too easy to forget that God's love is not limited to our fears and the silly self-created fences between us.

Our family will be approaching this new year with grateful hearts. I hope to remember as the year progresses that everyone we meet in this sad and beautiful world we share needs respect and nurture.

I believe we are all equally worthy of the kind of love and support our family has experienced through this violent and senseless crime. That seems like a good place to start this year afresh.

May God's grace be with us all.

Boulden, a writer and marketing consultant, lives in Little Rock and is a member of Quapaw Quarter UMC.



EDITOR'S CORNER

BY AMY FORBUS

Don't miss it...

FOMO: Fear of Missing Out. It's a naturally occurring phenomenon for most of us.

I've had FOMO for as long as I can remember. As a child, I hated going to bed because as the youngest in the household, I knew that all the other people there got to stay up later and do very important and interesting things. What would I miss while I slept?

I think FOMO is the reason the practice of channel surfing exists. Why watch one television program when there are so many others to consider watching?

FOMO can grow to unhealthy levels if left unchecked. It may explain why many people find their calendars packed with back-to-back and stacked obligations... because if we don't take advantage of a particular opportunity right now, will we ever get the chance again? Who can say? Life is short.

It's why we have DVRs and Netflix and YouTube. And also why we have the ability to access all of those tools through our smartphones. Some FOMO sufferers behave irresponsibly just to ensure they aren't letting anything get past them (ever read a text message while driving? There's a clear symptom).

The smartphone itself may do the best job of exposing the most obvious symptoms of FOMO. With that incredible device's buzzes and beeps and notifications, we can get so preoccupied with seeing what else is happening in other locations that we become oblivious to what's taking place right in front of us. Such irony: Fear of Missing Out begets Actual Missing Out.

Several years ago, I found myself falling down online rabbit holes so often that the practice began to affect my relationship with my husband. I'm thankful that he called me out on it. The danger hasn't gone away, but my awareness of it has heightened.

I'm not a big proponent of new year's resolutions. After all, why wait for an arbitrary date to make changes for the better? But in this new year, I resolve to quit glancing at my computer screen while someone is sitting in a guest chair in my office. Perhaps I'll even stop picking up my phone every time it buzzes—or every time I imagine that it's buzzing as it sits quietly in my purse.

God exposes us to the miraculous every single day. Yes, miracles can come through technology, but they also can come walking through your door. They arrive in moments that might at first seem boring or inconsequential. They emerge, if we let them, in the most fleeting glimpses of grace all around us.

And wouldn't it be a shame to miss out on that?

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



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Submission Deadlines

Issue Date	Submission Deadline
Feb. 6	Jan. 20
March 6	Feb. 17
April 3	March 17

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



GROWING TOGETHER IN CHRIST: A word from the Bishop

BY GARY E. MUELLER

It's time to get serious

I've been talking about it. We've been talking about it. And, hopefully, you've been talking about it.

The "it" is experiencing spiritual revival.

So exactly what is spiritual revival? How do we experience it, and what difference does it make? These are important questions. In fact, they are essential because we are investing so much time, energy and heart into seeking spiritual revival. That's why after a great deal of prayerful discernment, the Launch Team working on helping the entire Arkansas Annual Conference experience spiritual revival has developed a definition that answers these questions:

Spiritual Revival is a gift from the Holy Spirit that begins as individuals prayerfully seek God. Revival binds together individuals into a movement. Revival results in a deeper relationship with Christ as Savior and Lord. Revival compels

us to be part of Jesus' work in the world.

As we begin this New Year, I confess I've become aware that my own personal need to experience spiritual revival is greater than ever before. Quite simply, I've come face to face with the reality that I can't do what God wants me to do by my own efforts. I can't do it alone, and I can't do it apart from Jesus.

So here's what I'm going to do in 2015: long deeply and passionately for God to act in my life; be open to the Holy Spirit's movement in my life; move from making faith just about me to becoming part of a movement that goes out into the world; grow as a disciple of Jesus Christ; and share Jesus' love in ways that transform individuals, communities and the world.

I hope you feel the same way I do, which is why I want to invite you into a time of preparation for spiritual revival by covenanting with me to do

three simple things throughout 2015.

1. Pray every single day for yourself and the people called United Methodists to experience spiritual revival.
2. If you are a pastor, engage in conversation and prayer with laity about the importance of spiritual revival and how you can seek it together.
3. If you are a layperson, engage in conversation and prayer with other laity about the importance of spiritual revival and how you can seek it together.

I believe with all my heart that God longs to make spiritual revival a reality in Arkansas. That means it's time for us to get serious about seeking it.

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*:

- Lu Harding (deacon)
—Retirement; effective Dec. 31, 2014
- Dan Walker (retired local pastor)—Imboden/Smithville UMCs; effective Jan. 1, 2015
- Jesse James (supply pastor)—Weiner/Fisher UMCs; 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.



PRACTICAL DIVINITY

BY ANDREW C. THOMPSON

Angels: God's messengers, our guardians

We're in a season of angels.

It all began with Advent. One of Advent's most beloved Scripture passages is the angel Gabriel's visit to the Virgin Mary. Joseph had his own angelic encounter, of course. An angel visited him to assure him that Mary's child was from the Holy Spirit.

So it was through angels that news of Jesus Christ's coming into the world was first revealed.

Then after Advent, on the holy day of Christmas itself, angels were everywhere around the birth of Jesus. An entire host of them visited the shepherds in the fields outside of Bethlehem. They sang, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace amongst those whom he favors!" (Luke 2:14).

Around the time of the Epiphany, an angel shows up again. Joseph is visited by an angel in a dream. The angel warns him to take Mary and the baby Jesus to Egypt following the visit of the Wise Men.

We don't talk that much about angels these days. Perhaps we should.

In the Bible, the presence of angels in our world is a given.

Angels are God's messengers. Hebrews 1:14 speaks of angels as

"spirits in the divine service" that are "sent to serve for the sake of those who are to inherit salvation."

Hope for spiritual revival

One of the chief hopes of Bishop Mueller is that the church in Arkansas would experience a great spiritual revival. I share that hope as well. I also believe that one thing that needs to be in place in order for spiritual revival to happen is a deep awareness on our part that we live in a profoundly spiritual world.

A feature of modern life very damaging to Christian spirituality is the tendency we have to artificially segment our lives into different parts. We think spiritual things when we go to church. When we're out in the world, we are much more likely to act as if the material world is all that exists. Our faith can become something like a hat we wear when we are expected to act in Christian ways. Otherwise, we're happy doing our own thing. How might we think about ourselves and our world differently?

A mentor who has had a great impact on me is Richard P.

Heitzenrater, one of the leading historians of John Wesley and early Methodism. I once heard Dr. Heitzenrater describe what it was about Wesley that he found so fascinating.

Here's what he said: Among all historical figures he has ever come across, John Wesley had a greater sense of God's abiding presence in the world than anyone else. Wesley was keenly aware that he was living in a Spirit-drenched world and that God was literally everywhere. He didn't just know this in his mind, of course. Wesley felt it deeply in his soul, and it directed everything about how he lived his life.

That Wesleyan awareness of the world as a Spirit-drenched place is exactly what we need in order to be prepared for the Spirit's work of revival among us.

Angels in our midst

Angels are spiritual beings, of course, so it should not surprise us that Wesley was deeply interested in them. His interest began at a young age. One of the very first sermons that we have from his hand was written in

1726. Its title: "On Guardian Angels."

In the sermon he cites Psalm 124, which reads, "For he will command his angels concerning you, to guard you in all your ways" (verse 11). Wesley sees this biblical promise as meant by God for all faithful Christians—evidence of the "peculiar care he hath taken for their protection."

In a later sermon, "Of Good Angels," Wesley gets very specific about the ways that he believes angels minister to human beings. He says that they surely enlighten our understanding and warn us subtly against danger. Wesley believes that angels also come to us in our dreams and reveal things to us that we need to know. He even believes that they intercede in the physical world to protect us from harm and to heal diseases. Because he sees the world we live in as so deeply spiritual, Wesley even thinks that good angels regularly do battle against evil angels that would seek to harm us.

These views might make a modern Methodist blush. Should we put stock in such things that seem so unsophisticated or unscientific?

That all depends on how

seriously you take the biblical worldview of how God interacts with the world. Does God use angels for divine purposes? Wesley had no doubts, and I think there is a great deal to learn from that.

I yearn for a great outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon our church. Lately, I've been wondering if there are angels beckoning us to prepare for that. If you wonder the same thing, you might from time to time pray this prayer that was important to Wesley himself:

"Everlasting God, you have ordained and constituted in a wonderful order the ministries of angels and mortals: mercifully grant that, as your holy angels always serve and worship you in heaven, so by your appointment they may help and defend us here on earth; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen" (Collect for Saint Michael and all Angels, *Book of Common Prayer*).

The Rev. Dr. Thompson, Wesley scholar for the Arkansas Conference, teaches at Memphis Theological Seminary. He writes "Practical Divinity" quarterly for the Arkansas United Methodist. Email: athompson@arumc.org.

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 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, join the "Volunteers in Mission & Disaster Response - Serving Arkansas & Beyond" group for updates.

Case management help needed for those affected by April tornado

Interfaith and Partners Disaster Recovery is seeking volunteers to serve as **case managers** for households facing long-term recovery. Case managers will work with individuals and families to help them take steps toward recovering from the April tornado. No experience required. Training will be provided.

Contact Janice Mann (disaster@arumc.org) to ask about becoming a case manager.

Rebuilding underway as part of tornado recovery

Interfaith and Partners Disaster Recovery has begun rebuilding six houses 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 in partnership with other recovery organizations and agencies of the Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (VOAD). Unmet needs and priorities are determined through Disaster Case Management and funding is offered by recovery partners through an Unmet Needs Committee. The labor for building the homes is being provided by Christian Aid Ministries (CAM), an organization of Amish, Mennonite, and other conservative Anabaptist groups and individuals. Byron Mann is working to have all foundations in place by Jan. 5 when CAM is scheduled to begin their work. To sign up to help with any of the recovery efforts, contact Janice Mann.

Help needed for organizing supplies and tools

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.

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.

PEOPLE OF FAITH

McAdoo debuts new book

The Rev. C.E. McAdoo, a retired elder who currently serves as pastor of St. Andrew UMC Little Rock, has published a new book focused on learning how to cooperate with those who are different from us.

Nobody Jumped Off the Boat: We Are All In This Together is a continuation of McAdoo's "Journey" book series. Previous books in the series are *Budgetitis* (2008) and *Soul Prints of Faith* (1990).

Nobody Jumped Off the Boat addresses "a relational understanding that I feel sometimes we don't have with one another," he says.

Using the Noah's Ark story as the central metaphor, he writes about the necessity of working together: getting on the boat, dealing with opposites, getting off the boat and discovering what happens next.

"If we think about the ark, there's nowhere in the Bible that it says anybody jumped off," he said. The people and animals had no choice but to get along, to make relationships work.



C.E. McAdoo

McAdoo focuses on three arenas in which relationships matter for the sake of working toward common goals: religion, education and business. Though the metaphor is biblical, the principles can apply to multiple disciplines, religious and non-religious.

"It has nothing to do with what your perspective is," he said. "It has everything to do with how to get from A to B."

Shop through UMCMarket.org, benefit your local church

While doing some home remodeling, planning travel or shopping for necessities, you can shop online and use your purchases to benefit your local church at www.umcmarket.org.

With UMCMarket.org, a percentage of your purchase (donated by the retailer) comes back to your church. You can select your local UMC to receive your donation, or another United Methodist-related organization like the United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR), among many others.

To use UMCMarket.org each

time you shop online, first log into the website, search for a retailer, click their logo and start shopping. When you visit that retail site through the UMCMarket.org portal, your spending generates donations. When the total donations reach \$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

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Free resource for funeral planning

The beginning of a new year brings reflection. We often make goals to improve our lives and relationships or to better organize our lives. One area we don't often discuss is our death.

As a clergy member, college chaplain and now custodian of a columbarium and memorial garden, I work with many families and continue to find that not knowing what the deceased wanted for their final arrangements adds to the stress surrounding the death of a loved one.

Sharing what we want to happen at our funeral is one of the best gifts we can give our family and friends. It might sound morbid, but as people of faith, it should be a time to give thanks for our earthly life.

One tool I have found helpful is a Funeral Planning Document. A year ago, I hesitantly shared this document and the building of our columbarium with Hendrix College faculty and staff. I received a few emails with light-hearted humor, but most replies were from people thanking me for the document and saying

it was much needed.

For a copy of this resource, email me at clark@hendrix.edu and if I can be of any assistance, please let me know.

Best wishes for the new year,
Rev. J. Wayne Clark
Chaplain, Hendrix College

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.

Camp Aldersgate receives \$1 million grant from Donald W. Reynolds Foundation

Funds will provide new activity center

Camp Aldersgate, Inc., a United Methodist-related camp located on 120 acres in west Little Rock, announced in a Nov. 24 news release that it has been awarded a \$1 million grant from the Donald W. Reynolds Foundation. The grant will be used to construct a multi-purpose activity center.

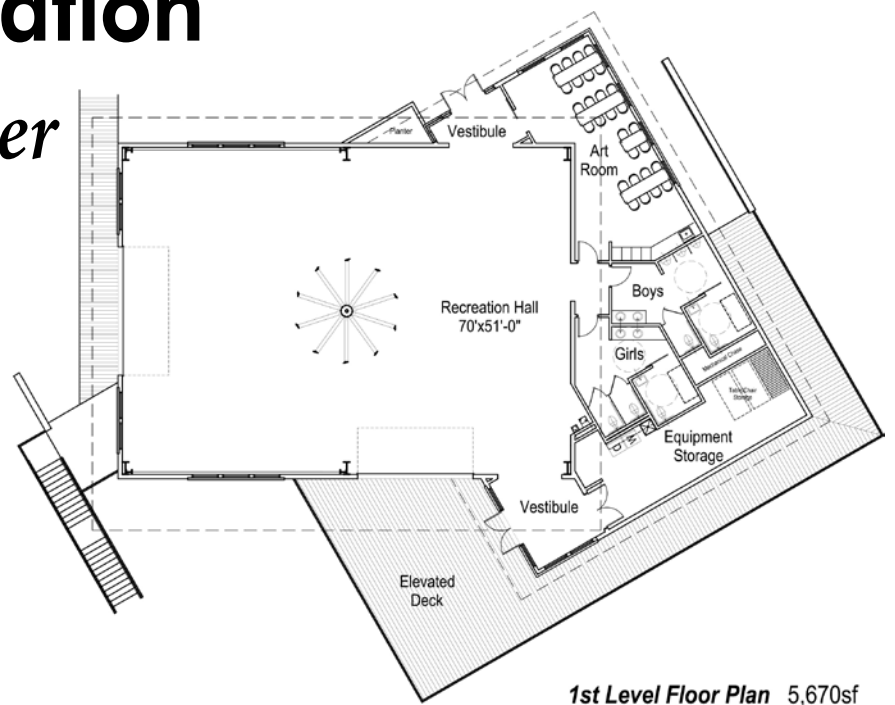
Camp Aldersgate creates life-changing experiences for individuals with special needs, and is the only camp in Arkansas uniquely dedicated to this purpose. It provides an ideal setting for programs which aim to strengthen personal and social development, promote healthy lifestyles, enrich communities and foster environmental awareness.

The Reynolds Foundation has awarded grants in excess of \$8.8 million to Camp Aldersgate. A Reynolds Foundation grant enabled the camp to complete its new master plan, which builds on the facilities already in place to strengthen the way children, volunteers, camp counselors, staff and physicians use the grounds, as well as improve the way the camp is able to serve the community.

The master plan identified a multipurpose activity building as the most critical need in the camp's immediate future. The new Donald W. Reynolds Activity Center will provide an indoor play area critical for year-round programming. With approximately 6,000 square feet of space, it will include a classroom for art and an informal recreational area for campers and participants of all abilities to enjoy activities such as beanbag baseball, chair volleyball, SNAG golf, shooting hoops, parachute games, dances or simply just hanging out together as a group. The design will feature wide decks overlooking the lake and the camp's natural beauty, as well as a shaded outdoor instructional space.

"There are few words to describe the impact the Donald W. Reynolds Foundation has had on Camp Aldersgate, our participants and our future," said Sarah Wacaster, Camp Aldersgate's CEO. "Since the Foundation's first gift to Camp in 2005, we have doubled the amount of those served and created an even more remarkable place than we ever dreamed possible."

Along with the grant, fundraising efforts will begin immediately to raise a minimum of \$250,000 to establish a new Activity Center operating fund.



1st Level Floor Plan 5,670sf



Entrance Elevation

ARCHITECTURAL RENDERINGS COURTESY OF CAMP ALDERSGATE

Hendrix receives Lilly Endowment grant to promote clergy civic engagement

Hendrix College in Conway announced in a Dec. 5 news release that it has been awarded a five-year, \$500,000 grant from the Lilly Endowment Inc. The award will support a new Institute for Clergy and Civic Engagement (ICCE) at the United Methodist-affiliated college.

The new program will develop leadership skills and ministry capacity for early-career Hendrix alumni who are pastors to lead their churches and communities in addressing major issues within their communities, and to meet the needs of the mission field outside the walls of the church.

"I am thrilled that the Lilly Endowment has put its trust in Hendrix College to help clergy in their early careers find the support they need to be the most effective pastors God has called them to be to

make disciples of Christ," said the Rev. J. Wayne Clark, the college's chaplain. He will serve as the project's executive director.

Open to 20 clergy

Two cohorts of 10 clergy participants each will receive training and support during a two-year period. Participants will meet in a series of retreats, each focused on a specific social issue affecting their communities. Following each retreat, participants will be challenged to discuss the topic with business and civic leaders in their own communities and explore ways to address the issues locally.

The pastors also will participate in a summer mission trip to serve a marginalized population with organizations that exemplify

innovative cooperative efforts among churches, civic officials and business leaders. At the end of the program, participants will develop a ministry plan that focuses on one issue for the church and the community to address together.

"The first cohort will be for Hendrix alumni only from all over the country," Clark wrote in an email message to the *Arkansas United Methodist*. "We think this will mainly be the students we have helped go to seminary from our first Lilly grant we received 12 years ago."

In 2002, Hendrix received a Lilly Endowment grant to develop the Exploration of Theological Vocation (now known as the Miller Center for Vocation, Ethics and Calling), which allowed Hendrix to put more resources into helping students discern a call into

ordained ministry. Since then, more than 50 students have attended seminary.

The second cohort will be open to Arkansas clergy only, and they need not be alumni of Hendrix. Both cohorts will be ecumenical, with their members having completed seminary within the last 5 to 10 years. The application process is still under development, but Clark confirmed that an advisory board will select members of both cohorts. Cohort participants will receive a stipend in addition to having the cost of the retreats and mission trips covered by the grant.

Lilly's legacy at Hendrix

Hendrix president Bill Tsutsui said the Lilly Endowment's generosity "has enabled Hendrix to deepen both its role as a liberal arts

college and the ways it supports the United Methodist Church and communities in Arkansas."

"For more than a decade, hundreds of Hendrix students have been enriched by the programs that began through Lilly Endowment's support," Tsutsui said. "When you add the people and the communities touched by the work of Hendrix students on mission trips and our alumni who now serve as clergy, the legacy of Lilly Endowment is absolutely incredible. This new grant is exciting, and we are so grateful for the Endowment's continued investment."

The program's first clergy cohort will start in Fall 2015. United Methodist clergy the Rev. Jeannie Burton and the Rev. Mary Jane Cole will serve as consulting senior pastor and program director, respectively.

Numbers from Ingathering hint at missing pieces



An 18-wheeler delivered 24 forklift pallets of relief supplies from Arkansas to the United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR) Sager Brown Depot in Baldwin, La., the morning of Dec. 2.

PHOTO BY BYRON MANN

BY AMY FORBUS
Editor

A record number of approximately 160 United Methodists and their friends spent time Nov. 22 working at Ingathering, organizing donations to help feed, clothe and provide emergency relief for others.

In addition to mountains of rice and sweet potatoes that reached

hungry persons in Arkansas with the help of Ingathering volunteers, 24 forklift pallets loaded with relief supplies went from Arkansas to Sager Brown Depot in Baldwin, La., as a direct result of the event.

"I thank God for each person who worked to make Ingathering a success," says Brenda Norwood, chair of the Conference Board of Global Ministries and coordinator of

Ingathering. "Being a part of Ingathering reminded me of a verse from Psalm 116: 'What shall I render to the Lord for all his blessings to me?'" she said. "The answer is, of course, share it!"

Decrease questioned

Ingathering is about more than a single day's work. It's also about

The Ingathering remittance form is still available for download at www.arumc.org/ingathering2014.

celebrating what has taken place all year long.

The forms churches submit as part of Ingathering provide a chance to share all the work a congregation has done beyond itself in the previous year. Yet as of Dec. 16, three of the five districts had reported lower totals for 2014 than 2013.

"I'm pretty sure that's not accurate," says Melissa Sanders, statistician for the Arkansas Conference, of the drop in mission giving.

Sanders pointed to the dramatic response to the April 27 tornado that tore through Vilonia and Mayflower, as well as responses to other storms that came through Arkansas in 2014. She suspects that many donations of time, money and supplies given at that point and at other times earlier in the year went unreported in November.

Still time to report

Sanders says it's never too late for a church to submit Ingathering forms.

"The reporting churches do through Ingathering gives us our best picture of Arkansas' involvement in local and global missions," she said. "That information helps us see

how vital our churches really are."

The one-page form includes lines for reporting in a variety of categories:

- Various kinds and of disaster response kits
- Estimated hours a church spent in mission and service activities (for example, the hours volunteers spent helping clear debris after a storm, as well as the time spent supporting those workers by preparing and serving meals; or the time spent stocking a food pantry or preparing and serving meals to individuals in need)
- Gifts to local ministries such as food banks and clothes closets
- Donations sent throughout the year to funds managed by the Arkansas Conference, including Special Sundays offerings and Conference-wide initiatives such as Imagine No Malaria and the new Child Hunger Initiative.

The Ingathering remittance form is still available for download at www.arumc.org/ingathering2014. Sanders and Norwood encourage churches to use the form as a way to celebrate the good work they do year-round in the name of Jesus Christ.

Jesus did not come to start a religion. He came to start a REVOLUTION.

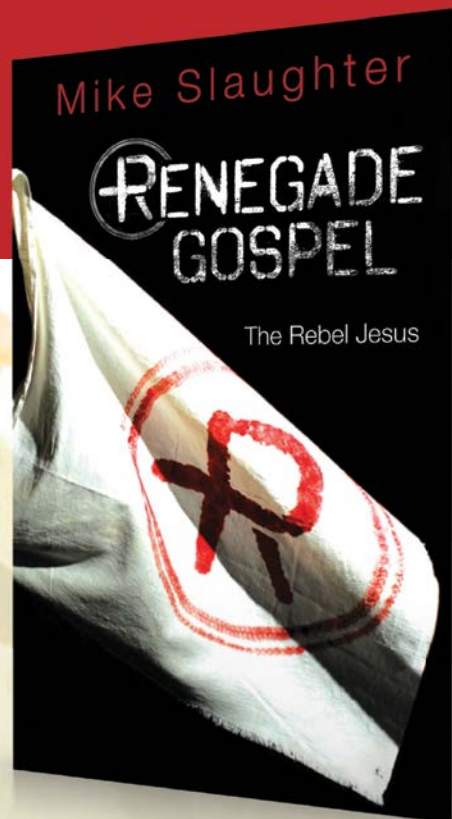
In *Renegade Gospel*, pastor and author Mike Slaughter presents Jesus and his challenging message to inspire us during Lent, Easter, and through the year. Read the red letters and discover Jesus all over again.

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- Children's Leader Guide



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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Nearly there (continued from page 1)

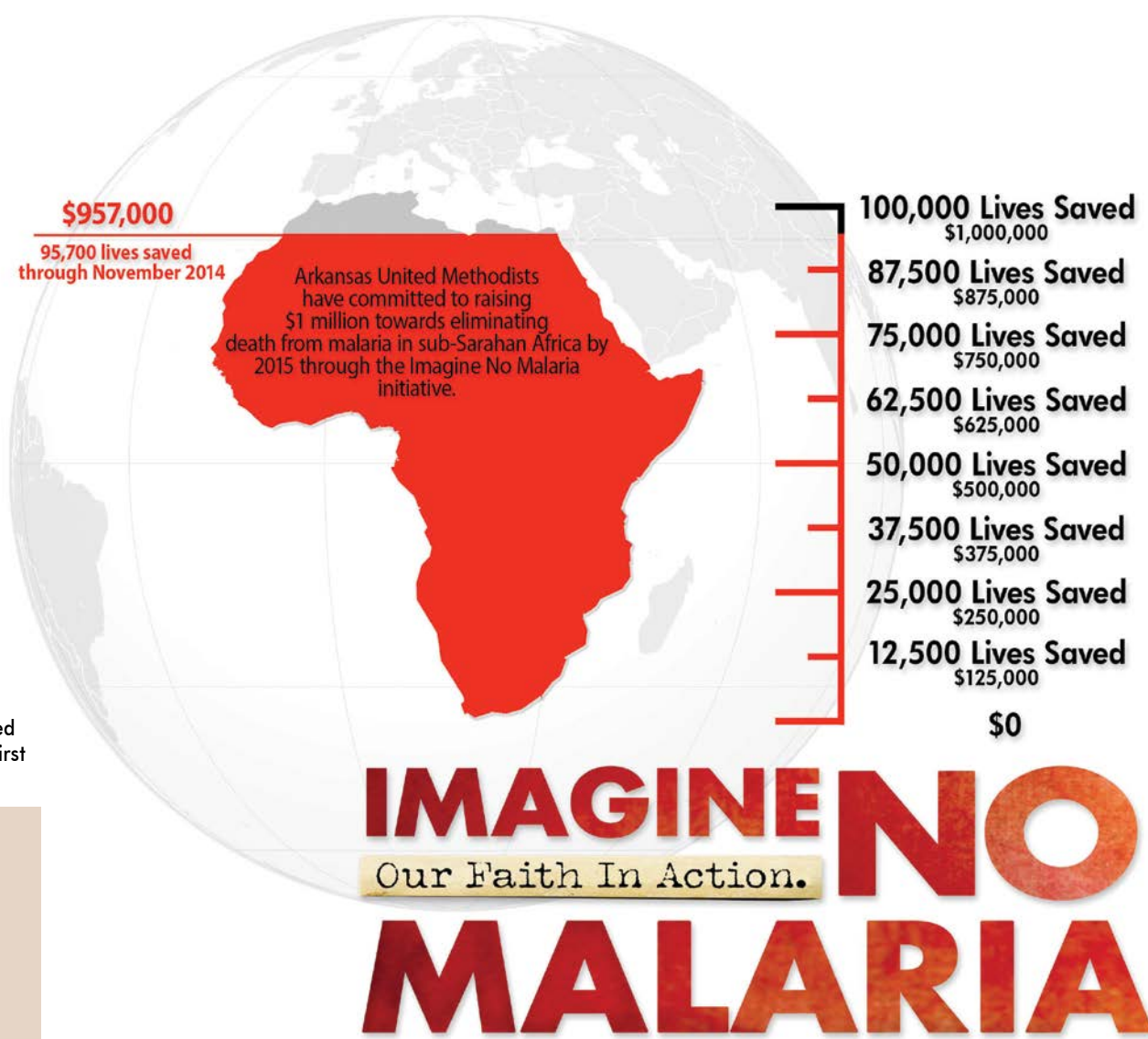
distributed; more than 11,600 local community health workers have been trained; more than 300 health facilities are in operation; and 13 health boards that serve 16 African countries have been established.

Availability of many free resources helps to keep the effort front and center here in Arkansas and across the denomination. An Advent toolkit was made available that included worship graphics, Facebook page banners, website graphics and an Advent video. The attention-getting bright green rubber bracelets, temporary tattoos and offering envelopes are just a few of the free materials local churches can order online at <http://shop.umc.org/giving>.

A Lenten toolkit is in production and will be available in early 2015. The toolkit will likely include worship graphics, digital images for local church websites and social media pages, a daily devotional, Lenten calendar and educational materials for children and youth.

The Rev. Taylor, Arkansas Conference storyteller, also works with marketing and training initiatives for the Conference.

RIGHT: United Methodists of Arkansas are poised to top \$1 million raised for Imagine No Malaria well before the three-year initiative comes to a close at Annual Conference 2015. Special thanks to the United Methodist Foundation of Arkansas for providing matching funds for the first one-third of the goal.



Imagine No Malaria attacks a preventable, treatable, curable disease through a multi-pronged approach of prevention, communication, treatment and education. Local churches have access to a variety of free resources to help support these efforts.

To select from these resources, visit www.imagenomalaria.org or shop.umc.org/giving.



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District Christmas brunch generates generosity

The clergy and clergy families of the Northwest District gathered Saturday, Dec. 6 for their annual Christmas brunch, hosted this year by the United Methodist Women of First UMC Fort Smith.

Attendees brought canned goods to donate to a local food pantry, and Waldron UMC's pantry was selected as the recipient. The Rev. Diane Miller was surprised and grateful for this gift to the ministry of the church she pastors.

The district made a donation to Imagine No Malaria in honor of all clergy, and also tried something new as a way to spread generosity: They held a drawing for Random Acts of Kindness gift cards. The district gave away nine \$50 cards, asking that those who received the cards use them to perform a random act of kindness, and to share with the district office how they used their gift. At press time, the district had received reports on how three of the cards were used.

Two of the cards happened to go to two children of the Rev. Carl and Denni Palmer. Carl is associate pastor at Central UMC Fayetteville and Denni is the Christian education and spiritual formation coordinator at Mount Sequoyah Retreat Center.

Here is their story, as told by their mom:

"The Palmer children have a tradition that every year they choose a child from the Teddy Bear Tree that helps children and youth who are in foster-care situations through Nothing in Return, a foster and adoptive support agency in Northwest Arkansas. With five kids, that means shopping for five children and teens. This year the plan was to go get the presents after the Northwest District Christmas Clergy Brunch. To our surprise, two of the girls won \$50 gift cards and were challenged to do something good. They quickly decided to use them to stretch their shopping dollar and were able to buy clothes, toys and more for an additional three children. The extra \$100 helped them bless eight instead of just five, and that is something they are very excited about!"



The Palmer children—Gretchen, 14; Kirsten, 11; Katrina, 10; Teasha, 9; and Jason, 7—used Random Acts of Kindness gift cards they received at the Northwest District Christmas brunch to provide Christmas gifts for children in foster care.

COURTESY PHOTO

Deb Topham was another recipient of a Random Acts of Kindness gift card. Here is her story, shared by her husband, the Rev. Michael Topham, pastor of Cavanaugh and Hackett UMCs:

"Deb went to Walmart and purchased \$50 worth of meats and will be taking it to the Community Clearinghouse with her gift card.

"Cavanaugh UMC collected over 40 bags of food for the Community Clearinghouse last month. Hackett UMC collected and took theirs to the Clearinghouse also. Both are bringing in canned goods each week for the Community Clearinghouse and have taken over two months' worth each."

—from the Dec. 11, 2014 edition of the e-newsletter "Around the Northwest District"



NOMADS hosted by Wesley UMC Conway

For 10 weeks in the fall of 2014, the RV park of Wesley United Methodist Church Conway stayed busy, with five to seven recreational vehicles occupying its spaces.

Some readers may wonder, *Why does one of our churches have an RV park?*

The quick answer: To give travelers a place to land while they serve.

The RV park, made possible by a Central District Missions Committee grant, money from Wesley UMC itself and disaster response funds from the Arkansas Conference, hosts Nomads On a Mission Active in Divine Service (NOMADS), a mission ministry of the United Methodist Church.

With its location between Mayflower and Vilonia—two of the communities hit hardest by the April 27 tornado that ripped through central Arkansas—Wesley UMC Conway has made an ideal base camp for NOMADS, all of whom must bring their own RVs for lodging.

In late 2014, the NOMADS staying on the church's property went out to build porches and ramps, complete the inside of one home and begin an addition to another home, plus complete interior work on that home's existing space.

Upon completion of each construction job, the NOMADS sign a Bible and offer prayers for the homeowners and family as they present the Bible to

them. They also mark helpful passages to encourage the survivor families.

NOMADS will return to Conway for 13 weeks in the Spring of 2015 to help with more long-term recovery and rebuilding.

Participants have come from Virginia, Tennessee, Kentucky, Texas, Colorado, Michigan, South Dakota, Ohio, Iowa, Indiana and Arkansas. They have shared their skills with families who have lost nearly everything. Tim and Ellie Brubaker of Michigan and Jerrel and Linda Fielder of Arkansas served as NOMADS coordinators for the recent projects.

On Thanksgiving Day, members of NOMADS, Wesley UMC and the Mayflower-based Interfaith and Partners Disaster Response Alliance shared a dinner with families affected by the tornado, as well as families who participate in The Bread Basket, the church's food pantry. The meal fed 47 persons in attendance, and a large number of to-go boxes were prepared to share with neighbors and other family members not able to attend.

Wesley UMC Conway also is preparing to host Christian Aid Ministries (CAM), a Mennonite group that will arrive in January to build two homes per month. CAM will have about 40 people in the area at a time.

To learn more about the ministry of NOMADS, visit www.nomadsumc.org.

—information provided by Rev. David Baker, pastor, Wesley UMC Conway

Preferred vendor deals available through Center for Technology partnership

Special ARUMC pricing for copiers, printers, technology services

The Arkansas Conference Center for Technology has invited Little Rock-based Datamax, Inc., to serve as the preferred vendor of printer, copier and imaging solutions for local churches and member organizations of the Arkansas Conference.

As an elite member of the Canon USA Advanced Partner Program, Datamax has secured special pricing with Canon for churches and affiliate organizations of our Conference. With the complete partnership of Canon, Datamax and the Arkansas Conference, churches and related institutions will not only

be able to receive select pricing on Canon Output Devices, but also on other services that Datamax offers:

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- Backup and disaster recovery options

The Center for Technology is confident that Datamax can bring complete and cost-effective solutions to local churches and other entities in the Conference. If you are in the market for any of the services that Datamax can provide, contact Datamax representative Josh Patterson at 501-603-3000 or jpatterson@datamax-lr.com.

—Mark Epperson, director, ARUMC Center for Technology

UMC's \$2.5 million total in #GivingTuesday donations shows strength of a denomination united



United Methodists once again responded with extravagant generosity on UMC #GivingTuesday. On Dec. 2, 2014, more than \$2.5 million was donated online through The Advance (the designated giving channel of the United Methodist Church) to support mission and ministries around the world.

The denomination's General Board of Global Ministries matched the first \$1 million in gifts to help build excitement and leverage donations.

More than 770 projects and missionaries received more than 8,700 gifts through UMC #GivingTuesday. The response was global, with donors from 25 countries giving generously.

Noticeable impact

"Having one day when United Methodists from around the world are united around giving shows the strength of the denomination's connection, while strengthening the impact of the gifts to each ministry,"

said Thomas Kemper, who leads Global Ministries. "Every gift made through The Advance this season makes a difference in the lives of the people they touch."

Kemper also noted that donors can partner with Advance projects and missionaries throughout the year.

Many of the projects and missionaries supported through The Advance on UMC #GivingTuesday gained traction because of existing personal connections United Methodists have with individual missionaries or ministries.

"The relationships our projects have with churches and individuals generated excitement for supporting specific ministries," said Ellen Knudsen, head of The Advance.

To ensure as many organizations as possible received some of the matching funds, Global Ministries placed a cap on how much of each gift could be matched. But Knudsen said that projects were also encouraged to work with faithful donors to develop their own

matches.

"Many of them found unique ways to connect through their networks, building on toolkits we created for them," she said. "These messages gained momentum and were shared electronically around the world through the grassroots."

A growing movement

This is the second year that The Advance participated in UMC #GivingTuesday, part of a larger international movement that provides an alternative to the shopping traditions following Thanksgiving—Black Friday, Small Business Saturday and Cyber Monday. According to Mashable, the number of nonprofits that received an online donation this year on #GivingTuesday increased 15 percent from 2013, while the total number of transactions was up 50 percent.

The United Methodist Church has become a model for other organizations wanting to participate in the larger #GivingTuesday campaign. Global Ministries was among the partners invited to the White House by the Office of Social Innovation and Civic Partnership on Oct. 6 to promote and support #GivingTuesday. And an article in *USA Today* highlighted the United Methodist Church among the significant participants, reporting that "Big names—Microsoft to

United Methodist General Board of Global Ministries and PayPal—got involved this year with promises to match donations."

Denominational agencies such

#GivingTuesday and about how United Methodist organizations got involved.

"For example, Cokesbury and the United Methodist Publishing

House pledged a portion of the day's sales to Advance projects, and our colleagues at United Methodist Communications helped answer donor questions through Infoserve," she said.

"We know that the giving on Dec. 2 will have a ripple effect throughout the season as people look for ways to stay focused on the spirit of

giving," she added.

To view a full report of projects that were supported and the gifts that Global Ministries matched, visit <http://goo.gl/ia7lzo>.

—from umcmission.org

The United Methodist Church

has become a model for

other organizations wanting

to participate in the larger

#GivingTuesday campaign.

as the General Board of Discipleship, General Board of Higher Education and Ministry, Commission on Religion and Race and United Methodist Communications joined in efforts to help promote giving through The Advance on UMC #GivingTuesday.

Emily Miller, Global Ministries' associate general secretary for communications and development, said she is thrilled about the creative ways diverse groups participated in

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COMING UP

January

Beyond! Children's Ministry Conference set for Jan. 29-31; register by Jan. 15

The Arkansas Conference Council on Children's Ministries will hold its Beyond! 2015 Children's Ministry Conference Jan. 29-31, 2015, at Mount Sequoyah Conference and Retreat Center in Fayetteville.

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.

Breakout sessions will feature more than 30 options in nine different categories: administration, creative arts ministry, curriculum, family ministry, mission/outreach, preschool, self-care, special needs and special activities. To register or learn more, visit <http://kidz.arumc.org>.

February

Register for March 25-28 Destination: Mission by Feb. 1

Destination: Mission is headed to Jonesboro for spring break 2015! A part of the Arkansas Conference Council on Children's Ministries, this mission experience is for 3rd- through 6th-graders.

On March 25-28, First United Methodist Church Jonesboro will host Destination: Mission, featuring opportunities with agencies around the greater Jonesboro area. Past trips have had teams helping in soup kitchens, thrift stores, food pantries, elder care centers, humane societies and more in Little Rock, Fort Smith, Fayetteville and beyond. Children experience and learn about service while meeting kids from across the state. Even adults and youth helpers find themselves seeing things through God's eyes. For more information or a link to the application, visit www.facebook.com/Destination.Mission.

Each church must send one adult for every four children. Individual registrations and deposits are due Feb. 1; final payments are due March 1.

Destination: Mission coordinator Denni Palmer will be presenting about kids and missions at the Beyond! children's ministry conference Jan. 30-31 (see information listed above).

Ministers Week at SMU's Perkins School of Theology set for Feb. 2-4

"New Wine, New Wineskins: Fresh Models for Ministry" is the theme for Ministers Week at Perkins

School of Theology, Feb. 2-4, 2015. In keeping with the 2015 theme, presentations will be modeled on the chavruta method of rabbinic study and learning, in which participants engage each other "in partnership" over shared texts and topics.

This year's Ministers Week brings together church leaders seeking new ways of growing and forming the church in the midst of wide-ranging societal shifts. Topics will include worship and hip-hop culture, mission and discipleship and spiritual formation. For a full list of speakers and topics, visit www.smu.edu/perkins/mw.

All lectures will be held in Perkins Chapel or Elizabeth Perkins Prothro Hall, at Perkins School of Theology on the campus of Southern Methodist University. For a map of the SMU campus, visit www.smu.edu/maps.

To register or view event details and lodging information, visit www.smu.edu/perkins/mw. For additional information, call 214-768-2251 or email AdvanceMinistry@smu.edu.

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 Feb. 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. For more information, please visit tanako.org or call 501-262-2600.

United Methodist Women of Perryville turn fried pies into funds for local and worldwide mission



Brenda Reeder, Blair Langston and Patsy Womack prepare pie crust dough as part of what's become known as Fried Pie Week at Perryville UMC. The United Methodist Women and other helpers raised nearly \$4,000 for mission through the pie sale.

COURTESY PHOTO

The United Methodist Women of Perryville UMC support a number of local, state, national and international organizations. To raise funds for these varied projects, the women have created an annual tradition: the sale of handmade fried pies. People of Perry County and surrounding areas have given generous support to this event, which has led to increasing pie sales each year. This year, approximately 2,600 pies were sold, raising \$3,800.

A lot of hard work goes into making the fried pies, but everyone has a lot of fun and it's all done for God's glory. The 2014 Fried Pie Week began Sunday, Nov. 2 after worship and finished Friday, Nov. 7.

Monies from the fried pie sales will be used locally to support Partners for Progress, Vacation Bible School, Glenhaven Youth Ranch, Single Parent Scholarships, backpacks and school supplies, New Beginnings and local jail ministries. Beyond Perry County, the church's United Methodist Women also sponsor Methodist Family Health, the United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR) and Camp Aldersgate. International mission work is supported through one of the church's former members who now serves as a missionary in Tanzania; by providing P.E.T. (Personal Energy Transportation) vehicles in developing countries for individuals who have mobility issues; and to aid in recovery from the 2014 flooding in the Philippines.

—submitted by Ida Rose

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Join Rev. Siegfried Johnson (St. James UMC, Little Rock) and Rev. Dennis Spence (FUMC Monticello) on a 13-day journey to the Holy Land departing Little Rock April 27, 2015.

This journey of a lifetime will take you to Bethlehem, Jerusalem, the Sea of Galilee, Mt. Hermon, the Dead Sea, Masada, and much more. Those interested may contact Rev. Johnson at sieg@stjames-umc.org or Rev. Spence at dsohp@gmail.com to obtain a brochure and more information. An informational meeting will be held at St. James (321 Pleasant Valley Drive) on Sunday, January 11, at 6:00 p.m., and all are welcome to attend.

First United Methodist Church, Fort Smith is accepting resumes for the position of part time worship leader for contemporary worship.

We are a large downtown church, in the heart of historic Fort Smith, Arkansas. Applicants are applying for a position to lead a large worship service with expected growth. Applicants must be experienced in leading contemporary worship and leading other singers and musicians. Resumes may be sent to Robert Cloninger by email: rcloninger@fsfumc.org, or mailed to First United Methodist Church, Fort Smith, 200 N. 15th, Fort Smith, AR 72901. For questions, contact Robert Cloninger at (479)782-5068.

First United Methodist Church, Fort Smith is accepting resumes for the position of Director of Youth Ministry.

We are a large downtown church in the heart of Historic Fort Smith, Arkansas. Our youth ministry is thriving, solid, and growing. Applicants need a minimum of a Bachelor's degree, a commitment to the United Methodist Church and Wesleyan theology, and experience in leading youth ministry. Graduate work or advanced training in youth ministry is preferred. Resumes may be sent to Robert Cloninger by email: rcloninger@fsfumc.org, or mailed to First United Methodist Church, Fort Smith, 200 N. 15th, Fort Smith, AR 72901. For questions, contact Robert Cloninger at (479)782-5068.

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OBITUARIES

ATKINS

Robert E. Woody

The Rev. Robert Emery Woody, 85, passed away Dec. 3, 2014, at the Atkins Care Center.

He was born May 16, 1929, in Sheldon, Mo., to Emery A. and Clydia E. Wilson Woody. He graduated from Sheldon



Bob Woody

High School, Southern Nazarene University in Bethany, Okla., Perkins School of Theology in Dallas, Texas and courses of study. He was licensed to preach Dec. 1, 1953, at the First Church of the Nazarene in Garden City, Kan. At the time, he was an elementary school principal and teacher at Pierceville, Kan. In 1955, he became a pastor in Texas and for many years taught school in Missouri, Kansas, Texas and Arkansas.

From 1958 until 1970, he was a bi-vocational pastor of Nazarene churches in Kansas and Texas, and a student pastor of the German Congregational Church in Weatherford, OK., while a student at Southern Nazarene University, Bethany, OK. He taught school to help support his family.

In 1970, he made a career change and became a United Methodist minister. He served as pastor of the following United Methodist charges and congregations in the Little Rock and North Arkansas Conferences: Tigert/Morning Star and Gardner/New Salem in Hot Springs; Mineral Springs/Wakefield; Lewisville/Buckner; Carr Memorial UMC Pine Bluff, Hazen/DeValls Bluff; Fairview UMC Camden; Augusta/Tupelo; Nettleton/Mount Carmel Jonesboro; and Griffin Memorial/Schugtoun Paragould. He officially retired from the Griffin Memorial/Schugtoun Charge in 1994 and was appointed to Atkins UMC in June of 1994, where he served until 2006.

One of the highlights in his life was when the group "People for a Better Atkins" selected him as "Citizen of the Year" in 1999. He was a member of the Mineral Springs Masonic Lodge 522 and a 32nd-degree member of the Scottish Rite in the "Valley of Little Rock, Orient of Arkansas."

He loved being a pastor, serving our Lord and helping people find a better way of life for them to live. Thank the

Lord for his call, His saving and keeping grace that He provides for all who will follow Him.

He was preceded in death by his parents; his first wife, Lois Rakestraw Woody; his second wife, Iva Neil Reeves Woody; a son, Robert Allen Woody; a brother, Glen H. Woody; and two brothers-in-law, Al Albinson and Jack Rakestraw.

He is survived by his daughter, Vicki Woody Norman Boren and her husband, Doug, of Atkins; three grandsons: Robert Woody Norman and his wife, Malynda, and Michael Paul Norman and his wife, Monica, of Houston, Texas; and Ryan Howard Woody and his wife, Abigail, of Texarkana; six great-grandchildren: Cortney Elizabeth Norman, Jacob Paul Norman, Gracie Ann Norman, Conner Paul Norman, Jackson Woody and Mason Woody; a sister, Mary Sue Potts and her husband, La Don, of Jerico Springs, Mo.; brothers- and sisters-in-law, Fred and Carol Rakestraw of Lamar, Mo., J.L. Moss of Hot Springs, Oda Mae Woody of Forsyth, Mo., Nancy "Rakestraw" Weinstein of St. Francis, Kan., Sue and Larry Gowen of Fayetteville, Jo Ellen Albinson of Russellville, Lavada and Elmer Padgett of Russellville, Linda and Don Burnham of Russellville and Mary and John LaFave of Russellville.

The funeral was held Saturday, Dec. 6, at Lemley Funeral Chapel, with the Revs. Gail Brooks and Naomi Rogers officiating. Pallbearers were his grandsons; honorary pallbearers were his brother and sister ministers of the Arkansas Area of the United Methodist Church.

ROGERS

Woodrow "Woody" Smith

The Rev. Dr. Woodrow "Woody" Smith, 86, of Rogers, passed away Saturday, Dec. 6, 2014 in his home, surrounded by his loving family.

He was born March 16, 1928, in Hot Springs, the son of Jefferson W. and Bessie Marie McCombs Smith. An ordained United Methodist elder, Woody was "a good and faithful servant," serving in United Methodist conferences in Arkansas,



Woody Smith

Texas and Louisiana. He was a member of the Bland Chapel United Methodist Church and also a Paul Harris Fellow Rotarian. Woody graduated from Southern Methodist University and Perkins School of Theology. He served as a board member for The Healing Gardens of Northwest Arkansas, Rocky Branch Fire Department, Bland Chapel United Methodist Church and Mount Eagle Christian Center.

Woody was an ecumenically-minded clergy; he received the Benemerenti Medal, an honorary medal from his Holiness Pope Benedict XVI, thanking him for bringing the Catholic, Jewish and Protestant communities together in Superdome of New Orleans for worship. He built a Sioux Indian Tipi in his younger days, then spent many nights over the years camping inside with his children and grandchildren. He floated the Buffalo River repeatedly over the course of 49 years, and he loved Beaver Lake. He enjoyed traveling the world, being outdoors at his home, gardening, playing dominoes and drinking Dr Pepper. Woody wrote and published "The Twelve Who Walked Galilee."

He was preceded in death by his first wife, Mary Elizabeth "Betty" Martin Smith, and one sister, Barbara Jean Jarman.

He is survived by his wife of 16 years, Freda Smith; four children, Cheryl Weigle of Houston, Texas; Chaplain Rev. Pamela Cicioni of Rogers; Jerry Smith of Beaver and Donnie Smith of Bella Vista; stepchildren Steve Jackson, Karen Fullen and Dr. Douglas Jackson; his brother, Stanley Smith of Dallas, Texas, and his sister, Valerie Halbach of Elk Grove, Calif.; grandchildren Matt Weigle, Erin Moore, Hannah Cicioni and Andrew Smith; step-grandchildren Maradyth McKenzie, Devon Rogers and Carly Jackson; and seven great-grandchildren.

A memorial service was held Thursday, Dec. 11, 2014, at Bland Chapel United Methodist Church with the Revs. Pamela Cicioni, Dawn Spragg and Judy Rudd-Platt officiating. In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to The Healing Gardens of NWA (Woody's first priority, in honor of his wife, Freda, who is a cancer survivor, and for his daughter Pamela's vision). Other contributions may be made to the Rocky Branch Fire Department or Bland Chapel United Methodist Church.

Holy conversation guide, older adult study available for free to Arkansas churches

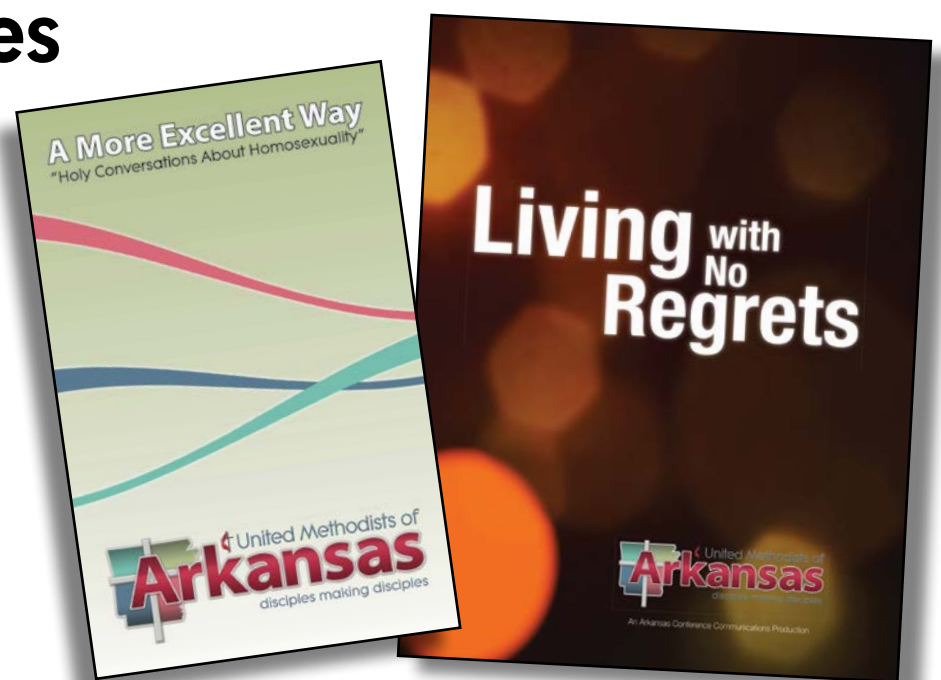
Two Arkansas-produced small group studies are available for free through the Conference office.

"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. The Rev. Dr. Andrew Thompson, the Conference's Wesley Scholar, is the presenter in the 20-minute holy conversations video. To order a copy of the discussion guide, email a request to 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 a request to communications@arumc.org. Those outside the Conference may order the study for \$25 at www.arumc.org/LWNR.



Pulaski Heights UMC and friends make bells ring across Little Rock Dec. 6



AUM PHOTO BY AMY FORBUS

Emily Erkel, center, and Bishop Gary Mueller, right, joined nearly 300 other participants in Pulaski Heights UMC Little Rock's Dec. 6 effort to cover a full day of bell-ringing duty for the Salvation Army. Their service helped fill red kettles with cash donations in 22 locations around the capital city.

In 2013, the year after Pulaski Heights UMC's centennial, senior pastor the Rev. Britt Skarda challenged the people of Pulaski Heights to contribute 101 hours of volunteer service to causes that had no direct connection with the congregation's ministries. Church member Paula Watson, who had grown up ringing a Salvation Army bell each December, served as one of the coordinators for that first year as well as for the 2014 project.

"It works well, and I hope this will become an annual thing," she said as she watched passersby add contributions to the kettle outside the west entrance to Dillard's at Park Plaza Mall.

Watson, Meredith Kemper and Brenda Mize led the coordinating committee in ensuring that all 22 stations were staffed by Pulaski Heights members and friends. Among those participating were the Rev. Richard Lancaster, superintendent of the Central District, and the Rev. Mackey Yokem, executive director for mission and ministry for the Arkansas Conference.

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