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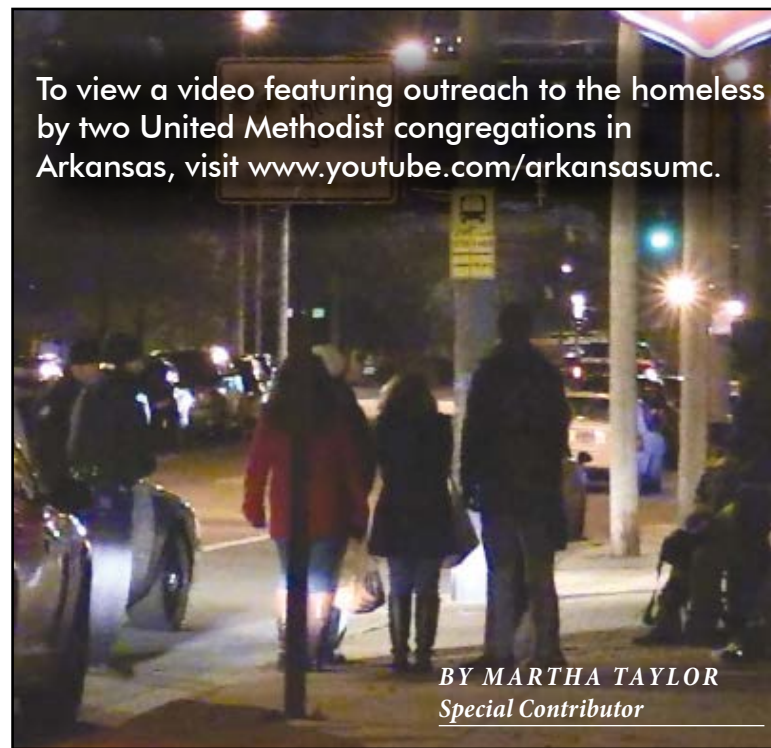
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## Churches find ways to give warmth to neighbors without homes

A cold day with a cup of hot coffee was how the Holy Spirit moved Janie Orr to action.

Orr, the wife of the Rev. David Orr, pastor at First United Methodist Church Searcy, was enjoying her warm home when she was struck by the abundance of her life and how different it was for others living within



To view a video featuring outreach to the homeless by two United Methodist congregations in Arkansas, visit [www.youtube.com/arkansasumc](http://www.youtube.com/arkansasumc).

BY MARTHA TAYLOR  
Special Contributor

walking distance of the church building.

"It just hit me that we have a big gymnasium and we needed to be using it," said Orr.

Aaron Reddin, founder of The One, Inc., a non-profit organization that cares for the homeless across central Arkansas, had shared information about Searcy's homeless population and the need for assistance with the local ministerial alliance. The church's outreach committee agreed to help.

The call came in early January as temperatures dipped into the teens. Within 24 hours, the church had organized a warming station, complete with meals, toiletries and sleeping space for any who needed it.

Church member Arthur Churchill said that there was suspicion among the homeless at first. As far as he knew, this was the first time a church had opened its doors to them.

"As the word spread, they realized that this is something for them," Churchill said. "We weren't trying to sell them anything. We're not trying to do anything but give them a place to sleep."

The building remained open every evening until the worst of the cold subsided. Orr hopes that the church will find ways of caring for its homeless neighbors regardless of the season.

On the same night First UMC Searcy was providing warm meals and beds, a crew from CanvasCommunity UMC Little Rock loaded into "Bertha," a passenger van donated by Piney Grove UMC Hot Springs, and went out into the cold night to check on their neighbors.

The van made stops at places in the city where the homeless find a modicum of safety and warmth, providing coffee, socks and hand warmers. Homeless neighbors seemed to appreciate the presence of the people checking on them just as much as the supplies.

These churches are just two of many UMCs with a desire to care for the homeless. Other churches across Arkansas are involved in similar ministries, making an impact on the lives of those they serve while growing in their understanding of what it means to be the hands and feet of Christ.

## New Philander Smith president shares excitement, faith, goals for the college

Dr. Roderick Smothers looks at students of historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs) and sees himself.

Raised in Vidalia, La., in a single-parent household, he graduated second in his high school class and became the first in his family to go to college. Juggling the roles of student, husband, parent and Air Force Reservist, he earned his Ph.D. by age 29. Widowed 11 years ago, he raised his children into young adulthood while following a career path that led him into administration for HBCUs: from Langston University in Oklahoma to Huston-Tillotson University in Texas, and now his new role as the president of United Methodist-related Philander Smith College in Little Rock.

Since he arrived on campus Jan. 1, Smothers has held a "fireside chat" that drew about a quarter of the student body, spoken in weekly chapel, met with alumni and board members and begun dreaming

about the school's future. He spoke recently with *Arkansas United Methodist* editor **Amy Forbus**. Read on for excerpts of their conversation.

**You've been here just a few weeks. What are your first impressions of Arkansas and Philander Smith College?**

I have been a longtime fan of Arkansas. I have always liked to visit Little Rock... found it to be a kind and warm environment when I've visited. Folks here have always been just that: kind, welcoming, warm. [But] it seemed to not be moving fast enough for me. When I got here, I found actually just the opposite. Seeing all the growth and development here just in the last decade, I thought, "Wow.... There's a lot of good things going on, a lot of synergy and momentum, and I like this."

When I interviewed [at Philander Smith], I fell in love with three things. I first fell in love with the mission of the college. The

college, in my opinion, has one of the most powerful missions: to graduate academically accomplished students who are rooted and grounded in the tenets of social justice, and who are ultimately prepared to go out and make the world a better place. How much more powerful can you get in a mission?

The second thing that drew me here to Philander was when I went online prior to interviewing here and saw some of the student testimonials and interactions. I thought, "Wow. These are some dynamic students. I've got to meet them." And what I encountered face to face far exceeded what I was able to glean from social media interaction.

The third thing that drew me to the college was the wonderful work that the faculty and the staff were doing here. Because I am aware of the struggles of historically black colleges in 21st-century higher education, I know that we, meaning HBCUs, have to make reality every



Roderick Smothers

day out of having not the most resources, having not always the best facilities. But when I got here, these faculty and these staff members were doing absolutely phenomenal things.

And the icing on the cake was, if you go out and Google Philander and see who some of the prominent alumni are, and what they've done and been able to accomplish... I thought, "Wow. I've got to be a part of that."

**Tell me about your faith, and how it influences your work.**

I consider the work that I do at historically black colleges and  
[See SMOTHERS, page 9]

# Hard work, much prayer ahead for 2016 General Conference delegation

Perspective from a former delegate, current observer

BY P. JAY CLARK  
Special Contributor

As we move into a time of discernment before the 2015 Annual Conference rolls around, I find myself in deep thought regarding elections for the 2016 General and Jurisdictional Conferences. This year we will elect our four lay and four clergy delegates to General and Jurisdictional Conferences, another four lay and four clergy to Jurisdictional Conference, plus alternates. The delegates will spend the time between their election and the gatherings getting to know the issues they will face there.



Jay Clark

This year is different for me because two years ago, I embarked on a new path—that of the local pastor. A local pastor is considered clergy if appointed and laity if not appointed. Local pastors are kind of in a “no-person’s land” when it comes to running for, and even voting for, General and Jurisdictional Conference delegations. Local pastors cannot run for a delegate spot or vote for delegates unless specific requirements are met. In 2012, I served as one of the lay delegates from the Arkansas Conference; this time, I’m not eligible, so I’ll be watching from the sidelines.

For those who have never witnessed the work of the General Conference, it will next convene May 10-20, 2016, in Portland, Ore. Delegates spend the first part primarily in committees—such as Church and Society, Local Church, Higher Education, Faith and Order—sorting through hundreds of petitions from all over the world. The second part involves the entire voting body hearing reports and debating and discussing petitions on the floor. Of course, there is also fantastic worship throughout the 10-day gathering.

The work of the Jurisdictional Conference (July 13-16, 2016, in Wichita, Kan.) primarily has to do with the election and assignment of bishops within our own South Central Jurisdiction. Our own Bishop Mueller was elected at the 2012 Jurisdictional Conference and assigned to lead the United Methodists of Arkansas.

As someone who has had the privilege of being elected to General and Jurisdictional Conferences, I can tell you that being a delegate involves a lot of hard work. 2016’s General Conference is shaping up to one of the most anticipated General Conferences in many years—especially after the last General Conference, held in Tampa

## Elections at AC2015: what you need to know

Arkansas’ **General Conference delegation** will consist of four laity and four clergy; the first two elected Jurisdictional Conference lay delegates and first two elected Jurisdictional Conference clergy delegates will serve as alternates.

Arkansas’ **Jurisdictional Conference delegation** will include the General Conference delegation plus four more laity and four more clergy, with two lay and two clergy alternates.

Visit <http://ac2015.arumc.org> to watch Bishop Mueller’s video about electing the delegates to General and Jurisdictional Conference.

**Those interested in serving on the delegation are encouraged to self-nominate.** To download a nomination form, visit <http://ac2015.arumc.org>.

**Please be in prayer** for those who discern a call to run for a seat on the delegation, and for the members of Annual Conference who will vote in the elections.

in 2012. That Conference attempted to significantly change the structure of the church, but the plan they approved was overturned by the Judicial Council.

The United Methodists of Arkansas have sent many wonderful leaders to General and Jurisdictional Conferences over the years. Although there is wisdom in electing those who have gone to General Conference before, there is also wisdom in electing those who can look at who we are as a worldwide church with fresh eyes.

If you have a passion for the United Methodist Church and have the gift of listening to others of same and differing opinions, I hope you will join me in prayer and discernment for this time of election. Maybe you will feel God nudge you toward talking to others about your desire to be elected. On the other hand, if you have had the honor of being elected to a past General Conference, perhaps you may feel God nudging you to step aside and let new leadership help carve out the future of our church.

My prayer is for our delegation to be a wonderfully diverse group—in age, gender, ethnicity, backgrounds, theologies and more—that truly represents who we are as the Arkansas Conference.

*The Rev. Clark, who was a lay member of Arkansas’ 2012 General Conference delegation, serves as pastor with youth and their families at Pulaski Heights UMC Little Rock.*

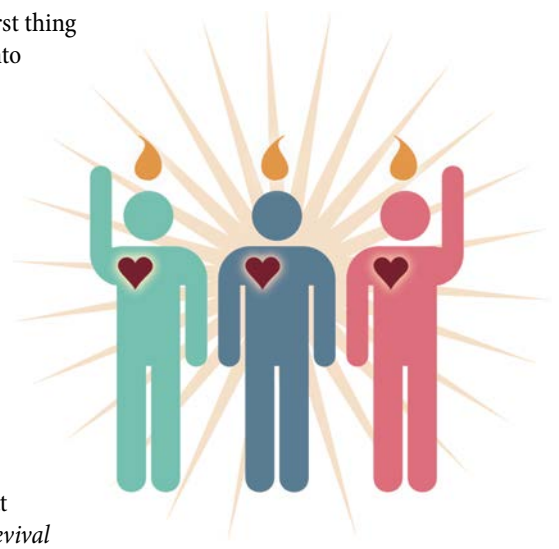
## An update from Bishop’s Mission Plan Launch Team #1: ‘Experience Spiritual Revival’

What is the first thing that pops into your mind when you hear the word *revival*? Does it have a positive or negative connotation for you?

These are the first questions we asked ourselves as Launch Team #1, Experience Spiritual Revival, began to meet last year. Our first task was to understand what this mysterious word *revival* meant for us and how it might be perceived throughout our Conference. We explored the notion of revival from many angles, with the end goal being the creation of a definition of spiritual revival that could be used across the Conference. We dissected the word *revival* in an attempt to discern what it is, what it is not and the experience we hoped to spark once we landed on a definition.

The Latin root of *revival* is *re-vivere*, which means to reinvigorate, to restore to life, to become strong and healthy after a period of decline, to renew or revitalize.

In every Christian’s life, spiritual vitality or passion wanes over time. This is true in all aspects of our lives: whether it is our relationships with others, our diet or exercise regime... our enthusiasm ebbs and flows. So it is with our spiritual life and relationship with God. We generate many reasons for not tending to that which gives us life—our relationship



with Christ. This word *revival* that can strike fear in our hearts may just be the very thing for which our souls are longing.

The end result offered to you from Launch Team #1 is the following definition:

**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.**

*Launch Team #1 includes Bishop Gary Mueller, Lawrence Bearden, Jimmie Boyd, Bill Buchanan, Mary Jane Cole, John Crawford, Carlton Cross, Jim Kimzey, Richard Lancaster, Susan Ledbetter, Charles Long, Karon Mann, Darrell Mills, Mike Morey, Mark Norman, Bud Reeves and Bruce Vick.*

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**Submission Deadlines**

Issue Date	Submission Deadline
March 6	Jan. 20
April 3	Feb. 17
May 1	April 13

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

BY GARY E. MUELLER

# Getting ready to get ready

How many times has someone asked you, “What are you going to give up for Lent?” Probably more times than you can count. And, if you’re candid, you know their question often leaves you just a bit uncomfortable.

Do you share that you’re doing something personal you don’t want to talk about? Do you say the usual, like chocolate, dessert or sugar? Or do you just go ahead and admit that you’re a bit befuddled by Lent and aren’t sure what giving up something for a significant period of time has to do with anything that actually makes much of a difference?

That’s why you need to rethink Lent and see it as a time to get serious about God in an intentional and, perhaps, accountable way. Or a spiritual discipline that causes you to focus on God whenever you realize you’re missing something you like a whole lot. Or even a chance to make a

sacrifice for the One who made the ultimate sacrifice for you.

For me, however, the best way of describing what’s going on during this period of time leading up to Easter is to understand that it’s a time of getting ready to get ready. We’re getting ready to experience the mystery and miracle of Jesus’ love on the cross. Getting ready to experience the awe and hope of Jesus’ resurrection from the dead. And getting ready to experience spiritual revival that transforms us from the inside out.

Spiritual revival is not a three-day preaching event that happens once a year. It’s not an experience that makes you feel properly spiritual. It’s not even something we should try to manufacture. Spiritual revival happens when we’re so deeply moved by the Holy Spirit that we suddenly experience that we are forgiven, healed, compassionate, generous, passionate, joyful and

more hopeful than ever before. So much so, in fact, that we’re ready to be disciples who make disciples who truly are equipped to transform lives, communities and the world.

I want you to know I’m praying that United Methodists throughout Arkansas, both lay and clergy, will be drawn deeper and deeper into spiritual revival beginning Ash Wednesday and continuing beyond Easter. I’m not sure where it’s going to take us. I don’t know what the results will be. But I’m perfectly fine with that. Because I can’t wait to see what God is going to do.

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*:

- Robert Jeffery (retired local pastor)—Newberry/Mountain View (charge realignment); effective Feb. 1, 2015
- Lynn Strang (part-time local pastor)—New Hope/Lavaca (charge realignment); effective Feb. 1, 2015
- Jim Keith (retired member of another annual conference)—No appointment; effective Dec. 31, 2014
- Lyn Poplin (part-time local pastor)—No appointment; effective Dec. 31, 2014

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).

# How big is your Jesus?

BY WILLIAM O. “BUD” REEVES  
Special Contributor



Bud Reeves

Recently my seminary alma mater, Duke University, generated controversy by announcing that they would let their Muslim student organization use the Duke Chapel tower to call Muslims to prayer on Friday, their day of worship.

Muslim students have been having prayer services in the basement of Duke Chapel for years. The *adhan* prayer, usually broadcast from a minaret, serves as a call to worship.

Evangelist Franklin Graham immediately castigated Duke on Facebook: “As Christianity is being excluded from the public square and followers of Islam are raping, butchering, and beheading Christians, Jews, and anyone who doesn’t submit to their Sharia Islamic law, Duke is promoting this in the name of religious pluralism.” He encouraged people to withhold contributions to the university.

Criticism of the decision began to pour in.

The next day, Duke rescinded its permission to the Muslim students. Michael Schoenfeld, vice president for public affairs and government relations, said in a statement, “Duke remains committed to fostering an inclusive, tolerant and welcoming campus for all of its students. However, it was clear that what was conceived as an effort to unify was not having the intended effect.”

I was embarrassed at the intolerant and inhospitable attitude of some Christians and saddened that my alma mater didn’t have more courage.

### Larger issue

This small incident brings up a big issue. How should we treat people of other faiths? What is the spirit of Christ toward those who don’t believe in him?

We should do more than just tolerate other faiths. We should be in respectful dialogue with them. In a pluralistic world, we can’t ignore them. In a world torn with religious violence, we should encourage faithful, peaceful expressions of any

faith, because extremism in any religion is destructive of faith and community. Most Muslims do not support ISIS any more than most Christians are members of the KKK.

We can respect other religions because we have a big Jesus. He is the Christ, the communication of God to the world. For thirty-odd years, the Christ was incarnate in Jesus of Nazareth, but it’s clear in Scripture that Christ is eternal with the Father. He is the agent of creation and transcends the human form in which he made the perfect revelation of God to the world (see John 1, Ephesians 1, Colossians 1, Hebrews 1, I John 1).

The idea that Christ is the Word—or Communication—of God to the world means that any revelation of God, through nature or another religion, has Christ behind it all. Scholars as diverse as Billy Abraham and Richard Rohr believe the Cosmic Christ has great implications for inter-faith dialogue.

### Common ground

This is not to say that all religions are equally valid or that Christians do not have any particular

‘...there is common ground between people of all faiths that provides a basis for friendship and dialogue.’

claims on the truth. What it does say is that there is common ground between people of all faiths that provides a basis for friendship and dialogue.

In his book *Mere Christianity*, C. S. Lewis wrote:

*“If you are a Christian, you do not have to believe that all other religions are simply wrong all through. If you are an atheist, you do have to believe that the main point in all the religions in the whole world is simply one huge mistake. If you are a Christian, you are free to think that all these religions, even the queerest ones, contain at least some hint of the truth. When I was an atheist I had to try to persuade myself that most of the human race have always been wrong about the question that mattered to them most; when I became a Christian I was able to take a more liberal view. But, of course, being a Christian does mean thinking that where Christianity differs from other religions, Christianity is right, and they are wrong. As in*

*arithmetic—there is only one right answer to a sum, and all other answers are wrong; but some of the wrong answers are much nearer being right than others.”*

Jesus is the right answer. But some of the other answers may not be far off. In John 10:16, Jesus says, “I have other sheep that do not belong to this fold. I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice. So there will be one flock, one shepherd.”

I wonder what he meant by that?

Being tolerant of other religions is a big step for some. But we should do more. We should engage in dialogue based on respect and encourage all peaceful expressions of faith.

Above all, we should live with the love of Christ. Then we will show the world how big our Jesus is.

*The Rev. Dr. Reeves serves as superintendent of the Northwest District. Email: [breeves@arumc.org](mailto:breeves@arumc.org).*

## Methodist Family Health issues challenge to 'Get Up & Give' during Lent

Lent is traditionally considered a time to make sacrifices and give up something you love leading up to Holy Week and Easter celebrations. However, a special drive hosted by Methodist Family Health during Lent asks participants to "get up and give" and contribute items to make a difference in the lives of others.

For the sixth annual "Get Up and Give" drive, Feb. 18-April 2, Arkansans are encouraged to collect items that will be used by those served by Methodist Family Health, a nonprofit organization providing psychiatric and behavioral health care to children and families.

Methodist Family Health was founded in 1899 by Methodists in Arkansas to care for children in need. Today, Methodist Family Health provides comprehensive psychiatric and behavioral health care to children and families through venues of care including a hospital, group homes, residential treatment centers, therapeutic day treatment programs, counseling clinics and other programs.

Items on the Get Up and Give collection list include socks, underwear, paper products, backpacks, toothbrushes and toothpaste, twin-size and crib sheets, wireless composition books, bath towels and washcloths and recreational items. All items must be new. Monetary donations will be used for necessity items and other unmet needs.

"Get Up & Give is an opportunity to show care and support for our kids in a very tangible way," says Andy Altom, president and CEO of Methodist Family Health. "We appreciate each and every donation."

Donations may be dropped off at any of the nine Methodist Counseling Clinic locations across the state. Clinics are located in Alma, Batesville, Cherokee Village, Fayetteville, Heber Springs, Hot Springs Jonesboro, Little Rock and Magnolia.

For more information and event details, contact Jane Dennis at 501-906-4210 or [jdennis@methodistfamily.org](mailto:jdennis@methodistfamily.org), or visit [www.methodistfamily.org](http://www.methodistfamily.org).

## PEOPLE OF FAITH

### Caldwell named project manager for ARUMC childhood hunger initiative



**Colleen Caldwell**

Deaconess Colleen Caldwell of Little Rock has been appointed project manager for United Methodists of Arkansas United Against Childhood Hunger, a three-year focus put forward by the Arkansas Conference extended cabinet and approved by the 2014 Annual Conference session.

Consecrated as a Deaconess in 2011 through the United Methodist General Board of Global Ministries, Caldwell has worked in community outreach and mission for The Journey UMC Cabot (formerly Christ UMC). In that role, she created a resource directory for the Cabot area,

listing places for those in need to find assistance. She will apply her previous experience to developing a comprehensive resource directory for United Methodists of Arkansas United Against Childhood Hunger, gathering data, analyzing statistics and assisting local churches in increasing their involvement with fighting hunger in their communities.

"Deaconess Caldwell's experience, combined with her passion for ending childhood hunger, will be a great asset in administering many of the details of this

Conference initiative," said the Rev. J.J. Whitney, convener of United Methodists of Arkansas United Against Childhood Hunger and associate chaplain at Hendrix College. "We have 200,000 hungry children in this state, and we can count every one of them as a reason to dedicate ourselves to the work ahead of us."

According to the 2012 Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church, the "purpose of the Office of Deaconess... shall be to express representatively the love and concern of the believing community for the needs in the world and to enable, through education and involvement, the full ministry and mission of the people of God" (Paragraph 1314). Caldwell believes the hunger initiative work fits perfectly with that purpose, as well as with the call of the Deaconess to embody the characteristics of love, justice and service.

"In a state that is a leader in food production—Arkansas ranks first in the nation in rice production and second in poultry—our children are hungry," she said. "Where is the justice in that?"

To contact Caldwell, call 501-529-0604 or send an email to [200kReasons@arumc.org](mailto:200kReasons@arumc.org).

# 200,000 REASONS

to fight childhood hunger

United Methodists of Arkansas united against childhood hunger

## 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.

### Spring mission March 20-23 in Vilonia and Mayflower

St. Andrew UMC Little Rock is sponsoring a three-day VIM effort to do recovery work in the Vilonia-Mayflower area this spring. Central Arkansas residents can make a series of day trips to participate in the work, or we can arrange housing for persons traveling from farther away. A team meeting and worship will serve as the kick-off on Friday, March 20, and work will continue from Saturday, March 21 through Monday, March 23. This project is set on a weekend-plus schedule to include Hispanic workers involved in the ministries at St. Andrew UMC, as well as people who aren't off work or school for spring break. For details, contact Jenni Duncan, 501-551-2141 or [jenni.duncan@arumc.org](mailto:jenni.duncan@arumc.org). Pre-registration and paperwork is required; deadline is Feb. 15.

### Case management help needed for those affected by April 2014 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](mailto:disaster@arumc.org)) to ask about becoming a case manager.

### Rebuilding underway as part of tornado recovery

Interfaith and Partners Disaster Recovery is 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). 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. To sign up to help with any of the recovery efforts, contact Janice Mann.

### Projects in central Arkansas ready for VIM teams

**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.

**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.

**East End:** Grace UMC needs volunteers to help with installing drywall in their new church building.

### Hilliard to retire as senior military chaplain of Arkansas

Chaplain (COL) Wesley Hilliard will retire as the Joint Senior Command Chaplain of the Arkansas Army and Air National Guard on Saturday, Feb. 7, 2015. Hilliard joined the military in 1985 at age 19. Since Sept. 11, 2001, he has been mobilized or deployed for more than 28 months. He has been Arkansas' senior military chaplain since 2009, leading 50 chaplains, chaplain candidates and assistants in providing spiritual leadership for over 10,000 soldiers, airmen, and their families.

Hilliard's full-time appointment is as the lead pastor of Heritage United Methodist Church Van Buren. His retirement ceremony will be held at Armstrong Chapel at Camp Robinson, North Little Rock.

Chaplain (Lt. Col.) Tom Smith, the 188th Wing chaplain, will replace Chaplain Hilliard as the Joint Senior Command Chaplain, and Chaplain (LTC) James Wainscott, pastor of Murfreesboro UMC, will become the new Senior Army Command Chaplain of the Arkansas National Guard.



**Wes Hilliard**



# College students spend winter break helping tornado victims rebuild

**Editor's note:** This article originally appeared in the Jan. 7 issue of the Conway-based *Log Cabin Democrat*.

BY BRANDON RIDDLE  
*Log Cabin Democrat Staff Writer*

Scarred trees and remnants of last year's tornado still fill the landscape for many Faulkner County residents, though the Ozark Mission Project (OMP) and Wesley Foundation college groups are providing a beacon of hope for those struggling to recover.

For student volunteers rebuilding homes and lives board by board this week, winter break was meant to be about something more than just having time off from class.

Beginning work at about 9 a.m. each morning, the group of about 60 volunteers travels from their housing at Hendrix College to their designated home in either Vilonia or Mayflower to help with projects that ease the burdens of rebuilding what was lost. The crews end their work at about 3:30 p.m. each day.

Ten projects will be completed by the end of this week, with three of those in Mayflower. Projects include building decks, providing wheelchair ramps to homes, painting, installing drywall and demolishing a house for new construction.

Eight colleges were represented with the help of student volunteers—seven from Arkansas and one from Texas.

The impact of the EF-4 tornado that struck in a path from Mayflower to Vilonia on April 27, 2014, is still being felt.

Neighbors Minnie White and Beatrice Stubbs are each being gifted with decks on the back of their new homes on White City Road in Mayflower after their previous homes were destroyed in the tornado.

Stubbs said she appreciates that the volunteers have taken time to do for others.

"We lost everything—house, cars, everything," she said, adding that people have come from everywhere to help. "They came out during their Christmas vacation to help me so that's really amazing for young people to do that."

Of the support, Stubbs said she has never seen so much love from neighbors.

"It's a big help," she said. "We

**'I feel it's my calling as a Christian to be here for them.'**

—Sidney Dennis

needed it. It gives us hope, help and it's really been uplifting for us that people who don't even know us come from miles away to help us."

The Wesley Foundation in Arkansas participates in a winter mission trip annually and organizers of this project including Bailey Faulkner, executive director of the OMP, knew early on in planning what the focus would be this year.

"We did this last year in Oklahoma for the victims of the Moore and we decided to stay here to see what we could do," she said.

Since its founding in 1986, the OMP has grown from a summer camp ministry to a year-round ministry across the nation.

"This year it was just an obvious decision from our committee [to pick Faulkner County]," Faulkner said. "The reason why we chose to stay here is because we wanted to help our neighbors. A lot of people know people who were directly impacted by the tornado and lost things."

As executive director, Faulkner said it is reassuring to see college students work in the cold during a break from classes to be leaders in their community.

To pay for the expenses of the

volunteer work, college students registered with a \$150 fee and the United Methodist Committee on Relief provided additional funding.

"This isn't just a project for us," Faulkner said. "We also want to connect with the people we're working for."

Michael McMurray, a junior at Hendrix and project leader, said his involvement in the service project

resulted from his heart for missions, which began with his involvement in the OMP in the eighth grade.

"A lot of times you think that the work will

be done soon after a tornado but there is so much to be done," he said. "Right now, I'm off from school. I could be at home playing video games, but I'm honestly really happy to be out here."

McMurray will soon spend the spring as an intern for the OMP.

"It was so much unlike anything I've ever done before," he said. "It was so fulfilling for me."

The Rev. Sam Meadors, Wesley Foundation director for Arkansas State University, said the greatest result from the project is helping people restore their lives to a sense of normalcy.

Meadors and her team were involved in Tuesday's deck-building efforts on White City Road.

"There's still so much that needs to happen and as we do approach the one year mark, and I know this from our work in Oklahoma City, a lot of the funding ends up drying up after a year," she said. "We're really wanting to get as much done as we can for these families and for this community while there's still funding to be had."

Sidney Dennis, a sophomore at Texas Christian University in Fort Worth, said she is from Little Rock and has previously worked with the OMP on youth camp projects.

"These people don't have anybody who can do the work for them and we're providing it for free," she said. "I feel it's my calling as a Christian to be here for them."

Dennis added that she was surprised upon arrival with the amount of destruction that remains

in Faulkner County as a result of the tornado.

"[Clean-up efforts] should have been done by now," she said.

Dominique Walker, a freshman at Henderson State University, heard about the event through the Wesley Foundation and jumped on the opportunity.

"We don't know it but we're helping those people more than what we think," she said. "They're actually helping us too because it makes us feel good inside to know that we're doing something for them."

Other Arkansas colleges participating include Southern Arkansas University, the University of Arkansas at Fayetteville, Ouachita Baptist University and Arkansas Tech University.

The students are staying in the Wellness and Athletics Center at Hendrix. First United Methodist Church Conway is providing food for the students during their week-long stay in Faulkner County.

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## Back from Cuba, Arkansas team taking applications for next mission

Translator and mission coordinator Alba Acosta, second from right, translates work instructions for Steve Shults of First UMC Little Rock, center, and Tom Baxter of Salem UMC Conway, right. The members of the Arkansas UMVIM team labored alongside Cuban workers during their time in Havana.



PHOTO BY NECHI FULLERTON

A United Methodist Volunteers in Mission (UMVIM) team composed of members of Arkansas churches in January made a 10-day journey to Havana, Cuba, to build faculty housing for the Seminario Evangélico Metodista, the Methodist seminary there. In addition to providing labor, the team delivered construction supplies, vitamins and medicines while building relationships with Cuban Methodists. The Arkansas group was the first UMVIM team to travel to Cuba since the United States in December announced plans to normalize diplomatic relations with the island nation.

“The work was like a vacation to me, but what I got excited about most was the enthusiasm of the Methodist people in Cuba,” said the Rev. Chris Cooper. “They loved us. They wanted to deepen relationships with us... and they truly were one church that was not divided by racism or classism.”

Beginning Feb. 8, members of the team will lead a four-week study on Cuba, to be held Sundays at 5 p.m. Visit [www.fumclr.org/registrations](http://www.fumclr.org/registrations) for details and to register.

The next Arkansas UMVIM journey to Havana is scheduled for February 2016. To learn more or to apply to participate, contact Nechi Fullerton, [nefullerton@yahoo.com](mailto:nefullerton@yahoo.com).



Tom Straight of Salem UMC Conway, the Rev. Chris Cooper of First UMC Little Rock and a Cuban worker trim and bend reinforcement bar for the concrete portions of faculty housing for Seminario Evangélico Metodista in Havana.

PHOTO BY NECHI FULLERTON



Nechi Fullerton of First UMC Little Rock and local worker Abelardo Castillo greet each other at the seminary construction site. The two met previously during a trip Fullerton made to Cuba two years ago.

PHOTO BY STEVE SHULTS

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## UCA Wesley settling into temporary location

Following the sale of its building to the University of Central Arkansas, the UCA Wesley Foundation has relocated to 2331 College Avenue in Conway. The United Methodist campus ministry will stay in this location for three to four years, during the design and construction of its next permanent home.

“What that building will be, I cannot yet say, but it will be molded by the mission field, and it will be singularly purposed to address the needs of the 21st-century college student and 20-something,” said the Rev. Blake Langston, director of the ministry.

In the meantime, the UCA Wesley’s current house offers two gathering spaces, a large room for prayer and small group meetings, a large yard make for outdoor events and a dedicated computer/video game room. A hospitality room stands ready to provide overnight accommodations when needed—whether for students, visitors or people who have a family member hospitalized across the street. Two resident interns live on the second floor.

“Over the course of our time here, we will be connecting with



COURTESY PHOTO

‘across the street’ mission opportunities, the student groups in our neighborhood, and our local retirement communities as we discern the shape of the ministry,” Langston said. “The shape of the ministry will then inform our next phase: the new Wesley House.”

Langston also said that connecting with local United Methodist congregations is a renewed priority, for the benefit of the churches as well as for the

campus ministry. The Wesley also offers a formal opportunity to support the ministry through the 12:15 Club. Members of the club commit to praying for the UCA Wesley Foundation at 12:15 p.m. each day, and to contribute \$15 a month for 12 months.

To connect with the ministry, contact Langston at 870-283-9498; email [ucawesley@gmail.com](mailto:ucawesley@gmail.com); or follow @UCAWesley on Twitter and UCA Wesley on Facebook.

## First African-American Hendrix graduate speaks at MLK service



Arkansas State Senator Linda Pondexter Chesterfield, the first African-American graduate of Hendrix College, was the featured speaker at a special Martin Luther King Jr. Chapel Service on Monday, Jan. 26, in the college’s Greene Chapel.

Chesterfield’s Hendrix education was strongly encouraged and supported by United Methodist clergy and Hendrix alumni, including the late Revs. Jim Beal, Charles McDonald and William Wilder, who insisted that Hendrix take progressive action on student diversity. Relatives of these three clergy visited with Chesterfield before the chapel service. Pictured from left are Mauzel Beal, wife of the Rev. Jim Beal; Chesterfield; current Hendrix students Malachi McDonald, grandson of Charles McDonald; and Beth Ayers, granddaughter of William Wilder.

Chesterfield, the recipient of the first Martin Luther King, Jr. Scholarship from Hendrix, represents Little Rock in the Arkansas State Senate and is a retired educator and former state representative.

PHOTO BY LEXI ADAMS / HENDRIX COLLEGE OFFICE OF MARKETING COMMUNICATIONS

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# Process changing for handling petitions, resolutions at AC2015

BY AMY FORBUS  
Editor

A task force examining the way the Arkansas Annual Conference handles its petitions and resolutions will implement a change for 2015.

The Rev. Will Choate spoke at last year's Arkansas Annual Conference about the need to examine the current process, which uses a debate structure based on Robert's Rules of Order. Choate encouraged the gathering to express their passion for faithfulness in ways that model our core identity as people of faith.

"We might begin to recognize that before Jew or Gentile, that before slave or freed, that before male or female, that before gay or straight, that before pro-choice or pro-life, that before death penalty supporters or being against the death penalty, that before laity and clergy, and before Democrat and Republican—see, the point is that before we are all of those things, we are people, and that we are people made in the image of God," Choate said on June 21, 2014. "And as the church, we are standing in the oneness of Christ. I don't think there's a better way to demonstrate that than how we talk to one another about the things we care about the most."

## New vision, different behavior

Choate, the pastor of Argenta United Methodist Church, chairs the petitions and resolutions task force of the annual conference planning committee. In a recent interview, he explained how the task force's work grew from a vision developed over the past two years: that annual conference gatherings will focus less on business and more on worship and providing resources for churches.

"As we looked at the agenda, our resolution process was the greatest threat to this vision," Choate said. "Our task force was assigned to suggest how we might engage resolutions in a way that was in itself worshipful and a resource for those returning to their local, and diverse, contexts."

It's not about changing the rules themselves—Robert's Rules of Order will remain in use—but rather the vision we have for their implementation, Choate says.

"Our current resolution process—with its avoidance of conversation and intolerance of competing positions—draws out the most immature parts of who we are," he said. "While you can't legislate maturity, you can create environments to foster it. Our hope is to move our conference into a more mature way of discussing and deciding."

## Process for 2015

The task force has met several times since June to discern how to talk about contentious issues in more loving ways.

"It was a beautiful gift to sit around the table with people on opposite sides of challenging issues and find unity in our desire for transformation and connection," said the Rev. Brittany Richardson Watson, a member of the task force and pastor at Sylvan Hills UMC.

"Even though we may not have agreed on everything, we found common ground in our desire to handle petitions and resolutions in a way that was life-giving and Spirit-inspired," she said. "I'm excited to see the ways these changes might transform not only these conversations, but also the culture of the Arkansas Conference."

The task force has developed the process below for handling petitions and resolutions at the 2015 Arkansas Annual

## AC2015-related information now available online

Visit <http://ac2015.arumc.org> for a number of documents relating to this year's Annual Conference:

- Petitions and resolutions (due by March 15)
- Nominations for the 2016 General and Jurisdictional Conference delegation
- Denman Evangelism Awards
- List of lodging options

More forms will be added as they become available.

Conference.

"These changes are not our arrival, but a step toward growing up in every way into Christ, and building the body up in love," Choate said, referencing Ephesians 4:15-16, the task force's guiding verses. "They are steps toward maturity."

**1. Submitting petitions and resolutions:** Like last year's resolution form, this year's form will require that all petitions and resolutions be rooted in Scripture. In addition, the annual conference planning team will give preference to resolutions that go beyond making statements and include action. The form is available at <http://ac2015.arumc.org>.

**2. Discussion on the floor of conference:** Before the conference discusses petitions and resolutions, the task force will lift up its vision for how the process can be worshipful and model the concepts of holy conferencing. The

[continued on next page]

## Methodist Family Health

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(continued from page 8)

resolutions will follow, each including speeches for and against in keeping with Roberts Rules of Order. The speeches will be followed by the members of the annual conference forming small groups of six to eight persons for discussion and prayer around the resolution in question. This exercise will put people face to face, where they can gain a greater sense of the diversity in the conference, wrap the process in prayer and spend time with the guiding Scripture passage, Ephesians 4:15-16.

**3. Voting:** This year, the annual conference will use electronic voting system with individual keypads, eliminating the need for members to stand and be counted in the event of close votes.

**4. Passing the peace:** The act of passing the peace after the vote will emphasize that all members of the annual conference are brothers and sisters, united in Christ regardless of their opinions on a particular topic.

The task force hopes that the additional interaction by individuals and small groups will encourage a focus on commonalities, even amid disagreement. Yet Choate acknowledges the tension between taking a stand on an issue and respecting diversity of opinion.

“When a resolution’s goal is to change behavior, the energy for and against that change typically falls on a continuum between the desire to include and the desire to stand for something,” he said. “If the way we discuss and decide on resolutions doesn’t honor both of those desires, then we need a new way.”

## Smothers (from page 1)

universities as a ministry. I will admit, I was a bit afraid that not being United Methodist would prevent me from getting the job. I am Baptist. But when I talked to the board and was very open with them about that, and said, “Hey look, I’m not Methodist, but I’m a Christian, and I love the Lord,” they said, “Well, if that’s the case, then we don’t think you’ll have a problem.”

I grew up in the church as a young boy... very active in Sunday school and youth ministry. So when I got to college at LSU, I joined Shiloh Missionary Baptist Church. Because I was in higher education, they immediately placed me on the scholarship committee at the church. From there, I became a Sunday school teacher, head of the youth ministry and also a member of the church’s school board, because they had their own school there at the church.

I think it just added to that lifelong relationship of working with young folks and being able to instill in them, in a different way, the importance of education—but in this instance, education about Christ, through the Bible.

When I discovered more about historically black colleges, and about church-based schools like Huston-Tillotson and Philander, one of the most exciting things for me—remember, prior to that I had worked at state-supported schools—was that I could be in an environment where we could openly and boldly proclaim our love for Jesus Christ.... That, to me, was very attractive about being at Huston-Tillotson, a United Methodist school, and ultimately about being at Philander Smith College.... to know that we can be so bold about our love for God and focus through our educational endeavors on the core values and tenets of the United Methodist Church, which are a part of our college’s core values. We can focus on character building. We can focus on spirituality. And we can do that unapologetically, and that to me is just absolutely what I think our kids need today.

### What are your goals for Philander?

We inherited a strategic plan that has been approved by our board of trustees that is, in my opinion, a good strategic plan. It has goals, it has a vision, it has outcomes that, if achieved, will truly

take Philander Smith College to the next level.

Once upon a time, Philander Smith College ranked in the top five percent of all HBCUs in America. We rivaled Fisk, we rivaled, Hampton, Howard, Morehouse and Spelman. The last ranking that came out, we were in the top 30 percent. I want to get us back to the top five percent. What do we need to do to get there? Well, here are the five things that I think it’s going to take for us to get there.

Number one, Philander has to figure out a way to thrive. For us to thrive, in my opinion, we have got to become more entrepreneurially focused... revisit our academic programs, and rethink them in a way that aligns them with current economic trends and drivers. We need to look at our degree programs and determine where there are opportunities to make them stronger, so that ultimately we can graduate students who can go into those industries that are the money-makers of tomorrow.

Secondly, I want to identify what I am going to refer to as programs of distinction.... I want to go out and find the absolute best and brightest faculty to come in and help us build those programs—not to say we don’t have good faculty already, because we do—but I want to identify what I like to refer to as rock-star faculty, who are out there doing the best and the most cutting-edge research, and I want to get them to this campus. Then I want to go and recruit equally talented, best and brightest students to become the majors of these programs of distinction. I think if we do that, it brings a level of prominence.... It makes us more competitive in the global marketplace.

The third thing I want to do is what I love to do, and that is increase the amount of resources that we have coming into Philander. Fundraising. I want to grow our endowment, and I want to increase the amount of scholarships that we have for our students.... My greatest fear is that I will get a student who will walk in and say to me, “I’m doing everything right, I’m serious about my education, I am an actively engaged student on this campus, but yet, I don’t have the funds to complete my degree.” I absolutely fear that one day, a student like that will walk into my office, and that I will not have the resources to say, “You know what? Because you are a good student, because you are doing what you’re supposed to do,

here is how I can help you.” So I want to go out and get more scholarship dollars through fundraising.

The fourth thing I want to do is grow our enrollment. Right now, we are still having conversations about what is the right size for Philander Smith College.... Once we determine by working with our board, with our faculty members, the actual right size for the institution, I want to grow our enrollment to that number.

We know that we have challenges financially because our enrollment is not where it needs to be.... For us to be able to operate with optimal efficiency, budgetarily, it takes us having about 750 students. Right now we have about 550 students, so we have challenges in those areas.

The last thing that I want to do is tied to the hopes and dreams that have been expressed to me by countless alumni and by a number of community members, and that is embracing what I call Philander Smith College’s urban mission.... There are problems in this urban center. There’s poverty here, there are educational issues here, there are social issues here, there are violence issues here. A number of issues.

Philander, through its social justice mission, is poised very uniquely to be able to reach back out to the community and help to solve some of those problems. We have the intellectual fortitude to do so, we have students who have declared that they want to give back to their communities, and so we have to embrace that mission. We have to begin to contribute in a meaningful way to the issues that plague our urban community.

If I can get us to those places, those five things, in the next two to three years, then I really think that we are poised to move back to that top five percent that I referenced earlier. Is it going to be a lot of hard work? Absolutely. Is it going to require a new way of doing business at Philander Smith College? Absolutely. Is it going to require a new way of thinking by the faculty, by the staff, by the students, by the alumni, by the community? Yes, it absolutely will.

But the one thing that we all have in common is that we love Philander Smith College, and we want to see it soar. And so, if we want to see it soar, we’ll come together to do those things, and at the end of the day you’ll find, I think, a new Philander Smith College. We’re very excited.

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## COMING UP

**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 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. Participants may register at [www.tanako.org](http://www.tanako.org). For more information, please visit [www.tanako.org](http://www.tanako.org) or call 501-262-2600.

**QuadW summer internship positions open in Arkansas and other states**

The QuadW Missional Internship program is now accepting applications from college-aged young people for 2015 summer internships. The program includes a \$2,000 stipend plus room and board, and a \$50 early application bonus if received by Feb. 15.

Interns will relationally serve in inner city neighborhoods, live in Christian community with other interns and receive mentoring from experienced practitioners. Opportunities are available in Mobile and Montgomery, Ala.; Kansas City (Kan. and Mo.); Pine Bluff and Little Rock, Ark.; Redding, Pa. (outside Philadelphia); and tentatively, Columbus, Ohio, and Portland, Ore.

The purpose of the QuadW Missional Internship program is to develop leaders—the kind of leaders who live out their faith in such a way as to change lives and communities through the sharing of God's unconditional love. Interns will be stretched beyond their comfort zones as they serve those in need and live in Christian community with one another. They will be equipped and trained to make a difference in the world, and they will experience the joy of their salvation in ways they never imagined.

Contact the director, Don Woolley, at [don@quadwmi.org](mailto:don@quadwmi.org) or visit [www.quadwmi.org](http://www.quadwmi.org) for more information and an online application process.

**Confirmation Day with the Bishop at Pulaski Heights UMC Little Rock March 14**

Confirmation Day with the Bishop is an annual event for any and all youth presently in a confirmation class, who have just finished a confirmation class or are getting ready to begin a confirmation class. This year's event is Saturday, March 14, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. at Pulaski Heights UMC Little Rock. This year's theme is "Uniquely United Methodist." In addition to spending time with Bishop Gary Mueller, students also will hear from the Revs. Mary Jane Cole and Mark Norman.

- 9-10 a.m. Registration in the sanctuary
- 10-11 a.m. Worship and Sacraments
- 11:15 a.m.-12:15 p.m. Session #1: The Bishop's Mission Plan—Bishop Gary Mueller
- 12:15-1:00 p.m. Lunch
- 1-2 p.m. Session #2: Grace—Rev. Mary Jane Cole
- 2-3 p.m. Session #3: Our Heritage, The Connection and Why It's Important—Rev. Mark

Norman

To register, follow the link from the Calendar page of [arumc.org](http://arumc.org) or visit <http://goo.gl/VqNSEy>.

**Nominations open for Denman Evangelism Awards until March 16**

The Arkansas Annual Conference is now accepting nominations for The Harry Denman Evangelism Award for Clergy, Lay, and Youth.

The Harry Denman Evangelism Award recognizes a person whose life and ministry exemplifies the teaching of Christ and the Great Commission. Recipients of these awards, nominated by individuals, churches, or districts, and selected by the Annual Conference, live their call to "Offer Them Christ" daily as modeled by Dr. Harry Denman, founder of The Foundation for Evangelism that sponsors these awards.

To learn more about the award or to download nomination forms, visit the 2015 Annual Conference website at [ac2015.arumc.org](http://ac2015.arumc.org). Nomination forms may be emailed to Rev. Carlton Cross at [cncross@salemumc-benton.com](mailto:cncross@salemumc-benton.com) or mailed to him at 1647 Salem Road, Benton, AR 72019-8344.

Nominations must be received no later than March 16 to be considered for the 2015 awards.

**Crisis counseling workshop at Hendrix April 11; register by April 6**

Hendrix College on Saturday, April 11 will offer a free workshop on crisis counseling led by Dr. Terry Parsons ([www.drterryparsons.com](http://www.drterryparsons.com)). Some United Methodists of Arkansas may know Terry from his work with Perkins School of Youth Ministry.

This informative and engaging workshop will equip participants with essential tools to effectively minister and counsel in crucial times. Crisis topics will include depression, suicide prevention, drug and alcohol abuse, cutting, bullying and other topics raised by attendees. The event will be held from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. in Hendrix's Student Life and Technology Center, and lunch will be provided. Though the workshop and lunch are free, you must register for the event by April 6. To register, contact the Rev. J. Wayne Clark at 501-450-1263 or [clark@hendrix.edu](mailto:clark@hendrix.edu).

**Registration now open for PAUMCS Certification Institute**

Now is the time to apply for the Professional Association of United Methodist Church Secretaries (PAUMCS) Certification Institute, to be held July 19-24, 2015 in Nashville, Tenn.

The United Methodist General Council on Finance and Administration (GCFA) endorses and supports the Certification Institute for PAUMCS. Classes are held at the GCFA Ministry Center. The Institute provides an in-depth look at the structure and mission of the UMC that is geared toward individuals who are instrumental in the work of the church.

Limited funds are available for those requesting scholarships to cover the cost of the registration fee. A written request explaining the need for the scholarship is required when applying. For registration information, visit [www.paumcs.org](http://www.paumcs.org).

## CLASSIFIEDS

PLACE YOUR CLASSIFIED in the *Arkansas United Methodist* for 60 cents per word, no limit. Call 501-324-8037, email [aforus@arumc.org](mailto:aforus@arumc.org) or mail to: *Arkansas United Methodist*, 800 Daisy Bates Drive, Little Rock, AR 72202.

**Part-time Children's Coordinator position available with Jacksonville First United Methodist Church.** Position is responsible for planning curriculum and programming for ages Pre-K – 5th Grade. Experience working in or leading children's activities preferred. Send resume to [info@jacksonvilleumc.com](mailto:info@jacksonvilleumc.com).

**Join Pulaski Heights UMC, Little Rock in a pilgrimage to the Holy Land** Oct. 2015 with a possible Egypt extension. For more information, contact Rev. Jay Clark at [jclark@phumc.com](mailto:jclark@phumc.com).

**Gardner Memorial United Methodist Church, North Little Rock, is seeking a part-time Organist/Accompanist.** Responsibilities include accompanying the congregation and choir in worship (including special worship services and choir programs), and the choir in rehearsals; to present a positive image of Gardner Memorial UMC to the worship community and the wider community. Compensation: Negotiable and commensurate with qualifications. To request a more complete job description or to submit a resume with references, please contact Pastor Richard Mitchell, Gardner Memorial UMC, 1723 Schaer Street, North Little Rock, AR 72114. Phone: 501-374-9520; email: [rsmitchell2@me.com](mailto:rsmitchell2@me.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).

## Hawley Memorial stages live nativity as a Christmas gift to its neighbors

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Hawley Memorial United Methodist Church Pine Bluff on Dec. 21 presented a live nativity scene as a way to remind their neighbors in the Ridgway Road community of the message of Christmas. The nativity scene was enjoyed by many who drove by and stopped to take photos and express appreciation to the participants. The Rev. Reginald Russell, pastor of Hawley Memorial, joined numerous laity who participated in the activity.

COURTESY PHOTO



## OBITUARIES

### BATESVILLE

#### Darlene M. Berckefeldt

Darlene M. Berckefeldt, 71, passed away Thursday, Jan. 15, 2015.

She was born Sept. 18, 1943, and was a retired registered nurse.

A member of the United Methodist Church, she accompanied her husband as he served congregations in the North Arkansas and Arkansas Conferences, including Cincinnati, Melbourne, Manila, Monette and St. John UMC Hope.



**Darlene Berckefeldt**

Survivors include her husband, the Rev. Doyle Berckefeldt, a retired associate member of the Arkansas Conference; two sons, Jeffrey Berckefeldt and his wife, Justina, of Melbourne and Robert Berckefeldt and his wife, Tammy, of Tyler, Texas; and two grandchildren.

A private memorial service was held with family members in attendance. In lieu of flowers, the family requests that memorials be made to the Nursing Scholarship Fund at the University of Arkansas Community College Batesville, P.O. Box 3350, Batesville, AR 72503.

### HOPE

#### Paul Lyons

The Rev. Paul Leroy Lyons, 88, of Hope, passed away Friday, Jan. 16, 2015.

He was born May 12, 1926 in Vinton, La., to Clarence Leonard Lyons and Nora Aldredge Lyons.

A World War II veteran with honorable discharge from the U.S. Navy and a retired elder of the Little Rock Conference of the United Methodist Church, he pastored many congregations in southern Arkansas. He graduated from Baptist Bible Institute in Graceville, Fla., William Carey College in Hattiesburg, Miss., and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Ft. Worth, Texas. He also pastored Baptist churches in Florida, Mississippi and Texas. He taught school at Brown Elementary in Hope, Ark., in the 1970s. Paul was the general contractor and designer of "Grandpa's Place" (a Gospel music park south of Hope in the Patmos community). This was accomplished with the help of many Patmos community volunteers.

His favorite scripture passage was Proverbs 3: 5-6. He called it a "Prescription for Success": "Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths."

He was preceded in death by his parents; his wife of 65 years, Mary Darleen Lyons; one son, Danny Lyons; one brother, Clarence L. Lyons, Jr; and sisters Marjorie Hoyt, Martha Melancon and Joyce Lyons.

Lyons is survived by one daughter, Carolyn Howard and her husband, Bruce, of Hot Springs; one son, Steve Lyons of Hope; and one sister, Mary Alice Johnnie of Orange, Texas; eight grandchildren; 20 great-grandchildren; and a host of cherished family members, church families and friends and his loving adopted family of the Heather Manor Nursing Home in Hope, who certainly went above and beyond the call of duty in providing care and compassion.

Services were held Tuesday, Jan. 20, 2015, in the Hinton United Methodist Church in Patmos, Ark. Interment followed in Memory Gardens Cemetery, Hope.

The family wishes memorials to be made to "Grandpa's Place," 1489 Highway 355 East, Hope, AR 71801.

### KENSETT

#### James R. "Jim" Wilson

The Rev. James R. "Jim" Wilson, 71, passed away Thursday, Jan. 8, at his home in Kensett, Ark.

He was born Aug. 21, 1943, in St. Louis, Mo., to Uell Wilson and Marie Meyer Wilson.

A retired elder in the Arkansas Conference, Wilson was appointed as pastor of the Kensett and Judsonia UMCs at the time of his death. He had previously served at Trumann, Desha, Southside UMC Batesville, Earle, St. Andrew UMC Little Rock, Marvell and St. Paul's UMC Harrison.

The author of several devotional books, he was a contributing writer to *Lectionary Worship Aids*, and to the Sunday school series *The One Room*.

He is survived by one brother, Jack Wilson and his wife, Peggy, of San Diego, Calif.; one sister, Jane Rhea and her husband, Curt, of Homer City, Pa.; and a host of loving nieces and nephews.

A memorial service was held at 7 p.m. Friday, Jan. 16, at Kensett UMC. A reception followed the service.



**Jim Wilson**

### LITTLE ROCK

#### Maurice C. Webb Sr.

The Rev. Maurice Clive Webb Sr., 101, of Little Rock, passed away Jan. 12, 2015.

He was born on Sept. 25, 1913, in Kansas City, Mo., to the late Joseph and Winnie Webb.

Webb graduated from Hendrix College and Perkins School of Theology, SMU. Before entering the ministry, he owned grocery stores in Blytheville and Egypt, Ark. He was a World War II veteran, serving with the Navy Seabees in Guam.

His ministry included serving United Methodist congregations in Little Rock and Springdale, including 14 years as the associate pastor of First United Methodist Church Little Rock. He and his wife shared a memorable experience and made many friends when he participated in a summer pastoral exchange program with the Methodist Church in Brighton, England.

As a member of West Little Rock Rotary, Webb was well-known for his perfect attendance and his prolific guest list. He was proud to be a Paul Harris Fellow. Although he lost the ability to see, he never complained about his lights being off. On the occasion of his 95th birthday, he invited many friends and family to join him as he walked across the Big Dam Bridge. His positive attitude, perseverance and kindness were an inspiration to all who knew him.

He is predeceased by his wife of 68 years, Atha Williams Webb; his sister Pauline Webb and his brother Boyce Webb. His 98-year-old sister, Lorene Hamilton of Walnut Ridge, was able to spend this past Christmas with her dear older brother.

He is also survived by his three children: Maurice C. Webb Jr. of Bigelow; Marcia Caplinger and her husband, Kelsy, of Little Rock; and Kathy Webb of Little Rock. Additional survivors are his three grandchildren: Paul "Trey" Lecky III and his wife, Nancy, of Woodland Park, Colo.; Laura



**Maurice Webb**

Lecky Coulter and her husband, John, of Little Rock; and Mauri Lecky Arnold of Tampa, Fla.; and his six great-grandchildren: Samantha and Matthew Lecky, Jonathan Webb Coulter, and Rachel, Katherine and Eliza Arnold. Each grandchild and great-grandchild was blessed to have been baptized by Papaw/Pop at First United Methodist Church Little Rock.

The family would like to thank his caregivers, Ely Bondoc, Janet Hubbard, Everett Roddy and the staff at Good Shepherd and Hospice Home Care for the wonderful and loving assistance they provided. Webb always expressed his gratitude for things big and small, with either a "thank you" or a hearty "Amen!"

A memorial service was held Monday, Jan. 19, at 1 p.m. at First United Methodist Church Little Rock. On Webb's 100th birthday, his church home gave him the honor of naming him Pastor Emeritus. In lieu of flowers, he requested that memorials be made to First United Methodist Church, 723 Center Street, Little Rock, AR 72201.

### TEXARKANA, Texas

#### Era Lee Hillis

Era Lee Pierce Hillis, 98, of Texarkana, Texas, passed away Tuesday, Dec. 30, 2014, at Wadley Hospital in Texarkana.

She was born Dec. 26, 1916, in Prairie View, Ark., to the late Robert Lee and Era Ethel Blair Pierce.

She attended Arkansas Tech in Russellville, and taught school for several years in Conway. She married James Ralph Hillis on Aug. 23, 1942, after his graduation from Perkins School of Theology at Southern Methodist University. Together they served Christ in numerous Methodist churches across Arkansas for over 30 years. They were blessed to spend 51 years together before he passed away in 1993.

Era Lee was a devoted minister's wife and a loving mother and grandmother. She was a faithful member of First United Methodist Church Texarkana, Ark., and its Montgomery Sunday School class. She enjoyed cooking, baking, all kinds of sewing and needlework, her friends in the Nandina Garden Club and her sisters in PEO Chapter V.

In addition to her parents, Era Lee was preceded in death by her beloved husband, Dr. J. Ralph Hillis; one sister, Dana Pierce Blaylock; two brothers, William and Fay (Pat) Pierce; and one son, James Robert Hillis.

She is survived by two children, Dr. Mike Hillis and his wife Sherri of Texarkana, Ark., and Ellen Jo Hillis Tate and her husband, Dr. Jeffrey Tate of Rogers; daughters-in-law Aimee B. Hillis of Little Rock and Kathy S. Hillis of Baton Rouge, La.; 10 grandchildren, Lisa Hillis Browning and Beth Hillis McCandless of Little Rock, Deborah Hillis O'Meara of Bent Mountain, Va., Dr. Michael Hillis of Alma, James Andrew Tate of Brooklyn, N.Y., Christopher Hillis of Conway, Elizabeth Tate Bradt of Owasso, Okla., Lindsey Hillis and Hampton and Brennan Hile of Texarkana, Ark.; and 12 great-grandchildren.

A celebration of Era Lee's life was held Friday, Jan. 2, 2015, at 11 a.m. at First United Methodist Church Texarkana, Ark. Burial followed at East Memorial Gardens.

In lieu of flowers, memorials may be given to First United Methodist Church, 400 E. 6th Street, Texarkana, AR 71854, or the Multiple Systems Atrophy Coalition, 9935-D Rea Road #212, Charlotte, NC, 28277.



**Era Lee Hillis**





## Church's new font made by local artist

Trinity UMC Little Rock on Jan. 11 consecrated a new baptismal font that also is a work of art. The font and its matching pitcher were crafted by local glass artisan James Hayes.

Colors chosen for the font include several shades of blue, representing water, and browns and beiges to represent sand or earth. The folds in the bowl are suggestive of waves of water.

James Hayes, right, aided by an assistant, shapes hot glass to make Trinity UMC Little Rock's baptismal font.

PHOTO BY DAVID GLAZE

The new font and stand were given by Wade and Mimi Wilson in honor of their children, Mia and Bryce.



Trinity UMC Little Rock's new baptismal font was given by the Wilson family, left. Also pictured are the font's creator, glass artist James Hayes, and David Glaze, diaconal minister on staff at Trinity.

PHOTO BY STEVE BONDS



## The Last Stop on Your Life's Odyssey.

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

### Good Advice

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

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

John calls the Finance e-Tips newsletter emailed from UMFA to 13,500 Arkansas United Methodists “full of good advice and information about taxes and other matters.” If you would like to begin receiving this fact-packed electronic e-newsletter, email [jmarshall@umfa.org](mailto:jmarshall@umfa.org).

As one of his first actions when he joined the board in 2006, John helped his church, First UMC in Texarkana, move \$837,000 from several money managers to UMFA for investment management. Through excellent investment performance and the addition of new funds raised for an endowment to provide for maintenance of church facilities, the church's total endowment had grown to \$1,836,974 at the end of 2014.

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



**The United Methodist Foundation of Arkansas**

5300 Evergreen Drive • Little Rock, Arkansas 72205

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