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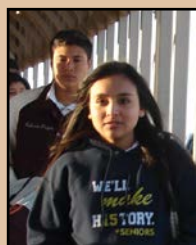
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Young worshipper Braydon Poland dances as the congregation sings during Vilonia UMC's building dedication service. AUM PHOTO BY AMY FORBUS

Vilonia congregation dedicates new building

Debt-free reconstruction completed 10 months after tornado

BY AMY FORBUS
Editor

VILONIA, Ark.—Seven minutes before the 10 a.m. worship service on March 1, members of Vilonia United Methodist Church began setting up extra rows of chairs for the friends old and new packing the bright and spacious sanctuary. A brass ensemble began to play Beethoven's "Ode to Joy," and the image on the projection screens bore the message, "Welcome Home."

Just 10 months after a deadly tornado ripped through central Arkansas, taking out homes, businesses, lives and doing severe damage to the Vilonia congregation's facility, the church gathered to dedicate its new home to the glory of God.

"This being a bigger building, we have to sing a lot louder," said music leader Dave Yarbrough, encouraging worshippers to raise their voices on both the classic hymns and contemporary praise songs.

Positioned to share

In a word of greeting to the church before leading them in prayer, Bishop Gary Mueller reminded them that God does not waste a crisis.

"Look where you are after only 10 months," he said. "You're not just back where you were, you're positioned to proclaim the gospel, to welcome people, to have them know Jesus Christ and be transformed and to share in the good news of Jesus Christ with a world that so needs it."

The bishop also congratulated them for having a dedication, not just a consecration, of the new building.

"There is the consecration of a building, which is to set it aside for holy work, and there is the dedication of a building, which is what you do when there is no debt at all," he said. "That's what's happening today: You not only are consecrating this building as a place of worship, but more importantly as a mission station. You are doing it with no debt, which means that your financial resources can be used to reach people, to bring healing and to bring hope."

The church's pastor, the Rev. Nathan Kilbourne, in his sermon emphasized that the congregation's new space is sacred because God chooses to inhabit it and make God's presence known. "Place matters," he said, quoting his grandmother, who insists on driving nearly an hour each way to attend her home church.

But while place does matter, God doesn't want to be contained by buildings, Kilbourne said. Of all the great spaces that have been built, God chooses one place to be confined: in human flesh.

"Today we have an opportunity to say to God as we dedicate this space, 'Fill us as a church. Fill us as the people of God,'" he said. "Use us, mold us, make us, that we might be a sacred space in our community—not that this space would just be the sacred space, but that we would become that sacred space."

Thankful

Before the service, Fred Fowlkes, the congregation's lay leader and one of the members spearheading the rebuilding process, expressed thankfulness for all the

[See DEDICATION, page 7]

Bishop appoints Steele to SW District



Rodney Steele

Bishop Gary E. Mueller has announced the appointment of the Rev. Rodney Steele as superintendent of the Southwest District, effective July 1, 2015.

Steele, who served as superintendent of the former North Central District from 2005 to 2011, currently serves as senior pastor of First UMC Mountain Home, as well as on the South Central Jurisdiction Episcopacy Committee, the denomination's Standing Committee on Central Conference Matters and the General Commission on Communications.

"Rodney's administrative and pastoral gifts have long been assets to Arkansas' United Methodist churches," Mueller said. "I'm looking forward to having him join the Cabinet to help more congregations grow in vitality, make disciples and transform lives, communities and the world."

Steele graduated from United Methodist-related Centenary College of Louisiana in Shreveport, and earned his Master of Divinity degree at Iliff School of Theology in Denver. In addition to his tenure at First UMC Mountain Home, he has served in Bradley, Mineral Springs, Murfreesboro, Little Rock, Van Buren, Rogers, Texarkana and as an Air Force chaplain. He and his wife, Becky, have two grown children, Garrett and Sarah.

"I will genuinely miss this beautiful part of the state, and this incredible congregation that is so committed to mission—for example,

[See NEW DS, page 4]

Don't miss the dance!

BY WILLIAM O. "BUD" REEVES
Special Contributor

My favorite spectator sport is college basketball (Arkansas Razorbacks and Duke Blue Devils, specifically). The high holy days of college basketball are the Big Dance, March Madness, the season-ending NCAA tournament. In terms of basketball, it doesn't get any better than this.

I think it's interesting that this year the Final Four and championship are occurring during Easter weekend. The high holy days of the Christian faith are Holy Week, specifically Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday and Easter Sunday. In our life of faith, it doesn't get any better than this. Holy Week and Easter are our Big Dance.

What makes it big is the story of Jesus. From the exultation of the Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday to the depths of the betrayal and crucifixion to the ultimate exaltation of the Resurrection, this is God's story.

It is our story. It is what makes us who we are, and it gives us life.

As many Easters as I have experienced, there are three things that still make me want to dance.

In Jesus, suffering becomes redemptive. The story of the betrayal of Jesus by Judas, the unjust trial by Pilate and Herod, and the brutal death by crucifixion is hard to bear. Our Lord suffered so much! But by the love of



Bud Reeves

God, his suffering became a sacrifice for our sins. The root word of sacrifice means "to make holy." It was unjust, tragic and senseless for the righteous Son of God to die. But through his sacrifice, you and I and the world were redeemed.

There are many examples of just such senseless suffering in the world today. We just remembered the Bloody Sunday in Selma, Ala., in 1964. Christians are being persecuted and martyred in many places around the world today. Tragic deaths occur every day.

Through the blood of Jesus and the love of God, no suffering is meaningless. It can awaken our conscience. It can enliven our love. It can engender our compassion. As I am continually reminded by Paul, "In all things God works for good" (Romans 8:28). Even suffering can be redemptive.

In Jesus, we know all suffering will end. As the Psalmist sang, "Weeping may linger for the night, but joy comes with the morning" (Psalm 30:5). Jesus suffered the humiliation of betrayal by one of his own disciples, the ridicule of the Jewish and Roman authorities and the unimaginable torture of the crucifixion. His suffering ended in death, but it was overcome by resurrection on Easter. This is the key event in the history of the world that gives us hope. Jesus suffered, died—and rose again.

When we go through the suffering of life, our hope

'As many Easters as I have experienced, there are three things that still make me want to dance.'

for better days comes from Jesus. The pain of illness will end, either in health or heaven. The heartbreak of grief will get better. The long, dark valley of divorce will yield a new day of happiness. Whatever hard times we endure, we know we can because Jesus did. He is our hope.

In Jesus, life overcomes death. This is the glory of Easter. As the women came on the third day to anoint the broken body of Jesus, they heard the words that changed history: "He is not here; he is risen!" The power of death is still at work in the world. There are lots of dark places still. But in the death and resurrection of Jesus, we know that we who have faith in him will have the ultimate victory. We will live and live forever! This is good news that never grows old.

If we didn't believe in the resurrection, Jesus would be just another teacher or prophet who came to a bad end. In fact, Paul says, "If for this life only we have hoped in Christ, we are of all people most to be pitied." Then he affirms, "But in fact, Christ has been raised from the dead" (1 Corinthians 15:19-20). The resurrection makes all the difference.

One of the songs that was popular back in the "folkie" days of my early youth choir experience was a spiritual, "Jesus Walked This Lonesome Valley," which contained the words "He had to walk it by himself." Indeed he did, to the point where he cried out in abandonment on the cross, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" He did that for us. He did that so that we would never have to walk alone, so that our suffering could be redemptive, so that our hope would be sure, so that our life would be eternal.

On this Easter weekend, that makes me want to dance!

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



EDITOR'S CORNER

BY AMY FORBUS

The family you choose

"Friends are the family you choose for yourself."

It's a phrase uttered so often that it has become an adage, not easily attributed to a single source. When it appears all over cute little wall plaques on Pinterest, you know it's got to be true, right?

It certainly resonates with me. Over the past couple of decades, I've forged relationships with a handful of women who even my sisters understand are like sisters to me. And there are a few men besides my brother who I consider, and sometimes refer to as, brothers.

I have theological diversity in my circle of friends. Some of them see God quite differently from the way I do, and some believe in no higher being at all. (And among those who call themselves atheist or agnostic, I've found people just as kind, or kinder, than many I've met who call themselves Christian. Ponder that for a while.)

But the very deepest friendships are connected through Christ, as well. The friends who show up in our lives and circumstances to be "God with skin on" can make a world of difference.

Take note of the friends who are there for you when one of your parents is dying. Who arrive on your doorstep when you're having a particularly rough time. Who pray with you and for you over the phone when they can't be there in person. Who insist that you rest when you're sick, and that you get out of the house as part of becoming well again. Remember their kindness, and learn from it.

One of my long-time friends recently wrote in an email, "Friendship is the vehicle through which God transforms us. I'd go so far as to say the cross has no meaning outside of friendship."

Preach, brother.

His point brings to mind the words of Jesus found in John 15:13, just before he was arrested: "No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends." Those words would take on literal meaning all too quickly—something of which I'm particularly aware now, during the end of Lent.

Friendship fortified by the bond of Christ holds incredible power. It doesn't have to feel "holy" or "proper." It may even have greater meaning when it meets you down in the desolate pit or the miry bog (Psalm 40).

The same brother-friend who wrote the words above recently asked a small group a question borrowed from author and priest Barbara Brown Taylor: "What's saving your life right now?"

I don't know what answers those group members gave, but I know my answer. It's when God shows up with skin on, every single day.

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



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Submission Deadlines

Issue Date	Submission Deadline
May 1	April 13
June 5	May 18
July 3	June 18

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GROWING TOGETHER IN CHRIST: A word from the Bishop

BY GARY E. MUELLER

This I believe

We will celebrate Easter on Sunday, April 5. It's a day of great joy. But it's also a day that means different things to different Christians.

There are some Christians who just can't accept the fact that Jesus was physically resurrected from the dead. But they're not ready to give up on resurrection, so they try to "explain" Jesus' resurrection in ways that make sense to them using primarily psychological or symbolic language.

Other Christians focus on Jesus'

resurrection as an antidote to death. Jesus conquered death after his amazing love led him to die on our behalf. His resurrection means that we will experience eternal life and live with God forever when we die.

Still other Christians believe that Jesus' resurrection is not primarily about death, but about life. This certainly includes life in the future that is lived in God's eternal never-ending embrace—but it also includes resurrection life that begins right now and changes everything about everything.

So what do I believe?
I believe Jesus was physically resurrected from the dead. He was not, however, merely the same as he was before; he literally became a new creation. I believe Jesus' resurrection overflows with rich spiritual, psychological and emotional meaning that speaks to our hearts, minds and lives in a multitude of ways so we can live more faithfully and fully every single day. I believe Jesus' resurrection gives us the eternal hope that nothing that happens in life or in death ever can separate us from God's love in Christ. And I believe Jesus' resurrection enables us to experience the beginning of eternal life right now through Jesus'

unconditional love that accepts us just the way we are, transformational love so powerful he is unwilling to leave us just the way we are and invitational love that invites us into the fullness of God's eternal life.

But when all is said and done, I believe there is one thing about Jesus' resurrection that is absolutely essential. If we believe Jesus' resurrection actually occurred, it must be the single most important thing in our lives. And that means it must shape everything we believe, strive for and do.

This I believe.
Amen.

APPOINTMENTS & RETIREMENTS

The following appointment changes have been announced since the deadline for the previous issue of the *Arkansas United Methodist*. Changes are effective July 1 unless otherwise noted.

- Andrew Thompson (elder)—First UMC Springdale
- Todd Lovell (provisional elder)—First UMC Springdale (associate)
- Rodney Steele (elder)—Southwest District superintendent
- Randy Ludwig (elder)—St. James UMC (executive pastor)
- Blake Bradford (elder)—Center for Vitality (formerly CCLEL; assistant director)
- Wade Shownes (elder)—Village UMC
- Rex Dickey (elder)—Chaplain, Holistic Product Group, LLC (extension ministry)
- Sara Bayles (provisional elder)—First UMC Fort Smith (associate)
- Eric Meyer (provisional elder)—First UMC Bentonville (associate)
- Jonathan Griesse (provisional elder)—First UMC Heber Springs (associate)
- Colin Bagby (provisional elder)—First UMC Maumelle (associate)
- Stephen Dickinson (elder)—Cabot UMC
- Stan Adams (elder)—personal leave of absence
- Zach Underwood (elder)—personal leave of absence
- Robert Cloninger (elder)—Marion UMC
- Mary Jane Cole (deacon)—Sacred Path, Inc. (primary appointment) and First UMC Little Rock (secondary appointment); effective March 9, 2015

Retirements effective July 1:

- David Steele (elder)
- Steve Brizzi (elder)
- Marcia Dodd (elder)

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

A pattern for prayer

What is the difference between praying and living a life of prayer?

Practically everyone prays now and then—even atheists, when they end up in foxholes. Offering an occasional prayer is much different than living a life of prayer, though. Biblical teaching suggests that a fully formed faith will express itself in a prayerful life. "Rejoice always," the Apostle Paul tells us in 1 Thessalonians, "pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you" (5:16-18; NRSV).

The practice of prayer was important in early Methodist spirituality and was encouraged by John Wesley. Wesley refers to faithful discipleship as "the Way of Prayer." About Paul's counsel in 1 Thessalonians, Wesley says: "God's command to 'pray without ceasing' is founded on the necessity we have of His grace to preserve the life of God in the soul, which can no more subsist one moment without it, than the body can without air."

So prayer is not only important; it is vital to all life!

It's one thing to affirm the need for prayer, but it's quite another to know what that looks like in practical life. We all follow routines and patterns in our lives—but few of us truly set those routines by our commitment to spiritual disciplines. We don't live in a world very conducive to that sort of life, and it's not clear that the church does a good job of teaching it.

So here I'd like to offer a pattern for prayer that can help any Christian begin to build a rhythm of prayer into daily life. For anyone who is only used to offering a brief grace before meals or a prayer at bedtime, this pattern offers a fuller approach to the life of prayer. On the other hand, this pattern is also basic enough that it can be incorporated into practically any one's daily life. First take a look at the pattern itself, and then read on for an explanation about how to use it in your day-to-day life.

Daily prayers

9 a.m.

New every morning is your love, great God of light,
and all day long you are working for good in the world.
Stir up in us a desire to serve you,
to live peacefully with our neighbors,

Pray for Self

and to devote each day to your Son,
our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen.

Noon

Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name,
Thy kingdom come,
thy will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
Forgive us our trespasses
as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil
For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory,
for ever and ever. Amen.

3 p.m.

We give you thanks for this day, O Father in Heaven,
for our work and our rest, for our food and our fellowship.
Sanctify us through the grace of your Son,
our Lord Jesus Christ.
And direct us by your Holy Spirit,
to walk in the ways that lead to life,
to avoid all outward and inward sin,
and to glorify your name in all that we say and do. Amen.

Pray for Family

Pray for Church

The how and why

This pattern of daily prayer will allow you to punctuate your day with prayer to God. By pausing for just five minutes at three times each day, we can build a holy rhythm into our lives that draws us closer to God. As the Scripture says, "Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you.... Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will exalt you" (James 4:7-8a, 10; NRSV). John Wesley echoes this teaching where he tells us, "God hardly gives His Spirit even to those

[See PRAYER, page 15]

New homes for tornado survivors

BY AMY FORBUS
Editor

Residents of Fortner Road in Mayflower on March 19 celebrated a dream becoming reality. Four families who had lost their homes in last April's tornado now have new houses, thanks to a partnership between the many disaster response organizations forming the Interfaith and Partners Disaster Recovery Alliance (IFPA) and Habitat for Humanity of Faulkner County.

"This partnership with Habitat for Humanity has opened a huge door to folks who might not have been able to own a home," said Janice Mann, disaster response coordinator for the Arkansas Conference UMC who also serves as staff for IFPA. Both the Conference and the United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR) are part of IFPA.

Mann also expressed appreciation for the involvement of Christian Aid Ministries, a Mennonite organization that led much of the construction, and NOMADS (Nomads on a Mission Active in Divine Service), a United Methodist group that lives out of



Edith Ortiz, left, and Pat Fortner share a moment of joy at the dedication of their new Habitat for Humanity homes in Mayflower. Four families displaced by the tornado that struck the area on April 27, 2014, now own new homes on the same street.

AUM PHOTO BY AMY FORBUS

RVs to do mission work around the U.S., saying both groups' steady presence has made a crucial difference in the recovery effort. (For information on the continuing work, see "Volunteers In Mission & Disaster Response - Updates and Needs" on page 6 of this issue.)

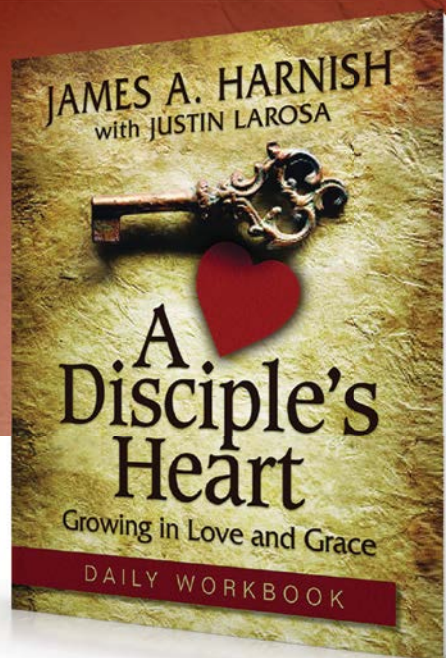
Before the tornado, Edith Ortiz rented a mobile home just two lots down from where her Habitat for

Humanity home now stands. When that home was destroyed, she never imagined the journey of the following year could culminate in home ownership. She looked forward to a good night's sleep back in a bedroom of her own.

"I'm ready to rest," Ortiz said, standing in her new front yard before the dedication ceremony. "I haven't truly done that in a long time."

A Transformed Heart is a Work in Progress

John Wesley was really all about the "spiritual journey"—taking steps and continually walking a path that transforms the heart and helps us grow into the likeness of Christ. This six-week study for small groups or a churchwide experience reinterprets Wesley's idea of "Christian perfection," helping participants develop a pattern of daily Scripture reading, prayer, and personal reflection.



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Components include a Daily Workbook (participant guide), Companion Reader, Leader Guide with Online Toolkit, and a Leader Kit.

Safe Sanctuaries posters now available at ARUMC children's ministry website

The Arkansas Conference Safe Sanctuaries® resolution and guidelines declare that local churches need to:

- Assist the development of awareness and self-protection skills for children and youth, and
- Advise children and youth of an agency or a person outside as well as within the local church whom they can contact for advice and help if they have suffered abuse.



With those two goals in mind, Arkansas Conference Children's Ministries has developed three age-appropriate posters—one for preschool age, one for elementary age and one for youth—that can be displayed in classrooms and hallways of your church building.

To download the posters and see related resources, visit <http://kidz.arumc.org/safe-sanctuaries>.

New DS (continued from page 1)

providing children with 100,000 meals this school year—and I will miss the life-shaping experience of preaching on a regular basis," Steele said. "But I served in the former Camden District, I came to ministry out of the Hope District, my first church job was as a summer youth minister in Arkadelphia, so in a sense I'm going back home to many places that are holy to me. I'm excited about collaborating with pastors and congregations in a very intentional way toward fulfilling our mission of making disciples,

and to help them be aware of all the resources that can support those efforts."

He succeeds the Rev. Mike Morey, who has begun a new appointment as senior pastor of First UMC Pine Bluff.

The Southwest District of Arkansas includes United Methodist congregations and ministries in 17 counties: Calhoun, Clark, Columbia, Dallas, Garland, Hempstead, Hot Spring, Howard, Lafayette, Little River, Miller, Montgomery, Nevada, Ouachita, Pike, Sevier and Union.

CREATIVE WORSHIP WORKSHOP

WHEN
April 25, 2015

AT
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\$25 for a group of 3 from a single church

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United Methodists of Arkansas
disciples making disciples

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Video from Ethnic Local Church Summit now available online



The Rev. Derrick Lewis Noble, right, director of church development and revitalization for the New York Annual Conference, anoints and prays for the Rev. Tommy Halsell of Mount Carmel and Scott's Memorial UMCs, Lockesburg. The prayer time was the closing worship of the Arkansas Conference 2015 Ethnic Local Church Summit, held Feb. 28 at Philander Smith College. Sixty United Methodists gathered for the day-long event, which focused on three areas: marketing the local church, preaching and technology. Featured workshop leaders included Noble; the Rev. Sherry Daniels, a technology consultant from Norfolk, Va.; and Bunnie Jackson-Ransom of Atlanta-based First Class Marketing.

For those who could not attend but who are interested in learning from the presenters, an archived video of the plenary session is available on the Arkansas Conference YouTube channel: www.youtube.com/ArkansasUMC.

PHOTO BY BRENNEN BOOSE

Annual Conference update: registration begins April 15

Registration for Annual Conference 2015 will be open from April 15 through May 29 at <http://ac2015.arumc.org>. In addition, registration packets will be mailed to lay and clergy members of the Annual Conference in early April.

Attendees may register and pay online, or mail forms and payment to the Conference office. Forms must be postmarked by May 29 to be eligible for the \$75 registration fee. This year's late registration fee will be \$125. Online registration will not be available for late registrants.

April 15 is significant for another reason pertaining to Annual Conference: Those who wish to be considered for the delegation to the 2016 General and Jurisdictional Conferences should complete a self-nomination form by that date. Elections will be held during the Annual Conference business sessions.

Visit ac2015.arumc.org for further updates relating to this year's Annual Conference as they become available, including profiles of delegation nominees.

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VOLUNTEERS IN MISSION & DISASTER RESPONSE - UPDATES AND NEEDS

For information on any Volunteers In Mission (VIM) project, 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). On Facebook, join the group "Volunteers in Mission & Disaster Response - Serving Arkansas & Beyond" for updates.

Tornado recovery update from Janice Mann

In Mayflower, four of seven new homes for survivors of the April 27, 2014 tornado are complete. Two more are nearing completion and should be finished around press time. The seventh home is 50 percent complete, and an eighth home is underway out in the county. Christian Aid Ministries (CAM) has been a Godsend. Their skills, talents and efficiency are amazing. We are so thankful they came to Arkansas to work this recovery effort. We also are grateful that the United Methodist NOMADS (Nomads on a Mission Active in Divine Service) have returned. They will pick up where CAM leaves off to finish the last two houses—the last two for now, that is. Interfaith and Partners Disaster Recovery Alliance (IFPA) is working to secure funding for more homes, and CAM has committed to return in the fall for more rebuilds.

In Vilonia, five houses are nearing completion, and the three that were built out in the county are essentially complete, with families already moved in. Vilonia Disaster Recovery Alliance (VDRA) has plans for more rebuilds as well. IFPA and VDRA work together to coordinate these efforts, which are made possible by our partners in response. A very big thank you to the United Methodists of Arkansas and the United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR). Without you and the funding you have provided, our part in these efforts wouldn't be possible. We are so grateful to say that most of the recovery projects, if not all, have been touched by a United Methodist hand and/or a United Methodist dollar.

We also very much appreciate our other partners—too many to name, more than 20 of them—who are helping to make this effort possible. Most are agencies and organizations of the Arkansas Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (ARVOAD). Some are local. Some are able to do more than others, but all play a huge part and we are so blessed to call them brothers and

sisters in Christ.

Events to mark the one-year anniversary of the disaster are being planned and include "Mayflower Rising" on April 28: "A time of remembering our loss and celebrating our resilience." Food, guests, activities, music and more from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the park.

Tornado recovery needs

- If you have or know of resources for new or gently used furniture and household goods for these new homes, contact Janice Mann. Donations or significant discounts are appreciated.
- In anticipation of the April 27 disaster anniversary date, a new clean-up effort has begun in the areas along the path of the tornado. This effort needs more helpers, and is well suited to youth, young adult and young at heart groups available to work for a day or a week.
- Types of workers still needed include skilled repairers and rebuilders, clean-up crews (ranging from picking up and sorting debris to operating chainsaws and heavy equipment), clerical help, phone staffing and case management.

Projects in Arkansas ready for VIM teams

There are several recovery and other projects in Arkansas that are ready for teams. Contact Byron Mann for details.

Byron also offers organizational and planning assistance for teams wishing to travel on Mission Journeys outside Arkansas or the United States.

PEOPLE OF FAITH

Allen, Crone, Brown named Philander Smith College Living Legend honorees

Three United Methodists on Feb. 26 were among those honored with Living Legend Awards from Philander Smith College. The celebration was part of the college's eighth annual Religious Emphasis Week.



Allen

The Rev. Maxine Allen, the first African-American woman to be ordained an elder in the United Methodist Church in Arkansas, holds a Bachelor of Arts in Philosophy and Religion from Philander Smith College and a Master of Divinity from the Interdenominational Theological Center's Gammon Seminary in Atlanta, where in 2008 she was named Alumna of the Year.

Allen's social advocacy spans five decades. She was instrumental in the founding of the first battered women's shelter in Arkansas (now named Women and Children First) and successfully lobbied the Arkansas legislature to adopt stronger domestic violence laws. She served as the founding executive director of Second Genesis, a transitional home for women coming from prison.

Within the United Methodist Church, she helped to implement the first Commission on the Status and Role of Women in Arkansas, serving as chair. As a layperson, she chaired the Arkansas Commission on Religion and Race, which advocates equality for ethnic persons in the church.

Currently she serves as the Arkansas Conference assistant director of ministries for mission field engagement. Previously she served as the Wesley Foundation campus minister at UALR; dean of the chapel at Philander Smith College; and disaster response coordinator for the Arkansas Conference.

She serves on the Arkansas Judicial Discipline and Disability Commission; as national secretary of the Black Clergywomen of the United Methodist Church; on the Arkansas Women's Project Leadership Team; as vice-chair of the Little

Rock Christian Ministerial Alliance; and has worked extensively for social justice in her local community and globally for women, children and the poor.

Sandra Jackson Brown currently serves as chair of the Verizon Arena Board, vice-chair of the Pulaski County Planning Board, and on the Treatment Homes Inc., Health Information Exchange Council (HIE) and the Arkansas Center for Health Improvement Health Policy Board.



Brown

A member of the Little Rock Black Nurses Association and the Arkansas Nurses Association, she was the first minority nurse to be elected to the National Council of State Boards of Nursing in 1986. She is a past member of the Arkansas State Board of Nursing, recipient of the Arkansas League for Nursing Merit Award, recipient of the Arkansas Nurses Association Nurse of the Year Award and served as co-chair of the

Arkansas Nurses Association Legislative Committee when ACT 409, the legislation that established the Advance Practice Nursing Licensure and role in the state, became law. Currently, she chairs the Arkansas Nurses Political Action Committee. She is also a member of Beta Pi Omega Chapter of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc. and the Little Rock Chapter of The Links Inc.

Brown continues to be active with Arkansas Advocates for Children and Families as a past board president, volunteering and raising funds for its annual Soup Sunday; and with Susan G. Komen for the Cure - Arkansas Affiliate as a past board member.

She retired from Baptist Health with 30 years of service, where her tenure included serving as director of community health. She is the new chief executive officer at Jefferson Comprehensive Care System, Inc. (JCCSI), where the primary mission is to provide access to healthcare.

Brown attends both Wesley Chapel United Methodist Church and First United Methodist Church Little Rock, and has received the Christian Ministerial Alliance Outstanding Citizen Award.

Cynthia Crone, a pediatric nurse practitioner, has spent her career advancing equity in health and healthcare through her work with the Arkansas Department of Health, University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences and the Arkansas Insurance Department. Her early achievements include integrating a variety of services, including immunizations, WIC, and child health services into same-day, same-visit, family-friendly services. She also helped lead statewide systems-change work to improve pregnancy and infant outcomes. These efforts led to her co-founding the nationally recognized Arkansas CARES family treatment program for addicted mothers and their children.

Her current focus is leading Arkansas' State Partnership Health Insurance Marketplace, which provides low- and middle-income Arkansans with health coverage choices that result in access to quality and affordable health care. In its first year, the marketplace led the nation in decreasing the percentage of uninsured adults. She is an alumna of the UAMS College of Nursing and Graduate School and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Executive Nurse Fellowship program.

Crone currently serves on the District Eight Health Care Industry Council of the St. Louis Federal Reserve Bank; on the National Academy of State Health Policy, Health Care Access and Financing Steering Committee; and on the boards of Family Development Center and Arkansas Nurses Foundation.

Crone's efforts have resulted in nearly \$100 million in grant funding for innovative, consumer-focused healthcare and systems change in Arkansas. She has provided volunteer leadership for multiple professional and service organizations, including the Miracle Team at Trinity UMC Little Rock, which works to share God's love and resources with those in need. She currently volunteers at Shepherd's Hope health clinic at Oak Forest UMC Little Rock.

Other Living Legend honorees included the Rev. Glenn Barnes, Bettye Brown, Christopher Davis, the Rev. Marion Humphrey, Collea McKinney and the Rev. Cleo Smith.



Dedication

(continued from page 1)

labor and gifts given to the congregation. He shared stories of those who came from near and far to help, including groups from Tennessee churches pastored by Kilbourne's father and uncle. He recalled one large church of another denomination that sent scores of people, and as they left after a full day of work, presented a check for \$10,000.

"I'm overwhelmed, really," he said. "I was thinking about it this morning. It's been 10 months, and has seemed like a lot longer than that, in a lot of ways, with a lot of things that happened in that time. But we've been just terribly blessed."

Kilbourne expressed the congregation's special thanks to those within the United Methodist connection who helped their sister church get back on its feet.

"Our members are so thankful to all who came, especially our UMCOR groups," he said. Volunteers working with the United Methodist

Committee on Relief (UMCOR), both from within Arkansas and beyond, provided a sustained positive influence amid the disaster, starting within hours of when the tornado hit.

Fowlkes credited the Vilonia congregation's cooperative spirit with making the decision of how to rebuild go smoothly.

"Once we looked at where we were... everybody got behind it," he said. "Not one person in the church was opposed to it. Everybody's been agreeable and supportive."

Beautiful things

During the offering, a slide show set to the song "Beautiful Things" by Gungor captured the process from destruction to rebuilding and gave worshippers a sense of how much had happened since the tornado struck.

And in the category of "good problems to have," the single-serving cups ran short during the celebration of Holy Communion. Picking up the common chalice from the table, Kilbourne continued

serving by intinction, with recipients dipping pieces of bread into the cup.

The rear wall of the sanctuary holds a painting depicting the church's old building, given by Vilonia artist Debbie Wright. A walk through the halls revealed that the church staff had begun to settle into its offices, and that the Methodist Family Health Counseling Clinic was up and running once more.

Surrounded by beauty and newness, the congregation received a challenge from its pastor at the close of his sermon.

"Will we be known as the church who, having experienced the resurrecting power of God, sat around, and did nothing with it?" Kilbourne asked. "Or will we be known as the church who, having experienced the resurrecting power of God, was so renewed by God's grace that they took that resurrecting power into a broken and hurting community, and said 'We want to share our sacred space with you?'"

"Space matters, and God dwells among us. Will we let God dwell within us?"



CLOCKWISE, FROM TOP LEFT:

Bryn Westby plays a violin solo during Holy Communion at Vilonia UMC's March 1 Dedication Sunday celebration.

Bishop Gary Mueller, left, leads a prayer for the Rev. Nathan Kilbourne at the close of Vilonia UMC's March 1 worship service.

Maddie Jenkins served as acolyte on Dedication Sunday.

AUM PHOTOS BY AMY FORBUS

Fred Fowlkes works to remove the cornerstone of Vilonia UMC's old building before its demolition earlier this year. His father-in-law led construction of that building, and Fowlkes and his wife, Beverly, were the first couple to hold their wedding there.

PHOTO BY TODD BURRIS

Wheelchair ramp completed with cooperation of local church, VIM and UMCOR



PHOTO BY STUART HOLT

Members and staff of First United Methodist Church Conway recently coordinated efforts toward the construction of a wheelchair ramp for Sandra and Kenneth Griffin of Conway.

When the church learned of the need, Kenneth had been in rehabilitation and was due home in just a few days. There was no way to get him in and out of his home in his wheelchair. The church's mission committee agreed to find a way to fund the need, and partnered with a team from the United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR) to build the ramp.

Byron Mann, Arkansas Conference Volunteers In Mission (VIM) coordinator, went to the Griffins' home to evaluate the job. He determined that their existing deck could not support a wheelchair ramp, so the group built a ramp and a deck. Over the course of two days, a group from Christian Aid Ministries of Berlin, Ohio, a fellow member with UMCOR in the Interfaith and Partners Disaster Recovery Alliance, tore down the existing deck and built a wheelchair ramp and new deck with steps on two sides.

Since the ramp's completion, Kenneth has been back in the hospital to have his leg amputated above the knee due to complications from diabetes.

"The porch and ramp have been a Godsend," said Sandra Griffin. "It has allowed me to get him in and out to his doctors' appointments, and if we didn't have it, his problem with his leg wouldn't have been caught."

—submitted by Colleen Holt

Veritas 2015 awakens youths' passion for God

BY MADISON AKINS-BANMAN
Special Contributor

On March 6, more than 1,200 youth and youth leaders gathered at the Hot Springs Convention Center to experience passionate worship, spiritual renewal and community building at Veritas, the largest annual Arkansas United Methodist youth event. As buses full of seventh- through 12th-graders flooded into the convention center parking lot despite the snow and ice that blanketed the state only two days before, it was evident that the weekend would surpass all expectations.

Veritas is one of six events created by the Arkansas Conference Council on Youth Ministries (ACCYM). Youth and adults are divided into task forces to plan each event. At the ACCYM retreat in August, the Veritas task force prayerfully discerned the theme "Awake" centered on Psalm 85:6-7, "Won't you bring us back to life again so that your people can rejoice in you?"

The task force constructed a prayer to be lifted to God during the months of preparation, in order that God might move in mighty ways. A voice recording of this prayer opened worship Saturday morning, setting the tone for a God-infused weekend. Youth groups were challenged to create their own prayer representing what they would like to experience as they journeyed through the weekend. Devotionals written by task force members were

available to youth groups, offering discussion and reflection on the theme.

Because the main focus of Veritas is meaningful worship, the weekend included five worship experiences with three elements: worship band The Ember Days; speaker the Rev. Magrey DeVega, pastor of St. Paul's UMC Cherokee, Iowa; and spoken word poet Amena Brown with DJ Opdiggy.

"I always feel reconnected after Veritas," said Claire Thompson, a four-year attendee from Pulaski Heights UMC Little Rock. "The worship is more meaningful when I'm with people my own age listening to speakers and bands who really know how to reach teenagers."

"I enjoyed Veritas because it allowed me to experience God in my own way and have a comfortable and passionate worship experience with people my age," said Lauren Lovelady from First UMC Hot Springs.

Veritas concluded Sunday morning with Holy Communion led by Bishop Gary Mueller. The weekend was over all too quickly, but youth departed with new friends, revived hearts and awareness of being awake to God's call. To see more photos of the event, search the hashtag #arveritas on social media and visit www.accym.org.

Akins-Banman is the current president of ACCYM and the youth chairperson of the Veritas 2015 task force.



PHOTOS BY ACCYM MEDIA TASK FORCE



ACCYM president Madison Akins-Banman, left, assists Bishop Gary Mueller with Holy Communion at Veritas 2015.



The Ember Days, featuring lead singer Janell Belcher (far left); and speaker the Rev. Magrey DeVega of St. Paul's UMC Cherokee, Iowa (left) were among guests at Veritas 2015, the Arkansas Conference Council on Youth Ministries' largest annual event.

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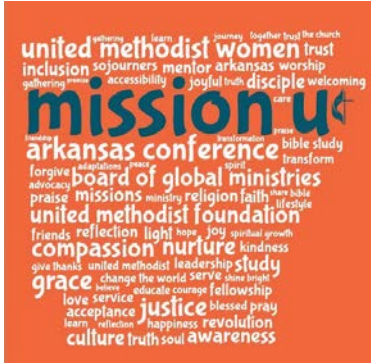


GLOBAL MINISTRIES
The United Methodist Church

Mission u 2015 registration open

Online registration is now open for Arkansas Conference Mission u, which will be held Wednesday, July 29 through Saturday, Aug. 1, 2015, at Hendrix College in Conway.

Arkansas Conference Mission u is a cooperative school supported by the Arkansas Conference Board of Global Ministries, the Arkansas Conference United Methodist Women and the United Methodist Foundation of Arkansas.



Mission u provides opportunities to study current issues and their impact on society based on recent mission study topics. It is open to both members and non-members of United Methodist Women. This year's Spiritual Growth study, in which all attendees participate, is "Created for Happiness: Understanding Your Life in God."

In addition to participating in the spiritual growth study, attendees will have a choice between two others: the geographic study, "Latin America: People and Faith" and the issue study, "The Church and People with Disabilities."

To register, visit <http://goo.gl/z8HyEE>. The registration deadline is July 10.

For those who do not have internet access or who prefer not to use online registration, paper brochures are available in each district office, or by contacting Beth Cobb at 479-719-0350 or bethcobb@att.net. All of the forms also may be downloaded at <http://goo.gl/coUuKJ>.

A scholarship application is among the available resources. Applications for Mission u scholarships will be accepted until June 15, 2015.

For more information, to ask questions or for assistance, contact Beth Cobb, 1112 M. Terrace, Barling, AR 72923; 479-719-0350; or bethcobb@att.net.

Calico Rock church welcomes teens on Friday nights

Like most towns its size, Calico Rock, Ark., does not have a mall. The closest movie theater and fast-food restaurants are over 30 miles away. This lack of gathering space adds up to a lack of safe places for teens to socialize—especially when the local high school's ballgame is over, or when there wasn't a ballgame that weekend at all.

The people of Calico Rock United Methodist Church have come together to help remedy this problem. The Pirate's Cove Coffee House, named for the local school mascot and hosted in the Calico Rock UMC fellowship hall, gives teens somewhere to go and something to do on the last Friday of each month.

Here teens have a place to call their own. Young people are invited to hang out on the couches. They can play video games, pool, foosball or table tennis. Teens with musical talent can sign up for open mic. Some simply share coffee and conversation.

Everything at the coffee house is free of charge to those attending. A local business provides the coffee, and church members provide dips



Teens from the Calico Rock community sing a duet during the open mic at Pirate's Cove Coffeeshouse.

COURTESY PHOTO

and chips and homemade cookies and brownies. For the kids who would like something a little more filling, the people of Calico Rock UMC serve up fresh hamburgers.

"Adolescence is a difficult time, and it is only compounded when young people feel forgotten or trapped," said the Rev. Bill Sardin, the church's pastor. "Too many teens in our town feel that way—they feel as though their social needs are forgotten, they feel trapped by the distance they have to travel to

experience many of the things that most American teens take for granted. I am proud of our congregation for taking a positive step and sharing a Jesus that cares about the needs of teenagers."

As interest in the Coffee House continues to grow, the church plans to open its fellowship hall on additional Fridays. For Calico Rock UMC, this is an opportunity to minister to, and earn the trust of, one of the least served populations in their community.



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- 10 a.m. **Inauguration Worship Service:** Bishop Gary E. Mueller, Episcopal Leader of the United Methodist Church, Arkansas Conference
Greene Chapel
- 11 a.m. **Pre-Inaugural Address:** Dr. John Churchill Secretary of The Phi Beta Kappa Society
Mills Center
- 2 p.m. **Inauguration Ceremony**
On the west lawn of Ellis Hall and Fausett Hall
Rain location is Staples Auditorium
Reception immediately following in the Pecan Court

For more inauguration information, visit www.hendrix.edu/inauguration
 For Alumni Weekend 2015 details, visit www.hendrix.edu/alumniweekend



1600 Washington Avenue
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COMING UP

April

VBS mini-grants available; applications due April 10

Need some additional funding for your congregation's Vacation Bible School this summer? Apply for a VBS Mini-Grant. Two VBS mini-grants of \$200 each will be awarded in all five districts of the Arkansas Conference. Grants are awarded on the basis of need, and are to be used for curriculum and/or supplies for a local congregation's 2015 Vacation Bible School.

The grant application deadline is April 10; recipients will be announced April 20; and funding will be in the mail to the 10 grant recipients by May 1.

For information about mini-grants, including the application form and planning resources, visit <http://kidz.arumc.org/vacation-bible-school-2015>.

United Methodist Historical Society of Arkansas spring meeting, luncheon April 25

Members, friends and guests are invited to the 2015 Annual Spring Luncheon of the United Methodist Historical Society of Arkansas, set for noon on Saturday, April 25, at First United Methodist Church Little Rock, 7th and Center Streets. The featured speaker will be Wye Mountain resident Randy Frazier.

The luncheon cost will be \$10 per person, so be sure to send a check with name, address and phone numbers for all attendees to Barbara Clark, Historical Society treasurer, 2605 Normandy Drive, Newport, AR 72112. You may pay at the door, but the Society needs your advance reservation to be able to prepare the proper amount of food.

If you have not joined the Historical Society yet, or have not paid your dues for 2015, you may do so at the rate of \$10 per person or household. Send dues to Barbara Clark at the address above.

This year the Historical Society, the UM Museum of Arkansas and the Commission on Archives and History will meet before the luncheon at 10 a.m. The full Archives and History group will meet under the leadership of chairperson Helen Guenter at 11 a.m., as a follow-up to the committee meetings.

The luncheon is for members, friends and guests—the Historical Society wants as many as possible present to help keep the ministry of memory alive and well in the Arkansas Conference.

The Historical Society is a committee of the Commission on Archives and History of the United Methodist Church of Arkansas. The Rev. Ron Clark serves as chair; he may be reached at 501-529-3143 or ronaldclark1510@comcast.net.

Creative Worship seminar with Midnight Oil Productions' Jason Moore April 25

Jason Moore of Midnight Oil Productions will share ways to make worship more relevant and exciting—all without breaking the bank—in Creative Worship, a day-long seminar sponsored by the Arkansas Conference Center for Clergy & Laity Excellence in Leadership (CCELEL). The Creative Worship seminar will be held at First UMC Hot Springs on Saturday, April 25, 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

While audiovisual technology is in place for many congregations, there's a big difference between technology and culture. The real story in worship now is not the use of screens, but how screens and other forms of creativity come together to create powerful God experiences. This seminar teaches techniques and methodologies that churches of any size can use to make big things happen in worship and beyond. Many of the techniques are suitable for small churches.

Creative Worship invites participants to explore what happens next with the latest thinking on culture, art, teams and technology. Learn how to create worship that is deep, meaningful, memorable and that makes disciples.

Tickets are \$10 per person, or \$25 for a group of three from the same church. To register, visit <http://arumc.org/events/creative-worship-workshop>. Registration deadline is April 20.

April - May

Lay Servant Ministries courses in Southeast District set for April and May

A number of Lay Servant Ministries (LSM) courses have been scheduled for this month and next, in various locations around the state. For the West Memphis, Monticello and Clarendon courses, registration will begin at 1:30 p.m., and classes will be held from 2 p.m. to 7 p.m. each day, with a meal at 5 p.m. For details, contact the Southeast District office at 870-367-3365 or Jimmie Boyd at 870-718-3649, 870-357-2688 or jimmie.boyd@arumc.org. The Little Rock schedule and meal information is different; see the last entry in this list.

First UMC Monticello: Sunday, April 19 and Sunday, April 26

- Basic Lay Servant Ministries
- Preaching
- Spiritual Gifts
- Prayer

For questions specific to Monticello courses, contact Jimmie Boyd (info above).

First UMC Clarendon: Sunday, April 19 and Sunday, May 3

- Spiritual Gifts
- Dancing with Words (preaching)
- Basic Lay Servant Ministries
- Refresher

For questions specific to Clarendon courses, contact the Rev. Nan Nelson at 870-530-1530.

First UMC West Memphis: Sunday, April 26 and Sunday, May 3

- Adult Basic Lay Servant Ministries
- The United Methodist Way / Living Our Beliefs
- Leading Worship / Worshipping with United Methodists

For questions specific to West Memphis courses, contact the church office at 870-735-1805.

Highland Valley UMC Little Rock: Friday, May 1 and Saturday, May 2

- Basic Lay Servant Ministries
- Advanced: Discovering Your Spiritual Gifts
- Advanced: Devotional Life in the Wesleyan Tradition

The classes at Highland Valley run from 6 to 9:30 p.m. on Friday and 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Saturday. Please eat before you arrive on Friday and bring a sack lunch on Saturday. Beverages and snacks will be provided. For a registration form and information on ordering course materials, contact the Central District office, fkirkman@arumc.org or 501-851-1433.

May

Lay Servant Academy at Mount Sequoyah set for May 13-16

Mount Sequoyah Conference and Retreat Center in Fayetteville will host the next Lay Servant Academy, May 13-16, 2015. Sponsored by Arkansas UMC Lay Servant Ministries, the academy provides opportunities to equip laity in areas of Scripture, doctrine, organization and ministries of the church.

Certified Lay Servants are leadership among the laity who work to be better equipped for service. They serve the local church or charge in any way in which their witness or leadership inspires the laity to deeper commitment to Christ and more effective discipleship. Students must order materials through cokesbury.com and complete two hours of required homework before arrival to successfully complete the class.

This Academy will offer the basic course, as well as advanced courses on leading worship, evangelism, preaching and United Methodist heritage. Instructors for this academy include the Rev. Pat Bodenhamer, Jodi Cataldo, Liz Curtis, Susan Jett, the Rev. Shane Pair and George Rhoades. To learn more or to register, visit www.mountsequoyah.org.

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‘This Old Church’ offering help, seeking more teams



The Volunteers In Mission (VIM) team from Northwest District that focuses on This Old Church projects has maintained a busy schedule in the past year.

This Old Church, begun by former Conference VIM coordinator Don Weeks, runs on a churches-helping-churches model. Congregations that need labor for building improvements and upkeep may request a team through current VIM coordinator Byron Mann.

The Northwest District team, led by Charlie Gilmore, is based out of Greenwood UMC. To date, they have logged a total of 760 volunteer hours completing 17 This Old Church projects, with five more scheduled in the near future. The congregation and team members themselves have covered expenses for the more than 3,000 miles of travel they have logged, and the local church with the need for a work team funds the project for which it has requested help.

Using one of the Arkansas Conference Disaster Response trailers, the team transports tools and materials to the churches and gets to work. They have added some tools to the trailer to increase efficiency.

Types of work done on church facilities include:

- repairing and replacing windows and doors
- updating trim and molding
- removing and replacing wood due to rot or mildew
- replacing carpet
- refinishing wood floors
- reworking and repairing pews
- some light foundation repair
- removing and replacing lights and switches
- updating entrances to improve accessibility for those with disabilities.

This team has also done some repairs and remodeling work at Shoal Creek Camp, the Arkansas Conference Camping Ministries site in the Northwest District. And, true to the purpose of VIM, it continues to work on local home repair projects, as well as building wheelchair ramps for local residents in the Greenwood area.

Another team, based out of Piney Grove UMC Hot Springs and led by David Stewart, is becoming more active and has collaborated with the Northwest District team on a project for Spadra UMC. With some help from team members from other Hot Springs churches, the Piney Grove team has worked on DeAnn UMC in Hempstead County outside of Hope.

This Old Church welcomes the formation of other teams across the state. If you are interested in joining one of the existing teams or possibly forming a new one, contact Byron Mann (vim@arumc.org or 870-826-0268) or Charlie Gilmore (mommagm@aol.com or 479-252-8261). Assistance has been requested by churches throughout the Arkansas Conference, so a job may already be available near you. Pastors or leaders of United Methodist congregations needing the help of a This Old Church Team may contact Mann or Gilmore, as well.

Camp Aldersgate receives grants, forms new partnerships

Two recent grants and a new weekend camp have made news at Camp Aldersgate, a mission institution of United Methodist Women. Situated on 120 acres in Little Rock, Camp Aldersgate creates life-changing experiences for individuals with special needs, enabling them to expand their worlds and express their unique voices.

Reeve Foundation grant: Camp Aldersgate has received a \$4,615 Quality of Life grant from the Christopher and Dana Reeve Foundation. The award was one of 75 grants by the foundation totaling more than \$600,000 awarded to nonprofit organizations that provide more opportunities, access and daily quality of life for individuals living with paralysis, their families and caregivers. Conceived by the late Dana Reeve, the Quality of Life program has awarded more than 2,400 grants totaling over \$18 million since 1999.

Camp Aldersgate will use the grant to support the 2015 Resource and Camp Day for children who utilize respiratory technology, their siblings and caregivers.

“This Quality of Life gift affirms Camp Aldersgate’s mission of providing life-changing experiences for individuals with special needs,” said Sarah Wacaster, Camp Aldersgate CEO, in a March 5 news release. “It is a privilege that this foundation continues to help and expand Camp Aldersgate’s programming.”

Grant creates partnership among West Little Rock Rotary Club, Museum of Discovery, Camp Aldersgate: The Museum of Discovery on Feb. 10 announced a



Adults with special needs participated in a March 13-15 Weekend Camp at Camp Aldersgate.

COURTESY PHOTO

new collaborative partnership with Camp Aldersgate and the West Little Rock Rotary Club. Over three years, the West Little Rock Rotary Club will provide volunteers and \$33,450 to create opportunities for Museum of Discovery educators to provide hands-on science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) education programs for children, youth and senior adults at Camp Aldersgate.

The Museum of Discovery and Camp Aldersgate staff will deliver STEM education outreach programs at Camp Aldersgate on topics ranging from the human body, engineering and animals to earth sciences and tinkering. Also included in the grant are sensory-friendly family events for Camp Aldersgate campers and their families at the Museum of Discovery.

The final component of the grant will provide a chicken coop for Camp Aldersgate to implement a new animal therapy program for children with special needs.

New camp for adults with

special needs: 2015 marked the first year for a partnership between Camp Aldersgate and Group Living, Inc., to provide camping experiences for adults with special needs. The March 13-15 Weekend Camp provided outdoor experiences for 26 adults with special needs. Structured programs included fishing, canoeing, carousel rides, team-building and additional outdoor, camp-related activities. First United Methodist Church Arkadelphia provided eight volunteers and raised funds to help this camp happen.

“We are thrilled for the opportunity provided by someplace as special as Camp Aldersgate,” said Yukiko Taylor, co-director of day services and development for Group Living, Inc., in a March 9 news release. “The chances the people we serve will be given here are not only fun and exciting, but also confidence building and normalizing. Everyone deserves the chance to enjoy nature and all its beauty. Camp Aldersgate ensures that everyone can.”

Scholarships available to Arkansas UM students

The Conference Board of Higher Education and Campus Ministry is seeking applicants for two scholarships.

The Conference Merit Scholarship is a \$500 award funded through the UM Student Day offering. A successful applicant must be attending a UM college or seminary and have been involved in campus ministry.

The Hood Memorial Scholarship is a \$1,000 award for a student preparing for ministry in the United Methodist Church. A successful applicant must be involved in a campus ministry experience.

The application form is the same for both scholarships, as is the deadline: **May 1, 2015**. An application (“Scholarship program - Candidate Application.docx”), a certification of church membership form and further details are available in the “Scholarships & Grants” section of www.arumc.org/forms, at any Wesley Foundation in Arkansas, Hendrix College and Philander Smith College. For additional information contact the Rev. Roy Smith, rsmith@fumcrsvl.org or 479-968-1232.

For information on other scholarships and loans available to United Methodist Students, send a request to umloans@gbhem.org.

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Center for Vitality: new name, new staffing for CCLEL

The Rev. Dede Roberts, director of the Arkansas Conference Center for Clergy and Laity Excellence in Leadership (CCLEL), has announced a new name for the Center she leads. It will now be known as the Arkansas Conference Center for Vitality.

“With our Conference emphasis on creating vital congregations, we felt it was time to bring the Center’s name into alignment with our overall trajectory,” Roberts said. “Between now and Annual Conference, we will be rolling out a new ministry plan with a focus on Next Steps 1, 5,6,7 and 8 of the Bishop’s Mission Plan.”

The Next Steps related to the Center for Vitality’s new ministry plan are 1) Experience Spiritual Revival, 5) Look Like the Neighborhood, 6) Grow by “1” (at least one new adult profession of faith, at least one more person in worship, at least one additional small group and at least one more ministry that reaches into the mission field), 7) Unleash Lay Leadership in Ministry and 8) Grow Excellent and Passionate Clergy. For additional information on the Bishop’s Mission Plan, visit www.arumc.org/missionplan.

The Center for Vitality shift will include staffing changes as well. Bishop Gary Mueller has appointed the Rev. Dr. Blake Bradford the Center’s assistant director for clergy development, effective July 1, 2015. The new position is focused specifically on Next Step 8 of the Bishop’s Mission Plan—honing the basic competencies clergy need to help churches become more vital and engage their mission fields in

meaningful ways.

“Blake’s experience in pastoral leadership and administration, as well as his work on the Board of Ordained Ministry, make him uniquely qualified for this new position,” Roberts said.

Bradford’s work will focus on nurturing spiritual leaders in the areas of personal discipleship, preaching, evangelism, mission-field engagement, stewardship and equipping laity for ministry—all hallmarks of vital congregations as laid forth in the Mission Plan.

A Little Rock native, Bradford entered the life of the church as a young adult, and was baptized at Highland Valley UMC Little Rock while a college student. After graduating from Hendrix College in Conway, he studied in England at Oxford University’s Centre for Medieval and Renaissance Studies. For his first Master’s degree, he studied Medieval and Reformation theology with a focus on sacramental theology at Vanderbilt University. He then earned his Master of Divinity degree at Iliff School of Theology in Denver.

He also holds a Doctor of Ministry degree in parish leadership from SMU’s Perkins School of Theology in Dallas, where his doctoral project, “Passing the Mantle,” studied the use of peer group learning and continuing



Blake Bradford

education in pastoral formation.

Bradford has served in churches and mission field contexts of different sizes. His most recent appointment has been as executive pastor of St. James UMC Little Rock, where he works with clergy, staff and lay leadership to align and coordinate the congregation’s ministries. He has spent several years on the executive committee of the Arkansas Conference Board of Ordained Ministry, organizing the new Residency Program for those seeking ordination, and on the faculty for the Arkansas Course of Study School. He and his wife, Kerri, have two children, Gabi and Micah.

Current assistant director the Rev. Dr. Candace Barron will be leaving the Center and returning to an appointment in a local church.

“Candace helped lay the foundation of work with small membership churches, and led us in developing resources for establishing small group ministries in churches of all sizes,” Roberts said. “I’m thankful for her service,

and excited for the congregation that will benefit from her leadership.”

Another new position has been created in the Center for Vitality to

focus on online learning and training for laity. For the job description and application information, see below.

JOB DESCRIPTION

Assistant Director of the Center for Vitality: Trainer

Purpose: Responsible for the design, coordination and presentation of training and development programs for creating vital congregations and unleashing lay leadership in the Arkansas Conference of the United Methodist Church.

The trainer will resource lay and clergy leaders to move forward in our trajectory of creating vital congregations that make disciples of Jesus Christ, who make disciples equipped to transform lives, communities and the world.

Responsibilities:

- Conduct a training needs assessment to determine training objectives for creating vital congregations and unleashing lay leadership
- Develop and distribute resources which aid congregations to “grow by one” in professions of faith, worship attendance, small groups for discipleship, and outreach ministries in the community
- Assist with training models and curriculum to achieve objectives of the Circuit Elder Program
- Lead and present training classes
- Develop resources for online learning system
- Continually monitor different training needs and models to keep training relevant and achieve objectives

Position Requirements:

- High degree of Emotional Intelligence
- Strong critical thinking and problem solving skills
- Demonstrated effectiveness as a teacher/trainer
- Excellent verbal and written communication skills
- Experience with various types of media
- Strong computer skills
- Strong leadership skills
- Working knowledge of online learning platforms

Minimum Education or Experience Requirements:

- Disciple of Jesus Christ and committed to the church
- Bachelor’s degree in Education, Human Resources, Organizational Development or similar field of study
- Experience in Corporate Training role
- Must provide training portfolio on request
- Experience in developing and training in areas of leadership and/or leading corporate change
- Working knowledge of United Methodist polity preferred

Compensation: Salary commensurate with experience: \$30,000-45,000. Benefit package of up to \$12,000 for insurance and pension.

The trainer will report to the Director of the Center for Vitality. Submit resumes to the Rev. Dede Roberts, drobotts@arumc.org.



Aiden Turner of Dover UMC reads from the book of Matthew as the Flat Wesleys, Charles and John, keep him company.

PHOTO BY ROY BETH KELLEY

‘Flat Wesleys’ visit church in Dover

Children at Dover United Methodist Church are learning about the history of the Methodist movement and practicing intentional discipleship with the help of drawings of John and Charles Wesley called “Flat Wesleys.”

The Flat Wesleys, both John and Charles, arrived at Dover UMC in mid-March from First UMC Hershey, Penn. The package included the Wesleys, along with a description of the things the Wesleys did while visiting the children in Hershey. (There was also a sweet surprise from Hershey for the children.)

The Flat Wesleys will help the children (and adults) of Dover UMC learn about their Wesleyan heritage.

“We will be learning about Wesley’s General Rules and how we can grow as disciples by living out acts of compassion, acts of devotion, acts of justice and acts of worship,” said the Rev. Roy Beth Kelley, the church’s pastor.

After two weeks with Dover UMC, the Wesleys will continue their travels, this time to a United Methodist

Church in Monument, Colo. The children of Dover UMC will include in the package a letter sharing what they learned during the Flat Wesleys’ visit.

According to a news release from Discipleship Ministries (formerly the General Board of Discipleship of the United Methodist Church), more than 700 UMCs around the world have signed up to host the Flat Wesleys, which were inspired by the youth literature character Flat Stanley©. The project grew from a desire by children’s ministry leaders to inspire covenant discipleship with children.

Congregations interested in participating in the Flat Wesleys project should contact Discipleship Ministries by email at childrensministry@umcdiscipleship.org. For details, visit <http://ministrywithchildren.com/flatwesleys>.

Later this year, Discipleship Resources plans to release a resource for covenant discipleship with children that will include experiences of those who participate in the Flat Wesleys Project.

Russian seminary president chooses Little Rock for first marathon

March 1 brought a milestone for the president of Moscow Seminary—26 of them, in fact. The Rev. Dr. Sergei Nikolaev ran his very first marathon right here in Arkansas, finishing just seconds over the four-hour mark. He corresponded recently with *Arkansas United Methodist* editor Amy Forbus; here are excerpts.



COURTESY PHOTO

You are spending this semester at Candler School of Theology in Atlanta. What are you teaching?

On the invitation of Candler School of Theology Dean Jan Love, this semester I am teaching a directed readings class on the history of Russian Methodism. I am enjoying teaching the class and also learning from Dean Love how to run a first-rate seminary. Part of my sabbatical study leave is to reflect on what needs to happen at the Moscow Theological Seminary of the United Methodist Church in order for it to become a better institution than it is now and what I, as a seminary president, need to do for that to happen. Candler is a great place for reflection.... In addition to running a marathon, learning how to run a first-rate seminary and teaching a class, I am writing a book on the history of Russian Methodism.

Was it a goal of yours to run a marathon during your stay in the U.S.?

I started running as stress relief, then fell in love with it and wanted to have a goal and a discipline to follow. In preparation for this marathon, I followed a running practice plan for over five months, and even in my travels with different United Methodist committees I followed it. Thus, I ended up preparing for the marathon in three countries: the U.S., Russia and Mozambique.

What led you to choose the Little Rock Marathon?

When my good friend Freddie Nixon, a long-time member of the board of trustees of the Moscow Theological Seminary of the United Methodist Church, learned that I planned to run a marathon during my sabbatical study leave, she invited me to run the Little Rock Marathon. Her friend from Pulaski Heights UMC, Gina Marchese Pharis, was one of the main organizers of the marathon.... I wish every first-timer had friends like Freddie and Gina. Because of them I did not feel that I lacked anything, even though it was my first marathon.

How do you feel about your run?

I did not expect that running the marathon would be such a strong emotional and inspiring experience. The first 21 miles I ran quite easily without pushing myself much.... I felt joyful and cheerful. The last five miles I felt as if gradually I was becoming more and more empty: All thoughts, distractions, and stress disappeared except one strong desire to finish and finish as well as I could. All this emptiness was abundantly filled with positive emotions and deep satisfaction of accomplishing something big. My wife Deborah, all my four children, Katya, Alex, Davyd and Daniel, my close friends Freddie, Vic and Aubrey Nixon filled my emptiness with love and care, which I continue

to carry even three weeks after the race, and expect to carry in me for a long time. It was a cleansing and deeply fulfilling experience for me emotionally, physically and spiritually.

What is the best way for United Methodists in Arkansas get connected with Moscow Seminary?

The very best way to get connected to the Moscow Seminary is to talk to Freddie Nixon from Pulaski Heights UMC Little Rock. Freddie has such deep knowledge and love for the Moscow Seminary and its students and so much experience in doing first-rate governance of the seminary, that she would definitely guide you in the right direction.

You are always welcome to come and visit the Moscow Seminary in person and enjoy getting to learn more about Russian culture. Or you can invite Freddie Nixon or me to speak at your church or a small group. Additionally, you can sign up for the Moscow Seminary newsletter in English by writing to president.msumc@gmail.com.

For over two decades, United Methodists in Arkansas have thoughtfully and imaginatively partnered with United Methodists in Russia. We appreciate that in the last couple of quadrennia they have focused on partnering with the Moscow Seminary in a strategic and visionary way. Thank you for partnering with the Moscow Seminary in meaningful and decisive shaping of the future of United Methodism in Russia.

Methodist Family Health

A PLACE OF INSPIRATION



Bishop Kenneth Hicks and his wife, Elaine, with a few Methodist Family Health clients.

Kenneth W. Hicks, an esteemed retired bishop of the United Methodist Church, recently shared these thoughts and encouraging words with key leaders of Methodist Family Health. Now we want to share them with you.

Don't lose sight of the reality that the work you do through Methodist Family Health is important. The world is plenty messed up right now, and just surviving and day-to-day living is difficult for so many. But what you are doing makes a difference.

The impact of Methodist Family Health in the entire state and region is magnificent. You should all be proud of your work with children on the fringes, with struggling parents, with families who need help. You are advocates for all these groups, working through complex issues and in a complex world. Your work is so very needed and so very important.

I am inspired by what this place called Methodist Family Health does. Your work is an expression of caring for children. I think you have to be called to this kind of work and have a passion for it. What would happen if we didn't have Methodist Family Health?



Rebuilding the Lives of Children and Families Since 1899

Methodist Family Health is the management company of: Methodist Children's Home, Methodist Counseling Clinic, Methodist Behavioral Hospital and Arkansas CARES.



Learn more about our programs at www.methodistfamily.org
Make a tax-deductible donation at www.methodistfamily.org/donations/donate.html

Lydia Patterson Institute still a beacon on the border

Dayna Barrera daily crosses the Stanton Street Bridge, over the Rio Grande River, to get from her home in Ciudad Juárez, Mexico, to Lydia Patterson Institute in El Paso, Texas. She's this year's projected valedictorian at the United Methodist school.

UMNS PHOTOS BY SAM HODGES



BY SAM HODGES
United Methodist News Service

EL PASO, TEXAS (UMNS)—Dayna Barrera seems typical of a bright, accomplished U.S. high school senior.

She's filled one bedroom wall with inspirational slogans jotted on multi-colored sticky notes. Her nightstand holds books by John Green, best-selling author of young adult novels.

But Barrera gets to class by leaving the country. Each weekday, she's up before dawn to go from her small, tidy home in Ciudad Juárez, Mexico, into El Paso, Texas. There she attends Lydia Patterson Institute, a United Methodist high school.

The journey takes 45 minutes on a good day. It means a standing-room-only ride on a city bus, a walk over the Rio Grande River via the Stanton Street Bridge, and shuffling through the pedestrian line at the U.S. Customs and Border Protection port of entry.

"Sometimes they ask a lot of questions. Sometimes they don't," said Barrera, 18. "It depends on the officer."

Whatever the hassle level, she arrives grateful. Barrera—projected to be this year's valedictorian—has a full scholarship offer from Ohio Wesleyan University and a large offer from the University of Texas at El Paso.

For more than 100 years, Lydia Patterson Institute has been a beacon for young Mexicans and Mexican Americans, giving them English language fluency and a sturdy, faith-based education that often brings transforming opportunities.

The school draws from the toughest areas of Juárez, a city beset by poverty and other social ills. But

roughly 98 percent of institute's graduates go on to college, with last year's senior class attracting some \$1.5 million in scholarships.

The alumni ranks boast physicians, lawyers, engineers, teachers, artists, diplomats and United Methodist clergy, including retired Bishop Joel Martinez.

"Lydia Patterson offers students a future without borders on the border," Martinez said by email. "It is a community where miracles are expected and celebrated every day."

A record of survival

The early 1900s saw an influx of Mexican families into El Paso. The public schools did not accommodate Spanish-speaking children, so a local woman named Lydia Patterson, working through the Women's Missionary Society of El Paso's Trinity Methodist Church, set up schools in homes.

When she died in 1909, her husband gave \$75,000 to build a two-story, red brick Methodist school named for her in El Paso's "el segundo barrio" or second ward, a few blocks from the Rio Grande. Lydia Patterson Institute remains there, albeit it in a modest compound of cream-colored brick buildings dating to the 1960s.

Early on, the school emphasized English for its students. It also became a training center for ministers serving Spanish-speaking Methodists, particularly in the Rio Grande Conference. One of the first such graduates was the Rev. Abel M. Gómez, who had soldiered under Pancho Villa in the Mexican Revolution.

Other Methodist schools were created for Hispanic youth in the United States, but only Lydia Patterson

remains open. It survived the Great Depression, the phasing out of the ministerial training department after the denomination began requiring college for ordained ministers, and the 1980s devaluation of the peso, which hit Juárez families so hard that enrollment dropped below 200.

The school bounced back through expanded fundraising for scholarships and more, but faced another trial when drug cartel-related violence gripped Juárez from 2007-2011. Many families left the city, and others lived in dread of kidnappings and random shootings.

"We became more than just a school," said Socorro Brito de Anda, president of Lydia Patterson. "We became a refuge, a safe haven for the students."

Opening doors

These days, some 400 students attend the school, in grades seven through 12. Most of the younger students get intensive English language training, and all upper-grade classes are English only.

About 70 percent of the students make the daily trek from Juárez, with others coming from El Paso or other nearby U.S. communities. Of the Juárez group, some were born in the United States and have U.S. citizenship, while others are Mexican citizens and need a student visa to cross.

Many students are on financial aid, with some so needy they get a "full plus" scholarship. That means the \$4,700 annual cost of their education is covered, and they get \$20 a month for spending money.

Scholarship students must work a campus job, an arrangement that allows the school to get by with a minimal support staff, including one maintenance man.

Bequer Gomez, an 18-year-old senior from Juárez, makes sure all restrooms have toilet paper. He's happy to do any job that keeps him in the school.

"Lydia Patterson has become my home," Gomez said. "It's developed my leadership skills, my character."

Gomez is one of about 50 students in the lay ministry internship program. That's given him summer work at Marvin United Methodist Church in Tyler, Texas, and at the Oklahoma Conference office in Oklahoma City.

Four courses in Christian education are required, as well as weekly chapel attendance. Students also must wear uniforms and mind their manners.

That's rarely an issue.

"When I came here, I noticed the kids were breaking their necks to open the door for me," said the Rev. Bill Davis, the chaplain and a former public school teacher. "I'm like, 'What's going on?'"

Other teachers note the high motivation level.

"Grades and success are important to these kids," said Alfredo Gurrola, who teaches science at Lydia Patterson Institute

Fernando Rivera, youth activities director, arrived as a student in 1974 and essentially never left. (His son, Fernie, also a graduate, is studying at Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary, on track to become a United Methodist elder.)

Then there's Patricia Amador, who came from Juárez and graduated in 1965. She went to the University of Texas at El Paso, the first in her family to attend college. She returned to Lydia Patterson Institute and has been teaching math there for 39 years.

"The Lord is using the United Methodist people to bless these children through education," Amador said.

Confidence amid challenges

Lydia Patterson Institute is a ministry of the South Central Jurisdiction, which includes the Arkansas Conference. About a third of its annual \$3 million budget comes from apportionments. Tuition and gifts make up the rest.

The school is in a \$15 million "Second 100 Years" capital campaign. The successful first phase



Efrain Belmontes is part of Lydia Patterson Institute's lay ministry program, which places students in United Methodist churches in the summer to help with Hispanic ministries. He's standing next to a bust of Lydia Patterson.

after 32 years teaching in the public schools. "It's very cool to get the top grade."

Many describe Lydia Patterson Institute as a family as much as a school, in part because a high percentage of faculty and staff are graduates who came back in gratitude, even though they could make more money in public schools.

Cristina Woo, assistant principal, is an alumna who has worked at the school for 43 years.

allowed for a major upgrade of 14 classrooms, as well as adding "smart boards" and tablet computers.

But the needs remain substantial. The school has no functioning science lab, the tiny library operates with an old-fashioned card catalog, and soccer is played on a pint-size asphalt court.

Though enrollment is stable, Lydia Patterson Institute operates with a lean endowment. A downturn

[See LYDIA, page 15]

OBITUARY

BROCKWELL

Loye Vern Mason

The Rev. Loye Vern Mason, 67, passed away Monday, March 16, 2015, at his home in Brockwell.



Loye Vern Mason

He was born April 28, 1947 in Batesville, Ark., to Orgel Mason and Geneva Helm Mason.

He was united in marriage to Cindy K. Graham Nov. 29, 1980, at Forrest Chapel United Methodist Church Brockwell. He spent his life as a loving son, brother, uncle, husband, father, grandfather, provider and friend. At the time of his death, he was employed as the vocal music instructor with

Melbourne School District. During the summer he was a volunteer instructor at the Brockwell Music School. He was an accomplished equestrian and was active in the North Arkansas Western Association.

A retired United Methodist local pastor, he served congregations in Arkansas from 1982 to 2012, including Evening Shade, Wiseman and Forrest Chapel. In his retirement, he attended Oxford Cumberland Presbyterian/United Methodist Church.

He is survived by his wife of 34 years, Cindy Mason; one son and daughter-in-law, Robin and Christy Mason of San Antonio, Texas; one daughter and son-in-law, Loyanna and Randy Everett of Cabot; one brother, Chaney Mason of Chattanooga, Tenn.; eight grandchildren: Chandler Mason, Christian Mason, Caroline Mason, Anna Kay Everett, Emma Everett, Macey Cooper, Mason Cooper and Katie Fish; and a host of other relatives and many good friends. He was preceded in death by his parents and one daughter, Jessica Mason Cooper.

A memorial service was held Thursday, March 19 at 2 p.m. at Howard Memorial Funeral Chapel in Melbourne, with the Rev. Bobby Coleman officiating.

Lydia (continued from previous page)

in the local or general economy could mean big trouble.

But there's a quiet confidence here, based on a century of beating the odds.

De Anda, the president, and Richard Hearne, development director, share a story they believe shows divine guidance in the school's affairs.

Hearne had contacted a United Methodist pastor, asking that he commit his church to underwriting

a scholarship. The pastor agreed, and Hearne called de Anda, excited to share the news.

She surprised him by responding neutrally. Later he would learn that when he called she had twin boys in her office, with their parents. They were a poor family, and she feared having to tell them they would have to choose which boy would attend on the one new scholarship.

The situation turned bleaker

when the pastor phoned Hearne and backed off the commitment, saying he needed an OK from the church's missions committee.

A few days later the pastor—who knew nothing of the twins—called with the committee's decision.

"We're not going to fund a scholarship," Hearne remembers him saying. "We're going to fund two."

Hodges, a UMNS writer, lives in Dallas.

Prayer (continued from page 3)

whom He has established in grace, if they do not pray for it on all occasions, not only once, but many times." It is no exaggeration to say that prayer is the beating heart of Christian discipleship.

The framework for this prayer pattern is Trinitarian. Jesus' high priestly prayer to God the Father in John 17 includes prayer for himself, prayer for his disciples, and prayer for the whole church. So our own pattern here includes prayer for ourselves, prayer for our families (whether that be our own kin or our faith community), and prayer for the church universal.

We begin at 9 a.m. with a morning prayer that includes both adoration and petition. It exalts the love and providence of God, and it asks God to be at work in our lives throughout the day. (This prayer is adapted from the "Prayer of Thanksgiving" in the Order for Morning Praise and Prayer, *United Methodist Hymnal*, p. 877.) After we say this prayer, we offer up a prayer from our own hearts that includes our personal thanksgivings and humble requests.

Our midday prayer comes at 12 noon and begins with saying the Lord's Prayer. This is the prayer that Jesus gave to his disciples, and it is the most precious prayer that we know. After we pray the Lord's Prayer, we offer up a prayer from our hearts for our families. It is appropriate to think of this prayer either as a prayer for our own

blood kin or as a prayer for the church family to which we belong. Most days it will probably include both.

Our evening prayer follows at 3 PM and consists of a prayer to the Holy Trinity. This is a prayer that both gives thanks to Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and also seeks the grace of God for our sanctification. After we offer up this prayer, we lift up a prayer from our hearts for the wider church — which will focus on those intercessions that we know are needed for that day.

Even when we add each written prayer to the personal prayer which will follow at 9 a.m., 12 noon, and 3 p.m., the daily rhythm will not take more than 5 minutes at each period. That means just 15 minutes in prayer—something which even the busiest among us can incorporate into our lives. The best practice would be to print out the prayer pattern and keep it somewhere that you will notice it throughout your day. Even after you learn the three written prayers by heart, you can use the printed copy as a visible reminder to pause and live up your heart in prayer to the God of love.

This piece is reprinted with permission from Wesleyan Accent (www.wesleyanaccent.com), a cooperative partnership of Wesley United Methodist Church Memphis, Tenn., and Seedbed.com. To read more from other Wesleyan theologians, visit wesleyanaccent.seedbed.com.

Groundbreaking for U of A Wesley House set for April 12



ILLUSTRATION BY MILLER BOSKUS LACK ARCHITECTS, P.A.

The University of Arkansas Wesley College Ministry in Fayetteville will break ground on its 8,000-square-foot Wesley House at 2:30 p.m. Sunday, April 12. The public is invited to attend.

Scheduled to open in January 2016, the building will be situated in the heart of the University of Arkansas campus, at 520 Lindell Avenue. The estimated \$2 million facility will include a large gathering space, administrative and pastoral offices, catering kitchen and a lounge with comfortable chairs and sofas on the lower level, as well as small group rooms, chapel and a dormitory for four students on the upper level. Two exterior crosses from the previous U of A Wesley building are being incorporated into the new facility.

"We are so excited about being on campus and what that proximity will make possible in terms of interacting with students and being a part of their day-to-day lives," said the Rev. Emily Burch, college pastor and director of the U of A Wesley, in a March 11 news release.

The *Arkansas United Methodist* reported in its Sept. 6, 2013 issue on the land swap deal with the University of Arkansas that made new construction possible for the U of A Wesley, which at that point had only a chapel with no office space, restrooms or breakout spaces. Since then, further investment by Central UMC Fayetteville and the United Methodist Foundation of Arkansas (UMFA) has increased the project's scope.

Bishop Gary E. Mueller in 2014 asked Central UMC to oversee the Wesley Foundation as part of a new model for partnering strong local churches with campus ministries.

Under the new arrangement, the Wesley Foundation campus pastor is a part of the Central pastoral staff, and Central provides administrative support for Wesley.

U of A Wesley has raised roughly \$1.7 million toward the project. As part of that total, UMFA has awarded a \$200,000 grant.

"I am grateful to the United Methodist Foundation of Arkansas for supporting a new collaborative model of campus ministry with Central UMC at the University of Arkansas in Fayetteville," Mueller said in a March 17 news release from UMFA. "In a rapidly changing world, this investment by the Foundation will enable United Methodists to reach more students and, in the process, develop models that can positively impact all of our campus ministries."

"We absolutely must give our best in order to provide effective ministry to the student population at this transition stage in their lives," said Brian Swain, administrator for Central UMC Fayetteville. The church's members have pledged approximately \$1 million of the funding.

This year, U of A Wesley students have joined other Arkansas campus ministries and the U of A's Council of Religious Organizations to make meaningful contributions to those in need, such as helping build and repair houses destroyed by last year's tornadoes; packing more than 20,000 meals to help answer hunger in Northwest Arkansas; and building wheelchair ramps over Spring Break through the Texas Ramp Project, which provides ramps to veterans, senior citizens and physically challenged adults.

Arkansas missionary featured in Global Ministries video



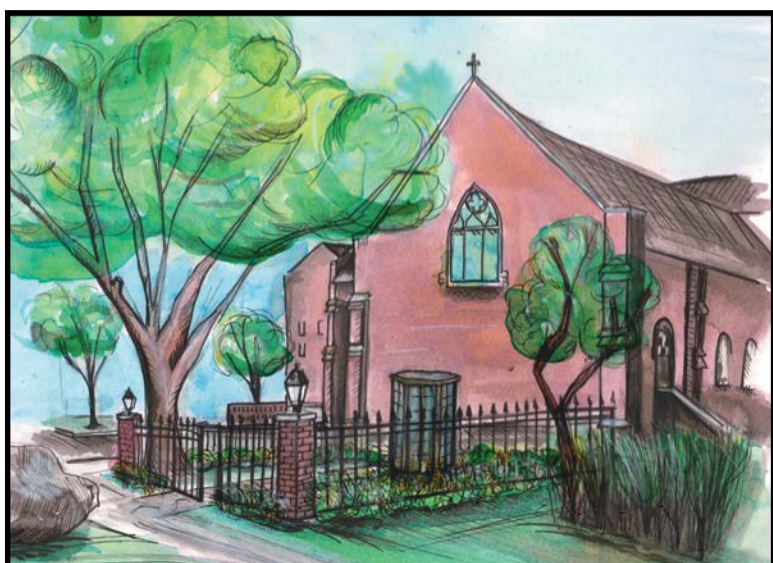
Elizabeth Fink, left, a member of Highlands UMC Bella Vista, currently serves as a Global Mission Fellow through the US-2 young adult program of United Methodist General Board of Global Ministries. She was featured recently in a video used to promote the program.

Fink is assigned to Branches, an urban and social justice ministry of the South East District of the denomination's Florida Annual Conference. Branches is a community-organizing agency that works in immigration, housing, hurricane relief, hospice care and other areas of social crisis.

In the video, Fink shares the story of working with a client who had become widowed, received a cancer diagnosis and had her previous tax refund stolen by the preparer. The client thanked Fink, not for fixing everything, but for listening and spending time with her, restoring some peace and hope in her life.

"At that moment, bug-eyed, heart melting, I'm like, 'OK God, I hear you,'" Fink says. "You know, we're not called to have the answer to everyone's problems, but to be a presence of peace and hope wherever we go."

To view the video, visit <http://goo.gl/jAsJCM>.



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

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1600 Washington Ave
Conway, Arkansas 72032-3080
www.hendrix.edu/memorialgarden



Faith Funds

Feeding the Hungry

"Vernon and I decided to put our money to good use through the Foundation," said the late Eva Lee Paysinger. "It's our way of saying thanks to a church that has done so much for us."

The \$750,000 Vernon and Eva Lee Paysinger Endowment was established in 2014 to make grants to causes that eliminate hunger. The United Methodist pastor and his wife had dedicated their lives to Christian ministry.

"Eva Lee and Vernon were life-long advocates for programs designed to eradicate hunger," said Jim Argue, Jr., UMFA President. "They lived simply so that they could give to others abundantly. The income from their fund will be used each year to support hunger ministries, extending their legacy of giving far beyond their lifetimes."

Rev. David Orr, senior pastor at First UMC, Searcy, knew Vernon and Eva Lee for nearly 40 years. "They were remarkably humble, remarkably committed and remarkably in love with Jesus Christ," said Rev. Orr. "If they heard me say these things, they would shrug their shoulders, grin, and ask if I wanted a second slice of pie."



The United Methodist Foundation of Arkansas

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