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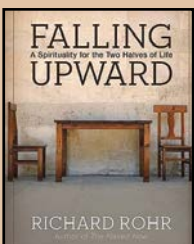
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QuadW interns provide summer enrichment



Hakeem Wortham, 21, a sophomore math major at Philander Smith College, served as a QuadW intern at Oak Forest UMC Little Rock.

PHOTO BY JANA GREEN

BY MARTHA TAYLOR
Special Contributor

It was Willie's legacy that brought them here. Willie Tichenor, a young man from Texas struck down at age 19 by cancer. And because

Willie was passionate about missions, two Arkansas communities, Pine Bluff and Little Rock, have experienced new vitality this summer through the transformational missional internships established in Willie's memory.

Since 2009, the What Would Willie Want

(QuadW) Foundation, administered by Tichenor's family and friends, has funded missional internships for young college students.

The internships are unique in that they pair young adults, churches and community partners

[See QUADW, page 11]

Feeding children, fostering community

Sheridan church works with partners to provide summer meals

BY MARTHA TAYLOR AND AMY FORBUS
Special Contributor and Editor

SHERIDAN, Ark.—If providing nourishing meals to hungry Grant County children weren't enough, the members of First United Methodist Church Sheridan have learned that feeding ministries can bring together people who might never have met, and strengthen the ties between church and community.

"The ministerial alliance, community leaders and representatives from the Arkansas Hunger Alliance met last year to discuss a summer feeding program, something that hadn't been provided in the past," said the Rev. John Embrey, pastor of First UMC Sheridan.

That conversation resulted in action last summer and beyond. Now, with four locations providing meals five days a week, the summer lunch program tripled the number of meals served from 1,000 in 2014 to 3,500 meals just one

[See FEEDING, page 13]



Mike Carpenter, a member of First UMC Sheridan who coordinates the summer feeding program of the Sheridan/Grant County Ministerial Alliance, answers a question from a volunteer as they prepare to transport food to one of the sites offering free lunches on Aug. 12.

AUM PHOTO BY AMY FORBUS

Bumper sticker living

BY CHARLES COOPER
Special Contributor



Charles Cooper

I suspect people who have bumper stickers are lonely. If you happen to have one, you are probably the exception; besides, I am no psychologist, just a worn-out preacher—as the early *Disciplines* used to call those of us in retirement. You are as much of an expert as I am; since you have a bumper sticker, more so.

Bumper stickers are brief conversation starters: from the domesticity of vacations and family to the controversy of politics and religion to the tawdry and sleazy and, of course, sports.

They are conversation starters without conversations. How can they be anything else? All the letters are a blur until you come to a stoplight, and then you are looking at the back of the top of someone's head with two windshields between the two of you, unless the glass is tinted or the driver is short or it's dark or it's foggy or rainy; or you don't notice because you are reading the bumper stickers.

One-sided conversation

Isn't it odd that a person makes known to just anybody, to you, convictions and passions with no chance of a response, just on to the next exit?

Here is this human being all sealed up in a bubble of steel and glass screaming in bold print as she races down the freeway. It's as if the machine had taken over and will not stop hurling her on as she strangles the steering wheel with both fists, and screams: *I visited the Grand Canyon. My child is smart. I'm a Republican. I'm a Democrat. I go to First United Methodist. I like to shoot*

large mammals in the woods. Peace. Go Hogs.

No one can say, "I hear you. Let's talk about it."

I think bumper sticker people want that conversation, yet are ambivalent about it. I tested my theory one day in a mall parking lot: I saw that the driver of a minivan had been on vacation in the Smokey Mountains. I said, "The mile-high swinging bridge about gave me a heart attack." The man replied, "I don't care."

I could have replied, "Thank you for corroborating my theory

voice and not by what he says about himself; it's the sound of the one who calls them to still waters and green pastures, the sound of the one who would give his life for them.

I have been thinking about dog whistles lately, the ultrasonic variety. The hunter blows a command that the dog hears, but not the game; the police officer blows a command that the dog hears, but not the crowds. So I believe if you are who you are, you don't need a bumper sticker. You don't need to shout, just blow the inaudible whistle of who you are. The right people will know and the

'Isn't it odd that a person makes known to just anybody, to you, convictions and passions with no chance of a response, just on to the next exit?'

about people who have bumper stickers."

So here's the point: I don't know if Jesus would have put one on his donkey. Maybe he would have done it for a laugh, but I don't think he was interested in advertising who he was to the world. When others would announce who he was, he would hush them up. He hushed up the demon in the first chapter of Mark; later he hushed up Peter when he confessed, "You are the Christ."

Evidence of identity

Jesus seemed to believe that the best evidence of who he was would come in getting to know him. The sheep know the shepherd not because the shepherd says, "Hey, sheep, I'm your guy, the shepherd." They know him by the sound of his

true conversation will begin, person to person.

I am sure stickers of all sorts have a reason to be. We do refrigerator magnets at my house and never give it a moment's thought. I guess we want to give that large metal box in our kitchen a personality. I suppose some people want to do the same with the large metal boxes on wheels in their garages. That's understandable.

I come up short in so many ways and probably enjoy too much the silence of strangers. Yet, often what is not said makes me wonder if other people might not have secrets too humbly wonderful to put on a bumper, as, of course, Jesus did.

The Rev. Cooper is a retired elder in the Arkansas Conference. Email: brocorbeau@gmail.com.



EDITOR'S CORNER

BY AMY FORBUS

A sweet mess

The Forbus household has a new canine family member. Actually, he's not new, just new to us. And truthfully, he's not even that new to us, because we've been fostering him since May.

Buddy is eight years old. It doesn't seem that he had the best start in life. Or the best middle part of life. But we've made the commitment to ensuring he has as good a life as possible for the rest of his time here on earth. (It helps that Angus, our crotchety 11-year-old cattle dog, doesn't actively dislike him.)

Though we've had many foster dogs in recent years, Buddy is the first one since 2012 who we've seen through treatment for heartworms. His veterinarian worked graciously with us to help navigate that bumpy road full of restricted activity and challenging side effects, and it's now behind us.

But some of the bumps in the road didn't disappear when treatment ended. Ultimately, making the situation sustainable for the long term has involved pharmaceuticals: Buddy currently takes a minimum of seven pills a day. As far as he's concerned, though, it means he gets two fingers of peanut butter every day, so it's not a bad deal.

When I look at Buddy, I see a sweet mess of a dog. A scar between his soulful eyes, notches on his velvety ears, worn and missing teeth, callused elbows... plus anxiety without his morning meds, and some serious log-sawing action loud enough to disturb everyone's sleep at night if he doesn't get those three pills after supper.

I see the sweet mess, and I see how much this creature of God is worth.

I view caring for dogs as one way I live out my responsibility to treat God's world with respect and love. And it's more fulfilling than carrying reusable shopping bags or participating in curbside recycling, though I do those things, too.

It's also far more difficult than those tasks. Taking on the care of an animal means seeing that animal through to its life's conclusion. Today a dear friend took that last walk into the veterinarian's office with her four-footed girl. Having faced that same walk less than two years ago, I know that believing you're doing the kindest and most loving thing for the animal in your care doesn't make it any easier.

It's part of our responsibility, taking care of what God has given us. Even when it's hard. As author Glennon Doyle Melton reminds me, "We can do hard things." And thanks be to God, we can do them with great love.

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



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Advertising is welcomed. For a rate sheet or more information, contact Amy Forbus at 501-324-8037 or aforbus@arumc.org. While all advertising is reviewed before acceptance, it should not be considered endorsed by this newspaper or the Church.

Submission Deadlines

Issue Date	Submission Deadline
Oct. 2	Sept. 15
Nov. 6	Oct. 20
Dec. 4	Nov. 13

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GROWING TOGETHER IN CHRIST: A word from the Bishop

BY GARY E. MUELLER

The church's most important issue is not the one you think it is

Nothing seems to get more time and emotional attention in the United Methodist Church than issues related to human sexuality, particularly homosexuality. Certainly none are more divisive. They set liberals against conservatives and conservatives against liberals in painful and divisive ways. Our inability to resolve these disagreements threatens to turn next year's General Conference into a gathering characterized by rancor, bitterness and possibly even division.

In recent years, a number of leaders within the United Methodist Church—conservative, liberal and in-between—have focused on trying to resolve our church's dilemma regarding human sexuality. They have convened conversations, offered plans and sought to find some solution that will keep our denomination from coming unraveled.

Sadly, there appears to be little hope of finding a solution that will satisfy everyone. This is not terribly surprising, however, since the United Methodist Church exists in a world that now gives us the opportunity to confront and demonize others from the safety of a keyboard or smartphone screen.

'Pressing' or 'important'?

Our "stuckness" has reached such a level that many feel resolving the myriad questions related to homosexuality is our church's most pressing task. But is it? Not necessarily. That's because what seems most pressing is not always what is most important.

Saying this is not an attempt to dodge a difficult conversation, save the United Methodist Church or broadcast another naïve call of, "Let's just be nice to each other and all get along." Instead, it's a radical call to make a powerful witness about what it means to be part of the Body of Christ when we have fallen into the trap of thinking our opinion is what matters most.

Jesus the Christ became incarnate—and was crucified and resurrected—to transform the world. He brought the Church into being to carry out his mission. But we cannot do that as long as Christians are lobbing accusations back and forth, pointing fingers and proclaiming to those with whom we disagree, "You don't belong to the Body of Christ because you don't believe like me."

The Apostle Paul reminds us that we Christians are so joined together by the resurrected Christ that we actually are the living Body of Christ in the world. Jesus instructs us to love one another so that the world will know we are his disciples. Not just when it's convenient, not merely when we are comfortable and not only when it's people just like us—but all the time.

The hard work ahead

I believe it is time for us to deal with the most important issue in the United Methodist Church: living, learning and loving together as the Body of Christ when no one thinks that is possible.

I believe the United Methodist Church can

offer a powerful witness to other Christians about how to be the living Body of Christ, even as we disagree about important things and make difficult decisions that must be made.

I believe we are called to the hard work of seeing those with whom we disagree as sisters and brothers in Christ, and then joining them in praying, listening, engaging in difficult conversations and sharing the sacrament of Holy Communion together at the Lord's Table.


I believe we can show a fractured world that the One we call the Hope of the World really is the hope of our world.

I believe the only way the United Methodist Church can become the Body of Christ is to seek spiritual revival so that the Holy Spirit does for us what we cannot do on our own: become a church that makes disciples of Jesus Christ, who make disciples equipped to transform lives, communities and the world.

I believe many of you believe this, too, because you long to be part of the "heart of Methodism" that refuses to let anything become more important than our calling as the Body of Christ.

This path will involve hard work. It may get quite messy. And, no doubt, some will respond with ridicule. But I believe this is the time to address our most important issue. And when we do, we will be far better able to deal with all the pressing matters that lay ahead of us.

Come, Holy Spirit, come.

Gary E. Mueller 

Our Trajectory

Creating vital congregations that make disciples of Jesus Christ, who make disciples equipped to transform lives, communities and the world.



APPOINTMENTS

The following appointment changes have been announced:

- David A. Moore (elder)—Grand Avenue UMC Stuttgart; effective Sept. 1
- Carol Moore (part-time local pastor)—Grand Avenue UMC Stuttgart (associate); effective Sept. 1
- Mark Donald (associate member)—St. Paul's Harrison/Diamond City/Omaha UMCs (charge realignment); effective Aug. 23
- Greg Gibson (full-time local pastor)—Central UMC Fayetteville (associate); effective Aug. 24
- John Humphries (part-time local pastor)—Goshen UMC; effective Aug. 3

For the most recent appointment changes, visit www.arumc.org/appointments.

The terrible, beautiful, ugly ride

BY PAT BODENHAMER
Special Contributor

A couple of nights a week I engage in a group text conversation with some trusted clergy friends. We've chatted this way for years now, and I would probably call them some of my best friends ever. Having trusted colleagues can be unusual in our profession because, like it or not, we compete with each other. But our group has not only good conversation, but I like to think the closest thing to holy conversation as I have ever had. These clergy are my brothers.

We laugh a lot, make fun of each other, hold each other accountable, give advice, dream, solve problems, coach... but most importantly, we hold each other in

prayer. Not a passing, "I'll pray for you," but deep, intentional prayer.

The other night one of my brothers posted a message to several young pastors that he is mentoring. It got under my skin—especially when he ended it with this paragraph:

"Are you playing church? If so, it will either crush you or you'll leave a bloody mess in your wake that you'll answer for. As I was told a long time ago... If you can be happy doing ANYTHING else then DO IT. But... if you're called, suck it up, say, 'here I am, Lord' and buckle in for a terrible, beautiful, ugly ride. Anything else will lead to your undoing. And we don't want that for any of you."

This "terrible, beautiful, ugly ride" is one that pastors know well.

Like my clergy brother said, if you can be happy doing anything else, then do it. One of my favorite pieces of advice came from Bishop Bruce Blake: "Pat, when it stops being joyful, get out."

Joyful doesn't always mean happy. You can experience joy in the midst of pain. Joy can flood your soul when your soul is empty. Joy is opening your eyes and seeing the miracles all around you.

I experienced the "terrible, beautiful, ugly ride" during this appointment season. Like many of



Pat Bodenhamer

you, I waited to hear where I would serve God next. I got wrapped up in all the "stuff" and I had to ask myself, "Would I be happy—no, joyful—doing anything else?"

And now, here I sit in my new church office, buckled in for another ride. It's a good feeling. I didn't abandon my dreams and goals. I just opened my eyes to the miracle of joy.

I think before we experience spiritual revival we must experience joy. Real joy, the kind that radiates and makes the world wonder, *what is going on with them?*

To experience spiritual revival, we must stop putting our stock in the latest fad of church growth or leadership development. It's going to take all of us going on this "terrible, beautiful, ugly ride" called being the church. It's going to take big churches and small churches. It's going to take laity and clergy

working together to build up the Kingdom. It's going to take clergy asking themselves the hard questions. It's going to take our leadership getting to know the pastors and churches and loving them for who they are and what piece of the Kingdom they are working on. It's going to take joy, real joy, to transform this world for Jesus Christ.

I give thanks to God that I didn't jump off at the last stop. I pray that my brothers and sisters in ministry experience joy for themselves, and learn to share that miracle with a hurting world.

The Rev. Bodenhamer serves as pastor of Decatur and Gravette UMCs. She offers special thanks to the Revs. Kavan Dodson, Brad Elrod and Keith Dodson for their inspiration.

Assembly 2015 rounds out year of statewide youth events



ABOVE: The Katie Danielle Band leads Assembly 2015's opening worship experience.



RIGHT: Maggie Rogers, Chad Hornsby and Jacob Turner at worship during Senior High Assembly 2015.

BELOW: Youth attending Junior High Assembly engage in a game as part of their small group time.



Worship, prayer, mission activities and time spent in small groups filled the schedule at Assembly 2015, held July 25-29 at Hendrix College in Conway. The week included a visit from Bishop Gary Mueller, who joined the Senior High Assembly for one of their worship experiences.

Amid all the activity focusing on growing closer to Christ, serving others and just having fun, the youth raised money for Youth Service Fund (YSF). During Assembly alone, more than \$1,000 was raised by youth, for youth. The money will provide grants for youth-oriented projects or scholarships, and now is the time to think about how your youth ministry might benefit from YSF funds. **Download an application form at www.accym.org/ysf; applications must be submitted by Oct. 1.**



Decorating ceiling tiles for Methodist Family Health's facilities was one of the mission options for the youth attending both Junior and Senior High Assembly.

ACCYM 2015-2016 event dates:

Refuge: Nov. 6-8, 2015

MITTO: Nov. 20-22, 2015

Veritas: March 4-6, 2016

ACCYM Choir Tour: June 12-19

Assembly: July 25-29, 2016 (tentative)

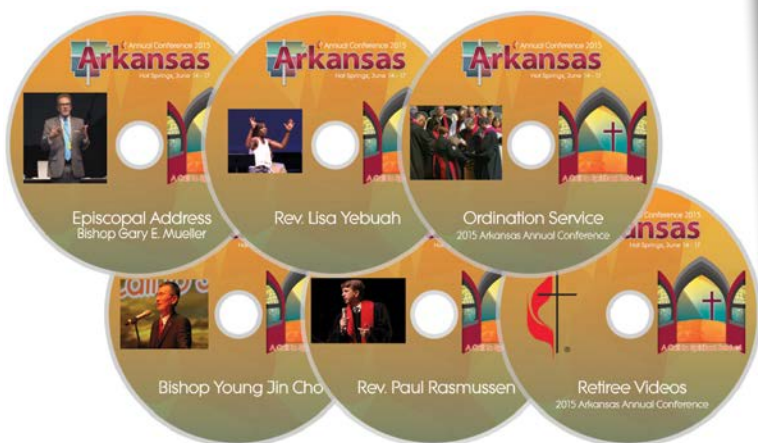
Have questions about any of these events? Want to get involved? Contact Michelle Moore, youth and young adult ministries coordinator for the Arkansas Conference, at 501-425-5975 or michelle.moore@arumc.org.



A mission option for youth attending Senior High Assembly was packaging meals with The Pack Shack, an Arkansas nonprofit dedicated to helping feed hungry people.

PHOTOS BY ACCYM MEDIA TASK FORCE

Annual Conference 2015 Journal, DVDs now available to order



DVD recordings of worship services, retiree videos and guest preachers from the 2015 Annual Conference are now available for purchase online.

Videos may be ordered individually or as a complete set. The recordings include:

- Opening worship with the Rev. Paul Rasmussen preaching
- Bishop Gary Mueller's episcopal address
- Prayer service led by Bishop Young Jin Cho
- Monday night sermon from the Rev. Rasmussen

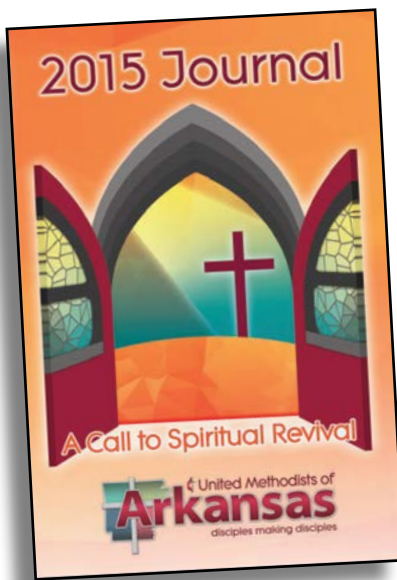
- Service of Ordination and Commissioning with Bishop Mueller preaching
- Closing worship with the Rev. Lisa Yebuah preaching
- Videos of retirees sharing their reflections

Visit <http://ac2015.arumc.org> to make your selections and place your order.

The print version of the 2015 Arkansas Conference Journal will soon be ready for shipment, and the PDF file is currently available. Choose one or more of the three options for obtaining the Journal

at <http://ac2015.arumc.org>:

- Download as a free PDF, which may be stored in multiple locations
- Purchase a print copy or copies through the online order form linked from the website
- Purchase a print copy or copies by printing and completing the order form available on the website, then mailing it with payment to the address provided on the form.



Guest preachers named for AC2016



Jan Davis



Samuel Yun



Emanuel Cleaver III

Bishop Gary Mueller has announced guest preachers for the 2016 Arkansas Annual Conference, scheduled for June 19-22 in Hot Springs.

The Rev. Dr. Jan Davis, senior pastor of First United Methodist Church in Rowlett, Texas, will preach in the June 19 opening worship service. A leader in the North Texas Conference, she currently chairs the Conference Board of Ordained Ministry and co-chairs the Clergy Effectiveness Task Force. She is North Texas' first elected clergy delegate to the 2016 General Conference in Portland, Ore.

The Rev. Samuel Yun serves as minister of young adults at Los Altos United Methodist Church in Los Altos, Calif., and is also appointed to plant a new multi-ethnic faith community in the Oakland area called EMBRACE, with the hope of reaching the unchurched and dis-churched in the Bay area. He will preach during two afternoon teaching sessions of the Conference. He was a featured speaker at the recent Youth 2015 quadrennial gathering in Orlando.

The Rev. Dr. Emanuel Cleaver III, senior pastor of St. James United Methodist Church in Kansas City, Mo., will preach the closing worship service June 22. A graduate of Philander Smith College, Cleaver has served as a pastor in the Missouri Conference for 16 years.

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Mission u students learn, grow, give



Appearing at Mission u in conjunction with the Latin American geographical study, these dancers from Ballet Quetzall include, from left, Manuel Martinez Citlali Vazquez, Uziel Cortez and Natali Brito. Leticis Retu serves as director artistico.

BY DONI AND FRED MARTIN
Special Contributors

“It is fantastic... such an opportunity to learn about other countries and mission work that is ongoing around the world.”

Those were words of the Rev. John Michael, pastor of First United Methodist Church Corning, during his first time to attend Mission u, held the last week of July 2015 at Hendrix College in Conway. “As a first-timer, I am surprised at the information shared and the mission work in Latin America,” he said of this year’s geographical study.

Mission u is made possible each year through the cooperative efforts of United Methodist Women, the Arkansas Conference Board of Global Ministries and the United Methodist Foundation of Arkansas.

With the theme “Learning Together for the Transformation of the World,” members of the United Methodist Women and others converged on Hendrix campus for

four days of study, singing and worship, all under the guidance of Diana Hendricks, dean of Mission u for the second year in a row.

“It’s a privilege to serve as dean for our time of mission education and transformation,” Hendricks said. “Nineteen capable study leaders diligently prepared to present very timely and relevant studies for all ages. Our minds were challenged and we will grow in our Christian faith as we apply what we learned from this journey.”

Registrar Beth Cobb reported 228 attendees, including 57 children and youth, 18 clergy and 34 commuters who drove to campus each day to attend classes. Forty-eight persons were there for the first time, a number similar to last year’s roster of new participants.

While adults were in their chosen classes, youth and children took time from their own classroom activities to sort 3,654 food items into 609 bags for distribution through Arkansas Rice Depot’s

“Food for Kids” backpack program and the Arkansas Conference’s 200,000 Reasons childhood hunger initiative.

A 13-year old first-timer, Zaria McCants, was among 10 youth attending from St. Luke UMC Pine Bluff.

“I enjoyed every day,” she said. “We studied Latin America and the different cultures and traditions of children in several countries. It was fun to hang out with friends, prepare food bags and help people with their lunch trays or carry their books for them.”

Zaria’s mother, Regina Von Tungen, organized scholarships that enabled members of St. Luke’s youth organization to attend Mission u.

One United Methodist Woman recalled the first time she attended Mission u, which was then called the School of Christian Mission. Back in 1963, Ann Ashcraft of Malvern was part of the study held in the facilities of the Arkansas School for the Blind.

“The next year we met at



Smiles on the faces of these children show their pleasure in helping prepare more than 600 bags of food to be shared with others.

PHOTOS BY FRED MARTIN

Henderson College in Arkadelphia,” Ashcraft said. “At that time we would go to the various districts in the state to conduct our mission studies.

Before long, we settled on the campus of Hendrix College. I think I have missed only one study since 1963.”

A past president, Conference officer and a member of the Women’s Division for eight years (along with many other United Methodist Women offices), Ashcraft says the variety of studies, learning about mission and seeing friends keep bringing her back year after year. “It is all good... every year,” she added.

Mission u 2015 featured the following studies:

“Created for Happiness: Understanding Your Life in God” written by Cynthia A. Bond Hopson and Sarah Heaner Lancaster. Study Leaders were the Rev. Maxine Allen, the Rev. Gail Brooks, Janice Goldman, the Rev. Katie Grover, the Rev. Dr. Michael Mattox, the Rev. Natasha Murray-Norman and the Rev. Mark Norman.

The geographical study “Latin America: People of Faith” by Sonia Maria Barbosa Dias was led by the Rev. Russell Breshears, the Rev. Stephen Copley, Dr. Roderick McLean, Laura Palmer, Sandy Wilder and the Rev. Dr. Diane Wimberley.

The issue study “The Church and People with Disabilities” by Peggy A. Johnson was taught by Londie Bell.

Rosemary Kirby served as assistant dean, and Muriel Schrepfer was assistant dean for youth and children. Other leaders included Amanda Baltz, Blayne Schrepfer, Blake Hendricks, Reagan Martin, Heather Hendricks, Latoya Shepherd, Robin Williams and Rachel Sanders. Lynn R. Baker served as song leader, with Julia Frost as pianist.

This year’s Mission u offering was divided between Arkansas Rice Depot and the Conference’s 200,000 Reasons initiative.

Mission u 2016 will be directed by Dean Rosemary Kirby. Cecelia Wadsworth will serve as assistant dean. Beth Cobb will return as registrar. Dates are not yet confirmed, but the study topics are set: Mission u 2016 will feature “The Bible and Human Sexuality” as its Spiritual Growth Study; “Climate Justice” as the Issue Study; and a continued focus on Latin America for the Geographical Study.

The Martins are long-time leaders and supporters of Arkansas Conference Mission u and its predecessor events.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Response to a letter in last issue

I must respond to the letter “An Opinion on a Controversial Topic” (Aug. 7 issue, *Letters to the Editor*). I am a gay United Methodist. I try to follow the General Rules. I seek personal holiness. I am a Certified Lay Servant, teach Disciple, coordinate the Social Justice program at my local church and have been a lay member of the Annual Conference for years. And yet, I am a second-class church member. I am “incompatible,” and unfit to be

married in the church, or follow a call to ministry as clergy.

Being gay is not a choice; it is the way God made me. And I am not sinful or evil because of who I am. My faith remains strong despite the hatred directed toward me and the misinformation spread about me. I do not “force my lifestyle” on anyone; in fact, if I did, you would find it rather boring. And above all, I believe in loving God with all my heart and loving my neighbor as much as myself.

(Jesus’ words, not mine.) Remove the log from your eye and get to know your LGBTQ brothers and sisters before you condemn us. Methodism is a big tent, with room for both me and you.

Harold Hughes
Quapaw Quarter UMC Little Rock

Letters to the Editor policy:

All letters must be signed (name and city/church) and include the writer’s phone number

or email address. Letters may be sent to editor@arumc.org, or to 800 Daisy Bates Drive, Little Rock, AR 72202.

The editor reserves the right to edit letters for style and length. Letters longer than 200 words will not be considered for publication.

The Arkansas United Methodist will not print letters containing personal attacks.

The Arkansas United Methodist reserves the right to publish Letters to the Editor in print, on the web, or both.

PEOPLE OF FAITH

Feezor commissioned as a 'US 2' Global Mission Fellow

Amber Feezor of Dover United Methodist Church has been commissioned by the United Methodist General Board of Global Ministries as a Global Mission Fellow. She is one of 15 young adults from 11 annual conferences who, at a July 30 ceremony in New York City, received two-year assignments linking issues of faith and justice.

A native of Bentonville and a graduate of Arkansas Tech University in Russellville, Feezor will serve as a seminar designer at the United Methodist General Board of Church and Society in Washington, D.C.

Global Mission Fellows is a two-year old program that builds on decades-old precedents. Fellows are between 20 and 30 years old, and typically are single, recent college graduates, although the 2015 class has the distinction of including three couples. Those who serve in the U.S. are called US 2s. The Global Mission Fellows program in all its facets takes young adults out of their home environments and places them in new contexts, where they become part of new local communities. One objective is to connect the church in mission across cultural and geographical boundaries. Another is to encourage the young people to grow spiritually and socially, becoming strong leaders committed to building justice communities and a peaceful world.

"My job will be to create classes for groups that are centered around the home location of the group and a social justice issue they are interested in finding long-term solutions for," she said, "as well as preparing groups to meet with their legislators in D.C."

"Each seminar will be tailored for every group."

Feezor began her assignment Aug. 31. To reach her during her time as a missionary, send an email to afeezor@umcmmission.org.



Amber Feezor

Morris contributes chapter to new pop culture textbook

The Rev. Dr. Michelle Morris, who currently serves as associate pastor of First United Methodist Church West Memphis, is among the contributors to Volume 1 of the new textbook *God and Popular Culture: A Behind-the-Scenes Look at the Entertainment Industry's Most Influential Figure*. The book is geared toward use in college courses in religious studies or sociology, as well as seminary courses.

Morris wrote the chapter "Easter in Margaritaville: Evolving Christology in *South Park*." In it, she addresses topics drawn from the long-running animated comedy series, where Jesus appears as a recurring character. Her writing deals with *South Park's* general approach to religion, the show's presentation of the humanity and divinity of Jesus, the influence of Postmodernism on how Jesus is portrayed and the consistent threads of how he has been depicted throughout the series.

At First UMC West Memphis, Morris leads The Bridge, a hybrid of Sunday school and worship that engages topics related to God and pop culture.

"My interest in writing for this book comes from a theological conviction that God permeates all aspects of our life," she said. "We just sometimes need to take the time to reflect on what is of God, and what is not. There is much of God in *South Park*, even as much of it needs to be set aside."

If we refuse to engage God's appearance in what we may consider purely secular areas, Morris says, "we not only miss God, we lose the ability to talk meaningfully" with those who never directly encounter the Gospel through the Bible or God's people, but only through avenues of popular culture.



Michelle Morris

PAUMCS certifies two from Arkansas

Rebecca Davis, administrative assistant for the Central District, and Cathy Hall Hughes, church relations liaison for the Arkansas Conference Center for Administrative Services, became the most recent Arkansans to receive professional certification at the 2015 Professional Association of United Methodist Church Secretaries (PAUMCS) Institute in Nashville, Tenn., held July 19-25.

Sponsored by the denomination's General Council on Finance and Administration (GCFA), the Institute provides advanced professional training and enrichment specifically for United Methodist church secretaries. Participants cover concepts required for understanding the financial operations of the church as well as relationships with the pastor, church staff and members.

To become certified as a Professional United Methodist Church Secretary, a participant must complete the program and meet requirements set by GCFA.

This year's PAUMCS Institute included a personality assessment using the Myers-Briggs-Type Indicator, courses on project planning, public speaking, working as part of a team and financial training. Teams of participants collaborated on special projects and made presentations on the final day.

Participants also visited the offices of GCFA, United Methodist Communications, Discipleship Ministries, the Upper Room Museum and Chapel and Scarritt-Bennett Center.

The Arkansas chapter of PAUMCS has a training session scheduled for Sept. 24 in Little Rock. For more information, see page 10 of this issue.



Rebecca Davis



Cathy Hall Hughes

VOLUNTEERS IN MISSION & DISASTER RESPONSE OPPORTUNITIES

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.

UMCOR Sager Brown has 14 spots reserved for Arkansans in December

Are you interested in adding your name to an ever-growing list of missionaries dedicated to making a difference in this world? Then plan to join us at UMCOR Sager Brown Depot in December 2015! The Arkansas Conference has 14 open spots on a 20-person journey of mission that will take participants to Louisiana so their work can reach around the world.

The United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR) has a long and rich history of serving others in times of distress. UMCOR Sager Brown Depot in Baldwin, La., welcomes more than 3,000 volunteers of all ages and skill levels each year. Our team will have a five-night mission experience beginning Sunday, Dec. 6 and ending Friday, Dec. 11—and it will be one of the best weeks of your year. The group will arrive on Sunday evening for orientation, and work from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. each day.

What's the cost for this rewarding week of service? Some expenses are set; some are not. The Conference has already paid participants' processing fees of \$25. Participants will be responsible for:

- Five nights lodging (\$120)
- Meals at Sager Brown (\$110)
- Travel expenses on the way to and from Sager Brown. It's hard to estimate these costs until we know how many are going, who can carpool, meal plans, etc.
- Supper on Wednesday. We will work in the morning and have lunch on the grounds, but the afternoon and evening are left open for those who want to do some sight-seeing while in south Louisiana.
- Each team member is asked to bring relief kit donations or contribute \$50 per member. We suggest the cash contribution, as Sager Brown can buy in bulk and purchase many supplies at reduced prices.

UMCOR Sager Brown is eager to welcome you and add your name to a long list of servants from the Arkansas Conference who care enough to put their faith in action.

Want more information? Contact Cathy Hall Hughes at 501-324-8020 or chughes@arumc.org. This trip will fill up quickly. Get your name on the list!

You're needed! More work to do in Arkansas

There are more Disaster Recovery and VIM projects around the state awaiting volunteer workers. To learn more or get involved, contact Janice Mann (870-703-8359 or disaster@arumc.org) or Byron Mann (870-826-0268 or vim@arumc.org).

Attend SCJ Mission Academy 2015 Sept. 25-27

The South Central Jurisdiction Mission Academy brings together those who desire to serve others through hands-on mission to learn, share and discuss healthy and effective ways to do so. This year, the Academy offers a variety of courses, from Disaster Response to Leadership to Understanding Poverty and much more.

This year's academy will be hosted at Hoblitzelle Camp and Conference Center in Midlothian, Texas, from 10 a.m. Friday, Sept. 25 until 1 p.m. Sunday, Sept. 27. To review course options or to register, visit www.scjumc.org/academy.

If you have questions after reviewing the information, contact Audrey Phelps, Volunteers In Mission and Disaster Response director for the South Central Jurisdiction: 636-344-0389 or vimp Phelps@gmail.com.

If you register, email Janice and Byron Mann, as they are keeping track of attendees from Arkansas and can offer referrals for particular classes.

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Spiritual revival preview events in October

Mark your calendar now to attend one of five special events that will provide a preview of resources and materials your local church can use to prepare to experience spiritual revival, the first step of the Bishop's Mission Plan. These preview events will guide attendees through options for worship, study, disciple formation and more.

All Arkansas UMCs are encouraged to participate in this intentional season of preparation for spiritual revival beginning in January 2016, and

these preview events will provide ways to help congregations get started.

One event will be held in each district. The experience is not specific to your district, so if you cannot make the date of the preview nearest you, feel free to attend one of the others.



- Sunday, Oct. 4: First UMC Arkadelphia, 3 p.m.
- Sunday, Oct. 11: Goddard UMC Fort Smith, 3:30 p.m.
- Saturday, Oct. 17: St. James UMC Little Rock, 10:30 a.m.
- Sunday, Oct. 18: First UMC Jonesboro, 3:30 p.m.
- Sunday, Oct. 25: First UMC Stuttgart, 4 p.m.

For details, visit <http://spiritualrevival.arumc.org>.

District Conferences to serve as early drop-off points for relief supplies

The 38th annual Ingathering, a service event that benefits United Methodist relief ministries in Arkansas and worldwide, is set for Nov. 21, 2015 at the Arkansas Rice Depot in Little Rock.

For those who cannot attend, but want to participate by contributing relief supplies to send to the United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR), this year's District Conferences will serve as early drop-off sites.

Schedule of District Conferences:

- **Central District:** Sept. 13 at 2:30 p.m. - First UMC North Little Rock, 6701 John F. Kennedy Boulevard, North Little Rock, AR 72116
- **Northeast District:** Sept. 13 at 3 p.m. - First UMC Newport, 217 Laurel Street, Newport, AR 72112
- **Northwest District:** Sept. 13 at 3 p.m. - Grace Community UMC Fort Smith, 4001 Brooken



Hill Drive, Fort Smith, AR 72908

- **Southeast District:** Sept. 27 at 4 p.m. - First UMC Stuttgart, 307 E. 4th Street, Stuttgart, AR 72160
- **Southwest District:** Sept. 20 at 3 p.m. - Gurdon UMC, 201 E. Walnut Street, Gurdon, AR 71743

Tubs this year. They are only distributed within Arkansas, and the Conference Disaster Response Team currently has a stock of hundreds.

- **Monetary gifts associated with Ingathering should not be left at early drop-off sites.** They should be mailed to the Arkansas Conference at the address on the Ingathering form available at www.arumc.org/ingathering2015. Enclose the completed form along with the funds. No cash should be included in any of the relief supply kits.

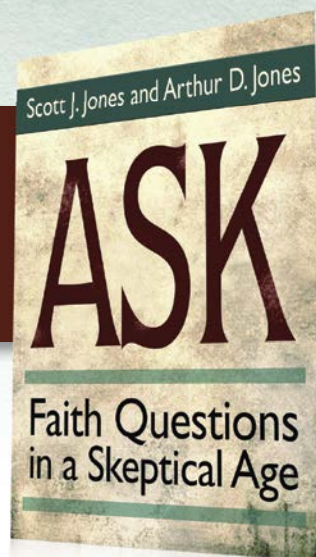
If you plan to attend Ingathering on Nov. 21, pre-registration is recommended. Groups are welcome if the adult-to-child ratio is in accordance with Rice Depot guidelines. No children under age 10 are permitted. To register, visit www.arumc.org/ingathering2015.

Special notes for early drop-off sites:

- **Please do not bring items to the early drop-off sites before the date of District Conference.** Most locations will not have on-site storage for these items, and will be loading them directly onto a Disaster Response trailer that day for transport.
- **Please do not bring Tornado**

Coming to Faith by Asking Questions & Exploring Doubt

We live in a skeptical age. People—especially young people—express doubts about Christian faith. In this thoughtful book, Bishop Scott Jones, author of *The Wesleyan Way*, partners with his son Rev. Arthur Jones, to address hard questions that all of us face when considering faith, religion, and the church.



The questions include:

- Can only one religion be true?
- Why is there suffering and evil?
- How can I believe in science and creation?
- How can I believe in a God I can't prove?
- Can I trust the Old Testament?
- Are marriage, sex, and family life religious issues?
- Was Jesus' resurrection real?
- Why do Christians disagree about so many things?

The message is strong and clear: Don't let your questions stop you from accepting God's invitation to faith. Engage your doubt, and you may find you are closer to God on the other side.

This book can also be used as part of an eight-week study with a DVD featuring young clergy discussion the questions and comprehensive Leader Guide sold separately.

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GLOBAL MINISTRIES
The United Methodist Church

Bridge walkers show their support of Methodist Family Health

Event yields highest fundraising total in nine years

BY JANE DENNIS
Special Contributor

More than 600 souls on Aug. 7 braved temperatures that soared past 100 degrees to take part in Methodist Family Health's 2015 Walk for Children and Families.

The annual event invites participants of all ages to step out in support of those served by Methodist Family Health by meeting at the Arkansas River to walk over the Big Dam Bridge and back. Headquartered at Cook's Landing Park on the North Little Rock side of the bridge, the event includes live music, free pizza and ice cream, fun and games. In addition to individual participation, dozens of United Methodist youth groups join in the Walk as a precursor to the

Participants in the 9th annual Walk for Children and Families write messages of encouragement on graffiti walls that will be displayed at Methodist Family Health facilities around the state.

COURTESY PHOTO



Conference Council on Youth Ministries-sponsored lock-in later the same evening.

"We truly appreciate everyone coming out and making the 9th annual Walk for Children and Families a big success," said Denise Luft, associate director of development for the MFH Foundation and event coordinator. "Yes, it was hot, but it's a worthy cause that supports an organization that makes a difference in the lives of so many."

A trio of graffiti walls was a new addition to this year's Walk. Visitors were invited to draw and write encouraging and positive messages to those in the care of MFH. The walls will be displayed at the Methodist Children's Home campus in Little Rock and other MFH locations around the state.

A live remote broadcast by Little Rock radio station B98.5 FM was also new this year. Newk's restaurant was on board for the first time, as well, serving lemonade and iced tea. Perennial favorite Frosty Treats ice

cream kept young and old cool by handing out free frozen desserts.

Thanks to corporate sponsors and generous donors, in addition to participant registration fees, the event raised more than \$90,000, the most in its nine-year history. Proceeds benefit the programs and services of Methodist Family Health, which provides comprehensive psychiatric and behavioral healthcare to children and families in Arkansas.

MFH cares for more than 2,400 clients daily through its multiple venues of care, including a 60-bed hospital, therapeutic group homes, residential treatment centers, counseling clinics, emergency shelter and other specialized programs. For more information about MFH or how to lend your support, visit methodistfamily.org or call 501-906-4202.

Dennis, a former editor of the Arkansas United Methodist, serves as communications director for Methodist Family Health.

9TH ANNUAL WALK for CHILDREN and FAMILIES

BENEFITING **Methodist FAMILY HEALTH**

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

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COMING UP

'Re-Firement' retreat at Mount Eagle for senior adults, Sept. 15-17

Looking for a great opportunity for worshipping God, enjoying food and fellowship and experiencing God's creation at a stunning location? Mount Eagle Retreat Center's Re-Firement event for senior adults promises great programming, small group Bible studies, passionate worship, games, great food, relaxation, guided walking or motorized tours, and opportunities just to spend time alone listening for God. The Rev. Dan Brand will serve as retreat leader.

The two-night stay includes six meals, and double or triple occupancy rooms with linens provided. ADA accessible rooms are available. For details or to register, contact Wanda Locke, 501-723-4580 or info@mounteagle.org; or Sarge Leonard, 501-757-1875 or director@mounteagle.org.

Mount Eagle, a ministry of the Arkansas Conference of the United Methodist Church, is located at 935 Beal Road in Clinton.

Training for church secretaries and administrative assistants offered by PAUMCS, Sept. 24

The Arkansas Chapter of the Professional Association of United Methodist Church Secretaries (PAUMCS) will hold a day-long training event Sept. 24 from 9 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. in the Kendall Building at Philander Smith College in Little Rock.

Topics addressed will include social media and the church, statistical reporting, a review of changes to administrative functions that connect the local church and the Annual Conference, ideas for improving day-to-day operations in the church office and more. The day will end with a celebration of Holy Communion.

The mission of PAUMCS is to provide a supportive base for the unity and fellowship of members in order to provide individual growth, professional development, continuing education and spiritual enrichment. To learn more about the training session, contact LaDonna Busby, lbusby@arumc.org or 870-793-5247. Visit goo.gl/wFEXwu to download a registration form.

Deaconess/Home Missioner discernment event Sept. 26

A United Methodist Deaconess/Home Missioner discernment event will be held Saturday, Sept. 26, 2015, from 10 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. at Roosevelt Thompson Library, 38 Rahling Circle in Little Rock.

Deaconesses and Home Missioners are lay women and men who have responded to the call of God to serve in full-time ministries of love, justice and service under the authority of the United Methodist Church. After a prescribed course of study, they are consecrated and commissioned and serve in an annual conference under appointment as described in Paragraph 1314 of the *Book of Discipline*.

Box lunches will be provided. To register or learn more, contact Deaconess Colleen Caldwell at 501-529-0604 or deaconesscolleen@gmail.com.

Robin Mark concert tour ends in Van Buren Sept. 26

Robin Mark, a Northern Irish Christian singer, songwriter, worship leader and recording artist based in Belfast, will end his 2015 U.S. tour in the River Valley with a concert at the Van Buren Fine Arts Center on Saturday, Sept. 26 at 7 p.m.

He has written several songs sung throughout the world, and is best known for "Days of Elijah," "Revival," "All for Jesus," "The Wonder of The Cross," "Not by Might" and more. Mark has released 13 albums, with sales of over two million worldwide. He was

nominated in 2006 for a Dove award for "Days of Elijah," received the Gospel Music Association's International Award and has four international gold discs. His songs have been translated into many different languages and sung by worshippers around the globe.

The concert is being sponsored by Heritage UMC Van Buren and is a part of their week-long "Feast of Tabernacles" celebration. Local musicians including Don Martin, Michael Brinson, Rick Endel and Rick Boyett also will appear.

The event is free to the public. The audience will be invited to participate in an offering that will benefit the Glory Girl Foundation, a non-profit ministry which provides support for families with hospital-bound children. In lieu of ticket sales, the public is encouraged to donate one household necessity such as: toiletries, cleaning supplies, personal hygiene and paper products, linens, etc. These items will be used to furnish the Glory House in Little Rock. For more information on the Glory House, visit www.glorygirlfoundation.com.

For more information, contact Heritage UMC at 479-474-6424 or office@heritage.church.

First UMC Conway celebrates sanctuary building centennial through November

First United Methodist Church Conway is celebrating the 100th anniversary of the opening of its current sanctuary, the red-domed building at the corner of Prince and Clifton streets. Throughout the remainder of 2015, the congregation and community will get a glimpse of this building and the ways it has helped to shape generations of people in becoming disciples of Jesus Christ. All events are free and open to the public.

Sept. 13: Former senior pastor the Rev. Phil Hathcock will be the guest preacher at the 8:45 and 11 a.m. worship services, as the congregation honors and remembers the church's former pastors and their spouses.

October: Activities include architecture tours of the sanctuary at 10 a.m. Saturday, Oct. 3, in conjunction with Conway ArtsFest, and additional tours on Oct. 11, 18, 25, and Nov. 1 at 10 a.m. (during the Sunday school hour).

Nov. 8: A celebration will mark the 100th anniversary of the completion of the sanctuary. Senior pastor the Rev. Dr. Michael Roberts will share how the congregation's history has shaped its present and its future. A brunch with birthday cake will be held at 10 a.m.

The sanctuary was first occupied on Aug. 15, 1915. The entire building opened Sunday, Nov. 14, 1915, just 10 days before the North Arkansas Annual Conference convened there.

Miles family clergy to speak on invitational evangelism Oct. 3-4

The Invitational Evangelism Committee of First UMC Hot Springs is hosting a two-day event Oct. 3-4 titled "Walking and Talking with the Miles: A Family Affair," featuring the Rev. John Miles, the Rev. John P. Miles II and the Rev. Dr. Rebekah Miles.

Few families in Arkansas have had greater impact on Methodism than the Miles family. With almost a half-century of dedicated service, John Miles retired 20 years ago from the pulpit of the largest United Methodist congregation in Arkansas, and at that time, two of his children had already been serving in pastoral leadership for more than a decade. John P. Miles II serves as senior pastor at First UMC Jonesboro, and Rebekah Miles is professor of ethics and practical theology and director of the graduate program in religious studies at Southern Methodist University in Dallas.

At the event, all three Miles clergy will talk about their faith and share together some of the vivid and even funny ways that God has used them to help build the kingdom of God and further the gospel of Jesus Christ—even though each may approach the task very differently!

The festivities begin Saturday, Oct. 3 at 5 p.m. with "Sharing Their Faith," an informal refreshment and conversation time, in Cupp Hall of the First UMC Christian Life Center. On Sunday, Oct. 4, all three pastors will be in leadership in worship. The Rev. Rebekah Miles will preach at the traditional services in the historic sanctuary at 8:15 and 10:45 a.m., and the Rev. John Miles II will preach at the Connexion service at 10:45 in the CLC.

The day will conclude with a dinner, "The Roast and Toast of a Servant Leader—John Miles Sr." at 5 p.m. At that time the Rev. Miles will close the weekend with a rousing call for renewal and revival. For more information, please contact the church at 501-623-6668 or visit www.fumchotsprings.com.

Perryville church marks 170 years Oct. 4

Perryville United Methodist Church will celebrate 170 years of service to our God and to the community on Oct. 4, 2015, beginning with Sunday School at 9:45 a.m. and followed by the morning worship service at 11:00 a.m. The Rev. Beth Perdue will lead worship, and the Rev. Richard Lancaster, superintendent of the Central District, will deliver a special message.

Former pastors and former members will be invited to share their experiences here during the worship service, as well as during the afternoon celebration service in the Connection Center. Following the morning worship, a potluck meal will be served in the Connection Center.

The Rev. Perdue and the church family invite everyone to attend the day's festivities and help celebrate this milestone anniversary. The church is located at 123 Cross Street in Perryville.

Atkins church celebrates 175 years Oct. 11

First United Methodist Church Atkins will mark 175 years of service with a Homecoming celebration on Oct. 11, 2015. Former First UMC Atkins pastor the Rev. Jerry Nichols will deliver the message. Anyone who has attended First UMC Atkins at any time in the past, or has any connection with the church through family or friends, is invited to share in this celebration.

John Stroud is compiling a history of First United Methodist Church Atkins, which will be available as part of a church directory in October. Anyone with photos or stories relating to the church to contribute to this history may contact the church at 479-641-2504.

The 175 years takes into account the years the Galla Rock Methodist Church existed. It is believed that the core members of the Galla Rock Methodist Church moved to Atkins following the completion of the railroad, as Galla Rock ceased to be a trade center.

There will be a fellowship meal following the service. All are invited to the meal and to visit and reminisce with friends connected to this congregation.

'At the Cross' retreat for senior adults at Mount Sequoyah, Oct. 19-23

As summer comes to an end, Mount Sequoyah Retreat and Conference Center in Fayetteville invites senior adults to attend At the Cross, its autumn senior adult retreat. Open to older adults from across the eight states of the United Methodist Church's South Central Jurisdiction, this event will be great for individuals, a couple or a whole group to attend.

Activities will begin with dinner on Monday, Oct. 19 and end with breakfast on Friday, Oct. 23, 2015. The retreat will feature excursions to the Botanical Gardens of the Ozarks, Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art and Prairie Grove State Park. Attendees will also worship and socialize together, and a devotional book for each attendee is included in the registration fee.

To register online or download a paper form, visit <http://goo.gl/6N8rne>.

Jesus is on the Main Line: Church provides thrice-daily prayer calls

As a means of encouraging regular prayer, Wesley Chapel began hosting a prayer phone call in January 2014. Members and friends were invited to call in weekdays at 6 a.m., noon, and 6 p.m. for a time of prayer. As the prayer call evolved, participants dialed in from Texas, Alabama, California and other states. The 6 a.m. call averaged more than 20 callers eager to plug into the power of prayer.

The prayer calls convened uninterrupted from January through May 2015. A monthly prayer calendar included a theme and Scripture passage for each day. Pastors, ministers-in-training and lay servants led the calls by reading the theme and Scripture, then engaging other participants through discussion of the Scripture, sharing of joys and concerns and an invitation to pray.

As participants became more comfortable with each other, the calls grew more interactive. Each call time has developed its own personality, with 6 a.m. being the liveliest; noon more soothing and reflective; and 6 p.m. including more exegesis of Scripture.

"Mother" Mary Baines of Alabama, whose granddaughter is a member of Wesley Chapel, often joins the prayer call three times a day. This summer she visited Little Rock, and members of Wesley Chapel had the pleasure of meeting her in person.

The prayer call took a summer break, but will resume after Labor Day. To participate, call 712-432-1500 at the time of your choice and use access code 919326# when prompted. The calendar will be posted at www.wesleychapelumcl.org.

Some participants pull over in their cars on their way home from work to join the call—or to lead it. Small informal groups of friends gather off-line to continue the discussions and prayer. People are starved for answers, and Jesus always responds when you call! As the song goes, "You just call Him up and tell Him what you want!"

—submitted by Pam Ligon Harris

QuadW (continued from page 1)

in a cooperative effort to meet a need of the community in which the interns serve. The 13 interns serving this summer in Arkansas were partnered with four churches: First UMC and St. Luke UMC, both in Pine Bluff, and Oak Forest UMC and Geyer Springs UMC in Little Rock.

The Rev. Natasha Murray-Norman has administered the internship program for two years, with this being the second year for Pine Bluff and the first for Little Rock. The Little Rock sites also benefit from the assistance of the Rev. Jana Green, director of the Wesley Foundation at the University of Arkansas Little Rock.

"The interns experience living and working together, creating programs that benefit the community and learning how each of their gifts and graces can be used for the Kingdom of God," said Murray-Norman. "They connect with one another and the people in the community and they are in relationship with the churches in which they live and work."

Three sites served children in kindergarten to sixth grade; one site served children up to ninth grade. Murray-Norman estimated that the four sites saw an average of 100 children per day.

Interns' tasks

All QuadW interns are responsible for developing, promoting and implementing their programs based on the needs of the communities in which they are placed. The Arkansas interns chose to focus their efforts on providing summer enrichment for children living in the neighborhoods around each of the four churches.

The interns at First UMC Pine Bluff joined forces with an existing program at the church, the Boys and Girls Club of Jefferson County, while the other three locations created stand-alone summer programs.

"It's been a perfect partnership," said Nyeshia Aldridge, CEO of the Boys and Girls Club of Jefferson County. "They have never worked with kids but you'd never be able to tell. I wish I had them year-round."

A QuadW intern is expected to participate in four key areas: contextual living, where the interns live in the same communities in which they serve; reconnecting the local church to its mission field; participating in Christian community, where students from diverse backgrounds do the hard work of self-discovery and challenge assumptions and stereotypes; and leadership. The internship expands the students' leadership skills through one-on-one mentoring, group worship, small group participation and journaling.

While this was the first summer for the program in Little Rock, First UMC Pine Bluff was happy to repeat their 2014 experience hosting the interns by providing housing on the top floor of the church, where an unused portion of the building was converted into living quarters. Church members provide meals, or the interns go to various other churches to eat meals provided for them. Little Rock interns were housed next door to Oak Forest UMC in a home owned by the church.



QuadW intern Sam Fry, 19, a student at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock, served at the Geyer Springs UMC campus.

PHOTO BY JANA GREEN

"I was a little shaky living with the other interns," said Hakeem Wortham, a sophomore student from Philander Smith College. "You know sometimes people clash, but this has been one of the best summers of my life."

Looking to the future

The Rev. Don Woolley, director of the QuadW Summer Missional Internship program and a United Methodist elder, couldn't be more pleased with having QuadW interns in Arkansas. Having spent his youth in and around Pine Bluff, he recognized the potential for involving young adults in service to the community. He was grateful when his grandmother, a member at First UMC Pine Bluff and "number one fan of Rev. Murray-Norman" introduced them.

"It's been a win for everyone," said Woolley. "The work that the interns are doing is exactly the kind we want them to have. All the goals we have for a site, we have more than met those. Everything has gone very, very well."

Funding for the internships was provided by the Arkansas Conference and the Southeast District as well as the QuadW Foundation. Murray-Norman says the partnership has been invaluable in helping the interns make the most of their experience.

Both Murray-Norman and Woolley expressed their shared desire for the QuadW internship program to expand in 2016, with additional interns and locations.

"Arkansas has been one of our strongest partners," Woolley said. "The buy-in from the churches and the Conference reflect the kind of partnerships that make the program work. I would like to see it grow and expand."

"I'd like to include more churches and do more for the children," said Murray-Norman. "I hope we can seek other ways to partner with more campus ministries and recruit top-notch students like we had this summer, who have made a difference in the lives of their students as well as the lives of their churches."

To learn more about the QuadW Summer Missional Internship program, contact Murray-Norman at 870-535-0935 or Natasha.murray.norman@arumc.org.

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Philander Smith College receives gifts of African art



ABOVE: Dr. Roderick Smothers, center, listens as Dr. Kevin Katz shares details about the African art he and his wife, Dr. Melissa Katz, left, donated and personally delivered to Philander Smith College on July 24.

RIGHT: Dr. Roderick Smothers admires a ceremonial helmet from the Mende people, given to Philander Smith College by Drs. Melissa and Kevin Katz of Dickinson, Texas. It is one of 25 pieces of art that came mostly from west and central African countries.

AUM PHOTOS BY AMY FORBUS

Philander Smith College on July 24 received a gift of 25 pieces of African art valued at \$950,000 from the Melissa and Kevin Katz Collection. The Katzes drove from Texas to deliver the art in person.

The generous donation includes an assortment of sculptures, masks



and ceremonial pieces—some decorative, others made for use in rituals.

An art exhibition including the Katz Collection opened Thursday, Aug. 27, 2015, in the Donald W. Reynolds Library, as a part of the slate of events celebrating the Aug. 29 inauguration of Dr. Roderick Smothers Sr. as president of Philander Smith College. Students studied the pieces so they could give guided tours of the collection.

World travelers who are passionate about Africa, Melissa and Kevin Katz are both optometrists from Dickinson, Texas, who practice in the Galveston suburb of Clear Lake. Born and raised in South Africa, Kevin Katz came to the U.S. in 1976. The couple has previously donated pieces from their extensive collection to Huston-Tillotson

University, Texas Southern University and Prairie View A&M University. The Katzes want the works they donate to be used as educational tools to inspire future generations of artists, collectors, researchers and anyone interested in learning about the history of Africa.

Smothers says the donation emphasizes one of his goals for the college: a reinvigoration of the arts and humanities.

“We will take great pride and care to showcase these impressive works as part of our extensive art collection housed on campus,” he said.

A four-year, historically Black liberal arts institution, Philander Smith College is affiliated with the United Methodist Church and is the only United Negro College Fund member school in the state.

Children learn importance of Christian service through Destination: Mission

BY DENNI PALMER
Special Contributor

Destination: Mission, a division of the Arkansas Conference Council on Children's Ministries, held summer mission trips in Jonesboro, Beebe, and at Mount Sequoyah in Fayetteville for upper elementary and middle school students as young as third grade. In the spirit of I Timothy 4:12, the young missionaries do not let their age and size stop them from serving at food banks, thrift store, children's home, assisted living facilities and more.

Teams are made up of students, youth helpers and adults from a variety of churches and everyone has a prayer buddy. Children always make new friends from other churches by the first night, which is a way of strengthening the United Methodist connection. Teams represent churches of all sizes across Arkansas, and this summer also brought the first out-of-state participant from Missouri.

When teams go to mission sites, the constant response is one of surprise at how much work is accomplished. Before teams are sent out each day, they pray to see the things that break the heart of God, and also for God to show them who in the group could be a future pastor or will hear the call into ministry and missions.

At afternoon debriefings, children share how they are grateful for the things they have and for food to eat. They talk about how they can continue helping once they return home and also point out anyone who showed Christ's love in service to others.

Destination: Mission also offers ideas for staying connected after participants return home. For example, this Advent and Christmas season, churches are



Participants in Destination: Mission help out at a food pantry during one of this summer's trips.

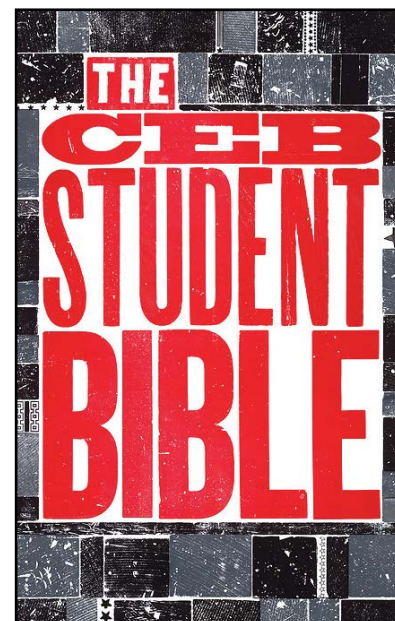
COURTESY PHOTO

encouraged to participate in Project Present, which involves carrying out service projects in their area and posting photos at facebook.com/destination.mission.

For 2016, the spring break trip, BuiLD, will be based on Matthew 28:19, and held March 20-23 in Little Rock. The summer trip theme will be HEROES, based on Philippians 4:13, and two options for attending will be available: July 6-9 at Mount Sequoyah and July 20-23 at Siloam Springs. The latter dates also will be the 20th trip since Destination: Mission's beginning in 2008 as a ministry of First United Methodist Church Siloam Springs.

To help support Destination: Mission, send contributions to the Arkansas Conference UMC, Destination: Mission, 800 Daisy Bates Drive, Little Rock, AR 72202. To learn more about this ministry, connect at <http://kidz.arumc.org> or facebook.com/destination.mission.

Palmer serves as Christian education and spiritual formation coordinator at Mount Sequoyah and as director of Destination: Mission.



Hendrix prof contributes to new CEB Student Bible

Hendrix College religion professor Dr. Robert Williamson Jr. is among the scholars who contributed to the new CEB Student Bible, which was released Aug. 18. Williamson wrote introductions and articles for the books of Song of Solomon, Daniel and Revelation.

Williamson is an associate professor of religious studies at

Hendrix, a United Methodist-related liberal arts college in Conway, Ark. He holds the Margaret Berry Hutton Odyssey Professorship and serves as faculty associate for the college's Miller Center for Vocation, Ethics and Calling.

“It is an honor to have my work included in the CEB Student Bible, which takes seriously the ability of young people to think for themselves about even the most difficult issues of life and faith,” said Williamson in a news release from the college. “My essays deal with topics ranging from body image to nonviolence to economic exploitation. We are trying to help students see how the Bible relates to their world, in all its beauty and messiness.”

The Common English Bible (CEB) translation was first published in 2011, a result of the collaborative effort of 120 Bible translators from 24 denominations and 500 Bible readers from diverse backgrounds and different churches. The CEB uses words and phrases that sound natural and conversational, seeking to offer a balanced, accurate and sensitive translation that mirrors how people talk, read and write.

Designed to help students move into deeper forms of personal and social holiness while helping them make connections between the world of the Bible and their own world, the CEB Student Bible raises challenging questions, engages students' minds and hearts and shows them how to participate in the story of God's people.

Targeted to readers ages 13 and up, the CEB Student Bible includes prayers and reflections written by students, for students; more than 400 articles by a diverse group of biblical scholars and youth ministers from over a dozen different denominations; and numerous discussion questions and activities designed to help students engage with the text.

Feeding

(continued from page 1)

year later. That wouldn't have happened without the involvement of church, school and community partners, he said.

Five days a week, volunteers arrive at First UMC Sheridan to take delivery from PepsiCo, an outside vendor that provides the well-balanced meals in accordance with USDA guidelines for children who depend on free or reduced lunches during the school year. The meals are divided among the four locations and then transported by volunteers. Other volunteers are at each site to serve the children, who vary in age.

Program administrator Mike Carpenter, a member of First UMC Sheridan, estimates more than 100

volunteers from eight different churches in the Sheridan/Grant County Ministerial Alliance have helped during the course of the summer.

"I couldn't have asked for better involvement with all the churches. We've developed a friendship

Embrey agrees that the program has become a point of common interest and mutual respect among its faith-based and community partners.

"Just because Methodists, Baptists and Pentecostals don't really see everything the same, doesn't mean we don't see the need to feed hungry kids," said Embrey. "That in itself has been a great thing."

While thrilled with the strides they've made this year in reducing the number of hungry children in Grant County, Embrey and Carpenter have begun to think about ways to feed even more

children next year, perhaps by expanding into another county or offering Cooking Matters classes at the church.

Embrey has seen a positive impact on the congregation through

between all of us," Carpenter said. "It's been a blessing. I've met so many more people that I did not know. Not only are we reaching out to the kids, but the community involvement has been tremendous."

200,000 REASONS

to fight childhood hunger

Hunger Action Month: What will you do?

September is Hunger Action Month, so now is a great time to decide how to make a difference in your community. Some ideas to get you started:

- **Watch the latest video** about Arkansas feeding ministries, featuring First UMC Sheridan, at www.youtube.com/arkansasumc.
- **Participate in the SNAP Challenge** to get an idea of what it's like to depend upon SNAP (formerly called food stamps) benefits. Visit www.arhungeralliance.org/get-involved/volunteer for links to resources from the Food Research and Action Center.
- **Sign up to work Ingathering**, a United Methodist event at the Arkansas Rice Depot Nov. 21. This year, Ingathering includes two activities to help local food pantries, including food to take back to your own church's feeding ministry for those who pre-register.
- **Make a gift** to a local food pantry or other organization that helps address food insecurity in your part of the state.
- **Connect** with the Arkansas Conference's 200,000 Reasons initiative to fight childhood hunger at <http://200kreasons.arumc.org>.

its involvement in this ministry.

"I think I'm seeing God in this quite a bit," he said. "I think God obviously has brought that program to these churches for us to make a difference. I think God is working through this program to give us a

better idea of what it means to be in an alliance working together for ministry. It's started that big conversation of who are our neighbors, what is their greatest need and what can we do to meet that need."

UMs offer back-to-school help

As the school year began, church groups across Arkansas reached out to students in their communities. Here are just a few of the many ways United Methodist congregations made a difference for children starting school:

- First United Methodist Church Mena on Sunday, Aug. 16 held a "Blessing of the Backpacks" during the 10 a.m. worship service. Students, faculty members and administrators of the Mena Public Schools and the Acorn School System were invited to bring their backpacks to the altar where they were blessed by the Rev. Ann Ferris. They were given a special blessing tag for their backpacks that included their school logo. Following the service, all who attended were invited to a hot dog social in the church fellowship hall.
- First UMC Mena followed up their backpack blessing with a prayer walk through the Mena Public Schools hosted by members of the Mena FUMC congregation and Rev. Ferris and James Ferris. Schools were opened from 6 to 8 p.m. so that individuals or groups could walk through the different campuses. First UMC members prayed for the classrooms, teachers, staff and students who would be using that facility for the new school year. In addition, representatives from First UMC and Cherry Hill UMC participated in an outdoor prayer walk around the campus of Acorn Public Schools.
- First UMC Harrisburg on Sunday, Aug. 9 capped off their "Angels in August" mission project by blessing 41 backpacks full of complete sets of school supplies for children of Harrisburg. It took three vehicles to deliver them to the school.
- St. Mark UMC Pine Bluff United Methodist Women partnered with H.O.P.E. (Help Our People Excel) in providing school supplies at the Merrill Center in Pine Bluff. The supplies, which included backpacks, folders, paper, pencils, pens and erasers, were provided for free to children in the community. The women enjoyed meeting and greeting the different families of Pine Bluff as they helped them stock up for school—a successful event that blessed many families.



'Name the Bird' contest yields 533 rolls of bathroom tissue for Goddard UMC Food Pantry

It started out as a whimsical centerpiece, but became a bird with a cause—and now, a name.

When a colorful bird was first used as a table decoration for a Goddard United Methodist Women meeting, someone proposed that the bird should be the unit's mascot...but what to name her? And how to decide?

A "Name the Bird" contest soon began.

Submitting a suggestion for the bird's name required that two rolls of bathroom tissue be donated to the church food pantry. After 11 names were submitted, voting took place over a three-week period, with each vote requiring a donation of one roll of bathroom tissue. Goddard United Methodist Women were on a roll—as was the bathroom tissue, which began rolling into the church and rolling out to the neighbors who came to the food pantry.

Goddard United Methodist Women's bird attended Annual Conference in Hot Springs, where she met Bishop Mueller (and yes, he cast a vote). She also attended the United Methodist Women's annual luncheon and met Arkansas Conference United Methodist Women president Martha Altom, and Northwest District president Diana Hendricks.

The winning name, Spirit, reminds the women of the sustenance of the Holy Spirit, and of all the mission-minded Goddard UMC members past, present and future. Spirit will be used to help bring attention to future United Methodist Women efforts connected with the congregation.

—submitted by Elizabeth Eubanks



BOOK REVIEW

Author offers guidance for growing up as we age

Falling Upward: A Spirituality for the Two Halves of Life

Richard Rohr
Jossey-Bass, 2013

BY DEDE ROBERTS
Special Contributor

"Most people don't grow up. Most people age. They find parking spaces, honor their credit cards, get married, have children, and call that maturity. What that is, is aging."

—Maya Angelou

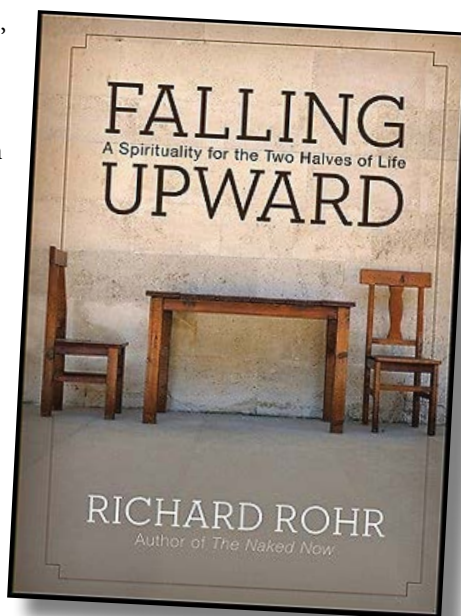
Richard Rohr's book, *Falling Upward: A Spirituality for the Two Halves of Life*, offers a pathway for Christians who want to grow up instead of just age. It is filled with insights, advice, personal stories and sometimes startling interpretations of Scripture. When I began reading it, I found it hard to put down. I also found myself reading some parts more than once, because I wanted to hear what God was saying to me through the words on the page.

Fr. Rohr, a Franciscan priest, is the founder of the Center for Action

and Contemplation in Albuquerque, N.M., and a sought-after speaker and author.

"Falling Upward" is Rohr's term for the necessary journey each of us must make through failure and loss to become grace-filled followers of Christ. He describes our lives in two halves. In the first half we are building our lives, aimed at success, learning about our gifts and shaping our reputation and place in the world. However, at some point or points along the way, we will experience loss or failure or suffering, and those experiences of "falling upward" lead us to a deeper life of understanding, patience, hope and even joy.

Rohr contends that many issues we face in the world and in the church are a result of our trying to live only in the first half of our lives. Our culture worships youthfulness, blames the victims of suffering, idolizes the successful and denies death. Therefore, it robs us of the gifts and wisdom that come through falling into the second half of life, where we can learn to integrate aging, suffering, failure and even our mortality into our lives.



To illustrate his contention, he offers examples of church "wars" about worship styles, human sexuality and dogma. He also discusses dis-ease in our culture where issues of race, poverty and gender are splintering us into rigid categories of haves and have nots.

The church has the key to integrating the halves of our lives and healing the culture. Jesus showed us the way through his suffering, death and resurrection.

The truth of falling upward is in the Gospel, if we have the courage to receive it. Rohr writes, "...the best word for God is actually MYSTERY." God is faithful to move us forward. God's desire is to transform us. God will not waste a single experience in helping us become the people we have been created to be.

Through his engaging style, Rohr invites those of us in the second half of our lives to consider the aches and pains of both body and soul as gift, even the means by which God is forming us into the likeness of Christ.

In my own work in spiritual formation I use the definition offered by Dr. Robert Mullholland:

"Spiritual Formation is the process of being conformed to the image of Christ for the sake of others." Falling Upward confirmed this working definition again and again. Only those who are willing to lose themselves will find themselves (Matthew 10:39). Our true lives are hidden with God in Christ (Col. 3:3). The grain must fall to earth to produce life (John 12:24). In our old age we will be led where we do not wish to go (John 21:18).

Such are the mysteries of the Christian life. *Falling Upward* reveals and helps explain them, and so it is a guidebook that encourages us to grow and not just age.

The Rev. Roberts serves as the director of the Arkansas Conference Center for Vitality.

The book review series that began in last month's *Arkansas United Methodist* comes from a reading list recommended by Bishop Gary Mueller. Look for reviews of the remaining books on the list in upcoming issues. They are currently available for purchase via Cokesbury.com:

- *Loving the World with God: Fourth Day Living* by Rebecca Dwight Bruff
- *Calvin vs Wesley: Bringing Belief in Line with Practice* by Don Thorsen
- *Revival: Faith as Wesley Lived It* by Adam Hamilton

CLASSIFIEDS

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PART-TIME DIRECTOR OF MUSIC: Grand Avenue United Methodist Church of Stuttgart is seeking a part-time Director of Music. The director should demonstrate a proficient skill in playing piano and in directing different age groups in vocal choir and bell choir. A working knowledge of Microsoft Office is required. Compensation will be based on education and experience. Send resumes to GAUMC, 803 S. Grand, Stuttgart, AR 72160 or grandavenue@live.com.

FAMILY SPECIALIST: FUMC Blytheville is seeking an energetic, creative Christian adult to help prepare children and youth for a lifetime of faith and service. Flexible schedule, 15-20 hours/week. Duties include planning, recruiting and supervising volunteers. Should exhibit a heart for children, and positive leadership, communication and organizational skills. Methodist background preferred. Send resume to bfumc_nrm@sbcglobal.net.

STEINWAY BABY GRAND FOR SALE. 1925 restored Steinway Model M. Original ivory and excellent condition. Appraised/insured at \$24,500, asking \$16,500. Contact mark.mcdonald@arumc.org for pictures and information.

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

Children's Ministry Forum coming to Arkansas Nov. 17-19



Summer is over, camps are done and VBS was a hit. After all that excitement and the rush of back-to-school activities, children's ministry workers may find themselves weary and a little run down. But there's an opportunity to recharge coming soon!

For the first time in history, Discipleship Ministries is presenting the biennial Children's Ministry Forum (CMF) leadership development conference in Arkansas on Nov. 17-19, 2015. This conference will be hosted by First United Methodist Church Little Rock. While it is marketed for children's ministry leaders in large United Methodist churches, classes will contain relevant information for ministry in all size congregations.

CMF is sponsored by United Methodist Discipleship Ministries, the Large Church Initiative and the United Methodist Publishing House, and offers opportunities for worship, spiritual renewal, continuing education, fellowship, networking and most importantly, support. There will be more than 100 classes taught by nationally recognized leaders in the fields of spiritual formation, teaching, volunteer recruitment, technology, communication, administration and leadership development.

To register, find answers to your questions or to learn more, visit the Arkansas Conference Children's Ministry website, <http://kidz.arumc.org>; or contact Laura Stinnett, 501-225-9231 or laura@asbury-lr.org.

Hendrix receives largest gift in its history

\$26 million to support scholarships, affordability, welcome center

Hendrix College announced Aug. 26 that it has received a \$26 million gift from the estate of Mary Ann Dawkins of Little Rock. The gift, the largest in the United Methodist-related college's history, will support scholarships, promote college affordability and launch a fundraising effort to construct a new welcome center at the northeast corner of the campus.

"Not only is today's announcement a historic moment for Hendrix, it's an incredible moment for future students," said Hendrix College president Bill Tsutsui.

Dawkins, a United Methodist, passed away in December 2014. In 1986, she attended a performance of the Hendrix College Choir's Candlelight Carol Service at First United Methodist Church North Little Rock. Following the performance, she was inspired to establish the Dr. David and Mary Ann Dawkins Endowed Scholarship Fund at Hendrix in memory of her late husband, Dr. David Dawkins.

Dawkins retired from Coulson Oil Company, founded by her parents, after 41 years. She served as corporate secretary and previously

served on the board of directors at Coulson Oil. She was on the boards of the Arkansas Oil Marketers Association and Mid-South Make-A-Wish Foundation and was a Special Olympics supporter.

"We are grateful, honored and humbled by Mary Ann Dawkins' extraordinary generosity," Tsutsui said. "This gift will help us continue to attract bright and talented students and keep the world-class liberal arts education and student experience at Hendrix within reach of all young people and their families."

In the past 10 years, Hendrix has increased the annual amount of student scholarships and financial assistance from \$6 million to \$36 million. Earlier this year, Hendrix created the Hendrix Arkansas Advantage financial assistance program for Arkansas high school students. The College also established partnerships with the League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC) and the Knowledge is Power Program (KIPP) Delta Public Schools to create new scholarship opportunities for Latino/Latina students and students from the Arkansas Delta.

"The Hendrix Arkansas Advantage and our new partnerships with LULAC and KIPP Delta have energized our community," said David Knight, chair of the Hendrix College board of trustees. "This gift will build upon the momentum of the past year and will inspire us to continue our ongoing commitment to keep Hendrix accessible and affordable for future students."

Before the Dawkins estate gift, the previous largest gift to Hendrix was a \$10.985 million grant from the Donald W. Reynolds Foundation in 1998, which was used to complete a comprehensive renovation of science teaching and research facilities and to construct the Donald W. Reynolds Center for Life Sciences.

With Dawkins' gift, the Hendrix endowment will surpass \$200 million for the first time in the institution's history.

Burns gift to UMFA benefits Asbury UMC and seminary scholarships

The late Helen Bernice Burns, a long-time member of Asbury United Methodist Church Little Rock, established a fund at the United Methodist Foundation of Arkansas through her estate plan to continue to support her local church and Arkansas Conference ministries beyond her lifetime.

Through the Helen Bernice Burns Memorial Endowment Fund, Asbury UMC and UMFA will receive annual income from the investment of \$560,000 in perpetuity. Half will go to Asbury to support local church ministries, and the other half will go to the UMFA Seminary Scholarship Fund that provides scholarships to students who attend United Methodist seminaries and return to the Arkansas Conference to pastor local churches.

"Mrs. Burns was a quiet but friendly lady who attended the Robert Moore Sunday School Class and served as its treasurer," said Ginny Kurrus, a member of Asbury and the UMFA board of directors. "Mrs. Burns was a part of the greatest generation. She lived modestly in a home in the Broadmoor neighborhood, and it is amazing to see the gift she was able to make at the end of her life to continue her service to the church."

Jim Argue, Jr., UMFA president and CEO, said, "Individuals who establish endowment funds at the United Methodist Foundation are being faithful stewards and making a powerful witness to the rest of us. Bernice is a wonderful example of someone who lives quietly, simply and faithfully, and then surprises all with a generous and powerful legacy. She reminds us that wealth is not a prerequisite for generosity."

The United Methodist Foundation of Arkansas manages \$135 million in endowment funds and other charitable assets that benefit local churches and other United Methodist ministries. UMFA is one of the largest United Methodist Foundations in the country. Founded in 1963, UMFA is responsible for over 750 funds that support United Methodist ministries.

OBITUARY

FORT SMITH

Richard R. Stegall

The Rev. Richard R. Stegall, 80, of Fort Smith passed away Monday, Aug. 24, 2015.

He was born July 14, 1935, in Blanco, Okla., to the late William George Stegall and Armadia Snow-Stegall. A retired associate member of the Arkansas Conference, he served more than 32 years in the church, including appointments in the Louisiana and North Arkansas Conferences. He was a member of the Lions Club and United Methodist Men, and a fan of the Dallas Cowboys and Arkansas Razorbacks.

He was preceded in death by his sister, Norma Jean Bruno.

He is survived by his wife of 48½ years, Elizabeth, a retired local pastor in the Arkansas Conference; one son, Steven Stegall and his wife Min Sticat-Stegall of Van Buren; two daughters, Linda Baschek and her husband Harold of Fort Smith, and Loretta Prpich and her husband Michael of Berryville; one brother, Bill Stegall and his wife Faye of Oklahoma City; three sisters, Mary Jo Crosby and her husband Bing of Van Buren, Patsy Stegall of Van Buren and Virginia Enloe of Saleen, La.; seven grandchildren, Kathleen Stegall, Eric Barr, Morgan Barr, Bethany Prpich, Nicholas Prpich, Lauren Baschek and Harrison Baschek; and one great-grandchild, Carson Kirby.

A memorial service was held Friday, Aug. 28 at Goddard United Methodist Church Fort Smith.



Richard Stegall

Black clergywomen conference offers respite

BY SHERON C. PATTERSON
Special to UM News Service

ROCKVILLE, Md.—A gathering of 150 black United Methodist clergywomen provided a place of respite from the day-to-day isolation faced by many of the women.

The Aug. 3-6 gathering was the 27th annual meeting of the Black Clergywomen of the United Methodist Church included women from five jurisdictions. The theme of the meeting was "Breathing God's Promises; Giving Voice to What Matters," and the women spent four days learning, listening to powerful preaching and attending workshops.

The Rev. Maxine Allen, national secretary for the group, said breathing is a luxury for many black clergywomen.

"This year's theme was especially pertinent to what we experience, as we look at what is happening with the Black Lives Matter movement," Allen said. She added that many are the first or the only black clergywoman to serve in their appointment and in many cases are "the other."

Many black clergywomen are placed in positions or appointments "where their voices are muffled or being not being heard at all," said Allen, who is the Arkansas Conference assistant director of mission and ministry for mission field engagement. "Some dare not speak for fear of retaliation by their conference

structures. We must come together to gain strength for the journey and for mutual accountability."

Reaching out was high on the clergywomen's agenda. They started the conference with a partnership with the international hunger relief group Stop Hunger Now. It was the second year that the clergywomen packaged meals with Stop Hunger Now. This year they packed more than 10,000 meals and donated \$2,000 to the organization.

The clergywomen also sent a \$2,000 gift to the children of the nine people killed at Emmanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church in Charleston, S.C.; and supported the memory of the first African-American United Methodist woman bishop, Bishop Leontyne T.C. Kelly, with a \$2,000 gift to the Gulfside Retreat Center in Waveland, Miss., where an outdoor worship center named for Kelly is planned.

The group's national president, the Rev. Telley Lynette Gadson, pastor of Saint Mark UMC Taylors, S.C., launched the conference with a rousing sermon entitled, "Don't Waste Your Breath."

The Rev. Yvette D. Massey, pastor of Central UMC Atlanta and vice president of Black Clergywomen, preached on "What if the women shut up?" Her sermon was based on the scriptural text of I Corinthians 14:34-35, in which the Apostle Paul tells women to be silent in the church.

Massey recounted her own experience of being told to be quiet in the church. After she'd preached the eulogy at a funeral, a woman—whom she did not know—"approached her, placed a crumpled letter in her hand, and disappeared into the crowd." The message—she should not be preaching because she was a woman.

The Rev. Pamela Lightsey, associate dean and assistant professor at Boston University School of Theology, was given the 2015 Justice Advocacy Award for her work in Ferguson, Mo., and for advocating justice in the Black Lives Matter movement. In a plenary, "Giving Voice to What Matters," Lightsey told the group, "We must move from being reactive to proactive. Stay in the word of God."

Retired Bishop Violet L. Fisher, episcopal adviser to the group, urged them to be bold and fearless in her sermon, which was preceded by a video of her bungee jumping.

Fisher's boldness two decades ago started the career of the conference's keynote speaker, the Rev. Cindy Trimm of Bermuda. Fisher was preaching in Barbados when she heard Trimm preach. She invited her to enroll in college and live with her. Now Trimm is an international, nondenominational preacher and teacher with numerous million-selling books.

The Rev. Patterson is communications officer for the North Texas Conference.

Church provides summer reading program for its neighbors



A First UMC Paragould volunteer helps families choose school supplies. Participants in the church's summer reading program, among others, attended a special back-to-school kick-off event that included school supplies, outdoor activities, a community meal and a blessing of the backpacks.

COURTESY PHOTO

As First UMC Paragould members Angela Newby and Danielle Honeycutt came to the end of a Bible study they had taken together, they realized what they had learned challenged them—and the church—to make a difference in their community.

Both teachers in the local school district, they knew that a free summer reading program could provide much-needed support for students in the church's neighborhood. Working with their schools, Newby and Honeycutt identified children who could benefit most from a little extra help over the summer break, and "Ready, Set, Read" was born.

Some of the children already were connected with First UMC Paragould, but the majority came from outside the church. Ready, Set, Read opened each morning with everyone hearing a story, then reading in smaller groups. At lunch, they worked on table manners. Then, after some play time, they had one more session of reading instruction before riding home in the church van.

Church members helped with small group reading and with preparing and serving lunch. When the week of Vacation Bible School arrived, the students joined in VBS activities in the mornings and attended Ready, Set, Read in the afternoons.

To cap off the summer, the church filled its lawn with free activities, and a space inside with free school supplies. Children and parents chose the supplies they needed, first picking out a backpack, then filling it with items on the appropriate school supply list. Many stayed for dinner, then a quick worship service that included a blessing of the backpacks.

First UMC Paragould hopes to maintain relationships with Ready, Set, Read participants through the school year to help them in other ways.

—submitted by Karole Risker



Faith Funds

A Congregation of Lawyers

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

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

This year's topics will include Avoiding Ascending Liability, Sensitivity to Potential Sexual Harassment in the Church & Management of Risk for Employer Liability, Ethics — Access to Justice & the UM Lawyer, Copyright Compliance, and Maintaining Tax Exempt Status for Local Churches.

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

The free seminar for UM lawyers earns Continuing Education Units for those who attend. The 2015 event will be held in Little Rock on Thursday, September 17. Contact Katie Holley at kholley@umfa.org if you are a United Methodist attorney interested in participating.



The United Methodist Foundation of Arkansas

5300 Evergreen Drive • Little Rock, Arkansas 72205

501-664-8632 • Toll free 877-712-1107 • Fax 501-664-6792 • www.umfa.org