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New Haven UMC dedicates new building

BY AMY FORBUS
Editor



Michael Smith holds Zaydrian Missouri while the congregation of New Haven UMC Hensley sings a hymn. The two were among those present at the Jan. 24 service of dedication for the church's new building, which replaces the one destroyed by fire in 2014.

AUM PHOTO BY AMY FORBUS

HENSLEY, Ark.—For those who saw the charred shell of New Haven United Methodist Church's building the morning of July 20, 2014, the afternoon of Jan. 24, 2016 brought a stark contrast. The bright, fresh interior of the just-completed facility provided a home for new beginnings on the day of the building's dedication to the glory of God.

Bishop Gary Mueller celebrated with the congregation, pointing out that the service was one of dedication rather than consecration—the difference being that a building is dedicated only when it is paid for in full.

As he began to preach, the bishop pointed out a typographical error in the responsive reading that had opened the service: "This is none other than the house of Go, and this is the gate of heaven." He suggested that it serve as an important reminder for the church.

"We all know that that's supposed to be 'God,' right?" he said. "But think about it: God did [See DEDICATION, page 8]"

Rice Depot, Foodbank merge: CEO sheds light on changes

BY AMY FORBUS
Editor

After more than a year of conversation and exploration, the Arkansas Foodbank and Arkansas Rice Depot announced in September their plan to merge at the start of 2016. CEO Rhonda Sanders now leads the new nonprofit, which will develop a new identity to honor the legacies of both its predecessors.

So when did the process begin, how did it unfold and what will it mean for United Methodist churches?

Coming together

Sanders arrived at the Foodbank three years ago; about a year and a half later, the Rice Depot hired Kim Aaron as president and CEO. Almost immediately, the two leaders became friends, and began to discuss how their nonprofits, situated just a block away from each other, might work together.

"It became pretty evident as Kim settled in there and we started talking that both organizations had such a strong, rich legacy of helping others and feeding others, but would really develop strengths in different areas," Sanders said. "I love the way one of our board members put it: 'We have similar missions, and different strengths.'"

The Rice Depot had developed a strong focus on addressing child hunger through its Food for Kids backpack program that sends a weekend supply of food home from school with children who need it. Meanwhile, as a partner with Feeding America, the Arkansas Foodbank had developed strength in the agency and food pantry sectors.

A yearlong process of analysis began, involving the boards of directors and executive committees of both the Foodbank and the Rice Depot. Both leaders worked diligently to help the groups get to know each other.

"It just became increasingly evident then as we looked at the actual financial pieces of it," Sanders said. "Coming together we could be efficient, we could save money. If we put this together, we're feeding children year-round."

Efficiency enhances mission

Though still new, the merger already has brought efficiency and created administrative savings that will result in getting more food to more people. For example, with a consolidated delivery map and schedule, trucks from the Rice Depot and the Arkansas Foodbank no longer overlap when they're out making deliveries. And the single organization no longer has to pay for two audits, which resulted in an immediate \$11,000 savings.

The memorandum of understanding for the merger prohibits layoffs due [See MERGER, page 6]

Know your crow

BY CHARLES COOPER
Special Contributor

Editor's Note: For background on Shakeyhead the Crow, see the Rev. Cooper's commentary from the Dec. 4, 2015 issue of this newspaper, available at www.arumc.org/2015/12/shakeyhead-the-crow.

I don't know where Shakeyhead slept. I wanted him to roost on my headboard, but he was not allowed inside, except the three times he was stuffed into a hatbox and



Charles Cooper

taken into the country for a "Free Shakey."

During the day he liked the banister of the porch where I fed him corn; the clothesline where we helped my mother do laundry; and he liked trees. I think he stayed in the trees across the street from Saint Joseph's while I was in school, or maybe he went down Dickson Street and raided the dumpsters. There may have been a

bit more weave to his flight pattern on the way home from school than on the way there.

He would always be on time when the last bell rang, and I would know my crow. That fact may seem strange. Crows look so much alike.

I can tell older crows from younger ones by the sheen and thickness of their feathers; and I know a little Crow. I know the double caw wake-up call; the siren caw that warns of hawks and cats; the clicking and clucking sounds they make within their family groups; and a few more. Yet, I cannot pick out one crow from all the others.

It was not by his appearance that I knew Shakeyhead, but in his response to me.

To other crows I was just another small human, someone to surmise for candy bars and hotdogs or a bean-flip or a BB gun. The strange crows would look at me and look away, but Shakeyhead would look and look again; and I would raise my arm and call him down. It was in that back and forth that I knew my crow.

Knowing each other

It is in that kind of back and forth that we know each other best. When my wife had a stroke on Christmas morning, 1992, I was in Fort Smith and she was in Yellville with the kids at her mother's house. I had led the Christmas Eve service at Cavanaugh UMC. I woke up and started packing my bags to go, and the phone rang. It was Becky's sister. She said, "Mama found Becky on the floor this morning. She is unresponsive. They have taken her in an ambulance to Mountain Home."

I got in the car and drove up the winding roads on a cold morning with a few flurries in the air. I imagined terrible things. I imagined Becky paralyzed for life. I imagined her dead. I imagined how I would raise and support our two daughters who were both in diapers. I wanted the best, and I thought of the worst. And that is how I was when I walked into the hospital ICU room.

I saw Becky under the sheets with an IV. She couldn't talk. She smiled out of the corner of her mouth, the corner that could smile. I looked in her eyes. She was there.

This weave of give and take is how we mend our torn up world. Everything else is just the blur of resemblances. I think it is how we know Jesus.

I cannot say how tall he was; he was a first century Jew, so I assume not too tall, and a swarthy fellow with dark hair and eyes. Since oil was used for bathing, his hair and flesh would have glistened. The times were lean, so I doubt not that he was, as well. One more thing: when he fled the mob in Nazareth that sought his life, he ran through the crowd rather than away from it, so he must have looked enough like everyone else that no one could pick him out. He would be the face in the photograph you forget, the one that blends in and so becomes everyone you do remember.

Jesus made known

I think Jesus still does that: hides in the crowd, among us, and is known, as he said he would be, in our love and sharing of life together. He is known in the simple responses that he makes to each of us in the flesh and blood of those around us, something such as the breaking of a loaf of bread in a way that says, "This is for you"—so entirely unlike the breaking of bread that says, "This is for me," or the necessary *quid pro quo* of buying and selling bread in the grocery store.

From afar we humans are fairly indistinguishable from birth to death, so even the most remarkable face becomes common in a large enough crowd. It's truer after we are gone. Eventually our memories become stones with names. Some of them can still be read. None can from a distance.

The stones are just like a large body of crows—unless one winks at you, and then you know. You know your crow; you know your spouse; you know your Lord, not by the color of hair or feathers, but in that shake of his head, in that look of her eyes, in that breaking of bread that says, "This is for you"—a gift from God that makes you the distinguished person that you are.

The Rev. Cooper is a retired elder in the Arkansas Conference. Contact him at brocorbeau@gmail.com.

'It is in that kind of back and forth that we know each other best.'

**Recycle
Reuse
Replenish**



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



EDITOR'S CORNER

BY AMY FORBUS

Looking toward Portland

As I write, I've just returned from Portland, Ore., site of the 2016 United Methodist General Conference to be held May 10-20. I attended a pre-conference briefing to prepare for telling the story of how more than 800 United Methodists (including eight from the Arkansas Conference) will conduct the business of the church—and, we hope, a good amount of holy conferencing, too.

General Conference, or #umcgc if you're planning to follow on social media, occurs every four years. If you aren't familiar with it (and even if you are), here are some resources that may prove helpful in the coming months.

The Upper Room's 60 Days of Prayer:

I went back and looked at the preparations for the last General Conference in 2012, and The Upper Room had mapped out only 50 days of prayer before that gathering. While I don't pretend to understand exactly how prayer works, I do understand that more is better. At <http://60daysofprayer.org>, you can sign up to receive the daily meditations by email or text message; they begin March 31.

In addition to that sustained effort, each annual conference has received a specific 24-hour period to pray for General Conference. Arkansas' date is April 5; mark your calendar and look for details soon.

General Conference website:

For news from the denomination about what happens before, during and after General Conference, visit

<http://gc2016.umc.org>. United Methodist Communications, an official agency of the church, maintains the site.

The Arkansas Conference website:

As I cover General Conference with special attention to what the developments mean for United Methodists of Arkansas, we will post updates on arumc.org, as well as on social media.

During the briefing in Portland, we learned about proposed legislation for restructuring the denomination; listened to panel discussions on human sexuality from as wide a range of perspectives as you will find within Christianity; and remembered the importance of Christian unity in the process of facing our disagreements.

One pastor from Portland, the Rev. Steven Lewis, put it well: "Few will read what we write, but millions will watch what we do."

Having witnessed three General Conferences, I've seen its difficulties. Chief among them: We are human beings, created in God's image, but perhaps not acting like it in every moment of our lives. Please be in prayer that even when United Methodists differ, whether on the public stage of General Conference or in the smallest gathering in our local churches, that we continue to see the light of Christ in each other.

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



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Submission Deadlines

| Issue Date | Submission Deadline |
|------------|---------------------|
| March 4 | Feb. 16 |
| April 1 | March 14 |
| May 6 | April 18 |



GROWING TOGETHER IN CHRIST: A word from the Bishop

BY GARY E. MUELLER

Toe-mashing questions

As I write these words, we are in the midst of a three-week sermon series on “Experiencing Spiritual Revival” that focuses on how God’s unconditional, transformational and invitational love, uniquely experienced in Jesus Christ, is the basis of a revival of us as individuals, congregations and the United Methodist Church in Arkansas.

We are also just days away from Ash Wednesday and the beginning of Lent; those 40 days we spend in serious spiritual practice to be better prepared to celebrate the meaning, joy and power of Jesus’ resurrection from the dead.

I am struck by how resurrection and revival are two r-words that go together. They both come from God. They both are gifts we can only receive. And they both are things we must prepare ourselves for.

Of course, most of us probably have a fairly easy time affirming this. After all, it’s good, sound theology and something we aspire to. But are we really serious about the resurrection? And are we really serious about revival?

Do we believe in them—not just with our heads, but also with our hearts, our spirits and our will? Do we long for them—not just occasionally, but constantly, with blood, sweat and tears? Do we have room for them in our lives—not just when we feel the need, but also because they simply are at the heart and soul of the life God has created us to live?

These are what I like to call “toe mashing” questions because they force us—and, yes, I mean me as well—to get serious about what matters most in life. Asking them can be uncomfortable, painful and risk-taking, to the point that we can

easily come up with all kinds of really good reasons to avoid trying to answer them.

But if we are willing to delve in, we will discover we don’t have to answer them alone. The Holy Spirit will help us. So much so, that what starts out as painful toe mashing will end up being the most amazing experience imaginable.

I pray that all of us are ready for some toe mashing. Indeed, I pray we will long for it. Come, Holy Spirit, come!

Grace and peace,

Gary E. Mueller

Apportionment payout changes little from previous year Churches continue to adjust to pension billing, new calculations

BY AMY FORBUS
Editor

In 2015, United Methodist congregations in Arkansas contributed \$10,547,927.96 toward the Conference budget. This number represents a payout of 87.72 percent of the assigned apportionments—a reduction of less than one percent from 2014.

While this number does show a decline in overall payout, it doesn’t tell the whole story, says Todd Burris, director of administrative services and Conference treasurer.

“When you account for the direct billing of pension benefits no longer included in the apportionments, the payout is actually a slight increase,” Burris said. During 2015, local churches paid 75 percent of their pastor’s pension benefits directly, and the remaining 25 percent was rolled into the apportionment calculation. From 2016 forward, local churches will pay their specific pastors’ full pension benefits. This transition began in 2013; the annual conference session approved the change in 2012.

The pension billing change lowers apportionments and decreases total expenses for some

churches, but others see an overall increase in expenses because their pastor’s pension wasn’t fully covered by their own apportioned giving under the previous system.

Apportionments support ministries beyond the local church, such as camping and retreat centers, staffing, supporting campus ministries and providing resources to congregations—such as the recent materials associated with “A Call to Spiritual Revival,” which received national recognition at last month’s United Methodist Association of Communicators award ceremony.

At its next meeting, the Conference Council on Finance and Administration (CFA) will review the details of the payout as part of the process for developing the 2017 Conference budget. With the adoption of the Arkansas Tithe Initiative at the 2015 Annual Conference, CFA is moving toward a calculation of apportionments based on 10 percent of a church’s adjusted gross income. The formula will take full effect in 2017; 2016 is a transition year.

Extra mile giving

Every year, some churches pay more than is required of them by the

apportioned giving formula. The Center for Administrative Services credits this extra mile giving toward the balance of churches that were unable to pay their apportioned giving in full. The following churches made extra mile gifts in 2015:

Central District:

Adona UMC
Cabot UMC
First UMC Carlisle
Keo UMC
Lakewood UMC North Little Rock
Levy UMC North Little Rock
North Pulaski UMC
Oakland UMC
Saint Paul UMC Little Rock
Sardis UMC
Wesley Chapel UMC Little Rock
White Memorial UMC Little Rock
Wye Mountain UMC

Northeast District:

Bono UMC
Farm Hill UMC
Keiser UMC
Moorefield UMC
Mount Carmel UMC Jonesboro
Pleasant Plains UMC
Rector UMC
Russell UMC

Northwest District:

First UMC Atkins
First UMC Bella Vista
Berryville UMC

Bland Chapel UMC
Central UMC Fayetteville
Central UMC Rogers
Charleston UMC
Cherry Hill UMC
Dover UMC
Elm Springs UMC
Faith UMC Fort Smith
Huntsville UMC
Mountain View UMC Alma
First UMC Rogers

Southeast District:

Clarendon UMC
Good Faith Carr UMC Pine Bluff
Greenhill UMC
Leola UMC
First UMC Monticello
Moore’s Chapel UMC Sheridan
Rock Springs UMC Wilmar
Sheridan UMC
Vannsdale UMC
West Helena UMC
Wynne UMC

Southwest District:

Avery’s Chapel UMC
First UMC Camden
De Ann UMC
Emerson UMC
Fairview UMC Texarkana
Faith UMC Hot Springs
First UMC Fordyce
First UMC Hope
Lewisville UMC
First UMC Magnolia
First UMC Malvern
Saint Andrew UMC Arkadelphia
Sweet Home UMC Murfreesboro

APPOINTMENTS & RETIREMENTS

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

- Kenny Lee (full-time local pastor)—Griffin Memorial UMC; effective March 1
- LaToya Shepherd (supply pastor)—Mission UMC Fort Smith; effective Jan. 18
- Jeff Blassingame- (part-time local pastor) St. James UMC Fayetteville; effective Feb. 1
- John Palmer (elder)—ATU Wesley Foundation, director; effective Feb. 1
- Anne Holcomb (part-time local pastor)—Western Hills UMC; effective Jan. 17
- Susan Ledbetter (elder)—Leave of Absence; effective July 1

Retirements (effective July 1, 2016, unless otherwise noted):

- David Bentley (elder)
- James C. “Clif” Christopher (elder)
- Robert David Jones (elder)
- Mary Jane Pearce (deacon)
- Winston Roden (part-time local pastor)
- Robert Craig Russell (elder)
- Michael Topham (elder)
- Shirley White-Souder (part-time local pastor)

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

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



Electrical fire creates additional construction project at Bay UMC

BY AMY FORBUS
Editor

Construction workers building the new fellowship hall at Bay UMC made a startling discovery Dec. 28: smoke coming from an electrical fire in the sanctuary next door to their project.

The Rev. Donald Lewert had been in the church office as the fire developed, but was too far away

he said. His departure left the building unoccupied, and no one was injured by the fire, which started between the two layers of the sanctuary roof. The top layer of the roofing was metal, so the fire stayed hidden while doing damage to the interior.

"They're going to rip it down to the studs," Lewert said, adding that the congregation doesn't expect to be able to use the sanctuary for at least

"We're hoping to maybe have our Easter service there," Lewert said.

The unexpected renovation brought on by the fire actually has given them an opportunity to evaluate what changes they may want to make to the space. They already know that they'll be repositioning the sound system and media area, moving it from the back of the sanctuary to the other side of the wall where the new fellowship hall building connects. "It will free up area in the back of the sanctuary that's pretty crowded now," Lewert said.

And it's also the perfect time to re-evaluate the church's ministry and focus, he said. The congregation had once run an after-school program at the local community center, but had had trouble finding enough volunteers to staff it. Lewert hopes that will change with the new building, including a gymnasium, available for congregational and community use.

"We'll definitely be upgrading our outreach to the youth of our community," he said. Many of the church members are part of multi-generational families, and many drive from other towns to attend. "We really want to look at our community of Bay, specifically, and see how we can better serve.

"We're hoping now that we've had the physical fire, now we can have that spiritual fire that will take us to the next level here."



The Dec. 28 fire at Bay UMC remained hidden for quite some time, causing enough damage to the interior that the sanctuary will have to be completely renovated.

PHOTO COURTESY OF ANGIE GAGE

from the sanctuary to smell the smoke. The power kept going out, though, and he grew tired of re-setting the clock every time the lights blinked.

"So I left the clock and went in to Jonesboro, and had no idea that behind me the church was on fire,"

eight months.

"We've been so focused on this new building, it's strange to have to shift gears and focus on the one that's been there for years," he said.

The new fellowship hall should be finished soon, though, and will double as temporary worship space.

PEOPLE OF FAITH



Stephen
Gideon



Martha
Taylor



Amy
Forbus



Michelle
Moore

Conference staff members bring home four awards from UMAC

The United Methodist Association of Communicators (UMAC) held its annual meeting Jan. 19-20 in Portland, Ore., and three Arkansas Conference staff members were among the honorees at the organization's awards banquet.

Center for Technology team members Stephen Gideon and the Rev. Martha Taylor received a second place award in the Campaign or Strategic Planning category for the Arkansas Conference Spiritual Revival campaign, and received an honorable mention for the 200,000 Reasons to Fight Childhood Hunger campaign, as well.

Gideon received second place in the Branding category for graphic design supporting the Annual Conference 2015 theme, "A Call to Spiritual Revival."

And *Arkansas United Methodist* editor Amy Forbus received a third place award in the Non-fiction Writing category for her commentary "Grace along the road," which appeared in the newspaper's May 1, 2015 issue.

Elements of these award-winning projects currently appear on the Arkansas Conference website, www.arumc.org.

Moore takes on project direction for Hendrix Youth Institute

Hendrix College announced in a Jan. 6 news release that Michelle Moore has been named project director of the new Hendrix Youth Institute (HYI), a summer program that will help high school students discern a call to ministry.

The new program is being created through a grant from the Lilly Endowment, Inc., which was announced in the Jan. 1 issue of the *Arkansas United Methodist*.

"The possibilities for youth seeking God and exploring a call to ministry through this innovative program are exciting and inspiring," Moore said. "I look forward to being in partnership with Hendrix as the Youth Institute emerges into the vital program I know it will become."

A 2006 Hendrix graduate, Moore earned a degree in religious studies. She holds a master's degree in specialized ministry with an emphasis in youth ministry from Southwestern College and is certified in youth ministry through the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry.

Moore currently serves in two roles for the Arkansas Conference of the United Methodist Church: director of program and marketing for camp and retreat ministries, and youth and young adult coordinator. The HYI duties are a part-time position in addition to her work for the Conference.

"The leadership that Michelle brings to the Hendrix Youth Institute will be vital to its success in reaching United Methodist youth in the state and across the jurisdiction," said Hendrix College chaplain the Rev. J.J. Whitney. "Her personal experience as a United Methodist youth discerning a call to ministry, her incredible gift in empowering young people and her ability to connect clergy and laity across the church will greatly impact our program."

"As a Hendrix graduate, Michelle knows well the importance of the relationship between the United Methodist Church and the college, and how her Hendrix experiences shaped her vocation as a professional minister," Whitney added. "She will bring this perspective into her vision for the Institute as we continue the Hendrix College legacy of preparing students to think about ministry as their life's work."

Hendrix College is a private liberal arts institution in Conway, Ark., founded in 1876 and affiliated with the United Methodist Church since 1884. To learn more, visit www.hendrix.edu.

CLASSIFIEDS

PLACE A CLASSIFIED AD in the *Arkansas United Methodist* for 60 cents per word, no limit. Call 501-324-8037 or email aforbus@arumc.org. Deadlines on page 2 of this issue.

First United Methodist Church, Magnolia, Arkansas, is interviewing for a full time Director for our growing youth ministry. Candidates should have significant experience with both junior and senior high school students and have strong leadership skills. They should be able to recruit, coordinate and empower volunteers. The person who fills this position will be highly organized, technologically savvy and have excellent communication/coordination skills. Appropriate use and knowledge of social media is a plus. The successful candidate will have a strong Christian and biblical background in order to provide spiritual leadership to our youth. Candidates must be committed to the United Methodist Church and Wesleyan theology. Salary commensurate with experience and education. Resumes may be sent to: Search Committee, First UMC, 320 W. Main St., Magnolia, AR 71753.

Grand Avenue UMC, Stuttgart, Arkansas is seeking a part-time Children's Ministry Director. The director is responsible for developing and growing the ministry program for children which includes Children's Bible Study, VBS, Sunday School, and other children's activities. Director should work a minimum of 10 hours per week, including Sundays and Wednesdays. A full job description will be given at time of interview. Please send resumes to grandavenue@live.com.

MLP BENEFITS — Mike Proctor: 870-315-3931, mlproctor@sbcglobal.net. Sells Individual Major Medical and Life Insurance to Individuals, Families, and Groups. Sells Medicare Supplements to age 65 and over. Please call for a quote: 870-315-3931.

Philander Smith students reflect on learning about hunger, homelessness

Each year just before Thanksgiving, the National Coalition for the Homeless and the National Student Campaign Against Hunger and Homelessness co-sponsor National Hunger and Homelessness Awareness Week. For several years now, Philander Smith College's Office of Religious Life, led by the Rev. Ronnie Miller-Yow, has organized educational experiences during that same week to raise awareness of these issues, and to foster in young persons the desire to end hunger and homelessness.

The 2015 Hunger and Homelessness Awareness Week activities at Philander Smith included:

- a charity basketball tournament with the admission price being a pair of gloves, hat, scarf or coat for those in need;
- a screening of a documentary on homelessness;
- "One Night Without a Home," in which students slept outside on campus;
- a "Rich or Poor Banquet" to illustrate the gaps in food availability; and
- service projects to help the hungry and homeless, including a meal-packaging party with The Pack Shack, a northwest Arkansas-based nonprofit.

Several first-year Philander Smith students have shared reflections on the week's activities with the *Arkansas United Methodist* so our readers may glimpse one way the United Methodist Church provides education beyond the classroom on its college campuses.



Philander Smith College students packed more than 6,000 meals for area food pantries as part of Hunger and Homelessness Awareness Week. PHOTO BY YAKIRA DEAN

"This week was really an eye opener to some of the real life struggles that people face here in the USA and all over the world every day. Hunger and Homelessness Awareness Week made me realize that we should not ignore hunger and homelessness because it is a very serious matter. This week reminded me that we should be our brother's keeper and help the less fortunate. I am very thankful for this week.... I was able to show love and support to the people that suffer [from] hunger and homelessness."
—Lakendrick Lewis

"It was a delight to be able to be a service to others and experience in the event 'One Night Without a Home' what it was like to be homeless. That event impacted me the most. It changed my mindset. I spent the night in a cardboard box and when I woke up the next morning, my body and my mind were in total shock. It took a few hours to my body to come back to normal, but my mind and heart were overwhelmed."
—Erykah Williams

"The banquet we had... showed how you would live if you were poor or unfortunate, and how you would live if you were wealthy. Hunger and Homelessness Awareness Week was very stunning. That week showed me how I should be thankful for the things in life, even the smaller things. When we did the Night Without a Home and we slept outside, it showed me living outside is not where I want to be, and I should be thankful to even have a roof over my head.... It makes you look at life in a different perspective and appreciate things a lot more."
—John Davis

"I enjoyed seeing my school come together to help the people who are less fortunate. Together Philander donated 125 thanksgiving dinners. We also prepared 6,480 meals through The Pack Shack. To me that is amazing. After experiencing Hunger and Homelessness Week, I am truly grateful for the things I usually take for granted: shelter, clothing and food. I realize there are people out there who only wish they had these things. I am blessed to have been a part of such an amazing week and I am now aware of hunger and homelessness in America."
—Koya M. Couch

"Cherokee Native Americans say, 'Do not judge a man until you have walked a mile in his shoes.'" During Hunger and Homelessness Awareness Week I not only walked in his shoes, I slept in his bed... I've never experienced anything like it. From the banquet where I ate nothing but beans, rice and cornbread sitting on cold newspapers, to sleeping outside in 30 degree weather, it was just overall humbling and makes you appreciate the littlest things, like hot water which thawed my bones that morning after a night without a home."
—Jasmine Owens

Bring a team to the Grow By One Summit

Registration opens in mid-February for the Grow By One Summit, set for Saturday, April 30 at St. James UMC Little Rock. In addition to lay leaders and pastors, the summit will benefit ministry teams and committee members who focus on growth in worship, discipleship, mission and outreach.

The Rev. Dr. Blake Bradford, assistant director of the Arkansas Conference Center for Vitality, recommends that larger churches bring multiple ministry groups so they can gather information to help them with multiple ministry goals. Smaller congregations also can benefit from a team attending this event.

"Small churches could bring a team to focus in on one or two strategic areas of ministry for growth," Bradford said. "The main element is 'bring a team.'"

The Rev. Dede Roberts, director of the Center for Vitality, says teams

should be prepared to ask questions of their core class instructors.

"Part of the time for each core session is set aside for the presenter to coach teams in planning ministry in their own unique mission field," she said.

Keynote speaker Kay Kotan will lead three plenary sessions and a core class. Participants can choose among several different ministry-centered core classes. In addition, about a dozen "lunch and learn" informal discussions will feature fruitful and effective ministries from around the state, from clergy and laity of churches of different sizes and contexts.

Online registration will be available through www.arumc.org. Register early for a 25 percent discount; the fee includes lunch, materials, a copy of Kotan's book *Get Their Name* and a gift from co-sponsor Cokesbury, who will have a full bookstore available on site.

Continue the Revival

GROW

by one* summit

*worship | profession of faith | small group | connecting with neighbors

SAVE THE DATE: Saturday, April 30, 2016

St. James United Methodist Church - 321 Pleasant Valley Drive, Little Rock

Registration Opens Mid-February; visit arumc.org for more information.

\$15
Early Bird
Rate



Bishop Gary Mueller

Resident Bishop of Arkansas
Summit Preacher



Kay Kotan, Keynote Speaker

Co-author of *Get Their Name*
*Grow Your Church by Building
New Relationships*



Workshops for every congregation:

- Designed for teams
- Build ministry action plans
- Connect with your neighborhood
- Reach the unchurched

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United Methodists of
Arkansas
Center for Vitality

UMs pack 300K meals for 200K Reasons

BY AMY FORBUS
Editor

The 200,000 Reasons initiative to fight childhood hunger includes United Methodists of Arkansas getting involved in feeding ministries, public witness and education for

long-term stability. One popular aspect of the feeding ministries component has been the "Feed the Funnel Party" option offered by northwest Arkansas-based nonprofit The Pack Shack (www.thepackshack.org).

By partnering with The Pack Shack, United Methodists across Arkansas packed 322,616 meals at events during 2015.

More than 15 different United Methodist congregations, plus Ingathering at the Arkansas Rice Depot, Camp Tanako in Hot Springs and Philander Smith College in Little Rock, hosted meal packing parties last year to stock area food pantries with The Pack Shack's nutritious meals.

Jarod Ring, co-founder and COO of The Pack Shack, called the United Methodist involvement in feeding ministries "amazing" in an email message to the Arkansas Conference.

"I truly believe we will blow these numbers out of the water in 2016 and look forward to partnering again with churches across the state to be the hands and feet of Christ and serve our neighbors in need," he said.

200,000 REASONS

to fight childhood hunger

Merger (from page 1)

to the merger for 12 months. "There's plenty for everyone to do," Sanders said, adding that she didn't anticipate layoffs at any point after that first year, either. When a resignation occurs, they evaluate whether that position is still needed, and the job may be handled by reassigning duties instead of making a new hire.

Layoffs would've been "counterintuitive to what we do," she added. "We feed people! They need jobs in order to take care of themselves." Between the Rice Depot and Foodbank locations, the organization currently employs about 65 people.

Aaron, the Rice Depot CEO, told Sanders early in the process that she felt her job was to help with transition and not to stay for the long term. She moved on in November, becoming president of United Way of Northwest Arkansas and leaving leadership of the new organization to Sanders. The job offer came sooner than they had planned for Aaron's departure, but the two leaders agreed the time was right. "We have remained close friends," Sanders said.

Sanders says her mantra during

this transition has been, "We are looking at everything, and we are taking the best of both organizations." That means everything is evaluated: computers, databases, facilities, processes. In some cases, they've been able to use the best of both organizations to create something new that works better all around.

Transition details

The 30 people serving on the new transition board of directors will stay in place for a year. To remain on the transition board, members had to make "a pretty steep commitment," Sanders said.

"They are charged with making sure the commitment to maintain the legacy of both organizations is done and how that is done," she said. "They will set the vision and the course.... I have full belief and faith in them that when they go through that few months that they'll come out with the right answer. They've really been amazing."

The new organization will eventually consider a name change, but the primary focus is on how food will continue to reach existing partners and the people they serve. And as they save money by functioning as a single organization, Sanders hopes the mission can grow.

By July 1, the agencies served by both organizations will know the new plan for where to pick up food and other logistical concerns.

"The commitment is there to do what we have to do to make sure those local communities have the food they've had, and that they need," she said. "We're committed to our agencies. We're committed to

those that work with us. We're not going to let anything slip off the radar screen."

Personally, Sanders' dream centers on serving more children. And the other big goal is to improve serving senior citizens; she added that she would love to hear churches' ideas in that area.

'A God thing'

United Methodists of Arkansas have made an impression on Sanders with their work addressing hunger.

"There is no way that we can accomplish feeding people without the work the Methodist Church brings to the table," she said.

Sanders attended Ingathering 2015, the annual United Methodist event held at the Rice Depot, as an observer "and I just loved it," she said. "It was amazing." She looks forward to the new organization continuing to host Ingathering, and watching the event grow.

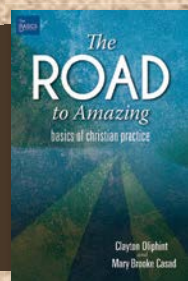
With the 200,000 Reasons initiative, food pantries, and various summer feeding, after-school and backpack programs run by United Methodists across the state, Sanders sees plenty of momentum for doing more together.

"I think it's pretty clear that all the connections are there, and my expectation is to grow all of it," she said. "We're focused and together now, and there's power in it."

"When the doors open, you've got to be ready to jump through them," she said of the merger and changes. "It's been a God thing. It really has. The things that aligned throughout the entire process.... This was meant to be, and it's going to make us better."

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Citizens of Hope

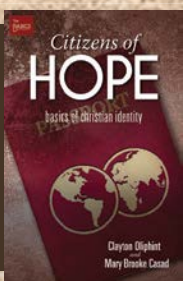
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 **GLOBAL MINISTRIES**
The United Methodist Church

'Get Up & Give' challenge issued by Methodist Family Health

Lent is traditionally considered a time to make sacrifices in preparation for the Easter celebration. However, a special Lenten drive hosted by Methodist Family Health (MFH) asks participants not to give up, but to "get up and give"—that is, to donate items that will make a difference in the lives of others.

For the seventh annual "Get Up & Give" drive set for Feb. 10 through March 24, Arkansans are encouraged to collect items for those served by Methodist Family Health, a nonprofit organization providing psychiatric and behavioral health care to children and families.

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

Methodist Family Health was

founded in 1899 by Methodists in Arkansas to care for children in need. Today, MFH provides comprehensive psychiatric and behavioral health care to children and families through its statewide network that includes a 60-bed hospital, eight group homes, two residential treatment centers, two therapeutic day treatment schools, nine counseling clinics and other specialized programs.

"It is a tremendous blessing how each year United Methodist churches and individuals give so generously to this effort," says Jane Dennis, MFH's director of communications and coordinator of Get Up & Give. "They know they can count on us to make sure their gifts help the kids."

Donations may be dropped off



First UMC Hope pastor Steve Johnson unloads 2015 Get Up and Give donations with the help of Methodist Family Health's Jane Dennis.

COURTESY PHOTO

at any Methodist Counseling Clinic location: Alma, Batesville, Cherokee Village, Fayetteville, Heber Springs, Hot Springs, Jonesboro, Little Rock or Magnolia.

For more information and event details, contact Dennis at jdennis@methodistfamily.org or 501-906-4210, or visit www.methodistfamily.org.

Paragould church tops \$50K in giveaways, collected one dollar at a time

As part of a worship service last month, First United Methodist Church Paragould's senior pastor the Rev. John Fleming presented checks to representatives of eight organizations benefitting from the congregation's "\$1 a Week" offering program.

For the fifth year in a row, First United Methodist Church Paragould has given grants to local organizations through the "\$1 a Week" program. Throughout the year, all single dollar bills received in the offering plate are set aside as a special offering, to be given away in the form of grants the following year. In January, the church gave away \$12,200 from bills collected in 2015. More than \$50,000 has been given since the program started in 2011 by the late Rev. Bill Leslie, senior pastor of the church in that year.

Last month's recipients of the 2015 offering were Focus, Inc., Greene County Goodfellows, Future and Hope Christian Women's Job Corps, Greene

County Rescue Squad, Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA), B.E.E.S. Senior Citizens, Inc., Paragould School



District Backpack Program and the Greene County Tech Parent Center.

—submitted by Karole Risker

Methodist Family Health presents



40 DAYS OF COLLECTING
FEBRUARY 10
THROUGH
MARCH 24

Methodist Family Health invites church groups, families, friends and neighbors to join us in collecting necessity items during the season of Lent! Your generosity will bring a smile to the faces of those we serve in our hospital, alternative schools, group homes, clinics and other programs throughout Arkansas.

After the 40 Days of Collecting, you can drop off the new items you collect at any of our Counseling Clinics from March 28-April 1 during regular business hours.

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- Toilet paper
- Recreational items, such as basketballs, kickballs, footballs, soccer balls, softballs/baseballs & gloves, board games, cards, dominoes
- Bath towels and washcloths (white only, no colors)
- Activity items such as coloring books, crayons, colored pencils and puzzles (500-piece and smaller)

Monetary donations will be used for necessities and other unmet needs.

Monetary donations may be sent to: Methodist Family Health Foundation, P.O. Box 56050, Little Rock, AR 72215 (put "Get Up & Give" in memo line).

MethodistFamily.org

For information: contact Jane Dennis at 501.906.4210 or jdennis@methodistfamily.org.





Bishop Gary Mueller, right, thanks the Rev. Norma Gillerson and members of the building committee for New Haven UMC Hensley (Julia Morehead, Michael Smith, Naomi Baker, Dorothy Smith, Lariyah' Lewis, Lindella Withers and Ronnie Withers) for their work in rebuilding the church's facility, which was destroyed by fire in 2014. The Revs. Bob Marble and Phil Hathcock, seated, were among those helping to lead the worship service.

AUM PHOTO BY AMY FORBUS

Dedication (continued from page 1)

not help you build this place to stay put, God helped you build this place to 'Go'—into your community, into your neighborhood, into the lives of people. Let this place be a strong, strong foundation from which you launch."

Mueller also issued a challenge, met by a chorus of "Amen" from the congregation:

"You are in a new church. But I have a question for you: Are you ready to be a new church? You are in a new building. Are you ready to be a new people?" he asked. "Because let me tell you, God is looking for new churches, and God is longing for new people, and we here in Arkansas in the United Methodist Church are in a time of seeking spiritual revival because we know the church that has been needs to come alive, and be recreated by God and become more than we can ever dream."

New Haven's pastor, the Rev. Norma Gillerson, says the church is up to the challenge. With the new facility came more square footage, a paved parking lot, accessibility in compliance with the Americans

with Disabilities Act, as well as a kitchen that meets standards set by the Arkansas Department of Health. But it's about more than the building itself.

"We have several projects in the works to reach out to the community by planning a community garden, weekly Bible studies open to the community every Wednesday at 12:00," she said, "[and] planning a senior citizen day for games and a nutritional meal."

The church also plans to continue serving as a voting precinct, hosting a Scout troop and getting a backpack-based school feeding program off the ground.

Ultimately, they hope to reach more community members who have needs the church can answer, providing support and resources to "allow them to tap into their fullest potential, so they can be all God has called them to be," Gillerson said. "This is a new beginning for New Haven United Methodist, with people making disciples for Jesus Christ for transformation of the world."

2016 RANEY PREACHING SERIES



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"A Battle Plan for the Wilderness" - Philippians 2:5-11
&

Sunday, February 28, 9 & 11 am, Sanctuary
9 & 11 am, Simulcast in New Heights
"Wilderness of Shame" - Genesis 3:6-10



The T.J. & Inez Raney Lectureship, established in 1951, was primarily endowed by the late Mr. & Mrs. Alton B. Raney in memory of T.J. & Inez Raney, consecrated leaders in Arkansas Methodism. Members of the Lectureship Board of Directors warmly welcome you to the 2016 Preaching Series.

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UMFA provides grant for new Hendrix building

Gift includes naming of conference room inside welcome center



The United Methodist Foundation of Arkansas (UMFA) announced Dec. 22 that Hendrix College in Conway will receive a \$150,000 UMFA grant over the next three years as a part of the capital campaign to build the campus's new Mary Ann and David Dawkins Welcome Center. This commitment enables UMFA to name the center's conference room in memory of Richard and Gertrude Butler.

"I am thrilled that the foundation has made a commitment and generous gift to help support the new welcome center," said the Rev. J. Wayne Clark, associate vice president of development and dean of the chapel for Hendrix College. "This is a great partnership with two United Methodist institutions. How fitting that the conference room in the welcome center will be named in memory of the Butlers. They cared deeply for Hendrix and the United Methodist Foundation, and we are honored to jointly celebrate their legacy."

The Hendrix admission and financial aid offices are currently housed in historic 101-year-old Ellis Hall, which is inadequate to support the thousands of visitors the college receives each year. These offices will both move to the new

welcome center, meaning that all prospective students will pass through this new building as they consider Hendrix for their undergraduate educational journey.

"To successfully recruit the best and brightest students and provide ample space for all guests to access the campus, Hendrix needs a welcome center that is friendly and inviting," said Jim Argue, UMFA president and CEO. "UMFA is pleased to be a part of this project."

Hendrix expects to begin the welcome center construction in late 2016, following the completion of a \$1 million challenge grant from the J.E. and L.E. Mabee Foundation of Tulsa, Okla.

The building's name honors a \$26 million gift received last year from the estate of Mary Ann Dawkins, the largest in the college's history. Dawkins, a United Methodist, was inspired to give to Hendrix after attending a tour performance of the Hendrix College Choir Candlelight Carol Service in 1986.

UMFA is one of the largest United Methodist foundations in the country, managing \$135 million in endowment funds and other charitable assets that benefit local churches and other United Methodist ministries.

High ropes course at Camp Tanako by summer, thanks to UMFA grant

The United Methodist Foundation of Arkansas (UMFA) announced in a Jan. 12 news release that it has awarded \$20,000 to Camp Tanako in Hot Springs for a high ropes challenge course. The grant will purchase ropes, harnesses, helmets, other hardware, and Association for Challenge Course Technology facilitator training.

The Camp Tanako high ropes course, which will be completed in time for the first week of camp this summer, will include a climbing tower with a rappelling wall, four individual challenge elements, a team challenge element and a zip line. It is designed to move participants out of their comfort zones in a way that promotes spiritual growth and self-confidence.

Kim Carter, executive director of Camp Tanako, said the course will be open to attendees of group retreats as well as to summer campers.

"This project would not have been possible without the



Foundation," she said. "It is designed to aid in team building, communication and leadership skills.... My hope is that their adventures high up in the air will be a conduit for the Holy Spirit in helping them feel the voice of God."

The grants committee of UMFA believes that the goals of the high ropes course fit well with the committee's focus on leadership development.

"We are proud to make this investment in our Conference's

outdoor ministry," said Jim Argue, UMFA president and CEO. "The beauty and activities at Camp Tanako make it a wonderful asset for United Methodists from throughout our state."

Camp Tanako has been a part of the Methodist tradition in Arkansas since 1948. Its mission is to welcome children, youth and adults to a place set apart where they can grow in their faith by experiencing God through nature and time spent in community, and can respond to the call of the Holy Spirit.

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.

VOLUNTEERS IN MISSION & DISASTER RESPONSE

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.

Mission team seeks members with varied skills for Rio Bravo journey in June

The Rev. Jim Benfer of First UMC Dardanelle is now preparing a team for a mission trip to Rio Bravo, Mexico with Manos Juntas, set for June 5-12, 2016. This trip offers opportunities to work on medical, construction, VBS, sewing and evangelism teams (native Spanish speakers required for evangelism team only). Van transportation to and from the Fort Smith area to the rendezvous point in McAllen, Texas, is already arranged. The cost for each team member for the week will be \$575, which includes transport in Mexico, mission supplies, accommodations, insurance and meals. For details, contact Benfer at 479-699-4683.

Donations needed to finish recovery work in Mayflower and Vilonia

Most tornado recovery repair projects in Mayflower and Vilonia are complete, but there are still several rebuild projects pending. Volunteers are scheduled—Christian Aid Ministries and the

NOMADS are committed to staying in the area until the efforts are complete—but funding is running short.

"Recovery is over when the last need is met or the resources are exhausted," says Janice Mann, disaster response co-coordinator for the Arkansas Conference. "At this point, it looks like it may be the latter. We have priority projects identified, and are hoping to at least have enough funds come in to finish those."

Send donations to the Arkansas Conference UMC, 800 W. Daisy Bates Drive, Little Rock, AR 72202, designated for "Central Arkansas tornado recovery."

Teams forming now for U.S.-based flood recovery work

Arkansas Conference Volunteers in Mission (VIM) has received requests for VIM Teams and Early Response Teams to travel to the Central Texas, Detroit, Oklahoma, Rio Texas and South Carolina Conferences to assist in recovery from recent floods. If interested, contact Byron Mann at vim@arumc.org. We will announce possible dates as soon as we can confirm them with the host sites.

COMING UP

Bishop candidate Gilbert to preach at Heritage UMC Van Buren Feb. 6 and 7

In support of Bishop Gary Mueller's call to revival, the Rev. Dr. Janice Gilbert will preach renewal services at Heritage United Methodist Church Van Buren on Saturday, Feb. 6, at 6:30 p.m. and Sunday, Feb. 7 at 8, 9:30, and 11 a.m. Dr. Gilbert is an endorsed candidate for bishop by the Black Methodists for Church Renewal. She is the senior pastor of St. James UMC Beaumont, Texas, and has received several awards for evangelism and church growth. She has been a guest speaker at many Annual Conferences and churches. Before entering the ministry, she served as a speech pathologist, college instructor, public school administrator and a consultant for families with special needs children. Wesley Hilliard is the lead pastor at Heritage Church. For more information, visit www.heritage.church or contact the church office: office@heritage.church or 479-474-6424.

Dr. Gilbert and the other South Central Jurisdiction candidates for bishop will be in Van Buren Feb. 5 and 6 to be interviewed by the Arkansas Conference delegation to Jurisdictional Conference.

Wesley Pilgrimage registration extended to Feb. 15; scholarships available for provisional clergy and local pastors

United Methodist lay and clergy leaders are invited to a 10-day adventure walking in the footsteps of John and Charles Wesley. The Wesley Pilgrimage in England, set for July 11-21, 2016, offers opportunities to:

- Immerse yourself in the Christ-centered leadership of John and Charles Wesley
- Learn, pray, and explore places where the Wesley brothers lived and served
- Reflect and make new friends in small groups
- Make connections between the Wesleyan heritage and missional leadership for today

The Wesley Pilgrimage is open to all United Methodist lay and clergy leaders; provisional clergy and local pastors may apply for scholarship assistance. This event qualifies for 3 CEUs. For additional details, including the scholarship application, contact the Rev. Steven Manskar at smanskar@umcdiscipleship.org or 877-899-2780, ext. 1765; or visit <http://www.umcdiscipleship.org/WesleyPilgrimage>.

All clergywomen invited to gathering in Conway Feb. 18

The Clergywomen of the Arkansas United Methodist Church are gathering for a day of worship, learning and fellowship on Thursday, Feb. 18 at Hendrix College. All clergywomen—elders, deacons, local pastors and supply pastors—are invited to attend. The presenter will be Christina Littlejohn, executive director of the Arkansas Symphony Orchestra. Littlejohn has led the ASO through a turnaround and has a great deal of wisdom to share about organizational resurrection.

The gathering will take place from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., and includes a catered lunch (cost is \$10 to cover the lunch and refreshments). To learn more, contact the Rev. Katie Pearce at katie.pearce@arumc.org. To RSVP, contact the Rev. Lynn Kilbourne, Kilbourne@conwayfumc.org, by Feb. 15.

Register now for Confirmation Camp Feb. 26-28

The first Confirmation Camp of 2016 is set for Feb. 26-28 at Camp Tanako. Churches of any size are encouraged to attend. If your church has a long-term confirmation program, this camp can serve as your confirmation retreat. If your church has a smaller confirmation class, Confirmation Camp can serve as the bulk of the confirmation experience, with follow-up lessons designed to be done at the

local church after the retreat. Registration closes Feb. 15, or sooner if all spaces are filled. Look for the registration link at www.arumc.org.

Can't make this session? Another Confirmation Camp will take place Oct. 7-9 at Bear Creek Camp, and registration will open Aug. 1.

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UMFA Seminary Scholarship application open until March 1

Applications are now being accepted for the United Methodist Foundation of Arkansas (UMFA) Seminary Scholarship. Any certified candidate for elder is eligible to apply for the full-expense scholarship from the funds held by UMFA. This student must be accepted in a United Methodist seminary as a full-time student seeking elder's orders. An interview selection team shall make the determination of the awarding of this scholarship. As scholarship recipients, the students pledge to return to Arkansas to pastor United Methodist congregations.

For information and forms, visit <http://www.umfa.org/seminary-scholarships>. The application deadline is March 1, 2016.

'A Day with the Bishop' for grades 5-7 at St. James UMC Little Rock March 12

A Day with the Bishop is a great opportunity for 5th- through 7th-graders to meet and spend time with our own Bishop Gary Mueller, learn about the connectional ministries of the United Methodist Church, and get a sneak peek at what's to come as a United Methodist youth! The event will take place from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. at St. James UMC, 321 Pleasant Valley in Little Rock.

Registration is available online at www.arumc.org. Please join this exciting day of fellowship and fun. Questions? Contact Michelle Moore, 501-324-8048 or michelle.moore@arumc.org.

Caring for Creation Conference April 8-9; registration discount until March 15

"Sowing Seeds: Where Food and Faith Meet" is the theme of this year's Caring for Creation Conference, set for Friday-Saturday, April 8-9 at First United Methodist Church Decatur (Ga.). The focus will be on food and food systems. Keynote speakers include Norman Wirzba of Duke Divinity School, Jennifer Ayres of Emory University's Candler School of Theology and Alice Rolls of Georgia Organics. Scholarships are available.

Register by March 15 to receive a discount; visit <https://goo.gl/RnSFIY> for the registration form.

Church administrative professionals: PAUMCS 'spring training' event March 17

All church administrative assistants are invited to attend the spring training event sponsored by the Arkansas Chapter of the Professional Association of United Methodist Church Secretaries (PAUMCS). "A Peacock in the Land of Penguins," facilitated by Lee Ann Branch, is a high-energy, fast paced seminar that includes training on diversity, conflict management and teambuilding—all necessary skills in the work of church professionals.

The event is set for Thursday, March 17, 2016. Sign-in begins at 9 a.m. in the Kendall Center of Philander Smith College in Little Rock. The meeting runs from 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. The registration fee is \$5, to defray the cost of lunch.

To register, contact Cindy Parker, administrator for the Southwest District, at 870.230.1118 or cparker@arumc.org. The registration deadline is March 10, 2016.

New retreat at Tanako for high school seniors, April 15-16

The new Senior Retreat from Arkansas Conference Camping Ministries provides an opportunity for graduating high school seniors to spend time learning what to expect on their post-high school journey, and how to navigate new challenges and situations. Topics will include sessions about college life, relationships, finances, and faith after high school. Camp Tanako will host this overnight retreat April 15-16. To register, visit www.arumc.org.

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OBITUARIES

GILLETT

Douglas Edwin Edwards III

The Rev. Douglas "Dee" Edwin Edwards III, 60, passed away Sunday, Jan. 3, 2016, in North Little Rock.



Dee Edwards

Dee was born on Jan. 8, 1955 in Starkville, Miss. He graduated from Northeast High in 1973, Hendrix College in 1977, and completed his master of divinity at Candler School of Theology, Emory University in 1984. He married Jan in 1980. "Brother Dee" served as a United Methodist pastor from 1978 to 2010.

He is survived by his wife, the Rev. Jan Tisdale Edwards of Gillett; daughters Elizabeth (Chuck) of Fayetteville and Sara (Chris) of Maumelle, granddaughters Claire and Caroline; a brother, Jim (Elaine); and nieces Jamie (Matt) and Emily of North Little Rock.

He is preceded in death by his parents, Douglas and

Clara Dunning Edwards of North Little Rock.

The memorial service was held Saturday, Jan. 9 at First United Methodist Church North Little Rock, with the Revs. Dede Roberts, Will Choate and Mark Norman officiating. Memorial gifts may be given to Gillett UMC, DeLuce/Prairie Union UMC, the Academy for Spiritual Formation or the University of Arkansas Wesley Foundation.

MONETT, Mo.

Della Edgington

Della Edgington, 83, of Monett, Mo., passed away Dec. 20, 2015 at her home.

She was born May 18, 1932, in El Dorado Springs, Mo., to Sherman and Buena (Thompson) Hubbard. Della was a retired teacher and a member of the Liberty United Methodist Church of Monett, Mo.

Della married the Rev. H. Joe Edgington on June 17, 1978. As a pastor in the North Arkansas Conference, Joe served appointments at Bradford, Wilson, Cherry Valley,

Hughes and Colt. He preceded Della in death on March 4, 2010.

Survivors include three sons, Mike Hudson of Springfield, Mo., Chris Hudson of Lee's Summit, Mo., and David Hudson of Springfield, Mo.; two stepdaughters, Teri Beattie of Divide, Colo., and Cindy Smelsor of Woodland Park, Colo.; three daughters, Diane Milford of Springfield, Mo., Brenda Sams of Combs, Ark., and Laura Wilski of Lebanon, Mo.; one brother, Freddie Hubbard of Kansas City, Mo.; two sisters, Jacqueline Regan of Kansas City, Mo., and Claudine Enlow of Independence, Mo.; and many grandchildren.

She was preceded in death by her parents and husband, as well as a brother, Kenneth Hubbard.

Funeral services were held Saturday, Dec. 26, 2015 at Liberty UMC Monett, Mo. Burial followed in Ray Spring Cemetery, Everton, Mo.

Pastor's hair donation honors congregants dealing with cancer

The Rev. Dixon Platt of Elm Springs UMC was asked at the 2015 Annual Conference if he intended to model his new hairstyle after John Wesley, Methodism's founder.

While his look may have harkened back to a long-gone century, it had a purpose in the present day: to honor a promise he made to Reva Chenowith, a member of the Elm Springs congregation who had been diagnosed with cancer.

"Reva is responsible for 'the project' because she asked me to shave my head when she was going through her chemo," Platt said. "I told Reva that I would grow my hair out to donate instead."

Soon after Chenowith's diagnosis, four other women from Elm Springs UMC were diagnosed with cancer within a span of five weeks. These women, as well as the memory of his own mother and other cancer patients, further inspired him to follow through on his plan.

After finding most organizations that make wigs for cancer patients will not accept completely gray hair, Platt found himself doing some research to find a place to donate his locks. After more than a year, he came upon 360 Hair. Affiliated with the Canadian Cancer Society, 360 Hair makes wigs for patients age 19 and younger.

Platt has now returned to a short hairstyle, and all five women from Elm Springs UMC who underwent treatment for cancer are doing well and in full remission.

"God is good all the time!" Platt says.



The Rev. Dixon Platt of Elm Springs UMC and his hairstylist, Brooke Claxton, in the process of gathering his hair for a donation to benefit cancer patients age 19 years and under.

COURTESY PHOTO

Senator, governor, choir director: Bumpers remembered at two Arkansas UM churches

First UMC Little Rock and First UMC Charleston hosted memorial services for former U.S. Senator and governor of Arkansas Dale Bumpers, a United Methodist who died Jan. 1 at age 90.

As an active leader at the church in his hometown of Charleston, Bumpers directed the choir for a time. In addition to his role in the peaceful desegregation of Charleston schools, which made it the first school district in the former Confederate states to fully integrate, he also led the effort to integrate the First Methodist Church. The church board voted 20 to 2 in favor of the motion he presented to desegregate the congregation.

"They were so proud of themselves that we had integrated that church, which is the exemplification of Christianity," he said in a 2002 interview for the David and Barbara Pryor Center for Oral and Visual History at the University of Arkansas. "Everybody was tickled to death about it."

Bumpers was a member of First UMC Little Rock at the time of his death. The church hosted the Jan. 10 memorial service, which was attended by numerous elected officials, including former President Bill Clinton, who was among the speakers. Retired pastor the Rev. Ed Matthews delivered the homily.

First UMC Charleston on Jan. 11



Dale Bumpers

hosted a memorial service attended by more than 200 community members and colleagues. The service followed a private ceremony in which Bumpers' ashes were inurned in the church's columbarium.

North Katanga Conference reports death of liaison to Arkansas Conference



Boniface Kabongo

The Rev. Dr. Boniface Kabongo, legal representative and assistant to the bishop for the North Katanga Episcopal Area, died unexpectedly on Thursday, Jan. 21, 2016 in Lubumbashi, Democratic Republic of Congo.

Kabongo, who was 50, served the North Katanga Episcopal Area since 1995. During that time, he served as legal representative and director of Teachers College, Kamina District superintendent, and local pastor in Bukama and Kitenge.

"This is a very big loss. Today, in Kamina, we are in shock," said North Katanga Bishop Ntambo Nkulu Ntanda.

Kabongo served frequently as liaison to partners of the North Katanga Episcopal Area, including the Arkansas Conference. Projects involving Arkansas included the Congo Wells Initiative, through which the United Methodists of Arkansas provided fresh water to numerous villages in the Democratic Republic of Congo; the Bobby Jackson Memorial Wesley Foundation at Kamina Methodist

University, given by the Arkansas Tech Wesley Foundation; and support for the work of Kamina Children's Home, a United Methodist orphanage.

"He was such a gracious host to us when we were in Kamina," said the Rev. Roy Smith, who served as Arkansas Conference director of connectional ministries during the partnership with the North Katanga Conference. "His work has made such a difference and will continue to do so."

A graduate of Africa University and Saint Paul School of Theology, Kabongo placed great value on his own education and that of others. A memorial scholarship is being developed at Teachers College; gifts may be directed to the Rev. Dr. Boniface Kabongo Legacy Fund, North Katanga Episcopal Area.

Bishops form interim team to lead Rio Texas

Bishop Mike McKee, president of the South Central Jurisdictional College of Bishops, has announced that the Rio Texas Conference will be led by a team of bishops who were elected to the episcopacy from that area. The vacancy was created by the resignation of Bishop James Dorff, effective Dec. 31.

McKee wrote in a Jan. 13 statement, "Bishop Janice Huie of the Texas Conference, Bishop Michael Lowry of the Central Texas Conference, Bishop Joel Martinez, who is retired, and Bishop Robert Schnase of the Missouri Conference have agreed to come home to

serve in the conference and area they love. Bishops Huie, Lowry, and Schnase will continue to serve in their respective annual conferences. With Bishop Martinez, they will divide the responsibilities of the Bishop of the Rio Texas Conference. Bishop Huie will be named as the interim bishop of record.

"The team approach is unique, but I am confident that it will serve the Rio Texas Conference well until a new bishop is assigned to the Rio Texas Conference at the South Central Jurisdictional Conference in July. That new bishop begins serving on September 1."



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Light of Her Life

The late Lucile Barnett, a retired art teacher, painted a light-filled impression of First United Methodist Church in Little Rock back in 1962. But her faith journey there began more than 100 years ago when she was enrolled in the Cradle Department on the day of her birth.

In her final years at a local retirement community, Lucile's finances were as secure as her faith. The United Methodist Foundation of Arkansas was trustee for the Revocable Trust and Charitable Remainder Unitrust created by Lucile and her husband Rollin after a visit from Foundation President Jim Argue to their Bethel Sunday School Class at First Church.

Always a joy to others, Lucile enjoyed time with her friends, a weekly beauty shop visit and watching Rev. Vic Nixon on the Pulaski Heights UMC broadcasts every Sunday. When her earthly life was done, the Rollin and Lucile Barnett Memorial Endowment Fund was created to express the love they shared for the Church forever.

"I have faith in the Foundation," Lucile said in a 2007 interview. "They've been so good to us, and they've done everything we asked."



The United Methodist Foundation of Arkansas

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