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## Bishops launch social media campaign ahead of General Conference

We are passionate. We are together. We are united. We are loved. We are hopeful. We are willing. We are bold.

We are *more*.

The bishops of the South Central Jurisdiction of the United Methodist Church, which includes Arkansas, have joined together to produce a campaign focused on stories that connect people and proclaim that #WeAreMore when united through Jesus Christ.

The We Are More campaign is designed to engage the people in the pews through sharing and listening to one another's stories in the lead-up to General Conference 2016, to be held May 10-20 in Portland, Oregon.

"I believe General Conference 2016 will require more spiritually-driven leadership than any previous General Conference, so we can truly be the Body of Christ as we carry out our mission of making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world," said Arkansas Bishop Gary E. Mueller. "The We Are More campaign highlights the kinds of stories that are unfolding in so many churches, but that can be overlooked. We hope people will share these stories on social media, use them in worship and small groups and submit their own #WeAreMore stories showing how the Holy Spirit is at work."

One of the first people to share as part of We Are More was Neal Garrett, a [See WE ARE MORE, page 6]

## General, Jurisdictional delegates answer questions as they prepare for conferences

BY AMY FORBUS  
Editor

Arkansas' delegates to the 2016 United Methodist General and Jurisdictional Conferences have spent the past 10 months familiarizing themselves with a number of issues relevant to the May 10-20 worldwide gathering in Portland, Oregon. As part of their April 22 delegation meeting, they held a live webcast to answer questions submitted by United Methodists from around the state.

Delegation head the Rev. Mark Norman outlined the covenant agreed upon by the delegation for their work together. It includes a list of spiritual and behavioral practices, as well as embracing the core values of humility, grace, respect and love.

Questions submitted in advance began with a request to name issues that delegates expect will take up a disproportionate amount of time at General Conference, contrasted with issues that may not receive adequate attention. Many delegates expect

[See DELEGATION, page 10]

## Budget decrease up for vote at Annual Conference *Cuts to Camp Aldersgate, Hendrix, Philander Smith recommended*

BY AMY FORBUS  
Editor

Moving to a tithe-based apportionment formula for local churches will have a pronounced effect on the Arkansas Conference's budget for 2017. The budget proposed to the Annual Conference by the Conference Council on Finance and Administration (CFA) contains a number of significant

reductions.

"CFA had to make projections of income available to the Conference based on the tithing formula established last year," said Todd Burris, director of administrative services for the Arkansas Conference.

Taking into account the lower apportionments generated by the new Arkansas Tithe Initiative

[See BUDGET, page 5]

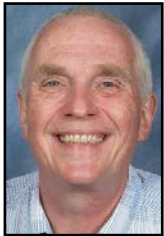
# Mercy, compassion, devotion

BY CHARLES COOPER  
Special Contributor

**(Editor's Note:** This is the final installment of a three-column series. For background on Shakeyhead the Crow, see the Rev. Cooper's commentaries from the Dec. 4, 2015 and Feb. 5, 2016 issues of the *Arkansas United Methodist*, available at [www.arumc.org/aum](http://www.arumc.org/aum).)

My mother had Capgras delusions. She lived in a world with impostors. The people close to her might suddenly not be themselves, and she might say so.

I remember the day my father came home from Korea. We had an overstuffed paisley couch, popular in those days, and he was at one end and she was at the other. She said, "You're not Rod." And he was not Rod for the next three years.



**Charles Cooper**

I suppose she thought he was a benevolent impostor. He would buy the kids toys, tell jokes at the kitchen table and take the family to church. He was good, but tricky, for he had his parents fooled. They called him Rod and let him sleep over with the rest of us at Thanksgiving and Christmas.

I am sure it was painful for him, so I understand his incredulity when my mother said, "Charlie has a pet crow. He feeds his crow on the banister of the porch."

I recall he grumbled something about how she was having one of her spells—he must have thought mental illness was akin to witchery. Their argument continued off and on and intensified until one day while I was feeding Shakeyhead my parents stepped out the front door, and my mother said, "See."

My father saw and mumbled something and went back inside to reassemble his world; which no sooner had he done than my mother

said, "The crow is named Shakeyhead, and he perches on Charlie's arm," something which my father said was obviously a spell.

Then one day while I was petting my crow, my parents came out the door. "See."

My father saw, mumbled to himself again and went back inside. Perhaps, he wondered if this thing my mother had might be contagious, or if maybe she had cast a spell upon him or upon me or upon Shakeyhead, or upon all three.

I remember after a few weeks my father pronounced the word of reason over the apparent sea of chaos: "That crow was someone's pet that got loose."

He never found his proof, for not even the humane people with the aviary knew of any escaped crows, but logic does not need facts as any absurd syllogism will illustrate:

- All flying serpents in Arkansas eat dust bunnies.
- Curley-Q is a flying serpent in Arkansas.
- Therefore, Curley-Q eats dust bunnies.

This is unmistakably logic, but not fact. Yet while not fact, it imposes an order on flying serpents and dust bunnies, and order can cast a spell that gives one a sense of security. So, my father, though without the support of fact, could feel secure in a reasonable explanation for the crow that perched on the banister of his porch and the arm of his son. My father could fit himself back into the sensible reality of a home life in which he was an impostor.

I can't help connecting the dots and being a preacher, so I must go to the resurrection as told in Luke. Mary Magdalene and her friends go to the disciples and tell them what took place at the tomb, how it was empty and a couple of sprightly dressed men announced that Jesus had risen. The disciples say, "Oh, this is just another one of your idle tales."—or spells, if you will.

The disciples said what my father said, but we should not be too

hard on either. We all try to figure things out. So, when my mother would look at my father or at the rest of us, and we were not we, she would conclude: "Impostors!"

Quite reasonably Shakeyhead was a jailbird on the lam, and the women who went to the tomb, under the burden of their enormous grief, were having a spell—never mind that my father always thought he was he; and never mind that I worked for weeks into months inching my way closer to that crow; and never mind that millions upon millions of clear-thinking people have believed what Mary said that long ago Sunday.

My father, on his own terms, came to accept that his son had a pet crow, and he never harmed Shakeyhead. He could have; could have taken the hatbox out to the woods and smashed the crow's head with a hammer, come home and said, "He's in a better place," but he could not, even though it had attacked his daughter and become a public nuisance. He was merciful, so when his three attempts at freeing Shakeyhead failed, he found him a better place above the ground and not in it.

Likewise, my mother had compassion for all people, imaginary or otherwise. So, when we in the family mysteriously vanished, our impostors were cared for and sat at the kitchen table just like us, and when we returned from wherever it was we went, my mother was always happy to see us home again.

And as for the disciples, they ended up under the same spell as Mary and devoted themselves to carrying forth her witness to the Risen Lord.

These things—mercy, compassion, devotion—are not the power of reason over disorder, but of love, an eternal gift in a world in which, as Paul said, "We see as through a glass darkly," and none of us ever gets all of our crows to fly in a row.

*The Rev. Cooper is a retired elder in the Arkansas Conference. Email: [brocorbeau@gmail.com](mailto:brocorbeau@gmail.com).*



## EDITOR'S CORNER

BY AMY FORBUS

# Holy time, holy place

Time surrounds humanity much like air: We take it for granted, not really noticing it until something changes and makes things personal. And time got personal for me in a new way in April, when I attended my 20-year college reunion.

For the record, we all agreed we look exactly the same as we did when we were in our early 20s, and we couldn't imagine why anyone would think otherwise.

I can't be the only one of us who sometimes wonders how we get away with putting on grown-ups' clothes every single day (what happened to jeans and a baggy t-shirt qualifying as a respectable outfit?) and pulling one over on the world. Yet we manage to educate children and youth, and perform surgeries, and run nonprofit organizations, and represent people in court, and edit publications, and pastor congregations. We raise kids and sell houses and write prescriptions and manage divisions of companies, or entire companies. Some of us produce television or theater. Others of us perform: research that helps save lives, or our own original music on stage.

A classmate I'd seldom seen in the last two decades stayed the weekend with us, providing reconnecting time that we relished. As promised, she brought fresh eggs, courtesy of the girls who live in her backyard coop. And she came bearing a surprise gift, too: a beautiful and creatively designed

journal. (Fellow English majors know the pleasure of a good journal.)

Saturday night's party provided confirmation that some things never change, and also that some things do—but that change is OK, even preferred. And that staying out too late is exactly what one needs every now and then.

And then came Sunday. Tears brimmed during the sermon at the alumni memorial service, with the dean of the chapel bringing home the Scripture in a new way: God began a good work in us *here*, in this place. And that work made this place, for us, holy ground.

We knew before we came that one of our classmates' names was among the dead. We stood as his name was spoken. So did the entire pew two rows in front of us, confirming our guess that his family was there. Afterward, we expressed our condolences to them, his daughter predictably shy, his mother and brother eager to connect with someone who knew him as part of this campus, those four years, that particular kind of holy ground.

There are moments we do recognize holy ground while we're standing on it. But I think, more often than not, the realization comes only as the banner of time unfurls. What a privilege to be able to return, and recognize, and give thanks.

*To reach me, send an email to [amorbus@arumc.org](mailto:amorbus@arumc.org).*



Volume 163 • No. 5 May 6, 2016  
Amy Forbus • Editor  
Melissa Sanders • Circulation  
[www.arumc.org](http://www.arumc.org)

The *Arkansas United Methodist* is the newspaper of record for the Arkansas Conference of The United Methodist Church. It is printed monthly, on the first Friday of every month, and distributed in both print and digital formats.

**Send correspondence & subscription updates to:** Arkansas United Methodist, 800 Daisy Bates Drive, Little Rock, AR 72202; or email [Melissa Sanders at msanders@arumc.org](mailto:msanders@arumc.org).

**POSTMASTER:** Send address changes to: Arkansas United Methodist, 800 Daisy Bates Drive, Little Rock, AR 72202.

The *Arkansas United Methodist* is published by the Arkansas Conference of the United Methodist Church, 800 Daisy Bates Drive, Little Rock, AR 72202. Postage paid at Gainesville, TX.



Arkansas Conference  
800 Daisy Bates Drive  
Little Rock, AR 72202-3770  
[www.arumc.org](http://www.arumc.org) 501-324-8000

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**Submission Deadlines**

Issue Date	Submission Deadline
June 3	May 11
July 8	June 17
Aug. 5	July 18

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# Our UMC mission: The forgotten paragraph

BY GARY E. MUELLER AND MARY BROOKE CASAD

Twenty years ago, the 1996 General Conference adopted a mission statement—later amended at the 2008 General Conference—to shape our mission from congregation to worldwide connection. That mission is to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. This mission is merely an outgrowth of the one Jesus gave his Church:

“Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to obey everything that I’ve commanded you. Look, I myself will be with you every day until the end of this present age” (Matthew 28:19-20 CEB).



**Bishop Gary Mueller**



**Mary Brooke Casad**

Recently, there has been important conversation about whether the phrase make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world still is an appropriate expression of who we are, what we do and that to which the Holy Spirit is calling us to aspire.

We were part of the original

team that discerned, proposed and worked for the adoption of the mission statement at the 1996 General Conference. We did so because the United Methodist Church was deeply siloed, defined by a large number of differing missions and lacked the common trajectory to move faithfully into the 21st century. The 2008 General Conference’s amendment of the words for the transformation of the world provides a helpful reminder that our mission is not to be institutionally focused, but focused on God’s world. After all these years, we are not attempting to preserve something in which we have a personal investment. We believe the United Methodist

[See MISSION, page 9]

## Retreat focuses on practical skills, renews energy for calling to ministry

BY MATTHEW JOHNSON  
Special Contributor

In one of my recent sermons, I offhandedly said that we are a nation of cynical skeptics. I’m one of those people, too. When I attend continuing education events, I tend to arrive with my guard up, sure that the experience will be another experience in a long line of similar ones I’ve attended, giving me just a couple of tips or tricks to lead the church I serve. A recent retreat, however, destroyed my expectations in the best way possible.



**Matthew Johnson**

The Empowering Effective Leadership retreat convened Feb. 15-19 at the Prothro Retreat Center on Lake Texoma. Sponsored by the Center for Religious Leadership at SMU’s Perkins School of Theology, it was led by Arkansas native and retired Bishop Max Whitfield and Dr. Mary Anne Reed, Ph.D., a licensed marriage and family therapist. I attended with fellow Arkansas clergy the Revs. Ronnie Miller-Yow and J.J. Galloway, and while I cannot speak for my colleagues, I will say that this retreat affected me tremendously.

The focus of the retreat was increasing emotional intelligence, which serves as a pathway to developing the ability to exercise adaptive leadership as pastors and leaders within the respective conferences they serve in. The group of pastors came from three different United Methodist annual conferences, one Catholic diocese and one Christian Methodist Episcopal district.

The sessions on emotional awareness and management provided some of the most helpful lessons

I’ve learned since graduating from seminary in 2003. I’ve read articles and books on this material a number of times during the last few years, but Dr. Reed pieced them together in a way that clicked. I’ve no other word to describe the experience. It clicked. It left me feeling more hopeful and capable of doing that which God called me to more than 20 years ago.

Learning to become aware of and manage emotions leads to better relationships in terms of social awareness and management, and, as Dr. Reed showed us, it gives us a clearer path toward practicing adaptive leadership—a better kind of change than merely retooling and renaming the same practices we’ve developed over the years.

Since returning from the retreat, I’ve been taking notes about my responses to stress, identifying emotions, and learning how to control my responses to stress with much more success than before. I feel more confident in my responses to conflict and in decision-making which are key components to adaptive leadership.

As a United Methodist, I wholeheartedly believe in going on to perfection, and I think part of the “going on” means that we never stop growing as Christians or human beings. Dr. Reed and Bishop Whitfield provided the tools and teaching to help us go on and become the best of what God desires. If the opportunity arises in the future, I encourage our clergy to prayerfully consider attending if invited to go.

*The Rev. Johnson serves as pastor of St. Paul UMC Searcy. Contact him at [matthew.johnson@arumc.org](mailto:matthew.johnson@arumc.org). The Center for Religious Leadership provides training in the theology of leadership and practical skills for leadership. For information, visit [www.smu.edu/Perkins/PublicPrograms/LeadershipCtr](http://www.smu.edu/Perkins/PublicPrograms/LeadershipCtr).*

## APPOINTMENTS & RETIREMENTS

The following **appointment changes**, announced since the deadline for the last issue of the *Arkansas United Methodist*, are effective July 1 unless otherwise noted.

- Reggie Russell (elder)—McGehee/Arkansas City UMCs
- Andy Hughes (local pastor)—Berryville UMC
- Michael Bolin (provisional elder)—Wheatley/Salem UMCs
- Billy McMahon (provisional elder, Texas Conference)—Concord UMC Lonoke; effective June 22, 2016
- Cory Pfeifer (full-time local pastor)—Brookland/Union Grove UMCs
- John Hiegel (part-time local pastor)—Piggott/Wright’s Chapel UMCs
- Jennifer Kaiser (lay supply)—Mars Hill UMC
- Al Loya (part-time local pastor)—Mineral Springs UMC
- Larry Martineau (elder)—Prescott/Hollywood UMCs (charge realignment)
- Danny Dunlap (part-time local pastor)—St. John UMC Hope
- Andrew Suite (part-time local pastor)—Mountainside UMC Hot Springs Village (associate)
- Joe Kaiser (full-time local pastor)—Cave City/Bear Creek UMCs
- Blake Schrepfer (full-time local pastor)—Calico Rock/Spring Creek UMCs
- Jay Stephen Simpson (provisional elder)—Osceola UMC
- Velda Bell (elder)—Salem/Viola UMCs
- Rex Dickey (elder)—Oakley Chapel UMC (interim); July 14, 2016-Jan. 17, 2017
- Debbie Perry (retired local pastor)—Bismarck UMC (interim); July 1, 2016-Sept. 30, 2016
- Scott Shafer (elder)—Bismarck UMC; effective Oct. 1, 2016
- Andy Newbill (retired local pastor)—Cecil/Vesta UMCs; effective June 1, 2016
- Tom Machen and Linda Buchanan (co-lay supply pastors)—Hunter UMC Hunter, Ark.
- Casey Turner (part-time local pastor)—First UMC Jonesboro (associate)
- Shane Pair (elder)—military deployment; July 14, 2016-Jan. 14, 2017
- Joe Head (elder)—medical leave of absence; effective May 1, 2016
- Rob Holifield (elder)—First UMC Texarkana (associate)
- Zach Underwood (elder)—First UMC Fordyce
- Cherie Baker (elder)—Washburn Campus Ministry/Grace UMC Topeka, Kansas
- Tony Hill (elder)—DeWitt/St. Charles UMCs
- David Hoffman (elder)—Faith/Geyer Springs UMCs (new charge alignment)
- Michelle Morris (elder)—Wesley/Cavanaugh UMCs Fort Smith
- James Kjorlaug (provisional elder)—Vilonia UMC
- Scott Schafer (elder)—U.S. Navy Chaplain (effective April 1, 2016)
- Vida Williams (elder)—Winfield UMC Little Rock
- Betsy Singleton Snyder (elder)—Pulaski Heights UMC Little Rock (associate)
- Jeremy Pressgrove (provisional elder)—St. Luke UMC Little Rock/Pulaski Heights UMC (associate)
- Matt Carter (full-time local pastor)—St. James UMC Little Rock (associate)
- Jennie D. Williams (provisional elder)—Highland Valley UMC Little Rock (associate)
- Heath Bradley (elder)—Living Waters UMC Centerton
- Matt Daniels (elder)—First UMC Beebe
- Corey Tyson (provisional elder)—First UMC West Memphis (associate)
- Dan Read (provisional elder)—First UMC West Memphis (associate)
- Doug Phillips (provisional elder)—Greenwood UMC (associate)
- Daniel Kirkpatrick (elder)—First UMC Sheridan
- Brad Moore (full-time local pastor)—Huntsville/Presley Chapel UMCs
- Randy Ludwig (elder)—ad interim Personal Leave of Absence (effective April 11, 2016)

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

- John Wilcher (elder)
- Larry Hughes (associate member); effective April 25, 2016

**For the most recent changes, visit [www.arumc.org/appointments](http://www.arumc.org/appointments).**

## PEOPLE OF FAITH

### Schload named CEO of Mount Sequoyah



**Jess Schload**

Mount Sequoyah Conference and Retreat Center in Fayetteville, Arkansas, on March 28 announced that the Rev. Jess L. Schload will serve as its new chief executive officer, effective May 16, 2016. He will focus on transforming the retreat center into a cutting-edge, multi-faceted organization offering secular and spiritual training seminars to church leaders, as well as overnight accommodations, meeting spaces, recreational programs and dining services to all its guests.

Schload comes to Mount Sequoyah with more than 20 years of experience in non-profit management, capital campaigns and fundraising, development of innovative programming, and outdoor retreat ministry operations. For almost 10 years, he directed the United Methodist Life Enrichment Retreat and Conference Center in Fruitland Park, Florida, leading that center to six straight years of surplus budgets. He also served as the executive director of Geneva Point Camp and Conference Center in Moultonborough, New Hampshire. He began his career as a local pastor in the Church of the Brethren, but soon was able to follow his calling into the retreat and conference center ministry.

Schload received a Bachelor of Arts degree in Bible from Anderson University, and a Master of Divinity degree with an emphasis in outdoor retreat ministries from Bethany Theological Seminary. He continues to attend educational programs and professional conferences sponsored by the Southeast Regional and National United Methodist Camp and Retreat Leaders Conferences, International Association of Conference Center Administrators and American Camp Association, among others. He and his wife, Connie, will move to Fayetteville, and he will begin work May 16.

Situated atop the largest mountain in Fayetteville, Mount Sequoyah Center, Inc. is a 501(c)(3) non-profit founded by the South Central Jurisdiction of the United Methodist Church in 1922. Only a few miles from the city's center and the University of Arkansas, Mount Sequoyah specializes in Christian hospitality and can accommodate a variety of special events, including family reunions, church retreats, corporate meetings, and wedding ceremonies and receptions.

### Dassinger becomes part-time coordinator for 200,000 Reasons hunger initiative



**Mary Lewis Dassinger**

Mary Lewis Dassinger, a certified candidate for ordination as a United Methodist deacon, began serving in April as part-time project coordinator for the 200K Reasons to Fight Childhood Hunger initiative. Her work will support the efforts of the Revs. J.J. Whitney and Martha Taylor, and of Deaconess Colleen Caldwell.

"I am inspired by the stories of Arkansas congregations that already have existing food ministries or are excited and eager to begin or expand food ministries," Dassinger said. "The energy of the 200,000 Reasons team, including Conference staff and partners like the Hunger Relief Alliance, is contagious. But most of all, the vision to help end food insecurity for impoverished children in Arkansas is full of real hope for real change."

Dassinger spent five years as director of missions at Pulaski Heights UMC Little Rock, where she and her family are members. She supported the Revs. David Freeman and Martha Taylor in their leadership of the Imagine No Malaria Campaign, and continues to serve on the Arkansas Conference Board of Global Ministries. After seven years in Tennessee, she moved to Arkansas in 2007, where she started seminary and worked with statewide grant coordinators for AmeriCorps and service-learning programs. She completed a Master of Arts in Religion from Memphis Theological Seminary in 2009. In addition, she served briefly as children's ministry director at St. John's

UMC Midtown Memphis.

Contact Dassinger (mdassinger@arumc.org) or any of the 200,000 Reasons team to explore how your congregation can be a part of ending childhood hunger in Arkansas.

### Baker elected to United Methodist Women's national board



**Lynn Baker**

Lynn R. Baker was elected as the second of four new national directors of United Methodist Women from the South Central Jurisdiction at the recent jurisdictional United Methodist Women quadrennial meeting, April 15-17 in Oklahoma City. Nearly 400 attendees from the jurisdiction's 12 annual conferences participated in electing new national board members.

Baker resides in Conway. Her first mission experience was as a summer counselor, working with children who have disabilities at the United Methodist Women's own Camp Aldersgate in Little Rock. Since that time and as a partner in ministry with her husband, David, she has served in many capacities within the United Methodist Church: three-time General and Jurisdictional Conference delegate, member of the General Commission on the Status and Role of Women for two quadrennial terms, and numerous positions at the Conference, district and local levels. She is passionate about living out the purpose of United Methodist Women, and has served as its Conference president; dean, study leader and music leader of Mission U; and coordinator of General Conference women delegates' orientation.

The United Methodist Women board consists of 25 members and manages the organization's program policies, finances, property and its top executive staff person. Twenty members are elected by jurisdictions and five through a nominations process to ensure diversity of age, race, language, physical ability and working status.

"I am humbled and excited about the challenge ahead," she said. "United Methodist Women have entrusted me to work into our future with women, children and youth, and I am committed to living out God's invitation that welcomes all."

Arkansas has been privileged to have at least one national director continuously since the 1980s. Previous directors include Bonnie Bumpers, Nadine Hardin Miller, Doris Fish, Nell Bruner Barling, Ann Ashcraft, Diane Vogler and Karon Mann.

### Allen honored by Oklahoma/Arkansas AME Church



**Maxine Allen**

The Rev. Maxine Allen, a United Methodist elder currently serving as the Arkansas Conference's assistant director of mission and ministry for mission field engagement, on April 19 was inducted into the inaugural class of the God First Legacy of Leadership Awards.

These awards are given by the African Methodist Episcopal Church's 12th Episcopal District, covering Oklahoma and Arkansas. They were created to recognize honorees' commitment to the church and ability to make a difference in people's lives. Allen was the only honoree outside of the AME Church to receive the award.

### Hightower honored as Project Compassion's volunteer of the year



**Iris Hightower**

Iris Hightower, a retired United Methodist Deaconess, received the Volunteer of the Year Award from Project Compassion of Fort Smith at a ceremony held April 21 at Immaculate Conception Church in Fort Smith.

To be considered for this honor, a Project Compassion volunteer must be active for a minimum of three years; consistently visit residents one-to-one and assist with group activities; enthusiastically promote the mission of Project Compassion; and project a positive attitude toward residents and facility staff.

"She has a heart and gift for this work, and she is dedicated to being a friend to each resident," said Marian Conrad, executive director of Project Compassion. Conrad also noted Hightower's love for animals, adding that she has served as a pet therapy volunteer alongside her dogs Rowdy and Missy.

## 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.

**Piney Grove UMC Hot Springs is presently receiving resumes for the position of full time Director of Music Ministries.** Interviews will begin late April/May. Salary package begins at \$60,000 and upward depending upon experience. Send resumes and inquiries to pastorstcott@cablelynx.com or efranklin@aatyc.org.

**Grace Community Church is seeking a full time pastor to students (grades 7-12)** who will oversee a team of adults working to raise up spiritual champions for Jesus Christ. Applicants should possess a deep commitment to Jesus Christ and a passion for students. They should also possess skills in training, recruiting, and equipping adult volunteers, organization, communication, spiritual direction, and planning. Salary is commensurate with experience. Grace Community Church is located in Fort Smith, Arkansas, and is committed to making disciples of Jesus Christ through worshiping, connecting, and serving. Resumes should be sent to Jeff Jones at jeff@gracefs.com. Please include three references. To learn more about Grace Community Church, check us out at www.gracefs.com.

**Central UMC Fayetteville is seeking a full-time Director of Youth Ministries.** A bachelor's degree is required and appropriate certifications are desired. The successful candidate must have a demonstrated ability to lead, vision, plan, coordinate, manage, and implement a youth ministry program. The ability to work effectively with youth, diverse individuals and a team of volunteers is essential. Salary is commensurate with experience. A full slate of benefits is available. The position is open until filled. Interested persons should submit a resume, letter of interest, and any other supporting documentation to: Central UMC, Carolyn Kersten, P.O. Box 1106, Fayetteville, AR 72702 or by email to ckersten@centraltolife.com. A full position description is available upon request.





## Following the action at General Conference

More than 850 clergy and lay delegates, plus bishops, communications and media professionals, staff members of church boards and agencies, worship leaders and observers will gather May 10-20 in Portland, Oregon for the 2016 General Conference of the United Methodist Church. The primary task: revising the denomination's *Book of Discipline* and *Book of Resolutions* through legislative action. In the course of the 11-day gathering, delegates also will worship, pray, engage in discussion and approve plans and budgets for the next four years.

Here are a few ways to keep up with what happens during General Conference:

- Look to [www.arumc.org](http://www.arumc.org) and the Arkansas Conference Facebook page ([www.facebook.com/arkansasumc](http://www.facebook.com/arkansasumc)) for updates highlighting the work and perspectives of members of the Arkansas delegation.
- Rely on <http://gc2016.umc.org> for:
  - Regular summaries from United Methodist News Service
  - Live video streaming of plenary sessions
  - Access to a digital copy of the *Advance Daily Christian Advocate*, the same 1,488-page document all delegates received in preparation for their work
  - The ability to track pieces of legislation.
- Read the June 3 issue of the *Arkansas United Methodist* for a roundup of the actions taken by General Conference, how Arkansas delegates influenced those actions and how changes may affect Arkansas churches.
- Download the General Conference smartphone app (search "UMC General Conference" in your app store) to stay informed on the go.

**Editor's note:** Additional information will be available from unofficial sources. Keep in mind these words of the Rev. Mark Norman, head of the Arkansas delegation: "I think one thing we need to be mindful of is that every bit of information that we receive about General Conference is not necessarily what's happening. There may be parties on both extreme sides that may be presenting their take in the Twittersphere.... Filter what's going on, because everything that's happening is not officially happening. There are communicators that are there to help report to you, so any tweet that comes from an individual person may just be their opinion, not necessarily what's going on."

## Budget (from page 1)

formula approved at last year's Annual Conference, CFA then projected that Arkansas churches collectively will pay 85 percent of that amount, or a total of \$8,761,134.00.

"After all of the budget requests were received, more than \$450,000 had to be cut in order to balance the budget," Burris said. He added that the extended cabinet and CFA reviewed several different scenarios, and the extended cabinet decided that youth and young adult

ministries, Wesley Foundations and Conference ministry centers (Administrative Services, Mission and Ministry, Technology, Vitality) should take priority.

"None of these budget reductions were easy or without consequence," Burris said. "However, everyone agreed that the tithe plan is the proper course of action for our Conference in order to provide long-term sustainability to the shared ministry of our church."

Pending approval at Annual Conference in June, the Conference will implement the following changes:

- Camp Aldersgate support will

## Annual Conference opportunities for worship, mission open to all

Registration is now open for the June 19-22 Arkansas Annual Conference. Attendees may register through the Conference website, [www.arumc.org](http://www.arumc.org) (look for the registration button in the right-hand column). Those who wish to register by mail may do so using the form mailed to Annual Conference members as part of their pre-Conference packet, or may print the PDF version of the form from the website to mail to the Conference office.

**The Pre-Conference Journal is available** online at [ac2016.arumc.org](http://ac2016.arumc.org). It is a free download, for use on a digital device or as a printed hard copy. Professionally printed copies may be purchased for \$10 as part of the registration process.

### Worship

Regardless of whether you register for AC2016, you are invited to attend any or all of the worship services:

**Opening Worship – Sunday, June 19, 7:30 p.m.**, a celebration of Holy Communion with the Rev. Dr. Jan Davis preaching

Unite with fellow Arkansas United Methodists in a celebration of and awakening to God's work in our state.

**Celebration of Life – Monday, June 20, 1:30 p.m.**, the Rev. Bonda Moyer, preaching

A time to remember and honor the lives of clergy and spouses of clergy who have died in the past year.

**Service of Ordination and Commissioning – Tuesday, June 21, 7:30 p.m.**, Bishop Gary E. Mueller, preaching

We will gather to ordain and commission those who have answered God's call as clergy in the Arkansas Conference. A reception to celebrate these new connections will follow.

**Closing Worship and Celebration of Appointments – Wednesday, June 22, 10:45 a.m.**, the Rev. Dr.

Emmanuel Cleaver II, preaching

A time for recognizing God's work during Annual Conference and to seek inspiration as those gathered are sent out for ministry in their own mission fields.

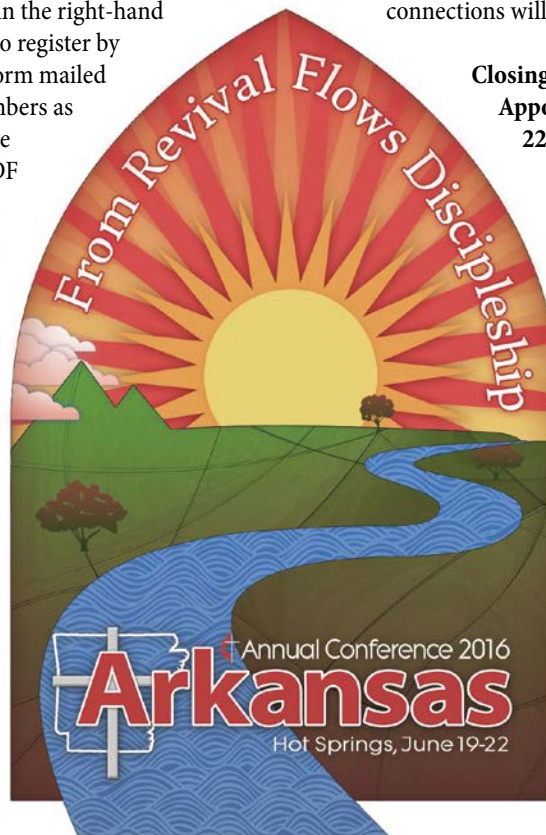
### Mission and service

There is no worship service Monday night, but there is a service opportunity arranged by Hot Springs area churches that is open to all. Local churches from Hot Springs and central Arkansas are hosting a Pack Shack Party, Monday, June 20 at First United Methodist Church's Family Life Center at 218 Pratt Street. The party

will begin immediately following the adjournment of the afternoon session. A pizza supper will be provided for the first 100 participants to arrive.

United Methodists will work with the Pack Shack to pack meals for the food pantries of Garland County. Groups may take some of the meals with them to stock their own food pantries, as well. (This is the same organization that ran the meal packing party during Ingathering 2015.)

Each meal costs 25 cents to pack, and donations are welcome to help increase the impact this mission effort will make. Send donations marked "Pack Shack Party During Annual Conference" to Oaklawn UMC, 216 Higdon Ferry Road, Hot Springs, AR 71913, or contact the church at [oaklawnsec@sbcglobal.net](mailto:oaklawnsec@sbcglobal.net) or 501-623-5588.



- decrease by \$27,000.
- Hendrix College support will decrease by \$63,000.
- Philander Smith College support will decrease by \$85,000.
- Conference lay staff will receive a three percent reduction in pension benefits.
- The Conference receptionist position, currently vacant, will be eliminated.
- Mission Local Church Compensation support will decrease by \$32,000.
- Conference Board of Global Ministries budget will decrease

by \$10,000.

- The Historical Society budget will decrease by \$10,000.
- Various other small reductions and cost savings.

Apportionment payout percentages are running 3.34 percent higher than at this time in 2015, according to Conference statistician Melissa Sanders.

"One factor to take into consideration is that the total budget is lower this year," she said. Because it is a transitional year between apportionment calculation methods, this year's apportionments take into account both the old expense

calculation method and the new tithe method.

A new element that is taking some adjustment time for local churches is the monthly reporting of tithe amounts.

"We started doing tithe reporting this year to help get churches ready for the complete switch to the tithe next year, but so far we only have 317 out of the 658 churches reporting," she said, adding that one of the goals of the Center for Administrative Services is to schedule training sessions that will clarify that process for local church treasurers and finance committees.



# Interfaith Arkansas and Hunger Relief Alliance secure more grant funding for hunger ministries

An \$85,000 grant for Arkansas nutrition programming efforts was among \$400,000 distributed by Global Health unit of the United Methodist General Board of Global Ministries earlier this year. The grant, awarded to Interfaith Arkansas in partnership with the Arkansas Hunger Relief Alliance, is providing more funding for work that supports access to good nutrition for children in our communities.

"We are very pleased to partner with the Arkansas Hunger Relief Alliance as we seek to reduce childhood hunger in Arkansas," said the Rev.

Stephen Copley, a Church and Community Worker with the UMC General Board of Global Ministries who serves as executive director of Interfaith Arkansas.

Building on previous grants from the Arkansas Conference's 200,000 Reasons initiative to reduce childhood hunger in Arkansas, this funding is giving more United Methodist churches opportunities to open pantries, plant community gardens, hosting Cooking Matters classes and sponsor summer and after-school

meals so that kids struggling with hunger will no longer have to wonder where their next meal will come from.

"We are working with Geyer Springs United Methodist and El Zócalo [Immigrant Resource Center] to offer Cooking Matters classes there, we are working with

First UMC Little Rock to offer Cooking Matters classes there, and at the same time we're supporting all these sites that have received 200,000 Reasons grants, as well," said Patty Barker, the No Kid Hungry campaign director with the Arkansas Hunger Relief Alliance.

"We would still like to talk to any churches that are

interested in offering Cooking Matters classes or interested in supporting a summer or after-school meals program for kids, or support a community garden, whether it's on-site at their church or supporting a nearby garden in partnership."

To explore how your congregation can receive grant funding to help support your neighbors who are experiencing food insecurity, contact Barker at 501-399-9999, ext. 24 or PBarker@arhungeralliance.org.

## 200,000 REASONS

to fight childhood hunger

## 'Be the Church Sunday' benefits hungry neighbors



Salem United Methodist Church Conway spent Sunday, April 3 being the hands and feet of Christ through "Be the Church Sunday."

The idea for this day began in Advent, when the church was challenged to raise funds to feed their hungry neighbors in Conway. Congregants donated money during the Advent, Christmas and Lenten seasons, and partnered with The Pack Shack to host a "Feed the Funnel" party on Be the Church Sunday. As members of all ages came together to combine our efforts for the 200,000 Reasons hunger initiative and combat hunger on a local level, the smiles and enthusiasm were contagious. With hair nets, beard nets, gloves and "Be the Church" t-shirts, young and old hands turned to doing God's work in the middle of a high-energy party.

Food insecurity affects 200,000 Arkansans under age 18, and one in three senior citizens. Those numbers are appalling, but hunger is a reality, and we must work to change those numbers.

Filling someone's empty stomach can help heal a broken spirit, then lead them to the path we all need to follow. In a few short hours, for 25 cents per meal, Salem UMC filled, sealed and boxed 23,632 meals to feed the hungry in Conway.

—submitted by Kim Bulice

## Search for the Whole Truth by Comparing Common Christian Clichés

They are simple phrases. They sound Christian—like something you might find in the Bible. We've all heard these words. Maybe we've said them. They capture some element of truth, yet they miss the point in important ways.

The clichés include:

- Everything happens for a reason.
- God helps those who help themselves.
- God won't give you more than you can handle.
- God said it, I believe it, that settles it.
- Love the sinner, hate the sin.

Join Adam Hamilton in this 6-week Bible study to search for the whole truth by comparing common Christian clichés with the wisdom found in Scripture.

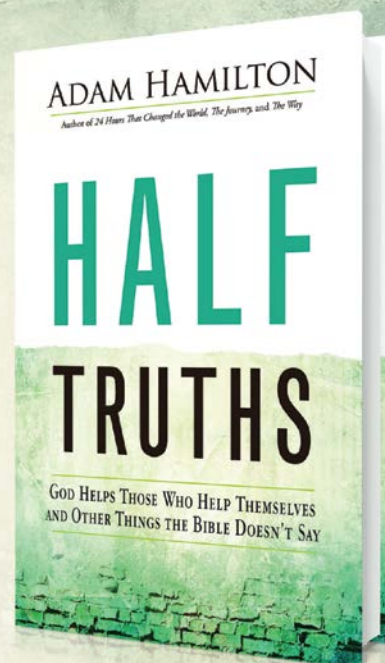
### Resources Include:

- Book
- DVD
- Leader Guide
- Youth Study



Learn more at [AdamHamilton.org](http://AdamHamilton.org)

Adam Hamilton is senior pastor of the United Methodist Church of the Resurrection in Leawood, Kansas, named by *The Church Report* as the most influential mainline church in America. Hamilton is the best-selling author of *The Call, Revival, The Way, 24 Hours That Changed the World, The Journey, When Christians Get It Wrong* and *Seeing Gray in a World of Black and White*.



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## We Are More (continued from page 1)

Fort Smith resident and member of Midland Heights United Methodist Church. The video featuring his story is being shared through the Arkansas Conference Facebook page and other social media channels, and is available at [www.wearemore.faith](http://www.wearemore.faith). Another Arkansas-based piece of We Are More is a quote from Mike Carpenter of Sheridan, which is posted along with his photo in the site's blog section.

The website will accept submissions of videos, photos, audio and brief written personal testimonies from those who wish to upload a story for consideration.

The South Central Jurisdiction includes United Methodists in Arkansas, Kansas, Louisiana, Missouri, Nebraska, New Mexico, Oklahoma and Texas. Antidote, a St. Louis-based agency, worked to develop the campaign in relationship with the bishops of these areas. While We Are More began here, any United Methodist worldwide may submit content through the website or use the #WeAreMore hashtag on social media.

We Are More will be at General Conference in Portland May 11-12 in the Oregon Ballroom Lobby with

the Missouri Annual Conference communications team, capturing attendees' video and audio stories. The campaign is expected to run throughout the summer.

"People seem to be anxiously bracing themselves as we draw near to General Conference. Some hope for change, others fear division, and most feel uncertain about what may happen," said Bishop Robert Schnase of Missouri in an April 25 news release. "Instead, we wanted to inspire people to remember that discipleship in Jesus Christ is more than buildings and structures, more than those in worship, more than the United Methodist Church, even more than the issues that divide us. Regardless of what happens at General Conference, United Methodists will continue to be called by God to ministries that transform lives, that offer hope to an anguished world, that relieve suffering and that offer God's grace to everyone. Sharing stories of how God uses ordinary people and works through ordinary congregations each and every day reminds us not to forget the kingdom work needed in the days following General Conference."



## Camp, Bible Funds enrich experience for kids in Methodist Family Health programs

For children and youth in the care of Methodist Family Health (MFH) residential programs, summer camp has not always been a given. Many have never before experienced a campfire or s'mores, paddling a canoe across a lake or singing silly camp songs.

But they get to do all that and more at the annual Reverend Robert Regnier Memorial Summer Camp, held each June at United Methodist Camp Tanako near Hot Springs.

Now in its 15th year, the camp is not only a treat, but also a major therapeutic benefit for the children and youth who live in the eight MFH group homes around the state and require emotional and behavioral therapy and treatment. Camp is a place of spiritual growth and

memories for the campers, and for many a highlight of their summer.

The United Methodist Foundation of Arkansas (UMFA) recently awarded a \$15,000 grant to MFH to help fund the Rev. Robert Regnier Memorial Camp.

"We are excited about helping youth from Methodist Family Health experience the joys of camp," said UMFA president and CEO Jim Argue Jr. "Many youth with behavioral problems don't get that opportunity."

Summer camp gives youth the chance to make wonderful memories, have fun and continue learning through the Teaching-Family Model, which is used in all MFH programs. The Teaching-Family Model uses positive reinforcement, and this continues at camp. There are multiple

opportunities for awards throughout the week, and medals and trophies are given as tangible evidence of their accomplishments. MFH Teaching Parents say these awards, along with their camp T-shirt, become some of the kids' most cherished possessions and are proudly displayed when they return home.

"This is an opportunity for our kids to experience fun camp activities like their peers," said Carolyn McCone, executive director of the Methodist Family Health Foundation. "Time spent in an outdoor ministry setting like Camp Tanako provides unique experiences that are valuable for the youth in our care."

Even with the large gift from UMFA, opportunities remain for churches, groups and individuals to help make the Reverend Robert Regnier Memorial Summer Camp possible. MFH sponsors and staffs the annual camp, and major funding comes from contributions to the MFH Camp Fund.

In similar fashion, every child in the care of a Methodist Family Health residential program is given an age-appropriate Bible or Bible Storybook. Contributions to the MFH Bible Fund make those gifts possible.

"United Methodists around the state can make a big difference in the spiritual lives of these youth by donating to the Camp Fund and Bible Fund," says Maggie Beeler, director of development for MFH. "It truly means a lot to these kids to get to go to camp and to have a Bible of their own."



COURTESY PHOTO

### How to give

To give to the MFH Camp Fund or Bible Fund, make checks payable to Methodist Family Health and send to Methodist Family Health Foundation, P.O. Box 56050, Little Rock, AR 72215. Please indicate "Bible Fund" or "Camp Fund" in the memo line. To learn more, contact Maggie Beeler at [mbeeler@methodistfamily.org](mailto:mbeeler@methodistfamily.org) or 501-906-4220.

## Grief camp for ages 5-18 set for this month

Camp Healing Hearts, a free overnight therapeutic family bereavement camp, will be held May 20-21, 2016, at Little Rock's Camp Aldersgate. The camp is hosted by Kaleidoscope Grief Center, a program of Methodist Family Health.

Camp Healing Hearts is offered for children ages 5-18 and their families who are grieving the death of a loved one. Caregiver participation is required. The 24-hour experience begins at 5 p.m. Friday, May 20, and concludes at 5 p.m. on Saturday, May 21.

Campers have time to reflect, reconnect and rediscover on an individual, family and community level by participating in therapeutic and recreational activities. The schedule includes "Heart to Heart" peer support groups, a candlelight memorial service and traditional camp activities such as a campfire and s'mores, fishing, swimming, arts and crafts and a ropes course.

For more information or to register, call 501-537-3991 or 800-756-3709, or visit [www.methodistfamily.org](http://www.methodistfamily.org).



COURTESY PHOTO

## Building dedication opens new chapter for Southside UMC



The congregation of Southside UMC Batesville can officially put behind them the November 2014 fire that destroyed their home. After a year-long rebuilding process, the church began using its new building in January 2016, and on April 10, they held a special service and celebration to dedicate the facility, debt-free, to the glory of God.

Numerous members and friends attended the dedication, including Northeast District superintendent the Rev. Susan Ledbetter, and a number of persons who were raised in the church and now live elsewhere, such as Arkansas Attorney General Leslie Rutledge, whose parents are still Southside members.

COURTESY PHOTOS



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# Churches field mission teams to Guatemala year after year



Team members from First UMC Fort Smith lay out supplies that will be needed for the day's clinic.

Short-term international mission trips have their limitations—for example, there may not be time to form relationships, and cultural differences or language barriers may create stumbling blocks. But by partnering with organizations in Guatemala, several Arkansas churches have been able to return teams to the same place each year to build upon their previous work.

In February, for the fifth time, First UMC Fort Smith sent a 16-person medical and dental mission team to work in Guatemala. These doctors, dentists, nurse practitioners, registered nurses and support staff held clinics in

remote areas near the town of Cunen to bring care to indigenous people of Mayan descent. The group works with Project Salud y Paz, which provides a team coordinator, translators, transportation and housing. Project Salud y Paz is also developing health education programs.

"The team was able to see about 500 patients during our time in Guatemala," said team member Dr. David Staggs. "We were also pleased to see that there is now regular care by Guatemalan providers at the Cunen clinic, which allows for continuity of care. Some surgical care is also provided by other teams at the Salud



Dr. Mike Cope of the Pulaski Heights UMC surgical mission team works with a Guatemalan surgeon.

y Paz clinic in Camanchaj." Staggs and others on the 2016 team hope to return to Guatemala next year.

Pulaski Heights UMC Little Rock is in its 15th year of sending teams through Project Salud y Paz. Denise Johnson has spent nine years traveling to a clinic in Chichicastenango with the same surgical unit, which performs hernia repairs, cataract surgery, biopsies and cyst removal, tubal ligations and hysterectomies. They also work with local surgeons to teach new techniques.



Dr. Bryan Watkins and physician assistant Christina Byler of St. James UMC Little Rock talk with clinic visitors in a remote village in Guatemala.

COURTESY PHOTOS

"Stepping off the plane in Guatemala is the most exciting day of the year for me—even beats Christmas!" Johnson says. "This mission reminds me one week a year why I became a nurse."

The St. James UMC Little Rock team partners with Impacto Ministry to provide dental, medical and construction services to the residents of San Pedro and nearby towns and villages. The medical and dental teams have seen more than 5,000 patients and pulled more than 2,000 teeth, and the construction teams have built two houses for Guatemalan families and have

helped expand the facilities at Happy Tummies, Impacto's after-school ministry for malnourished children.

In addition to ministering to the physical needs of the communities, the teams minister to the spiritual needs of the adults and children, offering Bible school-style activities and teaching.

"Many people's lives have been changed, in ways big and small, by this ministry," says St. James team member Jim Petersen. "To borrow from a song by Gungor, 'God made beautiful things on those mission trips. He made beautiful things out of the dust and out of us.'"

## 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](mailto:vim@arumc.org) or 870-826-0268. For **Disaster Response (DR) projects**, contact Byron or Janice Mann, DR co-coordinators: [disaster@arumc.org](mailto:disaster@arumc.org) or 870-703-8359 (Janice).

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

### Flood recovery in Arkansas: Help and funds needed

With recent flooding in McGehee, Lake Village, Crossett, Dermott and other locations in the southeast part of the state, Volunteers in Mission teams will soon be needed to repair flood-damaged homes. To sign up your church's team to help, contact Byron or Janice Mann at the phone numbers or email addresses above.

Funds are also needed to make these repairs possible. Send checks marked "Disaster Response" to Arkansas Conference UMC, 800 Daisy Bates Drive, Little Rock, AR 72202; or give online at [www.arumc.org/arkansas-disaster-response](http://www.arumc.org/arkansas-disaster-response) using the button on the right-hand sidebar.

### Mission Academy at Mount Sequoyah, Sept. 11-14

Mark your calendars for the South Central Jurisdiction's Mission Academy, set for Sept. 11-14 at Mount Sequoyah Retreat and Conference Center in Fayetteville. It will include instruction from United Methodist Volunteers in Mission, as well as disaster response training from the United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR). Course offerings are under development. To learn more about the event's location, visit [www.mountsequoyah.org](http://www.mountsequoyah.org).

### Seeking help with Bible School, other missions in Cuba

A Bible School team is forming for Catedral de Methodist, Holguin, Cuba, Aug. 19-26.

The cost to depart from Florida is \$1,400, which includes charter flight to Holguin with insurance, baggage fees, religious visa, housing, food, transportation, translation, a busy schedule and a love offering. A \$700 non-refundable deposit is required in early May to secure religious visas and the charter flight. (The journey likely requires a Friday night return stay in

Florida; the alternate dates of Aug. 23-30 might require a Monday night stay in Florida.)

Catedral de Holguin is the fastest growing church in Cuba, second in membership and attendance only to their bishop's church in Havana. The more than 2,000 members have a music, dance and drama program that supports the children's ministry and will provide plenty of volunteers. The Arkansas team will bring supplies and resources for Bible school, lead crafts and assist with games and snacks—and, of course, sing and dance along with them!

Bible School will be held in the mornings; in the afternoons the team will prepare for the next morning, sightsee or rest. Evenings include worship with Catedral de Holguin or home churches, attending small groups or visiting a mission.

If interested, contact Nechi Fullerton, [nefullerton@yahoo.com](mailto:nefullerton@yahoo.com). In the past three years, she has made seven visits to the the Methodist Church in Cuba, leading three UMVIM teams and staying two months last fall in the Catedral de Holguin.

Other upcoming opportunities for mission in Cuba:

- An adult exchange and immersion is tentatively planned for September 2016. Costs and accommodations will be similar to those listed above for the August Bible School. We will worship with Catedral de Holguin and visit their missions, ministries, home churches and small groups. There will also be time for sightseeing. Deposit is required by mid-June for religious visa application.
- The 2017 Arkansas UMVIM construction team will return to Havana Jan. 19-20 to Jan. 30-31 to build housing for the Methodist Seminary. Team is limited to 12 persons; deposits due mid-July.
- March 2017 will feature a spring break retreat/exchange for college students and young adults with the young people of Catedral de Holguin. More information to come.

To learn about these and future opportunities in Cuba, visit "Arkansas Methodist-Cuba Metodista Connection" and "Catedral Metodista de Holguin" on Facebook.



## Use new online form to connect incoming students to campus ministries in Arkansas

When a student leaves for college, how can pastors, relatives, mentors and other United Methodists back home help them receive a warm welcome in their new surroundings?

Local churches now have a new tool to help students making the transition to college life: an online referral form that instantly forwards the student's information to the appropriate campus ministry at a dozen colleges and universities around Arkansas.

To find the form, visit [www.arumc.org/wesley-foundation-information](http://www.arumc.org/wesley-foundation-information). Those making referrals will be asked to provide the student's name, contact information, high school and the college where the student is enrolled in 2016, as well as their own email address and relationship to the student.

The participating campus ministries include Arkansas State University (Jonesboro), Arkansas Tech University (Russellville), Henderson State/Ouachita Baptist University (Arkadelphia), Hendrix College (Conway), Philander Smith College (Little Rock), Southern Arkansas University (Magnolia), University of Arkansas at Fayetteville, University of Arkansas at Little Rock, University of Arkansas at Monticello, University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff and the University of Central Arkansas (Conway).

## LifeWay survey: New UMCs do well at reaching unchurched

A 2015 survey indicates that United Methodist new church starts have outpaced new church starts by other protestant denominations in three of five key benchmarks: average worship attendance, new decisions for Christ and reaching previously unchurched people.

The survey, conducted by LifeWay Research, spanned 17 U.S. evangelical denominations and church planting networks. LifeWay said the church planting survey was the most thorough in almost a decade. United Methodists represented 11.5 percent of the respondents.

"I believe the survey shows us verifiable proof that the efforts of our annual conferences to improve our church planting process is yielding positive results," said the Rev. Dr. Bob Crossman, a retired elder in the Arkansas Conference and a new church strategist with Path1, a division of United Methodist Discipleship

Ministries, in an April 15 news release.

United Methodist congregations averaged 84 new commitments to Christ during the first five years, while the typical new church in the survey had 78.

United Methodists need to improve two benchmarks included in the survey: 64 percent of churches surveyed were financially self-sustaining by the fifth year, compared to 42 percent for the United Methodists; and 22 percent of new churches started a daughter church within five years, compared to only 13 percent among UMCs.

Every mission field is different, and regions of the country are also different, Crossman said. "But if there is a particular activity that has yielded fruit nationwide—that resulted in an amazing benchmark—then our planters need to be testing that in their mission field."

To read Path1's executive summary of the LifeWay survey, visit <http://bit.ly/1XsxZW>. For a copy of the full survey, email Candace Lewis, executive director of Path 1 New Church Starts, at [clewis@umcdiscipleship.org](mailto:clewis@umcdiscipleship.org).

## Mission

(continued from page 3)

Church's mission statement remains faithful, vital and more important than ever before.

So why are questions being raised? We believe it's because a very interesting dynamic has developed over the past twenty years. The mission statement has been reduced to a simple sound bite instead of incorporating fully the three important paragraphs that comprise it: 'The Mission' ¶120, 'The Rationale for Our Mission' ¶121, and 'The Process for Carrying Out our Mission' ¶122. Perhaps it's telling that ¶122 is now referred to as the "forgotten" paragraph in *The Book of Discipline*.

There is a richness in ¶122 that describes a holistic understanding of what it means to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world: the evangelization of people in the midst of their unique context; their incorporation into a

community of faith; the power of baptism and profession of faith in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord; ongoing discipleship formation; the sending of disciples into the world who are equipped and committed to acts of mercy and changing social structures that oppress and destroy lives; and the affirmation that this is a continuing process for all of us that expresses John Wesley's vision of "moving on to perfection."

To be perfectly honest, it has taken awhile for the "new" mission statement to get traction. But it has, and we rejoice at the many signs of discipleship we see throughout the Church and the world. The conversation has shifted from focusing on members to making disciples. Even more importantly, the Holy Spirit is prompting the exploration of critical questions concerning what it means to be a disciple who follows Jesus, what this means in a particular context, the importance of both soul and social justice, and how all of this can actually transform lives,

communities and the world.

The theme of this year's General Conference is "Therefore, go..." Jesus' Great Commission sends us out into the world as an Apostolic, dynamic and Spirit-led movement of disciples bound together as the Body of Christ. We believe the United Methodist Church's mission statement expresses Jesus' intent, the work we need to do in the years to come and our highest hopes. Ultimately, however, what matters is not getting our words right or even fully understanding those words. It is about those of us who are Jesus' disciples experiencing spiritual revival through the power of the Holy Spirit so we can actually live our words.

Come, Holy Spirit, come.

*Mary Brooke Casad is an author and life-long United Methodist, serving both as a volunteer and lay professional. She lives in Sulphur Springs, Texas. Gary Mueller is the resident Bishop for the Arkansas Annual Conference.*

## New certifications in parish nursing available for ordained and lay leaders

United Methodist parish nurses now have the opportunity to earn certification in their specialized ministry. The United Methodist General Board of Higher Education and Ministry (GBHEM) announced March 24 that, in consultation with United Methodist Discipleship Ministries and the Global Health Division of the General Board of Global Ministries (GBGM), it is now offering deacons or elders who are also parish nurses a certification in parish nurse ministry. In addition, Discipleship Ministries is offering a parish nurse specialization for nurses through the certified lay ministry process.

"This is an opportunity for United Methodist parish nurses to get a distinctly United Methodist certification and enhance their connection with other United Methodist nurses," says the Rev. Victoria Rebeck, director of deacon ministry development and provisional membership with the Division of Ordained Ministry at GBHEM. "Parish nurses continue John Wesley's interest in health and wholeness. This certification recognizes and supports that vital community ministry."

Parish nursing has long been a part of congregational health under Global Ministries' Global Health Unit. The term "parish nurse" was chosen by Rev. Dr. Granger Westberg in 1985 to name this specialty practice because it connoted service not only to congregations, but also to the wider community. Global Ministries will promote the ministry

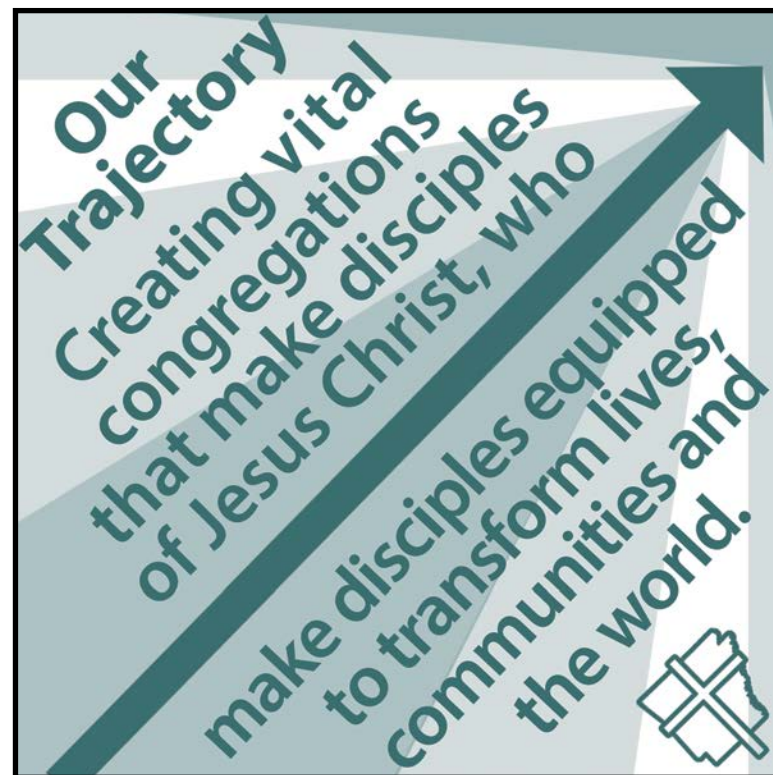
tracks for the parish nurse through its UMC Health Ministry Network of parish nurses.

"For health ministry to flourish, you need a parish nurse or person with a passion for health to advocate for programs that will improve the health of the local congregation and the community," says Dr. Olusimbo Ige, executive director of Global Ministries' Global Health Unit. "Not every community has a hospital or medical facility, but every community has a church which can positively influence and educate congregations and communities regarding holistic health practices of health ministry," she explains. Global Ministries will assemble a roster of nurses who have completed the certification process for support and networking purposes.

Clergy (or those pursuing ordination) seeking professional certification in United Methodist parish nursing must meet standards set by GBHEM's Division of Ordained Ministry. Candidates for certification are certified by their conference Board of Ordained Ministry (BOM) in cooperation with GBHEM.

Nurses who are lay people, and who expect to remain lay people, should pursue the Certified Lay Ministry Parish Nurse specialization.

To learn more about certification in the United Methodist parish nurse ministry for clergy, please send a message to [certification@gbhem.org](mailto:certification@gbhem.org). To learn more about certified lay ministry certification, send a message to [laity@umcdiscipleship.org](mailto:laity@umcdiscipleship.org).





## Delegation

(continued from page 1)

that topics relating to human sexuality, the rules and order of the conference itself and the financial implications of restructuring the denomination will dominate the conversation at General Conference, and that matters such as sacraments, evangelism, ordination and discipleship may not get the attention they deserve. They hope

that won't be the case, though. "We've been wrong before. Hopefully we will be wrong this time," said Norman.

Lay delegate Todd Burriss pointed out that many of the topics that do not get as much time on the floor of General Conference receive a lot of attention in committee work, precisely because it's easier to find common ground on those topics. Controversy tends to surface in floor discussions, creating a false

impression that less controversial issues are being ignored.

Delegates were asked how they are praying in preparation for General Conference. They are asking God for stamina, clearness of mind, open hearts and a sense of accomplishment. The delegation asks others to pray "that we won't be a voice that creates blockades, but that we have wisdom and insight that is shared throughout the connection," Norman said.

Citing frustrations from General Conference 2012, lay delegate Karen Millar asked for prayer that this gathering will get to do what it's supposed to do. "We say that General Conference is the only group that speaks for the church, and that just hasn't been happening," she said.

The hour-long webcast touched on restructuring plans, theological concerns, cultural influences and opportunities for holy conferencing, including a potential alternative to

Robert's Rules of Order for discussing contentious issues, called "Rule 44" by delegates. Regardless of what happens, though, delegates agree that the local church carries on and God is at work.

"God is the ultimate arbiter of General Conference," said the Rev. Maxine Allen. "We act like our individualized votes are going to change the universe, but God is in control."

An archive of the webcast is now available at [goo.gl/80hoLm](http://goo.gl/80hoLm).

## COMING UP

### Bethlehem UMC Lonoke to celebrate centennial of church's sanctuary May 22

Bethlehem United Methodist Church Lonoke will celebrate the 100th anniversary of the church sanctuary on Sunday, May 22. All former members, pastors, and interested public are invited to join the church members for the celebration.

The sanctuary was erected by church members in 1916 from hand-hewn logs from trees on the church's property. Pews were also built from trees on the land. In its early years the congregation numbered more than 400, with the Sunday school having 108 enrolled.

Anniversary events will include a special worship service at 11 a.m. on Sunday, May 22; a fellowship potluck dinner; singing after lunch; and visitation at Salem Cemetery.

The church was founded in 1871 and continues serving the Lonoke area communities including Austin, Ward and Bethlehem. Members also travel from Jacksonville, Cabot and Beebe to worship with the church. Bethlehem UMC is well known for its annual Road to Bethlehem displays along Bethlehem Road every December. Nearly 40 scenes from the Bible story of Christ's birth and the journey to Bethlehem are displayed on the lawns of residents along Bethlehem Road, culminating in the full nativity scene on the church lawn.

For more information about the centennial, contact Freddie or JoAnn Abshure, 501-438-2272.

### Campmeeting at Salem Campground set for June 12-18

Salem Campground is hosting its annual revival from Sunday, June 12 to Saturday evening, June 18, in the arbor beside Salem UMC Benton, at 1647 Salem Road.

Salem Campmeeting has been held on the old campground since 1838, and in years past each evening's service kicked off with the children's choir. Now, a different vocal group performs each evening at 7 p.m.

The Rev. Dr. Chester Jones of Haven UMC Hot Springs and former superintendent for the South Central District will be the evangelist for the seven-day event. If you haven't met Chester, you are in for a real treat. The Rev. Greg Schick, associate pastor for St. James UMC Little Rock, will preach Wednesday evening, the traditional "youth night" at Salem Campmeeting. Youth director Rachel Powell has many extra activities planned in and around the week's revival. The children's program, for ages 5 through 11, is under the direction of Denise Willoughby.

It's comfortable under the old arbor, and all are invited to join in an evening of hymn singing, good preaching, and fellowship with refreshments in the church's fellowship hall after services, says host pastor the Rev. Carlton Cross.

A nursery is provided for infants and children up to five years old, or if parents prefer, they may bring children with them to the arbor.

A memorial service is scheduled for Saturday evening for those who have passed away since last year's revival. Submit your loved one's name to head usher Bill Shirron at 501-316-2282 by Thursday, June 16. Come be a part of this old tradition.

### Scouting ministry seeks Arkansas participants for June 19-24 workshop

Scout leaders are invited to attend "Scouting in the United Methodist Church," a six-day workshop scheduled for June 19-24 at The Summit Bechtel Reserve facilities (BSA permanent Jamboree site). This Scouting ministry course will include information about new programs offered through Cub Scouts, Boy Scouts, Venturing, Girl Scouts, Big Brothers Big Sisters and other civic youth organizations.

The workshop is ideal for local church, district and conference Scouting coordinators, Scout leaders, clergy and youth leaders. The focus is on the role of Scouting ministry specialists and how the outreach ministry of Scouting can increase church membership. Topics such as award programs, youth protection and membership growth will be covered.

This is the first time the six-day United Methodist Church Scouters Training Course will be held at the Summit Bechtel Reserve in West Virginia. In the past, this extremely popular United Methodist Workshop training /workshop course has rotated around at the other BSA National High Adventure Bases. The Summit features training facilities, camping and related activities including white-water rafting, zip-lining, mountain bike trails and a rock-climbing wall.

Bill Byrd, Scouting ministries coordinator for the South Central Jurisdiction, will serve as course director and Susan Lawyer, Scouting ministry specialist, will be the assistant director. Visit [www.summitbsa.org](http://www.summitbsa.org), or contact Byrd with questions: [billbyrd1@yahoo.com](mailto:billbyrd1@yahoo.com) or 501-680-3409.

### Central District Lay Servant Academy in Jacksonville July 21-23

The Connection Center of First UMC Jacksonville will be the setting for the Central District's Lay Servant/Lay Speaker Academy July 21-23, 2016. Lay Servant Ministries courses are open to all laity and clergy, regardless of home district. The structure for this particular Academy creates the option for participants to attend for one, two or three days. Course topics include Spiritual Gifts, Worship, Heritage & Polity, Prayer and Preaching.

Books should be ordered and read in advance of the courses; because of this requirement, they will not be available for purchase at the event. Late or at-the-door registrations will not be accepted. The registration deadline is July 15. For a list of required reading or a registration form, contact Fonda Kirkman in the Central District office, [fkirkman@arumc.org](mailto:fkirkman@arumc.org) or 501-851-1433.

### United Methodist Lawyers Conference Sept. 15

The 2016 United Methodist Lawyers Conference has been set for Thursday, Sept. 15, at Pulaski Heights UMC. This time of fellowship and learning covers a variety of matters pertinent to lawyers who may assist United Methodist local congregations or other affiliated organizations, ranging from sexual harassment and misconduct to property dealings and the intersection of church and secular law. Thanks to sponsorship by the United Methodist Foundation of Arkansas, attorneys may attend and receive CLE credits at no charge. For more information, contact Janet Marshall, [jmarshall@umfa.org](mailto:jmarshall@umfa.org).

### Save the date: Bethesda Campground UMC to celebrate 175 years in October

Bethesda Campground United Methodist Church, located 10 miles west of Batesville, will hold its 175th anniversary celebration the week of October 3-9, 2016. A schedule of activities will be announced later this summer.

The first deed written for the church and property is dated October of 1841. There is some belief the church existed before then, but the deed is the earliest written record available.

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## OBITUARIES

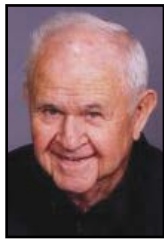
### CONWAY

#### Cecil S. Harrison

The Rev. Cecil S. Harrison, 96, passed away Sunday, March 27, 2016.

He was born to Robert N. and Effie Pruitt Harrison on July 12, 1919 in Antioch, Arkansas.

A United Methodist elder, he served several appointments, including McRae, Pangburn, Greenbrier, Joiner, Dell, White Hall and Floyd, before retiring from the old North Arkansas Conference in 1990. He also was retired from Yarnell's Ice Cream in Searcy.



**Cecil Harrison**

He served in the U.S. Navy during both World War II and the Korean Conflict. He was stationed on the USS Chincoteague AVP 24. He attended three years at Hendrix College, then went on to Perkins School of Theology in Dallas.

He is preceded in death by his parents; his wife, Iris Ivon Harrison; four sisters and three brothers.

He is survived by three daughters, Patsy Manion (widow of the late Jerry Manion) of Conway; Shirley Henson and her husband, Tom, of Van Buren; Debra Dickerson and her husband, Jim, of Searcy; two sons, Jerry Harrison and his wife, Gayle, of Conway; and Shirrell Harrison and his wife, Mary, of Searcy; 11 grandchildren, 23 grandchildren, 13 great-great-grandchildren and other relatives.

Graveside services were held Thursday, March 31, 2016, at Weir Cemetery, south of Searcy, with the Rev. David Orr officiating.

### OZARK

#### J. Victor Turner

James Victor Turner, 68, of Ozark, Arkansas, passed away Sunday, April 3, 2016 in Fort Smith.

Vic was born July 24, 1947, in Shelbyville, Missouri, to the Rev. Ellis and Viola Osborn Turner

He worked as a lineman for 34 years at South Central Electric Co-Op in Arkadelphia. He was a volunteer for the Arkadelphia Fire Department and a member of the River Valley Antique Tractor Club.

He was preceded in death by his parents and a son, Christopher Turner.

He is survived by his wife, the Rev. Regina Biren Turner of Ozark, a part-time local pastor who serves the Hartman and Spadra United Methodist congregations; a son, Brad Turner and his wife, Jennifer, also of Ozark; and two grandchildren, Jarrett and Jessica Turner.

Graveside services were held Thursday, April 7, 2016, at Shiloh Cemetery in Arkadelphia. Visitation preceded the service, and an additional visitation was held April 5 in Ozark.



**James "Vic" Turner**

### SPRINGDALE

#### Rosalie Ashcraft

Rosalie Hinshaw Ashcraft, 88, of Springdale, passed away April 10, 2016. Rosalie was born April 21, 1927, in Climax, North Carolina, to Simeon Ezra Hinshaw and Treva Dawson Hinshaw. She was united in marriage to the Rev. Charles G. Ashcraft for over 65 years. Rosalie taught elementary school for 25 years. She was also very active in the United Methodist Church as her husband pastored congregations throughout the state. Most recently, Rosalie was a member of the First United Methodist Church Springdale. She loved to sew and knit, dote on her grandchildren, and sing in the church choir wherever Charles was pastor.

She was preceded in death by her parents; four brothers, Max Hinshaw, Edward Hinshaw, Jim Hinshaw and Jack Hinshaw; and a sister, Donavie Allen of North Carolina. She is survived by her husband, Charles; two sons, Charles "Gary" Ashcraft II and his wife, Deedra, of Springdale, and their two children, Sarah and Walker; and Thomas "Mark" Ashcraft and his wife, Tammy, of Maricopa, Arizona, and their children, Salane, Stacy and Sam; and one brother, Clay Hinshaw of North Carolina.

Memorial services were held Monday, April 18, at First UMC Springdale, and Tuesday, April 19, at First UMC England, Arkansas, with the Revs. Audie Long and Andrew Thompson officiating. Interment followed at Mulberry Cemetery in England.

## UA Wesley campus ministry consecrates new home

On the bright, sunny afternoon of April 24, more than 200 people gathered to help consecrate the new Wesley House at the University of Arkansas. It was standing room only, with people lining the second floor balcony of the facility to share in the service below.

As the student praise band led those gathered in worship, the energy and enthusiasm was tangible. The Rev. Emily Burch, U of A Wesley college pastor and director, welcomed and thanked everyone for all that they have done to make the day possible. Brooke Hobbs, U of A sophomore and a Wesley student leader, stood before a sea of faces from as far away as Tulsa, Houston and Memphis, bearing witness to the difference being a part of a Wesley college ministry makes in her life.

Also in attendance were Bishop Gary Mueller and the Rev. Dr. John Robbins, senior pastor of Central UMC Fayetteville, which joined a partnership with the Conference in 2014 to revitalize the ministry and underwrite the Wesley House building project. Robbins reflected on Central's decision to become the lead church among Conference



The Rev. Emily Burch welcomes attendees of the consecration service for the Wesley House at the University of Arkansas.

COURTESY PHOTO

ministry president, led a litany of consecration, echoing the ministry's mission statement of helping students "CONNECT, GROW, and BEAR FRUIT in their life in Christ during their college years."

Elizabeth Murphy, long-time member and current chair of the U of A Wesley Advisory Council, challenged all in attendance to join God's

Kingdom movement at U of A by sharing in the work of the college ministry. She spoke of remaining naming opportunities in the facility, as well as U of A Wesley's Extra Mile Club, launched at the consecration service.

The day ended as every party should—with cake, punch and talk of great plans for the future. For more photos from the service and other information about U of A Wesley, visit [www.uawesley.com](http://www.uawesley.com).

churches in funding the U of A Wesley ministry: "We didn't have to do this, but we had to do this," he said. It was a movement of the Holy Spirit, Robbins believed, that launched the unique partnership between a local congregation and the Conference to write a new chapter in a vital young adult ministry at the U of A.

The Rev. Stephen Coburn, Northwest District superintendent, and Kaylee Smith, Wesley student

## Historical Society's annual meeting includes planning, sharing

The Historical Society of the United Methodist Church of Arkansas gathered at First UMC Little Rock on April 16, 2016, for its annual luncheon and business meeting.

The program and short business session seek to help the society maintain "a ministry of memory," the history of our movement as Methodists. One item announced was the formation of a group that will plan a bicentennial celebration in 2017 of the construction of the first Methodist church building in the state of Arkansas. Watch for announcements in the *Arkansas United Methodist* and on the Conference website, [www.arumc.org](http://www.arumc.org).

The program this year consisted of historical reflections presented by Earl Carter, Chester Jones and Ed Matthews, who shared observations about their experiences in the church from their early years forward. Their stories included some humorous accounts from first appointments; ways the church was affected by the change allowing women to be a part of the ordained ministry; and the merger of the Southwest Conference with the prior Little Rock and North Arkansas Conferences. Questions were presented by Historical Society president the Rev. Ron Clark, with some comments from other attendees.

"Overall, it was a good recognition that some of our older congregants and clergy in local churches could be interviewed and video-taped as part of the process of keeping a good collection of the history of the church," Clark said. "These tapes could be a great asset along with a local church's written accounts, a carrying forward of early times of 'oral history.'"

The meeting included election of new officers, with Joe Guenter of Monticello becoming the new Historical Society president.



## Rice Depot, Foodbank celebrate being 'United to Fight Hunger'



Arkansas Foodbank CEO Rhonda Sanders, left, and U.S. Senator John Boozman, right, unfurl a banner bearing the new identity for the Arkansas Foodbank, which combines the Foodbank's name and the Arkansas Rice Depot's logo to reflect the legacies of the two merged organizations.

AUM PHOTO BY AMY FORBUS

LITTLE ROCK—The Arkansas Foodbank and Arkansas Rice Depot on March 30 celebrated the completion of their merger, which will increase their ability to provide Arkansans with healthy, nutritious food.

A new theme, "United to Fight Hunger," reinforces the new organization's mission and the shared goals of its two predecessors. The brand identity retains the Foodbank's name and the visual identity of the Rice Depot, honoring the legacies of both organizations.

Foodbank CEO Rhonda Sanders thanked board members and staff for their vision and commitment to the mission.

"They have to be open to change and really, in a lot of ways, drastic change," she said of the staff. "All of this while they're still doing their day-to-day work, because we're here to feed hungry people.... We have already distributed more food this time this year than we did last year."

Many United Methodist churches are partners with the Foodbank, hosting food pantries, participating in backpack programs that feed school children on weekends and coordinating summer ministries that ensure children have access to food when school lunches

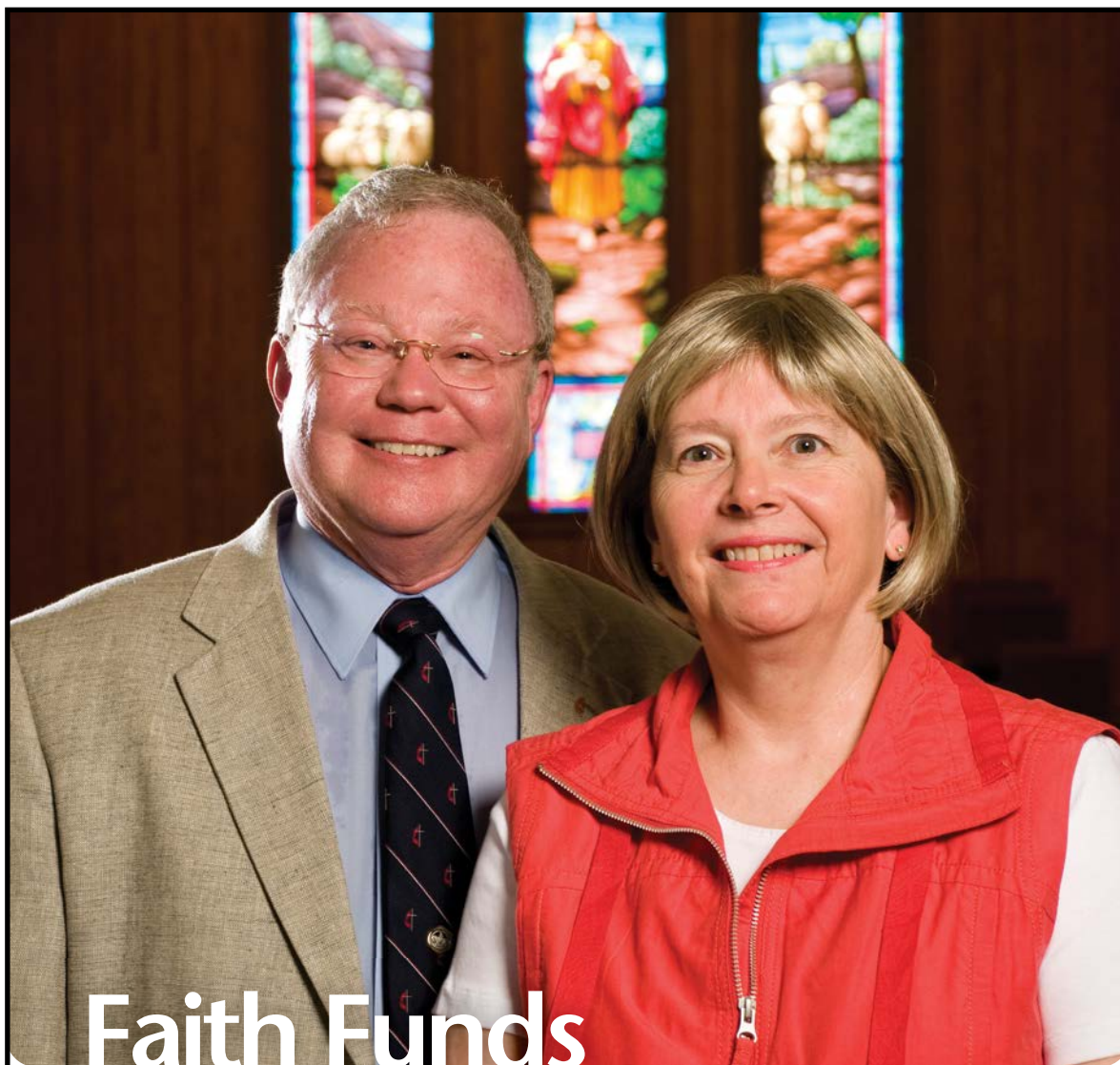
are not available.

"This merger is tremendous. It's two groups that both have been using the dollars they're given—nobody does a better job of doing that, in helping so many people," said U.S. Senator John Boozman. "This is a very bi-partisan effort. This is one thing that politics doesn't enter into, shouldn't enter into. This is about Republicans, Democrats, independents, working together for the greater good."

"It's work that we all do because of our personal faith, our belief, our passion," Sanders said, emphasizing the ongoing need for community support.

"With this bigger, stronger organization, we can expand programs. We can take initiative. We can try new things," said Foodbank board chair Jordan Johnson. "We can use the things that worked, that were good with both of these two groups—putting them together and be stronger financially, and be stronger from an efficiency perspective, and we can do a lot greater good."

At the conclusion of the event, attendees participated in a service project: assembling packs of child-friendly, nutritious food for backpacks to be distributed in 26 schools and nine counties.



## Faith Funds

### *Peace of Mind*

Rev. Tony and Barbara Hill want to make the transfer of their estate to their four children and five grandchildren as easy as possible during what they know will be a difficult time in the future. "I've seen lots of families torn apart because there was no will, and we've seen for ourselves the difference it makes," said Tony, senior pastor at Osceola United Methodist Church.

"My mother did it the right way. She had a will, a living will and plans for her burial," said Barbara. "It made things much easier in a time of grief." Barbara and Tony wanted to do the same, and a tool that helped them gather information to work with their attorney on their estate plan was the will planning document from the United Methodist Foundation of Arkansas. The will planner is available online at [www.umfa.org](http://www.umfa.org). A free printed will planner is available by calling Janet Marshall at the Foundation at 501-664-8632 or by emailing her at [jmarshall@umfa.org](mailto:jmarshall@umfa.org).

"Using the will planner made us think about a lot of things we would not have considered," Tony said. "We talked about how to make the division of our property fair for our children and what charitable gifts we could make."



### The United Methodist Foundation of Arkansas

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