

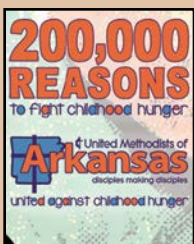
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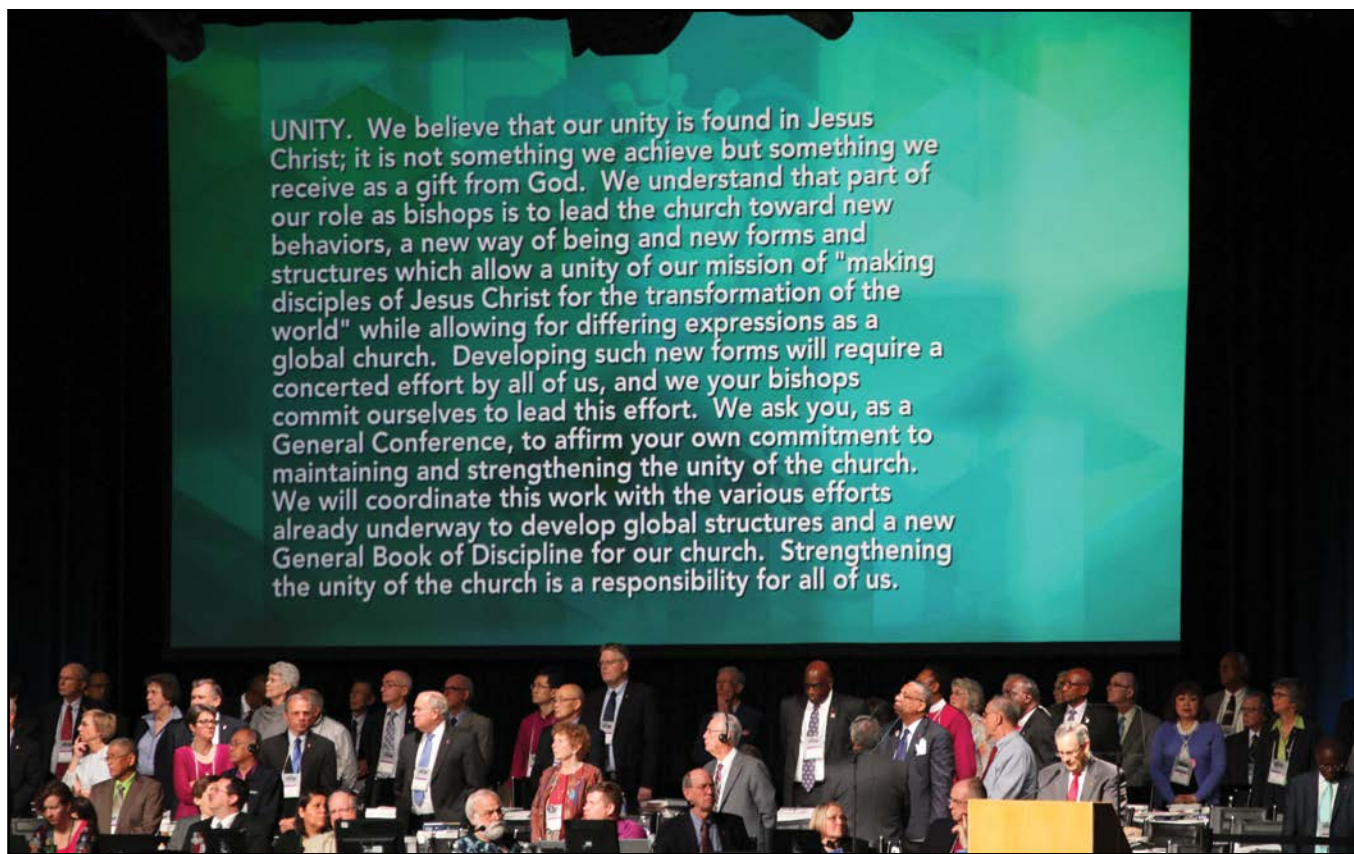
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UNITY. We believe that our unity is found in Jesus Christ; it is not something we achieve but something we receive as a gift from God. We understand that part of our role as bishops is to lead the church toward new behaviors, a new way of being and new forms and structures which allow a unity of our mission of "making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world" while allowing for differing expressions as a global church. Developing such new forms will require a concerted effort by all of us, and we your bishops commit ourselves to lead this effort. We ask you, as a General Conference, to affirm your own commitment to maintaining and strengthening the unity of the church. We will coordinate this work with the various efforts already underway to develop global structures and a new General Book of Discipline for our church. Strengthening the unity of the church is a responsibility for all of us.

Members of the Council of Bishops stand as their president, Bishop Bruce Ough, reads the group's May 18 statement to General Conference delegates. The bishops made clear their commitment to unity and recommended a commission to address petitions related to human sexuality, rather than using Robert's Rules of Order to debate them.

AUM PHOTO BY AMY FORBUS

General Conference 2016 brings changes, maintains unity

BY AMY FORBUS
Editor

PORTLAND, Oregon—What happened at the 2016 General Conference of the United Methodist Church?

In short: Opinions vary. Assessments of General Conference 2016 will likely last longer than the four-year intermission between this and the next regularly scheduled gathering, and there's a chance that a special called session of the General Conference will occur before then.

While it acted on hundreds of legislative items, celebrated ministry in a variety of forms, participated in acts of repentance and marked significant anniversaries, the 864-member body made of equal parts clergy and laity may

best be remembered for asking its Council of Bishops for leadership, then deciding to go with that leadership by the thinnest of margins.

Rules debate, request to lead

One action taken during the first week affected a substantial portion of the proceedings: Debate that stretched across the first three days of the gathering focused on what was known as "Rule 44," a proposed group discernment process for having conversations around potentially controversial topics. The 2012 General Conference had requested that the Commission on General Conference offer an alternative to Robert's Rules of Order for this

[See GENERAL CONFERENCE, page 7]

Grow By One Summit teaches reaching out

BY AMY FORBUS
Editor

More than 600 United Methodists gathered Saturday, April 30 to learn about sharing their faith and reaching new people for Christ at the Grow By One Summit, a one-day event organized by the Arkansas Conference Center for Vitality (CFV). St. James UMC Little Rock hosted the day's activities.

The event's title comes from Step 6 of the Bishop's Mission Plan:

"More churches will continue to grow every year by at least one new adult profession of faith, at least one more person in worship, at least one

additional small group and at least one more ministry that reaches into the mission field.... Every single church—regardless of its size—can be vital and reach its mission field with excellence and passion."

In her opening greeting, the Rev. Dede Roberts, director of the CFV, celebrated the energy of those filling the worship center and offered encouragement for those who had come to learn. She reminded the crowd that the call is to grow by *at least one* in the four areas identified by Bishop Gary Mueller. "Don't stop at one!" she said, prompting applause.

Mueller acknowledged the [See SUMMIT, page 5]



Kay Kotan, an author and a laywoman from the Missouri Conference, served as the keynote speaker for the April 30 Grow By One Summit in Little Rock.

AUM PHOTO BY AMY FORBUS

General Conference: A view from the nosebleed section

BY WILLIAM O. "BUD" REEVES
Special Contributor

So General Conference 2016 is over. After months of buildup, it all seemed to take place in a whirlwind. And now it's over. And we—bishops, delegates, and rank-and-file Methodists—are sitting in the roadway like Wile E. Coyote after the Roadrunner has passed. As the dust clears, we wonder, "What just happened?"

I was not there. I followed General Conference from a distance. I was not on the playing field, and really not even on the sidelines. I felt like I was observing from the upper deck somewhere, trying to make sense of it all. I don't know if being closer would have made it any easier.



Bud Reeves

Nevertheless, 2016 was the twelfth General Conference I have observed with some interest. My whole life has been in the United Methodist Church. My friend and colleague the Rev. Ellen Alston told me she remembered when I did a presentation to the Senior High Camp at Tanako in 1974 concerning the recent addition to the *Discipline* of the language about homosexuality. I've been at this a long time.

There was much to celebrate at General Conference 2016. We, along with the Roman Catholic Church, are truly a global Christian denomination. Though that makes our task harder, it's still awesome. We have made great strides in global health with our Imagine No Malaria campaign. We are growing so fast in Africa, they need five new bishops. We authorized a new hymnal, fit for the digital age. We commissioned a bunch of missionaries. All good stuff.

All the good stuff was overshadowed by the discussion about human sexuality. The landscape is changing rapidly in the United States and hardly at all in the developing world. But in an unprecedented move, the General Conference asked for the leadership and help of the Council of Bishops to discern a path forward. They returned with a proposal for a special commission to meet for a couple of years to develop a plan. The Conference approved.

At first I thought the bishops had just kicked the can down the road. We have debated this issue for 44 years, and true dialog hardly ever happens. But the most important concept that was affirmed by the General Conference was that we are not ready for an ecclesiastical divorce. We want to stay together.

The issues and disagreements are deep and fundamental, but even more fundamental is our unity in Christ. This sort of statement in our polarized,

antagonistic world is unheard of. In a commentary for *The Washington Post*, United Methodists Tom Berlin and Mike McCurry wrote, "In an ever-more-polarized society, the United Methodist Church this week has tried to model an approach to disagreement that the U.S. political system would do well to emulate." Given our fractious context, the decision amounted to a Gospel proclamation.

Maybe the delegates could see it coming. But to a guy in the nosebleed section, it seemed like a movement of the Holy Spirit. There is still much to be worked out: Who is going to serve on this commission? What process will they use? How much is it going to cost? But at least there is a glimmer of hope beyond splitting the denomination over an issue that is important but not paramount.

As the dust settles over Portland, there are at least three things that haven't changed.

- The local church is still "the most significant arena through which disciple-making occurs" (*Book of Discipline*, Paragraph 201). No matter what General Conference does, the real life of the United Methodist Church is in the 45,000 or so local churches, where children are taught, youth are guided, families are nurtured, communities are reached and God is worshipped. Being connected is important and integral to our Methodist DNA, but the real work of the Kingdom happens locally.
- The mission of the church is still "to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world" (*Book of Discipline*, Paragraph 120). To the extent that our denomination, our structures, and our local churches serve the mission, we will be healthy and fruitful. Everything else is secondary.
- Jesus is still with us. I heard from several sources during General Conference statements like, "God isn't through with us yet!" To even suggest such an idea is ludicrous. We could conceivably turn away from God, but God will never turn away from us. As the risen Christ gave the Great Commission to go and make disciples of all nations, he left the disciples and ended the Gospel of Matthew with this promise: "Remember, I am with you always, even to the end of the age" (Matthew 28:20). Whatever human foibles and failings we exhibit on every level of life and church, Jesus will not abandon us. The Holy Spirit is alive in us and guiding us. The love of God leads us forward. That is the last word, and it is a word that will propel us into the future.

The Rev. Dr. Reeves serves as senior pastor of First UMC Fort Smith. Email: breeves@arumc.org.



EDITOR'S CORNER

BY AMY FORBUS

Beyond the cover story

Even if nothing more could be said about General Conference 2016, I'm pretty sure people would say plenty anyway. This issue of the Arkansas United Methodist certainly doesn't avoid the topic.

As a credentialed member of the media, I attended the last five days of General Conference. I saw a lot; I'm sure I missed even more. It's challenging to keep up with everything that goes on at a worldwide gathering that happens once every four years. As a newsroom friend said to me, "It was impossible to monitor and write at same time. I'd write a lead and miss two amendments."

So what you read about General Conference in this issue will be incomplete. An entire newsroom of reporters, photographers, videographers, bloggers and podcasters spent almost two weeks trying to wrap their minds around it (as did the delegates). In addition to what you read here, much of the content they produced remains available at <http://gc2016.umc.org>. I hope that through words, videos, audio and photos, I've been able to provide an adequate picture of what delegates from Arkansas experienced.

What does General Conference 2016 mean for the church? It depends on who answers that question. Reactions to General Conference developments could be so varied that at times I wondered whether delegates seated within feet of each other were actually hearing the same words spoken.

But there are wonderful things United Methodists did at General Conference that don't fit neatly into the story on this issue's cover. One example is "#GC4JC," or General Conference for Jesus Christ, which partnered with Sisters of the Road, a Portland nonprofit cafe whose dining guests may pay with cash or bartering. GC4JC had a hallway table at General Conference, offering Sisters of the Road meal vouchers inside handmade greetings bearing messages of God's love, so General Conference attendees would have something to give when one of Portland's visible population of homeless people requested help. Children who had made the greetings also raised the money to buy the vouchers. I took several cards, and each one I offered to someone was met with appreciation.

I gave my last card to a vendor for *Street Roots*, a weekly newspaper that provides income opportunities to people dealing with homelessness and poverty. I chatted with him, bought a paper (which was a quality publication) and offered him the card, too. "You have no idea how much these help," he said as he thanked me.

Visit www.facebook.com/GC4JCMC to read more about this difference-making idea. There's even a story there of someone from Minneapolis, host city of General Conference 2020, considering how that host city might adapt the #GC4JC idea for their own context. A powerful reminder that by serving others in Jesus' name, we can be the church wherever we are.

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



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Submission Deadlines

Issue Date	Submission Deadline
July 8	June 17
Aug. 5	July 18
Sept. 2	Aug. 15

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GROWING TOGETHER IN CHRIST: A word from the Bishop

BY GARY E. MUELLER

#WeAreMore

General Conference is over. What happened—or didn't—during those 11 days in Portland during which 864 delegates came together to make missional, legislative and financial decisions makes a difference. Here are some of my take-aways.

We chose to stand united for the sake of staying in mission. Our gathering reflected our global nature more than ever before. We committed to continuing our work in the Four Areas of Focus, and adopted bold new goals for the next four years: to make a million new disciples of Jesus Christ; to engage three million leaders to make a difference in the world; to transform 400 communities for vital abundant living; to reach a million children with life-saving health interventions; and to double the number of vital congregations. We added five new bishops and doubled our investment in theological education in Africa.

For the first time, a General Conference appealed to the Council of Bishops to lead legislatively as well as spiritually. We bishops have humbly accepted this challenge as we appoint a special commission to engage in finding a way of moving forward, including the possible crafting of legislation related to human sexuality that may be presented at a called session of General Conference prior to 2020.

While this work is carried out, the prohibitions outlined in church law still exist, as does the process for addressing violations. There is, however, a desire to explore alternatives as we seek a deeper and healthier unity as members of the Body of Christ. It is my prayer that the Holy Spirit will enable

the commission and the Council of Bishops to offer a powerful witness to the world about what it means to live in unity in a world that finds it increasingly easy to divide, blame and hate.

When all is said and done, however, we are more than demonstrations, parliamentary maneuvering, budgets, legislation and whatever the media reports about us. I personally witnessed this in our Arkansas delegation. While there are striking differences of opinion on key issues, they modeled what it means to be joined together in the Body of Christ as they laughed, supported each other and prayed together. I was proud of them, and I know you are as well.

What is true about our delegation is also true about our Conference. We are more when we continue to focus on spiritual revival. We are more when we seek to "Grow by One." We are more when we get involved in "200,000 Reasons" in order to ensure that no child goes to bed hungry in our state. We are more when we engage the mission field right outside our churches.

In closing, I return home from General Conference reminded of three very important things. First, I love you. Second, I am grateful to serve in ministry with you. And third, I am ready to roll up my sleeves as we continue to create vital congregations that make disciples of Jesus Christ, who make disciples equipped to transform lives, communities and the world.

Grace and peace,

Gary E. Mueller

Perspective from 'the lady with a baby' at GC2016

BY BRITTANY RICHARDSON WATSON
Special Contributor

It was an incredible honor and heavy burden to attend General Conference as a reserve delegate of the Arkansas Conference. I had a unique experience as I carried my three-month-old son on my hip for much of the two weeks.

Each day Leo cooed along with hymns, babbled during sermons and, more than once, cried loudly during prayers. Being "the lady with a baby" at General Conference gave me an interesting perspective as everyone and anyone who spotted Leo's smiling (or crying) face would immediately release their scowl and give me a smile or a sympathetic glance. Everyone loves babies!

Conservative or progressive, man or woman, American or African, young or old, people like a smiling infant, especially if that infant has red hair and dimples. And so, every day I was greeted with smiles and laughter in the midst of back-breaking tension. As important decisions were made, votes were cast and deals were brokered I cradled, diapered and nursed a baby just feet away.

I can't help but think that these tasks are not so disparate, being called by God to care for something so beautifully fragile.

The fragility of our united church was tangible during those weeks in Portland. As I looked around during worship and coffee breaks, and sometimes even during our legislative sessions, I became acutely aware of what we could lose if we allowed our egos to come before God's love. In that convention center I felt the heaviness and tension of the possibility of schism in the midst of a diverse, loving and committed community of Christians. As



UM NEWS SERVICE PHOTO BY KATHLEEN BARRY

we sang in different languages, told stories of vital churches and celebrated the success of ministries around the world, it became evident that there was surely something left in the United Methodist Church worth fighting for. Slowly it became clear that this was our task as delegates, to strengthen and nurture the church we love, not to tear it apart.

The gravity of this responsibility became even more profound as I worshiped with my church family the Sunday after General Conference adjourned. As we sang familiar hymns and shared joys and concerns with one another, I wept as I saw the fragile yet resilient community of people that God has called the church. For this is truly what we stand to lose: not a quadrennial gathering of international delegates, but an intimate and powerful community of disciples who are bold enough to believe that God is ready to use them to transform the world through divine grace and love. This is the church worth saving.

In the days since General Conference, I find that the usual prayers I say over the life of my baby boy are now intermingled with prayers for our church. As I pray that Leo grow in strength, faith and love, I pray the same for our church. As I pray that I have the patience, wisdom and energy to get

through tomorrow, I pray the same for our church. As I both celebrate and grieve an unknown future for my child whose true potential is still unknown, I pray the same for our church.

Join me in prayer. Join me as we nurture, protect, clean up and cradle the church we love, for it is truly a church worth fighting for.

The Rev. Watson serves as pastor of Sylvan Hills UMC Sherwood.

APPOINTMENTS

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

- Joe Hudson (lay supply)—Alpena UMC
- Amanda Keller (lay supply)—Norfolk UMC
- Shawn Gustin (lay supply)—Quitman UMC
- Paige Gustin (lay supply)—Quitman UMC
- Rick Broadway (retired elder, Missouri Conference)—Winslow UMC
- Cheyann Bolin (local pastor)—Cherry Valley/Vandalle UMCs
- John Moore (local pastor)—Hickory Ridge/Tilton UMCs
- Brenda Wideman (provisional deacon)—First UMC Bella Vista (associate)
- Aaron Madden (part-time local pastor)—Pioneer Memorial/Prairie View UMCs
- Haley Harper (lay supply)—Waveland UMC
- Mark Lyle (other faith)—Cherry Hill UMC
- David Bassham (lay supply)—Mount Olive UMC Van Buren
- Gil Sills (part-time local pastor)—Rose Bud/Harmony UMCs (charge realignment)
- Nikki Pierce (part-time local pastor)—Cedar Grove/Pleasant Plains UMCs (charge realignment)
- Holly Patton (other denomination: Disciples of Christ)—Levy UMC
- Rebecca Boggan (deacon)—First UMC Bentonville (associate pastor of discipleship and hospitality)
- Richard Rogers (full-time local pastor)—Mansfield/Hackett UMCs
- Judy Hall (full-time local pastor)—Paris/Magazine UMCs (charge realignment)
- Paul Marshall (lay supply pastor)—Hays Chapel UMC
- Tom Conner (lay supply pastor)—Elkins UMC
- Beth Latham (part-time local pastor)—Lamar UMC/Mount Olive UMC Clarksville
- James Turner (part-time local pastor)—Garner UMC/Antioch UMC Beebe (new charge alignment)

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

PEOPLE OF FAITH

United Methodist Foundation of Arkansas names new board members



Bruce Bennett



Debra Fiser



Pam Harris



Phil Hathcock



Lynn Kilbourne

The United Methodist Foundation of Arkansas board of directors on May 4 elected eight new members: the Rev. Bruce Bennett of Texarkana; Debra H. Fiser, M.D., of Little Rock; Pam Harris of North Little Rock; the Rev. Phil Hathcock of Maumelle; the Rev. Lynn Kilbourne of Conway; the Rev. Jim Polk of Little Rock; Steve Shults of Little Rock; and Dewitt Smith of Bella Vista.



Jim Polk



Steve Shults



Dewitt Smith

The foundation manages \$131 million in endowment funds and other charitable assets that benefit local churches and other United Methodist ministries in the state.

"We are excited to welcome these incoming board members," said Jim Argue, Jr., UMFA president and CEO. "Our organization is dedicated to creating endowments that enhance United Methodist ministries, and a major key to our success is an active, engaged board of directors who provide leadership that strengthens our United Methodist connection."

Bennett grew up in El Dorado, where he was a member of First United Methodist Church. Since 2009 he has served First UMC Texarkana, and he previously pastored for 15 years at First UMC Sheridan. He served on the Arkansas Conference Committee on Episcopacy, Arkansas Conference Committee on Nominations and currently serves as a circuit elder. He is a graduate of Hendrix College, Asbury Theological Seminary and Princeton Theological Seminary.

Fiser returned to teaching and research in pediatrics in 2013 after serving as UAMS vice chancellor and dean of the College of Medicine. She joined the faculty in the UAMS Department of Pediatrics in 1981, where she served as chief of pediatric critical care medicine and as director of the Pediatric Intensive Care Unit at Arkansas Children's Hospital (ACH). In 1995, she was appointed chair of the Department of Pediatrics at UAMS and chief of pediatrics at ACH. She is a member of the church council at St. James UMC Little Rock.

Harris is a lifelong Methodist who has previously served on the UMFA board. Although she was born in Chicago, her Arkansas roots trace back to her grandparents, and in 1992 she became a permanent resident. Harris has held accounting and human resources positions in state and federal government. A certified Lay Servant, she has served as a member of the Conference Board of Pension and Health Benefits and in a number of capacities at Wesley Chapel UMC Little Rock.

Hathcock serves as interim pastor at Trinity UMC Little Rock. He retired in 2013 after 41 years as a pastor in Arkansas. A native of Fayetteville, he graduated from the University of Arkansas and Duke Divinity School. His previous appointments include long-term service at Siloam Springs and First UMC Conway. He served as superintendent of the Central District, then as director of connectional ministries and assistant to the bishop. A returning UMFA board member, Hathcock has chaired the Board of Ordained Ministry, the Council on Professional Ministries and the Order of Elders.

Kilbourne, associate pastor at First UMC Conway, will begin a new appointment in July as the senior pastor of First UMC North Little Rock. She serves as the 2016 clergywomen convener and on the Episcopacy Committee, the Steel-Hendrix Awards Nominating Committee and the Annual Conference Planning Team. After graduating from Henderson State University and Duke Divinity School, she served as associate pastor at First UMC Bryant. She is a UMFA Seminary Scholar.

Polk recently was named assistant to the bishop for the Arkansas Conference effective in July, and he will serve as an ex-officio member of the UMFA board. He has been senior pastor of First UMC Arkadelphia since 2013 and previously served in El Dorado, Nashville, Primrose, Dermott

and Camden. A native of Magnolia, he graduated from Hendrix College and Asbury Theological Seminary. He has chaired both the Conference Council on Finance and Administration (CFA) and the Conference Board of Ordained Ministry, and represented CFA on the Conference Vision Team.

Shults grew up in St. Paul UMC Little Rock, and has been a member of First UMC Little Rock for 30 years. He served a recent stint on the Staff/Pastor-Parish Relations Committee and participates in the Stewpot ministry. Shults is a lawyer with the firm of Shults & Brown, LLP, where his practice involves commercial litigation, other business and civil matters and pro bono activities. His civic involvement has included public education, hunger relief, political candidates and causes and the Old State House Museum. He is a graduate of Yale College and Harvard Law School.

A returning board member and former board chair, Smith has served for many years as a lay member of the Arkansas Annual Conference, and is currently the lay leader at Oakley Chapel UMC Rogers. His career in commercial real estate includes land development, construction, sales and leasing, asset and property management, financial analysis, financing and structuring complex investments. He serves on the board of directors for the Washington Regional Medical Foundation and currently chairs the board of Mount Sequoyah Retreat and Conference Center. Smith is a commissioner for the Arkansas Martin Luther King Jr. Commission.

Founded in 1963 and responsible for more than 750 funds that support United Methodist ministries, UMFA is one of the largest United Methodist Foundations in the country.

Arkansas admins attend PAUMCS national gathering



Attendees from Arkansas stop for a photo with "There's No Place Like Home" décor at the PAUMCS National Conference in Wichita, Kansas. From left: Cathy Hall Hughes, Bobbie Verser, Teresa Bodie, Fonda Kirkman, Cindy Parker, Kathy Bracke and Connie Thomas.

COURTESY PHOTO

Seven administrative professionals in the Arkansas Conference attended in April the Professional Association of United Methodist Church Secretaries (PAUMCS) National Conference in Wichita, Kansas. The host committee offered a Wizard of Oz sendup with the conference's theme, "There's No Place Like Home."

Among the highlights: The Rev. Adam Hamilton, senior pastor of Church of the Resurrection in Leawood, Kansas, and his assistant, Sue Thompson, led a session on how they partner in ministry, and Adam taught from his book *Making Sense of the Bible*. Bishop Scott Jones also led participants in a half-day session titled "The Way of the Cross Leads Home."

Five repeat attendees were joined by two new attendees this year, Teresa Bodie from St. James UMC Little Rock and Bobbie Verser from Faith UMC Little Rock. Both Bodie and Verser received scholarships from the Arkansas Chapter of PAUMCS.

The Arkansas Chapter of PAUMCS will be offering scholarships again next year to the National Conference in Chicago, May 4-6, 2017. To learn more, or to receive information about the Arkansas Chapter's upcoming fall meeting, set for Sept. 22 at Philander Smith College, contact Arkansas chapter president Fonda Kirkman, 501-851-1433 or fkirkman@arumc.org.

—submitted by Cathy Hall Hughes

CLASSIFIEDS

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



LEFT: The Revs. Maxine Allen and Siegfried Johnson serve Holy Communion during worship at the Grow By One Summit.



RIGHT: Flanked by the Rev. Dr. Blake Bradford and the Rev. Dede Roberts of the Arkansas Conference Center for Vitality, Bishop Gary Mueller sends forth attendees of the April 30 Grow By One Summit to go fulfill their mission.

AUM PHOTOS BY AMY FORBUS

Summit

(continued from page 1)

fatigue that can come from struggling to help a congregation grow and be fruitful. He shared the vision set forth by the Apostle Paul in Philippians 2, “that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father” (NIV).

“It’s a vision that God gave Paul. It’s a vision that God has given us,” he said. He challenged attendees to make the decision to grow, to pray and to learn new skills.

“Grow By One is not about what you haven’t done, it’s about what you can do,” he said. “It’s not about the size of your church, it’s about the size of God’s vision.”

Participants chose from a number of workshops led by special guests from outside the Arkansas Conference, as well as presenters from within Arkansas who shared stories of fruitful ministries in their own local contexts. Topics ranged from starting new outreach ministries and forging neighborhood connections to creating opportunities to deepen discipleship and using a team approach to designing worship.

Reaching new people

Keynote speaker Kay Kotan warned the laity in the crowd that she, as a fellow layperson, would be hard on them. “I’m going to say things that your pastor’s not able or willing to say,” she said. She reminded them that reaching new people is the job of everyone in the church—not someone who has been hired to handle it, and not just a committee of people—and that the same goes for living out the mission

of the church.

“Your mission is to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world,” she said. “You don’t need to figure it out. It’s already been given to us. We just need to put it into action.”

Kotan emphasized the importance of making new disciples, not just growing and forming the ones already connected with our churches.

“We have to turn our eyes outward,” she said. “We have to see the people who are searching, who are hopeless, who are lonely.” The priority is people who don’t yet know Christ, so we should leave room in our lives for building such relationships.

In doing research for the book *Get Their Name*, which she co-authored with the Rev. Bob Farr, Kotan noted that inwardly focused churches consider evangelism to be getting previously active members of a church to return.

“Laity, listen up: Quit asking your pastor to do that,” she said. “It is much more difficult to convince someone to come back than it is to reach someone new.”

Outwardly focused churches evangelize by reaching new people and building authentic relationships with people they don’t know. She encouraged people to practice sharing their faith story—first within our churches to learn what it feels like, then moving on to others. She also pointed out that a story of one’s church membership, while perhaps easier to tell, does not have the same impact as a faith story.

Kotan suggested asking at the start of a church gathering, “Where have you seen God at work in the last week?” as a way to help people learn to share their faith stories. It helps them begin to look for God in their lives, and makes things personal.

“This is belly-to-belly, eyeball-

to-eyeball work, folks,” she said.

Kotan called good deeds “passive evangelism,” and insisted that people must get more personal with mission instead of simply writing checks or donating food and clothing.

“What if the person who needed the warm coat got it from you?” she asked.

Welcoming with purpose

Kotan encouraged churches to examine how they welcome guests. “A guest is someone honored. A

guest is someone we’re looking forward to,” she said, adding that churches need to plan strategically to receive guests while concentrating on the church’s purpose and mission.

She encouraged churches to become known for something meaningful by the wider community—not something like an annual fundraiser. Churches need to play to their strengths. “Find the smoke, and build a fire from the passion of your leaders,” she said.

Circling a church’s resources around focusing on what matters—reaching people for Christ—will

help a church move from micromanaging activities to supporting and encouraging its people as they reach out to others in strategic, intentional ways.

“Let’s quit playing church,” she said. “The worst thing you can do is have a millennial come in and you ask them to serve on a committee.”

She cautioned against being a “worker bee” for your congregation when what’s really needed is for you to be a relationship builder—which may require a change in priorities.

Twenty-first century

[continued on page 12]

Avoid being pulled into the orbit of materialism!

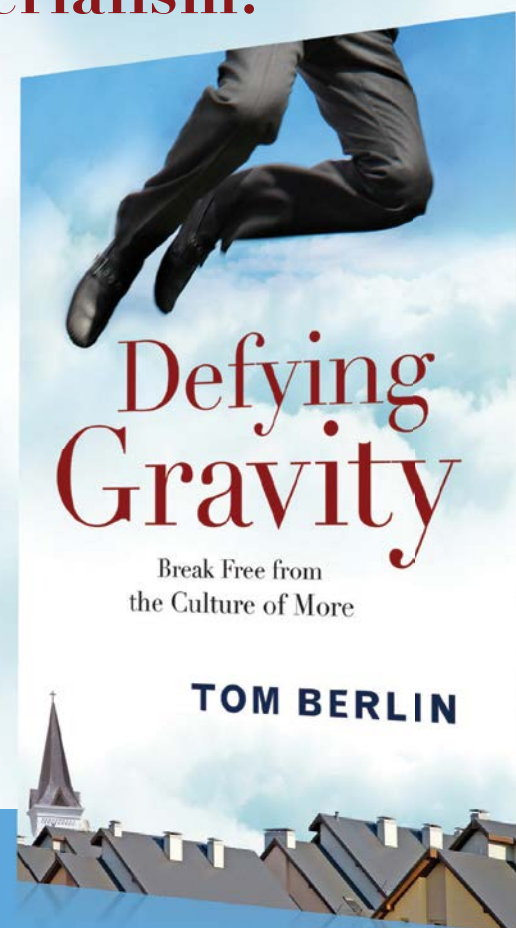
Stuff. And more stuff. And even more stuff. The next thing you know, we’re pulled into the orbit of materialism! In *Defying Gravity*, Tom Berlin takes a look at the difference between “want” and “need” and illustrates how possessions can create an unbearable weight on our lives. He shows us how too much stuff affects our ability to serve and thrive, and then he helps us explore what is required to sustain a vibrant life.

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Study Components

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- Leader Guide
- Program Flash Drive
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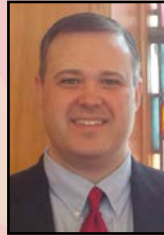
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Eleven to be ordained at Annual Conference June 21

Pending approval during the June 19 clergy session of the Arkansas Annual Conference, the following provisional clergy will be ordained in full connection to the Arkansas Conference. The Service of Ordination and Commissioning is set for Tuesday, June 21, at 7:30 p.m., in the Bank of the Ozarks Arena, Hot Springs. All are invited to attend.



Clark Atkins, elder
North Little Rock
Education: Arkansas State University; University of Arkansas; Asbury Theological Seminary
Appointment: First UMC Harrisburg



William Cato, elder*
Searcy
Education: Henderson State University; Memphis Theological Seminary
Current appointment: First UMC Fordyce
Future appointment: First UMC Arkadelphia



Jana Green, elder
Piedmont, Oklahoma
Education: University of Central Oklahoma; Wesley Theological Seminary
Appointment: UALR Wesley Foundation



Lloyd Blake Langston, elder
Pine Bluff
Education: Vanderbilt University; Asbury Theological Seminary
Appointment: UCA Wesley Foundation



Kathleen McMurray

Kathleen Louise McMurray, elder
Little Rock
Education: Louisiana State University; Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary
Appointment: Grace UMC Conway (associate)



Nan Hopkins Nelson

Nan Hopkins Nelson, elder
Ozark
Education: UALR; Nova Southeastern University; Phillips Theological Seminary
Appointment: First UMC Clarendon/Holly Grove UMC



Naomi Rogers

Naomi Rogers, elder
Jeon-Ju, South Korea
Education: University of Arkansas at Little Rock; Memphis Theological Seminary
Appointment: First UMC Atkins/Bell's Chapel UMC



Jessie Waddell Teegarden

Jessie Waddell Teegarden, deacon
Little Rock
Education: Ouachita Baptist University; Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary
Appointment: To be determined



Michael D. Utley

Michael D. Utley, elder
Harrisburg
Education: Arkansas State University; Touro University; U.S. Army Command & General Staff College; Memphis Theological Seminary
Appointment: Henderson UMC Little Rock



Todd Vick

Todd Vick, elder
Fort Smith
Education: John Brown University; Asbury Theological Seminary
Appointment: Salem UMC Conway



Dane Womack

William Dane Womack, elder
Cave City
Education: University of Central Arkansas; Duke Divinity School
Appointment: First UMC Fort Smith (associate)

*Cato is already ordained in another tradition, so the Conference will recognize his existing orders and welcome him as an Elder in Full Connection along with those being ordained that evening.

Fourteen candidates to become provisional members June 21

Pending the approval of the June 19 clergy session of the Annual Conference, 14 persons will be commissioned as provisional members of the Arkansas Conference, one of the final steps in the journey to ordination. The Service of Ordination and Commissioning is set for Tuesday, June 21, at 7:30 p.m., in the Bank of the Ozarks Arena, Hot Springs. All are invited to attend.



Michael W. Bolin

Michael W. Bolin, elder track
Beebe
Education: Arkansas State University; Memphis Theological Seminary
Appointment: Wheatley/Salem UMCs



Patti Butler

Patti Butler, elder track
Russellville
Education: Southeast Missouri State; UALR; Central Missouri State; Iliff School of Theology
Future appointment: Christ of the Hills UMC Hot Springs Village (associate)



Lauren DeLano

Lauren DeLano, elder track
Fayetteville
Education: Hendrix College; Boston University School of Theology
Future appointment: First UMC Conway (associate)



Katy Dunn

Katy Dunn, deacon track
Little Rock
Education: Southern Methodist University; Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary
Appointment: To be determined



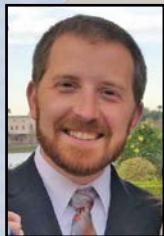
James Kjolraug

James Clark Kjolraug, elder track
Paragould
Education: Arkansas State University; Duke Divinity School
Appointment: Vilonia UMC



Rashim Merriwether

Rashim Malik Merriwether Sr., elder track
Fort Smith
Education: University of Arkansas-Fort Smith; Saint Paul School of Theology
Appointment: Hunter UMC Little Rock



Douglas Phillips

Douglas Shawn Phillips, elder track
Springfield, Missouri
Education: College of the Ozarks; United Theological Seminary
Future appointment: Greenwood UMC (associate)



Judy Rudd Platt

Judy Rudd Platt, elder track
Little Rock
Education: UALR; UALR School of Law; Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary
Appointment: First UMC Bella Vista (associate)



Jeremy Pressgrove

Jeremy Pressgrove, elder track
West Memphis
Education: UCA; Univ. of Alabama; United Theological Seminary
Current appointment: St. Luke/Geyer Springs
Future appointment: St. Luke/Pulaski Heights UMCs



Corey A. Tyson Read

Corey A. Tyson Read, elder track
Jacksonville
Education: UALR; Duke Divinity
Future appointment: First UMC West Memphis (associate)



Dan Read

Dan Read, elder track
Liberty, Missouri
Education: Fort Lewis College; Duke Divinity School
Future appointment: First UMC West Memphis (associate)



Jay Stephen Simpson

Jay Stephen Simpson, elder track
West Memphis
Education: Crichton College; Asbury Theological Seminary
Current appointment: Hughes/Madison UMCs
Future appointment: Osceola UMC



Brenda D. Wideman

Brenda D. Wideman, deacon track
Fayetteville
Education: University of Delaware; University of Arizona; Perkins School of Theology, SMU
Appointment: First UMC Bella Vista (assoc)



Jennie Williams

Jennie Williams, elder track
Tulsa, Oklahoma
Education: Lipscomb University; Asbury Theological Seminary
Future appointment: Highland Valley UMC Little Rock (associate)

GC2016: Arkansas highlights

- Arkansas delegation chair the Rev. **Mark Norman** was elected to a four-year term on the Interjurisdictional Committee on Episcopacy, which handles any transfer of bishops across jurisdictional lines. Norman currently serves as superintendent of the Arkansas Conference's Southeast District.
- Christ of the Hills UMC Hot Springs Village** received a mention in a video report from the General Commission on United Methodist Men: <https://goo.gl/AWJLPN>.
- Several **deacons from Arkansas** were included in the video celebrating the 20th anniversary of the Order of Deacons: <https://goo.gl/FV72cS>.

See photos here and on the next page for other actions taken in Portland by United Methodists from the Arkansas Conference.



Lay reserve delegate **Miller Wilbourn**, center, stood with other young people as they read the statement of unity they adopted at the Global Young People's Convocation. They timed their statement to occur during a debate on the Council of Bishops' recommendation to form a commission to discuss contentious matters surrounding human sexuality.



The Rev. **Rodney Steele**, a member of the Standing Committee on Central Conference Matters, introduced the proposal to add five bishops in Africa beginning in 2020. Steele currently serves as superintendent of the Arkansas Conference's Southwest District.



Clergy delegate the Rev. Dr. **Rebekah Miles** was elected a subcommittee chair in the General Administration committee, which gave her the duty of introducing legislation to change the wording of Article IV of the church's constitution. The change was approved by a 68 percent margin, and will take effect if ratified by a two-thirds majority at next year's annual conference gatherings.

AUM PHOTOS BY AMY FORBUS

[more highlights on page 7]

General Conference (continued from page 1)

purpose, but as the 2016 General Conference did not approve it, Robert's Rules remained the only manner by which business would move forward.

But delegates later turned to the Council of Bishops to ask for leadership on handling divisive issues, particularly surrounding petitions related to human sexuality. (Bishops do not vote at General Conferences; their primary tasks there are to preach in worship and preside over plenary sessions.) The bishops returned with a statement that upheld a desire for unity and recommended forming a special commission to examine every paragraph of church law that deals with human sexuality. The statement read, in part:

"We will name such a Commission to include persons from every region of our UMC, and will include representation from differing perspectives on the debate. We commit to maintain an on-going dialogue with this Commission as they do their work, including clear objectives and outcomes. Should they complete their work in time for a called General Conference, then we will call a two- to three-day gathering before the 2020 General Conference."

Though the first motion to adopt the bishops' recommendation failed, a slightly different motion later passed by just 23 votes. The commission's size, specific membership and the convening date have yet to be determined.

To read the bishops' full statement, visit <http://arumc.org/2016/05/offering-a-way-forward>.

A variety of changes

From making small wording changes in the Book of Discipline to paving the way for further expansion of the church outside the United States, actions of the General Conference have a variety of ramifications.

Actions taken by the delegates included:

- Approving a new high-tech hymnal project, which will be the first official United Methodist Hymnal produced since 1989. Delegates approved the creation of the cloud-based, print-on-demand hymnal, and a 15-person hymnal revision committee to shepherd its development.

Arkansas delegation chair the Rev. Mark Norman served on the Discipleship committee, which approved legislation for the new hymnal.

"It's a hymnal that gives the diverse kind of congregations that we have in Arkansas the opportunity to be able to sing praises to God in their different ways, whether it be in more

contemporary venues, or whether it be in more traditional venues," he said. "The new hymnal is going to be so flexible that it really helps congregations be able to use multimedia... it's going to be a great benefit and change to our churches in Arkansas."

- Adding age and gender to Article IV of the church constitution, which addresses the inclusive nature of the church. Because it changes the constitution, this measure will not be final unless it is ratified by a two-thirds majority at annual conference gatherings. Arkansas and other conferences will hold that vote in 2017.
- Withdrawing from the Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice, of which the denomination was a founding member in 1973 and which has prompted debate at every General Conference between then and now.
- Approving the addition of five new bishops to help lead United Methodists in Africa, beginning in 2020.
- Celebrating the success of the Imagine No Malaria campaign, to which Arkansas Conference churches and individuals have given more than \$1 million. The celebration included the release of the song "Able," available for free download and use by churches at www.umc.org/who-we-are/united-methodist-anthem-god-is-able-lyrics.
- Launching the Abundant Health Initiative on the heels of Imagine No Malaria, with the goal of reaching one million children with life-saving intervention by the year 2020 by ensuring safe births, promoting breastfeeding for infant nutrition, preventing and treating childhood diseases and promoting children's health and wholeness.

Arkansas delegates reflect

Like others surrounding them in Portland, members of the Arkansas delegation experienced frustrations throughout their time together.

"Our work was sabotaged by parliamentary maneuvering and parliamentary confusion and repeated referrals. There was so much distrust," said Karen Millar, a lay delegate from Searcy. "I am very thankful that General Conference is not the Church. I was so thankful and almost giddy to get back to my local church."

"We do much better in small groups than in large," wrote the Rev. John Miles in a May 20 Facebook post reflecting on his experience. "Our small group conversations were cordial and respectful. It is hard to demonize people when you talk to them. I think this has applications for the local church. Is it possible to have a wide diversity of people in the same church? If they are willing to talk and listen I think it is possible. Especially if they are all willing to put Jesus *[continued]*"

General Conference

(continued from page 7)

first.”

Karon Mann, the first-elected lay delegate and current Arkansas Conference lay leader, expressed appreciation for those who served at General Conference.

“One of the things I appreciate the most about the Arkansas delegation is our commitment to be in covenant and treat each other with respect, even when we do differ, and it is valuable to have safe space where you can feel what you feel, think what you think, but still be loved and respected by your fellow delegates,” she said.

Norman saw the close vote on the bishops’ recommendation as a reflection not just of differing opinions, but also of different approaches.

“A lot of people had a heartfelt desire to want to talk about the human sexuality issues. And it was out of that passion to want to talk about it that people were not always a fan of the Council of Bishops’ decision, because there was this hunger, this desire to talk and deal with it now,” he said. “But I so appreciate our desire to have focused conversation about the human

sexuality issues later. It’ll make for better conversation.”

Like Miles and numerous other delegates, the Rev. Dede Roberts, director of the Arkansas Conference Center for Vitality, shared on social media her thoughts on the bishops’ recommendation.

“Their suggested way forward is a deliberate process to keep us in conversation,” she wrote on Facebook. “I pray they will gather a commission which is representative without being controlled by the caucuses that have deadlocked us for years. I am hopeful that there is a way forward, for as I have said before, I think our greatest witness for the love of God is that we stay at the Table together instead of fracturing into our constituency groups. If we teach of a Triune God whose name is love, we must witness to that love through our relationships together.”

Norman, a first-time delegate, said he had heard stories of how difficult General Conference could be, but felt blessed by being able to interact with United Methodists from all over the world.

“There’s still an overcoming joy about being part of a global church,” he said.

Learn more about GC2016 actions

Watch a series of videos taken at General Conference featuring members of the Arkansas delegation, and a May 20 audio interview with Karon Mann and the Rev. Mark Norman that includes a photo essay of images captured May 16-20: <https://goo.gl/mWZt7m>.

View the albums posted at www.facebook.com/arkansasumc for more photos taken at the gathering.

Visit <http://gc2016.umc.org> for more detailed news reports on General Conference.



Alex Shannon (top row, left), a member of Pulaski Heights UMC Little Rock, sang on May 16 as part of the Centenary College Choir. The choir performed as part of morning worship, as well as at a lunchtime concert.



The Rev. **Barbara Douglas**, pastor of St. Luke UMC Pine Bluff, served as a page for General Conference 2016.

ARUMC at GC2016



Lay delegate **Karon Mann** presented a minority report from the Local Church committee.



Brian Swain (left), the Rev. **John Embrey** and **Karen Millar** join hands in prayer with other delegates seated at their table on the floor of General Conference.

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Registration opens June 26

Arkansas students heading to UM colleges as 2016 Dollars for Scholars recipients

The United Methodist Higher Education Foundation recently named 40 Arkansas students as recipients of the Dollars for Scholars scholarship. For each recipient, the students' local church gives \$1,000, and the United Methodist Higher Education Foundation matches that contribution. Then the United Methodist Foundation of Arkansas (UMFA) gives \$1,000, and the student's selected college contributes \$1,000 for a significant \$4,000 award.

"We are proud to announce that a total of \$40,000 in grants will be presented from UMFA to Arkansas students attending United Methodist colleges and universities during the 2016-2017 school year," said Jim Argue Jr., president of the United Methodist Foundation of Arkansas.

Attending Centenary College is Alexander M. Shannon of Pulaski Heights UMC Little Rock; and attending Dillard University is Kayla M. Vann of Wesley Chapel UMC Little Rock.

Hendrix College students receiving the scholarships include Ethny M. Ashcraft of Lakeside UMC Pine Bluff; Aubrey N. Brink of Sequoyah UMC Fayetteville; Samuel E. Byrd of First UMC Malvern; Christopher A. Carver of First UMC

Blytheville; Christina G. Choh of Hope Korean First UMC Jacksonville; Samuel M. Coker of First UMC Conway; Andrew D. Fleming of Grand Avenue UMC Hot Springs; Ava Z. Graves of First UMC Bryant; Liam R. Hankins-Hull of First UMC Little Rock; Caitlyn B. Hendrickson of First UMC Little Rock; Chad E. Hornsby of First UMC Brinkley; Harper L. Purifoy of First UMC Malvern; Daniel K. Reece of First UMC West Memphis; Faith Reynolds of Grace UMC Hensley; Michala J. Roberts of First UMC Conway; Victoria L. Spradley of Pulaski Heights UMC Little Rock; Douglas A. Tiler of Central UMC Fayetteville; Delaney G. Wells of First UMC Charleston; and Margaret A. Young of Lakeside UMC Pine Bluff.

Scholarship recipients studying at Oklahoma City University are Anna G. Estes of St. Paul UMC Little Rock; Addison G. Griffin of Highland Valley UMC Little Rock; and Emily L. Wollenberg of First UMC Clarksville.

Philander Smith College scholarship recipients include Christopher D. Beasley, Janan J. D. Caffey, Lorenzo C. Collins, Aaron Davis, Nicole L. Fulton, Anthony S. Harris, Kyra T. Jones, Titus N.

Manning, Deviontae T. Martin, Benjamin C. Mason, Christopher C. Rowland and Jalon S. Warren, all of Wesley Chapel UMC, Little Rock.

Andrea' L. Cummings of Wesley Chapel UMC Little Rock will attend Candler School of Theology; Taylor W. Loy of Central UMC Fayetteville will attend Duke Divinity School;

Laura J. Prange of First UMC Dewitt will attend Iliff School of Theology; and Dominique A. Rutledge of Wesley Chapel UMC Little Rock will attend Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary.

The United Methodist Higher Education Foundation is dedicated to helping students achieve their

dreams by providing scholarship aid for United Methodist students attending 122 United Methodist-related institutions. UMFA is one of the largest United Methodist Foundations in the country, and is responsible for over 750 funds that have combined assets in excess of \$130 million.

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.

Flood recovery in SE 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 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 give your input on possible topics, complete the poll at <https://goo.gl/Fbvclf>. To learn more about the event's location, visit www.mountsequoyah.org.

Cuba mission opportunities through traveling or giving

- The 2017 Arkansas UMVIM construction team will travel to Havana Jan. 19-20 to Jan. 30-31 to build housing for the Methodist Seminary. Only a few openings remain for this team.
- Sponsor a child for an August Bible School in the rapidly growing Methodist Church in Holguin, Cuba. For \$5, purchase a Bible School T-shirt for a child to wear over and over. For \$10, add a Bible that they will read and cherish. Gifts of \$15 would cover snacks for the six-session Bible School, as well. A \$20 gift includes a T-shirt, Bible, snacks and crafts for one child. Follow-up photos provided.
- Donate a traditional wedding gown for the Holguin church to rent, providing church income and a valuable service to members. Marriage, family and tradition are very important to the Methodist Church of Cuba, but wedding gowns are in short supply. Imagine your wedding gown coming out of storage to bring income and joy in the church in Cuba. Photos of the weddings provided on request. Communication with the happy couple very likely.

To participate either by traveling with a team or sending gifts listed above, contact Nechi Fullerton, nfullerton@yahoo.com or 501-766-8151. Fullerton has made seven visits to the Methodist Church in Cuba over the past three years, leading three UMVIM teams and staying two months last fall in the Catedral de Holguin.

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

Sylvan Hills UMC clinic offers school physicals to mark first anniversary



The monthly wellness clinic at Sylvan Hills UMC Sherwood celebrated one year of serving its community in May 2016. Each month's clinic has a special focus in addition to providing regular health screenings such as blood pressure and blood sugar checks, and the May clinic's focus was on school physicals. Dozens of students from the area received free physical exams thanks to the congregation's work.

The free clinic is offered the first Thursday of every month, from 4 to 7 p.m., and a light meal is available. The food and the services of the clinic are open to the entire community.

To learn more about the clinic or to connect with its coordinator, Audrey Burks, contact the church office at 501-835-3410.

—submitted by Kimberly Trice

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COMING UP

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. 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. 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 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.

Confessing Movement of Arkansas to host Watson June 20

The Rev. Dr. David F. Watson will speak at the annual Confessing Movement of Arkansas Breakfast, set for 6:30 a.m. Monday, June 20, at Union Missionary Baptist Church. For details, see the related advertisement on this page.

Church and Society Breakfast to host Norman, Mann for GC2016 discussion June 21

The Rev. Mark Norman and Arkansas Conference lay leader Karon Mann, the first-elected clergy and lay delegates to General Conference 2016, will discuss their experience of that worldwide gathering at the annual Board of Church and Society Breakfast, set for 6 a.m. Tuesday, June 21, at

Grand Avenue UMC Hot Springs, 841 Quapaw Avenue. Cost is \$15; those who did not purchase a ticket as part of Annual Conference registration and wish to make reservations should contact the Rev. Melissa Thomas at melissa.thomas@baptist-health.org.

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 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 Little Rock. 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.

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.

RENEWAL IN THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH**The Confessing Movement of Arkansas Annual Breakfast****Monday, June 20, at 6:30 a.m.****Union Missionary Baptist Church**
(behind the Convention Center)**"Where Are We Now? Reflections After Portland"**

David F. Watson, Guest Speaker

David Watson is the Academic Dean and Associate Professor of New Testament at United Theological Seminary in Dayton, Ohio. During his time in administration he has helped to oversee one of the fastest growing and most dynamic seminaries in the U.S. As an ordained elder in the West Ohio Conference, David serves on his Conference Board of Ordained Ministries, the board of Evangelical Fellowship of West Ohio, as well as the University Senate of the United Methodist Church. He has written *Honor Among Christians: The Cultural Key to the Messianic Secret* and *Key United Methodist Beliefs* (with William J. Abraham) and numerous articles and essays. David has preached and lectured in a diverse array of settings, from Dayton to Dallas, Cuba to Vietnam. His blog is www.davidfwatson.me



David F. Watson

Tickets are \$15.00. Purchase tickets as part of your registration for the Arkansas Annual Conference, or by contacting Karen Millar, 501-268-4859 or karenmillar@hotmail.com by June 10.

First UMC Benton takes hunger event community-wide

First UMC Benton continued an emphasis on reducing hunger in its own neighborhood by holding "Benton vs. Hunger" on Saturday, May 14. In addition to the primary goal of providing food for Saline County residents in need, their secondary goal was to expand from the previous year's event, beyond the members and friends of a single church. They invited First Baptist Church to come on board as a partner to promote and fund the event, and held it off of the church's campus, at the Benton High School cafeteria. The day ended with 40,080 meals packaged—all of which will be distributed

to churches of any denomination who have food pantries in Saline County, as well as through the local organization Churches' Joint Council On Human Needs (CJOHN).

—submitted by Greg Gillis

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OBITUARIES

CLARKSVILLE

Billy Gene Fox, 1935-2016

The Rev. Billy Gene Fox, 80, passed away May 12, 2016, in Clarksville, Arkansas. He was born July 11, 1935, in Winding Gulf, West Virginia.



Billy Fox

He was a retired pastor and brick mason. As a full-time local pastor and later an associate clergy member of the United Methodist Church, he served appointments at churches in the North Arkansas and Little Rock Conferences, as well as in the Tennessee and Missouri East Conferences. Churches he served in Arkansas included Almyra, Parkers Chapel, Jasper, Lamar and Monette.

He was preceded in death by his wife, Betty Ray Berry Fox; his parents, Ralph Edward Fox, Lillie Grimmitt Fox and Genesee Grimmitt Fox; a son, Jeffrey Kent Fox; three brothers, John, Wayne and Harold Fox; and two sisters, Bessie Fox Smith and Betty Fox Eikleburger.

He is survived by three sons: Matthew Lynn Fox and Jesse David Fox, both of Clarksville, Arkansas; and John William Fox and his wife, Dawn, of Nashville, Tennessee; two daughters: Regena Marie Fox Mason and her husband, Alvin, of Clarksville, Arkansas, and Holly Rae Fox Carter and her husband, David, of Nashville, Tennessee; a brother, Ralph Fox Jr. of Beckley, West Virginia; a sister, Doris Fox Reeder of Atlanta, Georgia; and seven grandchildren: Laney Mason, Kendall Mason, J.W. Fox, Levi Carter, Landen Bruden Fox, Kent Fox and Fox Carter.

Visitations were held Hardwicke Funeral Home Chapel in Clarksville, Arkansas and at Taylor Funeral Home Chapel in Dickson, Tennessee. The funeral service followed the second visitation, Monday, May 16, at Taylor Funeral Home Chapel in Dickson, Tennessee, with Herbert Wilkerson officiating. Burial followed in Van Leer Cemetery in Van Leer, Tennessee.

Pallbearers were J.W. Fox, Kendall Mason, Matt Fox, John Fox, Jesse Fox and Tim Potter. Honorary pallbearers were Levi Carter, Landen Bruden Fox, Kent Fox and Fox Carter.

HOT SPRINGS

Laura Botteron McLeod

Laura Botteron McLeod, 86, of Hot Springs, passed away Sunday, April 17, 2016.

She was born Aug. 5, 1929 in Denver, Colorado, the daughter of John C. Brouse and Louise Adams Brouse.

She was preceded in death by her first husband, the Rev. Harold Botteron, who in the 1960s and 1970s served as a full-time local pastor in the Little Rock Conference; her second husband, John McLeod; her parents; her brothers Harry Brouse and Gilbert Brouse; and her son Paul Botteron.

She is survived by two daughters, Gail Adams of Hot Springs and Sheryl Pease (Arthur) of Haughton, Louisiana; one daughter-in-law, Annette Botteron of Hot Springs; one granddaughter, Penny Botteron of Hot Springs; three grandsons, John Botteron (Sarah) of Hot Springs, Kevin Pease (Sherri) of Plain Dealing, Louisiana and Eric Pease of Houston, Texas; three great-granddaughters, Emily Botteron, Adalyn Botteron and Raelynn Pease; one great-grandson, Drew Botteron; and one step-great-granddaughter, Olivia Stewart.

Services were held Wednesday, April 20 at Caruth-Hale Funeral Home, Hot Springs with Dr. John McCallum presiding. Interment followed at Crestview Cemetery. Pallbearers were John Botteron, Kevin Pease, Eric Pease, Adams Richardson, Brent Smith and Danny Sherer.

Laura was Baptist in her faith. She loved taking care of her cats and watching the birds. She worked all her life in various bookkeeping positions, most recently for the National Park Service and the Army Corps of Engineers. She gave generously to numerous charities. Her children and grandchildren "rise up and call her blessed."

SILOAM SPRINGS

Sophia J. Barton

Sophia J. Barton, 77, of Siloam Springs, formerly of Conway and Flippin, passed away Wednesday, May 4, 2016, in



Laura Botteron McLeod

Springdale, Arkansas.

She was born Feb. 18, 1939, in Tilton, Arkansas, the daughter of Sam and Nora Mae Baldwin.

Sophia studied education at the University of Arkansas, and was a Razorback fanatic. She taught elementary school for many years, dedicating herself and being loved by the children in her classrooms. She loved to spend time with her family, complete crossword puzzles and follow Razorback football and basketball.

She married James Barton on Easter Sunday, 1956, at Tilton United Methodist Church in Tilton, Arkansas. James later became a Methodist pastor and served as an elder in the North Arkansas and Little Rock Conferences of the United Methodist Church.

Sophia is survived by her three children, James (Sherry) Barton of Gentry, Aloha Doss of Harrison, and Anthony Barton of Rancho Cucamonga, California; 10 grandchildren, Brian (Amy) Barton, Tammy (Bubba) Hall, Brynn (Casey) Barton-Shelley, Brooke Barton, John Ryan (Amanda) Johnson, Kelsie Smalley, Hollis Barton, JB Smalley, Hattie Barton and Hanna Barton; and 12 great-grandchildren.

She was preceded in death by her husband, the Rev. James A. Barton; grandparents, W.F. Kirksey and Willie Jane Pulley Kirksey and Sophie Biggem Baldwin and Nomido Baldwin; parents, Sam and Nora Mae Baldwin; and a great-grandson, Bailey Barton.

A funeral service was held Saturday, May 7, 2016, at Tilton United Methodist Church, with the Rev. Glenn Hicks officiating. Burial followed in the Kirby's Tucker Memorial Cemetery, Mountain Home, with BJ Burnett, David Brown, Brian Barton, John Ryan Johnson, Casey Shelly and Levi Hall as pallbearers.

Memorials may be made to the Tilton United Methodist Church, CR 133, Hickory Ridge, AR 72347 or CARTI, 622 Hospital Drive, Mountain Home, AR 72653.



Sophia Barton

Moore receives honor from Order of St. Luke

Bradley K. Moore received the Hoyt Hickman award for Outstanding Liturgical Scholarship Practice, awarded by the Order of St. Luke to the graduating student who has demonstrated quality scholarship in the study of liturgy and is an effective leader of church worship. The award was given during this year's Memphis Theological Seminary graduate luncheon. Moore, who graduated magna cum laude with his Master of Divinity degree this year while serving as associate pastor of First UMC Jacksonville, begins serving July 1 as a local pastor at Huntsville and Presley Chapel UMCs.



Keo UMC partners with city for public health action

Keo United Methodist Church partnered recently with the City of Keo to fight mosquitos around the community and raise awareness of the potential for Zika virus. After prayer and study, church members approached the city about a cleanup project. Mayor James Pearson and the city council embraced the idea, providing planning assistance and two 20-foot trash containers.



Neighbors, along with Keo area churches including Keo UMC, picked up debris from lawns and alleys and filled the trash containers three times over the course of a week. Removing lawn debris prevents mosquito eggs from hatching new mosquitos because it minimizes standing water where they grow. In addition, the city sprays for adult mosquito control. Jenny Ross, a Lonoke County Extension agent, provided information regarding mosquito abatement. The city plans another cleanup in early fall.

The cleanup project culminated in Pentecost worship with district superintendent the Rev. Richard Lancaster preaching, reminding the church that Christ goes with us to the end of the age.

—submitted by Rev. Chanda Adams

Our Trajectory

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



Summit (continued from page 5)

missionaries must remove their blinders and see people in a new way. Kotan told of the relationship she built with a convenience store clerk over her regular stops there; eventually, she found the right time to share her faith story and invite the clerk to church.

“How many times do we go through life and miss those opportunities?” she asked, stressing how important it is for Christians to “have your radar engaged as you go about life” to be ready when the right time to share comes along.

“Y’all, this is nothing new,”

Kotan said of the tips she shared. “This is biblical. But it’s something we must do.”

The Rev. Blake Bradford, assistant director of the Center for Vitality, reminded participants that the CFV is offering two free coaching calls to every church that participated in the summit.

As Bishop Mueller sent those gathered back home to apply what they had learned, he offered a reminder: “Remember the point is not to look better,” he said, “the point is that if we’re doing these things, we’ll be the church God calls us to be.”

Grow By One Summit comments give glimpse of event’s impact

Here are just a few of the participants from around Arkansas who found the Grow By One Summit helpful for their ministry.

On the Core Sessions:

“Profession of Faith is not just something we say to join the church but a ‘GIFT’ we have received. Love the connection made to the way of salvation and grace!” —*Rev. Michael Utley, Henderson UMC, who attended Bishop Mueller’s ‘Getting Comfortable with Professing Faith’*

“Kay helped reshape my thinking about how to reach out to the community and use common interests/needs to make a connection and provide an opportunity to share the gospel message.” —*Rev. Alicia Finch-McCastlain, Pleasant Hill UMC, who attended Kay Kotan’s ‘Building a Bridge Event’*

On the Lunch and Learn Sessions:

“Since I am from a very poor, very small and transient populated area the suggestions for teaching meal planning and meal preparation plus money management is an idea that I would like for us to try. We already have a food pantry, but so many do not know any of the basic fundamentals of surviving.” —*Winona Worm, Adona UMC, who attended ‘Offering a Hand-up Rather than a Hand-out’*

“This was a very informative presentation by an expert presenter. She shared HOW their program began and expanded, and also what was specific to their particular geographic area. Though few of us will be able to replicate what they have done, the specific ideas give us a framework into which we can ‘plug’ our demographics and make SOMETHING work.” —*Shari Coston, Grand Avenue UMC Hot Springs, who attended ‘From Backpacks to Baptisms’*

On the overall Summit experience:

“I have a sense of renewed purpose and mission in the church. I now know what direction for my leadership in the church to take and I know exactly how to do it.” —*Carla Kelley, Perryville UMC*

“Took home so many great ideas! Can’t wait to share with our worship team and other church leaders! I liked starting the day with worship and ending with everyone together. The Summit re-energized me and made me excited to continue my volunteer roles in the church.” —*Nancy Kossler Smith, Brinkley UMC*

“I left the Summit understanding that we must prepare ourselves and our church to be servant leaders.... Non-Christians don’t realize that God is not mad at them but is on their side, pulling for them. I now understand that we must go about making disciples in our everyday lives. We won’t be successful in making disciples if we compartmentalize our lives into a spiritual life, a social life, a family life and a recreational life. Striving to be obedient to the urging of the Holy Spirit and obedient to the Bible’s teaching will give us the abundant life we desire.” —*Bill Wisener, First UMC Monticello*

Didn’t attend? You can still benefit! Watch video from the Summit at <http://vitality.arumc.org/2016-grow-by-one-summit>.



Faith Funds

A Great Partnership

Brian Swain, Administrator at Central UMC in Fayetteville, calls the United Methodist Foundation of Arkansas a great partner for his local church. Central UMC endowment funds invested by UMFA have experienced healthy growth under the Foundation’s stewardship.

A lifelong United Methodist, Swain had a career in municipal government before his tenure at Central. He has great respect for the Foundation and its leadership, and he is proud of the expansion of UMFA ministries since he first became aware of them while attending his hometown church, Atkins UMC.

“UMFA and Central have worked together on Provide and Protect events for the past five years, and they have been well attended,” he said. These seminars can be a valuable resource as members of his congregation deal with family issues, healthcare concerns, current and future finances, estate planning, and charitable giving.

A local attorney and UMFA staff member deliver the two-hour presentations to explain the tools needed to create a plan and provide resources needed to complete those plans. To set up a seminar at your local church, email Janet Marshall at jmarshall@umfa.org or give her a call today.

“Many people don’t have a plan,” Swain said. “This is an excellent way to help our members with their Christian stewardship.”

**The United Methodist Foundation of Arkansas**

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