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Jurisdictional Conference elects, assigns bishops

Mueller to serve Arkansas for four more years

BY JIM POLK AND AMY FORBUS
Special Contributor and Editor

WICHITA, Kan.—Delegations from eight states and 12 annual conferences gathered July 13-16 for the South Central Jurisdictional Conference, held in Wichita's Hyatt Regency Hotel. Clergy and lay delegates met to elect and assign bishops, and to take care of the business of the jurisdiction for the next four years.

Three new bishops were elected to serve in the South Central Jurisdiction. The third round of balloting brought the election of the Rev. Ruben Saenz Jr., connectional ministries and mission vitality center leader of the Rio Texas Conference. The conference elected the Rev. James "Jimmy" Nunn, director of mission and administration for the Northwest Texas Conference, on the 21st ballot, and on a record 35th ballot the Rev. Robert "Bob" Farr, director of congregational development for the Missouri Conference, was elected to



Members of the Arkansas Conference delegation to the South Central Jurisdictional Conference pause between ballots for episcopal elections.

PHOTO BY PAUL STRANG

fill the remaining open seat of the South Central Jurisdiction College of Bishops.

The following episcopal assignments were made for the 2016-2020 quadrennium:

Arkansas – Bishop Gary E. Mueller; Central Texas – Bishop J. Michael Lowry; Great Plains – Bishop Ruben Saenz Jr.; Louisiana – Bishop Cynthia Fierro Harvey;

Missouri – Bishop Robert "Bob" Farr; North Texas – Bishop Michael McKee; Northwest Texas/New Mexico – Bishop Earl Bledsoe; Oklahoma/Oklahoma Indian Missionary – Bishop James G. "Jimmy" Nunn; Rio Texas – Bishop Robert C. Schnase; Texas – Bishop Scott J. Jones.

"I am deeply honored and excited to be re-assigned as the

bishop of Arkansas," Mueller said in a brief statement after the assignment was made official. "I am so excited about the way the Holy Spirit is leading us to make disciples of Jesus Christ, who make disciples equipped to transform lives, communities and the world. I love you and can't wait to do life and ministry with you!" For further

[See SCJ2016, page 5]

United Methodists in Arkansas respond to July shootings

BY K.D. REEP
Special Contributor

Shots rang out in Louisiana, Minnesota and Texas the week after July 4, and Arkansas' United Methodists reacted with action, prayer and love.

Reeling from the shooting deaths of civilians, police and protesters alike, churches across the Arkansas Conference provided ways for United Methodists and their neighbors to grieve, reflect and heal. Here are just a few of the ways the people called Methodist responded:

- **First UMC Maumelle** held a prayer service from 11:30 a.m. [See REACTIONS, page 6]



Community members came together at a Searcy park for a July 18 prayer service sponsored by First UMC Searcy and neighboring congregations, as well as the local police and fire departments.

PHOTO BY AL FOWLER, COVENANT FELLOWSHIP CHURCH

Out of season

BY CHARLES COOPER
Special Contributor

This shirt is one I picked up last November on clearance. People all summer had left it on the rack or bought it and brought it back because they didn't like it or it didn't fit, but I liked it, and it fit.

I like this office chair I picked up thirty years ago. It's where I sit and read and write and puzzle over life or fall asleep; and where, perhaps, someday I will fall asleep and be found by someone who



Charles Cooper

cared enough to check on me: "Charles, are you okay?"

"Yes, very much so for being dead."

The shirt is not folded, but tossed over the back of the chair—I can't remember when. The arbitrariness creates contortions in the plaid, so the shirt appears active, though at rest, as if it blew into my office through the window and has been eagerly waiting to be blown back into the world.

I wish I could paint. I would paint, "Portrait of Myself as a Shirt." I might even include cartoon bubbles: someone asking, "Are you okay?"

"Yes, very much so for being a shirt."

I look at the tag, and it was 100 percent conceived in a cotton field, and the hands of strangers on the other side of the earth assembled it, and it traveled across the ocean and half way across the continent to a store in Fayetteville, where it was neglected and rejected and remained on the rack until it was out of season. And a real bargain!

A big name shirt so well-traveled should be worth more. I know I can't fly or sail to the Near East for that price. And I think of those who labored in the fields and

in the factory, and the smiling folks at the store who complimented my frugality—all of that for less than the price of a fancy burrito and only because it's a month or two out of date, as if summer will never come again, as if the colors might fade while it hibernated in the dark of my closet.

Someone might argue, "But others know it's last year's style."

At my age I am going to look out of fashion no matter what I am wearing. Actually a shirt from last summer is an update, and one which I picked up for a fantastic 75 percent discount.

Why is it we want to be so up to date anyway? People ask me if I have read this new book or have seen that new movie, and sometimes I say what my seminary professor, Stuart Henry, was fond of saying, "Have you read *The Divine Comedy*? It's been out for over six hundred years. You don't want to fall too far behind."

As for you who might point to Jesus and the prophets and say that

they were more concerned with the present and the future than the past, need I remind you that you have used as your argument people who are from two to three thousand years

ago? As for the prophets, they were the singers of the old time religion, holding up the ancient standard against the wayward trending of their day. And Jesus sang that song as well. *Repent: turn back to God. Hear the law and prophets; it's all truer now than it was back then!*

I will concede that "The Kingdom is at hand" seems to direct us toward the future, but understand the implication of "at hand." It is certainly not the present with its fads and fashions and always slipping through our fingers like water, but something that awaits just beyond the fingertips of the present,

something far better than what is now, something which will follow the pattern of things that have already been: God's providence among the wandering patriarchs; the exodus; the return from exile; the resurrection, all of it, so close to us it could be happening now.

Such an "at hand" cannot be limited to the future. Think about it this way: if "at hand" is always just a step beyond and continues to be just a step beyond year after year, century after century, millennium after millennium, then we are too much like the greyhounds at the track chasing the bunny around and around until our tongues are hanging out. Not so, though, if "at hand" describes the presence of God that is all around us: past, present and future, or in the words of the liturgy: *As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.*

I made a modest investment in this red and blue shirt a few months before I would reach back into the summer of my closet and pull it out and put it on. I had faith in a good return, that I would be around to wear it in the spring, and if not, Becky would make an X-Large person

at the Salvation Army happy with a virtually new shirt. That is a pleasant thought for this living man: *for the meek shall inherit the earth, and the earth will not be worn out.*

And as for last November and its clearance sales, whether the year was to bring life or death, Becky and I had extra cash for a dinner and a tip for the waiter or waitress—a gratuity or gift, approximately the price of an amazing piece of cloth that had come from far away.

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

'Why is it we want to be so up to date anyway?'

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EDITOR'S CORNER

BY AMY FORBUS

A life connected

My experience of the 2016 South Central Jurisdictional Conference didn't turn out at all like I'd anticipated.

Instead of being in there taking notes and photographs, I found myself home in bed, watching the election of new bishops online between hydrocodone-induced naps. A car accident just west of Muldrow, Oklahoma, made it impossible for me to complete the journey to Wichita. (My injuries kept me out of the office for a week, but my colleague the Rev. Martha Taylor faces a longer recovery following ankle surgery. Please keep her in prayer.)

Amid elections and reports, those watching a neighboring jurisdiction braced for controversy that some say brings irreparable damage to our United Methodist connection. But for me, the impact of the Western Jurisdiction's ballot results had become dramatically less important. Through my injuries, I received a lesson in perspective that emphasized the strength of our connection.

With the dust still settling, a phone call to Todd Burris set a number of actions in motion. Bishop Mueller and our team leader Mark Epperson both called to check on us before we made it to the ambulance.

And when we arrived at the hospital in Fort Smith, the first person I saw was the Rev. Stephen Coburn, waiting for us by the emergency room entrance. He stayed with us, checking on Martha and me for the rest of the day and making sure I got my prescription and something to eat.

I saw the Revs. Bud Reeves, Andrew Kjorlaug and Michael Roberts stop by to offer pastoral care, too. And Michael joined Stephen in going to Oklahoma to retrieve Martha's and my belongings from the wrecked car.

Dozens of other clergy and laity called or sent messages of prayer and concern via text messaging, Facebook, email, GroupMe, and later, both mailed and hand-delivered cards. I think I responded to them all, but I can't be sure.

The Revs. Stephen Coburn and Jim Polk divided the duty of driving me back to Little Rock, going above and beyond in their graciousness and care.

There was no way Jim could have guessed that his third week on the job at the Conference office would include writing a cover story for this issue of the *Arkansas United Methodist*. Well done, Jim. Thanks.

And thanks to the Revs. Paul Strang and Jay Clark, along with Rose Kuonen and Vicki Davis, we have some photos chronicling Arkansas' presence in Wichita.

Yes, legislation and structure are necessary parts of United Methodism. But neither these actions nor matters related to human sexuality dominate the time we spend in ministry. Caring, praying, showing kindness and being Jesus' hands and feet require far more attention. Not a thing about the love my fellow United Methodists put into action when I needed help would have changed if the *Book of Discipline's* wording were different. That's something worth remembering as we find our way forward.

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



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Oct. 7	Sept. 19
Nov. 4	Oct. 17



GROWING TOGETHER IN CHRIST: A word from the Bishop

BY GARY E. MUELLER

A personal ‘Yay, God!’

It doesn't matter what churches I have served, what honors I have received or what titles I have had bestowed upon me. The fact of the matter is I am still an itinerant Methodist preacher. So even though I have gladly made a covenant to go where I am sent, I must admit that I am delighted beyond words to have been reassigned to Arkansas as your bishop.

As many of you are aware, the last four years have been filled with a great deal of personal pain. Yet grace—both from God and you—has filled, healed, transformed, empowered and gotten me places I never could have gotten to on my own. Yay, God!

You are an amazing group of passionate, faithful, committed and joyful disciples of Jesus Christ who take seriously creating vital congregations that make disciples of Jesus Christ, who make disciples equipped to transform lives, communities and the world. In a turbulent world and troubled church, you are uniquely situated to keep connected through prayer, long-standing

relationships, deep conversation and shared mission. And I am convinced you already are showing the world what it means to be the Body of Christ. Yay, God!

So what is going to happen the next four years?

We will grow as grace-filled vessels who will seek to share God's love in Jesus Christ so that people will not only become aware of the Good News of the Gospel, but also will experience the fullness of God's unconditional, transformational and invitational love. Yay, God!

We will continue to experience spiritual revival that reawakens, renews and recharges us in the midst of a spiritual crisis that literally touches every aspect of life. Yay, God!

We will tweak the 10 next steps of the Bishop's Mission Plan and, as a result, celebrate all the ways that formerly declining congregations are now growing in vitality. Yay, God!

We will engage the vast pain and brokenness in our mission field through 200,000 Reasons,

address the racial divide in our communities and join with others to stop the endless cycle of violence. Yay, God!

We will wait on the Holy Spirit to surprise, call and empower us to be part of what God is up to in ways we cannot begin to dream right now. Yay, God!

I am filled with hope because I believe—and have experienced—what can happen when the Holy Spirit works through Jesus' disciples. I love you. I have the deepest respect for you. And I am looking forward to being in ministry with you.

Yay, God!

Grace and peace,



Gary E. Mueller

Our Trajectory

Creating vital congregations that make disciples of Jesus Christ, who make disciples

equipped to transform lives, communities and the world.



We need (to be) a sign!

BY WILLIAM O. “BUD” REEVES
Special Contributor

This summer I have been preaching a series on heroes of faith out of the Old Testament. It has been fun to re-tell these great stories and to find that they are still surprisingly relevant to our faith journey today.

Recently I revisited the story of Gideon in Judges 6-8.

Gideon was empowered by miraculous signs to lead the Israelites to victory over the Midianites. It is actually quite an entertaining story.

Gideon came along providentially in the sermon series when the cultural signs had been particularly bad. We were still recovering from the heartbreak of the Orlando mass shooting in the gay nightclub. That week, young black men had been shot by police in Baton Rouge and St. Paul, sparking nationwide protests. In Dallas, a gunman purposely killed five police officers in retaliation.

(Since then, a similar killing of police has happened in Baton Rouge.) Signs abounded of our division, hatred, prejudice and inability to stop violence in our streets.

But there were other signs, too. For the most part, protests

against police violence were peaceful. The deaths in Orlando, Baton Rouge, St. Paul and Dallas called forth nationwide prayer and support for the victims of violence. People of faith of all colors reached out to both minorities and police. Praying people filled the altar rails of many churches that Sunday. It was a heartening thing to see.

God still gives signs in the midst of trouble, even as God did for Gideon long ago. It's easy to see the bad signs, but if we look

with the eyes of faith, we can see God's signs of hope in every direction. **Look around** you, and see the impactful ministries of the church. People are still showing up every week to worship God. We are discipling children and youth, helping the needy, advocating for peace. It's a sign!

Look within, and know the presence of the living God. The Spirit bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, heirs of eternal life. We are still in God's hand. Our experience of heartfelt faith is a sign.

Look beyond the walls of the church into the communities where we live. Hasn't God given us an awesome mission field? The

opportunities abound to make a difference, and each opportunity is a sign that God has work for us to do. The problems and pains and wounds of this world are a call not to despair, but to action.

Most of all, **look to Jesus**. He is the sign that God loves us sinners, and God will not give up on us. His name, “Emmanuel,” means God is with us, and his cross and resurrection are the ultimate signs that no matter how bad the problem or how sad the tragedy, we will have the victory, in this world and the next.

If we look, we can see the signs. If we see the signs, we can follow the way. The signs point away from prejudice, fear, hatred, and violence and toward love, grace, mercy, peace and

community. Jesus told his disciples, “If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them” (John 13:17). It doesn't do any good to see the signs if you don't follow them.

If we follow the signs of hope that we see by faith, we will become a sign of God in the world. Encouraged by signs from God, Gideon became the sign of God's power to defeat the enemy and restore the reign of peace. Jesus was the incarnation, the embodiment, of God's grace and truth, and he

became the sign of salvation for anyone who turns to him. Individual Christians and churches can become signs in a lost, broken and hurting world that God is still at work. God offers an alternative to the destructive path we are traveling.

We need some signs today! We need disciples and communities of faith who will live the way Jesus taught and communicate the love, grace, peace, joy and hope of Jesus in this crazy, sad, sick world.

Somebody's got to show the way, and that somebody would be us.

See the signs. Follow the signs. Become the signs of the Kingdom.



Bud Reeves

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

Philander Smith College awarded \$599,000 grant to establish theological institute for high school students



United Methodist-related Philander Smith College on July 7 announced it has received a grant of \$599,519 to establish the Philander Forward Theological Institute.

The grant to the historically Black college in Little Rock is part of the Lilly Endowment Inc.'s High School Youth Theology Institutes initiative, which seeks to encourage young people to explore theological traditions, ask questions about the moral dimensions of contemporary issues and examine how their faith calls them to lives of service.

The Philander Forward Theological Institute will be open to all high school students, offering a spectrum of activities and experiences designed to shape and contribute to their spiritual growth and development, encouraging them to explore how theological and religious traditions and cultural competence inform and shape their life decisions in a changing world. Beginning in summer of 2017, the

new institute will engage four programmatic pillars: Summer Institute, Wilderness Experience, Summit Experience and Faith/Share. Through each of these areas, students will gain an understanding of Scripture, including applying Scripture in the context of current societal challenges.

"The Philander Forward Theological Institute is a continuance of our institution's commitment to academic excellence, social justice and service," said Roderick Smothers Sr., the college's president, in a news release. "As part of our Forward movement, we want to increase our depth and level of institutional service to our students and the community. This grant and the formation of the Theological Institute for youth will help us in achieving that goal."

Philander Smith College is one of 92 schools selected for the initiative. The institutions are located in 30 states and the District of

Columbia. Although some schools are independent, many reflect the religious heritage of their founding traditions, including Baptist, Brethren, Lutheran, Mennonite, Methodist, Presbyterian and Reformed churches, as well as Roman Catholic, non-denominational, Pentecostal and historic African-American Christian communities.

"These colleges and universities are well-positioned to reach out to high school students in this way," said Lilly Endowment vice president for religion Dr. Christopher L. Coble, in a news release. "They have outstanding faculty in theology and religion who know how to help young people explore the wisdom of religious traditions and apply these insights to contemporary challenges."

The Endowment is giving \$50 million in grants to help a select group of private four-year colleges and universities around the nation to create these institutes. The grants are part of the Endowment's commitment to identifying and cultivating a theologically-minded youth who will become leaders in church and society.

An additional Lilly grant to the Forum for Theological Exploration will establish a program to bring together leaders of these high school youth theology institutes to foster mutual learning and support.

PEOPLE OF FAITH

Powell joins Southwest District office as administrative assistant



Jan Powell

Jan Powell has begun work for the Southwest District office in the role of part-time administrative assistant.

A 24-year resident of Arkadelphia, Powell has spent the past decade supporting and attending First United Methodist Church Arkadelphia, where she is a member of the handbell choir.

She graduated from Blytheville High School, and attended Mississippi County Community College working toward a degree in business administration. She has spent most of her career in administrative assistant roles, including 10 years at a local bank in positions with the account maintenance and accounting departments, as well as in the role of teller.

Powell also had the privilege of being a stay-at-home mom to teach and raise her two children: Chris, now 28, and Laura, now 22.

She may be reached at jan.powell@arumc.org or by phone at the Southwest District office, 870-230-1118.

Tanako executive director named 'Arkansan of the Week'

Kim Carter, executive director of Camp Tanako, on July 15 was recognized by U.S. Senator Tom Cotton as "Arkansan of the Week."

Cotton recognized Carter "for her commitment to ensuring Arkansas children have the love and support they deserve." He noted that she and her family have spent the past decade as a foster family, having helped nearly three dozen children, and highlighted the work she has done as executive director of Camp Tanako, the United Methodist camp in Hot Springs.

"Under her leadership and direction, Kim has helped the camp expand its reach tremendously," Cotton said. "Each year, dozens of area children are able to participate in Camp Tanako's various summer programs. Recently, Kim also started a day camp for local children to attend in the summer, which has also been a huge success."

The "Arkansan of the Week" initiative began in May 2016 and is designed to honor Arkansans who have gone above and beyond in their commitment to their communities, and to the state. Senator Cotton honors each Arkansan of the Week with a speech on the Senate floor. To nominate someone for Arkansan of the Week, send the nominee's name, contact information, a detailed description of why you think they should be recognized and a photo or photos, if available, to nominations@cotton.senate.gov.



Kim Carter

Showing God's love to graduates for 50 years

For more than half a century, the Wesleyan Circle at First UMC Heber Springs has prepared a from-scratch breakfast for all graduating high school seniors of the community, not just those in their congregation. This year, the group pictured at right worked joyfully together to serve more than 150 people as a way to show them the love of God.

The congregation has four active United Methodist Women circles—

Wesleyan, Joy, Sunshine and Dorcas—with approximately 80 total active members. This year the circles added something new that they hope to make a tradition: providing breakfast one morning for the Ozark Mission Project campers and chaperones that spent a week serving neighbors in the community.

Each of the circles also provides monetary support to Margie's Haven House, a shelter for individuals recovering from physical and mental abuse. In addition to giving funds, each group collects and gives items needed by those who stay in the shelter, such as shampoo, soap, deodorant, laundry baskets, detergent and gift cards. The United Methodist Women of First UMC Heber Springs continue to look for more ways to reach the people they are called to serve.

—Submitted by Terri Whitlatch



E-book with stories from Arkansas women in ministry now available from Conference Archives

To celebrate the 60th anniversary of full clergy rights for women in the Methodist Church, the Arkansas Conference Archives is publishing a collection of stories from Arkansas women in ordained ministry. The book, titled *Called to Be Bold – Stepping Out in Faith*, is available on CD-ROM from the archives. As a bonus, the CD includes *Women Answering God's Call: Courageous Past, Bold Future*, the book written by the late JoAnn Miles celebrating the denomination's 50th year of women's ordination.

More than 80 women in ministry, many of whom experienced being appointed as the first woman pastor to a church, have contributed their stories to this project. They relay to us their joys and disappointments. The 230-page book includes 110 photographs and is \$15, including shipping. To order, please contact the Archives by email at arkmethodist@hendrix.edu, or call the archivists, Marcia Crossman at 501-908-8180 or Carole Teague at 501-231-3877.



Bishop Gary Mueller visited with Arkansas Conference young people Lauren Lovelady (left), Claire Thompson and Miller Wilbourn following their participation in the report from the Jurisdictional Youth Ministry Organization (JYMO).

PHOTO BY JAY CLARK



Members and friends of the Arkansas delegation, Conference staff and the United Methodist Foundation of Arkansas (UMFA) celebrated with Bishop Mueller his reassignment to Arkansas at a UMFA-sponsored breakfast the final morning of Jurisdictional Conference.

PHOTO BY PAUL STRANG

SCJ2016

(continued from page 1)

comment, see the bishop's message on page 3 of this issue.

Arkansas action

Other Arkansas Conference-related highlights of the gathering included the presentation from the Jurisdictional Youth Ministry team featuring three young leaders from Arkansas, Lauren Lovelady, Claire Thompson and Miller Wilbourn; the acceptance of five Arkansas nominees to leadership at the denominational level; and the separation of Fayetteville's Mount Sequoyah Center from the Jurisdiction to become its own independent organization.

Although Arkansas originally was allocated three positions in the South Central Jurisdiction Nominations Report, five persons from the Arkansas Conference were eventually elected to serve on General Boards and Agencies: Miller Wilbourn on the Connectional Table; Kelly Murray-Norman on the General Board of Global Ministries; Todd Burris on the United Methodist Publishing House board of directors; the Rev. Rodney Steele on the General Commission on Communications; and the Rev. Mark Norman on the General Commission on the Status and Role of Women.

Mount Sequoyah

In other business, delegates approved a motion from the South

Central Jurisdiction Mission Council, the College of Bishops and the Mount Sequoyah Center Board of Trustees that divests the South Central Jurisdiction from all "ownership interest, control or responsibility" in Mount Sequoyah Center, Inc., a retreat and conference center in Fayetteville, Ark., which has been owned by the Jurisdiction or its predecessor bodies since its founding in 1922. Under the terms of the agreement, if Mount Sequoyah is sold or becomes profitable, money paid to the SCJ up to \$1 million will be given to Lydia Patterson Institute, the Jurisdiction-owned high school in El Paso, Texas, for either its capital campaign or for leadership development programs as part of its operating budget.

"This allows the Mountain to further expand its ministry ecumenically to the local faith-based community, and also focus more directly on the broader needs of the Fayetteville and Northwest Arkansas communities," Dewitt Smith, a United Methodist layperson and chair of the Mount Sequoyah board of trustees, in a July 22 news release from Mount Sequoyah.

The Rev. Jess Schload, CEO of Mount Sequoyah, in the same news release said that Mount Sequoyah will continue to offer religious and educational programs for adults, families and children, and still can be rented for church retreats, weddings and other events.

"Our hope is that this special place overlooking the city will continue to be an important resource for the community," Schload said. "We will be seeking partnerships with churches, religious organizations and

nonprofits to continue to serve this region."

Request for ruling

In response to the Western Jurisdictional Conference's election and consecration of Bishop Karen Oliveto—a self-avowed lesbian who is legally married to another

woman—the South Central Jurisdictional Conference approved a motion requesting a declaratory decision from the Judicial Council, the denomination's high court, on several questions of church law related to the action of the Western Jurisdiction.

The Judicial Council is not expected to address the questions

raised until its next regularly scheduled meeting, set for October 25-28 in Chicago.

The South Central Jurisdiction includes the states of Nebraska, Kansas, Missouri, Arkansas, Oklahoma, New Mexico, Texas and Louisiana and is composed of twelve annual conferences supervised by ten bishops.

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Reactions

(continued from page 1)

- to 1 p.m. on July 8 for those who wished to pray in conjunction with the City of Dallas's Prayer Service.
- **Pulaski Heights UMC Little Rock** opened its sanctuary from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. on July 8 for anyone seeking a place to lift up our nation and cover it in prayer.
 - **Quapaw Quarter UMC Little Rock** provided space for black healing for Black Lives Matter Little Rock from 6-8 p.m. on July 8. The space served as a call to grieve, and the focus was on healing. Afterward, everyone in attendance shared a meal, fellowship and prayer.
 - On July 8, **Calico Rock UMC** posted on its Facebook page, "Let us be in constant prayer for the people of Dallas, its law enforcement officials, and law enforcement across the country as we grieve the loss of so many lives in the line of duty."
 - On July 10, **Cornerstone UMC Jonesboro** lifted up our nation, communities, families and those who serve and protect us daily by providing cookies and thank you cards with words of encouragement to local police officers.
 - **First UMC Little Rock** affirmed on July 10 that "all lives matter, but we must remind ourselves that black lives matter and police lives matter because some in the world are acting as if these lives are disposable. Tying these

ribbons on our trees is a physical form of our spiritual prayer."

- After a misunderstanding surrounding the church's July 10 attempt to pray for officers and first responders of their community at the nearby 12th Street Substation, the people of **Theresa Hoover Memorial UMC Little Rock** welcomed Chief Kenton Buckner of the Little Rock Police Department during their July 24 worship service. Buckner offered an apology for the misunderstanding, and the next day accompanied the Rev. U.C. Washington and several members of Theresa Hoover Memorial UMC on a visit to the substation. In addition, five representatives from the church visited with their city director and the city manager, to discuss "how we might build relationship and be more in community together," Washington said. He added that the city and church are now working together to plan a community gathering with a meal at the 12th Street Substation. Though no date has been set, Washington expects it to take place in August or early September.
- The Rev. Dr. Jan Davis, senior pastor of **Central UMC Fayetteville**, posted in a July 11 blog entry, "Reconciliation begins with each of us. We are invited to participate in the work that God is already doing—comfort those who are grieving, pray for their families, work in our own community

for reconciliation, strive for peace, combat evil and stand firm for justice. We pray for an end to prejudice, violence, hatred, injustice and suffering in all the ways they present themselves. We proclaim the love of God for our world through Jesus Christ. Love is stronger than hate, good is stronger than evil, life is stronger than death."

- **Saint Paul UMC Searcy** invited all civil servants and their families to the July 17 11 a.m. worship to thank, lay hands and pray for them as well as our nation. At noon, the church served a potluck to all attending.
- **First UMC Searcy** on July 18 hosted a Comm-UNITY Prayer Service for the community in response to the previous week's violence. The service was held at 7 p.m. in Spring Park. Those involved in the event were First UMC pastors the Revs. David Orr and Bill Sardin, with song led by Amy Tate; St. James Catholic Church priest Father Matthew Malapati; Ministerio Cristiano Dios Habla Hoy Pastor Pedro Reynoso; and the Searcy Police and Fire Departments.



First UMC Little Rock on July 10 posted the photo above on its Facebook page, with the comment, "We affirm that all lives matter, but we must remind ourselves that black lives matter and police lives matter because some in the world are acting as if these lives are disposable. Tying these ribbons on our trees is a physical form of our spiritual prayer."

PHOTO COURTESY FIRST UMC LITTLE ROCK VIA FACEBOOK

'Embolden us to understand and act'

BY LINDA BLOOM
United Methodist News Service

Heartbreak. Prayer. Healing. United Methodists are among many in the U.S. trying to figure out an effective response to violence and racism.

In a message sent July 8 to church members, politicians and police chiefs in Arkansas after two recent shootings of African-American men by police and the killings of police in Dallas, United Methodist Bishop Gary Mueller said his heart was breaking "for our nation enmeshed in a culture of violence."

For those outside the church, an accompanying cover letter offered prayer and the bishop's assistance as needed.

He expressed concern for "the violence unleashed against young African-American men in a nation that still has not yet addressed the reality of racism," as well as for the deaths of the police officers shot in Dallas and for a situation in which the church "seems impotent" to bring about the reconciliation that society needs.

Most of all, Mueller wrote, his heart breaks "because we now are captives of fear. An entire community of people—especially parents—fear their sons will not survive. Police officers fear they will be vilified or killed as they try to protect and serve. We fear that the world is spinning out of control."

The Rev. Susan Henry-Crowe, top executive of the United Methodist Board of Church and Society, said the church is "in shock and mourning" even as it prays for those who lost their lives and for their families and communities.

"This week in the events of Falcon Heights, Baton Rouge, Dallas, and in many communities across the U.S., we continue to see the horrors of oppression and racism that lead to acts of violence," she wrote in a statement. "This is not who Christ calls us to be."

Helping the church engage in this issue is a priority for the United Methodist Commission on Religion and Race. "The deaths of five Dallas police officers in the wake of the shooting of Alton Sterling and Philando Castile serve as a reminder that the sins of racism and violence continue to plague this country," said Erin Hawkins, the commission's top executive.

How to respond?

"Recommit ourselves in prayer and action" to eliminating all forms of racism and a culture of violence, Henry-Crowe said.

React to violent incidents as "an opportunity to show up, speak out and be a source of healing in the communities that we serve," Hawkins said.

Engage the power of the Holy Spirit "to embolden us to understand and act in ways we have not yet considered," Mueller advised.

"We can seek to engage elected, community and spiritual leaders in serious and deep conversations to find a way forward by addressing the root causes of what is occurring," he said.

Bloom is a United Methodist News Service multimedia reporter based in New York. Follow her at www.twitter.com/umscribe or contact her at newsdesk@umcom.org or 615-742-5470.

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What draws people to church? Poll has insights

BY HEATHER HAHN
United Methodist News Service

Friends got Jennifer and Ben Bienvenu to visit a United Methodist church. The lessons they learned kept the young couple coming back.

“Every time we left Pulaski Heights [United Methodist Church], we always left feeling like we had been challenged or we had something to think about into the week,” Jennifer Bienvenu said of the Little Rock, Arkansas congregation.

“Those things were important to us—that we weren’t just fulfilling a routine.”

The church’s challenge to discipleship is one main reason the couple took membership vows June 26. Jennifer Bienvenu, who grew up unchurched, made a public commitment to Christ and joined by baptism.

The couple, both in their 20s, are not unique in what they look for in congregational life. Opportunities for spiritual growth and authentic community are top motivators for churchgoing, says a newly released survey conducted by Barna Group on behalf of United Methodist Communications.

Barna’s study sought insights about what young-adult spiritual “seekers” in the United States expect from churches. The Christian research organization defined these seekers as Americans currently ages 18 to 34 who are not active churchgoers or committed to a congregation but nevertheless indicate interest in spiritual matters.

Survey respondents cited the following top reasons to head to church:

- Church helps my spiritual development (39 percent)
- Opportunity to find out more about God (38 percent)
- Opportunity to make friends and nurture friendships (38 percent)
- Knowing that anyone will be welcomed into the church community (38 percent)
- Opportunity for support during difficult times (37 percent)

David Kinnaman, president of Barna and director of the study, said church leaders can use the findings to offer genuine community for young seekers across life experiences.

“Young adults are connected to social media nearly every waking hour, but four of the top-five reasons they might attend church point to a



The choir’s view of Pulaski Heights United Methodist Church in Little Rock, Ark., often is packed pews. The church’s experience attests to Barna’s findings that spiritual development and community draw young adults.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF ANDREA WYMES

profound need for community that is deeper than what’s available virtually,” Kinnaman said in a statement to United Methodist Communications. “In fact, twice the number of U.S. adults tell us they are lonely compared to 10 years ago—and that relational gap represents a real opportunity for churches that want to reach young seekers.”

The survey findings resonate with Jennifer Bienvenu. She and her husband joined the church just weeks before they were due to become parents of a little girl.

“We wanted to find community that is welcoming and inclusive,” she said. “We felt we really had found that at Pulaski Heights.”

Defying decline

The United Methodist Church long has faced decreasing membership and attendance in the United States. However, empty pews are not just a problem for this denomination.

For example, the Southern Baptist Convention in June reported declining membership for the ninth consecutive year. Its worship attendance and baptisms also are on the downswing.

In researching the book *Churchless*, Barna found that each younger generation in the U.S. is less religious than earlier cohorts. The group reported that nearly half of Americans born in 1984 to 2002 are unchurched, compared to 28 percent

of Americans born in 1945 or earlier. No question: Today’s faith communities have their work cut out for them when it comes to reaching

new people.

However, Kinnaman pointed to Barna research that indicates The United Methodist Church in

particular benefits from some built-in good will.

The group’s survey found that favorable impressions of The United Methodist Church have increased from 25 percent in 2011 to 40 percent in 2015. In the most recent survey, nearly three-quarters—74 percent—liked the denomination’s tagline “Open Hearts. Open Minds. Open Doors.”

A number of United Methodist churches already counter the cultural trends that keep Americans otherwise occupied on Sunday mornings. In fact, as of 2014, about 30 percent of U.S. United Methodist congregations were growing in worship attendance.

Among those is the 114-year-old congregation Pulaski Heights United Methodist Church. Between 2004 and 2014, its average worship attendance has grown from 859 to 1,080.

“While we receive our usual share of transfers from other United Methodist churches, we are drawing increasing numbers of unchurched and de-churched persons seeking [see POLL, page 9]

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Matt Rawle is the author of The Pop in Culture Series, including *The Redemption of Scrooge*, *The Faith of a Mockingbird*, *The Salvation of Doctor Who*, and *Hollywood Jesus*.

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Register now for Paysinger Hunger Summit

Don't miss the Paysinger Hunger Summit, an opportunity to plant seeds of hope in your community and help end childhood hunger in Arkansas. Part of the 200,000 Reasons childhood hunger initiative, the summit will be held Saturday, Sept. 10 at Pulaski Heights UMC Little Rock. Welcome and check-in begins at 9:30 a.m. for the 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. event.

Workshop topics include:

- Community gardens
- SNAP: Fallacies, Facts and How Your Church Can Help
- Cooking Matters
- Food Pantries: Making them work in EVERY Context
- Public Witness: Voices for Good
- Come and Get It: Meals Beyond the School Day
- Friends and Neighbors Network (FANN): Food Cooperatives

The summit is named for the late Rev. Vernon and Eva Lee Paysinger, who dedicated their lives to Christian ministry and were lifelong advocates for programs designed to eradicate hunger in Arkansas. Their legacy of caring is reflected in the establishment of the Vernon and Eva Lee Paysinger Endowment Fund, administered by the United Methodist Foundation of Arkansas (UMFA). The endowment's purpose is to support Arkansas ministries that work to eliminate hunger.

The cost to participate is \$15 per person; groups are welcome. Childcare is available for \$15 per child. To register, visit www.eventbrite.com/e/paysinger-hunger-summit-tickets-25646361959.

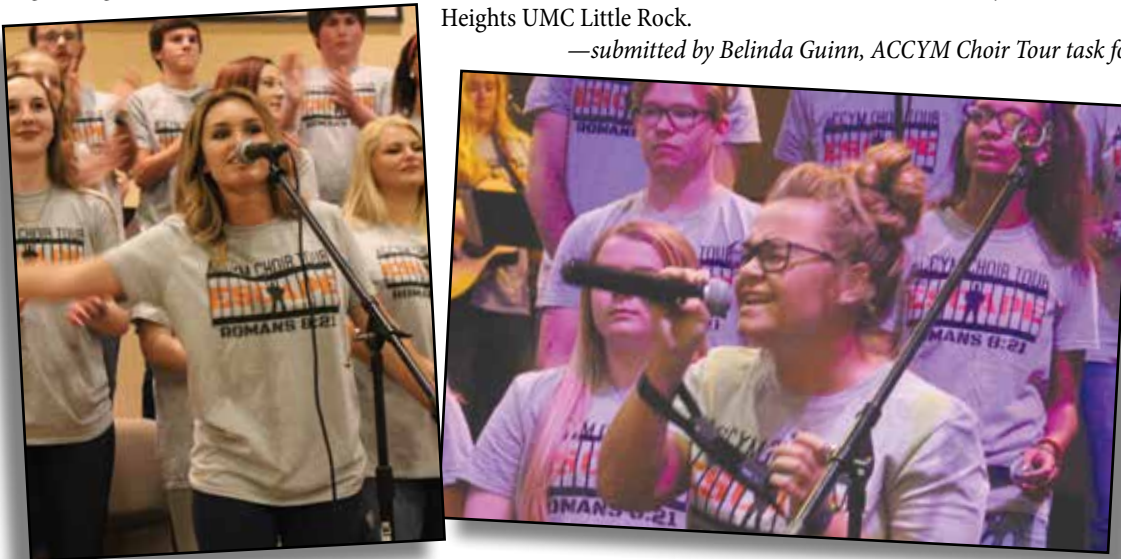


Youth choir tours state, shares music ministry with six churches



The 2016 Arkansas Conference Council on Youth Ministries (ACCYM) Choir Tour was held June 13-19, 2016. This year's theme focused on Romans 8:21 as its central Scripture and was titled ESCAPE. Thirty-four youth and six adults made up this year's choir, which spent a week traveling the state. The choir led worship at Mountainside UMC Hot Springs Village, Goddard UMC Fort Smith, First UMC Batesville, First UMC Osceola, First UMC Star City and Pulaski Heights UMC Little Rock.

—submitted by Belinda Guinn, ACCYM Choir Tour task force



Museum hosts invitational exhibit of church building photography

This image of Selma United Methodist Church in Selma, Ark., was submitted for exhibition by Anne Carpenter, a member of the Arkansas



Women Photographers association. The church was built in 1874, and is on the National Register of Historic Places.

PHOTO COURTESY OF ANNE CARPENTER

Sept. 6 through Nov. 8, 2016, the United Methodist Museum of the Arkansas Conference (UMMAC) is having a special invitational exhibition coordinated by UMMAC board member W.S. "Bill" Burgin, a long-time United Methodist and member of St. James UMC Little Rock. Burgin, who is himself an art photographer, invited art photographers to submit an artistic image of an historic United Methodist church building in Arkansas.

The objective of the exhibition goes beyond just the exhibit itself. Each entrant is required to submit a short history of each church and a good digital copy of the image to the museum for its permanent collection, creating documentation of these churches which is valuable to future researchers.

Most of the works submitted for exhibition are by members of Arkansas Women Photographers (AWP), an organization of more than 500 members. Burgin supplied each photographer with a list of the churches already added to the National Register of Historic Places; however, the list was only a suggestion as there are many historic churches still out there in need of documentation. Mike Anderson, a well-known art photographer in Little Rock, will select which photographs go into the final exhibition.

The museum is open for informal drop-ins on Tuesdays from 9:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., or other times by advance appointment. Guided tours are also available by appointment. For information about this exhibit or to book a tour, call Linda Baker, UMMAC curator, at 501-680-1089.

Poll (continued from page 7)

answers through spiritual exploration and development," said the Rev. Britt Skarda, the church's senior pastor.

"We have also made it clear to the public that we are a faith community that is open and welcomes all."

Making disciples

Getting people to darken the church door is tough enough, but congregations also have a deeper calling to turn seekers into disciples. Successful churches know that evangelism doesn't stop with a greeting and a church bulletin.

"People think, 'Oh, if we can just get them to come,' but that's not enough," said Sabra Engelbrecht, executive director of ministries for The Gathering United Methodist Church.

The multi-site congregation in the St. Louis area is one of those rare churches where regular worship attendance exceeds the membership rolls. Since its first service in September 2006, the church's average



Members of Pulaski Heights UMC Little Rock pack meals for hungry families in the state. The church is among the congregations growing in worship attendance.

attendance has grown to 1,200.

Engelbrecht said the church relies largely on word of mouth to get visitors. Many of those individuals are totally new to the church or previously hurt by the church, she said.

The church developed a

streamlined process for engaging these seekers in congregational life.

"From the minute they pull into the parking lot, there is someone at the front door greeting them and someone is helping them find a seat," she said.

Church leaders then invite newcomers to one of the regular coffees with the pastor. Next, the church steers newcomers toward an introductory small group called the "Living Room," which offers faith basics.

After that, they can get involved in one of the congregation's

CoreGroups, which meet weekly, and possibly one of the volunteer teams.

The goal is for worshippers to feel part of the Christian community long before attending The Gathering's membership classes, offered about

once a quarter.

Jordan Glaser still remembers the second she walked into the Gathering two years ago. "The place just hugged me," she said. "It was aesthetically, emotionally, spiritually perfect for me—and I knew before I even sat down."

Like Bienvenu, she too grew up with no church involvement. But she was baptized last month.

"I've always worried that trying to get back into a church and get back into my faith would be riddled with stares, and judgement, and confusion on my behalf as I didn't understand what the pastor was saying," she said "At The Gathering

none of that exists. All are welcome."

Bienvenu and Glaser both exemplify the kind of engagement church leaders like to see. Bienvenu said she sees her baptism as both an important step for her growing family and a pledge to her Pulaski Heights church community.

"We're not just showing up every week visiting," she said. "We are truly there to show our commitment."

Hahn is a multimedia news reporter for United Methodist News Service and a former editor of the Arkansas United Methodist. Contact her at newsdesk@umcom.org or 615-742-5470.

Barna Seeker Study poll methodology

Barna's Seeker Study used a national, random and representative sample of 406 young adults across the United States, drawn from an online panel. Individuals on the panel were screened to identify people who met the criteria of a seeker.

To be considered a seeker, a person must be: currently ages 18 to 34, not affiliated with The United Methodist Church, not an active churchgoer (infrequent church attendance) or not committed to a church (frequent church attendance).

The person also needed to answer "yes" to at least four of the following statements:

- Searching for meaning and purpose
- Something feels missing from your life
- Have emotional pain or frustration that you'd like to resolve
- A spiritual person
- Seeking something better spiritually in life
- On a quest for spiritual truth
- Want to make a difference with your life
- Have a passion for social justice
- Contribute to the common good of your community

Barna weighted the sample by gender and region to be nationally representative. Research took place Nov. 26-Dec. 7, 2015. The margin of error is 4.7 percentage points, and the survey has a 95 percent confidence level. Barna estimates the survey findings represents 20-25 million Americans, about one-tenth of the U.S. adult population.

For the complete study, visit <http://goo.gl/fFWdc6>.

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.

Registration now open for Mission Academy at Mount Sequoyah; training for individuals, teams in VIM, Disaster Response work

Registration has opened 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). The Academy provides excellent opportunities for preparing individuals and teams to serve wherever they are needed. To learn more or to register, visit www.scjumc.org/mission/academy.

Seeking help, donations for Southeast Arkansas flood recovery

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.

Cuba mission opportunities through Arkansas VIM

Sponsor a child for a 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.

If your church or group would like to plan a mission to Cuba, contact Nechi Fullerton, 501-766-8151 or nefullerton@yahoo.com. Fullerton has made seven visits to the Methodist Church in Cuba over the past three years, leading three UVMIM 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.

CLASSIFIEDS

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

WORSHIP AND ARTS DIRECTOR: First United Methodist Church of Batesville, Arkansas, is accepting applications for its full-time Director of Worship and Arts position. Applicants should have a passion for organizing worship with choirs, piano, organ, praise band, solos, duets, hand bells, traditional services, and contemporary services. Competitive pay and benefits. Contact the church office at 870-793-3803 or fumcbatesville@gmail.com to learn more.

MAYFLOWER UMC in Mayflower, Ark., seeks a pianist to accompany our worship service at 10:00 a.m. each Sunday morning. We enjoy singing from the United Methodist Hymnal as well as Heavenly Highways. Candidate should be able to sight-read music, accompany three hymns, provide soft prelude as people are seated, play during the offertory and Holy Communion, and play a brief postlude after worship. Salary is \$50 per week. Contact Rick Wilkins, Revrickwilkins@sbcglobal.net, or Brad Frakes, brazlewood@yahoo.com, with questions. To schedule an interview, email nancyacre@gmail.com.

COMING UP

Concert pianist Martinez to play benefit concert for Lydia Patterson Institute at First UMC Fort Smith Aug. 14

First United Methodist Church, 200 N. 15th Street in Fort Smith, on Aug. 14 will host Bishop Joel Martinez and his wife, Raquel. Bishop Martinez, who in 2004 retired from serving the Southwest Texas and Rio Grande Annual Conferences, will preach at the Sunday morning worship services. At 3 p.m., Raquel Martinez, a concert pianist, will play in the Music for Mission concert, which will be a joyful celebration of Hispanic heritage and will feature a mass choir, percussion and brass instruments. All are welcome to attend, and a special offering will be received to support Lydia Patterson Institute (www.lydiapattersoninstitute.org). Both Bishop and Mrs. Martinez are graduates of Lydia Patterson Institute.

Lydia Patterson Institute is a United Methodist secondary school in El Paso, Texas, committed to providing an environment in which Christian faith, values and knowledge converge to give students a cross-cultural, academic and state-of-the-art education, by creating opportunities to develop skills to succeed and transform a changing world. The Arkansas Conference's current representative on the Lydia Patterson Institute board of trustees is Nadine Hardin-Miller, a member of First UMC Fort Smith.

First UMC Mena to celebrate 120 years Aug. 14

The Rev. Ann Ferris and the congregation of First UMC Mena are making preparations for its 120th birthday celebration on Sunday, Aug. 14. Northwest District superintendent the Rev. Stephen Coburn will bring the sermon for morning worship on that day. Other scheduled activities include game time for the children during the Sunday school hour; recognition of persons who have been members 50 years or longer; introduction of former ministers who are attending; special music and an old-time hymn sing. A photo booth and pictorial and memorabilia display are planned. During the hamburger meal at noon, our former pastors will be invited to share memories of their ministry with this community. First UMC Mena invites all former members, pastors and their families, and friends to join us on this special day. For information, contact Ferris at the church office, 479-394-3051, or Flora McChristian, 479-394-4478.

Youth workers: Attend EQUIP 2016 at First UMC Conway Sept. 10

Everyone working in youth ministry is in a different place on their journey. EQUIP provides four tracks to meet the needs of youth workers at any stage. This is not an event just for youth directors! Part-time, full-time, volunteers, confirmation workers, college-age ministry facilitators, still trying to figure it out-ers... all are welcome for this one-day learning opportunity set for Saturday, Sept. 10 at First UMC Conway.

The keynote speaker is Matt Tuggle, associate pastor and director of family ministries at Highland Park UMC Dallas, Texas. Cost is \$20 and includes lunch and a choice of four different learning sessions with multiple choices of topics. Registration opens at 9 a.m. and the event concludes with a 5 p.m. Holy Communion service led by Bishop Gary Mueller. For more details or to register, visit www.arumcywn.org/equip.

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, 501-664-8632 or jmarshall@umfa.org.

'Some Assembly Required': PAUMCS Arkansas chapter's fall meeting Sept. 22

All church administrative professionals are invited to attend the fall meeting of the Arkansas chapter of the Professional Association of United Methodist Church Secretaries (PAUMCS), to be held Thursday, Sept. 22 in the Kendall Center on the campus of Philander Smith College in Little Rock. The theme of the event is "Some Assembly Required."

Registration begins at 9 a.m., and the meeting concludes at 3:30. The registration fee is \$5 to help offset the cost of the provided lunch. For a registration form, contact Cindy Parker, Southwest District administrator, at 870-230-1118 or cparker@arumc.org.

Washington D.C. 2017 seminar trip for young adults: Registration closes Sept. 30

Next year, May 21-27, 2017, a group of 20 young adults will go to Washington D.C. to attend the United Methodist Seminar program to learn more about social justice issues and how to work for systemic change through your local church. You will attend the seminar for the first three days of the trip, then spend the remaining time doing some mission work and visiting some museums and landmarks. For information on the seminar program, visit www.umc-gbcs.org/umseminars.

This experience is open to those who will be 19-24 at the time of the trip. There are fewer than 20 spots available and registration is first-come, first-serve. The total cost of the trip is over \$1,000 per person; however, through some support from various committees and organizations, the cost that each young adult will pay is only \$300.

Registration closes Sept. 30, 2016. A wait list will be established if the spots are filled before the deadline. To learn more and to reserve your spot, visit <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/young-adult-seminar-trip-to-washington-dc-tickets-26360389635>. Questions? Contact Michelle Moore at michelle.moore@arumc.org.

Bethesda Campground UMC to celebrate 175 years Oct. 3-9

Bethesda Campground United Methodist Church, located 10 miles west of Batesville, will hold its 175th anniversary celebration the week of October 3-9, 2016. The congregation has set the following schedule of activities to mark the occasion.

Monday through Friday evenings: visiting time with finger foods in Fellowship Hall 6:30 p.m.; worship led by previous/guest pastors in the sanctuary at 7 p.m.; and additional fellowship time with coffee and dessert in Fellowship Hall following the service.

Saturday's celebrations include outdoor games beginning at 3 p.m., followed by a picnic at 5 p.m. After a time of singing in the sanctuary, the church will bury a time capsule, join together in a worship service led by district superintendent the Rev. J.J. Galloway, and a coffee and dessert reception will follow.

Sunday's 9 a.m. worship service will be led by Bishop Gary Mueller, with a brunch following in the Fellowship Hall.

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. Those with questions about any of the festivities may contact Kay Hermansen-Pool at 870-793-3867.

Marriage retreat for youth workers and spouses at Mount Eagle Oct. 21-23

Relationships are hard work! Ministry is hard work! Put them together and marriage can be stressful and hard to balance. Youth workers and their spouses are invited to Mount Eagle Retreat Center near Clinton, Ark., to enjoy a meaningful time away to strengthen their relationship with each other and with God.

This marriage retreat will provide an opportunity for communication, sharing and reflecting. It also will provide time to meet other couples who share the same challenges and struggles. While some topics will be general to all marriage, others will be more specific to those issues that arise in marriages with one or both spouses involved in ministry settings.

The retreat includes a two-night stay, three meals on Saturday and one meal on Sunday. Part of the registration fee is covered through the ARUMC Youth Ministry budget. To register for this marriage retreat, visit <http://www.arumcywn.org/event/marriage-retreat-youth-workers-spouses>.

Registration forms and payments must be received no later than Oct. 1,

2016. The limited spots available will be filled on a first-come, first-serve basis. A wait list will be created if spots fill before the deadline.

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OBITUARIES

CLARKSVILLE

Gladys Nation

Gladys Dean Nation, 89, of Clarksville passed away Sunday, July 3, 2016, in Russellville. She was born Nov. 23, 1926, in Lamar.

She was a member of First United Methodist Church Clarksville, and the widow of the Rev. Thomas Nation, an ordained elder who served congregations in Arkansas from 1949 to 1984.

She is survived by three daughters, Dixie Douthit of Raleigh, N.C.; and Lewellyn Preston and Tekla Barr, both of Clarksville; a son, Delvin Nation of Fayetteville; seven grandchildren; and nine great-grandchildren.

A memorial service was held Friday, July 8, at First United Methodist Church Clarksville.

Memorials may be made to the Gideons International at www.gideons.org; or to Mustard Seed, 200 S. College St., Clarksville, AR 72830.



Gladys Nation

FORDYCE

Vivian T. Scott

Vivian Louis Tolerson Scott, 95, of Fordyce, passed away Thursday, June 23, 2016, surrounded by family. She was born March 3, 1921, in Auvergne, Ark., to the late Ethel Hurshpield Tolerson and Jessie E. Tolerson Sr.



Vivian T. Scott

Vivian married the late Rev. Herbert M. Scott Sr. on Dec. 25, 1949. He served as a part-time local pastor in the Little Rock Conference of the United Methodist Church, appointed to McCabe Chapel UMC from 1972 to 1977, and to Valley Grove UMC from 1982 to 1990.

Vivian attended W. F. Branch Colored Junior High School, Newport, and received her high school diploma from Cotton Plant Academy, Cotton Plant. In 1944, she earned her B.S. degree in home economics from Philander Smith College in Little Rock, and further studied Library Science/Media at A.M.&N. in Pine Bluff, Ark., Atlanta University, Atlanta, Ga., and Our Lady of the Lake College, San Antonio, Texas.

In 1983, after serving the Fordyce School District for 36 years, Vivian retired. She taught third grade and civics at Dallas County Training School and was a librarian for Fordyce Middle and J. E. Wallace School. She continued to serve an additional 15 years in the district as a substitute teacher after retirement.

She was also a faithful servant at Mount Olive United Methodist Church; a member of the Elegant Ladies Club; Delta Sigma Theta Sorority; and the Fordyce Scholarship

Association, where she served eight years as president. She was the recipient of numerous awards and honors.

She was preceded in death by her husband; four sisters, Vernell T. Proffitt, Gloria T. Haskins, Doris T. Borders and Delores T. Blackwell; and two brothers, Clay Tolerson Sr. and Jessie E. Tolerson Jr. She is survived by one sister, Floy T. Nelson (Robert) of Newport, Ark.

She is survived by her two children, Herbert M. Scott Jr. (Yana) of Little Rock and Marquis Daryl Scott (Joyce) of Pine Bluff; two grandchildren, Yana-Janell Scott of Little Rock, and Ulysses S. Grant IV of Houston, Texas; and two great-grandchildren, Brooklyn Ife Grant and Austin Elijah Grant.

Services were held Wednesday, June 29, at First United Methodist Church Fordyce.

Memorials may be made to Fordyce Scholarship Association in Vivian T. Scott's name, P.O. Box 851, Fordyce, Ark., 71742.

NORTH LITTLE ROCK

Nettie Jane Goss

Nettie Jane Goss, 90, passed away peacefully Sunday, July 17, 2016. She was born Aug. 8, 1925 in Plummerville, Arkansas to Roy and Ruth Burns. Nettie Jane moved to North Little Rock when she was five years old, and it was her home until her death.



Nettie Jane Goss

She graduated from North Little Rock High School in 1942 and soon made the decision to become a nurse. She graduated from St. Vincent Nursing School in 1946 and began working there upon graduation. While working full-time, Nettie Jane returned to college and received her Bachelor of Science in Nursing from the UAMS School of Nursing in 1966. She proudly remained at St. Vincent for 42

years, retiring in 1988. Nettie Jane was an active advocate for nurses. She was named Nurse of the Year by the Arkansas Nurses Association in 1965 and served as president of the Association in 1973. In 1976, she was appointed by Governor David Pryor to the State Board of Health and served three terms until 1987.

Nettie Jane first met Robert Goss at church when they were very young, but after he returned from the service they began a serious courtship and were married on Oct. 21, 1947. This began their 61-year adventure together.

Nettie Jane's greatest joy was found in her faith, family and friends. She served beyond the local church as the North Arkansas Conference's representative on the Lydia Patterson Institute board of trustees, as Conway District lay leader, vice-chair of the Conference committee on episcopacy, chair of the Conference nominating committee and as a delegate to the 1988 South Central Jurisdictional Conference. As an active member of Gardner Memorial United Methodist

Church for most of her life, she loved serving as a Sunday school teacher, Methodist Youth Fellowship leader, committee chairperson, United Methodist Women president, Bible study teacher and faithful choir member. She was instrumental in starting a health clinic at Gardner which opened in 2000 and is still open today; she volunteered there every week for 10 years. Nettie Jane was inducted into the North Little Rock Senior Citizens Hall of Fame in 2008.

The family wants to express sincere thanks to the staff of Parkstone Retirement Center, Arkansas Hospice Association and numerous caregivers, especially Susan Ellis.

Nettie Jane is survived by her sister, Aileen Flurry of Austin, Texas; son, Chuck Goss and wife Sally of Little Rock; daughter, Janet Mitchell and husband Robert of Plano, Texas; grandchildren, Lindsay Fields and husband Chas, Kevin Brockmeier, Jeff Brockmeier and wife Jennifer and great-grandson, Jacob Brockmeier. Nettie Jane was also blessed by her many nieces and nephews and loved being their Aunt Net. She is predeceased by her parents and her husband, Robert.

After a private burial, a memorial service was held Friday, July 22 at Gardner Memorial United Methodist Church, followed by a time to visit with the family in the Fellowship Hall. In lieu of flowers, the family asks donations be made to Gardner Memorial United Methodist Church North Little Rock.

WALNUT RIDGE

Hazel Kate Williams

Infant Hazel Kate Williams was born in the arms of Jesus on Friday, July 8, 2016, at Baptist Health Medical Center in Little Rock. She was surrounded by family and friends as she was baptized into the United Methodist Church and is now rejoicing in the presence of God. Hazel's father, the Rev. Heath Williams, is the associate pastor at First United Methodist Church Paragould while her mother, the Rev. Jeanne Williams, is the pastor at First United Methodist Church Walnut Ridge.

Hazel Kate is loved unconditionally by her parents; her sister, Natalie Williams; maternal grandparents, Greg and Becky Larson of The Villages, Florida; paternal grandparents, Jim Williams and Sharon Williams of Little Rock; uncles, Jason (Dena) Larson of Asheville, North Carolina; Brian Larson, cousins Brooke and Breanna, of Cookeville, Tennessee; and aunt, Heather (Dennis) Byrd, cousins, Branden and Addison, of Benton; and a large extended family.

A Celebration of Life Service was held Saturday, July 16 at First United Methodist Church Paragould, with the Revs. John Fleming and Susan Ledbetter officiating. Following the service, the family celebrated Hazel's life with friends and family in the Fellowship Hall of the church. Memorials may be made to First United Methodist Church of Walnut Ridge or Paragould; or to the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation (www.jdrf.org).

Special ARUMC pricing for copiers, printers, services through CFT/Datamax partnership

The Arkansas Conference Center for Technology has invited Little Rock-based Datamax, Inc., to serve as the preferred vendor of printer, copier and imaging solutions for local churches and member organizations of the Arkansas Conference.

As an elite member of the Canon USA Advanced Partner

Program, Datamax has secured special pricing with Canon for our churches and affiliate organizations. With the complete partnership of Canon, Datamax and the Arkansas Conference, churches and related institutions will not only be able to receive select pricing on Canon Output Devices, but also on other services that Datamax offers:

- Rapid Service Call
 - Responsiveness, Quick Service Call Resolution
 - Document management, Laserfiche
 - Information Technology services (remote or on-site)
 - Managed print services (identifying devices that aren't cost effective and formulating a plan to maximize productivity)
 - Network services (including a free network assessment)
 - Dell Direct pricing for computers and service
 - Backup and disaster recovery options
- The Center for Technology is confident that Datamax can bring complete and cost-effective solutions

to local churches and other entities in the Conference. If you are in the market for any of the services that Datamax can provide, contact Datamax representative David Holzhauer at 501-603-3000 or dholzhauer@datamax-lr.com.

—Mark Epperson, director,
ARUMC Center for Technology

Dollars for Scholars Grants Awarded to 40 Arkansas Students

A total of 40 students received Dollars for Scholars awards to begin or continue their education at United Methodist colleges, universities and seminaries. For each recipient, the student's local church gave \$1,000 and the United Methodist Higher Education Foundation matched that contribution. Then the

United Methodist Foundation of Arkansas gave \$1,000 and the student's selected college contributed \$1,000 for a significant \$4,000 award to each student.

UMFA is proud to grant \$40,000 in scholarship contributions to these students:

UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS

Ethny M. Ashcraft
 Christopher D. Beasley
 Aubrey N. Brink
 Samuel E. Byrd
 Jalan J. D. Caffey
 Christopher A. Carver
 Christina G. Choh
 Samuel M. Coker
 Lorenzo C. Collins
 Aaron Davis
 Anna G. Estes
 Andrew D. Fleming
 Nicole L. Fulton
 Ava Z. Graves
 Addison G. Griffin
 Liam R. Hankins-Hull
 Anthony S. Harris
 Caitlyn B. Hendrickson
 Chad E. Hornsby
 Kyra T. Jones
 Titus N. Manning
 Deviontae T. Martin
 Benjamin C. Mason
 Harper L. Purifoy
 Daniel K. Reece
 Faith Reynolds
 Michala J. Roberts
 Christopher C. Rowland
 Alexander M. Shannon
 Victoria L. Spradley
 Douglas A. Tiler
 Kayla M. Vann
 Jalon S. Warren
 Delaney G. Wells
 Emily L. Wollenberg
 Margaret A. Young

SEMINARY STUDENTS

Andrea' L. Cummings
 Taylor W. Loy
 Laura J. Prange
 Dominique A. Rutledge

HOME CHURCH

Lakeside UMC, Pine Bluff
 Wesley Chapel UMC, Little Rock
 Sequoyah UMC, Fayetteville
 First UMC, Malvern
 Wesley Chapel UMC, Little Rock
 First UMC, Blytheville
 Hope Korean UMC, Little Rock
 First UMC, Conway
 Wesley Chapel UMC, Little Rock
 Wesley Chapel UMC, Little Rock
 St. Paul UMC, Little Rock
 Grand Ave. First UMC, Hot Springs
 Wesley Chapel UMC, Little Rock
 First UMC, Bryant
 Highland Valley UMC, Little Rock
 First UMC, Little Rock
 Wesley Chapel UMC, Little Rock
 First UMC, Little Rock
 First UMC, Brinkley
 Wesley Chapel UMC, Little Rock
 Wesley Chapel UMC, Little Rock
 Wesley Chapel UMC, Little Rock
 Wesley Chapel UMC, Little Rock
 First UMC, Malvern
 First UMC, West Memphis
 Grace UMC, Hensley
 First UMC, Conway
 Wesley Chapel UMC, Little Rock
 Pulaski Heights UMC, Little Rock
 Pulaski Heights UMC, Little Rock
 Central UMC, Fayetteville
 Wesley Chapel UMC, Little Rock
 Wesley Chapel UMC, Little Rock
 First UMC, Charleston
 First UMC, Clarksville
 Lakeside UMC, Pine Bluff

HOME CHURCH

Wesley Chapel UMC, Little Rock
 Central UMC, Fayetteville
 First UMC, DeWitt
 Wesley Chapel UMC, Little Rock

COLLEGE

Hendrix College
 Philander Smith College
 Hendrix College
 Hendrix College
 Philander Smith College
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 Hendrix College
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 Philander Smith College
 Philander Smith College
 Oklahoma City University
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 Centenary College
 Hendrix College
 Hendrix College
 Dillard University
 Philander Smith College
 Hendrix College
 Oklahoma City University
 Hendrix College

SEMINARY

Candler School of Theology
 Duke University Divinity School
 Iliff School of Theology
 Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary



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