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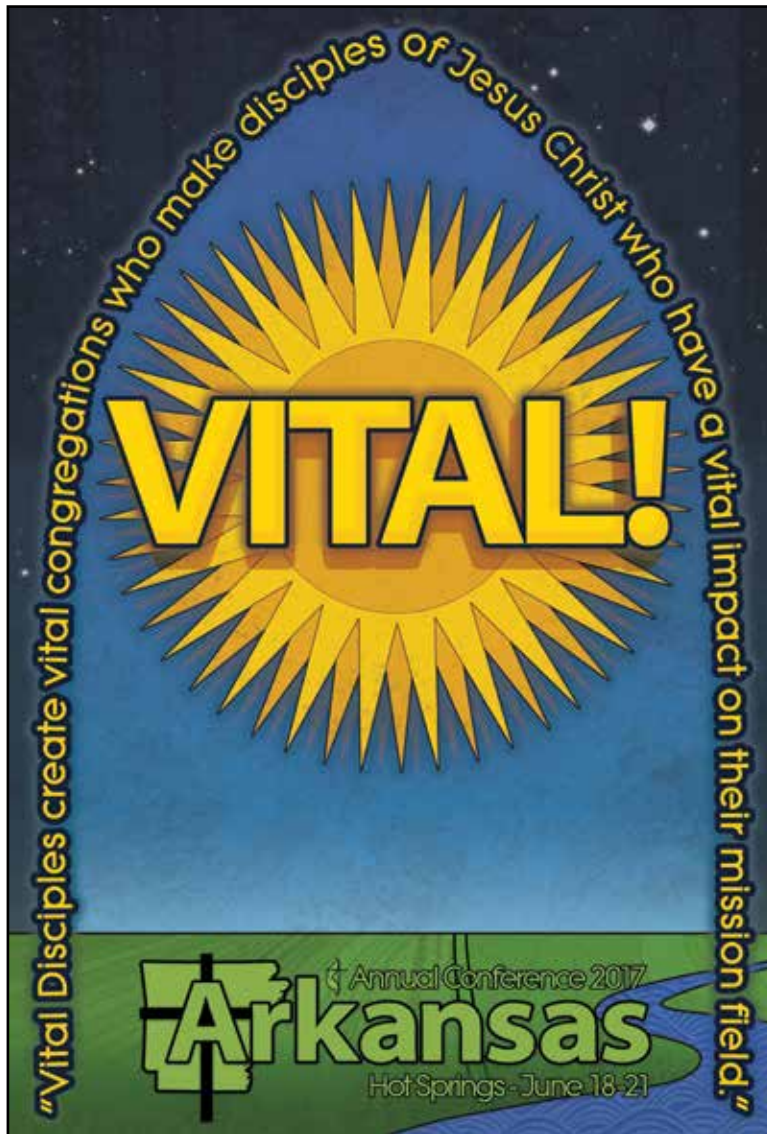


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Annual Conference theme to extend throughout 2017



BY AMY FORBUS
Editor

It's the second word of the Arkansas Conference's stated trajectory: "Creating **vital** congregations that make disciples of Jesus Christ, who make disciples equipped to transform lives, communities and the world."

And in 2017, "Vital!" promises to be the word that calls United Methodists to transformation—not just during Annual Conference gathering June 18-21, but all year long.

Prayer emphasis

In addition to the denomination-wide "Praying Our Way Forward" initiative beginning Jan. 1 (information available at www.umcprays.org), the United Methodists of Arkansas will once again be invited to pray for spiritual revival as they did during Lent of 2016.

For the month of February, Bishop Gary Mueller invites any and all United Methodists to pray daily for spiritual revival—personally, on

a congregational level and throughout the Arkansas Conference. This season of dedicated prayer may be customized by individuals and groups to include times of corporate prayer and fasting.

Look for more details and resources later this month on www.arumc.org.

Annual Conference teaching

In keeping with the theme "Vital!" the 2017 Annual Conference will include teaching in four areas that contribute to spiritual vitality in individuals and congregations. All are welcome to attend these sessions; participants need not attend the entire Annual Conference session or be a member of the Annual Conference.

Faith sharing: Kay Kotan, who hundreds of United Methodists in Arkansas will remember as the keynote speaker for last April's Grow By One Summit sponsored by the Arkansas Conference Center for Vitality, will return to Arkansas to

[See VITAL, page 7]

Book chronicles Hot Springs church's pioneering work in respite care ministry

BY MARTHA TAYLOR
Special Contributor

Scripture reminds us more than once of our responsibility as Christians to care for vulnerable persons, such as the poor, sick, widows and orphans. Bearing that in mind, it's easy to see why First United Methodist Church Hot Springs has provided a place of safety and support for more than 20 years for adults with different forms of dementia and Alzheimer's disease and their caregivers.

While the histories of long-lived

ministries may be lost to time, The Caring Place has the benefit of a comprehensive telling of the earliest days of the ministry through 2015 in a book written by Frances C. Dalme, Ph.D., RNP (retired) and First UMC Hot Springs member. In *The Caring Place: Making the Most of the Long Goodbye*, Dalme chronicles the ministry's beginnings, its mission and evolution into a national model of care for people with Alzheimer's disease and dementia.

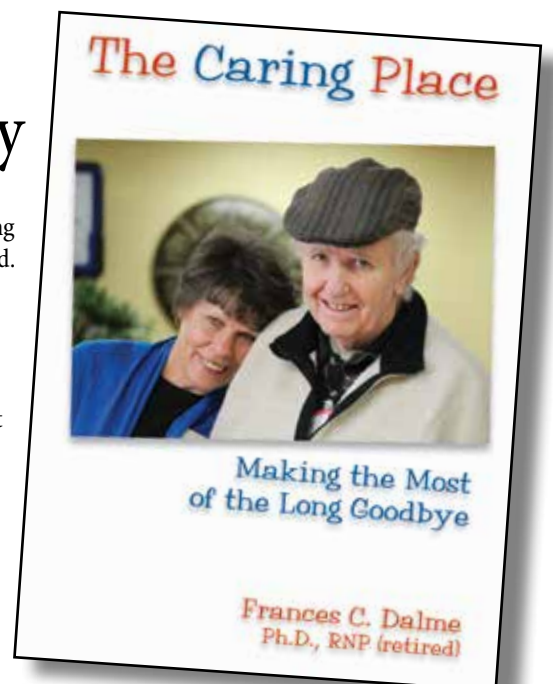
"I thought [The Caring Place history] should be documented because at the time we were the only

ones in the state doing anything," Dalme said.

Dalme's nursing specialty was in geriatrics, so when she joined First UMC Hot Springs in 1997 it was a natural fit for her to begin serving at The Caring Place.

"I loved getting to know people and I loved the participants," she said. "It sounded

[See CARING PLACE, page 5]



A pastor walks into a bar...

BY KATIE PEARCE
Special Contributor

Many of my friends are not active members of a religious community, and some do not consider themselves to be people of faith. However, we often have conversations about matters of faith: belief, doubt, prayer and the role of religion in society. Despite their hesitance to attend a traditional church, they do have thoughts about God and faith.

I want to encourage conversations that welcome honest questions, doubt and disagreement with those outside the church and with the lay members of my congregation. I have found that hosting these conversations in a non-traditional location draws a diverse crowd of people who are looking to engage in God-talk.



Katie Pearce

I have led two “pub theology” groups, one in Little Rock and the other in Morrilton. These two groups have different contexts and different purposes, but both take holy conversations outside the church and into the world.

‘Faith and Fermentation’

When I served as the associate pastor at Highland Valley UMC Little Rock, I started a monthly discussion group called Faith and Fermentation at Stone’s Throw Brewing with the owner, Ian Beard, a member of First UMC Little Rock. Faith and Fermentation did not start as an outreach of HVUMC or FUMC; the goal was simply to talk about matters of faith with a group of people from diverse faith backgrounds.

Faith and Fermentation began in October 2015, when we discussed the significance of the Pope’s recent visit to the United States. Several United Methodists attended, as well as Catholics, non-denominational Christians and “nones and dones.”

Over the past year, we have developed some Faith and Fermentation traditions. We begin with a moment of quiet, as suggested by a participant who attended a Quaker college. We introduce ourselves each meeting and share our faith tradition, if we have one. The

facilitator provides a topic and guided questions, but the conversation is not limited by those questions. There are no rules, except that we are not there to argue or change people’s minds; we are there to have conversations about faith over beer. We end by discussing possible topics for future meetings, which have included Christmas: Pagan holiday or Christian Holy Day?; What Would Jesus Do?; Mother’s Day; and Human Trafficking.

The group varies depending on the topic. Some topics created social media buzz, which led to many new faces. The group of regulars includes Methodists, members of the Church of Christ, Episcopalians and agnostics. They have discussed faith and the LGBT and transgender communities, race relations, worship styles, faith and politics, gender roles and denominational differences. Attendees speak with civility and grace, despite disagreeing deeply. One person without a worshipping community attends Faith and Fermentation regularly and calls it her church.

‘Bibles and Beer’

When I was appointed to Morrilton I was excited to hear that First UMC already had a pub theology group. Bibles and Beer was started by a group of laity who read Get Their Name and began eating dinner and drinking beer every Tuesday night at Yesterday’s Restaurant and Bar. As a weekly presence, the group formed relationships with regular patrons, waiters and owners.

The goal of Bibles and Beer is different from the goal of Faith and Fermentation. Bibles and Beer provides a way for the church to build relationships in the community of Morrilton. Initially there was no programmatic element to Bibles and Beer; we simply met and enjoyed dinner, drinks and fellowship weekly.

Recently we have changed the format. We now meet monthly, on the third Tuesday. We have grown to take up an entire room at Yesterday’s. We advertise to the community on social media and invite friends and neighbors. We continue to enjoy food, drink and fellowship, but we have added Bible trivia and conversation topics to the evening’s agenda. The group has also done mission projects together, like visiting the nursing home to deliver

Christmas gifts.

Bibles and Beer is one of the most intergenerational groups associated with First UMC Morrilton, with regular participants ranging from early 20s to late 70s. The group continues to experiment with different formats, but is committed to being at Yesterday’s every third Tuesday. The staff and patrons are welcoming and intrigued by the group. And as a new pastor in town, I’ve made connections with more members of the community through Bibles and Beer than I have at gatherings like Rotary meetings and football games.

Not about the drinks

Despite the names and locations of these gatherings, alcohol is not at the center of the event. Most people at both groups do drink, but some do not. One group has attendees who are in recovery.

While conversations can occur anywhere, it is important to take them outside the church walls. The concept could be re-branded as Bibles and Biscotti or Evangelical Espressos and held at a coffee shop or other locale. A different setting is inviting to people who are not comfortable walking into a church; it breaks some negative assumptions about Christian legalism and it brings the church to a new location. The beverage and setting are tools that lead to conversation and community, not the goal of the gathering.

I believe discipleship is occurring through these groups. We are examining the way God is at work, we are asking hard questions and are engaging with people who think and believe differently. My hope is that every person comes to the table expecting to be changed, and that we each leave the table transformed.

I hope churches will begin to host more off-campus groups in bars and coffee shops, and that we will mirror in our churches the same hospitality and grace-filled conversations that I have found at Faith and Fermentation and Bibles and Beer.

The Rev. Pearce currently serves as pastor of First UMC Morrilton. Bibles and Beer meets every third Tuesday at Yesterday’s Restaurant and Bar in Morrilton at 6 p.m.; Faith and Fermentation meets every first Tuesday at Stone’s Throw Brewing in Little Rock at 6 p.m.



EDITOR’S CORNER

BY AMY FORBUS

Beloved child of God

A few weeks ago, John and I officially became godparents for the first time. At Nora’s baptism, we stood beside her parents and made some pretty big promises.

We have made big promises before to some of our friends who are parents. There are a couple of growing girls in faraway states who, should their moms and dads both meet some untimely demise, are supposed come to live with us. There’s a kid in Texas whose parents asked us to stand with the family as he was baptized. But this is the first time we’ve been asked to answer the big questions.

Big questions. That’s one of the reasons Nora’s parents asked us to take on this role in her life. “We know y’all are okay with doubt, and we figure that someday she will question her faith,” her mom told me. “We want her to have a place to talk about things that she might not want to talk about with us.”

So as little Nora, the unwilling host to a stomach bug, endured three spit-up incidents and three wardrobe changes before her baptism arrived in the order of worship that Sunday, I got used to being a godmother. I held the pacifier. I handed over the towel to wipe up the mess. I found things squirreled away in pockets of the diaper bag. I reiterated that her mom had made exactly the right call to wait until the last minute before putting her in the heirloom baptismal gown. Nora’s mom declared me a most excellent godmother; I smiled, hesitant to remind her that we have a lot more godparenting ahead of us than behind us.

As a not very sentimental person, I thought of a baptismal gift almost too late to make it happen. But as someone with a stable of talented friends, one of whom was willing to pull a late night and try some innovation in the face of technical difficulties, the idea became reality. We gave Nora an embroidered blanket bearing her name, her baptism date, and the phrase, “Beloved Child of God.”

My prayer is that as she grows up, Nora will read those words early and often. That when she faces a world that tries to tell her she isn’t, she will answer that world, *Oh, yes, I am.* And that she will know the love of God even when she cannot bring herself to feel it. Because each and every one of us is God’s beloved child, priceless and treasured. I pray that Nora wraps herself in that truth all of her days.

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



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Submission Deadlines

Issue Date	Submission Deadline
Feb. 3	Jan. 17
March 3	Feb. 13
April 7	March 17



GROWING TOGETHER IN CHRIST: A word from the Bishop

BY GARY E. MUELLER

2017: a year of hope and vitality

Happy New Year!

The world is struggling as we begin this new year. Just like our denomination. And, perhaps, just like you. There is division, terror, fear, pain, injustice, anxiety and seemingly very little hope. But while it's tough to be optimistic, there is every reason in the world to be filled with hope. That's because hope is a gift from God that is possible because God is at work in our world making God's will just as real on earth as it already is in heaven.

It is in the midst of this struggling yet hope-filled world that God is calling the United Methodist people of Arkansas to create vital congregations that will bring the Good News of the Gospel of Jesus Christ to people who need it more than they will ever know.

Vital congregations passionately seek spiritual revival, intentionally grow disciples, engage people in their neighborhood and experience the fruit of increased professions of faith, worship attendance, and transformed lives and communities.

Vital congregations make disciples of Jesus Christ, are filled with disciples who make disciples, equip those disciples for the work of transformation and have the joy of seeing lives, communities and the world actually transformed as the fruit of their faithfulness.

Of course, as much as we might wish otherwise, there is no magical four-step checklist to follow in order to create vital congregations. But there are some specific things we can do throughout 2017 to help our congregations

become more vital.

We can begin where we always need to begin—by seeking spiritual revival. I hope you will join me in a renewed prayer emphasis for spiritual revival during the month of February. You will be invited to pray daily, invite others to pray with you weekly and perhaps even fast as we seek spiritual revival for our churches, our annual conference and ourselves.

The 2017 Annual Conference will have four outstanding teaching times that focus on four key areas that lead to vitality. Kay Kotan will teach us how to share faith. Kevin Watson will help us learn how to use Wesleyan small groups to grow deeper in discipleship. Clif Christopher will talk about the power of personal stewardship. And leaders from our own 200,000 Reasons children's hunger initiative will help us discover how we can end childhood hunger.

Since vitality is only vitality when disciples and churches are vital, your church can utilize one, two, three or all four of the recommended studies on sharing faith, small discipleship groups, stewardship and upping your game in ending childhood hunger during the 2017-2018 school year.

There's one more thing. The Center for Technology is developing a platform for sharing "stories of vitality" that happen in your church and mission field. This means you will have the opportunity to tell stories, post pictures or share videos about the vitality being experienced

through disciples in your congregation.

Once upon a time, I might have wondered, "Isn't this just another top-down conference program in which I have to participate?" Actually, nothing could be farther from the truth. You see, what truly matters is what's going on in churches. That's where disciples are made. That's where disciples grow. That's where lives are transformed. Which means this is about your church.

I want to be clear. This is not a mandatory conference program your church has to do. It is an invitation to be involved in one of the most meaningful and exciting journeys imaginable. For me the "why" behind all of this is very simple and very personal. Jesus has embraced me in grace, forgiven me, healed me and helped me experience the most blessed life imaginable. And I long for others to experience it. Just like you do, too.

I am grateful beyond words for the privilege I have of standing alongside you as we create vital congregations that make disciples of Jesus Christ, who make disciples equipped to transform lives, communities and the world.

May we become more vital than we ever imagined possible—for Jesus' sake!

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.



APPOINTMENTS & RETIREMENTS

The following **appointment change** has been announced since the last publication deadline of the *Arkansas United Methodist*:

- Robert Lyons—Good Faith Carr UMC; effective Jan. 1

And the following **retirement** has been announced:

- Henry "Hank" Wilkins; effective Jan. 1

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

for full salvation, or for a fresh manifestation of his grace, healing all their backslidings."

Wrapped up in that report is also a distinct note of thanksgiving on the part of the people involved. It's a thanksgiving borne out of the recognition for all that God has done for us, including especially offering

(continued on page 4)



PRACTICAL DIVINITY

BY ANDREW C. THOMPSON

Renewing our covenant with God in 2017

The beginning of the new year often brings with it our New Year's resolutions. Usually those resolutions are pretty predictable. We want to lose weight and get in better shape. We want to budget our money better, or perhaps finally finish that special project we have been working on for so long.

For the early Methodists, the beginning of the year was a time for a different kind of resolution—what they called "renewing the covenant." The idea was that they would renew their baptismal covenants with God and thereby recommit themselves to lives of faithful discipleship.

Evidence for early Methodist covenant renewal shows up frequently in John Wesley's

published *Journal*. It was a way that he could spread the word about the importance of covenant renewal to

other communities around the British Isles.

In those *Journal* entries, there is a kind of rhythm to the way Wesley reports on services of covenant renewal. They seem to have included elements of confession, assurance of pardon and power for future living. There is a great example of this rhythm in the entry for Jan. 1, 1775, where Wesley writes: "We had a larger congregation at the renewal of the covenant than we have had for many years; and I do not know that ever we had a greater blessing. Afterwards, many desired to return thanks, either for a sense of pardon,

'In John Wesley's understanding, the spiritual experience that could happen within the covenant renewal service is like a microcosm of the whole experience of salvation itself.'

PEOPLE OF FAITH

Methodist Family Health board, MFH Foundation board announce new members



Jim Polk



Nathan Kilbourne



Michael Mattox

The Rev. Jim Polk of Benton, the Rev. Nathan Kilbourne of Sherwood and the Rev. Michael Mattox of Rogers have been elected to the Methodist Family Health (MFH) board of directors.

Polk is director of connectional ministry and assistant to the bishop for the Arkansas Conference of the United Methodist Church; Kilbourne is senior pastor of First United Methodist Church Jacksonville, and Mattox is senior pastor of First

United Methodist Church Rogers. Methodist Family Health has been providing emotional, behavioral and spiritual support to children and families in Arkansas since

1899. MFH's nonprofit organizations provide care for thousands of children and families each year via a network of therapeutic group homes, a behavioral hospital, residential treatment centers, emergency shelter, day treatment programs and community- and school-based counseling clinics.

Ann Rowell of Little Rock, Dan Rohrbaugh of Hope and the Rev. Carl Palmer of Fayetteville have been elected to the Methodist Family

Health Foundation board of directors. Rowell is a community volunteer and member of St. James UMC Little Rock; Rohrbaugh is a financial advisor with Edward Jones and a member of First UMC Hope; and Palmer is associate pastor of Central UMC Fayetteville. The Methodist Family Health Foundation is the fundraising arm of the organization.

All of the new board members have either volunteered with or led congregations in awareness about Methodist Family Health. Kilbourne previously served as pastor of Vilonia United Methodist Church, which hosts a satellite clinic for Methodist Family Health, so he witnessed the work of the organization from a unique perspective.

"Following the 2014 tornado at Vilonia, Methodist Family Health

was not only an important part of the recovery process and helping families return to a normal routine, the organization was a wonderful partner with the church in helping us get back on our feet," Kilbourne says. "It has been an honor over the past few years to come to know about and experience the work Methodist Family Health does for local communities. For these reasons, I am honored to serve on the board."



Ann Rowell



Dan Rohrbaugh



Carl Palmer

Palmer says he is "a great believer in the work of MFH and all they do to champion children and families. As an adoptive parent, I have an understanding and great respect for the work of MFH."

For more information about Methodist Family Health, visit www.methodistfamily.org.

Practical Divinity

(continued from page 3)

us the gift of salvation.

In John Wesley's understanding, the spiritual experience that could happen within the covenant renewal service is like a microcosm of the whole experience of salvation itself. In order for us to really know and love God, we first have to get rid of all the junk of sin that piles itself up in our lives. When we confess that sin and ask God for forgiveness, we can receive the experience of true pardon. And once pardoned, we are ready to be filled with the sanctifying grace of Jesus Christ that enables us to love God fully.

That "pardon/power" dynamic appears in another covenant renewal reference from Wesley's *Journal*, this time on Dec. 31, 1780. Wesley writes: "We renewed our covenant with God. We had the largest company that I ever remember; perhaps two hundred more than we had last year. And we had the greatest blessing. Several received either a sense of the pardoning love of God or power to love him with all their heart."

One of the great things about covenant renewal is that it doesn't have to exist just as an historical artifact. The traditional "Covenant Renewal Service" is present in our current United Methodist *Book of Worship* on pages 288-294. I have led multiple groups through this service over the years, and it always offers a powerful experience of renewal. It's the type of service that often works best with small groups or class meetings that have been engaging in serious conversations about their

faith together over the previous year.

However, if the full Covenant Renewal Service isn't feasible, then anyone interested in the experience of renewing the baptismal covenant with God can draw on the "Covenant Prayer in the Wesleyan Tradition," found on page 607 of the *United Methodist Hymnal*:

**Holy God,
I am no longer my own, but
thine.
Put me to what thou wilt,
rank me with whom thou
wilt.
Put me to doing, put me to
suffering.
Let me be employed by thee
or laid aside for thee,
exalted for thee or brought
low for thee.
Let me be full, let me be
empty.
Let me have all things,
let me have nothing.
I freely and heartily yield all
things
to thy pleasure and disposal.
And now, O glorious and
blessed God,
Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,
thou art mine, and I am
thine. So be it.
And the covenant which I
have made on earth,
let it be ratified in heaven.
Amen.**

That prayer is appropriate for use in a regular Sunday service—whether that be on New Year's Day, Baptism of the Lord Sunday or some other occasion early in the new year.

The Rev. Dr. Thompson serves as senior pastor of First UMC Springdale. He can be reached at www.andrewthompson.com.

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.

FUMC, Paragould is seeking a full-time Director of Youth Ministries. The expectations are that our Director of Youth Ministries will help our youth in grades 7-12 grow spiritually, and be mission-minded. It is also our expectation that the successful applicant will see themselves as a part of a team, helping in other areas in the church. A Bachelor's degree is required. Membership and background in the United Methodist Church is preferred. Strong organizational and communication skills are desired. The salary is commensurate with experience. Interested candidates should send a cover letter and resume to Rev. John Fleming at Johnfleming27@gmail.com or First United Methodist Church of Paragould, 404 West Main Street, Paragould, Arkansas 72450.

Ozark Mission Project is looking to hire a full time Recruitment and Logistics Coordinator to work out of the Little Rock office. For more information, visit www.ozarkmissionproject.org/staff.

Director of Student Ministries position open at First United Methodist Church, Mountain Home, Arkansas. Dynamic church with an active Student Ministries program of 50 youth is seeking a spiritually mature Christian leader to shepherd students and their families in discipleship of Jesus. Must be knowledgeable of, and comfortable with, Wesleyan theology and have excellent communication skills with students and adults. Mountain Home is a wonderful place to raise a family with a quality education system as well as beautiful lakes and rivers. This is a full time position. Email resume to: office@fumcmh.org.

Mayflower UMC in Mayflower, Arkansas, seeks energetic part-time Youth Director for its youth group. Must be able to lead youth to Christ through a scripturally-based atmosphere of love and youth activities, and maintain a good Christian relationship with the youth. Candidates with a Methodist background would be beneficial. Duties include Sunday school, children's church worship and youth fellowship on certain evenings throughout the year. Part-time position, on average three to five hours per week. May be ideal for a college student or young adult. Salary is \$100.00 per week, possibly more depending on experience. To apply or for more information please email brazlewood@yahoo.com or revrickwilkins@sbcglobal.net.

Mayflower UMC in Mayflower, Arkansas, 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 an offertory as well as during Holy Communion, and play a brief postlude after worship. Salary is \$75.00 per week. To schedule an interview or more information please email nancyacre@gmail.com, revrickwilkins@sbcglobal.net or brazlewood@yahoo.com.

Swamp Angel Ministries is "TRAVELING ARKANSAS!" For more info contact Dr. David Bush @ Stuttgart FUMC - (870) 673-1131 or thepastor@stuttgartfumc.org call or text @ (870) 830-7777.

Caring Place (cont'd from page 1)

A Caring Place client and friend celebrate a birthday.

COURTESY PHOTO



like a wonderful ministry.”

While she no longer is able to volunteer “on the floor,” Dalme is a

volunteer facilitator for the caregiver support group, something she says is as important as the care given to the participants.

“Caregiving usually falls on one member of a family, and it’s 24/7 with no relief,” said Dalme. “In the care group we stress how important it is to take care of you.”

Early days

The results of three community-wide health needs surveys, conducted in the late 1980s and early 1990s by the administrators of St. Joseph’s Regional Medical Center (now CHI St. Vincent), revealed the need for a safe place for adults with dementia or Alzheimer’s to spend time in social activities and to provide respite and support for their caregivers.

The social model for the program was initially called Adult Day Respite Care and focused on a variety of activities such as art, music and exercise. As organizers drafted the program’s mission and scope, it became clear that a natural partner would be a local church that could provide safety for the participants and recruit a pool of trained volunteers. In 1992, St. Joseph’s administrators approached First UMC Hot Springs with the idea of providing space for the program. With the enthusiastic blessing of the senior pastor, the Rev. David Wilson, the response from the pews was a resounding, “Yes!”

“When we began, we were aware that the number of people who had Alzheimer’s and other forms of dementia was increasing in the Hot Springs area,” said Wilson, now a retired elder living in Hot Springs. “We received training and a start-up grant from the Brookdale Foundation. It was, and is, a needed and rewarding ministry.”

Wilson said that because the model for The Caring Place was so unique and effective it drew the attention of other churches and hospitals in Arkansas and the United States.

“We trained and continue to train any local church interested in providing respite care for individuals with dementia,” said Wilson. “We were also instrumental in helping to craft legislation that allowed churches to provide respite care one day a week without a license.”

In her book, Dalme credits Wilson’s leadership and that of many others for getting the program established in the church’s Fellowship Hall. Organizers were clear that they wanted the program to be diverse; they recruited leaders and volunteers from different denominations and serve an ethnically and racially diverse population.

Expansion

Initially the program was offered one day a week for four hours. It served six people and there were 12 volunteers. Participants paid \$12 for the program and

brought their lunches with them, as did the volunteers.

As word got out, the ministry extended its reach to participants from neighboring communities. To meet the demand, the program increased to two and a half days a week, then later to the current schedule of four days a week. Thanks to donations, lunch is now provided and the daily cost has been reduced to \$8, with some participants receiving full scholarships.

With increased participation, adequate space became an issue, but a First UMC Hot Springs couple’s gift resolved the problem. In 2005, Sam and Lucille Clark purchased and donated the old Hot Springs Telephone Company building to the church for The Caring Place’s use. Located a short distance from the church, the building provided the needed square footage, ensuring the success and growth of The Caring Place for many years to come.

The Caring Place was unique in the beginning; now, its social model has been replicated across the United States. One distinction was the support provided to the individuals caring for their loved ones affected by Alzheimer’s disease or dementia. A monthly support group gave caregivers space to share their experiences and help them overcome some of the isolation and loneliness that can come with this type of caregiving.

Currently the program has 52 volunteers and 58 participants. The staff of eight is led by director Lynn Reeves, who has been with the ministry almost since the start. Over the years, Reeves has seen and heard hundreds of stories and received thanks from many of the families that rely on The Caring Place for their loved ones.

“I can’t think of just one story because there are hundreds,” she said. “Just the other day a family member came in my office and said, ‘Lynn, this is the happiest I’ve seen my husband in three years.’”

Valued ministry

Reeves reflected on the future of The Caring Place ministry in light of the aging population in the United States. She already has seen participants entering the program as young as 58. She’s working to serve more people and to educate the general population about Alzheimer’s.

“We remind people that Alzheimer’s is a disease, not a mental illness,” said Reeves. “We work to keep the participants out of nursing homes so we focus on things they can still do, rather than on their losses. They’ve had so many losses.”

The Rev. David Moseley, senior pastor of First UMC Hot Springs, echoes Reeves’s sentiments.

“This is a great ministry, not so much for what comes from it for us,” he said. “It’s great because of what it does for the participants and their families.”

Moseley added that The Caring Place board of directors recently grew from five to seven members who represent different faith traditions including UMC, Baptist and Jewish.

The Caring Place has an ongoing fundraiser: Individuals can donate furniture and household goods to Godbehere Auction Company in Hot Springs and designate that the proceeds go to the program to provide participant scholarships. The group also produces notecards and an annual calendar featuring participants’ artwork.

Signed copies of Dalme’s book are available at The Caring Place and at First UMC Hot Springs.

For more information about The Caring Place, visit www.thecaringplacehotsprings.com or their Facebook page, www.facebook.com/thecaringplacehotsprings. If your church is interested in learning how to offer respite care for seniors with dementia, contact Lynn Reeves, 501-623-2881 or caring@cablerynx.com, to arrange a visit or to discuss training.

Young celebrity chefs share talents at church

The MidYouth group (students in fifth through seventh grades) at First UMC Conway on Dec. 14 enjoyed a special gift: a dinner cooked by the two celebrity chefs in their midst.



Ruby Jones, left, and Hart Irby in the kitchen at First UMC Conway.

COURTESY PHOTO

a seventh-grader whose recipe of Asian Catfish Sliders was chosen to be cooked for President Barack Obama at the White House Kids’ State Dinner in 2014 (part of First Lady Michelle Obama’s “Let’s Move!” campaign to fight childhood obesity), and Ruby Jones, a fifth-grader who finished as first runner-up on a November episode of the Food Network program Chopped Junior, prepared a meal for 75 fellow MidYouth members and guests. Hart’s sliders were the main course, and Ruby prepared dessert, a brownie topped with ice cream and chocolate drizzle.

“Kids with special interests and talents need to have the opportunity to shine,” said Rod Hocott, director of MidYouth ministries at First UMC Conway, in a post on Facebook. “I hope this will be a night they will remember because their MidYouth group-mates, and youth minister, certainly won’t forget.”

Hendrix College and Philander Smith College Present Faith in Black and White: The Church and Race in ‘Colorblind’ America

A public speaker series to explore the systems of racial injustice in contemporary American culture and the role of the Church in creating a more racially just society.

All events are free and open to the public.



THE FIERCE URGENCY OF PROPHETIC CITIZENSHIP

The Honorable Wendell Griffen: Monday, January 16
7 p.m. | Wesley Chapel United Methodist Church on the Philander Smith College campus

HOLDING UP YOUR CORNER: TALKING ABOUT RACE IN YOUR COMMUNITY

Rev. Dr. F. Willis Johnson: Tuesday, February 21
7 p.m. | Mills Center at Hendrix College, Room A



THE BIBLE IN BLACK AND WHITE

Dr. Nyasha Junior: Tuesday, March 14
7 p.m. | Kendall Nugent building at Philander Smith College

(IN)JUSTICE

Dr. Emilie Townes: Wednesday, April 5
7 p.m. | Mills Center at Hendrix College, Room A



For more information, contact Dr. Robert Williamson at williamsonr@hendrix.edu or 501-505-1559 or Rev. Ronnie Miller-Yow at rmiller-yow@philander.edu or 501-370-5344.



Center for Vitality holding series of lay leadership conversations



Cathy Hall Hughes, right, on Dec. 10 led a discussion among a group of laity that included Hubert Chapman, left, and John Petefish, both of First UMC Jacksonville. The conversation took place at the first in a series of "Leadership Unleashed" coffee gatherings in the Central District.

AUM PHOTO BY AMY FORBUS

"What can we learn from you this morning?"

That question, asked by Cathy Hall Hughes, lay program coordinator with the Arkansas Conference Center for Vitality (CFV), began two hours of discussion and sharing among laity from local churches at the Dec. 10 Leadership Unleashed coffee. The first of several such small-group gatherings was held at Sylvan Hills UMC Sherwood.

Leadership Unleashed is part of a pilot effort in the Central District that the CFV expect to roll out to other districts in 2017. The purpose: to connect laity with one another, recognize vital ministries taking place through local churches and begin to help churches learn from and inspire each other as they seek more opportunities to connect with their neighbors.

Invitations to future gatherings will be emailed to laypersons who have attended the Grow By One Summit held in April 2016 at St. James UMC Little Rock; the Leadership Institute at Church of the Resurrection in Leawood, Kansas; and various events associated with the Lay Servant Ministries program in Arkansas. All laity are welcome; the Center for Vitality is inviting laity based on their participation in these types of events because involvement in such programs indicates a willingness to serve in leadership.

The CFV is building connections among passionate laity in local churches so they may more easily share ideas and inspiration for ministry. They hope that these connections grow into a fellowship of prayerful support that helps congregations follow their calling to make disciples.

After learning about ministry directions and interests during Leadership Unleashed coffees, the CFV provides follow-up resources requested by attendees. The next phase, Hughes says, will be offering lay leadership training based on the input received at these gatherings. For more information, contact her at chughes@arumc.org or 501-324-8011.

VIM AND DISASTER RESPONSE UPDATES

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.

In-state mission journeys available in early 2017

Making plans for mission and outreach in the New Year? Please consider the needs of our neighbors in southeast Arkansas. They are ready to receive mission teams that can help repair homes damaged in the floods last spring. To schedule a team, contact Janice Mann at disaster@arumc.org.

Southeastern U.S. wildfires

The recovery period from wildfires in Gatlinburg, Tennessee, and surrounding areas will be long for many of the affected households. You can help by giving to Disaster Response, United States (Advance #901670) through the Arkansas Conference office or at www.umcor.org. Contact Janice Mann to receive information about any future call for mission teams in that area.

Help alleviate the humanitarian crisis in Syria

From the United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR):

UMCOR is working hard with on-the-ground partners to develop projects and provide humanitarian assistance, mostly food, supplies and other non-food items to the survivors of Aleppo. Since 2010, UMCOR has been responding to the Syrian crisis by working with partners to provide for the basic human needs of refugees and internally displaced persons. To date, UMCOR has spent approximately \$4 million on this disaster. UMCOR is currently finalizing a grant to assist in Lebanon as that country supports the nearly one-third of its population who are refugees. To give to

support this work, designate your gift with Advance #982450, International Disaster Response, at www.umcor.org. Most of all, though, please pray for the people who have been trapped in Aleppo.

Travel to Cuba in July or November

Contact Nechi Fullerton at 501-766-8151 or nfullerton@yahoo.com to learn more about these opportunities with the Methodist Church in Cuba:

- July mission: A Volunteers in Mission team is forming for a one-week journey to Holguin, Cuba, to lead Bible school. Now is the time to consider joining the team, tentatively scheduled for July departure. In addition to morning Bible School, the team will worship with the 2,000-member Catedral de Holguin, visit missions, house churches, small groups and see the sights. Those not interested in volunteering at Bible school can be valuable team members, as well.
- If you cannot travel but would like to sponsor a child's Bible school experience in Holguin, Cuba, craft projects and snacks are needed. Even a few dollars make a real difference in enriching the mission team's abilities to connect with and teach the students. Follow-up photos provided.
- November mission: Be a part of a one-week November 2017 Mission Team to experience the Cuban Methodist revival while supporting and worshipping with Catedral de Holguin, the second largest Methodist Church in Cuba. This immersion experience includes large church services, missions, house churches, small groups and the sights of Holguin.

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

New senior adult fellowship begins with thank-you banquet

December may have brought cold temperatures to northwest Arkansas, but Central UMC Fayetteville made warm memories with a new fellowship for senior adults called the Central GoodTimers.

Based on the words of the Psalmist, "This is the day which the Lord has made. Let us rejoice and be glad in it," Central GoodTimers is being led by pastors emeriti Dr. Jack Wilson and the Rev. Tony Holifield for the purpose of coming together and celebrating each day as God's gift with rejoicing.

To launch the new fellowship, the church on Dec. 7 hosted an appreciation banquet to thank Central's GoodTimers for their past contributions to the church and its many ministries. Music from the '30s and '40s helped set the atmosphere, along with tables dressed to the nines



The Rev. Dr. Jan Davis, senior pastor of Central UMC Fayetteville, refills water glasses at the Dec. 7 GoodTimers banquet.

COURTESY PHOTO

with centerpieces, tablecloths and china. Church staff members served the luncheon while Central's director of classic worship, Frode Gundersen, played The Armed Forces Salute to commemorate the 75th anniversary of the attack on Pearl Harbor.

Already 200 members strong, Central GoodTimers plans to have four events a year—to celebrate, rejoice, and be a continued blessing to many as they fellowship together, making memories of good times shared as God's people.

Want more frequent news from throughout the UMC?

Subscribe to the UMNS Daily Digest email

While the *Arkansas United Methodist* focuses primarily on news from within the Arkansas Conference, we are part of a connectional, worldwide church. United Methodist News Service, the official source for denominational news, offers a Daily Digest email, distributed weekdays at 6 p.m. Central time. Visit www.umc.org/news-and-media/daily-digest to set up your free subscription, then check your inbox for news on United Methodists across the U.S. and the world, as well as for denominational developments that affect every church in our connection.

Do you prefer keeping up with church news on social media? See the Facebook pages for UMNS, www.facebook.com/umnews, and the Arkansas Conference, www.facebook.com/arkansasumc.

Vital

(continued from page 1)

teach more United Methodists about sharing their faith with others. A layperson from Missouri, Kotan has co-authored a number of books, including *Get Their Name: Grow Your Church by Building New Relationships*. Her latest book, *Gear Up!: Nine Essential Processes for the Optimized Church*, will be available in March.

Small groups: The Rev. Dr. Kevin Watson will help Annual

Methodist Practice; The Class Meeting: Reclaiming a Forgotten (and Essential) Small Group Experience; and A Blueprint for Discipleship: Wesley's General Rules as a Guide for Christian Living. To get a preview of some of his favorite topics, visit his blog, www.vitalpiety.com.

Stewardship: The Rev. Dr. Clif Christopher, an Arkansas Conference retired elder who is recognized across the denomination for his work in Christian stewardship, will talk about the power of personal stewardship for disciples of Jesus Christ. Christopher is president and founder of Horizons Stewardship, and has written multiple books dealing with generosity and giving, including *Not Your Parents' Offering Plate: A New Vision for Financial Stewardship; The Church Money Manual: Best Practices for Finance and Stewardship; and Rich Church, Poor Church: Keys to Effective Financial Ministry*.

Fighting childhood hunger: To continue our emphasis on 200,000 Reasons to Fight Childhood Hunger, an initiative that was renewed for another three years by the 2016

Annual Conference, leaders from within our Conference will teach about ways individuals and churches can take action toward ending childhood hunger in Arkansas. They will provide a theological foundation for the work of combating hunger, as well as instruction on steps to take to get the work done. The mission of the 200,000 Reasons initiative is to engage 100 percent of United



Kay Kotan



Kevin Watson



Clif Christopher

Methodist churches in Arkansas in the initiative to significantly reduce childhood hunger through feeding ministries, public witness and education for long-term stability. The Rev. J.J. Whitney serves as project convener for 200,000 Reasons, and Mary Lewis Dassinger works as project coordinator. For details or contact information, visit www.200kreasons.arumc.org.

In addition to a focus on each of these areas at Annual Conference, local churches will be encouraged to focus throughout the 2017-18 school year on creating vital disciples. In the fall, resources will be provided for studies in all four of these vital ministry areas. Local churches will be invited to choose which and how many of the studies to use, based on

what they believe will work most effectively for ministry and discipleship in their own context.

Story sharing

As a crucial extension of the "Vital!" theme for 2017, the Arkansas Conference Center for Technology (CFT) is preparing to hear from local churches in new ways. When a church or individual experiences vital ministry that grows disciples, engages the neighborhood surrounding the church, yields professions of faith and transforms lives, the CFT wants to know about it to help share it with others.

If you have a story you think would inspire others, contact the CFT at communications@arumc.org



Leaders in fighting hunger

and include "Story of Vitality" in the subject line. It can be a brief written piece, photography or a video. Most importantly, it should provide an example of vital ministry—the kind that reaches out and transforms lives, communities and the world.

In addition to a focus on each of these areas at Annual Conference, local churches will be encouraged to focus throughout the 2017-18 school year on creating vital disciples.

Conference attendees learn how to use Wesleyan small groups to grow deeper in discipleship. An ordained elder in the Oklahoma Conference, Watson currently serves as assistant professor of Wesleyan and Methodist studies at Candler School of Theology at Emory University. His books include *Pursuing Social Holiness: The Band Meeting in Wesley's Thought and Popular*

This Lent, Look at Your MESS Through the Eyes of CHRIST

Sometimes our lives are in such disarray we can't envision a way through to redemption. But when we look at the mess through the eyes of Christ, we not only find redemption, we can clearly see spiritual restoration.

In *Restored*, author Tom Berlin encourages us to reflect and meditate through our own brokenness, showing us that it is only when we focus on the cross as a place to surrender control that we can leave our mess and find true redemption.

Study Components: Book, Leader Guide, DVD, Youth Study Book, and Leader Kit

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Not too late to report for Ingathering 2016

Drop in numbers attributed to decrease in completed forms, not decrease in actual giving

BY AMY FORBUS
Editor

While hundreds volunteered on-site for Ingathering 2016, held Nov. 19, many more United Methodists of Arkansas served and gave throughout the year. Much of the focus of Ingathering surrounds one specific day, but Ingathering also tracks year-round service and giving by churches throughout Arkansas. It's a task that's getting more challenging, says Conference statistician Melissa Sanders.

"We've been seeing more under-reporting from local churches in recent years," Sanders said. "I have no doubt that our churches are doing good work and serving their neighbors, but when the numbers don't arrive in our office, we can't get an accurate representation of it."

The one-page form, available online (<https://goo.gl/gGJ48v>), should be sent to the Conference treasurer's office each year—either by bringing it to Ingathering in November or by mailing it

200,000 REASONS

to fight childhood hunger

Arkansas churches' financial participation in ministries that help feed hungry children should be recorded on each church's Ingathering form in the "200,000 Reasons Childhood Hunger Initiative" box.

to the address printed at the bottom of the form. It can be completed by any member of a congregation who has access to

the church's information. The tally includes:

- Non-cash items (such as disaster relief kits for UMCOR)
- Estimated hours spent in mission and service activities
- Gifts distributed locally by the church (such as giving to food banks, medical clinics and assistance funds for those in need)
- Donations sent to the Conference treasurer's office throughout the year for support of specific ministries (includes a listing of various ministry partnerships and Conference initiatives, such as 200,000 Reasons to Fight Childhood Hunger).

The highest reported dollar amount given to mission in the past decade was in 2009, with records submitted totaling \$3,065,788.24. By comparison, the 2016 giving numbers currently stand at \$1,937,271.89, the lowest amount of giving reported in the history of the Arkansas Conference since the unification in 2003 of the Little Rock and North Arkansas Conferences.

Ingathering VIDEO:

To view scenes from Ingathering 2016, including interviews with individuals and groups who participated, visit the Arkansas Conference Vimeo channel, www.vimeo.com/arkansasumc.

Combines a Wesleyan focus with the insightful writings of Bishop Job.

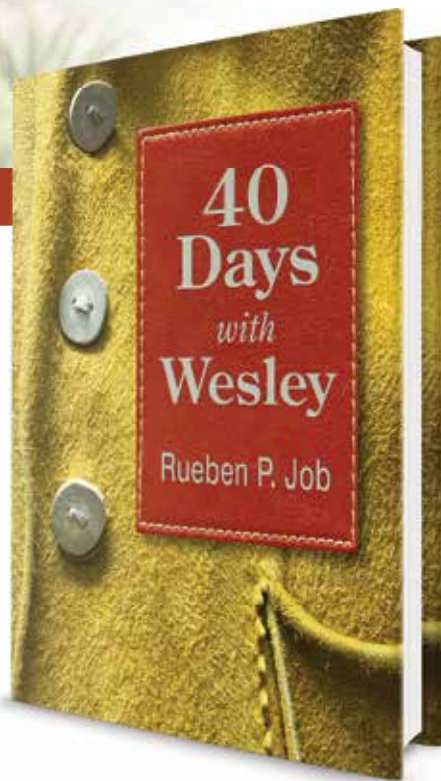
In an accessible, inviting format, this forty-day devotional experience weaves inspirational readings on faith and prayer with quotes and excerpts from John Wesley. Each selection offers a simple daily pattern of reflection with a prayer, scripture, a short reading, quotes from John Wesley, and a blessing to take with you through the day. Even those new to Wesley or a daily prayer guide will find this book an easy read for reassurance and inspiration during the Lent and Easter season. Those familiar with Rueben Job's writing will be delighted to find selections of his writing from the past two decades in a new format.

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Fifth- and sixth-graders to meet Bishop Mueller March 11

A Day with the Bishop is a great opportunity for fifth- and sixth-grade students to meet and spend time with Bishop Gary Mueller, and to learn about the connectional ministries of the United Methodist Church. This gathering time also provides a sneak peek at what these students can expect at United Methodist youth events when they're just a little older.

This year's Day with the Bishop is set for March 11, and will be held at First UMC Little Rock, 723 Center Street. Registration will open soon for this time of fellowship and fun; until then, if you have questions, contact Pam Snider, Conference children's ministry coordinator, at pam.snider@arumc.org or 501-240-3535.



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR POLICY

The Arkansas United Methodist welcomes the opportunity to hear from its readers. To be eligible for publication, letters to the editor must meet the following guidelines:

All letters must be signed with the writer's name, city and church, and include a phone number or email address. Letters may be sent to editor@arumc.org, or to 800 Daisy Bates Drive, Little

Rock, AR 72202.

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

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

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

Global Ministries' Center for Mission Innovation commissions 45 Earthkeepers

BY MARY ANDREOLLI AND
ALYSHA THOMPSON
UMC Global Ministries Staff

ATLANTA, Dec. 2, 2016—Global Ministries' Center for Mission Innovation (CMI) held its first United Methodist Earthkeepers training, Nov. 15-19, and commissioning, Nov. 20. CMI is Global Ministries' newest program area, now six months old. CMI is a forward-thinking, forward-leaning unit, cultivating a best-practice learning and innovation "laboratory" for re-envisioning and redefining 21st century mission practice in the church and in the wider world.

"The Spirit is calling us to a place of wholeness, and the Earthkeepers are a great first step in participating in that mission movement," said the Rev. Denise Honeycutt, CMI's executive director.

CMI launched Earthkeepers training as a response to the growing awareness of creation care as an essential part of Christian discipleship. Earthkeepers are United Methodists who discerned a call from God to a vocation of caring for God's creation. Global Ministries' Theology of Mission asserts: "God's Mission reclaims the life of all creatures and redeems all creation for God's intended purpose." Previously, the Rev. Pat Watkins was the only United Methodist missionary appointed to the care of God's creation, but as a part of this pilot program, CMI commissioned 45 United Methodist Earthkeepers.

Global Ministries celebrates Earthkeepers as a new ministry that hopes to address issues of environmental justice. Initially, it was designed to be a U.S.-based mission, but after further

discernment, it became clear Earthkeepers was destined to be a worldwide ministry.

During the Earthkeepers' training, participants discussed community projects they are currently involved in or would like to start. The training was designed so that when they returned home, the Earthkeepers would have concrete plans for how to bring their projects to life.

"They came together from around the world, we provided training, the opportunity to learn from each other, and then commissioned them to go back into their communities to live out their call," Honeycutt said. "Most of these Earthkeepers will be doing innovative creation care work as volunteers."

Sotico Pagulayan, an Earthkeeper from the Philippines, said he resonated with the importance of taking care of the land we are entrusted with. "I am the son of a farmer, so I have a deep connection with the land. And in terms of having a good yield of your crops, you need to take care of the soil."

The Rev. Dottie Yunger, a clergy member of the Baltimore-Washington Conference and a marine biologist, was concerned about the health of subsistence fishermen fishing in the Anacostia River in Washington D.C., due to the toxic levels of pollution in the river and the cancerous lesions on the fish being caught. Because she listened to the fishermen and others in the community, what began as a campaign to let fishermen know that they should not eat fish from the Anacostia, grew into a community-organizing project that has resulted in community gardens, market gardens, a fish farm and

green-jobs training for young African American men in the Fourth Ward, one of the poorest wards in the city. For Yunger, Earthkeepers is the perfect ministry and combines marine biology, ordained ministry and bringing the church into the community, which, according to her, is where the church belongs.

Earthkeepers are keenly aware of the ecological challenges in our world today and feel called to be part of a movement to transform the world. Anahi Alberti D'Amato, an Earthkeeper from Argentina, said, "I think people have to understand that the earth is a house. You have to take care of your house."

During the commissioning at Grace United Methodist Church Atlanta, Thomas Kemper, general secretary of Global Ministries, read an excerpt from the Document on Mission and Evangelism for the 21st Century: "God's love does not proclaim human salvation separate from the renewal of the whole creation."

"Earthkeepers have felt a vocational call by God to care for God's creation. We understand this call to be a biblical mandate for all Christians to care for the earth," said the Rev. Pat Watkins, United Methodist missionary for the care of God's creation, during the commissioning. "For many of them, they have been waiting a very long time for their church to validate their call to a mission of creation care. Well, Earthkeepers, your wait is over! Today is the day!"

CMI hopes to commission more than 500 Earthkeepers in the near future.

To view a related video, visit <https://goo.gl/PI9QNi>.

COMING UP

Technology training at Mount Sequoyah Jan. 26

Mount Sequoyah Conference and Retreat Center will host two technology training courses on Thursday, January 26, 2017.

Basic WordPress, 8 a.m. to 1 p.m.: The basic course is designed for those who have not developed a website or who are very new to WordPress. Includes information on cyber and technology safety.

Advanced WordPress, noon to 5 p.m.: The advanced course is designed for participants who are already working on a WordPress site. This course will include the opportunity to work through areas on participants' sites, as well as information on cyber and technology safety.

Instructors will be Mark Epperson and Butch Renfro of the Center for Technology (CFT) for the Arkansas Conference of the UMC.

All registrations include lunch at noon. Participants are responsible for providing their own laptop computers. If you have questions, contact Denni Palmer at 479-443-4531 or denni.palmer@mountsequoyah.org. To register, visit <https://goo.gl/T9ObT0>.

Beyond Children's Ministry Conference at Mount Sequoyah Jan. 27-28

Registration has begun for the 2017 Beyond Conference, to be held Jan. 27-28 at Mount Sequoyah and sponsored by the Arkansas Conference Council on Children's Ministry of the United Methodist Church. It is open to anyone working in children's ministry (part-time, full-time, paid or volunteer), including participants from other conferences and denominations.

The keynote speaker is the Rev. Melissa Cooper, an ordained United Methodist deacon in the Florida Annual Conference; the coordinator for the Life Enrichment Center, a United Methodist retreat and conference center in Fruitland Park, Florida; and the director of LECFamily, a ministry that includes intergenerational retreats and camps, resources for families and churches, as well as training and workshops for local churches and leaders. She regularly works with churches around the country to develop intergenerational culture, and has spoken at numerous events on the subject of intergenerational ministry and cross-generational faith formation.

Check-in begins at 10 a.m. Friday, Jan. 27. There will be a Wellness Workshop at 11 a.m. for early arrivals, with lunch to follow at noon. The first session of the conference begins at 1 p.m.

Visit www.mountsequoyah.org to learn more and to register. A commuter rate is available.

Food safety for churches: Free courses for United Methodists in January, February, April

The chicken for food pantry arrives, and it is one solid frozen 40-pound block. How can you thaw it safely to give it away? ... The Helping Hands group got the holiday spirit and cooked four casseroles and a pot of soup for the church's stash to give the bereaved. Refrigerators are designed to keep cold food cool, not to chill hot food! How can you cool the casseroles safely to store them until needed? ... You're serving up a great meal to a crowd. Does it matter if you use the same utensil for the chicken and dressing as for the gluten-free rice? Do you have to wear gloves? Do you need to wash your hands after bussing tables? ... The food at the fellowship dinner sat out through the hour meeting afterwards. Is it safe to keep and re-serve?

These are the kind of things that ServSafe Food Manager covers, as well as how to inspect received food for safety and how to make sure you don't have cross-connection, cross-contact or cross-contamination. We'll examine the leading causes of food-borne illness, and more. The course is usually six hours in length, but St. Andrew UMC Little Rock will split the course into two parts, hosting four sessions in 2017. Through scholarships, United Methodists can attend for free, and limited resource books and certification exams are also available. The Rev. Jenni Duncan, a certified trainer for ServSafe in English and Spanish, will lead the sessions and can give training hour credits or proctor official certification exams.

Module 1: attend either Saturday, January 21 or April 22, 9:30-12:30

Topics are a) Food-borne Illnesses, How They Occur & How to Respond, b) Keeping Food Safe; Contaminants to Food: biological, chemical, physical, deliberate, your role, c) Safety regarding Food Allergens, d) Personal Hygiene and Food Safety, e) Hazards in the Flow of Food; Time and Temperature, and

(continued on page 10)

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OBITUARIES

CHIDESTER

William Mosley

William Calvin Mosley, 78, of Chidester, Arkansas, passed away Sunday morning, Dec. 4, 2016.

He was born June 26, 1938, in Chidester.

Survivors include his wife Jannette (Hicks) Mosley of Chidester, who serves as lay supply pastor of Silver Springs UMC in the Southwest District of the Arkansas Conference; his sons, Lee Mosley of Camden and Chad Mosley of Shreveport, Louisiana; a step-daughter, Barbara Hagemeister of Chidester; three grandsons; Chris Hagemeister and Jason Glover of Chidester, and Jesse Mosley of Camden; one

granddaughter, Niki Mosley of Camden; and one great-granddaughter, Aubry Johnson of Camden.

William was preceded in death by his parents, Calvin Mosley and Estella Mosley of Chidester, and a brother, Joseph Mosley of Camden.

William always loved youth events held at every church as he was growing up. He asked that, in lieu of flowers, to please make a donation for the youth at your church of choice.

Services were held at First United Methodist Church Camden on Dec. 6, 2016, with the Revs. Buddy Ratliff and Benny Morgan officiating. Burial followed at Chidester Cemetery.

CLARKSVILLE

Carolyn Clemmons

Carolyn Warren Clemmons, 86, beloved wife, mother and grandmother, passed away on Sunday, Nov. 20, 2016.

She was born in Charleston, SC on March 25, 1930 and, growing up, gained a love of seafood she never lost. She was a registered nurse on the maternity ward at Sparks Regional Medical Center in Fort Smith, Arkansas, for 10 years, and claimed to have assisted in the delivery of more than 5,000 babies. Then, in 1960, she became the wife of the late Rev. Frank R. Clemmons, a United Methodist pastor who served

(continued on page 11)

COMING UP

(continued from page 9)

f) Purchasing, Receiving and Storing Food.

Module 2: attend either Saturday, February 25 or April 29

Topics are a) Preparation, Cooking, Cooling and Reheating Food, b) Holding and Serving Food, c) Systems, Facilities and Pest Management, d) Cleaning and Sanitizing.

Exams will be offered at 12:45 p.m. on the February and April dates. For information or to register, contact Jenni Duncan, jenni.duncan@arumc.org or 501-551-2141.

Nancy McDonald Wood Scholarship: Apply by Jan. 31

Applications are now being accepted for the 2017 Nancy McDonald Wood Scholarship. The purpose of the this scholarship is to educate and develop strong, committed female lay leadership for United Methodist churches and the communities they serve. The scholarship assists young Arkansas women planning to enroll in an accredited college for undergraduate studies.

Preference is given to a student who is an active member of an Arkansas UMC and has demonstrated commitment to historic Methodist values. Preference will be given to those with sound academic ability, leadership traits and exceptional personal character.

To be eligible, the applicant must have been accepted by an accredited college to begin classes the following fall semester. The amount of the scholarship award will be determined annually, beginning at \$3,000.

Early in April, finalists will be chosen to attend a NMW scholarship luncheon.

For additional information, see the advertisement on this page.

Confirmation camps: Register now for February and March sessions

Camp Tanako will host two Confirmation Camp sessions in early 2017, and registration is now open for both.

Camp 1 will be held Feb. 10-12, 2017. Registration is open until Jan. 29.

Camp 2 will be held March 31-April 2, 2017. Registration for this camp closes March 19.

To learn more, visit www.arumc.org/camping-retreat-ministries/confirmation-camp, or contact Laura Stinett, laura@asbury-lr.org or 501-225-9231.

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Senior Retreat: Registration open for February event

A special retreat for high school seniors is set for Feb. 17-18, 2017 at Camp Tanako. Senior Retreat provides an

opportunity for graduating seniors to spend time learning what to expect on their post-high school journey, and how to navigate new challenges and situations.

Topics Include College Life 101: New Freedoms, Finances, & Time Management; Relationships: Old Friends, New Friends and Family Changes; and Continuing the Journey: Faith after High School. Visit www.arumc.org/camping-retreat-ministries/senior-retreat to learn more, or contact the Rev. Jay Clark, jclark@phumc.com or 501-944-8400. Registration closes Feb. 5.

Registration now open for Veritas

Veritas 2017 is set for Feb. 24-26 in the Rogers Convention Center. This annual event provides an opportunity for youth and youth leaders to be renewed spiritually through passionate worship and community building. Early Bird Registration runs until Feb. 1; regular registration ends Feb. 19. For pricing and additional information, visit www.accym.org/veritas.

Hendrix Youth Institute applications due by Feb. 1

Applications for the 2017 Hendrix Youth Institute (HYI) are due Feb. 1. HYI will be held June 25-July 10, 2017. To learn more, visit www.hendrix.edu/religiouslife/youthinstitute or contact the Rev. J.J. Whitney, whitney@hendrix.edu or 501-450-1263.

Spring Lay Servant Academy at Mount Sequoyah March 10-11

The Basic Lay Servant Ministry Course for United Methodists will be offered during Session 1 of this March 10-11 training opportunity at Mount Sequoyah Conference and Retreat Center in Fayetteville. Advanced Course options will be available during both sessions, and include:

- Leading Prayer
- Living Our Connection (United Methodist Polity)
- Discover Your Spiritual Gifts
- Lay Pastoral Care Giving

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OBITUARIES

(continued from page 10)

38 years in the North Arkansas Conference; they were married for more than 50 years. She was known for her sweet spirit, her kind loving nature and her service to others.

She is survived by her three sons and daughters-in-law, David and Cindy Clemmons of Fort Worth, Texas; Mark and Renee Clemmons of Heber Springs, Arkansas; and John and Meredith Clemmons of Hattiesburg, Mississippi. She is also survived by her six grandchildren, Susannah, Carly, Isaac, Bennett, Isabel and Claire Clemmons.

Interment took place Saturday, Nov. 26, at Oakland Cemetery in Clarksville, Arkansas. A memorial service followed at First United Methodist Church Clarksville, with the Rev. Larry Kelso officiating.

Pallbearers were Van Tilbury, Jeff Marlow, Steve Morgan, David Hawkins, John Frost and Greg Roper.



Carolyn Clemmons

FAYETTEVILLE

James Harrison

The Rev. James David Harrison, 79, passed away peacefully Tuesday, Nov. 29, 2016, surrounded by family at the Willard Walker Hospice Home in Fayetteville, Arkansas. He was born June 11, 1937 in Russellville, Arkansas.

Jim was a devoted husband, father and friend. He graduated from Atkins High School. He attended Arkansas Tech University. After graduation, he was an educator and Aetna life insurance adjuster. He was called into the ministry and moved his family to Atlanta, Georgia, where he attended Candler School of Theology at Emory University. He received a Master of Divinity degree and moved back to Arkansas, where he served as a pastor in the North Arkansas Conference of the United Methodist Church for 30 years and retired from the ministry in 2000. In retirement, he participated in the life of Sequoyah United Methodist Church in Fayetteville.

Jim was preceded in death by his wife, Linda Harrison; his parents, William Louie and Catheryn Harrison; and an infant daughter, Jill Harrison. Survivors include three daughters, Joy L. Jeffery (David) of Rogers, Jana B. Carroll (Jon) of Brinkley and Jamie L. Tenison (Bill) of Fayetteville; six grandchildren, Christian Campbell (Jacob); Taylor Speegle (Jill); Jillian Thompson (Caleb); Justin Carroll; Sara Tenison; and Rachel Tenison; and three great-grandchildren, Harrison Campbell, Finlay Campbell and Ollie Speegle.

A memorial service was held Saturday, Dec. 3 at Sequoyah United Methodist Church Fayetteville. In lieu of flowers, the family requests that donations be made in Jim's name to: Ozark Mission Project, P.O. Box 26525, Little Rock, Ark. 72221, or at www.ozarkmissionproject.org/donate.

LITTLE ROCK

Mabel Harris-Webb

Mabel Estelle Martin Harris-Webb, age 98, of Little Rock, passed away Saturday, Dec. 10, in Little Rock.

She was born Aug. 28, 1918, in Warren, Arkansas, to Noel and Maude Rumph Martin. She graduated from Warren High School and then attended Hendrix College in 1936, graduating in 1940.



Mabel Harris-Webb

She married in 1941, to the Rev. Edward W. Harris of Texarkana, Arkansas, a graduate of Emory University. They served churches in Arkansas, Louisiana and Missouri for over 50 years. They were married 65 years.

She traveled as a tour host for many years with Educational Opportunities, an ecumenical travel group through the United Methodist Church. She traveled extensively in and throughout Europe, England and Scandinavia, and volunteered on Methodist mission trips to Mexico and Russia.

Later, she married the Rev. James R. Webb Jr. of Macon, Georgia, a retired United Methodist minister from the South Georgia Conference. They had first met in the College Summer Service Group in New York the summer of 1939. They were married for five years.

She was a long time member of First UMC Little Rock and the Friendship-Faulkner Sunday school class, plus an associate member of Historic St. George's Church in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, the oldest Methodist church in the world. Mabel established the "John Wesley Prayer Room" in First United Methodist Church in honor of John Wesley, founder of Methodism.

She was preceded in death by her parents; her first husband; her devoted sister, Alice Martin Fiser and brother-in-law, Paul Fiser; two of their children, Dr. Paul Martin Fiser and Susan Fiser Barham; and her second husband.

She is survived by her daughter, Elizabeth Martin Harris Livingston (Dr. Richard Lee Livingston) of Fort Smith, Arkansas; three grandchildren, Susannah Livingston Bertram (Christopher Bertram) of Brooklyn, New York, Connor Livingston of Little Rock and Andrew Harris Livingston of Fort Smith; and two great-grandchildren, Lily Elizabeth Greenberg and Henry Lee Greenberg of Brooklyn, New York. She is also survived by two step-children, Larry Webb of Minneapolis, Minnesota, and Sharon Webb of Hudson, Massachusetts; and several beloved nieces and nephews.

A funeral service was held Tuesday, Dec. 20, 2016, at First UMC Warren, Arkansas; burial followed in Oakland Cemetery. A memorial service will be held at 10:30 a.m. Saturday, Jan. 7, 2017, at First UMC Little Rock.

Memorials may be given to the C. Ray Tribble Scholarship Fund at Camp Aldersgate, 2000 Aldersgate Road, Little Rock, AR 72205; or to the Julie Wilke/Mabel Harris-Webb Youth Workers Scholarship Fund, c/o Steve Wilke, Southwestern University, 100 College St., Winfield, KS 67156.

RISON

Margaret May

Margaret Ann Wilson May, 85, of Rison passed away Friday, Nov. 18, 2016. She was born Jan. 5, 1931, in Calmer, Arkansas, to the late William Ira and Sarah C. Berry Wilson. She was a graduate of Woodlawn High School and a member of Mount Olivet United Methodist Church, where she served as treasurer and played the piano.

For 42 years, May was an inspector at Hammond Bag Company/Georgia Pacific. She also served as treasurer for 26 years with the Local 844 United Paperworkers International Union. May was a member of the RSVP and the travel club with Pine Bluff National Bank. She enjoyed going to the weekly singings at Green House Cottage of Southern Hills.

She was preceded in death by her husband, the Rev. Grady L. May, who served in the Arkansas Conference as a part-time local pastor of Martin's Chapel UMC from 2004 to 2008; six brothers; and one sister.



Margaret May

She is survived by two sons, Dennis (Linda Willhite) May of Searcy, Jimmy (Shawna) May of Fordyce; five grandchildren; and five great-grandchildren.

A funeral service was held Monday, Nov. 21, 2016, at Buie Funeral Home in Rison with Brother William Paul Woolley officiating. Interment followed in Roselawn Cemetery at Pine Bluff. Pallbearers were Derek May, Stew Ballard, Jonathan May, Jason May, Travis Connor and Ricky Young. Memorials may be made to the Alzheimer's Foundation or Mount Olivet United Methodist Church.

SPRINGDALE

Charles Ashcraft

The Rev. Charles Gary Ashcraft, 87, of Springdale passed away Nov. 21, 2016. He was born Jan. 10, 1929, in Stuttgart, Arkansas, the son of Walker Thomas and Frances Lee Gunnell Ashcraft.

After graduating from Hendrix College and Vanderbilt University School of Divinity, he served as a United Methodist minister for 65 years

throughout the Little Rock Conference, including appointments in Lake Village, Fordyce, Little Rock, Malvern, Camden, Hope, El Dorado and DeWitt, and a time serving as superintendent of the Arkadelphia District. He had also served in the United States Marine Corps.

He was preceded in death by his wife, Rosalie Hinshaw Ashcraft; and by his brother, Dr. Thomas Lee Ashcraft.

Ashcraft is survived by two sons, Charles "Gary" Ashcraft II and his wife, Deedra, of Springdale, and grandchildren Sarah and Walker; and Thomas "Mark" Ashcraft and his wife, Tammy, of Maricopa, Arizona, and grandchildren Salane, Staci and Sam.

A celebration of the Rev. Ashcraft's life will be held Jan. 10, 2017, at the England United Methodist Church in England, Arkansas.

WEST MEMPHIS

Ethel Vanclave

Ethel Mae Vanclave, 92, formerly of Jonesboro, passed away Tuesday, Nov. 8, 2016.

She was born Oct. 6, 1924, in Lake City to the late Gus and Mattie Chancellor Eberdt. She was a homemaker and a very talented seamstress. She had been an active member of St. Paul United Methodist Church Jonesboro. She will be remembered as a loving mother and grandmother; her family was her life.

She is survived by her children and their spouses, Benny Joe Vanclave Jr. and Karen of Charleston, South Carolina; and Reefe Marconi and Michael of Proctor; four grandchildren, Benny Joe Vanclave III of Little Rock, Misty Collins (Jon) and Benji Marconi (Gina) all of Proctor; and Jill Denton (David) of West Memphis; and eight great-grandchildren.

She was preceded in death by her husband, the Rev. Benny Joe Vanclave Sr., a United Methodist elder who served congregations in the North Arkansas Conference.

A celebration of her life was held Friday, Nov. 11, 2016, at Gregg-Langford Bookout Funeral Home Chapel with the Rev. Gary Hair officiating. Interment followed in Jonesboro Memorial Park Cemetery.

Serving as pallbearers were David Denton, Benji Marconi, Ben Marconi, Jon Collins, Tucker Collins and Danny Burk.

A special thank you to her extended family and amazing caregivers at Broadway Healthcare in West Memphis.



Charles Ashcraft

Hot Spring County Harvest of Hope ensures children receive the food they need



The Rev. LaVon Post, Penny Gassman and John Allan Funk on Thanksgiving Day presented a check to Arkansas Foodbank representative Brandi Johnston (at right). The more than \$18,000 raised this year will cover the weekend food needs of all hungry children in Hot Spring County for an entire school year.

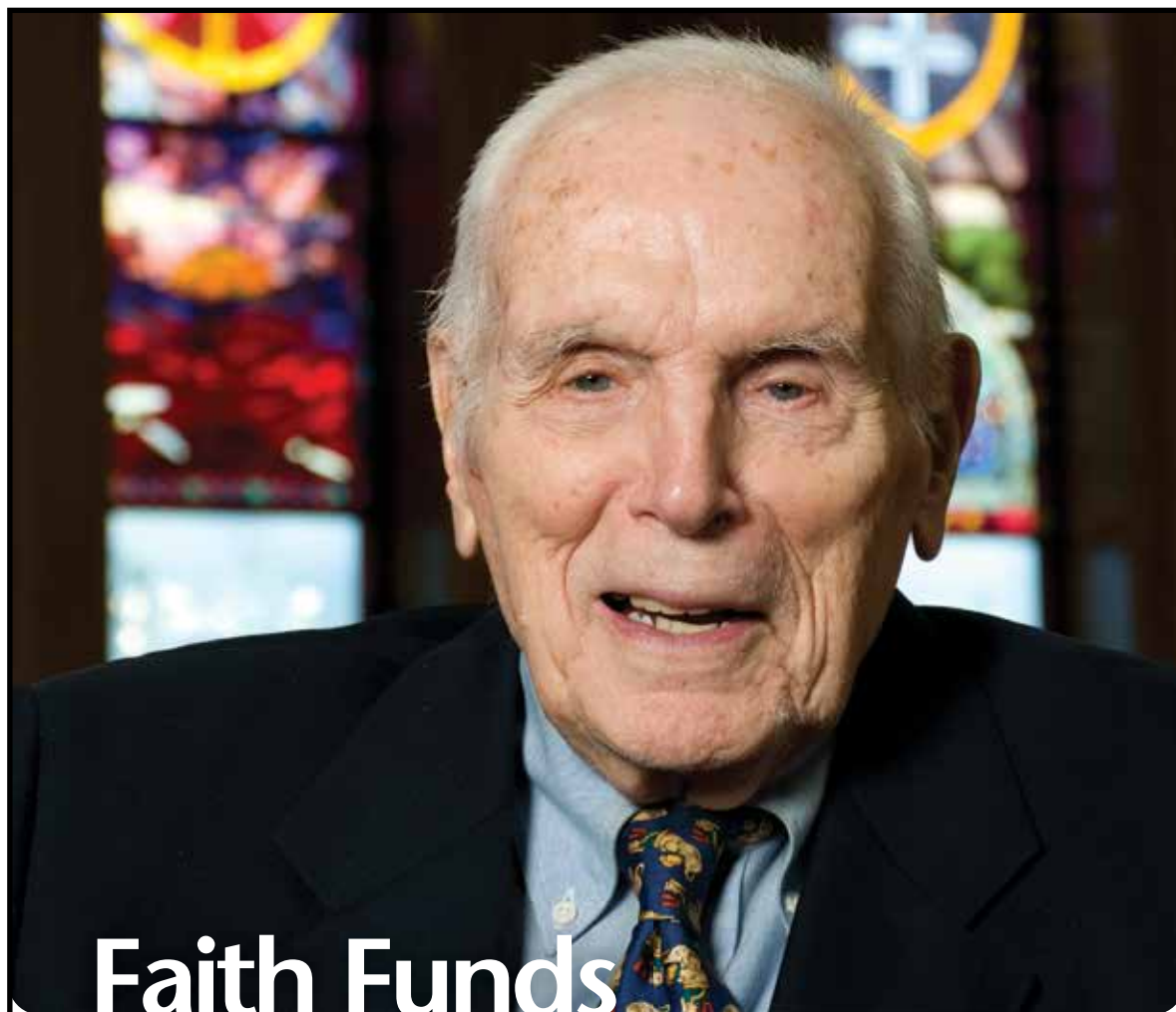
COURTESY PHOTO

Over the past seven years, Hot Spring County Harvest of Hope has raised \$123,000 to help feed hungry children in their part of the state. For the past four years, Harvest of Hope's efforts have covered the cost for all backpack food needs in Hot Spring County, making it the only county in the state currently covering the complete cost of feeding the children in its area's schools.

"I want every surrounding county to be able to say that, too," said John Allan Funk, chair of the board for Harvest of Hope and a member of First UMC Malvern. While the United Methodist congregation serves as "home base" for Harvest of Hope, the organization benefits from the involvement of multiple churches, community organizations, businesses and individuals. Harvest of Hope began by holding fundraisers selling smoked meats, but leaders realized the expense and labor-intensive nature of the sale wasn't necessary if they would simply raise awareness of the need in their own communities.

"Our board members talk to civic groups... and once they realize how dire the situation is, they freely give," Funk says.

In addition to fundraising, the Harvest of Hope board maintains connections in the schools to stay aware of the needs. For example, board member Penny Gassman, a retired teacher who also is a First UMC member, serves as the Malvern Elementary School liaison to the Arkansas Foodbank. She personally fills the backpacks each week for the students who need weekend help with food.



Faith Funds

A Lifetime of Serving and Giving

Brigadier General Bill Webster, USAFR, knows more about trusts and annuities than most of us will ever know. After 25 years of serving in the military, including in World War II, he led trust departments in Texas, Kentucky, founded the Trust Company of Florida and then moved to Little Rock to head the trust department at Union Bank. After a second retirement he worked for the United Methodist Foundation of Arkansas for 25 years.

So when he says that charitable gift annuities from UMFA are a good buy, people listen. "Most people will want to provide for their church through their will. However, there are many advantages to purchasing a charitable gift annuity now or during your lifetime. The benefit of higher income and receiving an immediate income tax deduction are two pluses," said Bill. "And if you use appreciated securities to purchase it, you can avoid capital gains taxes. It benefits both you and the Church."

Now retired for a third time and living at Andover Place in Little Rock, Bill takes his own advice. He has two gift annuities at UMFA, one that benefits his church, St. Paul UMC in Little Rock, and one that benefits both the Foundation and his church.

"I saw the fantastic yields and investment return," said Bill. "It was too good to pass up." If you are interested in a charitable gift annuity, contact Janet Marshall, VP of Development, at jmarshall@umfa.org or call the Foundation.



The United Methodist Foundation of Arkansas

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