

The Arkansas United Methodist

LIVING OUR FAITH

February 2019 | Volume 167, Issue 2



The Way Forward



UMFA's New
PRESIDENT

**GENERAL
CONFERENCE:**
What You Should Know

Sherwood PD's First Female
CHAPLAIN



FOR THE GOOD OF ALL

Former United Methodist Foundation of Arkansas Board Member Joyce Peck believes the Foundation works for the good of all United Methodists in Arkansas. She cites the work they do for local churches throughout the state — like offering free information on building endowments and providing Provide and Protect estate planning workshops.

A Texas native, Joyce came to Arkansas with her late husband Cliff Peck to start an automobile dealership as the 1960s were beginning. A few years later then Arkansas Bishop Paul Galloway asked the couple, who attended First UMC, Little Rock, to help start a new church on the city's western edge.

"I love everything about St. James UMC," she said. "Maybe because we were one of the first families to start the church. The people are great, they work hard, and I feel like I had a hand in building a great church. I've supported it physically, mentally, and financially."

Another cause Joyce cares about is Camp Aldersgate, where she donated a carousel that has been refitted to allow children with disabilities to enjoy rides. The camp has benefited from UMFA grants for its master plan, infrastructure, and strategic planning.

"Whoever needs help, the Foundation is there for them," said Joyce. "Nearly every Methodist in the state has been helped in some way."



Rev. Clark has lifetime of preparation for UMFA role

By Haley Klein
UMFA Contributor

Rev. J. Wayne Clark may have been born in Dallas, Texas, but his true roots are found in the Arkansas United Methodist Church. During his youth in Arkansas, Wayne was very active at First UMC, Malvern, Camp Tanako, and served in youth leadership roles as the President of the Annual Conference his senior year of high school.

While Wayne always felt the United Methodist church would be part of his life, he did not answer his call into ministry until college. His Methodism continued to grow stronger with his time at Methodist schools- Hendrix College and Southern Methodist University ("SMU"). Through an extended internship at SMU, Wayne served two Methodist churches in the Halifax Circuit of the British Methodist system where he had the opportunity to preach in the same pulpits as John Wesley.


Wayne has gone on to pastor local churches in Arkansas, served as a college chaplain, and worked as a professional fundraiser for Hendrix College. These varied jobs within the United Methodist Church helped Wayne prepare for the role as President and CEO of the United Methodist Foundation of Arkansas. The Foundation's mission is to create and administer permanent charitable endowment funds to strengthen and expand the United Methodist ministry in Arkansas.

Wayne feels very blessed and honored to serve the Church in this capacity and hopes to see the Foundation grow in every sense of the word. By building on the work of the Foundation's current staff and the late Jim Argue, Wayne is excited to share the expansive services and ministries of the Foundation with pastors, churches, and laity. "Through this work," said Wayne, "we hope to see an increase in the number of ministries around the state as we grow and continue our work of making disciples for Jesus Christ and strengthening Arkansas Methodism."



The United Methodist Foundation of Arkansas

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Caleb Hennington, Digital Content Editor

Amy Ezell, Director of The Center for Communication

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

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For information on subscribing to the digital edition, visit www.arumc.org/our-news/arkansas-united-methodist/ or call 501-324-8023.

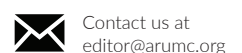
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STORY IDEA?



What comes next still matters



Caleb Hennington

Digital Content Editor, [@arumceditor](https://twitter.com/arumceditor)

This month, the long-awaited Special Session of General Conference takes place, and most of the folks I interact with on a regular basis are – understandably – very nervous.

The Commission on a Way Forward, at the direction of the Council of Bishops, have come up with three proposed plans that 864 delegates from all over the world will have a chance to vote on: The One Church Plan, the Traditional Plan, and the Connectional Conference Plan.

As the editor of the *Arkansas United Methodist: Living Our Faith*, some people might be looking to me for an opinion on the three proposed plans and an endorsement of the plan that I think would serve best the people of the United Methodist Church as we head into an uncertain future.

There's no reason not to think I would offer an opinion; I've seen many editors – on both sides of the debate – do just that. But quite honestly, they aren't adding much to the discussion that hasn't already been said a thousand times before.

Here's something that might strike you as odd; my opinion on the proposed plans does not matter.

My vote holds no weight in a debate that has rolled on for decades through the sanctuaries, family dinner tables, and minds of United Methodists, and one that I have only recently been pulled into.

If I were to choose one plan over the other, using some method of logical reasoning coupled with sound theological understanding and a lot of prayers, what difference would it make? After more than two years of debate over the proposed plans, and decades of debate over the issue of human sexuality, no one's mind will be changed by anything I could write in this article.

I settled this debate in both my heart and mind long before I knew about the Commission, General Conference or the three plans.

It's not my job to tell delegates, members, leaders, or even seekers of the United Methodist Church what they should believe, why they should believe it, and how they should vote at the special session of General Conference.

I'm not here to point fingers, call people names, and convince you that you're wrong about any of your deeply held, deeply personal beliefs.

I'm not here to offer an opinion, but rather to provide a bit of hope.

I will be right here after General Conference, doing the same work I did before the vote; telling the stories of the excellent work of the Arkansas Annual Conference and its faithful members.

The message of love and grace found in Jesus Christ will continue long after the special session concludes and those who fought so vehemently in favor of their "side" return to their homes and churches.

And above all, whatever the outcome of General Conference, remember that people still need to hear the message of redemption, hope, and endless love found in the pages of a millennia-old book from a foreign country.

I encourage you not to focus all of your energy on these three days in St. Louis but instead, focus on making disciples of Jesus Christ who make disciples.

That's what I'm doing this month and the month's after, and that's what I'll continue to do as long as I am able.

A letter from the bishop



Gary E. Mueller
Bishop of the Arkansas Conference

Dear Sisters and Brothers,
We are only weeks from the Special Session of General Conference in St. Louis Feb. 24-26. I must confess, I don't know what's going to happen. Just as I don't know what it will mean here in Arkansas. Or how you're going to react.

Like you, I've noticed these weeks preceding General Conference have been marked by an increasing level of uncertainty. And that this uncertainty is leading to greater anxiety. And the anxiety sometimes is devolving into polarization, demonization and people saying things they normally wouldn't say.

It's sad. But we don't have to remain victims of this state of affairs. We can still choose a different path. We can pray more diligently. We can engage in holy conversations, especially with those with whom we disagree. We can continue to seek to discern God's Will. We can expect God to do something new that no one yet has imagined. And we can remember several bedrock realities that will remain true regardless of what General Conference decides.

- God is still God.
- Jesus Christ still brings the salvation every human being needs.
- The Holy Spirit is still at work in new, creative and unexpected ways.

- God's unconditional, invitational and transformational grace is still the most powerful force in the universe and should shape everything we do as Jesus-followers.

The United Methodist Church in Arkansas still is called to make disciples of Jesus Christ, who make disciples equipped to transform lives, communities and the world.

Of course, things will be different when General Conference adjourns on Feb. 26, 2019. While I can't predict exactly how, I know this. Some of you will be pleased, while others will feel betrayed; some will be ready to move ahead, while others are ready to move on; and some will experience healing, while others will live with broken hearts.

Yet when all is said and done, I want to affirm as strongly as possible that I remain hopeful about our future. Not because I'm in denial about what's going on, optimistic by nature or trust in our ability to put things back together. But because God gives me hope. After all, Easter Sunday follows Good Friday. Eternal life follows death. And a new heaven and a new earth follow the turmoil of pain and struggle.

The Arkansas Conference of The United Methodist Church is an amazing group of churches filled with faithful disciples of Jesus Christ. And the fact of the matter is that I have fallen in love with you these past six years I have served in your midst. I will continue to love you - regardless of what happens and regardless of how you respond. That's why I want to ask you to join me in a simple prayer every day between now and Easter Sunday: **Lord, I pray that all of us who are United Methodists in Arkansas will continue to love each other in the strength, truth and grace of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. We pray this in his name. Amen.**

May it be so!

Grace and peace,

Gary E. Mueller
Bishop

Hearts not broken

By Rev. Rebekah Miles

Featured Commentator and General Conference Delegate

When I was a kid, the weeks before General Conferences were exciting. I remember our father, a clergy delegate, sitting up on my parent's double bed with a stack of papers at his side, the telephone cradled under one ear and a pencil behind the other, counting votes and talking strategy for hours with other delegates around the country. After retirement, our late parents, JoAnn and John Miles, traveled together to General Conference as volunteers to lobby, especially for justice causes. I loved to watch as they worked for legislation they believed would advance the mission of the church. Church politics is the closest thing we ever had to a family sport, and they were good at it! As Bill Moyers put it, "Ideas are great arrows, but there has to be a bow. And politics is the bow of idealism." How grateful I am to have had the gift of engaging in our political process and representing Arkansas Methodism at General Conference.

The upcoming General Conference will be exceptionally difficult. We are in a mess, and there is no clear way out. It will be hard to put together the votes necessary to pass any of the plans. And every option before us is flawed, including the option of doing nothing.

The Traditional Plan is hardly traditional. Its key provisions, designed to hold progressive annual conferences accountable to the Discipline, would undermine the central, long-standing authority of the annual conference (which dates from the historic 1808 Baltimore General Conference) and would have grave consequences, including a dramatic increase in church trials; hurdles that would make it harder for annual conference leaders to resolve complaints informally, even complaints having nothing to do with homosexuality; mandatory and severe minimum penalties of one year suspension without pay for a first offense; and new provisions for appealing the decisions of church trials beyond the annual conference on certain rulings of law and fact, not just process, which is a radical change. Again, this provision would apply to church trials generally, not just those relating to homosexuality. The authors of the plan didn't set out to make radical changes; these are the unintended but entirely predictable consequences.

The One Church Plan could be more aptly named "the plan that a majority of the bishops think most likely to keep most of the church in effective mission together," but that wouldn't fit on a powerpoint slide and didn't have much of a ring to it. I agree with the bishops and support this plan; it gives annual conferences and churches authority to make decisions that work for their ministry settings. But it is far from perfect, and I am under no illusion that it will leave our church fully united. Whatever happens at General Conference, some churches will leave, and we must have fair



Left to right: JoAnn, John, and Rebekah Miles at the 1996 General Conference in Denver, Colorado || *Photo provided by Rebekah Miles*

provisions for their departure.

The Connectional Conference Plan has the benefit of being so complex that hardly anyone understands it! (Our Arkansas Bishop is the rare exception, I am proud to say.) Its biggest disadvantage is that it requires not only a 2/3 vote of General Conference but also a 2/3 aggregate vote of all persons voting in annual conference sessions. That's a high bar for a complex set of legislative changes that few people fully understand.

As much as we miss our dear parents, my brother, sister, and I regularly say to each other "Aren't we glad that Mom and Dad are not alive to witness this General Conference. It would break their hearts!" But the more I think about it, I see how wrong that is. This General Conference and whatever emerges from it would never break their hearts; they weren't so fragile as that, and neither are we. If our parents were alive, I know what they would be doing; they would be going about the ministry and mission of our church. They would be making a case for whatever position they judged best, praying hard, and then working to mend relationships and move forward again toward our shared mission which, frankly, is the only reason the politics ever mattered to begin with.

Like my parents, our lives and faith are not so fragile that we will find them undone by the action of any General Conference. Our hearts will remain strong and unbroken. Whatever comes, we will continue to pray and work together for our shared mission in the world.

This is part of a continuing series from members of the Arkansas Delegates who will be traveling to St. Louis for General Conference in February 2019.

Empowerment

By Hank Godwin

“**T**hat nail gun changed my life,” said Nicole Ross. I’m not sure this was the target transformation that most of the leadership team wanted to achieve. However, it was an indicator of a great life skill that all the college campers of the 2019 Ozark Mission Project (OMP)/Wesley Winter Mission Trip achieved in one short week. Teaching young adults new life skills has always been a secondary objective of all mission opportunities.

This year we went to Port Arthur, Texas for Hurricane Harvey relief. The theme for the week was EMPOWERMENT. When I think of my 20-year involvement with OMP, empowerment of youth and young leaders would be near the top of my list of our ministry’s goals. The theme is critical to the experience and is weaved throughout the week into every quiet reflection moment; morning, noon and night. It is important and vital to a successful mission experience. Nothing empowers youth more than the simple act of serving others in need. I was looking forward to the week.

True Empowerment has many necessary components. Some of those components were clearly demonstrated this week. I organized them into a mathematical equation for me to process this mountain top experience and share in this missive.

Empowerment = Focus + Courage + Transformation

“All outward means of grace, if separate from the spirit of God, cannot profit...”

– John Wesley



Focus

Ms. Jenkins of Beaumont, Texas had two feet of water in her neighborhood as Hurricane Harvey began. It was rising quickly, and she was focused on one thing, get her mother to safety! Her husband left work to get as close as he could to her house. He walked two blocks to his home in the rising toxic water. Together, they waded another six blocks to her mother’s house. The focus turned to HOW. How could they safely get an elderly woman to the high ground? They emptied her mother’s freezer and took the door off to fabricate a makeshift boat. They waded through the driving rain keeping their new boat afloat with mom in it. They kept her safe for many more blocks to a fellow church member’s house above the rising water. Her husband had to then return to work.

The work we did for seven neighbors was very different from most flood relief. Usually, we are doing the nasty muck work of ripping Sheetrock off the walls and clearing damaged family heirlooms to the street. It is depressing on some levels, and sometimes the neighbor experience is missing. Port Arthur was different. Our projects were in the finish stage; door installation, flooring, and trim. This requires focus to do it right. Unlike the deconstruction work, this work was the final product for our neighbors. It had to be done to the highest standards by unskilled labor. In five working days, 48 college students installed 44 doors and 2000 square feet of vinyl plank flooring. They also painted three complete houses, nearly 40 gallons of paint and did a plethora of other finish tasks. The neighbors were highly engaged with the campers. The excitement of moving back in was palatable to everyone involved.

Texas Recovers and Shepherds Inn were our partners for this trip. It was evident that they were focused on more than just the mundane work of providing projects and shelter. They went above and beyond to make sure our experience was meaningful. Jessica and Josh from Texas Recovers were prepared, flexible and adaptive to our needs and the needs of the neighbors we served. Patsy at Shepherds Inn loved on us and attended to our every need. This focus contributed significantly to the success and enjoyment of our trip.

Courage

Imagine the courage to face your day when one morning you swing your feet out of bed, and they meet 14" of water in your home. Your wife is beside you in bed, and she is fighting cancer. I don't think I've been tested in my life to find enough courage to gather my wits to survive. Our neighbor, Mr. Aldaz, did. He shared that he thought he could take care of his wife forever by himself. With God's help, he now knows he has always needed help. He worked side by side with our family group, sharing his witness, and inspiring everyone he encountered.

We worked five full days for Ms. McCurley who was airlifted to safety with her two sons after four feet of water destroyed their home. The courage to ride in a harness and pulled by a thin line to a hovering machine several hundred feet above the polluted water is unfathomable to me. Where did they get this courage?

I'm overwhelmed with respect of the young people that attend these mission opportunities. They make time in their busy lives to go to an unfamiliar place to provide skills they seldom have to people they have never met! They ignore their debilitating shyness, anxieties, apprehensions, and fears. They pour out their hearts to people they just met to hopefully give them some joy and healing. The light emitted from this courage is inspirational and much needed in our world. The young leaders representing Wesley Foundations from U of A, ASU, HSU, SAU, and AR Tech fearlessly ran to an obvious need this week. I'm confident they will show this courage many times in their lives.

Transformation

I was able to reflect on larger societal subjects in the shadow of the largest oil refinery in the United States. The juxtaposition of wealth and poverty was disturbing. The Port Arthur downtown was a ghost town. I kept asking myself, "Where are the people and businesses?" and "Where are the school kids?" The city was clean, but it was obvious the people have not returned in the last 18 months.

Percy, son of our neighbor Ms. Blake, helped me with my



questions. Many of his neighbors had fled Katrina and have now experienced two floods in Port Arthur. "Enough was enough," he said. We then had an honest and disturbing conversation about speaking truth to power and how poverty has no voice. It rained the first two days of our mission, and all of us walked through ankle deep water to enter the houses we served. Why isn't there better drainage in these communities? Why can't there be a lasting transformation in these communities? Percy and I talked about solutions in his neighborhood. His positive outlook and forward strategy gave me some hope.

Noon devotionals with our neighbors are an important part of the college mission ministry. I try to structure my workday to attend a different family group each day during the noon break. I'm always impressed by the maturity of the conversation which usually crescendos during the week as each of the campers gain comfort and trust with each other. This is only one of the layers of transformation experienced during the week.

During one of these noon devotionals, we discussed "slow and deliberate" versus "mountain top event" spiritual transformations. Is one more lasting? Is one more important? I'm so pleased to be part of a denomination that embraces this type of critical thinking. I'm proud to be a part of a ministry to facilities spiritual transformation. All ministries of OMP and Wesley are a nurturing and safe environment to let these transformations explode into being or slowly mature. I have seen youth, adults, neighbors, and organizers experience a spiritual change in my tenure. In fact, transformation may be the most important parameter of the Empowerment equation. We were transforming lives through serving others in Port Arthur, Texas. We will do the same many more times for we are commanded and commissioned by Christ to do so.

A Moment with **Methodist** FAMILY HEALTH

How Methodist Family Health rebuilds the lives of Arkansas children, families

Having been an Arkansan and Methodist since 2011, I have heard of Methodist Family Health for the past several years, but I will admit that I did not have a very comprehensive understanding of the different facilities and programs that were available to help families in need. As a youth minister, I even led my youth group in serving at the Methodist Children's Home campus in Little Rock from time to time, but I still was unaware of the breadth of programs that existed. As an organization, Methodist Family Health is so fortunate to receive so much support from Arkansas United Methodist churches and individuals. It is our hope that by further explaining our different programs over the next several months, we can continue to help families receive the help they need, work to dissipate any stigma that surrounds mental health treatment, and help Arkansas Methodists find the best fit for ways that they may want to continue to join in prayer or service to our clients.

- Amy Shores, director of pastoral care at Methodist Family Health

Methodist Family Health has two residential treatment centers, one in Little Rock at the Methodist Children's Home, and one in Bono, which is in Craighead County. Our RTC programs are for youth ages 6 to 17 (trending older), and students can be referred by various sources, including parents, churches, schools or mental health clinics. A typical stay at our RTC is 4-to-6 months, and while in treatment, the students focus on individual, group and recreational therapy.

We are very proud to be in our new residential treatment center in Little Rock, which opened in September 2018. Here, clients have their own rooms along with shared living, dining and recreational spaces. Because students need to continue schoolwork

while at the RTC, we also have classrooms, and this school follows the Little Rock School District calendar.

Staff members at the RTC include behavioral instructors, therapists, doctors, nurses, administrators, teachers, and dining and housekeeping staff - all working together to ensure all students receive the best possible treatment for their mental disorders while learning new ways to cope with problems they may face at school, home or in the community.

Students at the RTC can eventually earn outings as part of their treatment along with weekend passes to return home to work on the skills they are learning.

However, at least for the first several weeks, it's difficult for most of our clients to have enough time at home to be able to attend church. We have a weekly Bible study, and we also try to have at least one volunteer group come in each month to lead a Sunday service for our students.

Several local churches have also opened their doors to our students to visit youth areas on a Saturday pass or to occasionally join an activity with their youth.

If you are interested in volunteering to host our RTC students, or if you have any adults or youth who would like to lead a service at one of our RTCs, please contact Amy Shores, director of pastoral care, at ashores@methodistfamily.org.

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ACCYM holds discussion forum on General Conference 2019



ACCYM members gather to hear a presentation on General Conference by Karon Mann. || Photo provided by Zach Schrick

At a recent ACCYM meeting, Arkansas Conference youth and young adults took a vote on the plans proposed by the Commission on a Way Forward, as well as the two additional plans; The Simple Plan and the Modified Traditional Plan.

The ACCYM Youth voted after a presentation by Karon Mann on the five plans that will be discussed at General Conference in St. Louis this February. They decided to use a similar process to the one used for the Global Young People's Convocation (GYPC). They voted for the plan they felt best represented themselves, and the results are listed below.

- One Church Plan: 26 votes
- Connectional Conference Plan: 5 votes
- Traditional Plan: 1 vote
- Simple Plan: 1 vote
- Modified Traditional Plan: 0 votes

Current ACCYM President John Mark Mathis was present at the vote and wished to share his thoughts on General Conference and his hope for the future United Methodist Church.

A letter from Mathis is featured to the right.

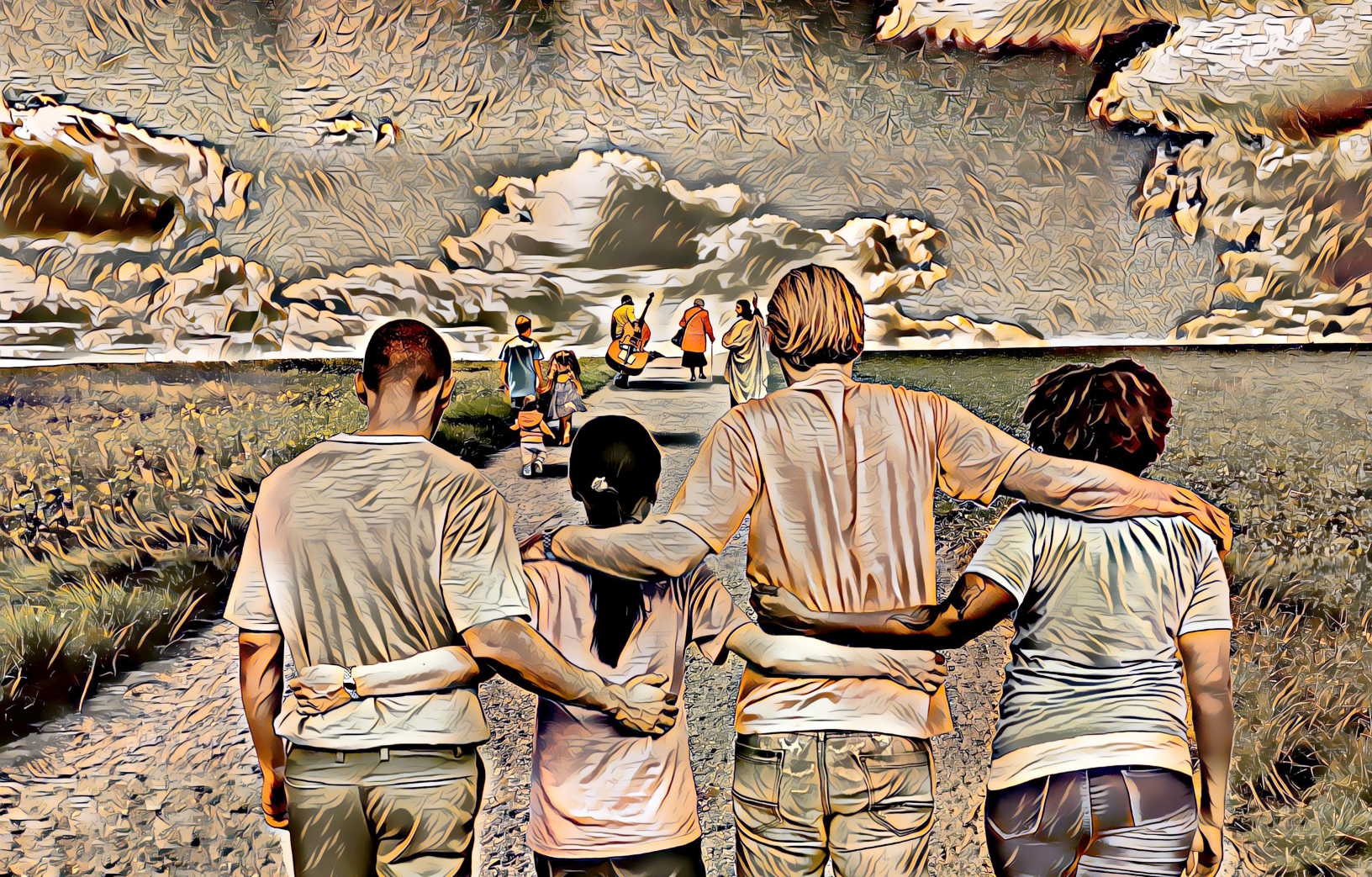
As a current senior, my life is about to change forever as I go out and explore what adulthood has in store for me. One thing that has been consistent is the time I spend in church, and specifically, the Methodist Church.

The Way Forward and the current decision is a scary thing. Not only does this affect the church's current generation, but it will also impact the younger generation and generations after.

As a youth, I love to learn more, and I have been able to learn more about The Way Forward and all the plans in place. We have talked about it in our local youth group, but I learned most of my current knowledge at our ACCYM meeting when Karon Mann spoke to youth and adults alike and gave us a deeper understanding on the plans for the upcoming General Conference.

Karon gave us a more precise explanation of the plans and was able to answer any questions my peers or I had. It was an excellent opportunity to dig in. No matter what happens, I believe that God will still move so powerfully in the United Methodist Church, as well as the world.

*- John Mark Mathis
Greenbrier FUMC, ACCYM President*



|| Illustration by Stephen Gideon

What to know about General Conference

Why we're having it, who can vote, and what they're voting on

By Caleb Hennington

Digital Content Editor | Follow me on Twitter @arumceditor

The called Special Session of General Conference is finally here.

The Feb. 23 – 26 meeting – taking place in St. Louis, Missouri – is the denominations largest meeting and typically occurs quadrennially; the next General Conference happens in 2020 in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

However, this year's General Conference is a special meeting, set up specifically during the last General Conference in 2016 to address the topic of human sexuality and examine paragraphs of the Book of Discipline which focus on this hotly debated topic within the United Methodist Church.

There are various paragraphs within the Book of Discipline that relate to human sexuality, but the subject of debate at this General Conference are the paragraphs pertaining to the ordination of LGBTQ clergy and the performance of same-sex marriage ceremonies in the church.

¶304.3 states: The practice of homosexuality is incompatible with Christian teaching. Therefore, self-avowed practicing homosexuals are not to be certified as candidates, ordained as ministers, or appointed to serve in The United Methodist Church.

Moreover, in ¶341.6, it states: Ceremonies that celebrate homosexual unions shall not be conducted by our ministers and shall not be conducted in our churches.

The debate over human sexuality within the UMC is nothing new. For more than 40 years – dating back to 1970 when the second, and only other, Special Session of General Conference took place – the church's decision whether to allow members of the LGBTQ community full inclusion into the church has remained unresolved.

After the 2016 General Conference in Portland, Oregon, the Council of Bishops formed the Commission on a Way Forward – a specialized group of 32 members – to examine paragraphs of the Book of Discipline concerning human sexuality and explore options to settle the debate over this topic.

What came out of that commission were three plans: The One Church Plan, The Traditional Plan, and the Connectional Conference Plan.

The 864 delegates to General Conference – about 58 percent from the United States, 30 percent from Africa, and the remaining number from the Philippines, Europe, Eurasia, and a few “concordat” churches outside of the UMC – will cast votes in favor of one of the plans submitted by the Commission on a Way Forward, as well as a number of other petitioned plans submitted by various groups (i.e. the Simple Plan proposed by the United Methodist Queer Clergy Caucus and the Modified Traditional Plan submitted by a coalition of conservative advocacy groups).

For legislation to pass, a simple majority of votes must be cast in a plan’s favor. If a plan requires a Constitutional amendment, two-thirds of the delegates will need to vote in favor of passing the plan, as well as two-thirds of those voting in annual conference sessions.

But what are the three plans recommended by the Commission on a Way Forward? And how will they change the rules, regulations, and structure of the United Methodist Church?

The One Church Plan

The One Church Plan, the plan recommended by a majority of the members of the Council of Bishops, would remove language found in the Book of Discipline concerning homosexuality.

It would allow the ordination of LGBTQ clergy in the United Methodist Church and for pastors and churches to conduct same-sex weddings.

But for those pastors and churches that choose not to perform or host same-sex weddings, it offers religious freedom protections. It also protects Boards of Ordained Ministry and bishops who do not wish to ordain LGBTQ persons in their Conference.

According to the report submitted by the Commission on a Way Forward, the One Church Plan “grants space for traditionalists to continue to offer ministry as they have in the past; space for progressives to exercise freely a more complete ministry with LGBTQ persons; and space for all United Methodists to continue to coexist without disrupting their ministries.” (pg. 11 of

Continued on Pg. 13



Former Council of Bishops President Bishop Bruce R. Ough delivers a statement from the Council of Bishops at the 2016 General Conference in Portland, Oregon. Through this statement, the Commission on a Way Forward was set up with the task of exploring the issue of human sexuality and providing a multitude of petitions to be voted on at the 2019 Special Session of General Conference in St. Louis, Missouri. To view the full statement, visit www.youtube.com/watch?v=aIDaoY1NNnk.

the report).

It's also important to note that the One Church Plan does not affect the Central Conferences of the United Methodist Church; the churches of Africa, Europe, and the Philippines.

These Conferences, according to the report, "through the work of the Standing Committee on Central Conference Matters, will have the authority to retain the present language regarding chargeable offenses of clergy and questions of ordination related to homosexuality found in The Book of Discipline (2016) or adopt wording in these paragraphs that best serves their missional contexts." (pg. 11 of the report).

The Traditional Plan

According to the report, The Traditional Plan seeks to strengthen "accountability to the current Book of Discipline language."

This plan keeps many of the same guidelines that are currently in the Book of Discipline, while also strengthening specific language regarding LGBTQ marriage and ordination.

The Traditional Plan would "broaden the definition of self-avowed practicing homosexual to include persons living in a same-sex marriage or civil union or persons who publicly state that they are practicing homosexuals." (pg. 55 of the report).

It would also put into place strict penalties against those who disobey the Discipline's teachings on LGBTQ clergy and weddings. Bishops, pastors and annual conferences would be required to certify their adherence to the Book of Discipline's standards regarding LGBTQ marriage and ordination as well.

For those who violate the Discipline's rules, penalties will include surrendering of clergy credentials, encouraging annual conferences to form "autonomous, affiliated, or concordat churches," and for bishops to be ineligible to receive compensation and encouraged to join an "autonomous, affiliated, or concordat church" formed by the previously mentioned separated annual conferences.

Separated annual conferences would be required to cease use of the United Methodist name and logo by 2021, and would no longer receive funding from the United Methodist Church.

The Connectional Conference Plan

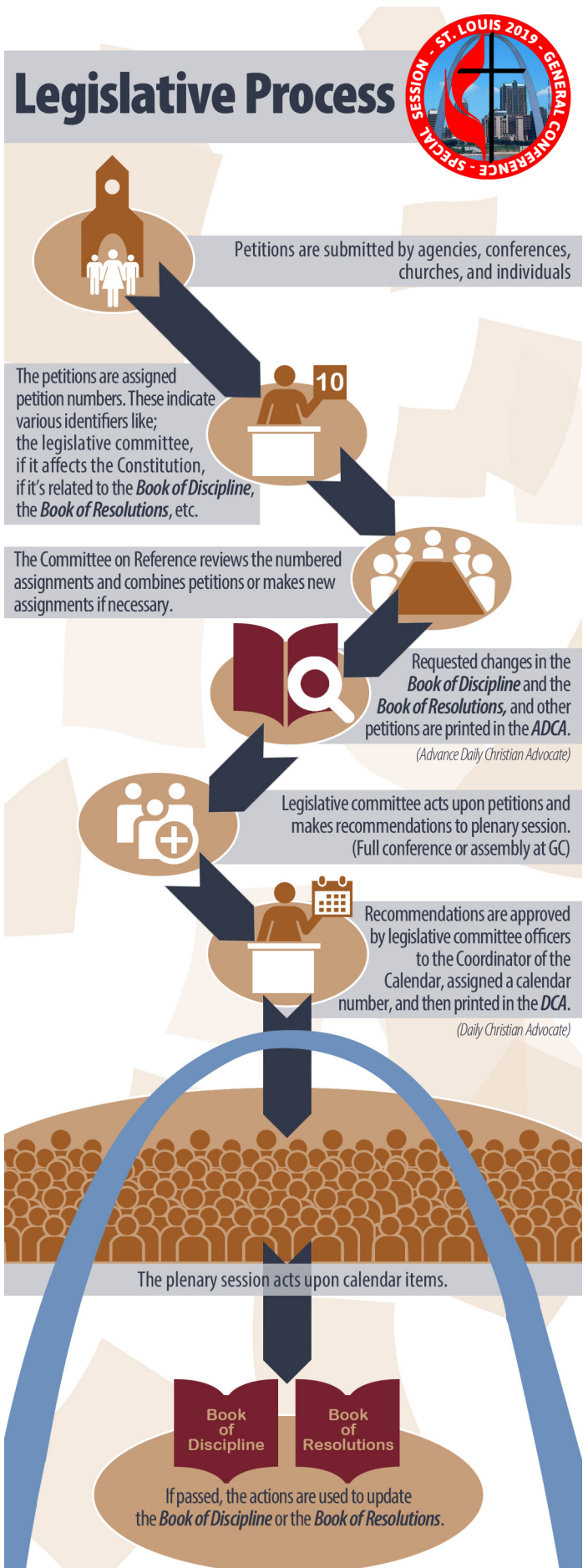
The Connectional Conference plan requires the most changes to the current structure of the United Methodist Church and is the only plan that involves the passing of Constitutional amendments.

According to the report, "This plan creates three values-based connectional conferences that have distinctive definitions of accountability, contextualization, and justice." (pg. 26 of the report).

For the central conferences, they have the choice of becoming their own connectional conference or joining one of the three new values-based connectional conferences.

The three values-based conferences would be named the progressive (liberal), unity (moderate), and traditional (conservative) conferences, and would seek to replace the current five U.S. jurisdictions (South Central, North Central, Northeastern, Southeastern, and Western).

Each connectional conference would then create its own Book





Bishop Gary Mueller addresses the Arkansas Conference about the Commission on a Way Forward's report, shortly after it was released to the public in July 2018. To view Bishop Mueller's video, visit www.arumc.org/gc2019/.

of Discipline, based on agreed upon theological understandings. The core General Book of Discipline, which includes the Articles of Religion, Confessions of Faith, General Rules and other commonly agreed upon items, would remain in place in each conference's Book of Discipline.

With the ability for each conference to construct their own Book of Discipline, issues of theological disagreement – including the ordination and marriage of LGBTQ persons – would be left up to the conference and not the overarching General Conference, as it currently operates.

These are the basics of the three plans submitted by the Commission on a Way Forward, but it is certainly not all of the changes that would occur if one of these plans passes at the Special Session of General Conference.

These plans could also see changes during General Conference thanks to the more than 78 legislative petitions that have been submitted for consideration.

Recently, the committee on reference met to review whether submitted petitions were “in harmony” with the Council of Bishops' call for the special session.

The 48 petitions included in the Commission's report were all deemed to be “in harmony,” while an additional 30 petitions outside of the report were cleared as well.

These petitions include the Queer Clergy Caucus's Simple Plan – which would remove all language from the Discipline that excludes LGBTQ people from full participation in the church – and the Modified Traditional Plan – a version of the Traditional Plan that would add a committee to hold

bishops accountable to the Discipline's sexuality standards and a \$200,000 grant to annual conferences that want to leave the denomination due to disagreements over LGBTQ issues.

No Plan Passes

There's also the possibility that no one plan or petition receives a majority of votes at General Conference. In other words, nothing gets passed.

If the delegate votes are split in too many directions – in a way that prevents any single plan from receiving more than 50 percent of the votes – then the church will maintain the current language of the 2016 Book of Discipline.

However, with a regularly scheduled General Conference occurring in 2020, these petitions could once again be brought up for a vote a little more than a year from now in Minneapolis.

The special session of General Conference is a complicated event focused on a complex subject.

The subject of human sexuality has been a source of disagreement within the church for decades.

With the 2019 special session, the United Methodist Church has the opportunity to settle the debate over human sexuality in the church – if not permanently, then at least temporarily.

For a more detailed look at the One Church, Traditional and Connectional Conference plans submitted to General Conference, the Commission on a Way Forward's full 93-page report is available for reading online at <http://www.umc.org/topics/general-conference-2019-special-session>.

From a single Christian

Learning to value the blessing of singleness

By Aynsley Broom
Featured Contributor



"I'm a bit of a coffee addict, and if I could spend an entire day at Starbucks or any coffee shop, it would be a good day! Movies, basketball (GO SPURS GO), and just having a fun time. I travel basically every other weekend, and it's a good life."

Hi, my name is Aynsley Broom, and I'm a single girl in her mid-20s living in the Bible Belt. What you just read, above, was the short bio I have on Bumble. Yes, even Christians are on Bumble because -- let's face it -- we aren't Rebekah waiting for Isaac to come riding in on a camel proposing to marry us in his mother's tent.

While it seems that single men and women in the Bible had it a bit tough -- from Jacob waiting 14 years to marry his true love to David's complicated love life -- it seems a lot easier than swiping left or right hoping that we find true love.

Growing up in the church, you learn about what kind of spouse you are supposed to marry, when you are supposed to marry them, and then taught how your marriage should work. What you often aren't taught is: what happens if you don't find that person in the allotted time that everyone thinks you should find them? (Which, by the way, the perfect time is usually seen as during college; especially if you attend a Christian college.)

Thankfully, Paul has some thoughts on people who remain

single. He says, "Now to the unmarried and the widows I say: It is good for them to stay unmarried, as I do. But, if they cannot control themselves, they should marry, for it is better to marry than to burn with passion." (1 Corinthians 7:8-9)

While it may be easy to look at this verse and then look at your single friends and say, "See you're doing great! It's a good thing to be single," they may look at you and think, "Well, why didn't you stay single if it's so great?" The words and actions just don't add up, and at times it can feel as if married Christians are held at a higher value than single Christians; though not intentionally.

Once engagement season rolls around, single Christians in the church can be flooded with the thoughts of, "What am I doing wrong?" or "Is there something in the water that I'm not getting?" or even, "Do I really have to be married to fulfill my Christian duty?"

As a fellow single Christian, the answer is, "no," you don't have to be married to be someone who does good for the Lord.

You see, some people think that being single is the worst thing that could happen to a person, or maybe it's that some, once they

become single again, have been in relationships for so long that they forget the freedom of being single.

Now don't get me wrong, I look forward to the day when I will meet my Mr. Right, but until then I do want to enjoy my singleness because there are many benefits to being a single Christian.

One of those benefits is time. You have the time to observe other Christian marriages. You have time to dedicate to more in-depth study and understanding of God's plan for your life. You have time to go on a mission trip. The list goes on.

So, if you're a single Christian and struggling with thinking the perfect guy or girl doesn't exist, don't worry; they don't (because no one is perfect). But God does have a plan for you and your future significant other.

Don't sell yourself short. Don't chase after a guy or girl just because everyone else has someone. If you do, you will be missing out on a love that "bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things." (1 Corinthians 13:7)

That special someone could be going through a rough patch in their life, and God knows that if you were to meet him or her, you might not like them. God is the master matchmaker, and He knows the heart of every person.

You may be ready to meet your future spouse, but they may not be ready to know you. They might not know what it means to truly love a person like depicted in 1 Corinthians 13, also known as the love chapter. Here Paul explains what love is. "Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud," and it continues on from there. It's also important to remember not to rush love.

Think of love as a flame. Many are in a hurry to start a fire that they pour as much kerosene on the wood as they can to get the fire going. However, the flames are large but go out quickly. Now, if you pour a bit of kerosene on the wood, take your time, and let the flames burn slowly, then the fire will last through the night. Consider this verse from Song of Solomon 8:4, "I adjure you, O daughters of Jerusalem, that you not stir up or awaken love until it pleases." So take your time!

To the church, I encourage you to value your single Christians and show that single Christians don't have to be married to be of use and have value. Being a single Christian is not a curse. In a way, it's a gift. There's time to focus on God and bettering ourselves. I hope that you know that God does have a plan for your life (Jeremiah 29:11) and to enjoy this season.

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Building on the Legacy

New president, CEO of UMFA seeks to continue growth of Foundation

By Caleb Hennington

Digital Content Editor | [Follow me on Twitter @arumceditor](#)

When I called to talk to the Rev. J. Wayne Clark – president and CEO of the United Methodist Foundation of Arkansas – it was barely a week into his new position.

Knowing he hadn't had much time to get used to the new job yet, I asked him how he was settling in any way.

"A bit chaotic!" Clark said with a laugh. "A lot of boxes, cluttered desks and meetings, But it's good. It's all very, very good."

That's how Clark seems to process change. Even if the world around him is moving fast and he's venturing off into uncharted territory, he's still as calm and charismatic as he always is.

It's perhaps one of the many reasons he was selected to lead the Foundation after the unfortunate and unexpected passing of longtime President James B. Argue.

Argue, who took over leadership at UMFA in 1981, grew the Foundation's assets from an initial investment of \$67,000 to a value of more than \$164 million at the time of his death in 2018. He was a legendary name in the Arkansas United Methodist Church and a man who touched the lives of countless people across the state.

The Foundation named Clark to the position in November, following an extensive search process that was administered by a committee made up of UMFA board members. UMFA Board of Director's Chair Judge Beth Deere convened the committee.

Other members of the committee included Phil Hathcock, Mable Donaldson, Ginny Kurrus, Dewitt Smith, and Bert Kell.

But Clark's journey to the Foundation wasn't always his objective; although he had admired and respected the work of the Foundation – and served on the board of directors for many years – taking over as the CEO wasn't initially on his mind.

Called to ministry

Born in 1962 in Dallas, Texas, Clark moved to Malvern, Arkansas with his family when he was five years old.

After graduating from Malvern High School, Clark went on to attend Hendrix College in the early '80s (class of 1984). It was there on the campus of Conway's beautiful liberal arts college that Clark decided to answer his call to ministry.

"I had been really involved in the Methodist Church in Malvern, and I was actually the conference youth president at one time. So, I always thought I would be involved in some way with the church, but I never really thought I'd be called to be ordained in the church."

That call to ministry led Clark from Hendrix back to his roots in Texas, where he enrolled in seminary at Perkins School of Theology.

Clark spent his seminary internship at Children's Medical Center as a hospital chaplain for about a year and then spent 1987 to 1988 across the pond leading Methodist churches in the United Kingdom.

"Methodism started in England. I got to preach in the same churches, and from the same pulpits, that John Wesley preached from, and that's something I'll never forget," Clark said.

Ministering to students

When Clark finally returned to the U.S., his first appointment was at Magnolia First UMC in 1989. Clark then served at Hawley Memorial UMC in Pine Bluff from 1992 to 1996 before returning to his alma mater in '96 to serve as the chaplain of Hendrix College.

"Like so many people that go to college and discern their calling, that was an important time in my life. And the opportunity came up for me to return to my college and get to serve a place that really impacted me.

"It was incredibly fulfilling to get to help others, not just those thinking about going into ministry, but anyone. It's a major time in a young person's life."

During his time as a chaplain, Clark was able to minister to students at Hendrix, but in many ways, the students also changed his life.

"I was so influenced by the students and their energy, their new thoughts and their overall optimism about the world and the church."

Before serving at Hendrix, Clark confessed that mission trips weren't a huge part of his spiritual journey. But over time, as he was able to organize and attend mission trips around the world with students, serving others in foreign countries became his passion.



Top: A group of Hendrix College students and Rev. Wayne Clark pose with church members after laying tile at a United Methodist church in Guatemala.

Bottom: Clark helps with construction work on a house during a mission trip to Vietnam. || Photos provided by Wayne Clark



By the time he finished his service at Hendrix, Clark had participated in more than 25 mission trips, from places as close as Chicago to as far away as Siberia.

“I learned so much on those trips. Most of the time, I felt like I was the one being ministered to instead of the people that we were serving,” Clark said. “People would say ‘go down and share the good news to those folks,’ and I would get down to Guatemala or wherever we were, and find that they were more spirited, religious people than any of us were!”

Clark said that through the mission trips, he learned that everyone has dignity and worth, no matter where they are from. Through serving in homeless shelters and soup kitchens in the U.S., he realized the homeless are treated as “less than” and are dehumanized on a regular basis.

“Most of these folks need money, food or shelter, but many times they’re also looking for a smile and recognition of their fellow humanity with you.”

One of Clark’s most memorable mission trips was a trip he took to Vietnam. On this trip, Clark and students built houses for people along the Mekong River, south of Ho Chi Minh City.

Because a language barrier existed between the 10 Hendrix students on the trip and the Vietnamese residents, a group of six Vietnamese college students met up with the group to act as translators.

“It was amazing to see because it wasn’t 10 American students and six Vietnamese students; it became 16 college kids. I mean, these students really bonded.”

Every day, the group would travel on a boat to get to the building site, and during these boat trips, the students exchanged different pieces of pop culture from their countries.

“I have this incredible image in my head of two of the students, one Vietnamese and one American, exchanging earbuds on the boat and telling each other about different music from their countries. They were saying things like ‘You need to listen to this!’ or ‘Check out this song!’ It was amazing to see.”

Hendrix to the Foundation

Although Clark’s many years spent serving the students of Hendrix as the chaplain made him well-rounded as a leader, it wasn’t the expertise that would have immediately identified him as a qualified candidate for the UMFA president’s position.

However, four years before landing the new job, Clark was asked by William M. Tsutsui – 11th president of Hendrix College – to leave his position as chaplain and take up a new role as the associate vice president for development. In this new position, Clark was responsible for fundraising, including managing the Hendrix Annual Fund, planned giving and major gifts, as well as providing leadership for Advancement Studies at Hendrix.

“When I was asked to lead this position, I said ‘I don’t know anything about raising money,’ and he [Tsutsui] said ‘Yeah you



Rev. Wayne Clark snaps a selfie with two children in Guatemala during a mission trip that he took while serving as the Hendrix College chaplain. || *Photo provided by Wayne Clark*



Rev. Wayne Clark and a Hendrix College student take a photo together after returning from a mission trip. || *Photo provided by Wayne Clark*

do, you just don't realize you know it. Raising money is all about building relationships.”

The new position wasn't an easy one to take on at first, according to Clark. Much of the difficulty came from the disengagement from his daily visits with students and the new responsibilities associated with the job.

“I was having to focus on raising money and thinking strategically about how to get that money, so there was a learning curve for me. But I grew into that role and came to realize that position was truly a ministry as well.

“When you talk to people about something as important as their money, that becomes a sacred conversation as well. To have someone trust you with their money -- that you're going to do something good with it -- takes a lot of faith.”

That trust is something that Clark recognizes is a reason former President Jim Argue was so effective at his job.

Serving on the board of the Foundation, Clark was able to see Argue's kindness and leadership first hand. He admired the Foundation's ability to manage money and the way they were able to disperse that money to churches and individuals who needed it to pursue the mission of making disciples of Jesus Christ.

“I thought, ‘This is so cool. Maybe when I retire one day, I can have a part-time position helping the Foundation in some way.’”

After Jim Argue passed away, Clark's feeling of wanting to help the Foundation part-time grew into a desire to put everything he had into a full-time leadership position.

After a lot of prayers, time to think, and discussions with his wife, Rynnett, Clark decided to throw his name into the hat of candidates.

“Going through the application and interview process, it made me realize that everything I've done is wrapped up into this Foundation. They work with the local church; I've been in the local church. They're Conference-wide. They are trying to help people think about endowed gifts. And they're giving money out to support churches.

“But I told them up front that if you're looking for someone with legal or financial expertise, like a lawyer or CPA, then maybe I'm not your person,” Clark said.

Clark's humility on financial know-how downplays the significant fundraising endeavors he was able to accomplish while at Hendrix.

During his tenure at Hendrix, Clark directed the planning grant that led to a \$2 million grant from the Lilly Foundation to “develop programs to assist students in the theological exploration of vocation,” according to a Hendrix College press release from 2015.

He helped gather an additional \$1.5 million grant to extend that original grant by three years.

Clark also helped write a \$500,000, five-year grant from the Lilly Foundation to set up a program for Clergy and Civic Engagement, as well as a \$1 million gift to establish the Miller Center for Vocation Ethics and Calling at Hendrix.

These are no small tasks that Clark accomplished, and the

members of the selection committee knew that his achievements at Hendrix uniquely qualified him for the position.

“In Wayne Clark, the Foundation is receiving a unique and valuable blend of gifts,” said Phil Hathcock, UMFA board member and member of the president & CEO selection committee. “He combines extensive development acumen and a deep love for the United Methodist Church. I am confident that he will lead us faithfully and well.”

Ginny Kurrus, another member of the committee, said that Clark’s experience as a clergy member in Arkansas and chaplain at Hendrix, combined with his experience in development, made him an outstanding candidate for the position at UMFA.

“His service on the UMFA Board has familiarized him with the history and past success of the Foundation, and his service on the Grants committee has allowed him to see some of the ways the Foundation is impacting the future of the United Methodist Church in Arkansas through efforts like the Seminary Scholarships,” Kurrus said.

“Wayne’s unique background fit well with what we were looking for in a new President and CEO.”

Going forward

Clark is hoping that his time at the Foundation will be spent building upon the accomplishments and legacy of the people that came before him.

Of the 45 United Methodist foundations across the U.S., the United Methodist Foundation of Arkansas is the sixth largest, a significant accomplishment compared to the relatively small size of the Arkansas Annual Conference.

Clark is hoping to get more individuals to invest in their local churches; specifically, helping members know how to return a portion of their estate to their church in ways that will continue to support the church long after they are gone.

Clark said that he owes a lot of what he’s bringing to the position to Argue and the way he lived his incredible life.

“I’ve admired Jim since I was



Rev. J. Wayne Clark, President and CEO of the UMFA, photographed in the new UMFA building in West Little Rock. || *Photo provided by the United Methodist Foundation of Arkansas*

first ordained in 1986. I remember him speaking about the Foundation at every Annual Conference. And even back then, with all the other reports from ministries being given, I was always excited to hear what was going on at the Foundation.

“So, when Jim invited me to be on the board a few years ago, not to be too corny, but it was a ‘dream come true,’” Clark said with a laugh.

Clark said that Argue passed on sage advice and wisdom to him over the years, but one of the most important things he emphasized was the power of personal relationships.

“Jim reiterated to me time and time again that it’s all about relationships. It’s not going to happen overnight, and people aren’t going to invest one of their greatest assets in anything until they trust someone or believe in the purpose.”

It’s impossible to live up to the legacy of what Argue accomplished, and Clark knows that. He isn’t trying to become the next Jim Argue because no one could possibly be Jim except Jim.

For Clark, the primary goal is building up the Foundation and helping people around the Conference get the help they need to further the work of the Church in Arkansas.

“I want the Foundation to be known throughout the state; it has a wonderful reputation already, but not everyone knows we exist. I want to change that.”



From left to right: Sherwood Police Department Officer Benjamin Witherspoon, Chaplain LaNita Daniels, Officer Justin Cherry and Officer Jeremy Murphy. || Photo provided by LaNita Daniels

Finding comfort in a dangerous job

Rev. LaNita Daniels brings sense of calm to Sherwood police force

By Sam Pierce

Featured Contributor, [@sjamespierce](#)

“There is an idea among people,” according to LaNita Daniels, “that one person cannot make a difference.

“Any little thing we do affects someone; any small action we do or do not do affects somebody else whether we realize it or not.”

“We need to remember that God has called each one of us to do something special in our lives and we can make a huge difference in someone else’s life.”

Daniels, who also serves as the pastor at North Pulaski United Methodist Church, is the first female chaplain for the Sherwood Police Department. She has served as the chaplain for nearly five months now.

“I think it gives a new dimension to the chaplaincy,” Daniels said. “I’m coming from a different perspective.”

“...I’ve always thought the police department was overlooked,

in a way, for needing someone to talk with and needing someone to be present and possibly represent spiritually in a hard world where police officers, and the department as a whole, meet evil head-on every day.”

Daniels said, by being the first woman chaplain, she feels like she is representing the changing paradigm in which chaplains are viewed.

“When we are called out on the scene,” Daniels said. “hopefully, we can give the care that is needed.”

Tim McMinn, the pastor at Sylvan Hills Community Church in Sherwood for the past 26 years, started the chaplain program in 1996 and for many years he was by himself.

Eventually, he partnered with Hugh Yarbrough, the pastor at Christian Assembly of God in Sherwood. Yarbrough is also the chaplain at Arkansas Children’s Hospital in Little Rock.

“We noticed an influx of female officers and African-American officers, and we decided we needed to add diversity in our chaplain program,” McMinn said. “So, we added Marion Butler, an African-American, but we still needed a female.”

“LaNita and I had a discussion a couple of months back, and she is a pastor in this community and lives in the community and has done excellent things. She was an excellent choice to be a chaplain for our department.”

McMinn said Daniels has a great personality.” He said bringing Daniels aboard was an easy decision because it brings a sense of comfort to the female officers.

“I’ve learned through the years, female officers don’t mind talking to you in a problem situation, but other times in their lives with more personal issues, they prefer a female than a male,” McMinn said. “So, we had a desire to get a female on board, someone they can relate to.”

He said, when searching for a chaplain, he always looks for people that are very outward and have a great personality.

“LaNita has never met a stranger and she has a compassionate heart,” McMinn said. “When we are called into a crime scene, we are meeting people who are having one of the worst days of their lives.

“We have to have someone who understands the complexity of the situation.”

Daniels said chaplains act as a sense of comfort, but also a sense of control, to a degree.

“It allows the officers to do their job and concentrate on the crime scene itself,” Daniels said. “It makes a difference for the officers because they don’t have to split their attention.

“I also ride with the officers, so I can get to know them, and they can get to know me. I’m not there to get in the way of their duties, but for them to know I’m there if they need me,” Daniels said. “If they would like to bounce something off me or anything like that.”

“The more of a relationship I can have with the officers, the more comfortable they are when they call me to a scene.”

Daniels said she tries to be at roll call as much as she can for all three shifts and do a devotional before the officers leave for duty. She also spends time with the dispatchers and eventually plans to spend time with every department.

Lieutenant Jamie Michaels and Daniels ride together, and Michaels said while it was difficult at times to talk due to the high amount of calls at night, she said they still spend a good amount of time chatting and “got to know each other on a personal level, which was great.”

“I’m a female who works in a male-dominated field anyway,” Michaels said. “I have had to find ways to relate to people regardless of their background, their orientation, male or female – whatever.

“But one thing I can appreciate with her, it does make it easier to relate to her on a great number of things, not just faith-based, but just life in general.”

McMinn, who also serves as an alderman for the city of Sherwood, said the department has been very receptive of Daniels.

“She’s just been accepted and received by both male and female officers,” McMinn said. “Everyone seems to like her.”

Sherwood Police Chief Jim Bedwell said Daniels is a unique person.

“Usually, chaplains are just called out to the scene when needed,” Bedwell said. “(LaNita) is trying to change that. She is interacting with our officers, letting them know her and getting to know them.

“...From the few officers that I have talked to, it has been nice



Rev. LaNita Daniels, pastor at North Pulaski UMC and Sherwood Police Department chaplain. || *Photo provided by LaNita Daniels*

and a good thing, having LaNita on board.”

Bedwell estimates of the 81 officers on staff, there are six or seven officers who are female. Michaels, who has been an officer for 15 years, said Daniels makes herself available to everyone.

“I think (LaNita) is a very loving, genuine person,” Michaels said. “She wants to get to know everybody on a personal level and takes a genuine interest in our officers in the police department.

“She really does care, and she makes it evident in what she does and the message she brings. She wants us to know God’s message, and she is not pushy with it. She just wants us to know God’s love, and I can appreciate that.”

Daniels, who is originally from Antioch, which is just outside Beebe, said she has wanted to become a chaplain for years.

“I feel like I am making a positive difference in people’s lives,” Daniels said.

“The ripples we make, can be good. But if we don’t act intentionally and don’t do what God calls us to do, we have lost an opportunity and so do all the people who would be affected.”

Daniels, who has been the pastor at North Pulaski for four years, said she has opened North Pulaski United Methodist Church facility to several groups (e.g., Scouts, Gravel Ridge Improvement Team community meeting, North Central Clergy Partnership Community Action Board, Veterans Happy Hour Social Club, Crafter’s Club) and is working towards hosting several new support groups for the community.

She holds several credentials (e.g., FEMA Master Professional Continuity Practitioner, Licensed Federal Acquisition Institute Program Manager, Licensed Federal Acquisition Institute



Rev. LaNita Daniels and SPD Officer Cherry ride together in a police department patrol car. Daniels often goes along with the officers when she is needed at a crime scene. || *Photo provided by LaNita Daniels*

Project Manager, Licensed Federal Government Contracting Officer's Representative, Federal Leadership Development Institute Mentor) and participates in many additional activities (e.g., Chairperson for Interfaith Arkansas Disaster Emotional and Spiritual Care Team, Interfaith Arkansas Representative to Arkansas Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster).

"I don't think the general public realizes the stress that police officers and their families are under," Daniels said. "I don't think they realize officers need a presence, a Godly presence.

"They go out and do more than give traffic tickets. They are there to face pure evil, and they are the ones that show up to fight it. They need a Godly presence.

"...The fear and concern of their families is a huge weight on their shoulders."

Michaels said just as those in faith-based work, she sees this as a calling.

"I don't think I could stay in this as long as I have, especially with the way things are now, without knowing I was doing this for a greater purpose," Michaels said. "This is a thankless job."

She said having Daniels at the department brings a sense of comfort.

"It is very comforting to listen to her message and the quick prayer she does; I take it to heart," Michaels said. "After we say, 'Amen,' I'm ready to go to work and get after it.

"I hope that my officers take the same comfort that I do."

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A recovery team from Roger's FUMC installs cabinets in a rebuilt home that was destroyed in the April 2018 Crawford County Tornado.

|| Photo provided by Janice Mann

Volunteers in Mission

Arkansas Volunteers in Mission (VIM) and Disaster Response (DR) will host VIM and DR Coordinators from the South Central Jurisdiction for their Spring meeting. Coordinators will be introduced to the newly approved official VIM Work Site, ECHO Village in Eureka Springs. While in Arkansas the coordinators will worship together, will meet together for updates and business, will volunteer at the ECHO Village construction site and will learn about the ministries of ECHO - what they are, how they came to be and who they serve.

Volunteers in Mission Team Leader Training, St. James UMC, March 9, 9 a.m. - 3 p.m., \$20. Contact vim@arumc.org to register or for more info.

This training is for leaders of mission teams both domestic and international. Also will benefit ERT leaders. One of the questions being asked by providers of insurance is whether the team leader has been VIM Team Leader trained within the last three years. The registration fee covers lunch and training materials.

Current In-Conference VIM projects:

- ECHO Village
- Crawford County Tornado Recovery
- Delta Dream Facility Repair
- Contact Byron at vim@arumc.org for more information and to schedule.

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I AM THE WAY, THE TRUTH
AND THE LIFE - JOHN - 14 : 6

LEARN FROM M...
Matthew - 11 : 29

JIM HART, LA
1968



First UMC Hot Springs restores historic downtown Jesus mosaic

By Michelle Morris
Featured Contributor

Perhaps you have noticed it as you drove through Hot Springs down Central Avenue. On the street side of First Hot Springs is an 18 foot 9 inch tall Jesus, beautifully portrayed in a mosaic of 488,000 Italian glass tiles, his arms outstretched as he welcomes all to come to him.

If you have noticed it, you are not alone. When FUMC Hot Springs disciples invite people to visit their church, they simply have to say, “It’s the one with the Jesus mosaic.” This incredible work of art is not only identified with the church, but also with Hot Springs itself. That is why, as it had recently fallen into disrepair, a group called “The Friends of the Mosaic Jesus” (comprised of Joyce and Neil Thornton, Steve Fulenwider and Maggie Foster) urged the people of the church to commit to its repair. Pastor David Moseley encouraged the necessary fundraising, noting that “It’s our gift to the City of Hot Springs.”

The restoration began this fall. What had initially cost \$374.97 when it was installed in 1965, the mosaic Jesus now totaled around \$80,000 to repair. Wendell Norton and his firm, who handled the restoration, were able to use some excess tiles that had been stored in the church since the 1965 installation to help with the work. In December, First UMC celebrated its completion in a service that included city personnel as well.

The next time you find yourself in downtown Hot Springs, keep your eyes and heart open to being welcomed by this beautiful body of Christ.



Attendees of the Beyond Conference gathered for a group photo at Philander Smith College. The two-day event, held Jan. 25 - 26, gathered together children's and youth workers across the state to learn about new ways to do youth ministry. || Photo provided by Melinda Shunk

Beyond 2019 reaches beyond expectations

"For where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there with them."
-Matthew 18:20

By Melinda Shunk
Children's Ministry Coordinator

Matthew 18:20 was the overall theme for this year's Beyond conference. Children's Ministers came together, to worship, learn, be inspired, and most of all feel God's hand working in Children's ministry. Opening worship modeled how we can make our worship services cross-generational so that all ages feel part of the service instead of a spectator with a busy bag or sent off to another space.

Marilyn Sharpe, the author of *For Heaven's Sake*, taught us how to connect with our parents, by giving the space to talk and a listening ear. She shared how important it is to train our volunteers to lean in and look for opportunities to share faith formations techniques. She gave us simple traditions to share with parents and why they are essential. Parents are scared when we say "devotions" but embrace when we teach them how everyday objects can be used to teach children they are a beloved child of God. Most of all, she echoed loud and clear two important points for our church: children are more than the future church they are the NOW, as well as helping everyone understand that if children and youth are not leading in the church, they are leaving the church!

Sadie Stratton from Downtown Bentonville First Church introduced to everyone the new Wonderfully Made human sexuality curriculum as well as wowing all with the progress she and her team have made with Children's First Church the first Sunday of every month; this is a service where children lead the adults in worship from the beginning to the end of worship.

Karen Reeves refreshed our souls teaching us how to use Yoga breathing to center our souls and hear God's whispers. She also gave us the gift of movement paired with the Lord's Prayer to teach our youngest preschool age children all the way to our youth how to fully engage the whole body in prayer.

Seventy Children's Ministers, pastors, youth workers, and volunteers took every opportunity to learn from one another and help make disciples who make disciples at this year's Beyond Conference. You will surely hear from one of the attendees that Beyond 2020 needs to be on your calendar.

CHILDREN'S MINISTRY



Karen Reeves leads yoga at Beyond.
|| Photo provided by Melinda Shunk



Marilyn Sharpe, author of *For Heaven's Sake*.
|| Photo provided by Melinda Shunk



Sadie Stratton Wohlfahrt, Director of Children's Ministries at Bentonville First UMC, speaks at the Beyond Conference. || Photo provided by Melinda Shunk



