

# The Arkansas United Methodist

**LIVING OUR FAITH**

June 2019 | Volume 167, Issue 6

## A New Office For *Lucie's Place*



**AC 2019**

Apartment Ministry  
**BOONEVILLE**

**Mission U**





## AN ANSWERED PRAYER

Rev. Roy Beth Kelley had a dilemma. After receiving a call to ministry, the Russellville attorney served as a local pastor for several years. Then she felt a deeper calling from God to attend United Theological Seminary in Dayton, Ohio full time.

"I knew I couldn't be a pastor, work at my law practice, and go to seminary full time. So I quit working at the law office, wrote a big check for my first semester of seminary, and took a leap of faith," Roy Beth recalled. "The UMFA Seminary Scholarship truly answered my prayer that God would provide."

Now serving as pastor for First UMC, Atkins and Bells Chapel UMC, Roy Beth holds services in both churches each week, attends meetings, and ministers to her congregations while attending seminary full time. She plans to complete her seminary work in December of 2018 and will continue as a pastor to local churches in the Arkansas Conference.

Roy Beth and her husband Ed have two grown sons. She is already putting to use the seminary coursework she's completed in church renewal and the missional church. "I am profoundly grateful to those who have made the seminary scholarships possible," she said.

# UMFA Hosts Endowment Seminar

By Haley Klein  
UMFA Featured Contributor

**O**n April 30, clergy and laity gathered in the Lusk Training Center of the United Methodist Foundation of Arkansas to hear from UMFA staff and Rev. Dr. Jim Bankston, retired pastor from St. Paul's UM Church, Houston, Texas.

The seminar focused on endowment fund creation, growth, and management. An endowment fund is a financial asset in which the original gift is never spent but invested, and the income is used for a specific purpose. "An endowment fund can enhance the ministry of your church from gifts that last in perpetuity. In a time when operating budgets are limited, endowments provide a steady stream of income to offset operations, and go beyond the budget," said UMFA Vice President of Development Janet Marshall.

"Constant reminders to church members about the endowments at your church is key to their growth," said Rev. Bankston. St. Paul's foundation grew from \$2 million to \$20 million during his 19 years as pastor.

Jim Kimzey from FUMC, Malvern attended the seminar. "We have an Endowment Committee which has been very much reactive rather than proactive in the past few years. Fortunately, our Sr. Pastor, Bruce Bennett, feels strongly about the need and advantages of an endowment program. The information provided during the UMFA's Endowment Seminar will be of value as we prepare our plans for a renewed endowment and planned giving program at FUMC Malvern."

The mission of the UMFA is to create and administer permanent charitable endowment funds to help strengthen and grow United Methodist ministries in Arkansas. Rev. J. Wayne Clark UMFA president added, "This seminar was provided to share information with local churches so they understand how the Foundation can partner with them in making a difference for ministry."

To learn more about endowments and your local church, please contact Janet Marshall at [jmarshall@umfa.org](mailto:jmarshall@umfa.org) or 501.664.8632.



L to R- Rev. Dr. Jim Bankston, Houston, Tx; Rev. J. Wayne Clark president of UMFA; Rev. Dr. Michael Roberts, First UMC, Conway; Rev. Siegfried Johnson and Dale Brubaker, Christ of the Hills, Hot Springs Village; Jim Kimzey, First UMC, Malvern; John Gibson, First UMC, Morrilton, and Patti Cox of First UMC, Ft. Smith attended the endowment seminar.



**The United Methodist Foundation of Arkansas**

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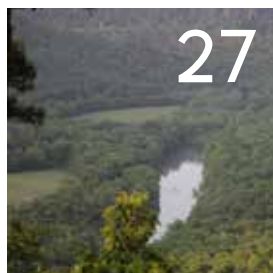
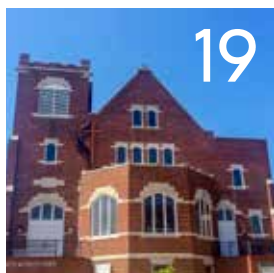
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When First UMC Little Rock purchased the abandoned building at 307 W. Seventh St., they had no immediate plans. A few years later, the church worked with a local non-profit for homeless LGBTQ youth to move into the renovated space.



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Caleb Hennington, Digital Content Editor

Amy Ezell, Director of The Center for Communication

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## STORY IDEA?



# One planet, one chance to get it right



**Caleb Hennington**  
Digital Content Editor, [@arumceditor](#)

I've been thinking a lot about our planet lately. Not in a spacey kind of way, imagining the stars and planets and the endless wonder of the cosmos (although, that is something that takes up a lot of room in my brain as well).

When I think about the planet these days, it's usually out of concern.

That's likely because my wife and I are right in the middle of watching a new Netflix series called *Our Planet*. It's a nature documentary, where each episode explores a different region and planetary environment, like jungles, deserts, or the ocean. But in addition to the usual facts about the animals and plant life that reside in these vastly different parts of the world, each episode also makes a point to show how quickly these places are changing; and not for the better.

Whether it's the critically endangered species that are leaving us faster than we can save them or the climate that's changing too quickly for plants, animals and even insects to adapt, one fact is unavoidable: our planet is dying, and it's mostly our fault.

We are failing at being good stewards of the Earth.

Stewardship is actually something that's deeply rooted in our Christian faith.

When God created Adam, one of the first things He entrusted to him was working and caring for the Garden of Eden (Genesis 2:15).

And why wouldn't He? God was pleased with His creation. He wanted to make sure it was well tended. If you recall, the Bible mentions that when God created something, he took a second to step back, see what He had done, and remark that it was "good."

God created everything to work together perfectly and mysteriously.

And one of the first things humankind chose to do was ruin it.

Recently, my wife and I have been trying to find ways that we can be better stewards of the Earth and slow down – perhaps even reverse – some of the long-lasting damage that we've done to our world.

When we moved to Central Arkansas, we were happy to see that Little Rock already had a residential recycling program. That made it easy for us to recycle our plastic and cardboard waste rather than sending it to the landfill.

We've also recently gotten into composting our food waste; it's like recycling but with more science and more smells!

When we're out shopping for home goods, we try to buy products that are organic, free from harmful chemicals, made from recycled material or can be easily recycled after we've used it.

These are small things, but they make a big difference when it comes to protecting the planet.

I recently read an article from *The New York Times* that made my heart sink. It was a new 1,500-page report from the United Nations that said more than 1 million species of plants and animals are in danger of extinction unless we do something about it now.

One million species.

I don't want to think about a world that's not going to be safe for my children or my children's children. I don't want to lose the forests, rivers, and oceans that I've had the privilege of experiencing firsthand and fallen in love with. I don't want to lose these beautiful creatures – handcrafted from the mind of our Creator – to climate change, deforestation, and poaching.

I'm doing all that I can to make sure that doesn't happen. I'm praying that people who have the power to make the changes we need to save the planet take heed and do the tough work that needs to be done.

I encourage you all to pray for our planet and do your own research into ways to protect it.

We only have one planet. Let's make it count by caring for the creation entrusted to us.





ARKANSAS RIVER FLOOD RELIEF

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# Let's Double Down

**W**e are in a tender time. Our beloved church is as polarized as our nation. Almost everyone is experiencing tremendous pain. Those who should be united in Christ are deeply divided. Hope seems to be at a premium. And in all honesty, I do not know whether we will be able to hold together.

Yet God is with us. And this reality changes everything. It means there is hope in the midst of our mess. It allows us to see new possibilities to which we otherwise might be blinded. And perhaps most importantly, it allows us to pivot from focusing on all the problems, discord and uncertainty we cannot control to embracing what God is calling us to do here in Arkansas - double down boldly on our mission.

Matthew 25, which is Jesus' final teaching before his passion unfolds, directs the church to double down in three essential ways. First, we are to double down on our faith commitment. Second, we are to double down on being fruitful. Third, we are to double down on acting with compassion.

This may seem risky in the midst of all the uncertainty. But, frankly, we don't have the luxury of waiting until we "settle" matters involving human sexuality before we get involved in ministry. The Gospel is too compelling, the needs are too great, and too many people need to experience Jesus' saving love right now.

So here's how we are doubling down in a multitude of bold and exciting ways in the Arkansas Conference. We are starting a new multicultural and multilingual work in Southwest Little Rock; beginning a new faith community in one of the fastest growing areas in the country in Northwest Arkansas; bringing on board an outstanding leader, Kay Kotan, to serve as Director for the Center for Vitality and New People; introducing a state of the art online Learning Management System that every Methodist in Arkansas can use called CouRSe - Congregational Resource System; recommitting to 200,000 Reasons to end childhood hunger in Arkansas; and developing a culture of call led by Michelle Moore to ensure we have outstanding leaders for the Methodist movement in Arkansas for decades to come.



**Gary E. Mueller**  
Bishop of the Arkansas Conference

Of course, we have difficult choices to make in the coming months about the future of our denomination. And we will. Not just at the 2020 General Conference, but also by the Arkansas Annual Conferences, our local congregations and you.

But in the meantime, we are called to make disciples of Jesus Christ, who make disciples equipped and sent to transform lives, communities and the world. In the meantime, we are called to keep affirming that we have a future with hope because "God is with us." In the meantime, we must seek to live as the Body of Christ that treats each other with respect and love, especially in the midst of significant disagreement. In the meantime, we will double down on growing in faith, being fruitful and acting compassionately. In the meantime, we will bring Christ to people and bring people to Christ.

I still have hope that the people called Methodists in Arkansas can work together to find our way forward.

And I think deep down inside, you do, too. But hope is not the final word. Acting on that hope is. Therefore, the question we must all answer is this: Are we willing to move from hope to working together?



# Can We Affirm A Common Core?

By Bud Reeves  
*Featured Contributor*

The “Common Core” refers to an often controversial set of state standards for education that was enacted a few years ago and is still supported in most states. The Common Core is knowledge that students should know by the end of a particular grade. The goal for the Common Core is to prepare students for success in post-secondary education. If all students possess similar levels of educational expertise, the pedagogical playing field should be more level, and there should be less need for remediation. At least that’s the theory.

When I go to our Arkansas Annual Conference, it reminds me of the Common Core of Methodism in our home state. I’ve been a Methodist all my life and a pastor all my adult life—“deeply ingrained” would be an understatement. At Annual Conference I experience worship and business the way we do them. I renew relationships with long-time, well-beloved colleagues and friends. I am reminded of our Wesleyan theology and our practices of faith that are uniquely Methodist. I would

be so out of place at a Southern Baptist convention or an Assembly of God conference. I am Methodist to the core.

Although I am writing this before Annual Conference, I am anticipating the presentation of a letter that will affirm our common core as Wesleyan Methodists. There is deep division within our denomination, made deeper by the General Conference of last February. As members of the Arkansas United Methodist family, several of us (of different perspectives on human sexuality) were invited by our bishop to have dialog about what unites us. We quickly came to affirm what we share in common, because what we share is broader, deeper, and perhaps more important than what divides us. The letter shared at Annual Conference included these points of commonality:

1. We believe in the Triune God, salvation by faith in Jesus Christ, in the unconditional love of God, and in God’s grace sufficient for every need. We believe in the faith delivered to the church in the historic creeds.
2. We cling to our Wesleyan heritage as Christians of a Methodist tribe. This includes:
  - a. A Wesleyan understanding of grace—prevenient, justifying, and sanctifying.
  - b. Theological and social discourse grounded first in



Scripture, informed by tradition, experienced in personal and corporate dimensions, and articulated with the best of human reason.

- c. Christian discipleship consisting of both vital piety and social action.
- d. Adherence to the General Rules given by John Wesley:
  - 1) Do no harm.
  - 2) Do good.
  - 3) Attend upon the ordinances of God.
3. We believe the mission of the church is making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. We affirm the trajectory of the Arkansas Annual Conference “to make disciples who make disciples equipped to transform lives, communities, and the world.”
4. We believe that whatever happens to the structure of the United Methodist Church, we will respect our fellow Methodists, and our interactions will be characterized by:
  - a. Listening well. We invite the members of Annual Conference to truly listen to one another as we share in conversation.
  - b. Loving well. As disciples of Jesus Christ, love is at the center of who we are and what we are about. Jesus tells us, “Love each other. Just as I have loved you, so you also must love each other. This is how everyone will know that you are my disciples, when you love each other.” (John 13:34-35)
5. We believe we are stronger and will accomplish more working together in our social witness. We commit to support our Annual Conference initiatives: 200,000 Reasons to stop childhood hunger in Arkansas, UMCOR, Volunteers in Mission, and disaster response initiatives.

This common core is often referred to as our “Methodist DNA.” (I’m no geneticist, so cut me some slack for the sake of analogy.) Each organism in God’s vast creation carries a genetic code made up of DNA, which is enclosed in chromosomes. Every cell in an organism carries this unique genetic code. But the slightest variation in composition introduces mutations into the organism. Human beings have 46 chromosomes, but the mutation of even one of those chromosomes can produce a substantially different organism.

In 1972, a mutation was introduced into the Methodist DNA with the “incompatibility” language inserted into the Book of Discipline. Mutations can be good or bad, and opinion is certainly divided on the character of that mutation. But mutations are part of the process of evolution.

The “incompatibility” mutation and its subsequent reinforcement may indeed produce a different organism in the Methodist family. It has happened before. The species *methodista pluralis* has continued to evolve. My point is that most of our DNA is still intact. We share a common core. My hope for the future is that whatever organisms evolve, we can affirm that we have more in common than what divides us. We can coexist in peace, and perhaps even cooperate. We can all make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

At least that’s the theory.

“We share a common core. My hope for the future is that whatever organisms evolve, we can affirm that we have more in common than what divides us. We can coexist in peace, and perhaps even cooperate. We can all make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.”

*The following letter was written by a group of Arkansas United Methodist Church clergy, and read at the 2019 Arkansas Annual Conference, May 29 - June 1 in Hot Springs, Arkansas.*



**To Our Arkansas Methodist Family:**

Grace and peace in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

As we gather as an Annual Conference, we acknowledge that there is deep division in our denomination and that our disagreements have caused pain among us. We call first for repentance, and secondly to find ways to affirm one another as a big family in Arkansas Methodism. To this end, we want to lift up a few statements that bind us together as Methodist sisters and brothers in Jesus Christ. No matter what happens, we share more in common as Methodist brothers and sisters in Jesus Christ than what divides us.

1. We believe in the Triune God, salvation by faith in Jesus Christ, in the unconditional love of God, and in God's grace sufficient for every need. We believe in the faith delivered to the church in the historic creeds.
2. We cling to our Wesleyan heritage as Christians of a Methodist tribe. This includes:
  - a. A Wesleyan understanding of grace—prevenient, justifying, and sanctifying.
  - b. Theological and social discourse grounded first in Scripture, informed by tradition, experienced in personal and corporate dimensions, and articulated with the best of human reason.
  - c. Christian discipleship consisting of both vital piety and social action.
  - d. Adherence to the General Rules given by John Wesley:
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5. We believe we are stronger and will accomplish more working together in our social witness. We commit to support our Annual Conference initiatives: 200,000 Reasons to stop childhood hunger in Arkansas, UMCOR, Volunteers in Mission, and disaster response initiatives.

We commit with you, our brothers and sisters in the Arkansas Annual Conference, to continue to pray for wisdom, guidance, and grace as we move forward. And in our Arkansas Methodist family, whatever structures may emerge, we will strive to “maintain the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace.” (Ephesians 4:3)

Respectfully Yours,

Mary Jan Davis

Karon Mann

John Mark Mathis

John Miles

Mark Norman

Katie Pearce

Bud Reeves

Michael Roberts

LaToya Shepherd

Britt Skarda

Carness Vaughn

Jeff Warrick



# Q&A w/ Kay Kotan

**Tell me about yourself: Where you're from, where you live now, where you went to school, your previous job, etc.**

I am a born and raised Missourian. I was born in Cameron, Missouri and moved to Savannah, Missouri in elementary school. (Fun fact: Our son is named after my hometown - Cameron.) I had lived in Missouri my whole life until the last two years of living in Pennsylvania serving the Susquehanna Conference as the Director of Equipping Vital Congregations. I have a background in banking operations and management and have created, grown and sold three different companies. I am a graduate of CoachU and Advanced CoachU. I have been working in coaching, consulting and speaking around church vitality and growth for more than a decade. I am married to Bob for 27 years and we have a son, Cameron, who is 23. Cameron resides in the Kansas City area and works in pipeline corrosion prevention.

**What attracted you to the Arkansas Conference and specifically the Director of the Center for Vitality position?**

I have had the great privilege of working with the Arkansas Conference over the past several years leading retreats and workshops and even creating some curriculum. The great people of Arkansas have always been very hospitable and kind. I have also appreciated how hungry people were to learn and be innovative. While working in and with many different conferences around the country, I have had the opportunity to learn, grow, and lead in a variety of ways. When the opportunity was presented to be able to work with the awesome people in Arkansas and use the experiences I have accumulated in other conferences, I was thrilled to be offered the chance to serve. I am truly humbled to be able to serve the Arkansas Conference.

**What are you hoping to accomplish as the new director?**

I am looking forward to building on the great work that has already been done in the Center of Vitality under its great leadership and staff. We are praying that through revitalizing churches, helping churches create intentional faith development processes, creating new places for new people, and equipping



**Name:**  
**Kay Kotan**

**Home State:**  
**Missouri**

**Title:**  
**Director of  
the Center  
for Vitality**

churches to make disciples that more people will come to know Jesus Christ through the United Methodist Churches in Arkansas.

**What do you like to do when you're not at work?**

When I am not at work, I love to watch HGTV, Shark Tank and an occasional Hallmark Movie. My husband and I love to travel to Cabo San Lucas, Mexico and take in the sand, ocean, and relax in the sun. There is such a peace and calm that washes over me when I sit and watch the Pacific Ocean waves wash upon the shore. It is indeed my happy place.

**Who is someone that inspires you in your daily life and why?**

I am standing on the shoulders of many women leaders in ministry. I am eternally grateful to those who have paved the roads ahead of me, broken the proverbial glass ceilings, and opened doors that were previously locked for women and for laity to lead. I remain humbled and thankful for those ministry pioneers.

# A Moment with Methodist FAMILY HEALTH



## Camp Tanako Provides Traditional Summer Experience for Arkansas Foster Children

By Amy Shores  
*Director of Pastoral Care, Methodist Family Health*

Whether your memories of summer camp are real or formed from what you saw in movies, most of us know what summer camp is about. S'mores. Canoeing. Crafts. Bunk beds. Swimming.

But there is a segment of kids who have never heard of summer camp – or have any way to go to one. These kids are in the Division of Child and Family Services and live in therapeutic group homes at Methodist Family Health. For these children, their experience of summer is bouncing from a foster member to a foster home to a group home.

Before coming to Methodist Family Health, their greatest desires were quieting their rumbling stomachs as they realize dinner isn't coming, or having an hour or two to themselves after raising their younger siblings because their parents weren't home (or weren't able) to do so. Their summers were anything but carefree.

Each year, Methodist Family Health takes every resident in our therapeutic group homes throughout the state to a week-long summer camp at Camp Tanako on Lake Catherine in Garland County. The experience is a traditional one – fishing, crafts, and a carnival included – but the opportunity to just be a kid is not.

"Camp Tanako is a labor of love for the staff and volunteers who make it happen, but it's one where we are rewarded with laughter from kids who haven't had much to laugh about," said Craig Gammon, United Methodist Children's Home

administrator and one of the masterminds behind Camp Tanako each year. "We have teenage boys ask to color and paint because they never have before. The girls love to kayak because it is a novel thing for them. All the kids' needs are met, and the only thing they have to ponder is whether they swim or sunbathe. For our kids, it's a week away from problems and troubles they are too young to face."

This camp experience is made possible by the Rev. Robert Regnier Memorial Summer Camp Fund at the Methodist Family Health Foundation. Named in memory of former Methodist Children's Home CEO Rev. Robert Regnier, this fund enables children who are residents of our group homes to enjoy a week of camp and outdoor activities, complete with campfires, arts and crafts, games, recreation, and spirituality services.

"The fund provides for rental of Camp Tanako for a week as well as all food and supplies for the kids attending," said Carolyn McCone, CFRE, executive director of the Methodist Family Health Foundation. "Large or small, donations to the fund make it possible for our group home residents to have a time away they will never forget. It seems like a small thing, but it really means the world to the kids in our care."

If you would like to contribute to the Rev. Robert Regnier Memorial Summer Camp Fund, there are several ways you can do so:

Text MFH to 501-881-2258;

Visit [MethodistFamily.org/Donate](http://MethodistFamily.org/Donate) to contribute online;

Mail a check to Methodist Family Health Foundation, P.O. Box 56050, Little Rock, Arkansas 72215;

Call 501-906-4209 to make a secure donation by phone.





Sonora Smart Dodd (second from right) visits with Boy Scouts and a Civil War veteran in Spokane, Wash., in this undated photograph. Dodd played a pivotal role in the creation of a national Father's Day celebration. Photo courtesy the Dodd family.

# Father's Day has Methodist Ties

By Joey Butler  
*United Methodist Communications*

**T**o all you dads out there: While you're relaxing in your recliner and watching sports on June 21, and your kids are on their best behavior to honor Father's Day, don't forget to thank a United Methodist.

That's right. Not one, but two United Methodist churches with the same name, oddly enough, can lay claim to originating the celebration of all things paternal.

In 1909 in Spokane, Wash., Sonora Smart Dodd listened to a Mother's Day sermon at Central Methodist Episcopal Church. Dodd's own mother had died 11 years earlier, and her father had raised their six children alone. Dodd felt moved to honor her father, and fathers everywhere, with a special day as well.

She proposed her idea to local religious leaders, and gained wide acceptance. June 19, 1910, was designated as the first Father's Day, and sermons honoring fathers were presented throughout the city.

When newspapers across the country carried the story about Spokane's observance, the popularity of Father's Day spread. Several presidents declared it a holiday, and in 1972, Richard Nixon established it as the third Sunday in June.

Dodd's pivotal role in the creation of a national Father's Day celebration was recognized in 1943 with a luncheon in her honor in New York City. Central Methodist Episcopal is now known as Central United Methodist, and holds a Father's Day service every year.

There's more to the story

If you thought you celebrated the centennial of Father's Day in 2010, you were actually two years too late.

You see, the year Spokane was observing its first Father's Day, almost 2,000 miles away in Fairmont, W.Va., another Methodist church was on its third.

On July 5, 1908, a Father's Day sermon was preached at Williams Memorial Methodist Episcopal Church, South, thanks to the efforts of Grace Golden Clayton.

In December 1907, a terrible mine explosion in nearby Monongah claimed the lives of more than 360 men. Most of them had families, and the tragedy left 1,000 children fatherless.

Clayton was distraught by the thought of all those children growing up without a father's guidance, and wanted to do something to honor the importance of fatherhood. She asked her pastor to set aside a special day to commemorate fathers. She chose the Sunday closest to the birthday of her late father, also a Methodist preacher.

However, unlike the Spokane service, the Fairmont event drew little attention outside the area.

Fairmont historians concede that Sonora Dodd deserves credit for bringing the holiday to national prominence, but want it known that they did beat her to the idea.

"We don't claim popularizing the day, but we have proof we were the first to have a church service," said the Rev. D.D. Meighen, retired pastor of the Fairmont church, which is now also known as Central United Methodist. Seriously, what are the odds of that?

Meighen said two news-making events happened on July 4, 1908, that stole the thunder from their Father's Day service.

On that Saturday, Fairmont held its largest 4th of July celebration to date. A large crowd watched a "dare-devil" roll atop a ball to the top of the bank building on a spiral stairway. It made all the news. People talked about it for days.

Then, tragically, a beloved young woman in the church died of typhoid fever. Church members were shocked when they arrived at the Sunday service to hear of her death. Her funeral, which included 17 carriages lined up in front of the church, also made the headlines.

Coincidentally, the first Mother's Day was observed on May 10, 1908, at Andrews Methodist Church in Grafton, W.Va.

West Virginia Methodists clearly love their parents more than the rest of us.

So enjoy firing up that grill and napping in the hammock, dads everywhere. You've earned it, and the United Methodists have your back.

And when your kids give you yet another gruesomely ugly tie as a gift... well, we're pretty sure the Lutherans are behind that.





The side of the building at 307 W. Seventh St. The building, which has been vacant for years, will be the location of the new Lucie's Place home office.  
|| Photo by Caleb Hennington



# Lucie's Place finds new life in historic building

By Caleb Hennington  
*Digital Content Editor, @arumceditor*

In 2014, First United Methodist Church Little Rock purchased the property at 307 W. Seventh St. At the time, the building was severely dilapidated – the structure was abandoned for several years after its last tenant moved out – and in serious need of interior and exterior renovation.

Over the years, the building – built in 1908 – has hosted a variety of colorful businesses and organizations, including a flower shop, a shoe repair store, a thrift shop, Easy Street Piano Bar, and most recently, Miss Kitty's Saloon, a local gay bar that frequently hosted drag shows.

But when First UMC decided to buy the building, and the adjoining gas station at the corner of 7th and Center Streets, its aspirations were simple; purchase the property now and figure out how to use it for ministry later.

“At first, we thought we could tear the building down and add more parking for the church or build a parking deck with office space on top, but none of those plans really gained any traction,” said the Rev. David Freeman, senior pastor of First UMC Little Rock.

“There were also some people at the time that were very adamant that we not tear it down. They believed the building had a lot of architectural integrity to the area. Seventh Street is known for its architectural variance, and if you just drive down Seventh, you'll see every type of building. So, we decided to leave it for the time being.”

The problems with the building, however, weren't just physical degradation; it was also suffering from more severe issues — namely, an asbestos problem in the roof.

“The roof leaked like a screen door, too. Water would just pour into the building when it rained.”

Freeman knew that if they were going to fix the building to where it could be usable again, it was going to cost some serious money.





An old photo, taken somewhere between 1915 - 1925, shows 307 W. Seventh St. not long after it was constructed. The building is seen in the background, with the A.V. Rogoski Plumber sign on the side and front.

*|| Photo courtesy of the Butler Center for Arkansas Studies.*

Not only that, they would have to find an organization who was willing to move into the more than 100-year-old building; a difficult task when you're talking about a building that's nowhere near move-in ready.

## Looking for a Tenant

Freeman said they opened the door to many different organizations who showed interest in buying the property at Seventh Street, but none of them felt quite right.

In the meantime, FUMC received an Environmental Protection Agency Brownfields grant from Pulaski County to remove the asbestos roof on the building. According to the EPA.gov website, "a brownfield is a property, the expansion, redevelopment, or reuse of which may be complicated by the presence or potential presence of a hazardous substance, pollutant, or contaminant."

Now that the environmental hazards were corrected, the property had far more value to a potential tenant.

Freeman said around the same time they were working on fixing the roof, he received a call from the Rev. Johnette Fitzjohn, the new executive director of Lucie's Place, a Little Rock-based homeless shelter for LGBTQ youth.

"She had been walking by the building at lunch one day and said 'We've been looking to expand our offices and this building has been a huge center point for the gay community. This building would be a great location for Lucie's Place.'"

Over the next several months, First UMC's Board of Trustees and Lucie's Place's Board worked out a deal where the church would renovate the outside of the building, and Lucie's Place would be responsible for fixing up the inside.

Lucie's Place would have a 10-year rent-free lease on the building to use as their new office space. After the initial 10-year lease, they would be offered a dramatically reduced rate to rent the building.

## Lucie's Place Gets a New Director

Fitzjohn, who took over as executive director of Lucie's Place after longtime director and founder Penelope Poppers left the position in 2018, found out about Lucie's Place by chance after viewing a listing for the non-profit on an online job board.

A native of Liberia, Fitzjohn is an ordained elder in the United Methodist Church and previously served in the Greater New Jersey Annual Conference. She left ministry in 2012 for personal reasons, but worked extensively with youth, especially youth

struggling with their identity, for more than 25 years.

Between leaving ministry and her job at Lucie's Place, she spent time coaching churches on leadership development as well as working with abused and homeless young mothers at an organization called Project Hospitality in Staten Island, New York.

When Fitzjohn heard about Lucie's Place and the work they were doing for homeless LGBTQ youth in Arkansas, she knew she had to be a part of it.

"I could not imagine my children being out on the streets because they were not accepted by my family or any child for that matter. When many of these young people come out, they do not have the support they need," Fitzjohn said.

That rejection leads to higher rates of suicide in LGBTQ youth, Fitzjohn said.

According to data from The Trevor Project, a national organization providing crisis intervention and suicide prevention services to LGBTQ young people, LGBTQ youth are almost five times as likely to have attempted suicide compared to heterosexual youth.

Fitzjohn said that she gets a lot of questions from people asking her how she can work with an organization like Lucie's Place when she is not a part of that community.

"I believe that, one, the greatest commandment is to love. And two, to accept people and to save lives. So if I can save just one life, that is what I believe in."

## A Coalition of Churches

In addition to the help that First UMC offered to Lucie's



Place, Freeman also managed to gather a coalition of Little Rock United Methodist Churches to apply for a grant from the United Methodist Foundation of Arkansas to help pay for the improvements to the interior of the building.

The coalition – made up of Asbury UMC, Pulaski Heights UMC, St. James UMC, and Trinity UMC – secured a grant of \$75,000 from the Foundation. The grant will cover almost half of the cost of the interior renovations for the building and will go directly to Lucie's Place.

The Rev. Carness Vaughan, senior pastor of St. James UMC in Little Rock, said that when he received a call from Freeman asking if he would help in this project, he didn't know much about Lucie's Place or the work that they did.

"But what I did know is that St. James has a real heart for the homeless in this city. We've been longtime partners with CanvasCommunity and have worked with the Under the Bridge Ministry.

"So, when David called ... and asked if we would be a part of this, it was kind of a no-brainer for us. It's the way we've been wired anyway."

Vaughan said what has made so much of an impact with this project is the Foundation's willingness to give back to the community.

"The grants that they have been able to give out have been so impressive. It's a real blessing."

Fitzjohn said the total cost of the project is close to \$200,000, so the grant from the Foundation has been a huge relief for them.

"It makes me feel like the church that I'm a part of still has good people in it who would like to partner with us to save lives," Fitzjohn said.

## Making an Old Building Shine Like New

Right now, Lucie's Place's offices are located on the seventh floor of a corporate building on Spring Street and are shared with several other businesses. The goal of having the new office space on Seventh is to have a place that feels safe and welcoming to anyone that steps through the front doors.

"The new space will be our offices," Fitzjohn said. "We are in a very small space right now, and we sometimes see anywhere from 10 – 15 people daily at our drop-in center."

In addition to the offices, the new space will also have room for a conference area, counseling rooms, a larger drop-in center that will serve as a welcome area and entertainment space, and other more private spaces for youth to meet with Lucie's Place employees.

They will also have showers and a grooming area. Fitzjohn said this is necessary because they have many youths who don't stay at the Lucie's Place residence but still need a place to freshen up and do their laundry.

Fitzjohn said since the area is so much bigger than their current space, there will also be room for a large event area, where other LGBTQIA groups across Arkansas can come to Lucie's Place and hold gatherings or meetings.

"We want Lucie's Place to be a center point, a meeting place for everybody."

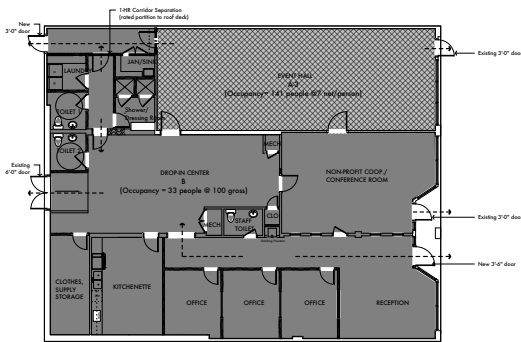
Ellen Yeary, a member of First UMC Little Rock and founder of Yeary Lindsey Architects, has been a crucial piece of



More interior shots show progress on the restoration of the building. Bottom: the front entrance of the building -- facing the street -- is where the new reception area will be located. || Photo provided by Lucie's Place



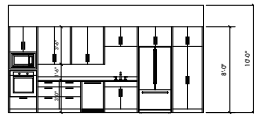
BUILDING INFORMATION	
Project Name	Lucie's Place Renovation
Project Description	A New Interior Renovation of an Existing Building
Project Size (Gross Square Feet)	4,264 Gross Square Feet
Occupancy Type - Section 403	Mixed Occupancy / Non-Separated
Construction Type - Section 402 - 407	Type III
CODE SUMMARY	
2015 International Building Code	2015 Arkansas Fire Protection Code
Total Area	Mixed Occupancy / Non-Separated (A.2, B)
Allowable Floor Area - Table 503	4,072 Net Square Feet
Allowable Area Increases:	9,500 Square Feet
Horizontal Separation:	IBC 503.2.2, No separation Required
Means of Egress - Chapter 10	N/A
Minimum Occupant Load - Table 1004.1.1	A-2 - 100 SF @ 7' per person = 141 people B - 5,000 SF @ 100 gross = 51 people Total Occupant Load = 172 people
Egress Width - Table 1011.2	44 inches min.
Exit Access Corridor Rating - Table 1018.1	1-100 (4470) (unimpeded)
Door Rating:	20 min. (4470) (unimpeded)
Exit Access Travel Distance:	A - 9 - 200' (Dead End) - 100'
Exit Required - Section 1019.1:	A - 1-2 exits B - 1-2 exits
Fire Protection - Table 601	
Structural Frame	0-100 Rating
Exterior Bearing Walls	0-100 Rating
Interior Bearing Walls	0-100 Rating
Exterior Non-Bearing Walls	0-100 Rating
Interior Non-Bearing Walls	0-100 Rating
Floor / Ceiling	0-100 Rating



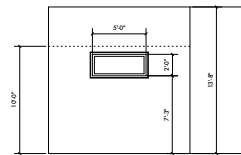
CODE PLAN  
 SCALE: 1/8" = 1'-0"

Occupancy Key  
 A3 (Assembly)  
 B (Business)

MAIN FLOOR PLAN  
 SCALE: 1/4" = 1'-0"



KITCHEN ELEVATION  
 SCALE: 1/4" = 1'-0"



RECEPTION ELEVATION - looking south  
 SCALE: 1/4" = 1'-0"

Scope of Drawing:  
 These drawings represent architectural design intent only. The general contractor is responsible for all methods and means of construction and for compliance with all codes and regulations applicable to this project.

Lucie's Place  
 307 W. 7th Street  
 Little Rock, AR

Floor Plan 4/17/19 A-1

Yeary Lindsey Architects  
 2415 W. 20th Street Little Rock, AR 72202  
 501-225-0885 Fax: 501-225-0728  
 www.ylarchitects.com

the puzzle for getting the Seventh Street building ready for use again.

"As a member of the church's Board of Trustees, I was one of the ones really adamant about not tearing that building down," Yeary said.

"I looked at this building with so much history and thought, 'oh no, not another potentially wonderful place being torn down to park on.'"

As the Project Architect for the Seventh Street renovation, Yeary is responsible for drawing up the plans for the new space.

For the Seventh Street building, Yeary said the original layout of the building was divided up into three long, skinny areas. They opted to keep those spaces in place but needed to demolish other areas, such as a large stage that was left over from when concerts and shows were hosted in the building.

The front of the building will be used as a reception and home office area and will be opened up with large glass windows, making it warmer and welcoming for anyone who walks through the doors. The front will also have the conference center in the middle of the building as well as a large event hall on the building's west side.

The drop-in center, the heart of Lucie's Place, will be located at the rear of the building, making it easy for kids to come by after school, and read, do homework, or relax in a safe space.

If all goes according to plan, Fitzjohn said they will be moving into their new offices sometime in early fall 2019.

## Why This Work Matters

For Vaughan, Isaiah 58 is a critical verse in the Bible that he often goes back to when thinking about the church's mission of caring for others who have been left to fend for themselves.

"God wants for us to care for those who are most vulnerable. Anytime you have a group of people who are willing to say 'We love you, no matter who you are,' then that to me is an important ministry. It fulfills the call of the Gospel to care for those who are in need.

"The Bible is crystal clear that every person is made in the image of God. Our Discipline is clear that every person is of sacred worth, and so this is a ministry that honors the value of these people."

Yeary said the simple need to help others is what brought to this project. She hopes that the new Lucie's Place office will be available for many years to take care of any homeless youth that walks through their doors.

"These people need this building, and this building needs these people," Yeary said.





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FOR MORE INFORMATION!





Left to right: Betty Hix, Michael McLean, Tommy McLean, Rachel Ewing, Caring & Sharing Team Chairperson Nikki Parker, Debby Scoggin, Nancy Smith, Joan Bishop and Rev. Mike Smith. || Photo by Nancy Kossler Smith

# Breaking Barriers in the Community

## Booneville UMC reaches people where they are

By Sam Pierce

Featured Contributor, [@sjamespierce](#)

When the outreach ministry for Booneville First United Methodist Church first began, one lady showed up during one of the most challenging times in her life.

“She came when we were having the meal on the church,” Mike Smith, the pastor at Booneville FUMC said. “She was walking by because she didn’t have any transportation, and she engaged with us in conversation easily and she started coming to our church.

“As our relationship with her deepened, that’s when we began to discover more about her and her complicated background. We came into her life at a crucial point.”

Smith said the ladies of the church just surrounded her.

“We have helped her financially, got her set up a residential center in Rogers and got her counseling,” Smith said. “She actually told us, she would not be alive if not for this ministry because she considered taking her life.

“This ministry allows us to break through that barrier and it is an opportunity for us to contact people and give them an encouraging word that we would not have had otherwise.”

The Sharing and Caring Ministry, as it has become known, involves members of the church taking meals to certain housing areas, setting up tables, and engaging in conversations with residents of apartment complexes. Nikki Parker, a member at Booneville FUMC, is one of the lead organizers.

“If we only reach one person, that’s one more than we had,” Parker said. “I think anytime, whether it is on the church grounds, or at the apartment complex, or other areas of towns, where we can reach people, especially the kids — because we know they are the future — it is pretty special.

“When things are close to my heart, this is what happens.”

The ministry started with a hot dog type lunch at the church on the lawn, and it had some success. Smith said the church is located at the intersection of the two main highways that run through Booneville, so it was a good location, and they had some activity there. He said it allowed them to engage in conversation outside of the church, just with people walking or driving by.

Smith said they eventually moved out to an apartment complex that “has a lot of children and working families.”

“We knew one of the managers at one of those complexes, so we discussed coming and offering lunch,” Smith said. “We would park our church van near one of their pavilions and serve hot dogs, chips, cookies and drinks.

“It was just a great opportunity to engage in conversation, by talking to the adults there and hopefully encourage them to visit the church because of our ministry.

“Our main objective was to get out to the community and let people know that we care.”

“Our church has always had the reputation of being an open and friendly church, with a very strong prayer ministry that reaches to people outside of our church, when we know about them,” Parker said. “I just felt like we needed to get outside the church and we felt like this was a way to give back and get out



into the community.

“We never did it with the anticipation that it would cause people to come to church. That was never the goal. Our goal was just to get out into the community.”

The ministry has now moved from the apartments to a local neighborhood. Smith said one afternoon, they parked the van, and visited with people who were out in their yards. He said they had some great success with that, as people would come and engage in conversation and hang around the van.

“We would talk and pray with some people, and it just became a real time for us to touch base,” Smith said. “We have eight to 10 people that are currently involved that are going out and more than that helping us prepare, or give money to help buy the food.

“We don’t budget the ministry; it is self-sustained. It allows our whole church to be involved.”

Parker said she has several school teachers that are involved in the ministry and a juvenile probation officer that has seen the results of kids not having the support that they needed from their community or family and went down bad paths.

“All these ladies are a big part of our ministry because they want to help,” Parker said. “Our church is very supportive of any ministry that we try to do. Some can’t go out with us, but they can help us at the church as we prepare food, or support us financially.

“I think that’s because they believe in what we are doing. It gives the church body several avenues to support this ministry.”

Parker said they are currently gearing up to start the ministry again, after taking a break this winter. She said they are trying to determine if other areas need to be targeted because they don’t want to be tied at one place all the time.

“There is a possibility for us to do more than we are doing now,” Parker said. “We may need to get a second place and alternate trips.

“I don’t know if we could get a second group together, but our church has always been so supportive, and we have had lots of people that come and help.”

She said they have good fellowship bagging up cookies and putting the drinks on ice.

“That was a good opening to get the kids, and that was the primary target,” Parker said. “But now we are seeing a lot of adults join us as well, so we just keep on trying.”

Smith said they are hoping to expand the ministry, which will include more nutritious meals such as sandwiches or a hot meal.

“We would fix it at the church, and put into carryout boxes and deliver them to the apartment complexes — something more sustainable,” Smith said. “When we first started, we really didn’t promote it a lot, but we are looking now to have a regular schedule every week.



Betty Hix, center, talks with residents of an apartment complex where Booneville UMC’s outreach ministry team meets. || Photo by Nancy Kossler Smith

“So when that day rolls around, people will know we are there. We are meeting within the next few weeks, to get back out there by the time school is out and take the ministry to the next level.”

Smith said one of the reasons they moved away from having it at the church is because people are more comfortable at their own turf.

“It is much easier to have a conversation, and it allowed us to reach more people in a much more relaxed environment,” Smith said. “We go back and see the same people, and we knew them by name and the issues they are having.

“We are taking the church out into the community.”

Smith said one of the main things he has seen through this ministry is “acceptance.”

“We see barriers being broken down,” he said. “Barriers that were put up because of expectations from people that are in the community.

“We had people, who started this, who were a little apprehensive and we saw those barriers being broken down. We are seeing God work and conversations happening.”

He said he had met a lot of people who said they never wanted to go church at Booneville FUMC, and now “they see God in a different way or see the church in a different way.”

“We have seen barriers on both sides of sharing the gospel being broken down in the community, and we see the church being a part of their life,” Smith said. 🌱



2020 General Conference and 2020 South Central Jurisdictional Conference delegates. Top row, left to right: Amy Forbus (laity), Pam Estes (clergy), Lauren DeLano (clergy). Middle row, left to right: Regina Norwood (laity), Natasha Murray (clergy), Rebekah Miles (clergy), Brandon Bates (laity), Hammett Evans (clergy), Katie Pearce (clergy). Bottom row, left to right: Karon Mann (laity), Mark Norman (clergy), Todd Burris (laity), Michael Roberts (clergy), Miller Wilbourn (laity), Lynn Kilbourne (clergy), Elizabeth Fink (laity), and Jessica Waddell Teegarden (clergy). Not pictured: Sarah Argue (laity), Asa Whitaker (laity), Brian Swain (laity).

# Arkansas elects 20 delegates to General, South Central Jurisdictional Conferences

By Caleb Hennington  
Digital Content Editor, [@arumceditor](#)

**T**he Arkansas Annual Conference elected 20 total delegates this year, eight to General Conference 2020, eight to South Central Jurisdictional Conference 2020, and two alternates.

These delegates will travel to General Conference, May 5 - 15, 2020 in Minneapolis, Minnesota and South Central Jurisdictional Conference, July 15 - 18, 2020 in The Woodlands, Texas.

The Arkansas Annual Conference delegates are:

## General Conference 2020

- Clergy: Mark Norman, Michael Roberts, Lynn Kilbourne, Jessica Teegarden.
- Laity: Karon Mann, Todd Burris, Miller Wilbourn, Elizabeth Fink.

## South Central Jurisdictional Conference 2020

- Clergy: Natasha Murray, Rebekah Miles, Hammett Evans, Katie Pearce.
- Laity: Regina Norwood, Sarah Argue, Brandon Bates, Brian Swain.

## Alternates

- Clergy: Pam Estes, Lauren DeLano

- Laity: Amy Forbus, Asa Whitaker

Jessica (Jessie) Waddell Teegarden, who is the first ordained deacon that the Arkansas Annual Conference has ever elected to send to General Conference, is delighted at the opportunity to serve the Arkansas Conference.

"I am overwhelmed with emotion with the opportunity to represent Arkansas at GC 2020 and grateful for the support of my colleagues in ministry. It is especially meaningful to represent young clergy women and the order of deacons," Teegarden said.

"I am grateful for those who have paved the way and supported the need for deacons' voices to be present at the table, especially Rev. Laverne Keahey and Rev. Lu Harding who have served on jurisdictional delegation and as alternates in the past. I pray that we will continue to 'make history' and continue to elect new, young, and diverse voices to the delegation."

Karon Mann, who was elected as a delegate to the 2016 and 2019 General Conferences, was also grateful for the opportunity to serve once again.

"It is an honor to be elected as a delegate to General Conference 2020 and to serve as the head of the delegation. I thank you for your confidence in me and promise to work diligently for the future of our United Methodist Church," Mann said.

"Arkansas delegations have a long history of camaraderie and Christian conferencing and this delegation will be no different. I thank the laity of the Arkansas Conference for this privilege!" 🌹



# Mission u Gears up for Four Days of Fellowship, Fun

By Caleb Hennington

Digital Content Editor, [@arumceditor](#)

**M**ission u is a chance for United Methodist women and girls throughout the state of Arkansas to come together and study important issues affecting society, and this year's Mission u will cover topics like radical discipleship, 150 years of United Methodist Women's ministry, and our relation to money within the context of faith.

The annual gathering will take place July 17 - 20 at the University of the Ozarks in Clarksville, Arkansas.

According to information provided by Mission u, the gathering is "an opportunity to study current issues impacting society based on recent mission study topics."

While Mission u is seen as a great opportunity for members of the United Methodist Women to gather and learn together, it is also open to non-members of UMW, as well as children and youth.

"Mission u is a time for like-minded people to gather together. It's a time to learn, and then leave renewed and hopefully go back home and pass along what you learned," said Beth Cobb, 2019 Arkansas Conference Mission u dean and the Northwest District president for the Arkansas Conference United Methodist Women.

This year's theme is "Radical Discipleship: Then and Now," and the classes offered during the four days will focus around this theme.

In "Practicing Resurrection: The Gospel of Mark and Radical Discipleship," participants will learn what it means to be a radical disciple using the Gospel of Mark as the foundation for the teaching. This class is based on author Janet Wolf's book of the same name.

"Women United for Change: 150 Years in Mission" is a study by Ellen Blue which will commemorate the 150-year

anniversary of United Methodist Women. United Methodist Women began with a group of eight women from Boston who organized the Women's Foreign Missionary Society in 1869 and raised enough money to send two teachers to India as missionaries to serve the women living there.

There will also be classes on faithful use of money in "What About our Money? A Faith Response," and two other classes on Mark geared toward youth, "Who do you say that I am? Meeting Jesus Through the Eyes of Mark," and "MARKED: A Mission Journey with Jesus in the Gospel of Mark."

"We have classes for everyone, from pre-k through adults, but our focus right now is really trying to get the younger ones involved in Mission u," Cobb said.

One of the ways that Mission u is trying to attract the younger crowd is through hands-on projects that get young adults out into the mission field.

"Instead of having them sit in another classroom and listen to a lesson, we're going to have them go out into Clarksville and help in some of the United Methodist mission projects in the city.

"That's one of the ways this year will be different than last year; they'll do one mission study the same as everyone else, but instead of doing a second mission study, we're going to get them out and involved in helping the community."

"With Mission u, we really want to remind people of all the good that United Methodist Women do, not only in the United States but worldwide, as well," Cobb said. "Lately, we've been hearing a lot of negative things about the United Methodist Church and UMW, so this is a time to reinforce the good that we do and remind people that no matter what happens, the work of United Methodist Women will continue."

To register online for Mission u, visit their website at [www.armissionu.weebly.com](http://www.armissionu.weebly.com). The registration deadline is July 1. For more information, visit their Facebook Page or contact [armissionu@gmail.com](mailto:armissionu@gmail.com). 🌸





# Tom Trenney to lead Hymn Festival, Summer Workshop

By Sam Pierce

Featured Contributor, [@sjamespierce](#)

**K**urt Kennedy and his daughter, Tish Davenport, first encountered Tom Trenney at the 2015 Dallas Church Music Workshop at Lovers Lane United Methodist Church in Dallas.

“My dad came up, and he and I attended together, it was really neat to do together,” Davenport said. “We walked out of that first session that we saw him in, and he is just truly special.”

“Most of it is concepts you may have heard before, but he brings an extra special level of depth.”

Davenport said they began to keep their eyes open and on Trenney’s schedule so when he came to Little Rock in 2017 at the Fellowship Biennial Convocation, they, of course, had to see him again.

“I came here for that, and we attended that together,” Davenport said. “He had a midday prayer that was just beautiful.”

“He actually travels all over the world, literally something every week,” Kennedy said. “He is a highly sought after person and very inspiring.”

“He is very eloquently spoken when he delivers a message.”

Kennedy is the director of music at First United Methodist Church in North Little Rock, and his daughter is the director of music at Searcy First United Methodist Church. Together, they are hosting a Summer Workshop and Hymn Festival from June 13 to June 15 at North Little Rock UMC.

“This is the first time I have ever done this workshop and my first attempt at one that is mostly directed toward musically inclined people,” Kennedy said. “We just felt like Tom Trenney is just so talented that we want to share him with the musicians of Arkansas.”

Kennedy said, during the day, there would be classes for church musicians to work on vocal technique, choral technique, and reading sessions to go through new music and some music of Trenney’s. Kennedy said after the workshops are over, there are rehearsals for anyone that wants to participate.

“We have designed the sessions to really appeal to a variety of people that work in the church,” Davenport said. “We have several sessions that lead church music, and there are sessions on Friday in particular that will work with the festival choir.”

“I just know from having experienced him that it will be an educational experience vocally. There will be some sessions that are designed for conducting sessions for a less experienced choir



conductor, or to work on our visual means of expressions because we all fall into habits.”

According to the website, [workshopandhymnfestivalwithtom.com](http://workshopandhymnfestivalwithtom.com), the event is a three-day workshop and Hymn Festival with Tom Trenney, pastoral musician, composer and teacher. “Sessions are both inspirational and practical in nature,” the website says. Participants are encouraged to invite friends and family to fill the audience for the free Hymn Festival at 7 p.m. on Friday.

“On Saturday, we will have a couple of sessions for church organists or accompanist and give them an opportunity to work with Tom on Hymn improv and also composition and ranging,” Davenport said. “The reading sessions are based on his music and some of his arrangements of familiar hymns and a few special numbers.”

For more information, visit the website, or call (501) 835-2201.

“So often we are thinking through the whole worship, so for us to have the opportunity to experience worship without having to lead, it is a spiritual refreshment and also further inspiration to take back to our churches,” Davenport said.

The cost for the three-day event is \$45, with individual day charges available. Kennedy said there is no cut off date, as people are allowed to walk in the day of the event.

“We believe it is a very reasonable price,” he said. “We aren’t trying to make money, because we understand people are coming in from out of town and have to spend a couple of nights in a hotel and buy their food and other expenses.

“We don’t want to burden them with a huge fee as well.”

Kennedy said he has gotten some response to the event, but not a lot of commitment.

“People are usually slow to respond, but hopefully they will just show up,” Kennedy said. “We will have two reading sessions, so I’m prepared for 100 people.”

Davenport said she has attended several workshops but has never tried to put one together. She said she is thankful for the opportunity to be able to do this with her dad.

“I’m kind of learning as I go,” she said. “It has really been fun, and I am really excited about it — I think we are going to have plenty of people involved.

“Because it is a really great mix of sessions and information. I believe the Hymn Festival, for those that experience it, will be touched and uplifted. I have no doubt.”

For the Hymn Festival, Trenney has created a program featuring hymns for congregational singing woven together with scripture collages and special selections sung by the Festival Choir, according to the website.

“He is very creative with his music,” Kennedy said. “I wouldn’t call it contemporary; I guess you would call it modern. He takes hymn tunes and reworks them with different harmonies and make them interesting for choirs and congregations.

“And of course, he has a lot of original works, too.”

Kennedy said anytime you make a hymn that people already know and make it new and exciting, with different harmonies in different sections, it makes it interesting.

“We wanted to do something for the general public, to educate them and entertain them at the same time; and promote church growth of course,” Kennedy said. 🌱

## Thursday, June 13, 2019

- 9:00 – 10:15 Session: And May God Give Us Faith to Sing Always: recommitting to the purpose and vocation of music ministry
- 10:15-10:30 Refreshment Break (Refreshments located at Welcome Desk in Great Hall)
- 10:30 – 11:45 Choral Reading Session: Compelling Music for Meaningful Worship
- 11:45 – 12:15 Midday Prayer Service
- 12:15 – 2:15 Lunch on your own (Enclosed in your packet is a list of nearby restaurants)
- 2:15 – 3:15 Session: Getting to Know the Score: strategies and possibilities for score study that prepare us for effective rehearsals and meaningful performances
- 3:15 – 3:30 Break
- 3:30 – 4:30 Session: A Beautiful Day in the Neighborhood: building our music ministry communities in the image of Mister Rogers’ neighborhood
- 4:30 – 6:30 Dinner on your own
- 6:30 Rehearsal of the Hymn Festival Choir

## Friday, June 14, 2019

- 9:00-9:30 Morning Worship Service
- 9:30 – 10:30 Then Sings My Soul: getting to the heart of the choir by freeing the voice of the choir
- 10:30 – 10:45 Break (Refreshments in Great Hall)
- 10:45 – 12:00 Session: Choral Masterclass: volunteer conductors lead us in familiar hymns and carols to help us all refresh on the fundamentals of expressive conducting
- 12:00 – 1:45 Lunch on your own
- 1:45 – 3:00 Choral Reading Session: the music of Tom Trenney
- 3:00 – 3:15 Break
- 3:15 – 4:30 Rehearsal of the Hymn Festival Choir
- 4:30 – 6:30 Dinner on your own
- 6:30 Warm-up for Hymn Festival Choir
- 7:00 Hymn Festival

## Saturday, June 15, 2019

- 8:30-9:45 Session: Abracadabra-- Discovering the Magic of Hymn Improvisation
- 9:45-10:30 Composition and Arranging: Question and Answer



Libby Tyson, left, of FUMC Hope and Elizabeth Cowart, right, of FBC Hope put on a skit and lead the starting and closing sessions of the ecumenical VBS.  
 || Photo provided by Melinda Shunk

# Hope UMC Holds Ecumenical VBS

By Melinda Shunk  
 Children's Ministry Coordinator

The definition of ecumenical is promoting or relating to unity among the world's Christian churches. Rose Gagon is doing precisely that at First United Methodist Church in Hope for the second summer in a row! In 2017, Rose met the new Baptist pastor of First Baptist Church of Hope at a community event. As she and Brother Daniel got to know each other, Rose mentioned how nice it would be if they could join together to hold their Vacation Bible School. Not in a way that they share supplies, but in the way of combining volunteers and VBS campers into one large VBS. Brother Daniel thought that would be a wonderful idea and suggested it to Sara O'Brien. Sara is the "full-time volunteer" for Children's ministry at First Baptist Church of Hope. She soon met with Rose, and they began planning for the 2018 Vacation Bible School.

During their planning meeting, many things had to be decided, but first, it was a commitment plan. They decided because this has never been done before they would need to have a two-year commitment to the Ecumenical VBS to work out the kinks and give everyone a chance to experience the positive results of change. It was a smart decision and kept the lines of communication very open between Rose and Sara, the now co-directors of Vacation Bible School. The next decision to be

made was where to hold VBS, but that was not difficult because the Children's wing at First Baptist Church of Hope was under renovation. So, it made perfect sense to hold the first Ecumenical VBS at First United Methodist Church for the first year with the 2019 VBS scheduled to be held at the First Baptist Church. They then had to compromise on the timing. First Baptist always did their VBS in the evening, and FUMC did theirs during the day for four days. They combined ideas and held VBS in the evening for four days and found that it was very beneficial for getting the whole family involved in programming because parents were home from work. The co-directors found that as they planned, their resources grew. They grew because they had more volunteers to place in just the right role. They also found when they ordered supplies, their money went further when they ordered in bulk. The extra money allowed them to purchase a VBS shirt for all the campers to enjoy for free!

The co-directors might be getting along just fine, but you may be asking how the campers and the volunteers experienced the same collaboration? The Holy Spirit was working that first Ecumenical VBS because no one was upset about going to VBS with their neighbors. It increased their attendance and ability to work together. The kitchen teams were asking their Baptist friends to work with them before the directors even got the phone call made. The youth group that serves as assistant crew leaders were excited to work with their friends from school. The VBS campers just knew they had enough kids to play a solid competitive game during the sports rotation. VBS campers had



no idea what volunteers were from which church because they all wore an Ecumenical VBS shirt made special for the week. Rose said that everyone had the mindset that God is a loving God. God brings us together, and that was and is the focus of 2018 and 2019 VBS.

The host church handles the online Google forms for registrations, but together they share publicity with both churches' names on everything that goes out. They post it on the Baptist digital screen, on each other's Facebook Pages, flyers that go to the school and into backpacks, and the directors even host a night at the community Farmer's Market to promote VBS sign-up and registration. VBS is free for all who want to take part. Last year, they had 104 kids and 60 volunteers. This year, they hope to increase outreach numbers by 30-40 kids!

Rose and Sara agree that a wonderful addition to ecumenical VBS is having two pastors take part in everything, even getting a balloon in the face during the last night of festivities. Their 2019 VBS is scheduled for June 24-27, and they will include a third church into the VBS program! A Place of Meeting is a non-denominational church that will be joining in the planning and preparation. Brother Nathaniel Crane, who leads A Place of Meeting, witnessed the success of last year and asked to join in ministry this year. So now everything, from food to decoration supplies, is being split three ways. They may even have to get the vans ready to bus some kiddos into VBS! After one year, the ecumenical idea from two churches has grown to three. God's love for us is big, but God's love has an even bigger impact on making disciples when we come together as one body of Christians!



Pastor Steve, right, of FUMC and Brother Daniel, left, of FBC work together for Bible story time. || Photo provided by Melinda Shunk



Members of FUMC and FBC work together during a craft rotation. Some are leaders for the station and some are shepherds. || Photo provided by Melinda Shunk



# Scenes From Local Pastor Licensing School



Top: Patrick Brown and the Rev. Nathan Kilbourne meeting at the mountainside chapel at Mount Eagle Christian Retreat Center.

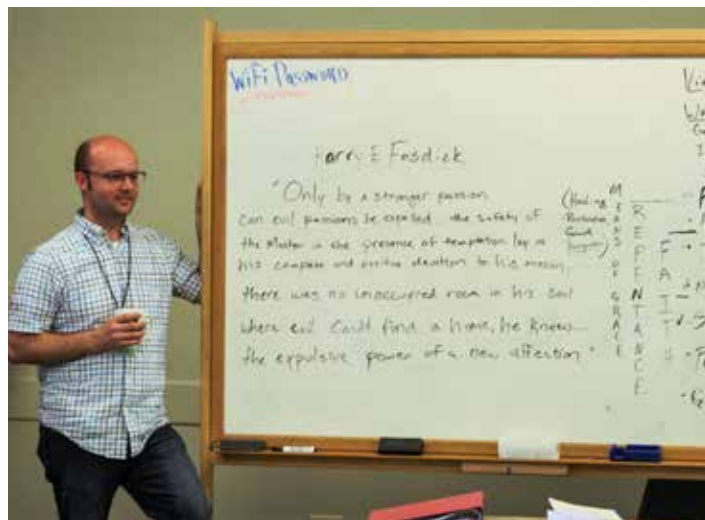
Right: Patrick Brown and Hardy Peacock in class at LPLS.  
|| Photos by Mike Meeks







The Rev. Maxine Allen and Cullianne Foster going over administration, policies and the Discipline.  
|| Photo by Mike Meeks



Top Left: The Rev. John Embry teaching pastoral care

Top Right: The Rev. Nathan Kilbourne teaching theology, history, and doctrine

Left: From left to right: Leon Jones, Hardy Peacock, Devon Arredondo, Laura Butkovic, Nick Schimmer, and Polly Burton in class.|| Photos by Mike Meeks

# Southwest District Council on Youth Ministries Spring Rally

The Southwest District Council on Youth Ministries held their spring rally this past March at First United Methodist Church in Texarkana. The rally is a time of worship, fellowship and leadership building for youth from around the Southwest District. Check out a few of the pictures from the rally below, taken by the ACCYM media task force.



Top: Outgoing and incoming youth council.

Left: Josh Holt and the youth worship band leading at the rally.  
|| Photos by ACCYM Media Taskforce





Top: Youth involved in a Q&A discussion at the SWDCYM Retreat.



Left: Youth engaged in worship during the retreat.

Bottom: District youth participating in group building activities.

*|| Photos by ACCYM Media Taskforce*





