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Global youth gathering begins with typhoon, ends with unity

BY AMY FORBUS
Editor

Four Arkansans attended the 2014 Global Young People's Convocation and Legislative Assembly (GYPCA), held July 16-20 in Tagaytay, Philippines. And so did a Category 3 typhoon named Glenda.

"Typhoon Glenda and I arrived in the Philippines at the same time," said Brooke Hobbs, a member of Mountainside UMC and president of the Southwest District Council on Youth Ministries for 2013-14. "The delegates, however, did not get lost in the chaos of the moment; we all found ways to bond with one another through fellowship and songs of praise."

They didn't let loss of electricity or damaged buildings keep them from serving, either. Instead, the more than 300 attendees took action: The United Methodist Committee on

[See YOUTH, page 4]



Brooke Hobbs, left, president of Arkansas' Southwest District Council on Youth Ministries and a member of Mountainside UMC, participates in UMCOR typhoon relief work. Typhoon Glenda, a Category 3 storm, arrived in the Philippines just as the Global Young People's Convocation Legislative Assembly was beginning. Attendees took time to help the United Methodist Committee on Relief prepare bags of meals for others displaced by the typhoon.

PHOTO BY JAY CLARK

Early morning fire destroys Hensley church building



The front wall of New Haven UMC's sanctuary was the only one left standing the morning of Sunday, July 20. At press time, investigators had yet to determine the cause of the fire that leveled this building and the adjoining fellowship hall.

AUM PHOTO BY AMY FORBUS

BY AMY FORBUS
Editor

HENSLEY, Ark.—Around 4 a.m. on July 20, Lindella Withers of Hensley awoke to the sound of a neighbor knocking on her door. Like most news delivered in the pre-dawn hours, his message wasn't a good one: The building belonging to New Haven United Methodist Church was on fire.

"I've been there 52 years, all my life. This is my childhood church," she said. "When we got there, the back fellowship hall was already engulfed in flames."

It didn't take long for Withers and her mother, Dorothy Smith, to reach the church's property, less than half a mile from their homes in Hensley, a small community on the southern edge of Pulaski County. But by the time they arrived, they knew there wasn't much that could be saved.

"We got up, we went up there, and it's—it's gone," said Smith, who

[See FIRE, page 4]

A poli-sci geek's reflections on the state of the UMC

BY SPENCER HALL
Special Contributor

I would like to start with a story about a woman running for county judge. Without money, sizeable staff or prior campaign experience, she began going door to door, eventually meeting a sizeable majority of her community in person. This process took months, and over time the visits resulted in volunteers who themselves went out, further spreading the word about her candidacy.

Come election time, sitting outside a precinct and expecting to find high levels of national office excitement, I was amazed to see



Spencer Hall

carloads of voters arrive to vote for her, often having to re-register party affiliation to do so. Somehow, one person had come from nowhere and outperformed all expectations.

The members of the Magazine Charge (Pioneer Memorial, Waveland, Magazine and Moore's Chapel UMCs) allowed me to be their voice and vote at this year's Annual Conference, for which I am deeply appreciative. My background is in political science, a passion that holds a great deal of influence on the way I view the world, as well as on my job as the Magazine Charge's single lay member of this body.

Arriving at Annual Conference only days into a mid-primary season break in election studies, and still in campaign study mode, I took to the Conference literature like a first semester student (I read it all, highlighter in hand and Wikipedia open). Upon blazing through the pre-Conference material, and in continued novice fashion, I quickly concluded that we were doomed as a church.

After all, what winning candidate had ever striven for one new vote (or, in the case of our Next Steps Trajectory, one new baptism, profession of faith or worship attendee)? Moreover, candidates do not try to look

like their community; they mobilize vote bases. And the big-tent strategy hadn't worked since FDR. Like any studious freshman, I was restless, knowing that I had to share my knowledge and save the church from its ill-fated campaign strategy.

I knew what we needed. We needed to bring in big data. We needed regression analytics on attendance figures. We needed to know how everything affected anything. In essence, we needed to stop running a church and start running a campaign, and it was these thoughts that flooded my mind the first day of Annual Conference.

Luckily, even in my haze, I knew that my pastor (who also happens to be my mom) is smarter than I am. Following her advice, I took the time to listen, to stifle my inner wonk (he's loud) and truly pay attention to what was going on at Conference. Yes, Adam Hamilton's message about our rate of decline terrified me, and bringing the tellers in for a vote did send my mind racing to the existence of cleavages in the church. (Was it demographic? Maybe age? Geographic? I definitely needed to get a survey out and find out what was driving opinion on issues.)

It was only several weeks after Annual Conference that it dawned on me what an amazing Church we

'...I took the time to listen, to stifle my inner wonk (he's loud) and truly pay attention to what was going on at Conference.'

have. The UMC battles malaria, feeds children, ministers to the sick and even takes time from global conferencing to do relief work. I can't describe the pride I have in our denomination for so many things. It turns out that we are not a political

candidate or party, and we are not just a church; we are United Methodists.

In my panic over our dropping membership rolls and closed churches, I had the energy to run through the streets begging people to come to church, to save the church from extinction. I know now that I was rash to so quickly despair at our prognosis. We need the exact calm that was advocated in our sessions, the clarity and passion that were delivered in the sermons and the joy that was shared in the retiree videos. We have a great platform, we have a great staff, and theoretically, Jesus Christ would be our candidate, so that checks out as solid as well.

All we need is the patience and diligence of that candidate for county judge, the poli-sci wonk equivalent to a mustard seed. That is all it takes to continue being the amazing denomination that we are for as many generations as can maintain such faithful persistence, pursuing lives of service and reaching out to one potential new Christian at a time. That, sisters and brothers, should give us all the hope and energy we need.

Hall is pursuing a master's degree in political science from the University of Arkansas at Fayetteville. He may be reached at sch011@uark.edu.



EDITOR'S CORNER

BY AMY FORBUS

Less screen time, more green time

I'm writing this column in the middle of deadline week, which is a necessary phase in every editor's job. In some ways, this deadline week is no different from the same week in any month of the year, though it's been particularly challenging the last couple of months. (To all those readers who shared condolences upon the death of my father: Thank you, and blessings to you all.)

This month, though, the challenge has a different origin: I shortened my production schedule to take a vacation with "less screen time, more green time." While I didn't completely abandon my smartphone, I did go a week without checking Facebook, and I touched a laptop only one day out of the seven. Discovering I had no cell phone service prompted feelings of freedom rather than concern.

My primary goal for the trip was to hike up Pikes Peak (elevation 14,110 feet). I'd spent the better part of two months hiking up and down Pinnacle Mountain any chance I could get—sometimes after running three miles or so beforehand. My adventure-seeking, fitness-focused husband encouraged me to test my limits and accomplish something big.

And he knows me well: He made a July 9 reservation for overnight bunks and board at Barr Camp, halfway up the trail. Proof that he understands 1) I work most effectively when I have a firm deadline, and 2) I will go to great lengths to sample unique cuisine. The promise of "Pikes Peak Protein-Packed Power Pancakes" prepared by the camp's caretakers sounded like an amazing breakfast opportunity.

On July 9, we shouldered our packs and began a two-day hike to the summit of the most accessible "fourteener" in the U.S. We encountered young and old, male and female, human and canine, hikers and runners. Some planned to summit that same day; others already had; and still others were waiting, like us, for the morning's lower odds of lightning strikes above the tree line. (And the higher odds of pancakes. Definitely the pancakes.)

We summited around noon on July 10, in tandem with another group of hikers we'd met at camp. The five of us celebrated by belting out a verse of "America the Beautiful," which Katharine Lee Bates wrote after taking in that same view. We saw some people using their phones to capture video of our performance... something I no longer had any desire to do.

Unplugging and focusing on nature—its beauty, its power, its challenges—didn't just result in more green time; it opened the way for more God time, as well. My phone may have multiple apps for Bible and devotional reading, but I've found that exploring Creation's beauty brings me into a deeper connection to our Creator than whatever appears on that little glowing rectangle.

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GROWING TOGETHER IN CHRIST: A word from the Bishop

BY GARY E. MUELLER

Living as a disciple

The emphasis is the same whether it's the United Methodist Church, the Arkansas Annual Conference or our "Next Steps" Trajectory—we're all about making disciples of Jesus Christ.

But exactly what does it mean to be a disciple of Jesus Christ?

Cambridge Dictionaries Online defines a *disciple* as "a person who believes in the ideas of a leader, especially a religious or political one, and tries to live according to those ideas."

But Jesus Christ is not merely a great religious leader. He is the Son of God, the Incarnation, Second Person of the Trinity, Savior and Lord. He is the One who gives you what you absolutely need, but can never get on your own: salvation, healing, wholeness, transformation and an eternal relationship with God.

This means being a disciple is not just something you do on your own, as if it's all about your best efforts. You become a disciple only through the grace Jesus offers, his invitation into a personal relationship, the call to follow him in ministry by living the life he shared and an offer to experience perfection in love so that it is the motivating factor in everything you do.

That's why I want to offer my own definition of a disciple. It's far from definitive, and certainly open to improvement, but I believe it begins to get at the divine dynamic that is present in living as a disciple of Jesus Christ:

A disciple accepts Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord, constantly matures in living the life Jesus shares, makes new disciples and gets involved in God's transformation of lives, communities and the world.

Being a disciple is the result of a relationship with Jesus Christ so personal and powerful it fundamentally changes your self-understanding, what matters most and how you live. It becomes your very identity. It's a day-to-day thing that touches everything you do and every decision you make. It's marked by compassion, humility and reaching out to share Jesus' grace.

Is it scary? Perhaps. Does it change you? Yes. Will it take a life-changing commitment? Absolutely.

But, then, that's the point, isn't it?

Grace and peace,

Gary E. Mueller

'Trail magic': reflections on a mission in Appalachia

BY BILL CATO
Special Contributor

I recently had the opportunity to be part of a unique mission trip: to serve hikers along the Appalachian Trail (AT) in Virginia and West Virginia.

We worked in conjunction with a group called Appalachian Trail Outreach Ministry (ATOM) led by the Rev. Alan Ashworth, a United Methodist pastor in the Holston Annual Conference; and his two congregations, New Hope and Pine Grove UMCs in Bastian, Va.



Bill Cato

The ministry reaches out to "thru-hikers," that is, individuals who are trying to complete the entire trail—a 2,100-mile journey that takes about six months.

My fellow Arkansan missionaries were Herrn Northcutt and Greg Floyd, both of Highland Valley United Methodist Church. Herrn and Greg have been involved with ATOM for about five years. This was my first trip, and from the minute I met my first hiker I was hooked.

Our primary job of the week-long mission trip was serving breakfasts and lunches to hikers. We

also handed out toothpaste and toothbrushes, mailed cards and letters for the hikers, provided transportation to stores in town and handed out New Testaments. Such activities are an AT tradition known as "trail magic." The real mission work, however, took place during our many conversations with hikers.

Stories shared

Naturally, we heard funny stories, like the hiker who got the trail name "Southbound" because he woke up one morning and started hiking the wrong direction. Then there was the young woman who was chased through a field by a cow, and the man with a pop-up tent that kept coming loose from his backpack. (When he turned around, his tent would be unfolded and all set up on the trail behind him.)

But if the hikers stayed around long enough for the humor and laughter to die down, the conversation would inevitably turn to more serious matters.

The AT stretches from Georgia to Maine—that's no Sunday afternoon stroll. Thru-hikers have a reason for being out there, and most of the time they are more than ready to talk about that reason. We listened as hikers talked about losing their jobs, trying to find themselves after retirement or looking for some direction for their future.

I remember one particularly interesting conversation with a young Jewish guy from New York City. His trail name was "Gandalf," and he hiked in his boxer shorts... seriously, he did. But he also possessed a deep spirituality. We talked for a good half-hour about our understandings of God, and how his connection with the world around him had grown during his time away from city life. He also had spent time in the Holy Land, and wanted to return there to do peacemaking work.

Healing on the AT

Herrn, Greg and I reminisced recently over some of our experiences. They recalled how we were very busy during the next-to-last day, with a lot of hikers coming through the pavilion for lunch. Greg struck up a conversation with a lady who was a youthful early 60s, hiking with another woman from Florida.

As we talked, she shared how she and her late husband were hikers through most of their marriage. After he died, she discontinued her hiking as she went through her grieving process. She later remarried to a retired UMC pastor and became a full-time caregiver for her parents. When both of her parents died last year, she decided to hike the AT as a way of helping her through her grief.

"We talked about many things," Herrn said, "but I remember most

her feeling that God was walking with her on the Trail and freeing her from her pain. I have read several stories about people getting on the Trail after the loss of someone close to them, but this is the first time I had the opportunity to hear firsthand about the healing powers of hiking the AT. This was God extending trail magic to me."

One of the ways I knew we touched a hiker's heart was when they would say that they were going to pass on the kindness to other hikers. We met two hikers from Germany who said they had watched videos about hiking the AT before coming to the U.S. They had heard stories about trail magic, but something about it did not quite translate for them. When they started their hike and actually got to experience some trail magic, they could not believe people actually do that kind of thing for hikers.

Astonished, they said, "You mean you came all the way from Arkansas to cook hamburgers for us?" "Yes, we did," I said. "We're United Methodists, and that's just the kind of thing we do to show people how much God loves them." They both commented that nobody really demonstrates that kind of hospitality to hikers in Germany, and began making plans to perform their own trail magic when they returned home. Those are the kinds of conversations that show how God's



From left, Yvanna and Andi of Germany and John from Massachusetts were three of the hikers Bill Cato met while engaging in mission on the Appalachian Trail. COURTESY PHOTO

love spreads through you and me.

Greg, Herrn, Alan and I talked a lot about stirring up interest and recruiting new people from Arkansas for the trip next year. The hikers are such an interesting group of people, and they literally walk right into your life. It's a prime opportunity to learn some profound lessons from them while sharing God's love in small but meaningful ways. I definitely plan to go again next year. I hope you'll consider coming along too, so that together we can experience some of God's trail magic along the AT.

The Rev. Cato is a provisional elder who serves as pastor of First UMC Fordyce. He may be reached at william.cato@arumc.org.

Youth

(continued from page 1)

Relief (UMCOR) offered a mission project for people affected by the storm. Delegates worked together to assemble food baskets, providing hundreds of Filipino families with enough food for five days. And with storm damage to their original gathering location, the group moved to another facility close to Manila and continued with legislative work and conversation.

The Arkansas attendees were Hobbs, a non-voting youth delegate with voice; Miller Wilbourn, voting youth delegate; the Rev. Jay Clark, non-voting adult worker delegate with voice; and Sarah Steele, representative of the Division on Ministries with Young People of the General Board of Discipleship.

The assembly is designed to give United Methodist young people a collective voice and a direct avenue for submission of supported proposals to the General Conference. Petitions approved at GYPCLA make their way to the 2016 General Conference in Portland, Ore.

One petition that did not receive approval came from voting delegate Miller Wilbourn, a member of Pulaski Heights UMC Little Rock and Arkansas Conference Council on Youth Ministries president for 2013-14. The petition proposed deleting the sentence in the *United Methodist Book of Discipline* that

declares the practice of homosexuality “incompatible with Christian teaching.” With all voting delegates participating, the vote came to a 54 to 54 tie. After some confusion about whether the tie could be broken, the results stood.

“People on all sides of the issue hold passionate positions,” Wilbourn said. “But in the moment of greatest contention, where many felt anger or unfairness, we were able to accept and respect the result.”

“The common theme to me for the GYPCLA was watching young people listen to each other in a way that really does not happen at General Conference,” said the Rev. Jay Clark, who served as a reserve delegate to General Conference 2012. “There are the same disagreements over many of the same issues, but young people want to discuss and learn from each other—not just win for their side.”

Clark commended Wilbourn for presenting legislation, as well as for listening to varied perspectives and working with delegates who disagreed with him. Wilbourn was among five delegates from around the world who held differing beliefs on the matter, yet brought to the floor a statement on unity the last night of the gathering.

“It passed overwhelmingly, which I think many of us saw as a hopeful sign for the future of our church as we continue to struggle with this issue,” Wilbourn said. “We hope that the rest of the United Methodist

community will thoughtfully consider this plea for unity, especially because it comes from this group representing the youth who will inherit the United Methodist Church.”

“The bringing together of those voices to present the statement on unity was very powerful and reminded all of us about who the global church should act like and look like,” Clark said. “I hope many of these young people will be considered by their conferences as delegates for General Conference, as their voices need to be heard as we move forward.”

Hobbs found attending worship at Manila’s Kamuning UMC was a highlight of her experience. “Being at this service proved just how connectional the United Methodist Church is,” she said.

She also toured a fishing village and saw how residents had been affected by the typhoon. “The people of the village said it will take approximately one month to recover from Typhoon Glenda. With an average of 26 typhoons a year, however, it might not be long before they are devastated by another storm,” she said. “I urge all who can to donate to this in some way—through UMCOR or any disaster relief organization.”

This report includes information provided by the UM General Board of Discipleship (www.gbod.org). For more information on GYPCLA, including videos from the event, visit www.globalyoungpeople.org.



Arkansas Conference participants in the Global Young People’s Convocation included, from left: Miller Wilbourn, voting youth delegate; Sarah Steele, representative of the Division on Ministries with Young People of the General Board of Discipleship; Brooke Hobbs, non-voting youth delegate with voice; and the Rev. Jay Clark, non-voting adult worker delegate with voice.

COURTESY PHOTO

Statement of Unity from the United Methodist Global Young People’s Convocation and Legislative Assembly held in Manila, Philippines:

“There has been increasing talk of schism of the United Methodist Church in recent months. Many say that the issue of homosexuality is so contentious that it will inevitably split our Church. We, as the young people of The United Methodist Church, would like to say that we do not desire a divided Church.

“The Church that we have taken our places in is called to a ministry that includes so much more than this one issue. There are genuine, passionate perspectives on all sides of the issue and though we disagree, we have committed ourselves to loving, faithful discussion on this subject. Part of the beauty of our Church is that there has always been room at the table for a wide range of theological diversity within our connectional church family. As Wesley said, ‘May we not be of one heart, though we are not of one opinion?’

“We urge everyone to seek solutions that promote our global unity as the United Methodist Church of Jesus Christ, rather than focus only on the issues that divide us, so that we may faithfully live out our mission of making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.”

Fire

(continued from page 1)

serves as the church’s treasurer, her voice lowering to a whisper as she named the reality of the building’s destruction.

“Ever since I was 15 years old, I’ve been right there in that church.”

As of press time, officials hadn’t yet ruled on where or how the blaze started. But regardless of the cause, the African-American congregation with an average worship attendance between 20 and 25 persons will move forward.

The members gathered at Hensley City Park at 5 p.m. the afternoon of the fire, and agreed to hold weekly worship there for the short term. The Rev. Norma Gillerson, the church’s pastor, says that they have begun talks with the owner of a nearby vacant church building about making that facility their longer-term temporary home.

Gillerson said that the

congregation has heard from many churches and individuals since the fire.

“The whole Conference has been so helpful and supportive and prayerful, and I just don’t know how to say thank you enough,” she said. “It just goes to show that the United Methodist Church is there for us. I don’t know how to explain it—they take care of even the least of these.”

She added that a number of churches have made offers of lecterns, chairs and other furnishings whenever New Haven UMC is ready to receive them.

The plan is for the congregation Gillerson describes as “a very small church with a big heart” to rebuild on the same site.

“We are the largest church in the community, so we are a community church,” she said. “We are a voting precinct also. And whenever there’s a huge funeral or a large wedding, a community meeting—we are just open to the community.”

It’s obvious that the people of New Haven UMC are accustomed to

being good neighbors, and they plan to continue that pattern, even as

they work through the challenge of having lost their physical home.



The church’s sign stands intact in front of the still-smoldering rubble of the fellowship hall.

AUM PHOTO BY AMY FORBUS

VOLUNTEERS IN MISSION AND DISASTER RESPONSE UPDATES

For information on any Volunteers In Mission (VIM) project below, contact the individual listed or Byron Mann, Conference VIM coordinator: vim@arumc.org or 870-826-0268. For Disaster Response (DR) projects, contact Byron or Janice Mann, DR co-coordinators: disaster@arumc.org or 870-703-8359 (Janice). To connect on Facebook, search for "Volunteers in Mission & Disaster Response - Serving Arkansas & Beyond," and join the group for updates.

Central Arkansas disaster relief and recovery continues

The relief phase for the April 27 tornado has gone extremely well, according to Janice Mann, who with her husband, Byron, serves as an Arkansas Conference disaster response co-coordinator. She reports that a few relief phase work orders remain on the to-do list.

"Working with other relief agencies and case management, we continue to meet unmet needs as they are identified," she said. "We have teams scheduled through Aug. 13."

Greg Forrester of the United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR) spent two days in Arkansas to survey the damage and offer UMCOR's support. UMCOR already has provided an Emergency Grant, and the Conference is awaiting word from them regarding a Recovery Grant.

Organizing for recovery

The affected communities are getting organized for the long-term recovery phase.

"The Vilonia committee that formed after the 2011 tornado has begun meeting again on a regular basis to assess long-term needs for repair and rebuilding," Mann said. "Their efforts will be focused within the Vilonia School District, but they will offer assistance to anyone who presents with unmet needs."

In addition, a Mayflower committee is forming, with subcommittees already meeting and planning for the long term. This committee will cover the rest of Faulkner County, and will reach out to the other affected areas to determine unmet needs there. Two United Methodist clergy are involved in this committee's leadership: the Rev. Rick Wilkins of Mayflower UMC serves as chair, and the Rev. David Baker of Wesley UMC Conway serves as an officer on the executive committee. In addition, Sheri Mathews, spiritual and emotional care team supervisor for Arkansas Conference Disaster Response, will chair the spiritual care subcommittee.

Janice and Byron Mann have spent the bulk of their time on the ground in affected areas since the tornado hit. They have committed to continue for the long haul; Janice will serve as long-term recovery coordinator, and Byron will serve on the construction subcommittee.

The long-term recovery groups invited Church World Service to present its Recovery Tools and Training Workshop in Arkansas to aid in the recovery process. It was held at and hosted by First UMC Conway, in coordination with Arkansas Conference Disaster Response Ministries. UMCOR was here to present at this workshop and remained to do a two-day comprehensive disaster case management training for all who are serving as case managers for the recovery effort.

Sign up to help

Teams wishing to offer assistance in the recovery efforts should continue to register via the conference website at www.arumc.org/arkansas_disaster_response (click on the "Volunteer Form" tab). Teams should be able to offer skills needed for major repair and rebuilding projects, and should have a designated team leader that has had VIM Team Leader Training or has the equivalent experience leading teams. Teams larger than 15 members should be willing to divide into multiple teams and have an additional appropriate number of trained or experienced team leaders for those multiple teams. All team members must have medical insurance coverage. Additional trip insurance is available if desired. Contact Byron Mann at vim@arumc.org concerning trip insurance.

NOMADS will arrive early October to aid in the recovery efforts. They will park at RV sites at Wesley UMC Conway. There are four existing sites with electrical hook-up. Conference Disaster Response has provided funds for two additional sites, and electrical hook-up and sewer hook-up for all six sites.

Please prayerfully consider contributing to the recovery efforts by continuing to pray for those affected and those working to help, by volunteering with a team or by donating funds for building materials and other needs. The latest, and likely final, numbers provided by the Arkansas Department of Emergency Management (ADEM) and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) indicate that there are 825 homes affected.

East Arkansas flooding

The Manns have been in contact with the Rev. Mike Smith of Brinkley UMC concerning damage from the recent flooding in that area. He has requested, and Arkansas Rice Depot has

delivered, 40 Cleaning Buckets to be staged and distributed there. ADEM has identified 151 homes affected across four counties.

"Pastor Mike is in close contact with the mayor and the local fire departments and watching the situation closely," Janice Mann said. "He will let us know if outside assistance is needed, and we have put ERTs [Early Response Teams] on standby."

Other training and mission news

Recent training event in Searcy certifies 22 persons

Thanks to First UMC Searcy and St. Paul UMC Searcy for co-hosting Early Response Team (ERT) Training on July 19. Twenty-two persons attended the session and received or renewed their Early Response Team certification.

ERT training Aug. 30 at Prescott UMC

The next Early Response Team (ERT) training session will be held Aug. 30 at First UMC Prescott, 125 W. 2nd Street North in Prescott. Contact Janice Mann or Prescott UMC for more information or to register.

Much more than 'cleanup': Disaster Response Academy Sept. 7-11

The UMC South Central Jurisdiction's 2014 Disaster Response Academy is set for Sept. 7-11 at Canyon Camp and Conference Center in Hinton, Okla. This academy offers workshops for everyone, from persons just getting interested in disaster response to the person who is the defined leader at the Conference level.

Annual conference and district disaster response coordinators should receive training at least once every four years, and the Academy provides an excellent opportunity.

The Academy offers a choice of 15 workshops targeted to different levels of experience with disaster response. Scheduling allows participants to select up to six of these workshops:

- Overview of UMCOR Programs
- UMCOR Basic Disaster Ministry ("Disaster 101")
- Connecting Neighbors Leadership Training Program (local church readiness training)
- Spiritual and Emotional Care: "Calming After the Storm"
- Volunteer Coordination: On-site Management for Early Response Teams (ERTs)
- ERT Team Leader
- ERT Site Assessment
- Cleaning Out Flooded Homes
- Managing Unsolicited Donated Goods - The Secondary Disaster
- Everyone's Role in Disaster
- Transitioning to Long-Term Recovery and UMCOR Grants
- Crisis Planning and Response: Communicating Under Pressure
- Communicating with Team Leaders
- Overview of Missouri Conference Disaster Response Coordinator Impact Ideas
- DRC & UMCOR Close-Out Meeting (Mandatory for DRC and UMCOR leaders)

To view all workshop descriptions, or to register, visit <http://goo.gl/l2sfbC>. The early bird discount registration deadline is Aug. 17; final registration date Sept. 3.

Questions? Contact Audrey Phelps, VIM and Disaster Response director for the South Central Jurisdiction, at vimphelps@gmail.com or 636-344-0389.

Mission journeys to UMCOR Sager Brown Depot in 2015

Conference Volunteers In Mission (VIM) coordinator Byron Mann, is setting up two different opportunities to travel to UMCOR's Sager Brown Depot in Baldwin, La., to help with both local mission work and preparing relief supplies to be distributed around the world. (Most of the items local churches collect annually as part of Ingathering are received by and distributed through Sager Brown Depot.)

Two scheduled journey dates for Sager Brown are available: March 23-27, 2015, and Oct. 15-23, 2015. To learn more or to register for either of these mission journeys, contact Byron Mann at vim@arumc.org.

Attention college students!

The United Methodist campus ministers in Arkansas want to meet you.

ASU: Sam Meadors, sam@astatewesley.org

ATU: Jonathon Bevil, jonathon.bevil@arumc.org

HSU/OBU: Jessica Durand, jessicadurand@hotmail.com

Hendrix College: Wayne Clark, clark@hendrix.edu

Philander Smith College: Ronnie Miller-Yow, pastoryow@gmail.com

SAU: Mark Lasater, sau_wesley@hotmail.com

U of A Fayetteville: Emily Burch, eburch@centraltolife.com

UALR: Jana Green, jana.green@arumc.org

UAM: Kavan Dodson, edwardkavanaugh@hotmail.com

UAPB: Hank Wilkins IV, senatorrevhank@aol.com

UCA: Blake Langston, blake.langston@arumc.org

Please send the following information by Aug. 5 to roy.smith@arumc.org:

Name; school you are attending; email address; mobile phone number (optional); Twitter handle (optional)

Let us know you are coming, and we will be in contact with you. We hope you have a great college experience!



Wesley Foundation directors and college chaplains gathered July 14-15 at Mount Eagle Retreat Center to implement long range plans for vital campus ministries in Arkansas to reach the mission field of college students. Five of the Arkansas Conference's nine Wesley Foundation directors are newly appointed—the Revs. Jonathon Bevil (Arkansas Tech University), Blake Langston (University of Central Arkansas) and Jana Green (University of Arkansas at Little Rock), top row; and the Revs. Emily Burch (University of Arkansas at Fayetteville) and Sam Meadors (Arkansas State University), center. Also pictured are the Revs. Wayne Clark and J.J. Whitney, Hendrix College; and Roy Smith, First UMC Russellville and chair of the Arkansas Board of Higher Education and Ministry.



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ASU Wesley sponsors Delta Pride summer camp

“Forgiven Hearts” was the theme of this year’s Delta Pride summer camp, hosted July 9-12 by the Arkansas State University Wesley Foundation. More than 65 youth and young adults representing 15 different congregations from across the United Methodist connection gathered on the A-State campus for worship, Bible studies, workshops and fun.

Campers had the opportunity to participate in a number of different workshops ranging from photojournalism to outside games, cooking to crafts. College student counselors prepared the activities and led campers in their daily devotionals and worship times.

The highlight of camp was the creation of a new prayer garden located behind the Wesley Foundation that will serve as a meditation space for A-State students and staff for many years to come. Campers and counselors spent numerous hours in the July heat clearing space for the new garden, as well as building a wall from reclaimed pallet wood and installing a privacy fence. First UMC West Memphis donated a pew for the garden from their Rosewood campus, which was sanded and refinished by the campers in the handiwork and missions workshops. The Rev. Chris Hemund of Cornerstone UMC Jonesboro led campers in planting “seeds of forgiveness” to officially open the space.

Delta Pride leaders pray that the seeds planted during camp will be nurtured and thrive as students return to their home congregations.

—submitted by the Rev. Sam Meadors

TOP RIGHT: Campers at the ASU Wesley Foundation’s Delta Pride camp work on refinishing a donated church pew as seating for the campus ministry’s new prayer garden. RIGHT: The completed prayer garden.

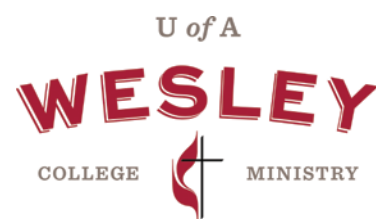
COURTESY PHOTOS



A return to roots means new beginnings for U of A Wesley

In 1924, Fayetteville’s Central Methodist Church started a college ministry on the campus of the University of Arkansas. In 1962, that ministry became the autonomous Wesley Foundation. On July 1, 2014, under the direction of Bishop Mueller and his Cabinet, the two ministries were reunited.

The campus ministry of Central UMC and the Wesley Foundation at the University of Arkansas have merged into one campus ministry, under the umbrella of Central’s ministries. The Memorandum of Understanding ratified at Annual Conference states, “This reorganization simplifies and combines what were previously two campus ministries operating parallel to one another, and it is proposed with the intent to strengthen campus ministry, engage the mission field



more forcefully, and make disciples of Jesus Christ more effectively. The purpose is to continue and expand the ministry of Jesus Christ to the campus of the University of Arkansas.”

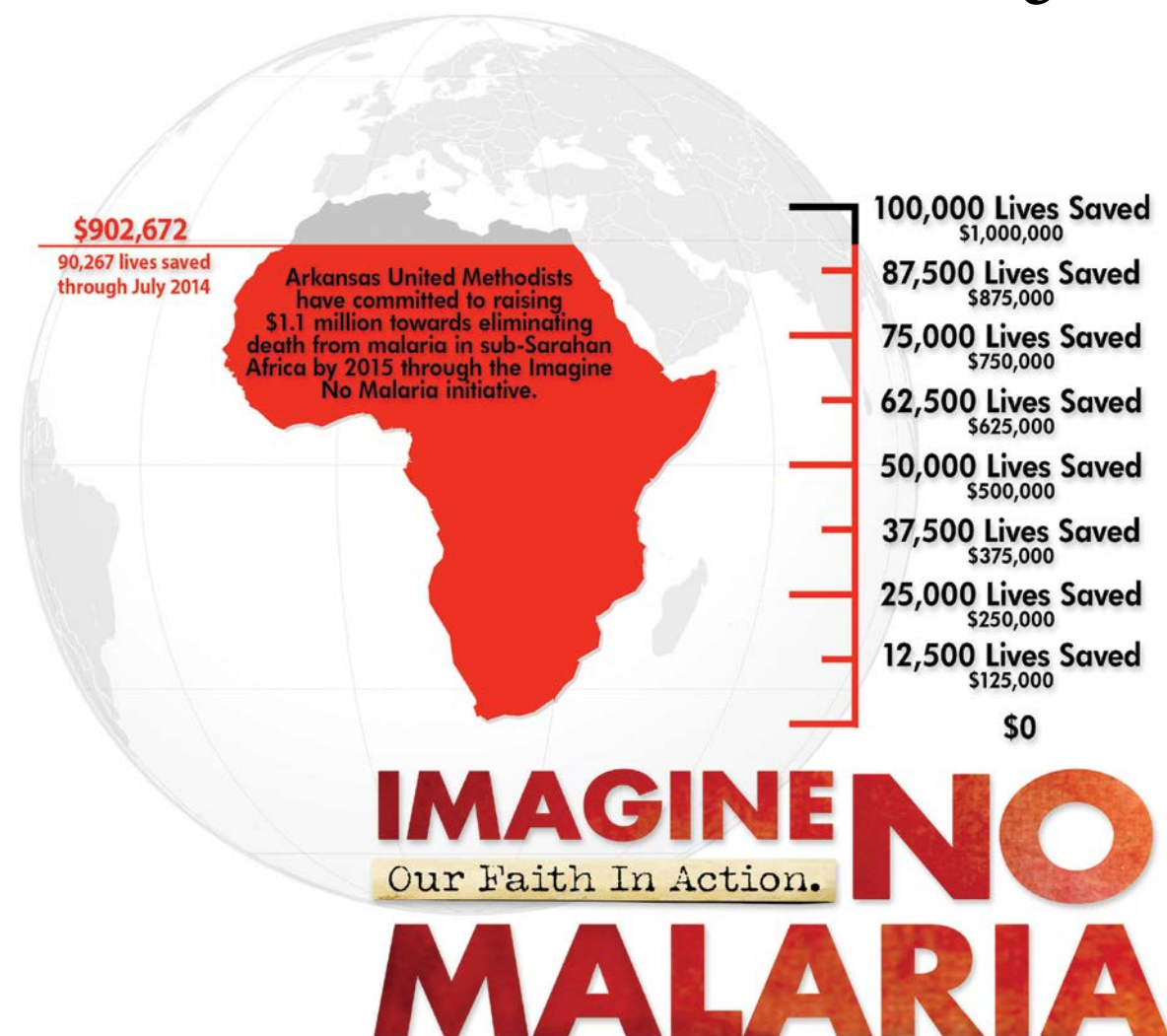
The Rev. Emily Burch has been appointed as the director of U of A Wesley, while retaining her appointment as college pastor at Central UMC. A native of Collierville, Tenn., Burch served the Wesley Foundations at Auburn University and Murray State University before moving to Fayetteville.

“We are eager to connect with incoming U of A students, as well as alumni, friends and former staff from U of A Wesley,” Burch says. “We hope our website will be a great way of making and renewing these connections across our Conference.” You can find U of A Wesley’s new website at www.uawesley.com.

If you or a student you know is interested in U of A Wesley, visit Wesley’s home page, scroll to the bottom, and click the “Let Us Know You’re Coming!” button. Also, find U of A Wesley on Facebook by searching “U of A Wesley”; on Twitter @UofAWesley; and Instagram @UofAWesley. For more information, contact Burch, eburch@centraltolife.com, or Wesley intern Elizabeth Hood, ehoo@centraltolife.com.

—submitted by Lincoln Combs,
 U of A Wesley student leader

Almost there: Arkansas UMs closing in on Imagine No Malaria goal



The Arkansas Conference goal of saving 100,000 lives from malaria by June 2015 is in sight. According to figures provided by Conference treasurer Todd Burris, total donations and pledges have reached \$902,672—an increase of \$12,000 since Annual Conference met in June.

“It is because of the commitment of local congregations and individual donors to saving lives that we are far ahead of our two-year benchmark figure of \$750,000,” said the Rev. David Freeman, chairperson of the Imagine No Malaria task force. “With continued support and emphasis on ending death and suffering by malaria, I have every confidence that we will celebrate meeting the \$1 million goal at Annual Conference 2015.”

To date, the denomination-wide Imagine No Malaria initiative has raised \$62 million of its \$75 million goal, reducing malaria deaths by 50 percent in sub-Saharan Africa. A new Imagine No Malaria website launched this summer at www.imagenomalaria.org and has made it even easier for churches and individuals to find resources or to donate. Local churches and individuals may also contact the Rev. Martha Taylor, mtaylor@arumc.org or 501-324-8035, for ideas and resources.

Conference youth choir completes six-stop summer tour



ABOVE: Tal Mims, Ryan Pendergrass, Alex Hendrickson and David Bultena provided instrumentation during the 2014 ACCYM choir tour.

RIGHT: Lindsay Dawson sings a solo during “Were You There When They Crucified My Lord.”

COURTESY PHOTOS



“Facing Giants” was the theme of this year’s Arkansas Conference Council on Youth Ministries choir tour, which traveled around the state June 23-29. Fifty-two youth from across Arkansas joined together to present a program that included a mix of sacred and secular music at six different tour stops: Sardis (Bauxite), Elm Springs, Pocahontas, Marianna, Sulphur Springs and St. James (Little Rock) UMCs.

Youth on the tour task force

included Kristin Shults and Alex Hendrickson, co-coordinators; Maggie Rogers, Mackenzie Turner and Bailey Balcom. Adults serving on the task force were Rosemarie Gagnon, Rod Hocott, Britney Andrews and Sara Tenison. In

addition, adults Jeff Turner and Brooke Crumpler provided assistance before and during the tour.

A video recording of the choir’s June 29 performance at St. James UMC Little Rock is available online at <http://goo.gl/wG9ICb>.

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Mount Sequoyah CEO on administrative leave

Retired bishops' investigation results pending

BY AMY FORBUS
Editor

The Northwest Arkansas Business Journal reported on July 7 that Abby Foster, the CEO of Mount Sequoyah Retreat and Conference Center in Fayetteville, is on paid administrative leave.

Mount Sequoyah's board of trustees requested that the three retired bishops on its executive committee conduct an investigation concerning allegations that prompted the administrative leave.

"These [allegations] have to do with personnel, so they cannot be public," said the Rev. David Severe, director of the South Central Jurisdiction, in a July 15 email message to the Arkansas United Methodist.

Severe did say that retired Bishops Charles Crutchfield, Ann Sherer-Simpson and Max Whitfield have completed their investigation and will present their findings and recommendations to the full board of trustees at a special called meeting, which was set for July 31, 2014. (This newspaper went to press July 24; check future issues of the



The Cross Overlook at Mount Sequoyah Conference and Retreat Center provides a sprawling view of the Fayetteville, Ark., area.

COURTESY PHOTO

Arkansas United Methodist or visit www.arumc.org for updates concerning this matter.)

"What is important is that the Mountain continues to function and provide the same radical hospitality for which it is noted," Severe said. "We have an excellent staff in place and all operations are continuing uninterrupted."

Though located within the boundaries of the Arkansas Conference, Mount Sequoyah is owned by the South Central Jurisdiction of the United Methodist Church (SCJ), which includes the annual conferences covering Arkansas, Kansas, Louisiana,

Missouri, Nebraska, New Mexico, Oklahoma and Texas. Its board of trustees, which is named every four years at the quadrennial conference of the SCJ—the same meeting at which new bishops are elected—includes laity and clergy from each of these conferences.

First opened in 1923, Mount Sequoyah currently covers 32 acres, and includes more than 40 buildings. Its cottages, lodges and historic halls can accommodate approximately 300 people. To learn more about Mount Sequoyah's lodging options, facilities, programs and availability, visit www.mountsequoyah.org.

PEOPLE OF FAITH

Aaron named to lead Arkansas Rice Depot

The Arkansas Rice Depot has named Kimberly A. Aaron as its new executive director. She began work with the organization May 19, 2014.

Aaron comes to the Arkansas Rice Depot from the North Texas Food Bank, where she served as executive vice president of policy, programs and research. An alumna of the University of Arkansas at Fayetteville, she earned a bachelor's degree in marketing and an MBA with concentration in finance. She went on to earn a Ph.D. in public affairs with an emphasis in nonprofit management from the University of Texas at Dallas in Richardson. She may be reached at kim@ricedepot.org.

Aaron succeeds Laura Rhea, who retired as the Rice Depot's executive director after 30 years of service.

The Arkansas Rice Depot was formed in 1982 to combat hunger in Arkansas. Their mission is to find sensible solutions to hunger in Arkansas. The organization distributes more than 9 million pounds of food each year, feeding as much as 15 percent of the state's population by working with partner agencies in all 75 counties.



Kim Aaron

Davenport becomes Shoal Creek Camp director

Laurie Davenport has been named director of Shoal Creek Camp, located in the Northwest District of the Arkansas Conference, off AR Highway 22.

Born and raised in the former Little Rock Conference, Davenport is no stranger to Methodism or camping. She participated in District and Conference youth activities, including at Conference camps. Her church and Girl Scout camping experiences, as a camper and then as a counselor, made such an impact on her that she graduated from Arkansas Tech University with a degree in parks and recreation administration.

Throughout her college years, Davenport spent time working with several established camps in Arkansas. She began her professional career with the Girl Scouts of the U.S.A. and United Methodist churches, serving as director of Christian education for two congregations. She has volunteered with Ozark Mission Project (OMP) and various age groups at Camp Tanako.

"It's summer, and many of us think of camping experiences past and present," she said. But the 'camping' experience can happen at other times of the year, too, and that's what I hope people will remember. Shoal Creek is great place for the novice, one-day camper experience, a weekend retreat or a gathering place for meetings and encounters."

For information or to make a reservation for Shoal Creek Camp, email laurie.davenport@arumc.org, or leave a message with the Northwest District office: 479-783-0385.



Laurie Davenport

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New Hendrix president values higher ed, Arkansas, faith... and Godzilla

When Dr. William “Bill” Tsutsui came to Arkansas as a candidate for the presidency of United Methodist-related Hendrix College, the interview took place in Little Rock. But he rented a car and drove to Conway for an incognito visit to the Hendrix campus.

He saw students socializing outdoors and studying in the library. He confesses to walking behind students to sneak looks at their laptop screens: “They were all working on stuff! No Facebook, no Twitter, no shopping for parkas, you know? They are all doing what they should be doing. This is a serious place.

“And I said, ‘That’s the kind of place I want to be.’ A community that takes the work seriously, that cares about each other, and for me, really is small enough to get your arms around.”

A Texas native who served most recently as dean of SMU’s Dedman College of Humanities, Tsutsui has specialized in modern Japanese business and economic history during his career. Among his published works, though, he is best known for those that relate to a passion he has had since childhood—his book *Godzilla on My Mind: Fifty Years of the King of Monsters* examines the cultural impact of the world’s most famous radioactive lizard.

Tsutsui arrived at Hendrix in June, and will be inaugurated as the college’s 11th president on April 18, 2015, during Alumni Weekend festivities.

He spoke recently with *Arkansas United Methodist* editor Amy Forbus. Here are excerpts from their conversation.

How are you adjusting to Arkansas?

You know, I love Arkansas. It is just such a warm place here.

Not just the temperature?

Not just the temperature—it is mainly the people. That struck me from the beginning, from the first time I came to Arkansas, that it is just a friendly, authentic, welcoming environment. What I say to folks is there couldn’t be a better place to go to college than Arkansas.

Why did Hendrix appeal to you?

I’ve taught at a lot of big schools. Kansas was gigantic—if you knew all the members of your department, you were doing a pretty good job. At SMU, we were a smaller community and yet, still, with



Bill Tsutsui

11,000 students on campus, you couldn’t have a personal relationship with but a small number of them. And as dean, of course, the only students I got to know were the absolute best students and the absolute worst students! I sort of wanted to know that big middle, what they were thinking and what they were doing and how their education was going and what meant a lot to them. I just never had an opportunity to do so.

So for me, Hendrix was exactly the right size, exactly the right place, and just the right personality for what I want.... We’re not just giving you what you get in the classroom. What we offer can’t be replicated in an online course... we offer a true holistic experience.

You came to Hendrix from SMU. Do you see a difference in the role of faith on campus so far, even though they’re both Methodist colleges?

Honestly, I think SMU—just the fact that you hear it called SMU a lot more than Southern Methodist University—it was a big, urban, professional school. And the heritage of Methodism, if you walk down to Perkins School of Theology you can feel it, but elsewhere on campus you really didn’t see it.

What appealed to me a lot about Hendrix was that the values that come with our United Methodist heritage are really close to the surface here. We all recognize we’re doing more than teaching people facts and figures. We’re doing more than housing them and feeding them. It’s really about character and values.... Without proselytizing or twisting any arms, we can just help introduce people to a life that goes beyond work and textbook

education.

What about your personal faith journey? Did it play into your willingness to come here?

Yeah. I went to religious schools from the sixth grade on.... So though my parents weren’t religious, I really grew up an Episcopalian, and continued to go to church through college and into graduate school. I was confirmed when I was over in England; I was very active with the college chapel at Oxford. My wife sang in the choir, so that’s another place we overlapped.

Then after we came back, and especially once we went to Kansas and I was in a job as an administrator and all those kinds of things, we sort of drifted away from going to church—largely because it was very political at church. Who you sat next to was the kind of thing people talked about, and we didn’t love that. We really had enough politics at work; we didn’t need it on Sunday, too... so we stopped going. And once you fall out of the habit, it’s hard.

But we’ve started up going again. We go to St. Peter’s [Episcopal Church] here in Conway. The Episcopal tradition, the liturgy and such, is so close to Methodist practice, it’s amazing.

Well, you know, John Wesley was never a member of the Methodist Church—he was Anglican.

That’s what I hear! Ellis [Arnold, executive vice president, general counsel and dean of advancement for Hendrix] gave me that, early on!

Both of them are very inclusive traditions, which is what I like. That they are big tents, and that they welcome people at different places in their faith journeys, because goodness knows I’m at a different place than a lot of folks in our church here. And both also have a very strong commitment to service, and that to me is really impressive.

I’ve talked on numerous occasions about going out to Vilonia after the tornado out there, and we went with a group of Hendrix students. There were three or four dozen of us that went out on a Saturday, spent the whole day cleaning up.

And you weren’t technically on staff yet.

I was not yet—I was a volunteer for Hendrix, volunteering for Hendrix!

I was struck by so many things on that day—it was so amazing for

me. To be struck by the spirit of the Hendrix community, to be struck by the spirit of Vilonia, but really I think what’s going to stay with me more than anything is the importance of the churches in that community to really provide a focus for relief and recovery.

As I went down Main Street and saw the various activities, it was the Methodist relief that was the most impressive to me. They were the best organized, they had the largest crowds out there, and it was really something to be proud of.

As far as local flavor goes, I thought of you a couple of weeks ago when I heard the Gwatney Chevrolet radio ads. Do you know about Gwatzilla?

Yes! And I’ll tell you the secret—you are the first media outlet to get this: We are using their inflatable Godzilla for my inauguration.... It is now reserved.

Clearly, you have a sense of how to have fun!

I’m still a teenager. I’m like a 14-year-old.

UM Museum of Arkansas to host special exhibit by clergy artist Polk

The United Methodist Museum of the Arkansas Conference (UMMAC) has an upcoming special loan exhibition, “Methodism On the American Frontier” that will begin Sept. 2 and run through Jan. 5, 2015. This exhibit includes 10 works of art by the Rev. John Polk of First UMC Hot Springs. Polk’s works transport viewers back in time to early Methodism in America and Arkansas. To visit the exhibit or book a tour for your group, call Linda Baker, curator, at 501-372-4685. The museum is located at 7th and Center Streets in downtown Little Rock, inside First UMC.



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Mount Eagle Retreat Center near Clinton is seeking a new Executive Director to help expand programming and facilities in partnership with the Arkansas Conference. The Executive Director oversees the safety and quality of all Mount Eagle facilities, programs, and operations including fund-raising and development. This position provides guidance and supervision to staff and volunteers at the retreat center, as well as ensuring a safe environment and hospitality to guests, while practicing and advocating creation care.

The ideal candidate will be well-grounded in Christian faith consistent with the UMC, have a bachelor’s degree (or equivalent), and significant experience as Director or Program Director in camp or retreat ministry (or equivalent) with demonstrated management skills and program growth. Interested applicants are asked to review our full-length job description at www.mounteagle.org/blank.htm. Compensation is dependent on experience and includes on-site housing and benefits. Position begins January 1, 2015. Applications will be received until September 15, with phone and on-site interviews to be conducted in October.

Send resume with cover letter and references to director@mounteagle.org or Search Committee, Mount Eagle Retreat Center, 935 Beal Road, Clinton, AR 72031.

Home Study: Save \$\$\$ Christian Bible College, P.O. Box 8968 Rocky Mt., NC 27804 Phone (252) 451-1031; www.christianbiblecollege.org.

COMING UP

Wordpress 101: The Basics—free website workshop Aug. 8

The Center for Technology invites you to the Arkansas Conference offices Friday, Aug. 8 for Wordpress 101: The Basics, an overview of WordPress platform for those who need to manage a WordPress website for their church or ministry. The free course runs from 9 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. If you are new to WordPress, this session is designed for you. It is limited to 10 participants, so register by Aug. 7 at www.arumc.org/calendar.

Participants should bring their own Mac or PC laptop (not a tablet or phone) with the ability to connect to wireless internet. Topics to be covered include: website basics - do's and don'ts WordPress overview; Admin Area; basic settings; pages vs. posts; plug-ins; embedding photos, audio and video; widgets; themes; and menus.

PAUMCS Arkansas meeting in Little Rock Aug. 12

The Arkansas Chapter of the Professional Association of United Methodist Church Secretaries (PAUMCS) will hold its annual meeting Tuesday, Aug. 12, from 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., in the Kendall Center of Philander Smith College, Little Rock (downstairs from the Arkansas Conference offices). The meeting is open to both paid and volunteer staff members involved in administrative work in the local church or extension ministries; attendees do not need to be members of PAUMCS.

Keynote speaker will be Sue Thompson, author of *The Ministry of Administrative Assistants* and secretary to United Methodist Church of the Resurrection's senior pastor, the Rev. Adam Hamilton. The topic: "Using Your Super Powers in the Church Office." Registration begins at 9 a.m.; the \$5 fee helps defray the cost of the meal. Registration deadline is Aug. 3. For additional information or assistance, contact Fonda Kirkman, fkirkman@arumc.org or 501-851-1433.

Mountainside UMC charity golf tournament Aug. 18

Mountainside UMC Hot Springs Village is gearing up for its 12th annual golf tournament. All proceeds will benefit local and global missions.

The Diamante Country Club will host the tournament Monday, Aug. 18, with a shotgun start at 9 a.m. The four-person scramble will include three flights: couples, mixed and men. There will be three winners per flight.

After tournament play, several lucky golfers will be chosen to try for a 165-yard hole-in-one shot to win a \$100,000 grand prize, as well as additional prizes. A silent auction is also planned.

Mountainside supports the missionary efforts of retired United Methodist minister the Rev. Charles Wiggins and his wife, Karen. About six years ago, Wiggins felt a call from God to serve as a volunteer missionary in Bunda, Tanzania, so the couple moved there. His education, ministry work, teaching career and mental health work are just some of the areas that prepared him for this mission. Karen spends much of her time there teaching sewing, basic nutrition, cooking skills and more.

Proceeds from the tournament provide funds to several local charities as well, such as Jackson House in Hot Springs; Starting Over Ministries in Hot Springs Village; the HSU/OBU Wesley Foundation campus ministry in Arkadelphia; Kairos Prison Ministry; a backpack program in local schools; and supplies for flood and tornado relief (including recent gifts for tornado relief in Vilonia and Mayflower).

Golfers can sign up as a foursome or a single by calling the church office at 501-922-2626.

Sponsors also are encouraged. To become a tournament sponsor, call the church office for information or visit www.mountainsidechurch.com.

Bible Boot Camp at Camp Tanako set for Aug. 22-23

Children entering the 3rd and 4th grades are invited to Bible Boot Camp, an overnight adventure at Camp Tanako in Hot Springs. Sleep in cabins, enjoy campfires, music, great food, attend Bible workshops, play Bible games and cool off in the swimming pool. Everyone is welcome. To register, visit <http://goo.gl/ruqefc>. For information, contact Cindy Burns at cburns@phumc.com.

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**Saturday, Nov. 22
9 a.m. to 2 p.m.**

Arkansas Rice Depot, 3801 West 65th Street, Little Rock
Join fellow United Methodists for a day of service, fellowship and celebration!

**'Prisons & Pews' Bible study outreach training in Little Rock Aug. 23**

Transforming Lives in Prisons & Pews, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., Saturday, Aug. 23, at Philander Smith College in Little Rock. Attendees will receive Disciple Bible Outreach Ministries (DBOM) in Prison certification and participate in DISCIPLE training during this one-day event. DBOM trains and equips local church volunteers for ministry in prisons, jails and youth development centers in Arkansas. In addition, DBOM promotes DISCIPLE Bible study in local churches and provides training events for leaders.

The event is free, and open to both laity and clergy. Lunch will be provided. To register, visit www.arumc.org/calendar and click on the event name.

NOMADS Annual Meeting in Branson, Mo., Sept 6-12

The 2014 Annual Meeting for Nomads On a Mission Active in Divine Service (NOMADS) will be held at the Branson, Mo., KOA, on Animal Safari Road. NOMADS are people who seek a retirement with a purpose; enjoy traveling in an RV; want to share their Christian faith; and enjoy using their skills in service to others.

The meeting officially begins Sunday, Sept. 6, at 9:30 a.m. Missouri Bishop Robert Schnase will lead the Sunday evening Worship and Communion Service, and Arkansas Bishop Gary Mueller will lead devotions at 7 a.m. Monday morning. The week's events include several great speakers, Bible study and devotions, business meetings, leadership training, various seminars, tours, auctions, great music and entertainment, fun and fellowship.

NOMADS provide volunteer labor for new construction, remodeling and repairs for churches, children's homes, camps, colleges, outreach missions and disaster rebuilding throughout the U.S. Most NOMADS travel and live in their RVs while volunteering. To learn more, drop by the annual meeting to ask questions, or contact the organization by emailing nomads@nomadsumc.org.

'But They Don't Look Like Us' cultural competency training Sept. 13

But They Don't Look Like Us: Developing Cultural Competency for Your Mission Field, is set for 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturday, Sept. 13, at Philander Smith College in Little Rock. Noted author Chris Crass will lead this learning opportunity specifically designed for those facing challenges with intercultural relationship in their mission fields. 0.3 CEUs are available. Cost is \$15 and includes lunch and materials. Visit <http://bit.ly/1jPuPET> to register.

Travel the Holy Land with Bishop Mueller, Jan. 19-29, 2015

Members of the Arkansas Conference are invited to join Bishop Gary Mueller for an 11-day journey of a lifetime to the Holy Land, Jan. 19-29, 2015. The Sea of Galilee, Bethlehem, Jericho, Jerusalem, the Mount of Olives, the Garden of Gethsemane, Nazareth—these are just a few of the many biblical sites the group will visit. Extension trips are available to either Egypt and the pyramids or Jordan and Petra.

Bishop Mueller emphasizes that the journey is a spiritual pilgrimage. "It's not just about what Jesus did back then," he said. "It's also about how you can grow deeper in your discipleship now."

If you're interested in joining the bishop's 2015 Holy Land trip, e-mail the Rev. Siegfried Johnson at sieg@stjames-umc.org for more information and a brochure. Space on this tour is limited.

Holly Grove UMC member sews comfort for Children's Hospital patients

Melba Richardson shared recently the latest fruits of her labor—10 Raggedy Ann-style dolls—with Arkansas Children's Hospital, to be given to terminally ill patients as a way to provide an extra source of comfort. She is pictured above with the dolls she sewed.

Richardson's work is just one example of how Holly Grove UMC's members think beyond their local church, says the Rev. Nan Nelson, the congregation's pastor. She points to their involvement with the Methodist Family Health girls' group home in the Southeast District—where church members provide a birthday cake and gifts to each resident throughout the year, and attend special events in support of them—and their recent involvement in collecting and donating empty storage tubs for those needing to gather scattered belongings after the April 27 tornado in Mayflower and Vilonia.

"Although Holly Grove UMC is definitely a small membership church, the members are actively reaching out to others," Nelson says.



OBITUARIES

BATESVILLE

Eva Lee Paysinger

Eva Lee Paysinger, 96, of Batesville, passed away Sunday, July 13, 2014.

She was born on Aug. 18, 1917, in Evening Shade, the daughter of Jasper and Manerva (Wilkes) Whitten.

She was united in marriage to the Rev. Vernon Paysinger on Feb. 9, 1941. Her tireless devotion to her husband and their ministry was noted by all. The Paysingers served United Methodist churches in West Memphis (Rosewood), Hoxie, Beebe, Lepanto, Prairie Ridge, Paris (Coles Chapel), Batesville (Central Avenue), Ft. Smith (Hendricks Hills) and McCrory. At her death, Paysinger was a member of Central Avenue United Methodist Church Batesville.

Survivors include her nieces, Thelma Jackson of Lubbock, Texas; Marie Wilkinson, Euna Mae Franks, Anna Lee Little and Jo Ann Cushman of Evening Shade; and Janie Gilbert of Jonesboro; and a nephew, Lehman Booher of Lufkin, Texas.

She was preceded in death by her parents and her husband; her sisters, Elsie Jewel Whitten, Artie Thomas, Trixie Qualls and Carrie Barnett, her brothers, William (Bill) Whitten and John Henry (Doodle) Whitten; nephews William Jewel Whitten, R.J. Thomas, T.O. Whitten, J.W. Whitten and Garvie Qualls; and nieces Roxie Moss, Elsie Whitten, Dora Fay Cales and Cora Lou Davis.

The funeral service was held Wednesday, July 16 at Central Avenue UMC Batesville, with burial following the service at George's Campground (north of Evening Shade).



Eva Lee Paysinger

Pallbearers were Mike Cushman, Jerry Gilbert, Harlan Davis, Ricky Davis, Jeremy Weaver and Jerry Buie.

Paysinger and her husband were life-long advocates for programs designed to eradicate hunger. They planned for the creation of the Rev. Vernon and Eva Lee Paysinger Memorial Endowment Fund at the United Methodist Foundation of Arkansas to express their concern for others in perpetuity. The annual income from this fund will be used to support world hunger ministries. All who knew Eva Lee Paysinger and her husband knew that they lived simply so that they could give to others abundantly. Memorial gifts may be added to this permanent fund by sending them to United Methodist Foundation of Arkansas, 5300 Evergreen Dr., Little Rock, AR 72205.

HORSESHOE BEND

Judy Butterbrodt

Judith "Judy" A. Butterbrodt, 70, passed away July 11, 2014, at the Fulton County Hospital in Salem.

She was born in Ladysmith, Wis., on Oct. 26, 1943 to Karl W. and Dorothy E. (Wilson) Schmidt, and was a long-time resident of Marshfield, Wis. Upon graduation from Marshfield Senior High School in 1961, she began her employment with the School District of Marshfield, where she worked in the main office until her retirement in 2002. She also worked part-time in a design and floral shop, and became proficient in her decorative hobbies at home.

On June 29, 1963, she married her high school sweetheart, Evan G. Butterbrodt, at Wesley UMC Marshfield. She was active in the church and community, and a member



Judy Butterbrodt

of the church choir for over 35 years. She worked with Cub Scouts and Boy Scouts in various capacities. She and her husband worked as a team in the churches he pastored during his second career as an associate clergy member of the Wisconsin Conference of the United Methodist Church.

Judy and Evan moved to Horseshoe Bend in 2004, and became quite active in the community and in the Horseshoe Bend United Methodist Church. She was a Master Gardener, an active AARP member, a member of the Honorary Police and a past member of the Wisconsin Club, as well as being involved in other volunteer work.

In 2009, Judy and her husband decided to find a winter home in Donna, Texas, in the Rio Grande Valley. While living in Donna, she became a member of The Amigos de Los Niños de Mexico, the Casa Del Sol choir, and volunteered in several other areas in the Casa Del Sol community. She regularly attended First UMC Weslaco, Texas.

Judy and her husband enjoyed travelling together, both here and abroad.

Judy was predeceased by her mother and father. She is survived by her husband, Evan; her son, Michael, and his wife, Ruth (Baures) of Stoughton, Wis.; her daughter, Michelle Walton and her husband, Calvin, of Stone Mountain, Ga.; and three grandsons, Stefan, Ryan and Caleb. She also leaves behind a brother, Gary Schmidt and his wife, Janet, of Green Bay, Wis.; and two sisters, Karla Pfeiffer and her husband, Al, of Austin, Texas, and Deanna Christiansen and her husband, Michael, of St. Louis Park, Minn.; and many nieces, nephews, grand-nieces and grand-nephews.

As she gave of herself in life, she continues to give in death, as she donated her body to science through Genesis (M.E.C.R.I.) in Memphis, Tenn.

Memorial arrangements are pending.

Holy conversation, older adult studies free to AR churches

Two studies, one new and one revised, are available through the Conference office and through the online Learning Management System.

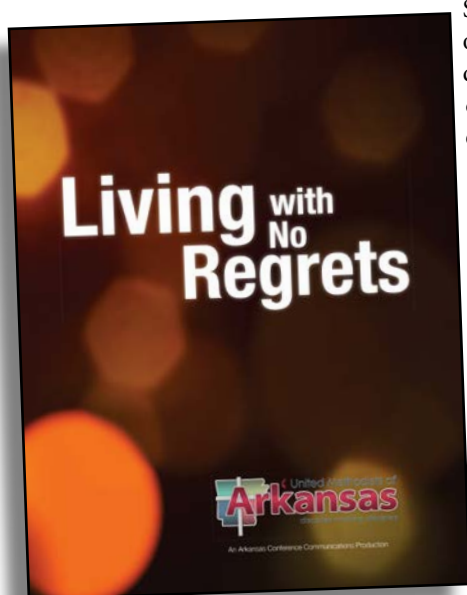
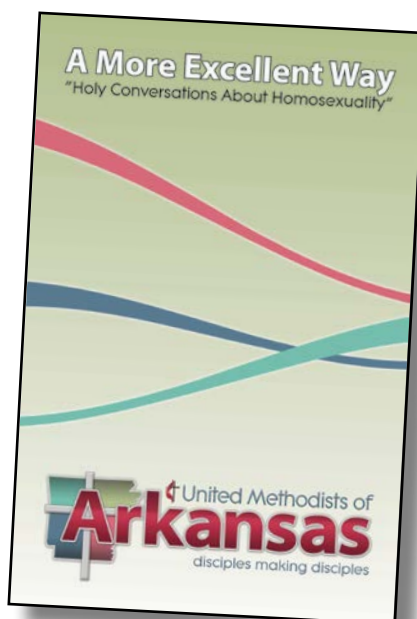
"A More Excellent Way: Holy Conversations about Homosexuality," includes readings, a video about holy conversations, a three-session small group discussion guide and a bibliography for further study including papers written by members of the Human Sexuality Task Force and other scholars. Dr. Andrew Thompson, the Conference's Wesley Scholar, is the presenter in the 20-minute holy conversations video. The task force released 16 different resources, all of which may be downloaded from the Learning Management

System at arumc.org; or order a copy of the discussion guide by email: communications@arumc.org.

The small group study "Living with No Regrets" focuses on issues and challenges facing older adults and their families, and offers ideas for how local churches and communities might minister to them. The 2014 revised study features updated statistics and a facilitator's help video with Jenni Smith, director of congregational care and Living with No Regrets study leader at St. James UMC Little Rock.

Living with No Regrets was created by the Arkansas Conference Older Adult Ministry Council and funded by a grant from the United Methodist Foundation of Arkansas. It received a 2012 national Telly Award.

Arkansas local churches and ministries may order the study at no charge by emailing communications@arumc.org. Those outside the Conference may order the study for \$25 at www.arumc.org/LWNR.



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Logging into umcmarket.org takes just a couple of minutes. Each time you shop online, first log into umcmarket.org, search for a retailer, click their logo and start shopping. When you visit the retail site through the UMCmarket.org portal, your total spending is accumulated for your church and when the total donations reach \$100, your church will get a check.

As you make more purchases throughout the year, the process is repeated. The more shopping done through this portal, the more assistance goes to support the global ministries of the connectional United Methodist Church.

—From the UM General Council on Finance and Administration, www.gcfa.org

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UMFA announces 2014 Seminary Scholars

Deena Marie Hamilton of St. Andrew UMC Little Rock; Rollie Mullins Jr., of Parkview UMC Benton; Jeremy Pressgrove of First UMC Maumelle; and Melanie Tubbs of First UMC Russellville have been named United Methodist Foundation of Arkansas (UMFA) Seminary Scholarship recipients for 2014 by the Arkansas Conference Board of Ordained Ministry, UMFA announced in a July 21 news release.

Established in 2000, the UMFA Seminary Scholarship Fund awards grants for scholarships to Arkansas students attending three-year United Methodist seminaries. The students make a covenant to return to Arkansas to pastor United Methodist churches after completing their studies.

“The UMFA Seminary Scholarship Program has a significant role in ensuring strong pastoral leadership for the Church in years to come,” said Jim Argue Jr., UMFA president. “These students will touch the lives of thousands of United Methodists during their years of service to the Arkansas Conference.”



Melanie Tubbs

Tubbs is an adjunct professor at Arkansas Tech University in Russellville and a local pastor for two nearby churches. She plans to attend St. Paul School of

Theology in the greater Kansas City area. “I am ready to fully devote myself to a deeper understanding of His Word through study in seminary,” she said. “He has cleared a path, prepared my spirit and commanded me to follow.”

Pressgrove will attend United Theological Seminary in Dayton, Ohio. “I have been living my call, serving as a local pastor for two churches,” he said. “In seminary, I expect to gain a better understanding of Scriptures and practical applications for life, as well as a better understanding of



Jeremy Pressgrove

people and how to care for them.”

Mullins, who has served as a local pastor in Arkansas and Ohio, is a student at St. Paul School of Theology. “This scholarship will allow me to focus on my studies, serve as a local pastor, and participate in local missions,” he said. “Serving God with my whole heart, body and soul is the main point of all that I aspire to do.”



Rollie Mullins Jr.

Hamilton is a student at Perkins School of Theology in Dallas and has served as a local pastor while working

as a nurse and chemist. “Being a pastor gave me great joy because I was being in service to God and God’s people,” she said. “After meditation, reflection and prayer, I know that I would like to continue my candidacy for ordination on the Elder track.”

Founded in 1963, UMFA manages \$135 million in endowment funds and charitable assets that benefit local churches and other United Methodist ministries, and is one of the largest United Methodist foundations in the country.



Deena Marie Hamilton

35 Arkansas Students Receive Dollars for Scholars Awards

This year more students than ever before received Dollars for Scholars awards to begin or continue their education at United Methodist colleges, universities and seminaries. For each recipient, the students’ local churches gave \$1,000 and the United Methodist Higher Education Foundation matched that contribution. Then the United Methodist Foundation of Arkansas gave \$1,000 and the students’ selected college contributed \$1,000 for a significant \$4,000 award to each student.

UMFA is proud to make a total of \$35,000 in scholarship contributions to these students:

Undergraduate Students	Home Church	Institution	Undergraduate Students	Home Church	Institution
Ethny M. Ashcraft	Lakeside UMC, Pine Bluff	Hendrix College	Alexander M. Shannon	Pulaski Heights UMC, Little Rock	Centenary College
Madelyn R. Bagwell	Central UMC, Fayetteville	High Point University	Jonathan T. Spradley	Pulaski Heights UMC, Little Rock	Hendrix College
Kayla A. Baker	Wesley Chapel UMC, Little Rock	Philander Smith College	Thomas P. Spradley	Pulaski Heights UMC, Little Rock	Hendrix College
Jonathan S. Barker	Wesley Chapel UMC, Little Rock	Philander Smith College	Victoria L. Spradley	Pulaski Heights UMC, Little Rock	Hendrix College
Natalie E. Clark	First UMC, Conway	Wofford College	Megan L. Steely	Trinity UMC, Little Rock	Hendrix College
Joshua Dumas	Wesley Chapel UMC, Little Rock	Philander Smith College	Archer W. Tribett	Pulaski Heights UMC, Little Rock	Central Methodist University
Lance S. Dunbar	St. James UMC, Little Rock	Hendrix College	Tasha D. Washington	Wesley Chapel UMC, Little Rock	Philander Smith College
Liam R. Hankins-Hull	First UMC, Little Rock	Hendrix College	Seminary Students		
Caitlyn B. Hendrickson	First UMC, Little Rock	Hendrix College	Kathryn E. Dunn	Pulaski Heights UMC, Little Rock	Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary
Trevor A. Ivy	Wesley Chapel UMC, Little Rock	Philander Smith College	Christopher P. Gillespie	Cornerstone UMC, Jonesboro	United Theological Seminary
Lawrence E. Knox	First UMC, Fort Smith	Boston University	Marcia A. Grassel	First UMC, Eureka Springs	Saint Paul School of Theology
William B. Lovvorn	Grace Community UMC, Fort Smith	Hendrix College	Laura Jo Prange	First UMC, Dewitt	Saint Paul School of Theology
Malachi J. McDonald	First UMC, Jacksonville	Hendrix College	Myron E. Rhodes	First UMC, Maumelle	Perkins School of Theology
Michael R. McMurray	First UMC, Little Rock	Hendrix College	Andrew J. Smith	St. Paul UMC, Little Rock	Perkins School of Theology
Kaelin K. McNeal	Wesley Chapel UMC, Little Rock	Philander Smith College	Corey A. Tyson	First UMC, Jacksonville	Duke Divinity School
Rebecca R. Meredith	St. James UMC, Little Rock	Hendrix College			
Collin M. Moore	Grace Community UMC, Fort Smith	Hendrix College			
Candace L. Parchman	Wesley Chapel UMC, Little Rock	Philander Smith College			
Steven R. Ragsdale	First UMC, Bryant	Hendrix College			
Michala J. Roberts	First UMC, Conway	Hendrix College			
Blaine K. Sadler	First UMC, Benton	Hendrix College			



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