



The Current

News of Illinois Great Rivers Conference of The United Methodist Church

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February 2010

UMCOR joins on-the-ground relief effort in Haiti



Photo by Paul Jeffrey/ACT.

Anna Zizi is pulled alive on January 19 from the rubble of Haiti's devastating earthquake, one week after the city was reduced to ruins in a matter of seconds. She was rescued from the collapsed home of the parish priest at Port-au-Prince's Roman Cathedral Cathedral of Our Lady of the Assumption by members of a Mexican search and rescue team, several of whom were in tears as they pulled the woman free from tons of rubble.

By Linda Bloom*

The United Methodist Committee on Relief and a host of other faith-based groups are on the ground in Haiti as they determine how to assist earthquake survivors.

With more than \$2 million in donations received by Jan. 20, UMCOR already has provided emergency grants to the Methodist Church of Haiti and

GlobalMedic, a Canadian relief agency, to address immediate needs.

An assessment team led by UMCOR's Melissa Crutchfield was gathering in the Dominican Republic Jan. 20 and preparing to enter Haiti. She is accompanied by five others with the relief agency, the United Methodist Board of Global Ministries and United Methodist Communications.

Other United Methodist-supported organizations, including Church World

Service, Action By Churches Together International and Stop Hunger Now, also are responding with aid.

Paul Jeffrey, a United Methodist photo-journalist and missionary on assignment with ACT, watched a Mexican rescue team free Anna Zizi from the home of the parish priest at Port-au-Prince's Roman Cathedral of Our Lady of the Assumption.

"The rescuers were crying afterwards," reported Jeffrey. It was a welcome opportunity to feel joy amid such devastation, he said.

ACT has deployed a "rapid support team" to Haiti, which will work with members with offices already in Haiti. UMCOR is a pending member of the new ACT Alliance.

Despite rescue efforts, few survivors were being pulled alive from the rubble a week after the earthquake struck.

The Reuters news organization reported that 75,000 bodies were buried in mass graves and that Haitian officials say the toll could be between 100,000 and 200,000. An organization called Partners In Health said 20,000 people are dying daily "who could be saved by surgery," according to a Jan. 20 story in The Wall Street Journal.

■ Distributing water

UMCOR's partnership with GlobalMedic will focus on the distribution of clean drinking water, says the Rev. Tom Hazelwood, an UMCOR executive. It also will provide medical attention to earth-

See Haiti on page 10 ...

2009 apportionments finish at 90.17%

Despite a shaky economy, apportionment receipts finished at 90.17 percent for 2009.

The total is one of the nation's highest.

A complete accounting of apportionment payments organized by district and church is found on pages 15-18 in this month's *Current*.

Ways to assist in Haiti

- Donate online at <http://www.umcorhaiti.org> 100 percent of your donation will go directly to UMCOR for disaster relief.

- Donate through your local church designating Advance Special 418325, Haiti Emergency. Church treasurers should note the Advance Special and the Conference number 3765 on their remittances. The offering qualifies as an UMCOR Advance Special for the Five-Star Mission program.

- Donate directly to UMCOR, designating *See Assist Haiti on page 12 ...*

Midwest Mission Distribution Center shipping supplies to Haiti

Working with UMCOR, ministry has sent two shipments since earthquake

By DEBRA LANDIS and AMANDA REAVY
Springfield State Journal-Register

CHATHAM —Thanks to the generosity of area residents, the Midwest Mission Distribution Center (MMDC) in rural Chatham is sending a second relief shipment of the most basic, but important, health supplies — soap, toothbrushes and toothpaste, infant diapers and wash cloths, among other items — to the victims of the Haiti earthquake.

The first shipment left Sunday. It weighed nearly 15,000 pounds and carried more supplies than the MMDC initially

thought it could provide.

"We expect a second shipment will go out within the next one to 1 1/2 weeks," executive director Pat Wright said Tuesday.

Sunday's shipment had 288 layette kits, 3,571 health kits and 4,023 school kits, according to Barbara Webster, MMDC bookkeeper and secretary.

Even if schools are not yet operating, the paper, pencils, crayons and other items can help take children's minds off the devastation surrounding them, Webster said.

The MMDC provides health, school and other supplies in times of war, famine and

See MMDC on page 13 ...



Gerald G. King

King appointed to Springfield Laurel UMC

By Paul Black

Bishop Gregory V. Palmer has announced the appointment of Rev. Gerald G.

King, Sangamon River District superintendent to Springfield Laurel UMC, effective July 1.

King, who has served as a member of the Cabinet since November 1, 2003, will be succeeding Rev. John Hamilton who is retiring after serving at Laurel for 18 years.

"I am very pleased with the appointment," Palmer said. "Rev. King has given distinguished service as district superintendent because of a deep sense of ground-

ing in Jesus Christ and in the spiritual disciplines."

Palmer said that King was one of the most highly connectional pastors he knows "not just organizationally or structurally, but something organic to Christian community." The bishop added, "we have a well-experienced pastor matched with a church that holds future fruitfulness for both pastor and church."

King was appointed Okaw River District superintendent in November 2003 and said at that time he looked forward to helping laity to answer their own calls to ministry.

In September 2005, King was appointed superintendent of the newly-configured Sangamon River District when the number

See King on page 13 ...

News from the Episcopal Office

God is our refuge and strength



Dear Friends in Christ:

Since Jan. 12 I have read or recited portions of Psalm 46. God indeed is our refuge and strength. We have all leaned upon these verses as we have stood in solidarity with the people of Haiti and the people that we know who are connected to this devastating tragedy.

While attending the memorial service for one of the UMCOR executives who was killed in the collapse of the Montana Hotel in Port-au-Prince was moved in my spirit about the power of faith to sustain us in life's most difficult moments. The service for the Rev. Sam Dixon quickened my faith in the work of the Spirit that both comforts and sends into service. The witness of the Rev. Jim Gulley was an unbelievable powerful mix of narrative, personal testimony, grief processing and theological reflection on tragedy. I know I will continue along with you to hold Haiti and the countless families known and unknown to us who are grieving the loss of loved ones, homes and possessions.

I solicit not only your continued prayers but also your gifts and energy to assist with the long haul of recovery. The attention that is needed is both short- and long-term. Occasionally you hear calculations about attention span in the news cycles. When Haiti is no longer the lead story it will not be a sign that the work is complete. The tsunami at the end of 2004 and Hurricane Katrina have taught us that well.

To this end, you can be confident of the extraordinary work that UMCOR does. A part of their well-earned, excellent reputation is that they are seen as the body that is in it for the long haul. So we will have the opportunity for a long time to come to be a part of the story of the healing of Haiti. Thank you for being the hands, feet, mind and heart of Jesus Christ in healing brokenness in your community every day and in Haiti right now.

Your servant in Jesus Christ,

Gregory V. Palmer

Illinois Episcopal Area, the United Methodist Church



Bishop Palmer issues pastoral letter on Haiti

Greetings!

Grace and peace from God our creator and God's son our Lord Jesus Christ.

All of us have watched in shock as more and more is known about the extent of the devastation of the earthquake in Haiti. Thank you for your continuing response to this crisis:

- through prayer
- information
- financial contributions
- assistance through the Midwest Distribution Center
- and so much more.

I urge you to continue your efforts in all of these areas and to keep checking your email and the conference website, www.igrc.org, for helpful information.

As you know, Sunday, Jan. 17, is Human Relations Day in The United Methodist Church. This annual emphasis also carries with it the invitation to give a special offering that supports the ministry of The United Methodist Church in strengthening people, relationships and communities. I am sure that many of our congregations were already planning to observe this day on Jan. 17 or some other Sunday in the near future.

We are also in the midst of giving special offerings through UMCOR because of the disaster in Haiti. Both giving opportunities are important so please do all you can not to let them compete. Because of the urgency of the efforts in Haiti please feel free to do the Human Relations Day Offering on another Sunday. But please don't forget about it.

I am confident that we can rise to the occasion to respond to the humanitarian crisis that stares us in the face and to support ongoing ministries that reflect important United Methodist commitments. Thanks again for who you are and all you have done and will done in the name and spirit of Jesus the Christ.

I am,

Yours in Christ,

†Gregory Vaughn Palmer

Resident Bishop

Appointments

Appointments

In consultation with the Cabinet of the Illinois Great Rivers Conference, Bishop Gregory V. Palmer appoints the following pastors:

Cecil Atchison to Crab Orchard, Pleasant Grove and New Burnside, Cache River District, effective Jan. 1. This is a change in appointment from $\frac{3}{4}$ to $\frac{1}{2}$.

Dave Hutton to Bluff Springs, LaMoine River District, effective Dec. 1, 2009.

Timothy H. Pearce to Laura and Monica, Illinois River District, effective Feb. 1.

Deryck C. Sonaram to Lewistown, Illinois River District, effective Jan. 1.

Sally Swaim to Middlefork, Iroquois River District, effective Jan. 1. This is a change from $\frac{3}{4}$ time to $\frac{1}{2}$ time only.

Supply not-appointed

Joseph Irwin, Sr. to Oliver, Embarras River District beginning Dec. 15, 2009.

Deaths

The **Rev. Jack B. North**, a retired pastor, passed away on Jan. 20, 2010 in Springfield, Mo. Rev. North was a pastor in the former Central Illinois Conference serving churches in Cissna Park, El Paso, Peoria, Kankakee and Champaign. He also served as the Pontiac District Superintendent and as the Assistant to the Bishop. He retired in 1986.

Orville Mueth, a member of Caseyville UMC, who served in various capacities of District and Conference lay leadership, died Jan. 11. Mr. Mueth was a former district director of lay speaking for the East St. Louis District of the former Southern Illinois Conference and very active in United Methodist Men. The Caseyville UMC unit was named in Mueth's honor several years ago in recognition of his many years of service.

Marsha Schmidt, widow of the late Rev. Richard Schmdt, died Jan. 8. The Schmidts pastored in the Illinois Synod of the Lutheran Church in America prior to his being received into full membership by the former Southern Illinois Conference in 1972. Rev. Schmidt preceded her in death March 10, 2000.

Dr. Lawrence Juhlin, a member of the

Conference Council on Finance and Administration and a former lay member to annual conference from Carbondale Grace UMC, died Jan. 7.

Mary Treat, widow of the Rev. Joe W. Treat, died Jan. 7. She and Rev. Treat pastored several appointments in the former Southern Illinois Conference between 1953 and his retirement in 1979. Rev. Treat preceded her in death on Aug. 19, 1982. Expressions of sympathy may be sent to Mrs. Treat's son, the Rev. Dr. Robert J. Treat, 1002 Sawmill Run, Moro, IL 62067-1212.

Positions

Parish Visitor for Rosewood Heights St. Paul UMC, East Alton; 10 hours per week. Job description and application available from Church Office, 618-259-5210, or at info@stpaulwired.org.

Free Prestige organ to a church in need

Prestige G501 2-Manual Digital Organ, marketed by Church Organ Systems (appears to be identical to the Viscount Prestige G501 organ). Dark oak finish, full 32-note AGO pedal board. For a full list of features, please see the detailed listing on www.igrc.org/communications/classifieds.aspx

This organ comes from a private home, and has had very little use. Like-new condition, no scratches, all in full working order. Accepting party would be responsible for removing the organ from the house, and transport. Arrangements would take place after March 14, 2010. The organ is housed in Normal.

We are interested in donating this instrument to a church in need. Please contact Fred or Elaine Noyes at 309-838-2244, 309-838-4383; or email ernoyes2002@yahoo.com.

Announcements

Annual report filing online

For the second year, pastors and churches wishing to complete their annual report filing may do online in a partnership between the conference and the General Council on Finance and Administration.

See Announcements on page 3 ...

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Announcements & Events

Announcements

Continued from page 2

Packets of report forms have already been sent out. Those wishing to utilize the online method may do so by visiting <http://eagle.gcfa.org>

The username is the six digit number assigned to the church by GCFA – the number is found pre-printed on the Table I form that the church received in the mail. The password is “password” (without quotes). The user can change the password after logging on to the system.

Non-profit status info

All United Methodist churches are included in the IRS 501c3 (non-profit) group ruling issued to the United Methodist denomination.

Churches needing a copy of the letter to prove non-profit status can visit the GCFA website at: www.gcfa.org. Type “Group Ruling” in the search box, click on the first choice which is the request form. The form can be completed on the computer or printed out blank and filled in by hand. The form can then be faxed or emailed to GCFA with the number supplied on the form.

If the church provides an email address, GCFA usually can respond to the request in a few days. They will email the church a copy of the 501c3 letter, plus a letter certifying that the requesting church is a member of the group.

If the church is seeking a grant from a state or federal agency, they sometimes want a DUNS number for the church. Each church has to have its own DUNS number. It cannot use a conference or UM number. Fortunately, the DUNS number is easy to get. Go to www.dnb.com and click on the DUNS number choice and follow the prompts.

W-2 help available

Church treasurers and clergy needing guidance on filling out W-2's have a resource on the GCFA website. Several different resources appear on the Clergy Tax Packet page, which can be accessed from the GCFA website by visiting www.gcfa.org. Once at the site, type in “clergy tax packet” in the search box. Click on the first search result.

The page has many different resources, including example or information for W-2 forms.

Trenton First UMC to offer scholarship

The Jeff Campbell Family has established the J.A.M. Scholarship – A Celebration of the Life and Music of Justin Andrew Melzer.

The mission of this scholarship is to honor the memory of Justin Melzer, son of

Rev. Ron Melzer and Rev. Debbie Melzer, and his ministry through music and to encourage participation in church music ministries. It is our prayer and intention that this scholarship will cultivate and stimulate a future generation of church musicians.

\$500 will be awarded annually to a qualified recipient. Applicants for this scholarship must be a member of a United Methodist Church in the Illinois Great Rivers Conference. These persons may either be graduating high school seniors, college undergraduates, or students attending a tech or trade school. A requirement for award selection is that the applicant is an active participant in a music ministry within their church.

Application deadline is April 1. Award will be announced in May. To obtain an application for this scholarship, you can go to the church's website at www.trentonfumc.com and click on the link to the scholarship. You may also call the church office at 618-224-7416.

It is our hope and prayer that each year funds will allow more than one scholarship to be awarded. If you would like to make a donation to the J.A.M. Scholarship, please make your check out to the First UMC with “J.A.M. Scholarship” written in the memo. Donations should be mailed to Trenton First UMC, 220 N Main Street, Trenton, IL 62293. All scholarships will be awarded from the First UMC in Trenton.

Gifted to Serve: a ministry and leadership discovery retreat

Bloomington Wesley UMC's Leadership Development Team is hosting a one-day ministry and leadership discovery retreat for adults on Saturday, March 6, from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

The retreat, *Gifted to Serve*, has been adapted from the popular and well-respected Lifekeys program developed by Jane Kise, David Stark and Sandra Krebs Hirsh.

There is no fee to participate in the retreat but a free-will offering will be taken to cover the cost of lunch. To register, visit the Bloomington Wesley website (www.wesley-umc.com) or contact Jody Robbins at 309-827-8046 or by email at jrobbins@wesley-umc.com

The Gifted to Serve Retreat is rooted in the belief that life and service are not one-size fits all experiences. Our diversity as unique individuals is a cause for celebration because when each of us collaborates from a position of strength, we are able to more fully realize the rich design of God's grand tapestry. The retreat leaders will help you find meaning and purpose in your

See Announcements on page 6 ...

Sweet to speak at men's wellness event

Platform includes Christian comedian Jonathan Slocumb, seven-time Grammy nominee Vanessa Bell Armstrong



Leonard Sweet — Shiloh UMC on Saturday, March 27, from 9:30 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Sweet will be joined by Christian comedian Jonathan Slocumb and International Gospel Industry Award vocalist Vanessa Bell Armstrong as part of the event, sponsored by the Metro East Project, in cooperation with the Illinois Department of Public Health's Center for Minority Health Services.

Free prostate screening will be available through the mobile Wellness on Wheels, which will be parked on-site throughout the event.

Sweet served from 1995 to 2001 as Vice President of Academic Affairs and Dean of the Theological School at Drew University, Madison, N.J. He is also a visiting distinguished professor at George Fox University in Portland, Oreg., and President Emeritus of United Theological Seminary. He is a weekly contributor to the online preaching resource, *sermons.com*.

Author of more than two hundred articles, 1,200 published sermons and almost 40 books, he is currently working on two textbooks: one on preaching (*Giving Blood*) and one on evangelism (*Pay Attention: Every Bush is Burning*). His most recent book is *So Beautiful: Divine Design for Life and the Church*. The last two years Sweet has been voted by his peers as “One of the 50 Most Influential Christians in America” as polled by *ChurchReport* magazine. His popular weekly podcast is called “Napkin Scribbles.” Sweet is designated as one of “The Twitter Elite,” and routinely ranks in the top 1,000 of the millions of Twitter users worldwide.



Jonathan Slocumb

In an era when it is common for comics to use four-letter words and make sexual innuendos, Slocumb is known as “Mr. Clean.” “Mixing comedy with gospel messages and music is certainly a unique approach,” wrote Janine Coveney in *Billboard*, “and that's the road taken by newcomer Jonathan Slocumb.” The difference for Slocumb is his Christian outlook. “My greatest challenge,” he told the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, “is to show

people that you can enjoy life, laugh and be a Christian. Besides, your health is better when you laugh.”

Slocumb started performing as a comic in his late twenties after working as an account representative for AT&T. He was discovered when Gail Hamilton of Choice Management saw him serve as the master of ceremonies for a gospel concert. Hamilton asked him if he had any more material, and soon he was touring as the opening act for Take 6. Later, Slocumb would open concerts for performers like Natalie Cole, Vanessa Bell, and Shirley Caesar, and co-host the Stellar Awards and Lou Rawls' Parade of Stars. His comic work was influenced by other “clean” comics like Bill Cosby, Sinbad, and Arsenio Hall. He admitted to Taylor that a number of comedians make him laugh. “But no one does it like Bill Cosby! He and Sinbad are the ones making my life as wonderful as it is.”

In 1997 Slocumb released *Laugh Yo' Self 2 Life!* on Warner Brothers. The album included the retelling of Biblical stories (“Noah ‘Jackson’ / David ‘Holyfield’ & Goliath / Job's Blues”), church humor (“Preachers” and “People in the Pews”) and growing up (“Childhood”). “Recording artist Jonathan Slocumb carves out his own recording genre, Gospel/Comedy, with *Laugh Yourself 2 Life!*,” wrote Teresa Graham in the *Times Union*, “providing observation humor on a portion of African-American life often overlooked by comedians—the church.” *Billboard* concurred: “Slocumb professes his faith and love for African-American women,” wrote Janine Coveney, “pokes gentle fun at some of the church's stock characters, and skewers the family. Nothing too heavy or satirical, just lighthearted fun.”



Vanessa Bell Armstrong

Vanessa Bell Armstrong made her solo debut on Onyx/Muscle Shoals Sound Records in 1983 with the album *Peace Be Still*. The title track has since become one of Armstrong's signature songs. Armstrong's second album *Chosen* hit number one on the US *Billboard* Top Gospel Albums chart.

Bell Armstrong performed on the 1st Annual Soul Train Awards ceremony. Her 1986 album *Following Jesus* won a Soul Train Music Award for Best Gospel Album - Solo in 1988. She is also a seven-time Grammy Award nominee.

Local Church News

Arthur community meals focus on food, fellowship

By Jodi Heckel
Champaign News-Gazette

ARTHUR — It was a bitter cold January night, with a snowstorm forecast to begin later in the evening.

But mothers and children, retirees, congregation members and others braved the cold to come to the Arthur United Methodist Church for a meal.

The kitchen at the church was buzzing with activity by mid-afternoon.

Volunteers wearing aprons and visors were spooning pudding into bowls, pouring lemonade and pulling stacks of plates from cabinets. Five large pots of green beans sat on the stovetop, and large warming pans held slices of pork tenderloin, mashed potatoes and gravy.

A pink plastic tablecloth was unrolled over tables that were soon covered with bowls of lettuce salad, fruit salad and desserts.

People began to fill the basement, as they have every Wednesday for nearly a year.

The community meals at the Arthur church began last February as a Lenten project for the church's youth groups.

The Methodist church had long provided dinner on Wednesday nights for the young people who participate in the youth groups.

The youth leaders knew there were families who had trouble putting enough food on the table, especially with the poor economy. So it was decided to open up the Wednesday night meals to the entire community during Lent. The youth groups would pay for the food from their budget.

But they didn't want anyone feeling awkward about coming to the church for

food. Church members were encouraged to eat at the community meal as well, so any needy families could be comfortable being part of the crowd.

The meals are about more than feeding the hungry. Every week, the crowd includes many who are there for the company, to eat a meal with friends.

"We have what I call belly-hungry, and what I call just hungry for community," said Donna Jurgens, one of the co-chairs of the community meals. "Times have been bad for people in a lot of different ways. We're feeding lots of things besides hunger."

Bud Seaman lives alone, since his wife died last spring. He's a regular at the meals, and if he can't get out, someone will deliver a meal to him.

"It gives me a chance to get out and see people," Seaman said.

And he likes the food. "It's just home cooking."

The food at the meals has ranged from chuck roast to spaghetti to soup and grilled cheese sandwiches. The meals always include a hot vegetable, some form of potatoes and dessert.

It usually costs from \$350 to \$400 each week to buy the food, with about \$200 spent on meat. Jurgens and co-chair John Strawn plan the meals. They talk with Dick Elder at the meat counter of the Arthur IGA about what meat is on sale that week, and the grocery store gives them the best price possible.

Other Arthur businesses have donated food, including Yoder's Kitchen and R&I Restaurant.

When the church began the meals, they



Pastor Leroy Allison talks with (left to right) Chris Crabtree, Joe Garza, James Allen, Derrill Allen as they get ready to eat Jan. 6. They were at the weekly community meal served on Wednesday at the Arthur Methodist Church.

had no idea how many people to expect each week. They still don't know. Jurgens and Strawn plan to feed 200 to 225 people, with enough left to send plenty home in takeout boxes.

They have had crowds ranging from 120 to more than 200 people this past fall, with a high of 280 people one Wednesday in November.

Last week, they fed 215 people. By 5:30 that evening, most tables were full, the basement was filled with voices, and there was a line at the serving counter.

"When we first started doing this, we couldn't imagine so many people would come," said Monica Green, one of the youth leaders.

Jurgens and Strawn are amazed they have

never run out of food. They keep some food in the freezer, and cheese for grilled cheese sandwiches, just in case. Last week, after the green beans were gone, they pulled out canned corn and began serving it.

In addition to the meals eaten in the church basement, many people get takeout boxes with food for another meal later or for family members.

Any leftovers at the end of the night are delivered to families who use the church's food pantry.

Lisa Doss is a single mother to three children, ages 8, 5 and 3, and she's out of work. She ate at last week's meal with her three kids, plus two children she was caring for that evening.

See Arthur on page 5 ...



In 1950, Mildred Briley began a labor of love for the Gilead UMC when she agreed to be the Church Treasurer. After 60 years of keeping the books and paying the bills, Mildred passed the mantle to the next generation. She was honored for her dedication by Pastor Paul W. Widicus and the members of Gilead during the worship service on Sunday, Dec. 27. She was also honored at a luncheon following the service. The Gilead UMC is part of GOD'S New Parish of the United Methodist Churches in the Centralia area.

Photo courtesy of Paul Widicus

Mission work is alive at Belleville Union

By Ed Weston

Belleville Union has had a goal of being a well rounded church — not focusing on just one aspect of congregational growth, but on all areas of worship, nurture, mission and outreach.

It has a unique ministry of being a downtown church in the largest city in Southern Illinois south of Springfield. In 1998, the church decided after much study and prayer, to remain downtown—not to relocate to the "suburbs" where the population was growing rapidly. Rather, they saw their mission as being committed to the downtown area with its dropping population and increasing poverty and homelessness.

In the past nine years, the church has expanded its facility several times, building nearly \$5.5 million of additional space. They also rebuilt from the ashes of a 2002 fire that destroyed its offices and youth center.

In the past year, the congregation has been involved in the following mission projects:

- Developed with IGRC Congregational Development support, a satellite center in Freeburg, with an average of 70 in attendance after one year. The Journey is following in Union's footsteps, having adopted a school lunch program in the Philippines, feeding 130 weekly.

- Provided the funds to build the New Hope UMC in Paynesville, Liberia

- Provided nearly 70 sack lunches weekly to the homeless in downtown

- Operate a food pantry two mornings a week that serves over 45 people weekly

- Donated a van (in partnership with O'Fallon First UMC) to the developing Hispanic Ministry in Washington Park, with \$200 in gas certificates

- Provided Christmas gifts to 50 area families

- Provided more than 75 coats and 50 blankets to Neighborhood House

And so much more for the church also has a very active United Methodist Women's unit that focuses on mission work. The need is great — but generous hearts always find a way to respond.

Local Church News

Arthur

Continued from page 4

“Six mouths to feed. That isn’t cheap,” she said.

Not having to pay for one meal a week “really does help,” Doss said. “And it gives Mom a day off, and it gives the kids something to do. It’s like going out to eat, without the cost of going out to eat.”

She and her children ate at the church the night before Thanksgiving, and she left with a container full of extra turkey and mashed potatoes.

“It helps me out to know there are people who are for you and support you,” she said. “It’s like a family. Everyone is so warm and open-hearted and kind. They don’t know you, but they’re willing to reach out and help you.”

The church also provides donated clothing to needy families, mostly children’s clothing and winter coats. The number of people using the clothing shop, called “God’s Closet,” has tripled since the community meals began, said Iris Ramsey, who runs the operation.

Families can eat at the church, then go upstairs to select what they might need. Last week, seven families got hats, gloves, boots and children’s pajamas.

When Cynthia Allen moved to Arthur from Florida a few years ago, the church

helped her family out by providing winter coats and boots.

The Wednesday night meals have become a family time for her. She and her four children, ages 13 to 5, eat there every week, along with her sister-in-law, a niece and nephew, and her mother-in-law.

“I think it’s wonderful,” Allen said. “It brings people together.”

At the end of Lent, church members talked about what would happen to the community meals. They decided they would continue, although the youth groups would not continue sponsoring them.

The church paid for the meals for a few weeks. They decided to begin accepting donations in mid-May. They don’t ask for money at the meal, and they put the stock pot that serves as a donation box in the sanctuary, rather than in the basement, so as not to make anyone feel uncomfortable if they can’t make a donation. Early on, someone asked the church’s minister, the Rev. Leroy Allison, if the church could afford to provide the meals.

“I said, ‘We can’t afford not to be in ministry to the community,’” Allison said.

The congregation members who eat at the church every week are vital to the meals, Jurgens said, because their donations have made continuing the meals possible.

The donations no longer cover all the

cost. But an anonymous donor in the congregation offered to make up the difference every week.

In addition to worries about cost, there was concern about finding volunteers – and about burning out those who spend a half-day or more working at the church every Wednesday.

“But we’ve got people who want to do this, who feel it’s important to them,” said Allison. “It’s a vital part of their week to do this.”

Betty Klaus is at the church every week, usually helping prepare the desserts. She lives alone, and it’s important to her to work and visit with others each week.

“Besides, I’m doing something worthwhile,” she said.

“We are helping other people, but the church is the big winner,” said Janece Dicks, who was helping serve food last Wednesday. “The fellowship, the being together, is really great. Tremendous.”

Danny and Gaye Powell work the later shift on Wednesdays, busing tables and washing dishes.

“To me, this is what church should be,” said Danny Powell. “You’re involved. It’s like mission work.”

Allison agreed, saying he has long preached that ministry is the job of the entire congregation.

“It’s the church in action, as it should



Photos by Darrell Hoemann, Champaign News-Gazette, ©2010

Arlone Doan puts gravy on a plate as she and Janece Dicks and Billie Bernius (green shirt) serve the food on Wednesday, Jan. 6, 2010. They were at the weekly community meal served on Wednesday at the Arthur Methodist Church.

be,” he said. “This has been good for the community. It’s been good for the church. It’s been very good for us. It has given people something to come and to do, to say church is not just a building that’s open for an hour or two on Sunday.”

(Reprinted with permission from the Jan. 10 issue of the Champaign News-Gazette)

Carthage UMC earns Welcoming Certification Award

NASHVILLE — First UMC in Carthage, a congregation of the LaMoine River District, has been recognized by United Methodist Communications (UMCom) as an official “Welcoming Congregation.”

“Welcoming Congregations” are a select group of United Methodist congregations nationwide that meets criteria including embracing newcomers and providing opportunities in discipleship. The recognition program is part of a larger effort launched in late 2000 by UMCom, the

denomination’s communications agency, to use modern technology and the common language of television to spread the Good News of Christ to a world in need.

For the past eight years, “Open hearts, Open minds, Open doors” has been the theme of the denomination supported with a series of national cable TV advertising, supplemented by regional and local church participation. The overall aim of the effort was to invite people, to enter into connection with the Christian community as they seek meaning and purpose in their lives.

The new campaign, Rethink Church, seeks to capitalize on the previous campaign, targeting 18-34 year olds and inviting churches to think of the motto as a verb, not just an adjective as in: “Together we can...Open hearts, Open minds and Open doors.”

Rev. Larry Hollon is the agency’s top staff executive. More information is available from the agency’s Web site at www.rethinkchurch.org or by calling toll free 1-877-281-6535.



SIU-C Wesley Foundation celebrates years of campus ministry

By Ronna Seibert

CARBONDALE — What began as a 50-year reunion for the SIU-Carbonale Wesley Foundation turned into a celebration of the ministry Oct. 10 during Homecoming Weekend.

Current Wesley Foundation students at SIU-C and director, Sherry Smedshammer hosted the reunion of students from the 1950’s, 60’s and 70’s. Although initial plans were for a 50th year reunion for the class of ’59, the word spread and more than 60 alumni and former Wesley Foundation directors gathered to enjoy the homecoming parade and a meal together. Former Directors who attended included Ron Seibert (1954-1971), Don Carlton (Assoc. Dir 1960-1962), Gerry Gulley (1971-1978), Murriel Nance (1978-1981) and

Ken Wallace (1986-1992).

Graduates of the 1950’s remembered going from church to church throughout the annual conference raising money to build the facility that is still in use. The life-changing impact of participation in work trips and deputation teams were noted as important then as they are to current students today.

Graduates of the 1960’s and early 70’s recalled how being part of a faith community during the civil rights movement and the war in Vietnam impacted their faith journeys. As a witness to Christian unity, integrated groups of students participated in work trips to Mississippi and other southern states.

These groups were sometimes met with hostility, refusal of service and threats of violence. The SIU Wesley Foundation

reached out to the larger university community with “The Well” coffeehouse, “Matter of Conscience” film series, contemporary worship, and choral and drama groups.

Many of the Wesley Foundation alumni chose careers in ordained ministry, mission or some field of service. Many of them met their spouses at the Wesley Foundation. Many are key lay leaders in their local congregations.

The response during the October reunion from those who shared in the day and from the many conversations with those who could not be present, have reaffirmed the joy and love that is shared through this community of Christ’s disciples. Friendships and memories have extended across the years and an immeasurable witness and service has been shared with local communities and churches.



Photo courtesy of Steve Killion

At the beginning of Advent, Rev. Steve Killion challenged the Bridgeport UMC to tithe the amount of money they spent on Christmas gifts and place the tithe in the “Jesus Box” which was under the church Christmas tree.

The theme for Advent was *Whose Birthday Is It, Anyway?*, which came from SimpleLiving.org. The Advent offering finished at nearly \$2,000. The congregation was very supportive of this effort and many have said, “We now have a new tradition.”

Local Church and Conference News

More than 1,100 served in food effort

By Tom Compton
Robinson Daily News

ROBINSON — In a one-time "emergency food distribution" Jan. 9, the Robinson Food Pantry gave out food to nearly 300 households with the help of 200 volunteers.

The distribution is part of a special effort sponsored by Kraft Foods and the Eastern Illinois Food Bank to provide families in need with a one-time supply of food. According to Food Pantry Director Patty Murphy, the program usually provides food for 150 families.

"I told them that would not touch our need here, and asked for enough for 300," said Murphy. "And Kraft agreed."

Despite temperatures in the teens, around 85 volunteers arrived before 9 a.m. Saturday to help unload the two semi-trucks of food. Pallets were rolled to the side door of the Otterbein United Methodist Church, where the pantry is located, and slid down conveyors to the basement where volunteers carried it to designated locations for distribution.

For the 1 p.m. distribution, 115 volunteers arrived to help pass out food and carry it to the cars. Recipients for the food lined up around the church, some holding clothes baskets and boxes to carry out the food. Entering on the west side of the church, recipients signed in and then went from table to table where volunteers handed out a variety of foods such as macaroni and cheese, rice dinners, peanut butter, cereal, bread, and bottled water. Volunteers then helped carry the overflowing boxes to cars.

Murphy said the total count showed 286 households were served - 1,141 people, including 409 children, were provided with food. The feedback she got from recipients was positive.

"Some said that it did not matter if you were first or last in line, you got the same amount of food," Murphy said. "Everybody would come away with food."

The only problems noted from the day Murphy said, was that she got hit in the head during the unloading process, and one of the semi-trucks hit her van.



Jack Storckman, left, watches with other volunteers as two semi-truck loads of food roll down the conveyor, and were carried to designated locations in the church basement.

The event may have not only benefited needy families, but the pantry itself. Murphy said several of the volunteers said they did not realize there was such a need and would like to volunteer on a regular basis. Volunteers from Palestine and Flat Rock were also put in contact with the Palestine Food Pantry so they could

help out there.

"This brought people together," Murphy said. "I could not have done this without the help of volunteers and support of community."

(Reprinted with permission from the Jan. 12 issue of the Robinson Daily News)

Photo courtesy of Tom Compton, Robinson Daily News

Announcements

Continued from page 3

personal ministry by discovering and affirming: what you do best through an examination of your life experiences and spiritual gifts; your personality type and values along with the places and environments that give you the most energy; and your passions, the purposes God has

placed in your heart.

Once you have registered to participate in the retreat, you will receive an assessment scorecard with links to the three online assessment instruments you will need to complete prior to the retreat - Myers Briggs Type Indicator, Strong Interest Inventory, and spiritual gifts survey. Those needing assistance with accessing the online assessments are encouraged to

come to the Bloomington Wesley library on Wednesday, Feb. 10 or Wednesday, Feb. 24 between 6 p.m. and 8 p.m.

Facilitators certified in each of the assessment instruments will be present at the retreat to help you understand what your scores mean and how you can apply your gifts and passions to ministry. Although beyond the narrow focus of this retreat, you may find these newly acquired personal insights useful in clarifying career or employment goals whether you're just starting out or looking to make a mid-life vocational change.

also be a Native American drum, dancers, fry-bread, and Native American Fellowship made goods. There is never a charge to attend any Native American Fellowship events, teachings, or ceremonies. For more information call 309-635-1107.

Torch Award nominees sought

Nominations are being sought for the 2010 Torch Award, recognizing adult leaders who have given exceptional service in the use and promotion of programs of civic youth-serving agencies or scouting.

Nominees shall: be an active member of the UMC displaying Christian character; have a continuous record for 10 years or more of using and supporting the programs of the CYAS; serve the agency in unit, district, council, or other levels by actively participating in the program; counsel young people enrolled in its religious awards program; have served in or helped promote religious services within the agency program.

The local church can award the Cross and Flame Award to those involved in the Youth Serving/Scouting Agencies in the local church. Local Churches who charter Scout units are encouraged to check with the unit leaders to see if any qualify.

Contact either conference scouting coordinator: Raymond Gessel, 309-688-1508, or Dennis Luessenheide, 618-288-5251, for an application for the Torch Award.

Nominations for the 2008 Torch Awards must be in the Conference Ministry Team

See Announcements on page 13 ...



Photo courtesy of Belleville Union UMC

Belleville Union and O'Fallon UMC's joined together to provide an early Christmas gift to the Hispanic ministry in Washington Park led by Pablo Marty. O'Fallon pastors Ron Dickinson and Joel Catlin were at a meeting with Union's pastor Ed Weston, when they learned of the need of a van to transport potential worshippers. The three decided on the spur of the moment to do something. Union was in the process of selling its church van and its Board of Trustees decided to give it away. O'Fallon UMC stepped in to provide the funds to have it professionally painted. Together, the power of God was working through both churches to meet the need. Union's UMW Deborah Circle donated \$200 in gas cards for the church to use to complete the gift which was presented Dec. 23.

Forming Spiritual Leaders

Garrett to hold conference on ethical leadership, the church and the economy

EVANSTON — Bishop Gregory V. Palmer will be one of three United Methodist bishops that will be participating in The Ethical Leadership, the Church and the Global Economy Conference to be held Feb. 25-27 at Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary.

Palmer will be joined by Bishop Sally Dyck of the Minnesota Conference and Bishop John Hopkins of the East Ohio Conference as part of the conference panel. The conference will bring key academic, business and church leaders together to explore ways faith communities can become agents of transformation in the new economic reality of the Midwest and the world.

“The changing global economy is having a dramatic impact on our communities, our congregations and the mission of the church itself,” says Dr. Mark Fowler, Garrett-Evangelical vice president for vocation in ministry. “In order to have some focused conversation and to look at possible responses for church leaders, congregations and the academic community, we have organized a conference that brings together the best of those who have led us in thinking about these issues. We are also gathering church leaders who will engage the conversation and will participate with those who attend the conference in establishing concrete next steps for the church, the academy and the witness of the church in the world.”

Conference goals are threefold: 1) to refine and focus the impact of the global economy and formulate strategic directions for the church’s response; 2) to establish relationships across the church and the academy to think strategically and ethically in order to address the changing realities in our communities and institutions; and 3) to shape the work we will do

as leaders and members of the church and the academy to impact the effects of the global economy in this time of change.

Distinguished speakers and work-group leaders include:

- Bishop Gregory Palmer, President of the Council of Bishops, United Methodist Church
- Richard Longworth, Senior Fellow, Chicago Council on Global Affairs and author of “Caught in the Middle: America’s Heartland in the Age of Globalism”
- Dr. Max Stackhouse, Professor Emeritus at Princeton Theological Seminary and international speaker on faith and globalization
- Dr. Walter Fluker, Executive Director of the Leadership Center, Morehouse College
- Bishop Sally Dyck, Minnesota Episcopal Area, United Methodist Church
- Dr. Brent Waters, Director of the Stead Center for Ethics and Values, Garrett-Evangelical
- Dr. Dipak Jain, Northwestern University’s Kellogg School of Management
- Dr. Juan Floyd-Thomas, Vanderbilt University Divinity School
- Dr. Peter Paris, Princeton Theological Seminary
- Dr. Drew Smith, Director of the Center for the Church and the Black Experience, Garrett-Evangelical
- Bishop John Hopkins, Ohio East Episcopal Area, United Methodist Church
- Dr. Philip Amerson, President, Garrett-Evangelical

For more information, including the conference schedule, and to register online, visit www.garrett.edu/elc or contact Wendy Kneer at 847-866-3961 or wendy.kneer@garrett.edu.

Self-care Covenant Workshop slated

A clergy self-care covenant workshop, sponsored by the General Board of Pensions and Pastoral Care and Counseling Center, will be held April 16-17 at the Conference Center in Springfield.

There is no cost to the participant. However, for those requiring overnight lodging, participants will be on their own to secure motel rooms. Pastoral Care and Counseling will be providing scholarship monies for lodging through the district superintendents’ offices. Online registration will be available beginning Feb. 1.

During the workshop, participants will:

- Make the connections among spiritual, mental, social and physical health
- Describe how servant leadership requires self-care
- Experience stress management techniques and learn how to say “No”

Discuss recommendations for eating, physical activity, water and sleep

- Self-assess current health behaviors and choices
- Develop a self-care covenant with an accountability plan.

Judy Johnson from Kansas University School of Medicine and Rev. Tom Mattick, a clergy member of the Desert Southwest Conference of The United Methodist Church will be the workshop leaders. The workshop format was developed and tested in the Kansas East and Kansas West conferences. The General Board of Pensions and Health Benefits has recently been licensed as the official distributor of this workshop by the Kansas United Methodist Health Ministry Fund in Hutchinson, Kan.

Marked Leadership Camp raising up new leaders

For the last three years, high school students have been descending upon Living Springs Camp in Lewistown for a week of in depth leadership training known as *Marked: Leadership Development Camp*.

They say that necessity is the mother of invention, and that is very much the case when it comes to Marked.

Marked was the product of several months of discussion between a few IGRC youth leaders and Peggy O’Neal, conference coordinator of Camping and Youth Ministries. They noticed that there was a lack of leadership at the high school level and very little was being done to train up a new generation of leaders. These discussions, coupled with much prayer, inspired a vision of a one-week camp, part of a four-year academy, for high school students that would focus on developing the skills and hearts of leadership students.

Rev. Sarah Wanck, pastor of Victoria and Maxey Chapel UMC’s and Chuck Hilman, director of youth ministries at Geneseo Grace UMC serve as co-directors of Marked and work with a diverse group of volunteers including ordained elders, youth directors, teachers, police officers and others who are all passionate about developing young people into leaders.

The goal of Marked is to raise up a generation of Christian leaders, regardless of their chosen future profession. The world needs young leaders, be they clergy or laity, who can lead from a biblical perspective.

Marked Camp trains student leaders by focusing on four areas of instruction: leadership characteristics, spiritual disciplines, strengths-training and working in a team. The camp staff believes these areas are vital for developing students into strong leaders.

Each year the camp focuses on five characteristics of leadership that are found in the lives of biblical leaders and set them apart from the crowd and marked them as a leader. Each day, a speaker who has a high level of experience in the subject, is brought to camp to lead a morning workshop that focuses on the practical aspect of the day’s leadership characteristic. That evening the speaker preaches at the camp worship service and looks at a biblical character that exemplified the characteristic and inspires the students to put the charac-



teristic into practice.

The camp staff also strongly believes that any Christian leader needs to consistently practice the spiritual disciplines. Rev. Mike Mayfield, the camp chaplain, spends time daily with the students and helps them discover the beauty of the spiritual disciplines, how valuable they are to godly leadership and provides practical instruction on how to incorporate the disciplines into their lives.

The third focus, strengths training, comes out of the belief that leaders are most effective when they are leading out of their God-given strengths. To do that we require all students to complete the Strengthfinder 2.0 survey to discover their natural strengths. Rev. Jeremy Henson, a certified Strengthfinder Trainer, then spends time each day with the campers helping them understand and develop their strengths.

The final focus is teamwork. Every leader needs to be able to work in a team and to utilize the strengths and weaknesses of all team members in order to achieve their goals. To that end, time is spent each day on a team challenge course designed to stretch their abilities and intelligence to the max and require them to lean on their teammates.

Marked is a four-year academy in which each year builds on the previous year. This year was the third year of the camp and students who have been to the previous two years were sent off to Peoria each day on a service project to put their skills and strengths to work in a real world setting. Next summer, those who are accepted into the fourth year of the program will spend much of their time working with the first year campers and putting their leadership skills to work.

Marked Camp is an excellent opportunity for students to grow as leaders. Next year’s camp will be June 13-20th at Living Springs Camp. We are always looking for new students, so if you know anyone who might be a good fit for Marked please encourage him or her to apply. Applications will be on the camp website by mid-October.

Participation is open to all clergy and spouses, Cabinet, staff (both lay and clergy), members of the Board of Pastoral Care and Counseling, members of the Connectional Table and members of the Bishop’s Task Force on Wellness.

Register for the April 16-17 Self-care Covenant Workshop beginning Feb. 1 at <http://self-care-covenant.eventbrite.com>

Developing New Congregations and Revitalizing Existing Ones

Fruitful Congregations Leadership Institute deadline approaching

Both capacity and registration deadline are rapidly approaching for the Fruitful Congregations Leadership Institute. Friday, Feb. 19 is the last day covenants will be accepted for the first session to be held March 6-7, in Normal.

Congregational Teams (pastor and at least 3-5 laity) will participate in a series of five workshops based over a 2 ½ year period. Jim Griffith will be the presenter for the first workshop titled *Radical Hospitality: How to Reach More People*.

The Office of Congregational

Development will provide ongoing coaching for churches, as they participate in the FCLI. For more information about the FCLI, the commitment made by the local church, and the workshops and support offered by the Office of Congregational Development, visit the Conference website.

Note: Because of space limitations, the FCLI is currently limited to 30 participating churches. As of the publication deadline, 20 churches had submitted covenants.

Workshop to evaluate church systems

Church teams are encouraged to register for a one-day workshop to be held Saturday, April 17, 2010, at Savoy UMC. The workshop is titled *Grow Your Church Where You Are*.

The workshop will be led by Brad Kalajainen and Ken Nash, pastors of Cornerstone UMC in Caledonia, Michigan. The workshop will help participants to evaluate all major systems of their church. There will be dozens of practical ideas presented to increase the church's capacity to reach new people in the community. The principles taught are designed to fit any size congregation and any age church.

On-site check-in will begin at 9 a.m. and the workshop will run from 9:30 a.m. until 3:30 p.m. The cost for the workshop is \$60 for up to three people from a church and \$20 for each additional person (i.e. one person, \$60 total; three people, \$60 total; four people, \$80 total). There is an early bird discount if registered with full payment by March 15. The registration fee includes payment for lunch. All participants MUST pre-register no later than April 7.

Contact the Office of Congregational Development at congdev@igrc.org or visit the Conference website to download the registration form.

Large Church Initiative April 12-15

The Large Church Initiative 2010 has been slated for April 12-15 at University UMC in San Antonio, Texas.

The goal for the 2010 national training event is to introduce persons to leading thinkers, major speakers, cutting-edge systems for making disciples and making decisions that make disciples. Participants will leave San Antonio with new tools for coaching individual disciples and coordinating institutional decisions. These tools will grow your congregation larger in both size and significance. Teams will also

establish new contacts, friendships and peer networks that can assist you for years to come. LCI 2010 will help any congregation, especially those with a weekly worship attendance of 350 and more.

A sampling of LCI2010 speakers and consultants include Will Mancini, Dr. Joy Moore, Nancy Ortberg, Will Willimon, Randy Frazee, Lovett Weems, Reggie McNeal, Dick Wills, Bob Whitesel, and Jim Sheppard.

For complete information on the Large Church Initiative, visit: www.lci2010.com

Worship Team among those providing resources for coping after quake

By Tim Ghianni

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (GBOD) — Within hours of the Jan. 12 earthquake in Haiti, the Worship Team had more than a half-dozen tools posted at www.gbod.org/worship that could help United Methodists and others figuring how to deal with the crisis in Haiti, either as parishioners, preachers or as music leaders.

While the tools are designed for United Methodists, the Worship Team — a part of the General Board of Discipleship (GBOD), an agency of The United Methodist Church — knows that many denominations visit the site to find prayer,

visual resources, poetry, litany, sermons and even special offertory and music features.

"When something like this happens, this takes immediate precedence, because there is the need and desire from churches all over to have these materials to use in worship," says Dean McIntyre, director of music resources for the team that also includes Taylor Burton-Edwards, director of worship, and Safiyah Fosua, director of invitational preaching ministries.

"It is so gut-wrenching and sometimes disabling for people. If I can put a new hymn up there or we can put a new worship video up, it's a God-given privilege

Older Adult Ministry seminars planned for March

Going On to Perfection? Our Spiritual Journey Continues is the theme for the upcoming March 2010 seminars sponsored by the IGRC Older Adult Ministries Task Force. This seminar is scheduled for the week of March 14th in four different locations.

- Monday, March 15 at Marion Aldersgate UMC. Rev. Larry Gilbert seminar leader

- Tuesday, March 16 at Lebanon First UMC, Rev. Dr. Beverly Wilkes Null leader

- Thursday, March 18 at Galesburg First UMC, Rev. Terry Clark leader

- Friday, March 19 at Champaign First UMC, Rev. Paul Unger leader

Each seminar will run from 9:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. Cost is \$20 per participant and includes a continental breakfast, light lunch and all seminar materials.

Register for all of these events by calling Sidna Young at 217-529-3257 or e-mail Sidna at syoung@igrc.org or sangamonriver@igrc.org. Registration costs for groups or individuals may be mailed to Sidna at: Sidna Young, Sangamon District Office, P O Box 3487, Springfield, IL 62708-3487. **Registration deadline is Friday, March 5.** A brochure of the seminars will soon be available by contacting Sidna and on the IGRC website.

Each seminar location will include a morning presentation and discussion on spirituality and aging led by one of our IGRC clergy. The afternoon session will be led by Rev. Anna Kpann, Director of Ministry to the Aged for the Liberia Annual Conference. Rev. Kpann visits in the homes of retired clergy and homebound senior citizens throughout the Liberia Annual Conference, distributing rice and clothing and offering encouragement and support.

In early November, 2009, Bunny Wolfe, IGRC coordinator of missions and outreach, went with Rev. Kpann to visit several elderly being served in the Monrovia area. Some were retired minis-



Rev. Kpann visits in the homes of retired clergy and homebound senior citizens throughout the Liberia Annual Conference, distributing rice and clothing and offering encouragement and support. Illinois Great Rivers Conference and its churches have provided some of the rice that Kpann distributes during her visits.

ters and widows of retired ministers of the Liberia Annual Conference and stories of God's provision, care and protection were abundant.

Rev. Kpann will share the importance of staying connected with God and how this sustains older adults in Liberia. Our friends in Liberia hold onto faith in the face of seemingly insurmountable and impossible conditions and they can teach us how to hold onto God when God is all that is left in our lives. God is their sustainer, provider and comforter in all situations and all times.

Going On to Perfection? Our Spiritual Journey Continues is an opportunity to explore how spirituality is vital to all stages of our life and particularly how to maintain a healthy and active spiritual walk. How often do we hear the phrase "Been there - done that!" within our local congregations? Yet this is not true in our walk with God. There is always more to learn. There is always a deeper relationship with God to be sought.

for us to be able to put these words in the mouths of worshipers all over the world," says McIntyre, who also was called into similar emergency work during the period around 9/11, the 2004 Asian tsunami and Hurricane Katrina.

"A preacher might say 'Omigosh, I've got a Sunday worship service' right after something like this happens," and he or she can visit the GBOD Worship site at www.gbod.org to find the appropriate links. It's easy to find the dedicated offerings for this crisis by simply looking at the main page. For more details, click on Haiti Earthquake Response — Resources.

There are links to an on-line giving form

and tips on how to assemble a health kit.

Beginning Feb. 1, Upper Room Ministries will be offering Prayers for Haiti: Words of Hope for People Who Help (product #1037). These are single booklets of prayers and meditations for those affected by the earthquakes and include a special meditation from Bishop Charlene Kammerer.

The Upper Room also has books and other resources available that can aid people in times of need and loss at www.upperroom.org/bookstore.

Tim Ghianni is a Nashville, Tenn.-based freelance writer for the United Methodist Board of Discipleship.

Forming Discipleship Systems

Senior High YAR registration underway

Registration is underway for the 2010 Senior High YAR to be held Feb. 26-28 at the Lake Williamson Retreat Center in Carlinville.

Colin McCartney, founder of UrbanPromise Toronto, will be the keynote speaker and music will be provided by the Scott England Band.

Colin and his wife Judith started UrbanPromise Toronto in 1998. **UrbanPromise** is a para-church ministry that was started in the USA under the direction of Dr. Tony Campolo. UrbanPromise Toronto's mandate is to "proclaim the love of Jesus, and to express it through educational, social, and spiritual development of children, youth and families in government housing projects in Toronto, Canada." UrbanPromise Toronto targets children, teens and single moms in high-risk communities through after school tutoring programs, summer camps, youth leadership and employment development and single Mom's ministry. UrbanPromise Toronto also has an extensive intern program where young adults, 18-26 years of age, can serve in the city.

The Chicago-born Scott England now makes his home in Atlanta, Ga. In the summer of 1996 the rock/pop artist, singer/songwriter and worship leader stepped out and began his music career. With years of experience crafting his gift, England continues to encourage, uplift, and inspire listeners through his music. With three bands, six albums, numerous recording productions, frequent performances, multiple accolades, and over a decade of preparation under his belt, Scott England is slowly but surely loving his way into the people's hearts all across the globe.

"I like to consider myself a 'musicianary.' You will find me at youth camps, school campuses, coffee houses, clubs and amphitheaters all over the world, as well as serving youth and music in the local churches," England says.

For more information or for a registration packet, contact Peggy O'Neal, coordinator of camping, retreat and youth ministries at 217-529-2646, 217-529-3007 or by email at camping@igrc.org

Confirmation Retreats on four different weekends

Four weekend retreats, designed to enhance a confirmation journey, will be held in February and March at three conference campsites.

Persons who are going through confirmation or are considering confirmation are invited to join in a weekend of fun as the group explores the meaning of belonging to the church and the support the church family provides. The camps will be using Claim the Name curriculum provided by Cokesbury.

The camps are designed to complement, not replace confirmation classes in the local church.

Registration is limited to a certain number so early registration can ensure your choice of campsite.

Cost for the weekend is \$85 and is all-inclusive room, board and materials.

Dates of the Confirmation Retreats are as follows:

Feb. 5-7 at Living Springs Camp in Lewistown, led by Bill Pyatt and Wally Carlson

Feb. 5-7 at Little Grassy in Makanda, led by Kim Stuby

Feb. 19-21 at East Bay Camp in Hudson, led by Keith Michaels

March 12-14 at East Bay Camp in Hudson, led by Keith Michaels

One adult must attend with each group of five or fewer youth. For more information, contact Peggy O'Neal, coordinator of camping, retreat and youth ministries at 217-529-2646, 217-529-3007 or by email at camping@igrc.org Registration forms and materials are available at <http://igrcamp.org>

Retreat to focus on worship and hospitality

Drinking Deeper and Sharing the Cup: Experiencing Worship and Hospitality, the second event in the Deeper Still series of retreats sponsored by the IGRC New Streams Team, will be held Friday and Saturday, April 16-17, at West Salem Trinity UMC in Mt. Vernon.

Bishop Gregory Palmer is the featured speaker for this event, which will focus on worship as a way to grow in our love for God, and hospitality as a way to grow in our love for our neighbor. Through hands-on participation, along with times of teach-

ing and reflection, participants will be encouraged to deepen their experience of and participation in these two spiritual disciplines.

Participants will have the option of receiving overnight hospitality in the home of a Mt. Vernon area family or arranging their own lodging in a local hotel. Child care will be available for a limited number of young children.

For information or to register online for the April 16-17 Deeper Still event, visit <http://drinkingdeeper.eventbrite.com>.

Drinking Deeper and Sharing the Cup ...

Experiencing Worship and Hospitality



Online registration for the Deeper Still event April 16-17 is available by visiting: <http://drinkingdeeper.eventbrite.com>

Renewal is found in Wesley's 'means of grace'



By Andrew C. Thompson
UMR Columnist

There are a lot of dissatisfied Christians in our culture. The world constantly pulls and pushes them in ways they don't want to go. They know their faith should help them make sense of their lives, but it often feels too thin to make a real difference.

When I talk to members of the United Methodist Church from around the connection, they often say they want to see the renewal of the Church. I believe that. But I also think they want to see a renewal of their own lives.

Put another way: They want to experience salvation.

These two types of renewal are intertwined. The renewal of the Church depends on the renewal of the individuals in its membership. And the salvation of God's people depends on their incorporation into the Church, which is the body of Christ.

I'll make the case in my next few columns that the Church's renewal depends on how we engage a specific set

of practices called the means of grace. These are the practices God gives us to build us up (individually) and the Church up (collectively), so they are important to the very possibility of our salvation.

But just so I don't get the cart before the horse, let me explain a little bit about what I mean when I use that term—means of grace.

Historian Richard P. Heitzenrater has suggested that the best understanding of grace in a Wesleyan sense is the "active presence and power of God." Grace is the pardon we receive in Jesus Christ for sin. But grace is also the source of our transformation into new creatures.

It means God doesn't just want to forgive us. God also wants to restore us to the holiness for which we were originally created. God wants to transform us through love.

Naturally, God can give grace any way he likes. (The Book of Acts provides some examples of grace given in pretty extraordinary ways.) But the consistent witness of Scripture is that God has provided certain means by which grace is regularly received in the Church.

John Wesley explains the importance of the means of grace for salvation when he

says, "As God . . . knew there was but one way for man to be happy like himself, namely, by being like him in holiness; as he knew we could do nothing toward this of ourselves, he has given us certain means of obtaining his help."

Elsewhere he calls the means of grace "means of drawing near to God."

So the means are central to any notion of renewal for just this reason: They are the way we can draw near to God. And that means it is important to understand what they are and how to engage in them.

I call the means of grace "practices" because they are repeatable activities of worship and discipleship.

For instance, the "instituted" means of grace are those that were instituted by Jesus Christ in the New Testament. Methodists identify the instituted means of grace as Prayer, Searching the Scriptures, Holy Communion, Fasting and Christian Conference.

Then there are the "prudential" means of grace. These might not be specifically commanded in the Bible, but they arise out of biblical principles and are found by experience to be sources of God's gracious activity. We call them "prudential"

The Rev. Thompson maintains a blog at www.genxrising.com: andrew@mandatum.org

because we discover them by prudence, or practical wisdom, as we live out our discipleship. Sometimes these are described with reference to Matthew 25—as activities of ministry that involve feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, welcoming the stranger, caring for the sick and visiting the imprisoned.

Some of this stuff might sound like no big deal. Who doesn't pray every once in awhile? And who hasn't received Holy Communion in the last year?

The tension comes in when we look at the role of the means of grace in our daily lives. Do we allow our lives to be patterned according to other priorities, adding in our Christian faith only when there is time? Are we really choosing to serve other gods and only occasionally giving a nod to the God we know in Jesus Christ?

Or are the means of grace themselves the pattern for our daily lives? For only when the central practices of faith become truly central to our lives will transformation really happen.

And only then will we see renewal in the United Methodist Church.

(Reprinted with permission from The United Methodist Reporter, umportal.org.)

Remembering those who gave their lives



UMCOR's Sam Dixon remembered for life of service



Rev. Sam Dixon

By Linda Bloom*

RALEIGH, N.C. (UMNS) — Hundreds of worshippers celebrated Jan. 22 the life of the Rev. Sam Dixon, the leader of the United Methodist Committee on Relief who was on a mission of mercy when he died in the rubble of the Haitian earthquake.

Friends and family, United Methodists from agency leaders and bishops to North Carolina colleagues and missionaries in the field, gathered at Edenton Street United Methodist Church to remember a life given in service to others.

"Do you not know that a prince and a great man has fallen this day in Israel," the Rev. William Simpson said in a moving eulogy referring to 2 Samuel 3:38.

Simpson, Dixon's former pastor and a close friend, noted that Dixon died on the birthday of the slain civil rights leader, the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr.

"Dr. King said the ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in the moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands in times of challenge and controversy. I believe that fits Sam Dixon," Simpson said.

The Rev. James Gulley, an UMCOR consultant who was trapped with Dixon and four other colleagues in the rubble of the Hotel Montana after the earthquake, told the story of their ordeal in a voice occasionally broken by emotion.

"There were moments of hope, moments of anger, moments of humor, moments of despair," Gulley said. Gulley said Dixon's last words to him were, "Please tell my family I love them," and he named his family members one by one.

Dixon, Gulley said, possessed a can-do attitude "undergirded by a gentle, kind spirit."

Throughout the service, from the opening hymn of "Holy, Holy, Holy! Lord God Almighty" to the white-robed choir's powerful rendition of the "Hallelujah Chorus," participants expressed gratitude for Dixon's life.

"You could not be in his presence and not have a sense of his passion for his faith and for his work," said Bishop Gregory Palmer, president of the United Methodist Council of Bishops.

Bishop Joel Martinez, interim top executive of the Board of Global Ministries, said Dixon didn't take himself seriously, but took his mission seriously.

"Sam would be on the road somewhere today, probably in Haiti, if he hadn't been there at the beginning," Martinez said.

In his eulogy, Simpson said Dixon had little patience for "paltry" politics. "One of his most courageous acts was fostering a partnership between UMCOR and Muslim AID. That has not been entirely popular, but Sam knew it was right."

■ Diet Coke and chocolate

Simpson married Dixon and his wife, Cindy, and the couple, he said, seemed to be more in love than ever in recent years. He remembered Dixon as a gentle, humble, joyous man who "knew how to use the ways of the world for good" and couldn't live without Diet Coke and

See Dixon on page 14 ...

Mission leader Rabb celebrated for making a difference

By David Briggs and Linda Bloom*

AUSTIN, Texas (UMNS) — A mission leader who died serving one of the world's poorest nations was remembered as a friend and advocate for the most vulnerable of God's children.

More than 700 friends, family and mission workers from throughout the world packed University United Methodist Church Jan. 23 to celebrate the life of the Rev. Clinton Rabb, 60, who died from injuries received in the rubble of the earthquake that struck Haiti Jan. 12.

Tears, some laughter and moments of profound silence filled the two-hour service that took participants from the plains of Mongolia to baptisms in Russian prisons to the darkness of post-quake Haiti as witness after witness spoke of the passion for life and faith of the director of the Mission Volunteers program at the United Methodist Board of Global Ministries.

"As we are gathered here this day, the occasion of our worship is the death of Clinton Rabb. The purpose of our worship is to give thanks to almighty God for his life and for life eternal," said Bishop James Dorff, who leads the Southwest Texas Annual (regional) Conference, where Rabb was a clergy member.

In an emotional presentation of a plaque to the Rev. Suzanne Field Rabb, Clinton Rabb's wife, Bishop Juan Alberto Cardona said the Methodist Church of Columbia wished to pay homage to the man who loved all people, "especially the smallest of this world."

"No one, Cardona said, "has love as big as those who give their life for their friends."

Bishop Joel Martinez, the interim leader of the Board of Global Ministries, said Rabb was a big man in his physical size, in



Rev. Clinton Rabb

his vision of global mission and "in his embrace of other people, of all colors and creeds ... and places. Clint was a person who loved and reached out."

Today, Martinez said, "Clint is saving all of us a place in the banquet of Jesus Christ, the banquet of eternal life."

■ Mission of mercy

Rabb was in Haiti to discuss ways to assist the impoverished island nation. He had joined five colleagues for a dinner meeting at the Hotel Montana in Port-au-Prince when the Jan. 12 earthquake struck. He and the Rev. Sam Dixon, top executive of the United Methodist Committee on Relief, found their legs pinned under a concrete slab. Two days later, French rescue workers found the group, but it took hours for them to free Rabb.

Rabb was airlifted to Florida but died of his injuries at a hospital there on Jan. 17. Dixon died earlier in Port-au-Prince.

The Rev. James Gulley, an UMCOR consultant who was trapped with Rabb

See Rabb on page 14 ...



"He was my north, my south, my east and my west, the Rev. Suzanne Field Rabb said as she spoke to worshippers attending the Jan. 23 funeral of her husband, the Rev. Clint Rabb, at University UMC in Austin, Texas. I thought my love would last forever."

Remembering one who died on the mission field and the one who survived

Mission volunteer remembered as a symbol of love

By John A. Lovelace*

DALLAS (UMNS) — Clara “Jean” Arnwine, 49, who gave her life providing medical care to Haiti’s poor, was remembered in song and prayer Jan. 20 in an emotional service attended by many of the volunteers who served with her.

More than 800 family members and friends of Arnwine packed Highland Park United Methodist Church in a service of celebration and thanksgiving for the mission team member, who died from injuries she received in the earthquake that struck Haiti Jan. 12.

Wearing a pink carnation in honor of Arnwine’s love of flowers, 10 of the 11 surviving members of the 12-person medical mission team from the church attended the service. They included ophthalmologist Dr. Ken Foree, 82, the clinic’s founder, and his wife, Lila.

The Rev. Paul Rasmussen, pastor of Highland Park Church’s contemporary worship program known as Cornerstone, built his sermon around the concept of clarity of sight, calling it “the very nature of love.”

The congregation sang “Blessed Assurance, Jesus Is Mine” and “Precious Lord, Take My Hand.”

Arnwine’s husband, David, shared memories of their courtship and subsequent raising of two children. He recalled the couple’s joy as recently as last month, when they attended a national tour production of “South Pacific” at Dallas’ new opera house.

He said she was especially excited about this opportunity to help others.

Arnwine, serving on her first mission team, traveled to Haiti as part of a 12-



Clara “Jean” Arnwine

member medical team from Highland Park. Arnwine and four colleagues from Texas Retina Associates were part of the volunteer team that helped run a free eye clinic in a village near Port-au-Prince, the Haitian capital and city where the devastation was the greatest. Like several others in the team, she was not a member of the mission-sponsoring church.

When the earthquake struck, their clinic in Petit-Goave collapsed with five volunteers inside. Arnwine, the most seriously injured, was placed on a surgical plane destined for Martinique. When her condition worsened, the plane diverted to the island of Guadeloupe, where she died at the hospital, said Highland Park spokeswoman Kim Gifford.

In addition to her husband, Arnwine is survived by a son, Ashley Ryan Arnwine of San Francisco, and a daughter, Merilee DeAnne Arnwine of Keller, Texas.

*Lovelace is a freelance writer based in Dallas.

Survivor: UMCOR trio kept the faith in Haiti hotel ruins



Jim Gulley, a consultant with the United Methodist Committee on Relief, was among three missing staff members who were seen entering the Montana Hotel in Port au Prince, Haiti, shortly before the Jan. 12 earthquake occurred.

(Editor’s note: The Rev. James Gulley was ordained an elder in the former Southern Illinois Conference in 1962 and was a clergy member of that conference until his transfer to the Virginia Conference in 1983. During his years in Southern Illinois, Gulley was a missionary serving in Nigeria)

By Kathy L. Gilbert*

FRISCO, Colo. (UMNS) — There were times, trapped beneath tons of concrete in the collapsed Hotel Montana, when the Rev. James Gulley thought help would never come.

But Gulley, the Rev. Sam Dixon and the Rev. Clinton Rabb always knew they were in the hands of God.

When help did come 55 hours after a massive earthquake hit Haiti and reduced the hotel to a pile of crumbling concrete, Gulley was pulled to safety, but his friends both died of their injuries.

“I have no answer about why I was given the gift of life and Sam and Clint were not,” Gulley said in an interview with United Methodist News Service. “I can’t answer that any better than Job could answer why some people suffer more than others. All I can do is continue to try to use that gift in God’s service in whatever way it is intended. I’m grateful to be alive, and I accept that gift.”

The three men, working with the United Methodist Committee on Relief, were in Port-au-Prince to meet with members of the Methodist Church of Haiti to talk about ways to improve and develop the country. They had scheduled a meeting with members of IMA World Health, including United Methodist Sarla Chand,

at the Hotel Montana.

“A driver from the Methodist Guest House dropped us off and when we walked in they were sitting in the lobby checking their e-mail.”

The group gathered and were heading to the hotel’s restaurant when there was a rumble, Gulley said. “We had just passed the reception desk. I looked up and the hotel was shaking; in the third second, it fell on us.”

The six humanitarian workers and two other men trapped inside elevators were suddenly confined to a small area.

“The first thing I heard was Sam saying his legs were broken. Then Clint said his legs were also broken. We called out to each other and the others said they were OK.”

The group struggled to remain calm even though Dixon and Rabb were “suffering terribly,” Gulley said. They were afraid they might run out of oxygen but soon felt some cool air coming around the edges.

“We tried to joke, to think of funny stories, but we didn’t have too many. We talked about how ironic it was that we had come to Haiti to offer aid and now we were the recipients of relief aid.”

After night fell on the first day, they knew no one was coming until morning. But when another day and night came with no help they began to feel despair, Gulley said.

At one point he started singing “Peace Like A River” and the others joined in. When help came from French firemen, Gulley and the others started singing the doxology, “Praise God from whom all blessings flow.”

“It was good for those of us who were not so badly hurt,” Gulley said. “But I think it was harder for those who were pinned because they had such high expectations after some of us were pulled out.” Gulley said it took the firemen four hours to get him out.

“Sam was still alive, he was the last one whose fate we knew about,” Gulley said. Some reports said Dixon had been evacuated and was alive.

Dixon had removed his wallet from his back pocket in an effort to get more comfortable, Gulley said. “I picked up his wallet and put it in my pocket. I didn’t realize I was taking away his only identity.”

Gulley and Dixon had worked together for many years.

“My first trip abroad in 1999 was to Haiti with Sam,” Gulley said. Fighting through tears, he said, “We began in Haiti and that’s where we parted.”

*Gilbert is a news writer for United Methodist News Service in Nashville, Tenn.



U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class Joshua Lee Kelsey

Members of Fairfax County Urban Search and Rescue conduct a rescue operation in a collapsed section of the Hotel Montana in Port-au-Prince, Haiti during a search for survivors of a 7.0 magnitude earthquake. The unit was activated by the U.S. Agency for International Development.

Mission and Outreach — Locally and Globally

Seminary reaches out to heal others in post civil war Liberia



Photo courtesy of Liberia Annual Conference

St. John UMC at the Gbarnga School of Theology

By Vicki Brown

GBARNGA, Liberia — Despite devastation from civil war on the campus of the Gbarnga School of Theology in Liberia, the faculty immediately added counseling to its class offerings after peace was restored.

“This is what sacred theology is all about. We are equipping church workers with clinical pastoral education to let them be able to assist their traumatized members. Graduates from this discipline are working in churches and schools and communities,” said the Rev. Yatta Roslyn Young, dean of the seminary.

The seminary, with about 100 students, is at the center of the religious community that trains ministers and Christian educators of the United Methodist, Episcopal, Lutheran, and Pentecostal churches in Liberia, Young said.

“The cross-and-flame logo of The United Methodist Church can be found in every village, hamlet, town, and city in the country,” Young said. The United Methodist connection is strong in Liberia, where President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf is a United Methodist.

While seminary graduates try to help the country heal the wounds from a long civil war that left hundreds of thousands of people dead and devastated the country's economy, the theological school itself has many

needs.

The Rev. Ken Carter Jr., senior pastor of Providence UMC in Charlotte, N.C., and chair of the General Board of Higher Education's Division of Ordained Ministry, said he was stunned by the condition of the school when he visited in 2009. The campus in Gbarnga was occupied by rebel forces during the war and the school moved to Monrovia for the duration of the conflict. The school has now moved back to Gbarnga and is rebuilding the campus.

“They are really rebuilding the school; it was decimated by the war, and there is a need for infrastructure and housing for faculty. The library looks like the worst church library you've ever seen. No one on the faculty has a laptop, and the building of a new lecture hall is the first priority,” Carter said. He said the faculty is trying to identify what books are needed, and his personal project — with the help of his church — is going to be to try and help rebuild the library.

The Rev. Isaac Dowah's studies were interrupted by the war, but he is now completing his final year of study in the Basic Theology program, though he earned degrees in Ghana and was ordained in 1998.

But he said study is difficult at Gbarnga because everything was looted.

“All our books and computers were taken away.... Moreover, students have to

go on a book hunt if they have a little assignment to do. Before the war, this was not the case. Students got all their major books on the first day of school.”

Lack of electricity creates problems, too, he said. “The majority of students cannot afford a personal power generator, so they are studying by candlelight, which is to the detriment of their eyesight,” he said.

Carter said Liberians he spoke with had always expected the United States to intervene in their civil war because of the U.S. role in founding Liberia. Modern-day Liberia was founded by the American Colonization Society in 1821-22 as a place for slaves freed in the U.S. to emigrate to Africa, where it was believed they would have greater freedom and equality.

“I never met anyone in Liberia who wanted to leave. They just want to have peace,” Carter said, adding that he believes The United Methodist Church and the seminary can have an important role in the healing process.

“A lot of young people in Liberia have been child soldiers. They have to be reintegrated into society,” Carter said.

Young said the needs of the school are great. She was among 23 United Methodist theologians, seminary representatives, and leaders from across Africa, as well as representatives from general church boards and agencies in the U.S., who gathered last August in Kampala, Uganda, for an assessment of United Methodist theological education in Africa.

“We need textbooks for the disciplines we have at Gbarnga School of Theology — general theology, religious education, sacred theology, and basic agriculture,” she said.

“I use a manual typewriter, and I just recently received a gift of a used computer from a friend — praise the Lord for small favors! That is the only computer on the campus. We need computers for office use as well as for the students to prepare their assignments and papers. Our library has a few obsolete books that cannot support research work, and we need Internet connections,” she said.

Apart from a few individuals, and one or two churches that have opted to assist with

textbooks, the school has not established any sister relationship with any church or conference in the U.S. or anywhere else for that matter, Young said.

“This is my desire, and I will appreciate all the assistance in that direction. The devastation on the campus is of monumental proportions and The United Methodist Church in Liberia cannot rebuild it on its own,” she said.

Carter said the Gbarnga School of Theology is a part of the maturing of theological education in Africa. “We need to develop a collective effort,” Carter said.

He noted that while there are 700 churches in the Liberian Annual Conference with two pastors each, many of those are local pastors. One district superintendent told him no pastor in his district even makes \$1 a day.

That need for effective, sustainable theological training, and formation of church leaders was the focus of the August consultation in Uganda.

The 2008 General Conference approved “Support of Theological Education in Africa” (petition 81160), which directed \$2 million over the next four years to expand and strengthen theological facilities beyond Africa University, as well as library development, scholarships, publications, and logistical support of theological education. More than 25 percent of United Methodists worldwide live in Africa.

The Revitalization of the Gbarnga Mission and School of Theology/United Methodist University is a designated Advance Special Giving project, Advance #3020679, or you can donate online.

Donations of books, computers, or other specific items can be sent to: the Rev. Yatta Roslyn Young, DEAN, Gbarnga School of Theology/United Methodist University, Liberia Annual Conference, The United Methodist Church, 13th Street, Sinkor, PO Box 1010, 1000 Monrovia 10 Liberia. Dean Young said cash donations can also be sent to the same address to Bishop John G. Innis, Liberia Area/The UMC.

**Brown is associate editor and writer, Office of Interpretation, General Board of Higher Education and Ministry.*

Assist Haiti

Continued from page 1

nating Advance Special 418325, Haiti Emergency.

• Assemble health and layette kits. The Midwest Mission Distribution Center is assisting UMCOR Sager Brown in the shipment of these kits. Supplies are needed to assemble the kits. Churches can collect supplies or they can send the supplies to Midwest Mission Distribution Center for assembly there. The list of materials can be found on page 12 of this issue of *The Current*.

• Support the One Great Hour of Sharing offering which will be collected during the fourth Sunday of Lent (March 14). This offering provides the means for UMCOR to pay for the administration of various emergency appeals without having to take a percentage of donations for administrative purposes.

Donate online at <http://www.umcorhaiti.org>.

100 percent of your donation will go directly to UMCOR for disaster relief.



Guidelines for volunteer service in Haiti

There will be a great need for volunteers to help rebuild once the initial crisis has settled. At this time, it is not safe or possible for volunteers to go to Haiti. The city of Port-au-Prince and the whole country are in crisis with severe lack of fuel, food, and water. There are significant transportation and security challenges. Bishop Joel Martinez, Global Ministries' interim general secretary, has alerted bishops to the inadvisability of sending volunteers at this point. Read his memo:

UMCOR and other units of the General

Board of Global Ministries will be working with the Methodist Church of Haiti and other organizations in providing medical and other services. While plans are being made for this long-term work, some medical specialists may want to respond to a call from the US government for trauma surgeons, orthopedists, anesthesiologists, and others with experience in treating crush injuries. Volunteers must be able to serve for at least two weeks, and be willing to live and work in spartan conditions. Preference will be given to physicians. See *Guidelines on page 13* ...

Embracing Communications & Technology

Media Resource Center catalog online

The Communications Ministry Team has just completed a project where the entire catalog of the United Media Resource Center is now searchable online to assist congregations and persons within the IGRC with their resource needs.

The search engine, which can be found in the lower right-hand corner as part of the rotisserie of items that can be clicked, provides a way to search by keyword and the search can be limited by media type. The advanced search provides a more detailed way to search and persons can

request items by putting them in their shopping cart and checking out. There is also a link indicating items that have been added in the last 30 days.

The checkout generates an email to the UMRC, which checks the requested dates against other reservations.

Remember: the services of the UMRC are free and the only cost to churches is the price of return postage if they are not returned some other way to the Conference Center.

2010 Program Calendars have arrived

The 2010 IGRC Program Calendars arrived in the Conference Center Dec. 11. Shipments were sent Dec. 14 to those that placed an order for them.

Any remaining copies will be available on a first-come, first-served basis. If you haven't received a complimentary



one, the first will be free for clergy and laypersons holding conference leadership positions. Each additional copy is \$8 postpaid.

Contact Michele Willson at mwillson@igrc.org or 217-529-3122 to request your copy while supplies last.

Conference News and Announcements

MMDC

Continued from page 1

natural disaster. It works in conjunction with the United Methodist Committee on Relief, which provides assistance in about 80 countries.

Efforts to help the victims of the Haiti earthquake, Wright said, won't stop with the second shipment. "It will be an ongoing effort," she said.

The public's outpouring of support, Wright said, demonstrates "people really have big hearts."

Layette kits include cloth diapers, diaper pins, baby undershirts, washcloths, gowns or sleepers. Each health kit includes a hand towel and wash cloth, comb, fingernail clipper or file, bar of soap, toothbrush, toothpaste and six adhesive bandages.

King

Continued from page 1

of districts within the conference was reduced by two from 12 to 10.

For King, the appointment is a return home after answering the call to ministry as a second career pastor. After spending 10 years in the horticulture and nursery business, King began investigating ordained ministry with Phil Icenogle and Mark Kaley, both of whom were associated with Springfield First UMC. District Superintendent Jack Travelstead was also an encouragement and King credits his counseling elder, Brent Anderson with

Guidelines

Continued from page 12

cians who are Creole or French speakers, and to those currently credentialed through the Medical Reserve Corps in their home state, or the ESAR-VHP (Emergency Services Advanced Registration of Volunteer Health Personnel) program. For more information contact Michala Koch at Michala.Koch@hhs.gov. For information on becoming part of the Medical Serve Corps go www.medicalreservecorps.gov.

Preparing to Volunteer with the Methodist Church of Haiti

A school kit includes notebook paper, six unsharpened pencils with no advertising, one pair of blunt school scissors, a 12-inch ruler that includes metric measurements, 1-by-2-inch eraser, box of 24 Crayola Crayons and a pencil sharpener.

These items, Wright said, may be dropped off at the MMDC, 1022 New City Road. The center is open from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday and Saturdays by appointment. Phone number is 483-7911, and the Web site is www.midwestmissiondc.org.

As the MMDC gathers items for Haiti, it also must remain prepared for emergencies elsewhere.

"You never know when disasters and emergencies will strike," Wright said.

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helping him focus on issues of ministry while a student pastor.

A native of Springfield, King received his undergraduate degree from Knox College in Galesburg and his master's degree from Southern Illinois University-Carbondale. He received his seminary degree in 1988 and was ordained an elder in the former Central Illinois Conference in 1990. Prior to his appointment to the Cabinet, King's previous pastorates include Gifford-Pleasant Grove, Tonica, Pesotum-Tolono and Urbana First.

King and his wife Virginia are the parents of a grown son, Matthew.

Here are two ways for you to volunteer in Haiti through The United Methodist Church, once there is an invitation for volunteers to participate in the recovery:

1. Short-Term Volunteers (1 week - 2 months): umvim.info

In order to respond in a way that is consistent with the churches' needs, you are requested to contact the appropriate jurisdictional United-Methodist-Volunteers-In-Mission (UMVIM) coordinator listed below. The jurisdictional websites have information on training and scheduling volunteer teams, as well as local conference UMVIM offices. To see the geo-

See Guidelines at page 14 ...

Announcements

Continued from page 6

Office, attention Rev. Kent Lolling UMM Liaison, PO Box 19207, Springfield IL 62794-9207 by April 1. The winners will be recognized during the 2010 session of Annual Conference in Peoria in June.

Kyle Jones in concert at Normal First

Up and coming Christian artist Kyle Jones will be in concert at Normal First UMC on Saturday, March 13. The concert is slated for a 7 p.m. start.

With music geared more toward youth, young adults and those who enjoy contemporary worship, Jones, from Atlanta, Ga., will be performing with his band following a couple of in-house events at Normal First. Tickets are \$5 each and will be available at the door. To hear some of Jones' music, visit his website at: www.kylejonesmusic.com.

Society of St. Andrew offers free Lenten devotional

The Society of St. Andrew, a national, ecumenical, nonprofit hunger relief ministry and Advance #801600, offers its 2010 Lenten Devotions program, "Jesus is ...". "Through spiritual reflection, prayer and giving, the reader is challenged to take seriously the scriptural injunctions to care for the poor, while also being provided an opportunity to feed our hungry neighbors," explained Rev. Jennifer Vestal Moore, church relations director for the Society of St. Andrew. "Each day of Lent, one of our gifted guest writers uses the theme "Jesus is ..." to describe how they see Jesus and how His love has touched their life. As you make the journey to the cross this year, use this devotion booklet to see Jesus in all kinds of unique ways while remembering how much Jesus loves you and the incredible sacrifice He made for each of us."

An optional "Good Friday Fast" is available for use in conjunction with the daily devotions or as a stand-alone program.

All materials for the Society of St.

Andrew's Lent Devotions program are free. Order today – individuals can order their own packet, and churches can order a sample packet. There is no obligation. Call 800-333-4597; fax 434-299-5949; email church@endhunger.org; or order online at www.endhunger.org/lent.htm

The Parables of Jesus in First Century context

World-renown Biblical scholar James Fleming will be presenting a series of lectures on Jesus' parables in relationship to the Holy Land's geography and architecture Feb. 21-23 at Springfield Laurel UMC.

Participants attending Fleming's sessions, will gain an understanding how the geography of the countryside and the archaeology of the village can help one to arrive at the deeper meaning of the parables of Jesus. Jesus the Teacher might be thought of as a "metaphorical theologian" who uses human stories to illustrate the nature of the Kingdom of God, and as a poet who told us truth in easy-to-remember forms.

The schedule of lectures is as follows:

- Sunday, Feb. 21, 7 to 8:30 p.m.—*Parables Set in the Countryside*
- Monday, Feb. 22, 10 to 11:30 a.m.—*Jesus the Teacher, Poetry & Parables*
- Monday, Feb. 22, 1 to 2:30 p.m.—*Parables of the Hidden Kingdom*
- Monday, Feb. 22, 7 to 8:30 p.m.—*Parables Set in the Home*
- Tuesday, Feb. 23, 7 to 8:30 p.m.—*Parable of the Lost Child*

Registration is free and persons may attend any or all of the lectures. For more information, contact Laurel UMC at 217-525-1866.

Fleming serves as Director of Biblical Resources Study Center (BRSC), an ecumenical organization serving Christians around the world. He has developed courses of study in historical geography and biblical history, uniquely tying the studies with the biblical text and emphasizing the wedding of theological/faith relationships. Fleming's lectures weave four perspectives to help us understand Biblical times—archaeology, history, geography, and theology.

Conference News

Dixon

Continued from page 10
chocolate.

“He was not pious by the world’s standards, but he was pious by God’s standards. His faith was genuine,” Simpson said.

Mourners solemnly recited The Lord’s Prayer and sang the doxology after the eulogy. At another point in the service, the congregation said words of praise to God “for Sam, whom you have graciously received into your presence.”

Dixon, 60, had served as the United Methodist Committee on Relief’s top executive since 2007.

A world traveler for the business of mission, Dixon went to Haiti to discuss projects to improve life in the impoverished island nation. When he walked into the lobby of the Hotel Montana on Jan. 12 — just moments before the earthquake would bring the building crashing down around him — he was anticipating a working dinner with five colleagues.

Instead, he was trapped for several days in the rubble of the hotel, pinned under a concrete slab. Rescuers eventually found the group and four colleagues were saved. They worked to free him, but it was too late. Dixon’s death was announced on Jan. 16. A fellow Global Ministries staff member, the Rev. Clinton Rabb, was pulled out but died later from his injuries.

■ ‘In God’s hands’

Thomas Kemper, a United Methodist from Germany, whose election to lead the Board of Global Ministries was announced shortly before Dixon’s death, expressed his sorrow Jan. 21 on the board’s “tribute blog.” But he advised those in mourning to “leave the image of entrapment for one in which we see Sam and Clint in a good and secure place—in God’s hands, and covered by his love.”



Dakotas and Minnesota to become new Episcopal Area in 2012

CHICAGO, IL — The United Methodist Church (UMC) North Central Jurisdiction (NCJ) College of Bishops announced Jan. 26 that the Dakota Annual Conference and Minnesota Annual Conference will be served by only one bishop in order to reduce the number of episcopal areas from 10 to 9. Its decision today on how it will reduce the number of Episcopal Areas from 10 to nine, effective Sept. 1, 2012.

The reorganization comes as a result of action at the 2008 General Conference of the UMC. Four of the five jurisdictions in the United States are each required to phase out one episcopal area by 2012.

“We regret that financial considerations

Condolences for the loss of both men have poured in from around the world. Among those offering words of tribute were representatives of the Mennonite Central Committee, the Council of Methodist Educational Institutions of Brazil, the Vietnamese National Caucus, and the Methodist churches in Bolivia, Latvia, Britain and Honduras.

A North Carolina native, Dixon had served for 24 years as a pastor before joining the Board of Global Ministries’ staff in 1998 as a staff executive in the UMCOR non-governmental organization. He became executive director of the United Methodist Development Fund in 2001, then was elected to lead the board’s unit on evangelization and church growth two years later. In that role, he also supervised programs in mission education and relations with mission partners.

■ Vocation and passion

Elizabeth “Brooke” Conklin, a director of the Board of Global Ministries, remembered Dixon’s certainty as he spoke during a meeting last summer about what propelled him to devote his life to the church.

“Sam spoke that he knew without a doubt that God had called him to be doing exactly what he was doing,” she said. “His life, his work, his ministry, his vocation, his passion—all was about responding to God. He knew he was right where he should be and serving where he was supposed to be serving.”

Dixon and his wife, the former Cindy Leapley, are the parents of four grown children, Christy, Amy, Josh, and Molly. He also is survived by his mother, three sisters and two grandchildren.

**Bloom is a United Methodist News Service news writer based in New York. Ted Avery, a freelance writer from Durham, N.C., contributed to this story.*

have forced us to make this decision,” said Bishop Jonathan D. Keaton, president of the NCJ College of Bishops. “Regardless, we know that nothing will prevent us from our mission to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.”

In exploring this issue, The NCJ College of Bishops consulted with the NCJ Committee of the Episcopacy and considered input from lay and clergy leaders at the most recent Jurisdictional Conference in 2008.

For more information, visit the IGRC website. A more complete story will appear in the March issue of *The Current*.

Rabb

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and Dixon, struggled to control his emotion at times as he spoke of the ordeal. Although Rabb was pinned down in the rubble with his legs broken, Gulley said, he would spend much of his time trying to lift up Dixon to make him more comfortable by creating a makeshift bed of plaster and laptop bags.

That strength, and his resilience through days of agonizing pain and vicarious suffering, gave hope to his colleagues that Rabb would survive. At one point, as rescue workers struggled to free him, Rabb told a reporter, “Please tell my wife that I deeply love her.”

“I can’t answer the question of Job, of why some people suffer and die and others do not,” a shaken Gulley said at the memorial service. “We all will someday meet again.”

Amid words of hope and resurrection, mourners also experienced the depth of the grief being suffered by Rabb’s family and the loved ones of so many tens of thousands of other people who perished in the quake. Rabb’s purple-draped coffin was at the front of the church, where a large cross serves as the backdrop.

There is a deep abiding grief, one that would extinguish the stars and dismantle the sun, with the knowledge, “My beloved Clint is dead,” Suzanne Field Rabb said.

“He was my north, my south, my east and my west,” she said. “I thought my love would last forever.”

■ A gentle spirit

Many at the service recalled Rabb as a man with a gentle, kind spirit, but a passion for service.

“Clint never waited for the world to come to him,” said West Ohio Bishop Bruce Ough, president of the Board of Global Ministries. “He went to the world. He channeled the talents and equipped thousands of other United Methodists to go to the world (to be) a mighty river of grace, mercy and transformation.”

In a eulogy, the Rev. Robert Huie, a close friend and former neighbor, said, “Clint’s God was always getting bigger.”

Rabb could pound out hymns such as “Precious Lord, Take My Hand” on the piano with a jazzy beat, and take similar great pleasure in helping start house churches in Southeast Asia, Huie said.

Guidelines

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graphic areas of the jurisdictions, go to: umvim.info for a map.

At this time the UVMIM coordinators are taking information; they will contact volunteers when the country is again open and an invitation for volunteers is extended for recovery efforts.

The North Central jurisdictional representative is: Lorna Jost, 605-692-3390, email: umvim-ncj@brookings.net

If someone said Rabb thought outside the box, “Clint more than likely would say, ‘What box?’”

Huie told mourners that Rabb would want to tell each of them that he loves them with all of his heart and mind and soul. “And his love endures forever,” Huie said.

In a spirited part of the service, the gathering sang along to guitar accompaniment several verses of “Peace Like A River.”

Hands began clapping throughout the church as celebrants sang:

“I got love like an ocean.

I got love like an ocean.

I got love like an ocean,
in my soul.”

■ A life of service

Rabb, a Texas native, grew up in Hunt County, northeast of Dallas.

“We grew up in a home where we were expected to be aware of the larger world, to participate in a larger world and to know we had an obligation and the ability to make a difference,” said his brother Joel. Joel Rabb said his brother “achieved great things because he listened to God’s call at the lowest points in his life—and at the highest points in his life.”

Clinton Rabb served as a pastor and chaplain for the denomination’s Southwest Texas Annual (regional) Conference before joining the mission agency in 1996. Besides working with the mission volunteers program, he had been involved with new mission initiatives in Africa, Asia, Eastern Europe and Central Asia. He created the “In Mission Together Church to Church Partnership Program,” which links congregations, annual conferences, volunteer efforts and mission personnel.

His wife, the Rev. Suzanne Field Rabb, is also a member of the Southwest Texas Conference. They have eight children, Maury Rabb, Tyler Rabb, Ginny Scheuch, Travis Payne, Daniel Payne, Andrew Payne, Matthew Payne, Clare Payne, and three grandchildren.

The family has started a charity, <http://www.clintonclarkrabbcharity.org>, in memory of Rabb. Memorial contributions should be designated to The Clinton Clark Rabb Charity. Checks can be mailed to P. O. Box 721115, Dallas, TX 75372.

**Briggs is news editor of United Methodist News Service, Nashville, Tenn. Bloom is a news writer based in New York.*

Website: www.gbgn-umc.org/northcentralvim

2. Individual Long-Term Volunteers (2 months - 2 years):
www.individualvolunteers.info

There will be requests for Individual Volunteers as the recovery progresses. Training and experience in working in disaster areas is beneficial. See the website for information, application, training, and assistance in placement.

Conference News

Haiti

Continued from page 1
quake survivors.

GlobalMedic is deploying paramedics, water technicians and a doctor to assist the sick or injured, UMCOR reported. A water distribution hub will provide 65,000 people daily with clean drinking water.

Working through local nongovernmental organizations and the United Nations network in Haiti, GlobalMedic also will distribute 110,000 sachets of PUR water purifiers, 5 million Aquatab water purification tablets and 110,000 oral rehydration sachets.

The supplies are being shipped into the Dominican Republic, and then transported by ground into Haiti, Hazelwood said.

One of the tasks for the UMCOR team in Haiti this week will be meeting with Gesner Paul, who leads the Methodist Church of Haiti, to assess how best to work with church members there.

Organizing volunteers

Mission volunteers from The United Methodist Church have been a strong presence in Haiti for years, so another priority is organizing for future volunteer teams.

"We know the (immediate) need is for medical volunteers," Hazelwood said. "We're looking at trying to centralize the volunteer process."

Bishop Joel Martinez, interim general

secretary of the Board of Global Ministries, is advising volunteer teams not to set out for Haiti immediately. "The time for volunteers will come, and their assistance will be crucial," Martinez said.

Church World Service has sent in Don Tatlock, its Latin America and Caribbean program manager, to coordinate its efforts in Haiti.

Recovery has been slow, Tatlock reported. "People are still sleeping outside in makeshift tents on street sides, parks or any open area," he said. "In some neighborhoods, you see signs written on sheets asking for water and food."

Church World Service relief kits and blankets are being distributed in Port-au-Prince, and the agency's partners in Action by Churches Together are bringing in water and sanitation equipment.

Tatlock said a European psychosocial team supported by Church World Service also was arriving in Haiti to work with disaster survivors and first responders. "The situation is so horrifying that there is concern of post-traumatic stress syndrome for members of search and rescue teams," he said in a report on the agency's Web site.

Food aid flown in

A planeload of 80,000 pounds of water, medicine and medical supplies organized by Stop Hunger Now is being distributed in Haiti, says the Rev. Ray Buchanan, the United Methodist pastor who is the food



UN Photo by Logan Abassi.

After the devastating earthquake in Port-au-Prince, Haiti, survivors rest in a makeshift shelter in the parking lot of the general hospital.

aid group's founder and president.

He also has talked to Mission of Hope, the partner group in Port-au-Prince that received most of those supplies, about a previous supply of pre-packaged meals. "They told us that since the earthquake, they've been feeding 50,000 a day using the meals we sent in December," Buchanan added.

Stop Hunger Now still has five containers of bottled water and three containers of more than a half-million meals ready to go

to Haiti. "We're currently doing our very best trying to find military transport," he said. "We're working with the Army, Air Force and the Navy."

Meal donations have come from a variety of sources, including a Jan. 18 packaging event in Lynchburg, Va., which resulted in 210,000 meals, "really touches the heart of what Stop Hunger Now is trying to do," Buchanan noted.

**Bloom is a United Methodist News Service news writer based in New York.*

Be There. Be Hope. In Haiti.

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UMCOR
United Methodist Committee on Relief
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Residents in Port-au-Prince, Haiti search for survivors among the debris on January 13, 2010, one day after a 7.0 earthquake rocked the country. Haiti's president said he feared thousands were dead after the presidential palace, schools, hospitals, and hillside shanties collapsed, leaving the Caribbean nation appealing for international help.
REUTERS/Eduardo Werra/Courtesy of www.Amet.org

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