



The Current

News of Illinois Great Rivers Conference of The United Methodist Church

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Passionate worship

Lost in Wonder, Love and Praise is the theme

By Paul Black

SPRINGFIELD – Persons attending the 2010 Annual Conference will notice a number of changes being implemented over previous years.

At the same time, a number of things will remain the same, including the Morning Manna worship on Thursday, Friday and Saturday mornings.

The annual conference theme is *Passionate Worship: Love in Wonder, Love and Praise*, which is taken from the last verse of the Charles Wesley hymn, *Love Divine, All Loves Excelling*.

The logo, which was designed by video production manager Suzy Burns, draws on all three aspects of worship – wonder, love and praise – in silhouetted figures that are set on a background of the cross and a radiating heart.

Conference speaker



Rev. Burton-Edwards

Rev. Taylor Burton-Edwards, Director of Worship Resources for the General Board of Discipleship of The United Methodist Church, will be the conference speaker.

An elder in the North Indiana Conference of The United Methodist Church, Burton-Edwards was Director of Community Impact with United Way of Madison County (Anderson, Ind.) 2002-2005; associate pastor of First United Methodist Church (Anderson, Ind.) 1998-2002; and pastor of Tyner UMC (1995-1998), Wawaka UMC (1994-1995) and Waldron Baptist Church (American Baptist, 1991-1993). He served as Chair of the North Indiana Conference Board of Discipleship (1997-2001). He has also taught at Anderson University (Peace Studies) and Ivy Tech State College (Gerontology).

His academic work has focused heavily on history (BA, Kenyon College 1985), historical theology/liturgy (M.Div. Southern Baptist Theological Seminary 1990), and the intersection of peacemaking and liturgical studies (MA in Peace Studies, Associated Mennonite Biblical



Seminary, 1997). He is a member of the North American Academy of Liturgy (2009), the Consultation on Common Texts (2005), and Prior for the CyberChapter of the Order of Saint Luke (1996).

He is married to The Rev. Dr. Grace Burton-Edwards, an Episcopal Priest in the Diocese of Indianapolis, Associate Rector of Trinity Episcopal Church in Indianapolis, and Chaplain at its companion ministry, St. Richard's School.

Worship leader



Mike Rayson

Evangelist Mike Rayson will be leading worship during the 2010 Annual Conference, Bishop Gregory V. Palmer announced.

Rayson, of Pleasant View, Tenn., is a native of Australia and no stranger to the Illinois Great Rivers Conference, as he has ministered in a number of local congregations and most recently, served as worship leader for Covenant Keepers 2009.

After completing his education in tiny rural Australian schools, Rayson went on to a career in the media. After hosting number 1 rated radio programs in rural, regional and metropolitan markets and writing many national radio commercial campaigns, he heeded God's call, and went on to ministry with the Uniting Church of

Australia – an amalgamation of Methodist, Presbyterian and Congregational Churches – the third largest denomination in the country.

Rayson's first pastoral role was in the regional town of Port Lincoln, South Australia... where Steven Spielberg filmed the underwater scenes of the movie *Jaws*. He also served as Chaplain/Pastor to the local High School of 900 students and 60 staff. From Port Lincoln, Rayson took an appointment to the capital city of South Australia (Adelaide), where he served in two parishes – Marion and Seaclyff.

With a passion for music infusing his pastoral ministry, and increasing time away from his churches accepting invitations to preach and sing elsewhere, he stepped out of fulltime pastoral ministry in 2000 and started Mike Rayson International Ministries, which is partnered with Compassion International. The ministry organization runs under a 13-member board of directors and a constant prayer team that has members spanning six countries.

In 2005, Rayson and his family relocated their ministry to the other side of the world, just outside of Nashville. He is a regular worship leader and preacher at the Upper Room, and was also invited to minister last year in the world famous Central Methodist Meeting Hall in London.

He has ministered with such people as Anne Graham Lotz—daughter of legendary Christian Evangelist “Billy Graham;” Rev Dr Len Sweet—author and theologian; and has shared the musical stage with Darlene Zschech—composer of the song *Shout To the Lord*.

Worship services

Attendees of the 2009 annual conference warmly received the morning devotional period with Bishop Gregory V. Palmer called Morning Manna and those periods will be a part of the Thursday, Friday and Saturday morning schedules.

Conference will open on Wednesday evening with the Memorial Service as the conference remembers those who have entered the Church Triumphant in the past year. Holy Communion will be celebrated by Bishop Palmer.

An all-conference dinner which will feature *See Passionate worship on page 20 ...*

Reminders

■ **Housing:** Members of the annual conference are responsible for securing their own housing during the conference. Materials with a list of motels with reserved blocks of rooms have been mailed to the lay member to annual conference and pastors several weeks ago.

In order to reserve a room at the prices quoted, reservations must be made by May 2.

If there has been a change in who will be attending, contact your District Superintendent so this information can be corrected in advance of annual conference.

■ **Memorial service:** Persons who have served as lay members to annual conference who died within the past year are also remembered at the Memorial Service. Submit names of lay members to Conference Lay Leader Rhonda Whitaker at Whitakers@mchsi.com or by mail at 1264 Hickory Dr., Neoga, IL 62447 or by phone at 217-895-3962.

■ **Pre-Conference Workbook:** All clergy and lay members should receive a packet in April of reports and resolutions to be acted upon by the annual conference session.

■ **Displays:** A group officially recognized by and/or related to the United Methodist Church that has secured display space will be able to set up in Exhibit Hall D on Wednesday, June 2 from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.

■ **Promotion of events:** All promotion of special meals and special guests will be done through the pre-conference edition of *The Current*, which will be a part of the May 2010 issue. This will take the place of flyers and brochures prepared independently.

Materials for *The Current* will be edited by *The Current* editors. Deadline for copy is Friday, April 2.

Materials can be sent to Paul Black, Director of Communication Ministries by email at pblack@igrc.org or by mail—*See Reminders on page 20 ...*

News from the Episcopal Office

Resurrection: to forgive and to be forgiven



Dear friends in Jesus Christ:

I greet you in the strong name of Jesus as we finish the Lenten journey and prepare for the feast of Easter.

I am hunching that a good many of you have used these days of Lent to give yourself over to the practicing of some new discipline through either abstinence or doing. Across the last several years there has been a renewed interest in the church about the ways in which we are formed in Christ Jesus. In the nineties Dorothy Bass edited an important book entitled *Practicing Our Faith: A Way of*

Bishop Palmer *Life for a Searching People*. A few years ago Bishop Robert Schnase blessed the church with *Five Practices of Fruitful Congregations*. (I commend both of these books to you for you reading and re-reading).

Craig Dykstra says *"Christian practices are not activities we do to make something spiritual happen in our lives. Nor are they duties we undertake to be obedient to God. Rather, they are patterns of communal action that create openings in our lives where the grace, mercy, and presence of God may be made known to us. They are places where the power of God is experienced. In the end, these are not ultimately our practices but forms of participation in the practice of God."* I would add that the practices are both personal and communal but never private.

During these Lenten days I have been thinking a great deal about the practice of forgiveness. I did not necessarily begin this season with a plan to spend a lot of energy focused on forgiveness as a Christian practice, but for a number of reasons it took a prominent place on my radar screen. This was mostly as a result of things that I was invited to help tend through my work. As these things came to me the fractures in relationships especially in the body of Christ simply could not be ignored. So beyond the work, I needed to claim anew the reality and power of forgiveness.

After all God's message to us in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ is that we are forgiven and invited to live in forgiving and reconciling ways with one another, the world and the creation. Throughout his earthly ministry Jesus the Christ preached, taught and practiced forgiveness. He did it as he walked the dusty roads. As he broke bread. As he healed the sick. As he hung on the cross. As he appeared to his disciples following his awesome and glorious resurrection.

To forgive and be forgiven is indeed to experience the power of resurrection. Let's claim this Christian practice again this Holy week and Easter.

Yours in Christ,

† Gregory Vaughn Palmer

Harter appointed Sangamon River District superintendent



Terry P. Harter

By Paul Black

SPRINGFIELD — Bishop Gregory V. Palmer has announced the appointment of Rev. Dr. Terry P. Harter as Sangamon River District Superintendent, effective July 1.

Harter, who has served the past 14 years as pastor of Champaign First UMC, will succeed the Rev. Gerald King as conference superintendent. King was previously appointed as pastor of Springfield Laurel UMC.

"I look forward to serving my sisters and brothers in Christ through the ministry of the superintendency," Harter said. "I invite your prayers, your counsel and your support as we continue the journey of making disciples whom God can use for the transformation of the world."

Harter added that the new chapter of ministry is one in which he is "humbled and honored" at the same moment. "And more than a little anxious that I can live into this calling," he added.

In describing the recent turn of events, Harter said he felt like Moses. "One afternoon I was tending the flock in the East, at Champaign, and the next morning I was looking at the burning fire of the Cracker Barrel," Harter explained. "I heard Bishop Palmer call my name, 'Terry, Terry. I have seen the people, pastors, and congregations of the Sangamon, and I will lead them....So now I am sending you.'

"Of course, I am well aware that I'm not Moses, but I think I have some sense of what he was thinking and feeling out there in Midian. I'm not the one you want. I'm not sure I can do this, I've read The Book of Discipline paragraphs 401 through 435, and there are at least 43 priority tasks."

A native of Indiana Harter responded to a call to ministry as a high school student while at Epworth Forest Camp in Indiana. He received his bachelor's degree from Wabash College and was a cum laude graduate of Boston University School of Theology. He received his Ph.D. in 1980 from Boston University's Graduate School.

Appointments

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

R. Bruce Weiman to Living Faith, LaMoine River District, effective July 1.

Tom Corum to Champaign: First, Iroquois River District, effective July 1.

Brian Manigold to appointment beyond the local church, Veterans' Administration — Illiana Health Care Systems, Danville, Vermilion River District, effective March 1.

David Poland to Colusa and Appanoose Yoked, Spoon River District, effective March 1.

Dan Seibert to Monticello, Sangamon River District, effective July 1.

Charge realignments

Bruce S. Gordon to Mt. Vernon: Wesley and Irvington, Kaskaskia River District, effective Jan. 1.

Chuck Trent to Mt. Carmel: Trinity and Adam's Corner, Kaskaskia River District, effective March 1.

Supply not appointed

Oren Banks to Richey and Essex, Vermilion River District, effective March 1.

Positions

Youth minister — Centralia First UMC is seeking an individual to work with youth. Responsibilities include Sunday worship attendance, teen Sunday School teacher, developing weekly youth

programs of spiritual lessons, mentoring and supervising recreational events while building personal relationships with individuals. Contact the church at 618-532-7361 or Rev Gordon at 618-332-9494.

Deaths

Marian Olsen, widow of the Rev. John Arnold Olsen, died March 13. She and her husband served churches in the Troy, New England and Central Illinois Conferences, retiring from Decatur First UMC in 1981. Expressions of sympathy may be sent to a daughter, Judy Allen, 1364 Deep Run Road, Naperville, IL 60540.

Rev. Kenneth "Doc" Bissey retired pastor, died March 9. Rev. Bissey pastored churches in the former Southern Illinois Conference, retiring in 1983. Expressions of sympathy may be sent to his widow, Ada Belle Bissey, 322 Foster St., Olney, IL 62450-1928.

Norma Darling, widow of the Rev. C. Eugene Darling, died Feb. 22 in California. The Darlings served churches in the former Central Illinois Conference, retiring from Paxton in 1974. Expressions of sympathy may be sent to her son, The Rev. Steve Darling, 511 Acorn Way, Lodi, CA 95242-4652.

Correction

This is a reminder that the email address printed in the 2010 Program Calendar and Staff Directory for the Sangamon River District office is incorrect.

The correct email address is: SangamonRiver@igrc.org. An old address was inadvertently left in the District listing. That account has been closed for several months.

Please update this information in your staff directory where the District offices are listed.



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Communications Team leader: Paul E. Black; team members: Catherine Flynn and Michele Willson. Send materials to P.O. Box 19207, Springfield, IL 62794-9207, tel. 217-529-2040, fax 217-529-4155, e-mail TheCurrent@igrc.org, web page: www.igrc.org. Periodical's postage paid at Peoria, IL, and additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Please send address changes to "The Current," Illinois Great Rivers Conference, P.O. Box 19207, Springfield, IL 62794-9207.

Announcements & Events

Grow Your Church Where You Are workshop

The Office of Congregational Development will offer a workshop, Grow Your Church Where You Are, on Saturday, April 17, at Savoy UMC.

The workshop will help participants evaluate the major systems of their church. They will walk away with dozens of practical new ideas for promoting growth and reaching their community in a new way. The principles taught are designed to fit any size congregation and any age church.

The registration deadline is April 7. 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) and includes snacks and a box lunch.

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

The guest speakers, Brad Kalajainen and Ken Nash are pastors of Cornerstone United Methodist Church in Caledonia,

Mich.

Kalajainen started Cornerstone UMC in 1990, and it has grown to more than 1,500 attendees in worship. They relocated to a new campus on November 1, and had more than 2,000 congregants on the first weekend.

Nash has been the teaching pastor at Cornerstone since July 2006. Prior to that, he served a church in a small community in rural Michigan that grew from 80 to more than 400 persons in attendance.

Churches share wisdom of generous giving

By Barbara Dunlap-Berg

NASHVILLE (UMNS) — Generous giving is not easy in a recession.

It takes commitment, reaching beyond the local congregation, and the faith and courage to make hard choices. It requires emotional, spiritual and financial investment.

Some of the biggest miracles in The United Methodist Church happen because committed congregations pay their apportionments in full. One-hundred percent giving to United Methodism's seven apportioned funds paves the way for African students to pursue higher education, enriches 11 historically black colleges, supports our bishops in their ministry, provides the financial backbone for General Conference, strengthens cooperation with people of other faiths and nurtures seminarians in their spiritual journey.

In looking at conferences and churches that meet their financial commitments, a common theme is their belief in mission beyond their local congregation and regional bodies.

"The 'for the transformation of the world' part of the denominational mission is far more than an appendage to the 'make disciples of Jesus Christ' phrase," says the Rev. Arthur McClanahan, Iowa Annual (regional) Conference director of communications.

"When people experience the spiritually strengthened, worshipful work that goes on in the smallest hamlets, our suburban communities and our inner cities, the opportunity for connectional giving is understood as an extension of ministry. When people are involved, they're invested. When there's emotional investment, there's spiritual investment—and financial investment, too."

■ 'Part of their DNA'

"The Peninsula Delaware Conference," says Bishop Peggy Johnson, "has a great sense of loyalty to The United Methodist Church. They support our missionaries, Advance Specials and special offerings as well as paying apportionments 100 per-

“My experience is that churches that are involved in mission and outreach (have fewer) problems paying apportionments ... The only method for reviving a church that I have seen actually work is to get out of the pews and reach out to the community in need.”

— Rev. Richard Van Giesen, Illinois Great Rivers Conference

cent. It is part of their DNA.”

Focusing on stewardship, telling the stories, challenging givers to stretch and celebrating success are vital.

"Stewardship is taught well here, and churches believe it is a sign of their devotion to God to pay their apportionments," Johnson adds. "Paying it is non-negotiable. When the budget is tight, other things get cut, but not the apportionments. The leadership has a strong commitment to this and always has."

Tell the story "as frequently as possible," advises the Rev. Carol Goehring, connectional ministries executive, North Carolina Conference, "to illustrate the ministries provided through the apportionments."

"Each year," Wisconsin Conference's communications director Michele Virnig says, "our conference leaders ask if (full payment) will remain a priority. So far, the answer has always been 'yes.' We cannot expect congregations to keep faith with the conference in its pursuit of 100-percent apportionments if the annual conference doesn't keep faith with its commitment to the general church and the world."

Saying "thank you" and celebrating are also important, adds Carolyn Stephens, Central Texas Conference communications director. "We celebrate even small accomplishments because sometimes that is a major accomplishment at that time for that congregation. Beyond the bishop's commitment to connectional giving, the motivator for a congregation is a pastor who shares his or her excitement about what their dollars are doing in the world — locally and beyond."

■ 'Get out . . . and reach out'

When congregations are outwardly focused, generous giving follows naturally, say United Methodists for whom 100-percent giving to churchwide mission and

ministry is a way of life.

"My experience is that churches that are involved in mission and outreach (have fewer) problems paying apportionments," says the Rev. Richard Van Giesen, Illinois Great Rivers Conference treasurer. "If a congregation is struggling, I would advise them to get involved in a Habitat project, a soup kitchen, a food pantry or other local ministry.

"Churches that get into financial trouble have a tendency to withdraw, become ingrown and spend all of their money on themselves. This is the exact opposite of what they should do, and it is a certain prescription for death. The only method for reviving a church that I have seen actually work is to get out of the pews and reach out to the community in need."

Setting realistic expectations is essential for congregations striving for 100 percent, notes Bishop John R. Schol, Baltimore-Washington Conference. "Do not try to achieve 100 percent in one year. Set a goal each year so that in three to five years, you are paying 100 percent."

Yellowstone Conference—at 95 percent payment last year—is doing just that. Two years ago, the conference determined to pay general and jurisdictional apportionments at 90 percent and incrementally increase giving by 5 percent until they reached full payment. They renamed apportionments "Mission Shares" and hired a half-time mission coordinator.

"We run our conference budget much like a family would," treasurer Anita Saas notes, "making the sacrificial choices so we can do what is important."

She advises struggling congregations to "make a plan and be ready to keep working to reach your goal, even in the tough times."

*Dunlap-Berg is internal content editor for United Methodist Communications.

Native American Ministries Sunday on April 18

Resources to assist your church in observance of Native American Ministries Sunday on April 18, are now available.

Native American Ministries Sunday is one of six general church offerings of The United Methodist Church.

The offering on this Special Sunday educates Native American seminarians, plants Native American churches and cultivates Native American outreach to seekers like Ray.

Call toll-free 1-888-346-3862 to order envelopes and other resources so your congregation can participate in this churchwide offering. They will be sent at no cost to your church! Find more at: www.umcsgiving.org/specialsundays.

Lay Ministry Training April 23-24

Another round of lay ministry training will be offered in Mt. Vernon, Galesburg and Springfield April 23-24.

Three different modules will be offered — two of them on Saturday only and one on a Friday evening/all day Saturday format.

Registration deadline for the April lay ministry training events is Friday, April 2. To register or learn more about the training, visit: <http://layministry0410.eventbrite.com>

Bible Bowl slated for May 2

The Conference Bible Bowl will be held at East Bay Camp again this year on Sunday, May 2, from 2:30 to 5:30 p.m.

Scriptures for the 2010 Bowl are:
Elementary (4th-6th* graders) -

Mark 1:1 - 6:13

Jr. High (6th*-8th graders) -

Daniel 1-6

Sr. High (9th-12th graders) -
Revelation 1-12

For more information please contact John Hauck at john.hauck@gmail.com, 309-363-1901, 309-444-3228 or 309-444-4727.

UM Day at ballpark slated for May 22

United Methodist Men are sponsoring its annual day at Busch Stadium on Saturday, May 22, when the Cardinals take on the Los Angeles Angels in inter-league play.

Game time is 1:15 p.m. and tickets range from \$15 to \$30. The order form can be downloaded from the IGRC website by visiting <http://www.igrc.org/United-Methodist-Men.aspx>

Tickets are processed on a first-come, first-served basis.

Local Church News

Compassionate caring

Putting your life on hold for a loved one as the family's primary caregiver

By Meredith Jackson
Decatur Limited Magazine

Barb Wence is a trained health minister for Grace UMC in Decatur. Her desire is to meet the needs of parishioners beyond the walls of the church, particularly those who are ill, in nursing homes, hospitals or homebound.

"Health ministry is a holistic approach to the well-being of the individual," she said. "We assess their physical, spiritual, emotional and social needs."

And, she does her best to meet those needs. For example, she might act as a liaison between a shut-in and his doctor or keep in touch with out-of-town family members. She visits parishioners in the hospital and follows up with them once they have returned home, and she is available to coordinate any other assistance they might need.

"I love it," she said. "It's a wonderful, wonderful, wonderful experience."

Jan Hager is another church member involved with the elderly. She brings homemade cookies to those who are homebound and long for company. While her Tuesday visits are strictly social, they are just as vital to those she sees-and to her.

"It's so rewarding," she said. "It's wonderful talking to these elderly people-the stories they tell me, the memories they have. Sometimes they just want you to listen. And from what they have told me, they now feel like someone cares."

The work these ladies do is certainly a calling and a gift. Hager had a brain aneurysm in 2003 and was not expected to live. Now she feels that God has given her this ministry as her mission in life. In April 2009, Wence retired after 31 years in the medical profession, and the position as health minister at her church seemed a perfect fit for her. But as with Hager, Wence's personal experiences give her a deep empathy for the people to whom she ministers.

In August 1994, she watched her mother, Betty Weddle, die from complications brought on by uncontrolled diabetes. For four years prior, Wence's father, Tom, cared for her mother as she battled heart disease and the devastating effects of a stroke, and Tom Weddle chose never to put his wife in a nursing home. But Betty Weddle eventually wasted away. Wence considers it a blessing that she was able to spend the last two weeks of her mother's life by her side.

"I have a healthy Christian attitude towards death, and for me, it was important to be there," she said. "It was a peaceful thing. It gave me peace, and I truly felt her presence leave. I just felt like she was being received. It was...painful, yes, but at some point, we have to put that person before our own pain and allow them to go. We literal-

ly had to give her permission to go."

Today, Wence is the "relief caregiver," as she says, for one of her sisters, who is the full-time caregiver for their dad. He has chronic kidney failure and heart disease.

"Caregiving is a wonderful thing, but also very tiring," said Wence. "The one on duty 24/7 needs a respite now and then."

In her church and as a health minister, Wence often sees those in the same situation. Spouses and adult children sacrifice years of their lives to care for their sick or dying loved ones, knowing what must one day come to pass. Yet for a time, life goes on.

Grace United Church member Jane Calmes has amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, also known as Lou Gehrig's disease. Its cause is unknown, and there is no cure for this very rare disease. It affects the nerve cells in the brain and spinal cord that control voluntary muscle movement, leading to difficulty with breathing and swallowing and causing muscle weakness in other areas of the body. Most of the time, those with ALS die within two to five years of diagnosis. But Jane Calmes does not consider herself to be dying.

She is, instead, living.

Calmes has already proven that she's a survivor. In 2007, she beat breast cancer. During treatment, she thought she was unusually sensitive to the chemotherapy drugs she was being given. She felt breathless and weak, and despite her efforts to work out and regain her strength, she simply could not. In the summer of 2009, her doctor sent her to the Mayo Clinic, where she received her devastating diagnosis: ALS.

Calmes says that she is not ready to share what legacy she hopes to leave her family. She simply hasn't thought that far ahead yet. Instead, she lives in the moment.

"I look at my family, friends and neighbors, and I feel the blessings that I have, and I pretty much live in the day," she said. "Because with ALS, they say that no two cases are the same. I don't know what path mine will take, and I can still walk and use my arms and legs. It's mainly my breathing that is difficult right now."

Mostly, Calmes misses the simple things that she can no longer do. She watches her four children, her new daughter-in-law and her daughter Kim's fiancée prepare meals together in the kitchen, and she wishes she could be in the thick of things again. She speaks with pride and joy of her sons, Andy and Christopher, who come home for weekend visits from St. Louis; daughter Kim, who is earning her master's degree while planning a wedding; and Nikki, who chose to join her father in caring for her mother full-time.

Calmes says that she couldn't get through each day without her faith in God.

"That's it," she said simply. "That's what



istockphoto.com

gets me through. Faith."

Equally invaluable are her family's care and support. She calls them her rock.

"Of course, I worry about them as the disease progresses," she said. "It's going to be hard on them to watch it. I hate that for them. But they tell me I'm not a burden."

For 29 years, Mark Calmes has stood by his wife's side, in health, and now in sickness. He speaks knowledgeably of all the ins and outs of ALS, the progress that has been made in fighting the disease and the work that still needs to be done. He wishes that ALS were better known and better funded.

"Part of our responsibility with this disease is to try to get the word out, because it is a rare disease," he said. "It's not like heart disease or cancer."

Though armed with knowledge and certainly with hope, he does not live in denial and is not afraid to speak of the inevitable.

"It's difficult to answer how life has changed; it's an ongoing learning experience," he said. "You are instantaneously devastated and go through the normal stages of human emotion, but then after that, life goes on, and so you have to try to come to grips with, what do we do now? And how?"

What makes it even more difficult to wrap one's brain around a terminal illness of a loved one, is that for a time, that person seems fairly healthy, Mark explains. Right now, his wife is at that point, and it's difficult for him to predict how his emotions will change when her condition changes. So, he, too, seizes each day and meets the needs of his wife moment by moment, reassuring her that she is no burden.

"We are happy to care for Jane," he said. "She's the one that's sick and she has to deal with the consequences. We have to deal with them too, but not nearly in the same way that she will. Anything that I can do to keep stress and strain off her to prolong her life is what I want to do."

Nikki Calmes is her mother's other full-time caregiver. She had just completed her bachelor's degree in hospitality administra-

tion at Northern Illinois University and was in the middle of a summer internship on Hilton Head Island when her parents visited to share the devastating news in person.

"As soon as I found out the news, there was no other choice. I was finished with school. Eventually children end up taking care of family, and this was what I wanted to do in my heart," she said. "Putting my life on hold for a year or two or three-I didn't hesitate. I have the rest of my life."

Nikki Calmes has taken over many of the daily tasks required to run a household: grocery shopping, running errands, cleaning the house, cooking meals and more. She also volunteers with the ALS Association and is training for a half-marathon in April.

"I've always been addicted to working out...and that's one way I can take out my stress is on the treadmill or lifting weights. This helps give me a positive way to work out some of the emotions I am dealing with," she said. "Another thing about running this half marathon is that I actually have the ability to, whereas people with diseases like ALS wish they could run two steps."

Nikki Calmes says that dealing with her mom's ALS has helped her to be more patient. Like her parents, she finds solace in her spiritual walk and that living day to day is far healthier than dwelling on the future. But she is not oblivious to the reality.

"I cherish every single second I get to spend with her," she said. "I don't know if most kids my age would put their lives on hold like I did, or if they would even have the resources to do that. But my mom and I...now have a special bond that I can't even put into words, and I will have little day-to-day moments to cherish for the rest of my life."

"There is a saying that yesterday's history, tomorrow's a mystery and today's a gift," she said. "That's why it's called the present."

(Reprinted with permission from the Feb. 24 issue of Decatur Limited magazine, a publication of the Decatur Herald & Review newspaper)

Local Church News

'All Because of Jesus'

Local artist and worship leader at Fountain of Life UMC competes to open for national Christian band

By Brien Murphy
Springfield State Journal-Register

The first time Darrin Thurman sang in front an audience, he was just 5 years old, and he and a cousin sang, *I Was Raised on Loving Jesus*.

Twenty-three years later, Thurman is still singing about Jesus. And it might just land him a slot singing to thousands of people at a big-time Christian rock concert.

Thurman, of Dawson, is one of four finalists in WIBI-FM's *Opening Act* talent contest. If enough radio listeners and online voters like his recording of the song *All Because of Jesus*, he will get to do several shows with Rush of Fools this spring.

"I saw the opportunity to get my name out there and meet other people and maybe meet some potential pastors where I could go perform at their church with my ministry," Thurman said last week, just a few hours after returning home from a recording session. "... It was not necessarily to win the contest, but to get the opportunity to get some exposure and meet other musicians. That'd be cool."

He has the chance to accomplish more than that.

WIBI, a Carlinville contemporary Christian music station, sponsors *Opening Act*, a talent search where the big prize is to open for an established Christian music artist.

Thurman made it through a round of live auditions to get to a field of 45 quarterfinalists who sang in Springfield at the Jeremy Camp/Natalie Grant concert. Then he made it to semifinals with seven other singers who performed at a Big Daddy Weave concert in Florissant, Mo.

Now, he's one of four finalists who are trying to earn the title, and a three-concert stint touring with Rush of Fools (*Undo, Never Far Away*) in April.

The four finalists made professional recordings of their audition songs. The recordings will be played on WIBI and www.wibi.org so listeners can vote.

At this stage, *Opening Act* resembles *American Idol* — if a singer gets enough votes each of the next three weeks, he or she continues. The elimination rounds continue until a winner is announced at the April 10 Rush of Fools show in Alton. The winner gets to sing at three more three more Rush of Fools concerts.

Thurman grew up near Galesburg singing around the piano at the home of his grandmother, the late Geneva Thurman. The retired music teacher handed down a love of music to her grandchildren, and Darrin now owns that piano she played.

Thurman came to central Illinois to study at Millikin University in Decatur, which has a well-regarded music program. He says his career plans included singing on cruise ships or in Las Vegas — until he



Darrin Thurman

started writing songs.

"I was messing around with songwriting, and wrote my first song, which happened to be Christian-inspired song. I thought, 'Wow, maybe this was what I was meant to do.'"

Thurman works for a Springfield hotel and as worship leader at a Buffalo church. He's using his contacts among his friends and colleagues to spread the word about the contest.

"Social media is my best friend right now," he said. "... I've learned, you can be as talented as the next guy, but you truly have to have a fan base. You have to

market yourself."

And while he says he's "playing to win," his primary goal is to sing for more people.

"I would love to be able to do it full-time, but I also know that God has put me right where I need to be. He's never let me win anything until it was in its time. Things that were important to me, I might not necessarily get it the first time. He's put me in my place a little bit, and makes sure I know I'm right where I need to be."

(Reprinted with permission from the March 21 issue of the *Springfield State Journal-Register*).

New Salem UMC celebrates Scout Sunday

By Chuck Kurfman
Pastor, New Salem UMC

New Salem UMC recently observed Scout Sunday with three of its youth members of Cub Scout packs in New Berlin and Springfield, participating in the Sunday morning worship service.

The three scouts were Casey Bixby and Ben Kelly, both members of Pack 320, and Aaron Evans, a member of Pack 38.

The three Cub Scouts participated by leading the pledges to the Christian and American flags, serving as acolytes and ushers, greeting people as they came into church.

The Boy Scouts of America, in conjunction with United Methodist Churches throughout the nation, recently celebrated Scout Sunday on the second Sunday in February. This Sunday has been set aside to recognize the contributions of young people and adults involved with Scouting.

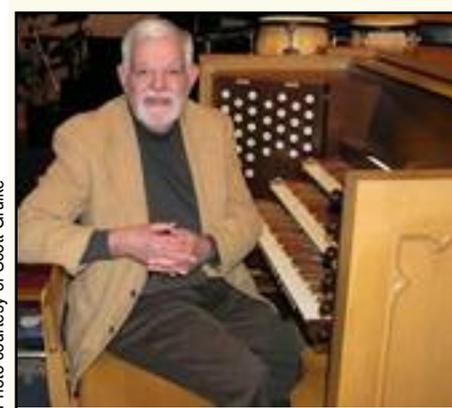
The Scouting programs in New Berlin, Springfield and communities throughout the area, are more than just an activity for our youth to learn about the outdoors. Scouting provides fun, fellowship and training to our youth as well as youth in our community. It emphasizes honesty, self-reliance and respect. Through a year-

round program, it affects character, citizenship and personal fitness. However, the success of our Scouting depends on the volunteers, who serve in a variety of leadership roles so that our young people may benefit from the Scouting ministry.

Many volunteers give their time so Scouting's members will be involved in a quality program. Merit badge counselors help Scouts learn more about vocations and hobbies. Volunteers see that the Scout camps have the necessary physical facilities and that all camp activities meet the high health and safety standards of the national organization.

Volunteers serve behind the scenes on committees so that community organizations using the Scouting program can find the best leadership possible for the youth related to their organizations. Volunteers, too, provide training for these leaders and offer a continuing service to every Cub Scout pack, Boy Scout troop and Venturing crew.

Many men and women offer their services to Scouting, but more volunteers are always needed to serve as leaders or share their special skills with young people and other adults. All these people experience a special sense of achievement through their work in Scouting.



Kirby Eber

Quincy Vermont Street UMC honored its organist Kirby Eber, for his 50 years of service on Sunday, March 7.

A special recognition was held in the church's 9 a.m. worship along with an afternoon open house.

During Kirby's tenure at Vermont Street, he has served with nine different directing pastors and 14 associate pastors.



Mission volunteer collapses on worksite in Hawaii

A mission volunteer who was leading a team from Bloomington Wesley UMC collapsed on the worksite in Hawaii Feb. 23 and died.

Doug Woodburn was pronounced dead at North Hawaii Community Hospital in Wiamea, Hawaii, after being taken by ambulance from the church camp where a mission team of 15 was working.

Woodburn's wife, Judy, was also on the trip and at her request, the mission team

completed the mission work before returning on Sunday, Feb. 28.

"Doug had a great passion for this particular mission trip, and cared deeply about the work they were doing in Hawaii this week," said Rev. Vaughn Hoffman, in a message on the church's website. "His faithfulness, good spirit and friendship will be deeply missed by all the Wesley family and the community at large."

Health Care Reform

Bishop clarifies church's role

Dear Friends:

I have had a number of contacts today especially following the debate on Health Care Reform legislation that took place in the U.S. House of Representatives late Sunday night. The flash point is, of course, the reference to The United Methodist Church in the Speaker of the House's speech. Neither the Council of Bishops office nor the General Board of Church and Society had prior knowledge of the content of any speeches made on the floor of the House on Sunday night much less Speaker Pelosi's speech.



Bishop Palmer

It will come as no secret to you that the United Methodist Church has been involved in this conversation fully based on the work of eight successive General Conferences. The United Methodist Church has affirmed the need for comprehensive health care reform that extends insurability to those not currently insured. United Methodists have been involved in monitoring Congressional action that culminated with the House votes Sunday night. This included reading the entire 2,700 pages of the bill. While not engaging in the partisan debate that preceded the vote, leaders continued to contact House members, informing them of the church's stance consistent with General Conference action.

As you deepen your understanding of the United Methodist Church's views on health care I refer you to paragraph 162V in the 2008 *Book of Discipline* (pp.117-118, see the entire paragraph in related article on this page).

Second, the 2008 General Conference approved Resolution 3201 entitled Health Care for All in the United States, which is located elsewhere on this page.

Yours in making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world,

† Gregory Vaughn Palmer

Resident Bishop

Paragraph 162.V Right to Health Care

"Health is a condition of physical, mental, social, and spiritual well-being. John 10:10b says "I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly." Stewardship of health is the responsibility of each person to whom health has been entrusted. Creating the personal, environmental, and social conditions in which health can thrive is a joint responsibility—public and private. We encourage individuals to pursue a healthy lifestyle and affirm the importance of preventive health care, health education, environmental and occupational safety, good nutrition, and secure housing in achieving health. Health care is a basic human right.

"Providing the care needed to maintain health, prevent disease, and restore health after injury or illness is a responsibility each person owes others and government owes to all, a responsibility government ignores at its peril. In Ezekiel 34:4a, God points out the failures of the leadership of Israel to care for the weak: "You have not strengthened the weak, you have not healed the sick, you have not bound up the

injured." As a result all suffer. Like police and fire protection, health care is best funded through the government's ability to tax each person equitably and directly fund the provider entities. Countries facing a public health crisis such as HIV/AIDS must have access to generic medicines and to patented medicines. We affirm the right of men and women to have access to comprehensive reproductive health/family planning information and services that will serve as a means to prevent unplanned pregnancies, reduce abortions, and prevent the spread of HIV/AIDS. The right to health care includes care for persons with brain diseases, neurological conditions, or physical disabilities, who must be afforded the same access to health care as all other persons in our communities. It is unjust to construct or perpetuate barriers to physical or mental wholeness or full participation in community.

"We believe it is a governmental responsibility to provide all citizens with health care."

The House vote by United Methodists

Voting YES: Vic Snyder (D), Ark.; Doris Matsui (D), Calif.; Laura Richardson (D), Calif.; Allen Boyd (D), Fla.; Suzanne Kosmas (D), Fla.; Baron Hill (D), Ind.; David Loeb sack (D), Iowa; Dutch Ruppersberger (D), Md.; Mark Schauer (D), Mich.; Bennie Thompson (D), Miss.; Russ Carnahan (D), Mo.; Emanuel Cleaver II (D), Mo.; Betty Sutton (D), Ohio; Bart Gordon (D), Tenn.; Lloyd Doggett (D), Texas; Gene Green (D), Texas; Solomon Ortiz (D), Texas; Rick Larsen (D), Wash.

Voting NO: Marion Berry (D), Ark.; Mike Ross (D), Ark.; Mike Coffman (R),

Colo.; Jeff Miller (R), Fla.; Bill Posey (R), Fla.; Bill Young (R), Fla.; Steve Buyer (R), Ind.; Lynn Jenkins (R), Kan.; Jerry Moran (R), Kan.; Ed Whitfield (R), Ky.; Mike Rogers (R), Mich.; John Kline (R), Minn.; Lee Terry (R), Neb.; Steve LaTourette (R), Ohio; Dan Boren (D), Okla.; Tom Cole (R), Okla.; Phil Roe (R), Tenn.; Joe Barton (R), Texas; John Culberson (R), Texas; Chet Edwards (D), Texas; Kay Granger (R), Texas; Ralph Hall (R), Texas; Sam Johnson (R), Texas; Pete Olson (R), Texas; Rick Boucher (D), Va.



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Pelosi hails church agency on health reform



House Speaker Nancy Pelosi

By Kathy Gilbert

NASHVILLE (UMNS) – The United Methodist Board of Church and Society is being hailed by House Speaker Nancy Pelosi for being a key contributor to a landmark vote on health care.

In her closing remarks March 21 before legislators approved legislation to provide medical coverage to uninsured Americans, Pelosi referred to The United Methodist Church as one of many organizations "sending a clear message to members of Congress: Say yes to health care reform."

More specifically, the United Methodist Board of Church and Society is included on Pelosi's Web site listing organizations supporting reform. Bishop Gregory Palmer, president of the Council of Bishops, along with the social action agency, endorsed a letter to Obama and members of Congress before the public health care summit held on Feb. 25 urging them "to take heart and move meaningful health care reform forward."

United Methodists, like most Americans, have taken different positions on the basic legislation approved by the House. Opponents of the legislation have cited its cost, its expansion of federal power and concerns that it would reverse past policy by allowing federal funding of abortions.

"There are parts of this bill that are good, including much-needed health

United Methodists, like most Americans, have taken different positions on the basic legislation approved by the House.

insurance reforms and making health insurance affordable for the uninsured," said Rep. Mike Ross, a United Methodist from Arizona who opposed the legislation. "On the other hand, many parts of this bill cause me great concern, like telling people they must buy health insurance or be fined, cutting Medicare by more than a half-trillion dollars, increasing taxes and forcing businesses to provide health insurance to their employees."

The denomination's chief legislative body, the quadrennial General Conference, has taken no stand on the current legislation, but has been a strong advocate for universal health care.

The United Methodist Church in its law book states: "We believe it is a governmental responsibility to provide all citizens with health care."

The 2008 United Methodist *Book of Resolutions* adds: "In the United States today, however, fulfillment of this duty is thwarted by simultaneous crises of access, quality, and cost. The result of these crises is injustice to the most vulnerable, increased risk to health care consumers, and waste of scarce public and private resources."

Signers of the letter urging action on health care reform included the Albany Area United Methodist Church, New York, Arkansas Methodist Federation for Social Action, Oregon-Idaho Methodist Federation for Social Action, Peninsula-Delaware Annual (regional) Conference of the United Methodist Church Advocacy Resource Team and the Western North Carolina Conference Methodist Federation for Social Action.

Health Care Reform

Resolution 3201: Health Care for All in the United States

■ Theological and Historical Statement

From our earliest days United Methodists have believed that providing health care to others is an important duty of Christians. John Wesley found ways to offer medical services at no cost to the poor in London. The first Methodist Social Creed (adopted in 1908) urged working conditions to safeguard the health of workers and community.

The provision of health care for all without regard to status or ability to pay is portrayed in the parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:24-35) as the duty of every neighbor and thus of every person. In a conversation that began with the question of how one might obtain eternal life, Jesus asserted that one must love God and one's neighbor. In response to the next question as to who one's neighbor is, Jesus portrayed a Samaritan, an outsider, who coming upon a wounded traveler, provided him with health care. Jesus portrayed the duty to provide health care as (1) one that is owed regardless of the merit or ethnicity of the person in need; (2) one that is owed to the limit of one's economic capacity — the Samaritan told the innkeeper, "Take care of him; and when I come back, I will repay you whatever more you spend", and (3) a duty that one neglects at the peril of one's eternal life. In a democracy, our duty to our neighbor merges with the duties that the Hebrew scriptures assign to government: the prophet Ezekiel denounced the leaders of ancient Israel whose failure of responsible government included failure to provide health care: "you have not strengthened the weak, you have not healed the sick, you have not bound up the injured, you have not brought back the strayed, you have not sought the lost, but with force and harshness you have ruled them." (Ezekiel 34:4, NRSV) The United Methodist Church therefore affirms in our Social Principles (§162V) health care as a basic human right and affirms the duty of government to assure health care for all.

In the United States today, however, fulfillment of this duty is thwarted by simultaneous crises of access, quality, and cost. The result of these crises is injustice to the most vulnerable, increased risk to health care consumers, and waste of scarce public and private resources.

■ Access barriers are an injustice to the most vulnerable

In today's United States, healthcare access is disproportionately afforded to the affluent, the employees of government and large corporations, the very poor, and many receiving adequate pensions plus Medicare. Forty-seven million Americans are uninsured, largely the self-employed, recently unemployed, middle income, and working poor. Lack of health care access affects minorities disparately, and the results of the devastating expense of a long-term or terminal illness, inadequate care in general, and the extraordinary cost of insurance all

contribute to keeping many minorities in the poverty cycle, dependent on welfare and other forms of assistance, and imprisoned in struggling and dangerous communities. Disparities in access lead to disparities in treatment. The poor, the aging, women, children, people with disabilities, and persons of color are most at risk. The infant mortality rate in the United States is the worst among the "developed" countries. African-American women die from cervical cancer at three times the rate of Caucasian women. African-Americans have a significantly lower life-span than Caucasians and Hispanics have the least access to the health care system of any group. Native Americans, besides suffering greatly from alcoholism, have a substantially higher diabetes and tuberculosis rate than average U.S. rates. Recent immigrants who experience health problems find the health care system poorly equipped to meet their needs. We believe it is unconscionable and abhorrent that any human being should ever be denied access to adequate health care due to economic, racial, or class barriers.

Such barriers, however, are endemic to our current system of employer-sponsored health coverage. This system is eroding, covering a smaller percentage of Americans each year, and rendering American employers less competitive in a world market. When a covered employee has a health crisis affecting his or her ability to work, a whole family's coverage is jeopardized. Other difficulties with private insurance are that in a health care crisis, even those with insurance may have expenses that exceed the lifetime maximum under their policy. In some cases, the insurance policy may be cancelled just when it is needed most. Businesses are overwhelmed with the cost of health insurance. Persons with chronic diseases face special challenges of inadequate resources both in availability of health care professionals and economic support. United Methodist Conferences increasingly find health care costs consuming dollars intended for ministry.

Forcing Americans to rely on a safety-net program like Medicaid is unjust because if a health catastrophe should strike, those who have no coverage must deplete all assets in order to qualify for Medicaid, including selling of a home or surrendering a lifetime of savings. Even if this family is not among those who must declare bankruptcy in order to survive, these circumstances contribute to poverty, constant worry, and despair among many. While Medicaid provides some care to the poor, it does not encourage primary nor comprehensive care and disqualifies applicants with borderline incomes. Persons with episodic incomes are denied Medicaid during the period they have incomes, and therefore also receive episodic care. In addition, Medicaid systems remain under

The United Methodist Church is committed to health care for all in the United States and therefore advocates for a comprehensive health care delivery system that includes access for all, quality care and effective management of costs.

constant attack as one of the first places to cut the federal and state budgets, belying the claims of many civil leaders that health care is their priority.

■ Quality issues put all patients at risk

In the United States, the provision of health care has been transformed from a ministry to a commodity measured in patient encounters, tests performed, medications dispensed, and beds filled. In the process, quality of care suffers as the primary concern is often cost, not care. The physician-patient relationship is thereby compromised. Insurance companies in their efforts to reduce costs seek to control physicians' practice of medicine, thereby interfering with the physician-patient relationship. As a result, medical decisions are often made with primary consideration for the costs to the corporation, not for the optimum health of the patient. In the current climate physicians who prescribe treatments or tests not pre-approved by the insurance corporation face severe financial penalties or other disincentives to optimum patient care. Physician time is consumed with excessive paperwork, malpractice suits, and inadequate government programs.

The American claim-based system produces enormous administrative burdens as well as denial of needed care. When claims are not denied by policy, they are often denied by the sheer burden of bureaucracy that must be overcome to obtain approvals. It has been estimated that today's physician spends about one-third of his or her time satisfying these insurance company regulations and seeking approvals for treatment, time the physician could be spending with patients. Competition for premium dollars and concern for high profits have taken priority over necessary care at actual cost. It is evident that private insurance companies are prone to deny claims while continuing to receive premiums, favoring higher profit over the "health and wholeness" of the weakened, the worried, and the sick. These same companies want to limit a patient's right to sue in civil court when the company breaches its own contract to provide benefits, regardless of the suffering or death a benefit denial may cause. In these types of cases a benefit denial is tantamount to medical malpractice.

Care Management has often been taken over by funding agencies rather than physicians. Managed care companies, HMOs, PPOs, and the like, interfere with the physician's ability to develop comprehensive treatment plans for his or her patients. They require that a decision be made by the corporation about treatment cost and efficacy. Medical decisions are in effect made by persons much less qualified than the

patient's physician or the specialist a physician may recommend. In fact, persons with little or no medical training often make those decisions. Many insurance companies hire nurses to review the physicians' diagnoses and treatment plans. While it is unusual for nurses to oversee doctors, it is also evident that these nurses have had no contact with the patient under review.

Hospitals are required to provide uncompensated care. As a result, patients who are unable to pay for small primary care bills are able to incur large hospital bills when their untreated illness has become life-threatening. It has been estimated that the cost of uncompensated care included in each individual policy is \$341, and in each family policy is \$942. Hospitals can no longer stay financially sound under existing policies.

Hospital staffing, due to cost concerns, imposes burdens on patient care that compromise quality, issues reflected in unhappy staff and increased numbers of union complaints and strikes in recent years. Error rates due to overwork and other factors are a crisis; the Institute of Medicine estimates that 100,000 persons die in American hospitals each year as a result of medical errors.

■ Spiraling costs waste scarce resources

Per capita health care costs in the United States are more than twice the median level for the 30 industrialized nations in the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development. The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services have estimated that by 2010, health care expenditures in the United States will reach \$2.6 trillion.

While some of the escalating costs of health care can be attributed to advances in technology and the aging of the population, a very significant part is due to the nature of America's health insurance market, in which:

- Today's physician spends one third or more of his or her time satisfying insurance requirements and seeking approvals for service.

- Multiple insurance companies, programs, coverage, claims processes, create confusion, duplication, and unnecessary administrative costs. It has been estimated that the cost of administration of Medicare is 4 percent to 5 percent of its budget, while the typical private company's budget for administration and profit is about 25 percent. Health care provision is managed by a massive bureaucratic complex: more than fifty state and state-level Medicaid systems, the Department of Veterans Affairs, the Railroad Employees insurance program,

See Resolution 3201 on page 18 ...

Forming Spiritual Leaders

Scholarship opportunities for college students

The Board of Higher Education and Campus Ministry of the Illinois Great Rivers Conference will award four \$1,200 scholarships for the 2010-2011 school year. The Scholarships augment the mission of our Conference which is to grow disciples for Jesus Christ.

Scholarships will be awarded in \$600 increments, to be paid in July (fall semester) and December (spring semester) of each year. Scholarships shall be paid directly to the student.

Scholarships are awards to students who have demonstrated leadership potential and are active in the campus ministry where their scholarship will be awarded.

Applicants must have approval to apply from a campus minister recognized by the Board, Wesley Foundation director or local United Methodist pastor.

Scholarship packets are available by visiting: www.igrc.org/Downloads/Ministries/Higher-Ed/IGRC-Leadership-Award.aspx

In addition, From the United Methodist Student Day Special Offering, scholarships will be awarded to students attending a United Methodist-related school, college, university or theological school recognized by the University Senate. One or more \$500 merit awards will be awarded; the number of awards is directly related to the amount allocated to the IGRC from the Student Day Special Offering.

Merit Scholarship application packets are available by visiting: www.igrc.org/Downloads/Ministries/Higher-Ed/IGRC-Merit-Awards.aspx

Deadlines for both applications are 4:30 p.m. March 31.

Scholarship established in Melzer's memory

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

A \$500 award will be given 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.

Deadline to apply 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.

Deadline approaches for Lay Witness Mission training event

By Ava Williams
Conference Director of Lay Speaking Ministries

The second of two lay witness mission training event will be held at Bloomington Wesley UMC in the Vermilion River District on April 23-24. The event will begin at 6:15 p.m. Friday evening. On Saturday, training begins at 8:30 a.m. and will run until 5 p.m.

The cost for the course is as follows:

- Clergy, laity and lay speakers NOT for credit=\$40, which includes LWM binder, Saturday lunch, snacks and handouts.

- Lay Speakers FOR credit as Advanced or Refresher Course=\$50, which includes text book, LWM binder, Saturday lunch, snacks and handouts.

Lay Speakers registering for the event and for credit toward their Continuing Education Requirements are reminded that this is now a GBOD approved course and you no longer need to contact your District Director of Lay Speaking Ministries for approval, nor do you need to obtain from them a Continuing Ed Form for this event.

For those needing overnight accommodations a block of rooms has been reserved at the new Bloomington-Normal Marriott

Lay Witness Mission Team Member Training is designed to give lay persons some help and practical experience for sharing their witness and testimony regarding what Jesus has done and continues to do for them.

Hotel and Conference Center with the special rate of \$109.00 which is good for the night of Friday, April 23. More information on how to reserve a room is available in the registration brochure.

If you have questions or want to request a brochure with registration form please contact Ava Williams at adwilliams2@juno.com or by phone at 618-966-3870. Deadline to register for the event is FIRMLY set for Friday, April 9.

Participants will be familiarized with the Lay Witness Mission schedule and content including opportunities to role play leadership of related small group meetings such as Bible studies and adult Sunday school classes. They will also be offered some suggestions for witnessing and given an opportunity to think through and write out their own witness as well as practice sharing it.

Why should you consider taking this training?

1. You will be enabled to give a personal testimony of your spiritual journey with Jesus Christ.

2. You will be equipped to better lead small groups.

3. In your own congregation you may find Lay Witness Mission to be a valuable tool for spiritual renewal in your church.

4. You will be personally enriched by the training experience itself.

5. As you share on a Lay Witness team you will receive much, for in giving we receive.

6. As you serve on Lay Witness teams you may feel led to become a coordinator and lead some of these missions.

These points apply to all laity, not just lay speakers, however, lay speakers may find an additional benefit:

7. Lay Speakers will receive more opportunities to speak in churches as team members on Lay Witness Missions.

Marked Leadership Camp June 13-20

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.

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.

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.

The camp staff also strongly believes that any Christian leader needs to consistently practice the spiritual disciplines.

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.

Marked Camp is an excellent opportunity for students to grow as leaders. Next year's camp will be June 13-20 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.

Self-care covenant workshop April 16-17

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 is available at: <http://self-care-covenant.eventbrite.com>

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 license as the official distributor of this workshop by the Kansas United Methodist Health Ministry Fund in Hutchinson, Kan.

Participation is open to all clergy and spouses, and staff (both lay and clergy).

Forming Discipleship Systems

Dots dying to be connected

Why do young adults so often find God and community in coffee shops rather than churches?

By Dan Dick



Dan Dick

Recent conversations with pastoral leaders in my home Conference (Wisconsin) about young adult ministry share a common theme: there simply isn't enough interest in the area.

Apparently, young adults don't want what the churches have to offer.

Except, this morning when I stopped off for my morning Buzz at Beans 'n Cream coffee shop, I noticed two small groups engaged in some deep Bible study. One table hosted two fifty-somethings and five college students, the second table squeezed together nine twenty- and thirty-somethings. I stopped and asked both groups what church they were from and got identical answers: we don't go to church.

Now the default reaction for most main-line United Methodists is, why can't we get these kids to come to church? They study the Bible — they're obviously interested in the Christian faith. It seems like they are a prime target audience. They want to grow in their faith, we're the church — BINGO!

But therein lies the rub. Church and the Christian faith are not the same thing, and much of what those inside the church find so valuable, those outside do not. Much of what church members will tolerate, non-church members have no patience for. Attending worship — the meat-and-potatoes of modern United Methodism — is of secondary importance to those seeking spiritual formation in small groups.

The sad fact is, we DON'T have what a large population is looking for. They want relationship with God, we offer them relationship with a church (small "c").

Now, don't get upset. There is nothing wrong with church. I spend most of my days trying to help churches. I think churches are swell. But I also recognize the gaping chasm between Church — the body of Christ incarnate to serve in the world — and church — where we go on Sunday for worship and may gather during the week for programs, classes, meetings, suppers, and events. For the segment of our population seeking the former, they often are completely turned off by the latter. It is symptomatic of a church whose "busyness" displaces the "business" of the church — i.e., getting members instead of building community.

I have a passion and a deep desire to see strong young adult ministries — but I understand that they will not conform to a traditional vision. Each time I raise the need for young adult ministries in my Conference, some well-meaning NOT young adult pipes in with, "We need to form a Young Adult Coordinating

Making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world requires structure and resources — but it doesn't require much of what we have become addicted to in the church: large buildings, expensive music programs, paid staffing, more and bigger and better equipment. Most young seekers after Christ aren't interested in those things.

Committee!" I quietly shake my head. When I speak to young people and tell them the Conference wants to form a young adult "committee/council/planning group," they beg me not to let it happen. The fastest way to kill any kind of young adult focus is to force it into an old structure. Young adults want form to follow function in organize ways — let the purpose and vision define the means of forming community and structure. It isn't rocket science ... but it also isn't the way "we've always done it before."

Another symptom of this disease are the number of 40- and 50-year-olds who want to "be involved" in young adult ministry. Young adults are fine with non-young-adults providing resources and support, but if the older generation is running things, then it really isn't young adult ministry. It is not enough to be in ministry "to" young adults, or provide ministry "for" young adults, or even to be in ministry "with" young adults.

Young adults need to be in ministry to and for one another, and beyond themselves in the world. Many young adults are suspicious of the older generations "welcoming them" into the existing structure. We (over-40s) may want them (under-40s) to lead "our" church in the future, but that doesn't seem to be the highest goal and value of young adults. Living well and doing good are much higher priorities that believing right and being good — normative expectations of the existing church for younger seekers.

In the past 20 years, I have found absolutely no difficulty in striking up conversations about spirituality, God, Jesus Christ, Christian service, faith formation, and transformation — people are starving for such engagement. But during the same period I have found it increasingly tricky to talk about church, religion, membership,

and worship with those OUTSIDE the church. These topics seem to be all we inside care to discuss, which is why people outside aren't that excited about coming inside.

Making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world requires structure and resources — but it doesn't require much of what we have become addicted to in the church: large buildings, expensive music programs, paid staffing, more and bigger and better equipment. Most young seekers after Christ aren't interested in those things.

Mostly, they want coffee (or tea), a table, time, and some compassionate, open people willing to sit with them and wrestle with the questions and concerns that emerge when they seriously wonder "why" and "what for." You cannot leave the church building without falling over one of them ... but if you wait until they come to us, good luck. They've already tried the church looking for Jesus, and all too often discovered he isn't there. But we already knew that — Jesus goes where the need is, and that — more often than not — is out in the world.

(Dan Dick is an ordained minister of The United Methodist Church serving in extension ministry as the Director of Connectional Ministries for the Wisconsin Annual Conference. A nationally known speaker, teacher, and author of 13 books on spirituality, stewardship, congregational development, research, and spiritual gifts discovery, and an advocate for a more loving, inclusive church for the 21st century and beyond, Dan worked for the General Board of Discipleship in Nashville, Tenn. for 14 years in stewardship, congregational and conference planning, leadership development, and research. Reprinted from Dick's blog, United Methodevations, <http://doroteos2.wordpress.com>)

Children's and youth ministry through a new lens

The Christian Educators' Fellowship will host "Ministry with Children and Youth through a New Lens" on Thursday, April 22, from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. at Jacksonville Grace UMC.

Becky Morris of the Performance Development Network will be speaking.

Cost for the event is \$25, which includes lunch. Scholarship assistance is available by contacting Beth Fender at bfender@igrc.org or by calling 217-529-2611. Registration is available online at: <http://newlens.eventbrite.com> now through April 19. If you are unable to reg-

ister online, contact Christy Blickensderfer at 217-529-2473. Payment can be made by credit card online or by check, payable to IGRC and mailed to: Christian Educators' Fellowship, Attention: Christy Blickensderfer, P. O. Box 19207, Springfield, IL 62794-9207.

If you have any questions or need additional information, contact IGRC CEF President JoAnn Overholt at Springfield Laurel UMC at joverholt@laurel.umchurch.org or by calling 217-525-1866, or Beth Fender at bfender@igrc.org or by calling 217-529-2611.

Worship, hospitality focus of Deeper Still retreat

Worship and Hospitality will be the focus of Drinking Deeper and Sharing the Cup, the second retreat in the Deeper Still series sponsored by the IGRC New Streams Team.

Throughout this two-day event, participants will have opportunities to receive and extend hospitality in the context of worship. Through times of teaching, action, and reflection, as well as inspiring preaching from Bishop Gregory Palmer, participants will be renewed, equipped, and challenged to deepen their relationship with God and neighbor.

Bishop Palmer, Kaskaskia River District Superintendent Cynthia Jones, and members of the New Streams Team will lead teaching sessions during the event, providing participants with practical tips and tools to take back and use in their local church.

Drinking Deeper and Sharing the Cup will be held Friday and Saturday, April 16-17, at Mt. Vernon West Salem Trinity UMC. **Final registration deadline is Tuesday, April 6.** No registrations will be accepted after this date.

Can't make the whole retreat? Join us at 3:30 p.m. on Saturday, April 17, for a worship celebration featuring the inspiring preaching of Bishop Palmer.

Refreshments will be available following the service for those who choose to stay. This service is open to everyone, and no registration is required.

For more information or to register for the retreat online, visit <http://drinkingdeeper.eventbrite.com>

Bible Study resources available for download

A six-week Bible Study on the Book of Acts, which brings together scripture, the teachings of John Wesley and the Four Areas of Focus, was released online March 1 for IGRC congregations to use in the 50 days leading up to Pentecost.

The Acts of the Apostles: Hearts Afire and the Four Areas of Focus is a collaborative effort that has involved a team of writers and resource people across the United Methodist connection.

The Bible Study consists of two components: daily participant readings and weekly group lessons. The delivery via download is an attempt to provide delivery in an easy to use format. The study could be used by existing Sunday school classes, small groups, or Bible study groups, or by new groups formed specifically for this short-term study.

Printed resources and promotional materials can be downloaded from the IGRC website. Visit www.igrc.org, click on Downloads from the right-hand column, select Ministries from the left-hand column and then select "Acts Bible Study." A direct link can also be found on the IGRC Home Page.



Spring Break With a Mission

Teams of students from public and private universities use their Spring Break to make a difference in people's lives.

Story and photos by Tim Harrison, Sherry Smedshammer, Paige Roberts and Sarah Casey.



Relationships are first, work second

McKendree University Campus Ministries took 12 students and two adults to Virginia this year for Spring Break.

The group ranged from students who have been on six previous mission trips to those for whom this was their first experience. Joining forces with the staff at Appalachia Service Project (ASP) and with two other schools (Emory and Saint Louis University), we were assigned projects on two different houses.

The first project was shingling a roof and refinishing a deck. The second project included reinforcing the outside walls of a house, working to remove a bathroom floor and then dig holes through mud, clay, and mountain rock to secure footings for the foundation of a floor. In addition, we were charged with reframing a door and window in another room of the house.

Our project leader was a junior student, Jared Winters, who had worked at ASP that previous summer. Through his supervision and the work of other students, we accomplished goals we had set for ourselves throughout the course of the week.

The families we worked for were outstanding. They welcomed us, and in some cases as the families were able, pitched in and worked side by side with our teams to remodel their homes.

While there, we were able to enjoy a wonderful evening of Appalachian culture with a local blue grass band providing us a personal concert at the ASP lodge. Students responded with hard work, a wonderful attitude and some meaningful

reflection on the importance of giving back to others.

One student, Adam Schwind summed it up best when he wrote:

"This experience was truly a life-altering one, as many of the mission trips were before it. Unlike many past mission trips I have been on however, the house our team worked on here in Virginia provided me a brand new experience. Throughout the week, family members were present at all times while the team worked on the home. It was a constant reminder to me of how each house that we were working on deserved our utmost respect. Our student construction site leader, Jared Winters, said it right, "Relationships first, work second." Every time Ben (the son of the homeowner) came out from his parent's home he had a big smile and warm heart to share his gratitude for what my fellow college-aged disciples of God were doing for free. But it really wasn't free, was it? We GAVE away our spring break with a smile. We SPENT countless hours on a roof or digging holes in mud because we had the strength. We were called to perform God's will and we ANSWERED. I'm not trying to make us sound like heroes. I'm trying to let every person know that God's will falls upon each of His children and it is up to us to answer the call. It was a great experience to see other college groups at the same place we were working together. It continues to be a great experience to share this event with all of my brothers and sisters."



Kingdom House...a true blessing

During spring break, instead of soaking up the sun on a beach, there were five SIU-C Wesley Foundation students and six students from the American Baptist Campus ministries gave up time to work at Kingdom House in St. Louis. It is a great ministry that provides a variety of services including day care, thrift stores, food pantries, etc. (check out the website kingdomhouse.org if you would like to know more).

On Saturday, we toured the building, cleaned the playground, and participated in a virtual money store with the kids. Each child was given a pretend checking account with a sample monthly salary, and they had to go to different stations paying for different "real-life" expenses (health insurance, student loans, housing, etc.). Chris, who had a station for purchasing transportation, did some wheelin' and

dealin' and managed to get almost every kid to buy the most expensive, "coolest" car. He definitely gave them a taste of the pressures of material things in the real world...

Monday, half of the group sorted and organized food in the food pantry...while the other half worked outside with a compost pile and garden plots...

Tuesday, the House received a massive food delivery of over 70 boxes which had to be sorted and organized. This task kept the majority of us busy while a few others in our group worked some maintenance jobs.

Working with a ministry like Kingdom House was a great experience. There couldn't be a better way to spend Spring Break than showing God's love by helping those in need.



EIU students find common ground

Students from the Wesley Foundation at Eastern Illinois University just returned from a week long mission trip to Tuskegee, Ala. They worked with Alabama Rural Ministry (ARM), a United Methodist ministry which focuses on home repair in the "black belt" region of Alabama.

After a day of discovering the history of Tuskegee, including visits to the historic Tuskegee Institute and the George Washington Carver Museum, the eleven students plus their campus minister dedicated five days to serving families in the Tuskegee and Auburn areas.

The group broke up into two teams and worked on five different projects during the week. One team put siding up on a home and fixed the front deck. At another home they finished the painting on a house that had been rehabbed by previous work crews. In addition, the team also helped ARM by organizing their supply closet.

The second team worked for a woman in her late 80's who recently suffered a stroke. They replaced a broken window in her bedroom, fixed leaks in the bathroom, painted ceilings, and replaced damaged wood siding all around the house. At another home they pulled up a floor which had been damaged after the roof blew off during severe weather.

After each day of work, the students met to worship and talk about their day. The students were asked where they saw God. Their answers ranged from the weather, to the families they worked for, or to each other. The trip made quite an impression.

"It was great to meet people from a different culture than us and even a different race and yet see how much we really have in common," said Caleb McGregor a junior from Mt. Carmel. The students returned inspired to find more ways they can serve in the EIU community and at home.

Where did they go?

McKendree University – Virginia to work on Appalachian Service Project

SIU- Carbondale – Kingdom House, St. Louis, assisted with playground cleanup and work in the facility's food pantry and general maintenance; Brenton, W.Va., to work on Appalachian Service Project providing repair and light construction projects

Eastern Illinois University – Tuskegee, Ala., working with the Alabama Rural Project in Alabama's "black belt." Work consisted of repair, rehab and light construction work.

Illinois State University – Miami, Fla., as part of 200 students working on a Habitat for Humanity build.



SIU-C gets outside comfort zones

A group of Southern Illinois University-Carbondale students drove nine hours to Brenton, W.Va., for a week's work with the Appalachian Service Project.

The idea behind ASP is to help families in need to repair and rebuild their houses. The team was assigned to one house for a week where we completed various construction projects. Every day we would have breakfast at 8 a.m. and then head out to our work site around 9:30 a.m.

During the week my team rebuilt the kitchen counter and sink, installed new floors, added insulation and dry wall to a number of walls in the house, added double paned windows to the existing bedroom while sanding and painting a new finished bedroom. Because several students were not very knowledgeable about construction projects, the trip was a challenge for them. They learned a lot of new information and now know how to hang drywall, tape seams, and mud and sand a wall as well as hang insulation underneath the house.

Each day the team worked to about 5

p.m. and then headed back to the ASP center where we would clean-up and have dinner. A couple of nights the SIU-C team went to the neighboring town for Dairy Queen ice cream. One night they went to a small restaurant called the Cow Shed Inn where we all ordered "wedgie" sandwiches (sandwiches made out of pizza crust folded in half), while a couple of students took on the Big Daddy Pizza.

Every night our group spent lots of quality time together playing Balderdash, working on puzzles, knitting, playing mind-boggling games of 3D Tic Tac Toe, and of course, priceless conversation.

As one student wrote, "The entire trip was a wonderful and humbling experience. I love going out into the community to spread the love of Christ to families in need. I would encourage every person to go on some kind of mission experience in his/her lifetime because on this trip not only did I help an extremely nice man and woman, but I also learned to appreciate the things that I am blessed with on a daily basis."

ISU Wesley works on Habitat build

At midnight on Friday, March 5, ISU Wesley (almost 40 young adults!) kicked off Spring Break 2010 by piling into 15 passenger vans for a 24-hour drive to Miami, Fla.

ISU students joined 200 other young adults and spent four days working with Habitat For Humanity to build homes for those who have none. Words cannot adequately describe the experience of spending eight hours on a roof in the blistering sun building a house for a person you have never met - and having your best friend on your right and a complete stranger on your left working right alongside you.

Our group consisted of individuals from many different backgrounds which allowed for an awesome group dynamic. Each person set aside their personal baggage to serve together. It was a rare, humbling experience.

God's presence was felt and known whether we were in the vans singing on our way to the work site, up on the roof, or lying on the beach. Highlights of the week included a day at the beach and a fabulous authentic Greek feast. Not to mention hours of swimming and games after a long, hard work day. The trip would not have been complete without nightly euchre competitions.

What is most exciting for our ministry as a whole is that this trip is always a time when new leaders emerge, and this year was no exception. We came together for an evening worship service led by a current sophomore who set the tone for a power and authentic worship experience. Those who were new to the ministry began to find their place and were welcomed with open and accepting hearts by those already involved. It was an incredible week of service, laughter and fun.

Mission and Outreach — Locally and Globally

Haiti training April 10

A VIM training event which will provide training to teams wanting to go to Haiti when the time is right will be held on April 10 at the Conference Center.

Registration cost is \$20 per person which covers lunch and materials. Registration deadline is Wednesday, March 31.

Contact Christy Blickensderfer at 217-529-2473 or by email at cblickensderfer@igrc.org.

Dayspring Church hosts Mother Earth Healing Day

The Native American Fellowship Turtle Lodge Community in conjunction with the Native American Fellowship Dayspring Church (UMC) hosts Mother Earth Healing Day, a special gathering on Saturday May 1, from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., at the church's 43-acre property at 201 N. Norwood Place in East Peoria (adjacent to East Side Center). Admission is free.

Every year Mother Earth is prayed for, in the traditions of members' respective tribes. This year the public is invited to a rare opportunity to observe traditional ceremonies and traditions that come from members' tribal backgrounds. Native American people will tell their story in an attempt to clear up racism, false stereotypes, and cultural exploitation of Native Americans.

This event will be lead by NAF Dayspring Pastor Dan Fire Crow Lybarger, elected NAF Medicine Chief Phyllis Singing Bird Ballard, and NAF Turtle Lodge Community Leader Adam Danner.

Many respected Native Americans from around the country will speak and join us in ceremony, including Lionel Little Eagle Pinn (Micmac), a pipe carrier, author of the book *Green Grass Pipe Dancers*, and past guardian of Crazy Horses' pipe bag.

The Native American Fellowship drum and Native American flute players will share their music. Fry-bread and hand crafted goods will be available. For more information call 309-635-1107 or <http://nafdayspring.org/>.

UMM support prayer ministry

The Upper Room and United Methodist Men support a 24-hour 7 day-a-week intercessory prayer ministry.

United Methodist Men prayer advocates presented the center with \$11,375 during their March 3-7 meeting. The men annually provide \$21,000 to pay for the phone line. The 30,000 monthly prayer requests received at the center are sent to 300 covenant prayer groups.

Chilean pastor appeals for assistance



Mario Mayer Chile was facing one of the five human history strongest earthquake (8.8 grades Richter's scale), and later a tsunami that destroyed several cities beside the sea.

From that day until today those people faced 143 aftershocks in between 7.7 and 5.5 grades. Contrary with what is recommended, I am wishing to be there, I remember how important and busy role I played after the 1985's earthquake in helping The Methodist Church in Chile to acknowledge, to size and organize how to rebuild what was lost.

I think that I am the only Chilean person serving at the IGRC and I know that in our actual world culture everyone is permanently busy and unfortunately, many times tired to be working in Church, helping different causes and attending a lot of meetings but I want to ask for your attention. I received this morning the Chilean Bishop Rev Mario Martinez's email containing preliminary information after counting the damage in what is the internal church's family concern.

The following words are part of Chilean Bishop Rev. Mario Martinez report:

"Only today Monday, after several times trying to make contact with the congregations located in the earthquake area, we are able to share with you all a preliminary report. Fortunately we are in condi-

tion to said that there are not people injured or death to be sorry. However the damage in church buildings, parsonages and in what are our members private homes is huge and we are afraid that in several cases will be impossible to keep using them; especially those located at William Taylor District, Concepcion District and South District as well as several other places with important damage at Santiago-Metropolitan District.

We are still waiting for information from several congregations that so far have being impossible to communicate with."

I am writing this message after being three days in shock, in darkness and watching the valley of destruction and death in the land of my dear ones. Now, our Good Lord Jesus is giving me strength to stand and to talk to the people of God that is my Church's family and to ask them to commit with those who are in deeply need.

Chile has been developing economically in a very good standard helping poor people to grow and it was amazing to see the integral progress after the military coup. But now I can say that in many places after this natural mega earthquake will be a big challenge for the whole nation and it should be great if we all consider to help in some ways whether through one special offering or sending a VIM Team to help in rebuilding. I am making myself personally available and volunteer myself to visit congregations to provide information for those who are willing to help but they do not

know how.

Financial support can be made to Chile Emergency Advance # 3021178.

Gifts can also be made by check to UMCOR and mailed to UMCOR, PO Box 9068, New York, NY 10087 or by phone Call toll-free 800-554-8583. For local church and Annual Conference credit, place your gift in the offering plate on Sundays. Please indicate in the memo line of the check that it is for the Chile Emergency.

If you need to have a more clear information before to feel that this is a good cause to be involved with, let me share with you that so far there are more than 2 millions of damaged people, almost 800 dead, 500 injured and innumerable missing.

I am serving at Newton Grace UMC at the Embarras River District, happy to see my parishioners immediate support to answer to the many needs in Chile; I will become an USA citizen hopefully next year but, still Chilean blood is running on my veins and I am proud of that and I do not feel ashamed to ask for your help, after all, whether people in Chile or Americans, we do have the same Father and a common mission.

Thanks for taking the time to read this S.O.S. and to consider helping.

May God bless you all.

Rev. Mario S Mayer

Email mariosmayer@gmail.com; cell phone 618-553-7191; office 618-783-3336; website www.newtongumc.com

MMDC celebrates 10th anniversary of operation

The Midwest Mission Distribution Center will celebrate its 10th anniversary on Saturday, May 1, beginning at 2:30 p.m.

Activities will include making kits in the center based upon supply and need. Tours of the campus will be ongoing during the celebration and a video presentation of the Center will be shown in the Chapel.

The Twice Giving shop will be open.

Tenth Anniversary totes will be available to those on a first come first serve basis for a donation to the Center.

Dinner will be served at Sugar Creek UMC (located next door to the Center) at

5:30 PM and a free-will donation will be taken there. There will be a keynote speaker during the meal, and recognition will be paid to those who were former Board Members and staff who come, and to those who will be going off the board at this time.

MMDC has reserved a block of 20 rooms at the Baymont Inn & Suites in Springfield for \$74/night plus applicable tax. There are 10 rooms with double beds, and 10 rooms with king-size beds. The rooms are 100 percent smoke free and equipped with microwave and fridge.

The room rate includes a free hot break-

fast, free internet, and access to the fitness room, indoor heated pool and hot tub. To reserve a room, call the Baymont at 217-529-6655 and mention the block date (May 01) and the block name (Midwest Mission Distribution).

You must have a valid credit/debit card to hold a room. 24 hour advance notice must be given for any cancellations. The rooms will be available until April 15. All rooms not reserved will be dropped on April 15 and the discounted rate will no longer be valid. Any rooms reserved after April 15 will be at their regular rate.

Update on Haiti receiving mission teams

United Methodist Volunteers in Mission and United Methodist officials continue to work on a plan for receiving volunteers in Haiti, following January's earthquake.

Paulette West, Executive Director of UMVIM, Southeastern Jurisdiction debriefed last week in New York City with the General Board of Global Ministries and the United Methodist Committee on Relief after her recent trip to Haiti.

Resumes were reviewed for the posi-

tions of the US Haiti Coordinator and the Haiti Volunteer Management Coordinantor. An announcement of those positions will be made in the near future.

UMVIM is continuing to receive resumes for the Haiti Finance/Hospitality Coordinator. Please send resumes to Landon Taylor, ltaylor@gbgm-umc.org, at GBGM Mission Volunteers. Once these positions are filled and in place, we will be able to begin scheduling the first teams

into Haiti. GBGM, UMCOR, and UMVIM continue to emphasize that teams must have a trained team leader with Haiti experience.

The framework being currently implemented will help teams interested in Haiti to plan their trips, as well as protect the fragile infrastructure of Haiti and the Methodist Church of Haiti. Therefore, all teams serving in Haiti will need to schedule through the US Haiti Coordinator.

Embracing Communications & Technology

Google: the new Yellow Pages

Why start a digital marketing campaign for your church?



By Eric Seiberling

As people are considering marketing their church using social media, a question that I often get asked is “why?”

There are many in the church who still don't get on Facebook, see no use for Twitter and rarely check their e-mail.

So why start a digital marketing effort?

Google is the new YellowPages.

Today, people use the Internet to find things they need, research things they are interested in and use it as they would use the YellowPages, 411 or even a map. People now use the internet as their primary (and sometimes sole source) of information, as well as the primary tool they use to get to where they want to go.

My daughter is in 8th grade and she had this massive project called “Sculptors of History.” It involves researching a major figure in history, writing a report and presenting it in class. Her's was on William Shakespeare. Where did she go to research William? Google and Wikipedia. When I asked her if she went to the library, she asked “WHY?”

When we compare the ease of looking something up on-line vs. going to the physical library, it isn't hard to imagine why she responded the way she did.

■ Google Results = First Impression of Your Church.

Adam Broitman, an interactive media strategist, calls Google a “reputation management system.” Many people use Google as the sole source to find all things on the Internet. Most people do not randomly search around on different sites. Instead, they surf about 10 to 12 sites regularly and then use Google to answer any ad hoc questions.

So, what does that mean for churches? It basically means that your “digital presence” is determined by what Google thinks of you. Google looks at links to and from



your site, references to you on-line, how “fresh” the content is, and some of the mechanics of your website. Google judges you based on the key words used on your site, the number of links going in and out, and the type and quality of the sites that reference your website.

- Hub = Your Website
- Connectors = Links
- Outposts = Other websites referencing yours.

The more outposts and connectors that you have; the more you will come to the top of the Google search results and that the results will be focused on things you want them to be.

■ What would Jesus or the Apostle Paul do?

Scripturally, it fits in with “Go and make disciples” idea. Jesus and the Apostle Paul used cutting edge marketing techniques to reach all those who needed to hear the Good News. Jesus went to the synagogues and then taught the crowds on the hillsides. Paul preached where the Philosophers would go and debate one another. Paul also wrote a lot of letters to churches that were reproduced to help spread and strengthen the Gospel.

The MESSAGE was always the same, but the MEDIUM changed to ensure it was effective at reaching who they were trying to reach. The web provides another MEDIUM to reach out digital world and spread the MESSAGE. We are CALLED to use all mediums to spread God's universal

message of love.

■ From a practical perspective...what is the digital appearance of your church?

Your church is already on-line, but are you going to manage its presence or not. Search engines, yellow pages and even blog posts exist about your church, right now. If you doubt it, go to Google and type the following: “Your Church UMC” +City. Count the number of hits. Even if your church is off-line, it will have between 20 and 50 hits. You are already on the web. Shouldn't you listen to the conservation?

Let me put it another way. Would you stop mowing the lawn, tending the flower beds and picking up the litter around your church? Why not? I think there are two answers. One, it isn't good stewardship. God calls us to care for what has been put in your hands. Two, it makes for a pretty poor perception (read: witness) of your church for the surrounding community. So, we trudge out every week to clean up the area outside our facility (including along the street), change the sign, mow the lawn, and generally tidy up. While it does not impact the ministry inside the four walls of the church, we do it because we feel an obligation to do it. Makes sense, right?

Now consider your church's digital appearance. Are you tending to it? Are you putting information on the sign for people to read when they “drive by?” Are you ensuring that Google's information is about your church is correct? Or is there a bunch of digital litter burying your church and muting your ability to “go and make disciples”?

(Eric Seiberling is a Technical Account Manager for Dassault Systemes, serves on the denomination's General Commission on Communications and is Chair of the Communications Team for the West Ohio Conference. His blog, “flock:ology” focuses on ways to grow the church and improve its effectiveness. Reprinted with permission, www.flockology.com)

UMCom hosts weekly webinars online

Tuesdays @ 10am Central is a free 30-minute Webinar hosted by United Methodist Communications to share up-to-date and relevant information, resources and tools that will enhance your church's communications ministry. While the live broadcast of the Webinars is free, we do ask that you register the first time at our online registration center. After you register the first time, you will automatically receive an invitation and access to subsequent live Webinar broadcasts. At any time, you can request to discontinue receiving invitations.

Upcoming Webinars:

Topics and presenters are subject to change, but we will make every effort to

keep to the list below. If you would like to suggest a topic for a communications ministry Webinar, send us an email.

- **March 30**, Take a look at photo sharing online. This is the fifth of five webinars dedicated to “Mastering the Multimedia Maze.”
- **April 6**, Learn how to use free online communication with Voice over IP.
- **April 13**, Discover the convenience of online meetings.
- April 20, Special guests, TBD.
- **April 27**, Take advantage of free online polls and surveys.

How to Register:

To register, visit the online registration center at: www.123signup.com/register?

id=jcnhj once to sign up for the live Webinar broadcast. You will receive an email confirmation with access information to join the live Webinar broadcast. Use the same access information each week to join us each Tuesday @ 10am Central. The Webinar “room” is limited to the first 100 people who log in each week.

Subscribe to the RSS Feed:

If you can't join us for the live broadcast of a Webinar, or you'd like to revisit the topic later, you can access each archived Webinar online and/or subscribe to the RSS feed. Visit: www.umcom.org and select Training.

Communications Team earns All-Star rating

Constant Contact, the nation's leading email marketing and online survey tool, has named the IGRC Communications Team an All Star for 2009.

The honor was given to the team for employing sound business practices and in recognition of regular communications with the various constituencies within the IGRC.

This is the second award given to the team for its e-newsletters. In October, the United Methodist Association of Communicators, named the electronic *Daily Current*, published during the 2009 annual conference, as the best electronic newsletter of 2009.

Black to serve on NICC Board

IGRC Director of Communications Paul Black has been nominated as a member of the board for the National Interfaith Cable Coalition as the denominational representative for The United Methodist Church.

Black, whose election will be consummated April 13, succeeds United Methodist Communications General Secretary Larry Hollon as the United Methodist Church representative.

The NICC is a television programming consortium that now includes approximately 70 Christian, Jewish and Muslim faith groups. In 1988, the group founded the VISN network, which later merged with the Southern Baptist-sponsored ACTS channel and became the Odyssey Network.

Odyssey's cable property was later sold to the Hallmark Channel, and the NICC coalition retained until 2007 a Sunday programming block on Hallmark for productions by its member faith groups. Today, NICC is known as Odyssey Network and serves as a media production, distribution and promotion agency working to place faith-based programming on a variety of cable, internet and broadcast channels.

Black's nomination was put forward by the General Commission on Communications' executive board. Black is currently in his second four-year term as a member of the General Commission and chairs the New Media committee.

Deadline for pre-Conference issue of *The Current* nears

Groups interested in promoting or advertising news related to the 2010 Annual Conference are reminded that these items are to be turned in no later than Friday, April 2, in order to be included in the pre-Conference issue of *The Current*, which will be published April 30.

National News

Groups discuss clergy job guarantees

By Kathy L. Gilbert*

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (UMNS) — A United Methodist commission charged with developing ways to improve clergy effectiveness is considering recommending the elimination of guaranteed appointments.

In a joint meeting with the Committee on Faith and Order this week, members of the Ministry Study Commission raised concerns about the practice of promising some clergy lifetime jobs.

“We decided that the system of guaranteed appointments has created mediocrity, an expectation that clergy will have a job no matter how effective they are and that churches will get a pastor even if they are not functioning in a healthy way or participating in living missionally,” said the Rev. Amy Gearhart, an elder in the Missouri Annual (regional) Conference and a commission member.

The ministry commission and the Committee on Faith and Order met and shared their work March 16 as both prepare reports for the 2012 General Conference, the top legislative body of the denomination.

The joint meeting was to share and get “push back” on some of the issues both groups are grappling with, said Bishop Alfred Gwinn, chair of the ministry study group.

The Committee on Faith and Order was given leadership in reflecting on matters of faith, doctrinal teaching, order and discipline in the church.

The ministry commission has named the major issues they are working on “big rocks.” The team is focusing on recruitment, discernment and formation for professional ministry; ordination and sacramental authority; and clergy appointments.

“We want to concentrate on the big rocks in the jar and not get overloaded with the sand and small rocks,” Gwinn said.

■ Deploying clergy

Historically, biblically and theologically, The United Methodist Church has practiced itineration, Gearhart said. Having bishops assign clergy to churches has been a tradition in United Methodism dating back to John Wesley.

However, clergy need to understand itinerancy is not something they do in exchange for a guaranteed appointment to a church, she said.

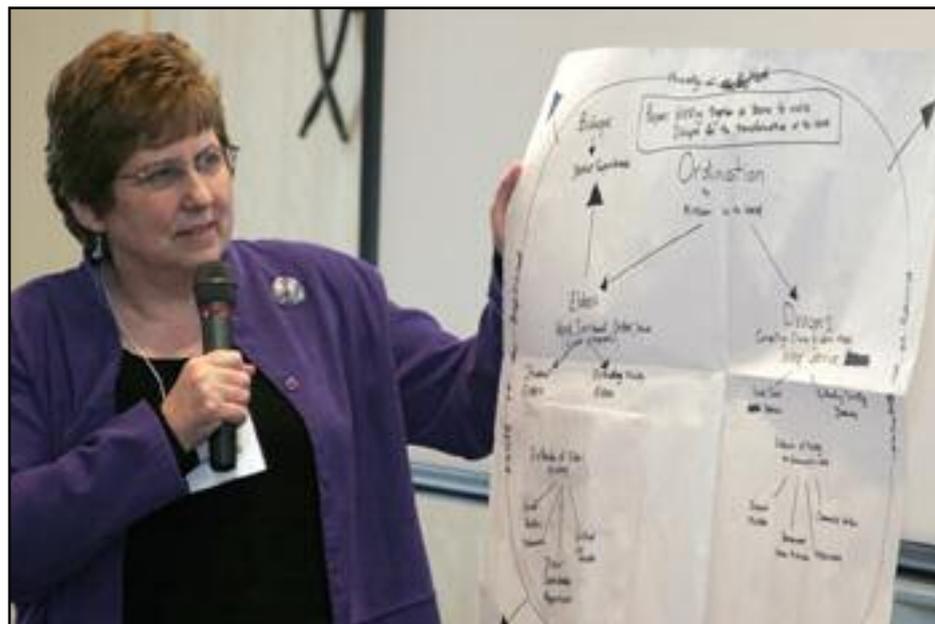
“We have heard pastors say, ‘I will give you the practice of itinerating my family and my life and my household if you give me a guaranteed appointment.’”

The two are not meant to be used against each other, she said.

“Itinerancy is effective and a response to covenantal obedience to a particular call from God,” she said. “Itinerancy is not just about moving.”

■ Difficult path to ordination

The Rev. Jay Williams of the New York Annual (regional) Conference said the church’s fear of not having enough young clergy and the assumption of guaranteed appointments also has resulted in a cumbersome and often lengthy process to entering ministry.



UMNS photos by Kathy L. Gilbert

The Rev. Anita Wood, executive with the United Methodist Board of Higher Education and Ministry, uses a chart to explain the ministry of the baptized. The Ministry Study Commission and the Committee on Faith and Order met in Nashville, Tenn., March 16 to share and discuss their work.

“The 2004 and 2008 General Conferences have done strong work in streamlining the process so we are already under way,” he said. “I personally have experienced that the process is extraordinarily difficult to navigate. Even with my extensive and intimate knowledge, it is still too difficult.”

There needs to be a paradigm shift to a “culture of call” during the candidacy stage, he added. “We need to deploy those who are called into ordination quickly.”

■ Shared mission

“This has been a productive conversa-

tion,” said Bishop David Yemba, chair of the Faith and Order Committee. “It is good to hear what is going on in the ministry study group. It’s a starting point, but we still have some issues.”

Gwinn agreed the task was large.

“I invite you to be honorary members of the ministry study commission,” he said. “God is up to something with The United Methodist Church. If the church is to catch a new vision, it will take broad ownership.”

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



Photo courtesy of UMNS
Former Bishop and GBGM General Secretary Edward W. Paup.

Bishop dismisses complaint against Paup

By United Methodist News Service

A Colorado bishop has dismissed a complaint that charged the former top executive of the United Methodist Board of Global Ministries violated his ordination vows.

Denver Area Bishop Elaine J.W. Stanovsky announced that she has “terminated the complaint process against the Rev. Edward W. Paup,” a former bishop and a clergy member of The United Methodist Church’s Rocky Mountain Annual (regional) Conference.

“Since forwarding the complaints to the Counsel for the Church, intervening events have mitigated many of the concerns raised,” she wrote in a letter dated March 9. “Therefore, after prayerful consideration, I have decided that it is in the best interests of the church to conclude the complaint process rather than proceed toward church trial.

“While I understand that some of you will have questions about this decision and how I came to make it, my commitment to confidentiality with the parties

involved does not allow me to share the details.”

In a telephone interview, Stanovsky on March 18 declined to comment further on the specifics of her decision. But she said, “The goals the complainants had for this process had largely been realized.”

Paup could not be reached by telephone for comment. He resigned from the episcopacy in 2008 to become the top staff executive of the United Methodist Board of Global Ministries. A year later, in September 2009, he resigned from that position, citing health concerns.

He resigned less than two weeks after Stanovsky made public her investigation of a complaint that Paup “had violated the sacred trust of ordination.” The bishop said she issued the Sept. 11 letter acknowledging the complaint because of mounting rumors. No details of the allegation were revealed.

At the time, Stanovsky reported that Paup was undergoing medical testing for a possible benign brain tumor. The latest letter had no information regarding his medical condition.

National News

Marchers call for immigration reform

By John W. Coleman*

WASHINGTON (UMNS) -- "The time for comprehensive immigration reform is now," United Methodist Bishop Minerva Carcaño proclaimed before tens of thousands of marchers gathered in the nation's capital.

The colorful, noisy throng of marchers—parading March 21 with banners and marching bands—filled more than three blocks on the National Mall near the U.S. Capitol, where members of Congress were debating and would soon pass historic health care reform legislation.

Hundreds of United Methodists were gathered and scattered throughout the teeming masses, identified by their shirts, signs and banners. They came via trains, planes, cars and buses, some riding all night to be a part of history. Some described the march as larger than the last big one, held here and in other cities in April 2006 when Congress last debated but didn't pass immigration reform legislation.

Carcaño was among a diverse procession of speakers—representing advocacy organizations, labor unions, religious bodies and other groups—urging Congress and President Barack Obama to move reform of the nation's troubled immigration laws to the top of their agenda.

They called for fair, humane, viable policies and procedures that would allow about 11 million immigrants now in the United States illegally to attain legal status while continuing to work and live with their families, safe from intimidation, arrest and deportation.

■ Diverse coalition

"This country says to you, 'Harvest our fields, build our homes, take care of our children, serve our tables, clean up after us

and then be gone,'" Carcaño told listeners.

The Phoenix Area bishop spoke of her father, who came to the United States in the 1940s as a "bracero," a legal temporary worker from Mexico, "carrying upon his back the enormous responsibility to save his family from hunger and the afflictions of extreme poverty." After being sent back, he later returned and raised his family.

Carcaño chairs immigration task forces of the Council of Bishops and the church's general program agencies. She called current immigration laws and enforcement "a shameful state of affairs for a country that prides itself on providing justice for all."

The three-hour March for America, preceded by an interfaith service on the mall, drew immigrants from Latin American, African, Middle Eastern, Asian and European countries. While some carried flags from their home countries, U.S. flags and other signs of American patriotism were plentiful.

Reform advocates have tried to broaden their diversity by persuading African-American, Asian and other racial-ethnic groups to join the mostly Latino and white movement. Ben Jealous, head of the predominantly black NAACP, was one of several speakers calling for more multicultural support.

The Interfaith Immigration Coalition, of which the United Methodist Board of Church and Society is an active member, has worked with groups to increase religious diversity in the campaign.

■ Pressing for change

During the rally, immigrants and non-immigrants alike sang, shouted, applauded speakers and chanted "Si, se puede!" ("Yes, we can!"). "Change takes Courage" read numerous placards, amid other reminders to the president of his campaign promise to push for immigration reform



Immigration Rally - Washington, D.C. Mall, March 21, 2010, Young United Methodists from North Carolina hold sign evoking Jesus' commandment to love one's neighbors.

UMNS Photo by John Coleman

during his first year in office.

Obama appeared in a brief video message viewed on giant screens. He assured marchers that he would do "everything in my power" to get a bipartisan bill before Congress this year.

"You know as well as I do that this won't be easy, and it won't happen overnight," he said. "But if we work together across ethnic, state and party lines, we can build a future worthy of our history as a nation of immigrants and a nation of laws."

Obama has endorsed a general plan for immigration reform presented to him just days before the march. It would require illegal immigrants to pay back taxes and perform community service in order to gain legal status. And it would require citizens and legal immigrants both to obtain a new high-tech Social Security card. Also, it would establish a system to bring in temporary workers according to the demands

of the U.S. economy.

The chances for any plan to become a bill acted on in Congress this year are doubtful to many observers, especially in light of high employment, the fall congressional elections and other legislative priorities, including new energy policies and financial regulatory reform. But with the health care reform legislation now completed, advocates are pushing for immigration reform to be considered next.

"We've been patient long enough. We've listened quietly. We've asked politely. We've turned the other cheek so many times our heads are spinning," U.S. Rep. Luis Guterierrez of Illinois, the leading proponent in Congress, shouted to marchers. "It's time to let immigrants come out of the shadows into the light and for America to embrace them and protect them."

*Coleman is a freelance writer based in Washington.



The Red River overflows its banks at Lindenwood Park in Fargo, N.D. Remembering their experiences with record flooding last year, United Methodists in North and South Dakota are watching river levels and assessing snowmelt this month.

UMNS photo by Michael Rieger/FEMA

Dakota flooding eyed

By Linda Bloom

Remembering their experiences with record flooding last year, United Methodists in North and South Dakota are watching river levels and assessing snowmelt.

The Red River — which crested at 9 feet above flood level March 21 — has been kept largely under control in Fargo by dikes, but if major flooding does occur, the church is ready, said the Rev. Debra Ball-Kilbourne, the bishop's assistant for disaster response in the United Methodist Dakotas Annual (regional) Conference.

"We did a lot of training last year, and we're better prepared as a result of that training," she explained.

The conference, which handled 400 long-term flood recovery cases in North Dakota for 2009, has formed partnerships

with the United Methodist Committee on Relief and local faith groups, as well as with the Federal Emergency Management Agency and state and city governments.

Training through UMCOR was particularly helpful, Ball-Kilbourne said. "UMCOR doesn't just provide stuff so it has to come back time and time again. It really does prepare you to prepare others, who can prepare others. That paid off nicely for us."

By March 23, the Red River had dropped slightly in Fargo to 36.02 feet, according to the National Weather Service, and it was expected to continue to recede throughout the week. Flood level is at 18 feet.

Donations to UMCOR can be made to U.S. Disaster Response and designated for UMCOR Advance #901670. For more information, go to www.umcor.org.

Global News

Women seek empowering role in Haiti recovery

By Linda Bloom*

NEW YORK (UMNS) – For 16 years, staff of the Lambi Fund have helped rural communities in Haiti work toward self-sufficiency.

Since the Jan. 12 earthquake, the humanitarian organization has witnessed the effects of reverse migration on those communities as more than a half-million people have streamed out of Port-au-Prince, Haiti's heavily damaged capital. The 80-year-old mother of Lambi staff member Pierre St. Cyr, for example, has taken in 39 earthquake survivors.

"Many of the rural towns doubled their populations overnight," said Karen Ashmore, Lambi's executive director. "We're giving cash grants to 43 grassroots organizations in the countryside to help their members meet that expanded capacity strain."

United Methodist Women has given financial support to the Lambi Fund and other groups committed to empowering women as equal participants and community leaders in the rebuilding of Haiti.

The organization also is part of a coalition that is circulating principles calling for the inclusion of women in the earthquake recovery process, says Carol Barton, an executive with the Women's Division, United Methodist Board of Global Ministries.

United Methodists intend to be involved "in direct support for efforts to train and mobilize grassroots women in some of the refugee camps in Haiti to monitor how aid is getting to the camps, how it is being distributed and whether women's needs are being taken into account," she added.

At the United Nations, the Huairou Commission, a partner with United Methodist Women, submitted a statement on behalf of the coalition during recent meetings of the U.N. Commission on the Status of Women, noting that because women are "disproportionately impacted" by the earthquake, they also are key to Haiti's recovery.

"We expect to see a large and diverse number of Haitian women's organizations consulted and included in needs and damage assessments, and in the design, implementation and monitoring and evaluation of post-disaster aid programs," the statement said, adding that financial aid to grassroots women and their organizations is essential.

■ Legacy of leadership

The coalition's declaration is part of an effort to get women on both the agenda and participants' list at an international donors' conference set for March 31 at the United Nations.

Recognition of women's legacy of leadership already has come from the Board of Global Ministries and the Church World

Service board of directors, whose members include Harriett Olson, the Women's Division's top executive. In a March 11 statement, directors said that women must be actively involved in leadership roles in Haiti, allotted a fair share of resources for reconstruction and development and receive training and financial support to expand the capacity of their organizations.

On the ground, the Women's Division has given \$10,000 grants to both the Lambi Fund and the Movement of Dominican Women of Haitian Descent for their earthquake relief efforts.

More grants for Haiti assistance will be approved when the division's board of directors meets in April, according to Betty Gittens, staff executive. Regional missionaries and staff also are planning fact-finding trips to the Dominican Republic and Haiti, she said.

■ Caravan for relief

The Movement of Dominican Women of Haitian Descent, which supports community health projects and offers training and educational programs for women and children, organized a caravan of 88 relief workers within 36 hours of the earthquake. The workers provided medical care and other services to survivors in six different makeshift camps.

The Dominican volunteers also set up a tent city and clinic at a church-run orphanage and school that had collapsed outside the city of Leogane, caring for the 78 orphans who had been left on their own.

The Lambi Fund already had an extensive network of projects in Haiti related to sustainable development, community microcredit, animal husbandry, the environment and leadership training.

"Prior to the earthquake, we had worked on 175 different projects impacting almost 2 million Haitians," Ashmore explained. "We have strong grassroots connections in the countryside."

Lambi staff convened regional assemblies after the earthquake, asking participants to prioritize their immediate, mid- and long-term needs.

Among the more immediate concerns:

- **Sanitation.** The influx of population into the countryside has overloaded sanitation systems, so the Lambi Fund plans to build 880 latrines in rural areas.

- **Income generation.** Micro-enterprise will help earthquake survivors "develop their own livelihood so they can start supporting themselves," Ashmore said. Lambi is helping a group of market women in Port au Prince replenish their microcredit fund.

- **Medical supplies.** A lack of basic items, such as refrigerators to hold medications, is a problem, Gittens said. "There's still a tremendous amount of need, in terms of medical assistance within the camps."



Sharlene Jean offers a sample of treated drinking water to a child living in a makeshift camp in Gresier, Haiti. The United Methodist Committee on Relief and partner agencies provided water treatment supplies to the camp.

- **Safety.** The Lambi Fund supports a group that is forming protective areas in the tent cities and applying group pressure to encourage people to intervene if they witness attempted sexual assaults. "They're amazing," Ashmore reported. "A lot of the women were victims of domestic violence and rape and they are supporting each other and helping other women."

- **Shelter.** With many people still living under blankets strung on ropes, permanent housing has become a priority, particularly as the rainy season approaches Haiti. "We were hearing that women need tents and that tents also have become a scarce commodity," Barton said. "There's an enormous concern about the rains coming."

The Lambi Fund's long-term goals include increasing the availability of organic, locally-grown food and clean water with expanded sustainable agriculture, reforestation and water access projects. Other sustainable development projects would include pig and goat breeding and setting up grain and sugar cane mills.

"Imports and food aid is fine in the immediate time, but it doesn't help the local economy at all," said Ashmore.

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

Africa University supports Haiti relief

By Andra Stevens*

MUTARE, Zimbabwe — In a country where hyperinflation snatches the opportunity for many to go to college, students at United Methodist-related Africa University are reaching out to Haiti, more than 7,500 miles away.

"At Africa University, we are taught to care for one another, and we realize we have so much freely given to us at this institution," student Angeline Mafemba said.

"It is only natural for us to give to a community that has been devastated and where the need is so great," Mafemba said. "We felt we must respond."

Both students and staff participated in fundraising efforts. The students launched their campaign Jan. 22—10 days after the earthquake struck Haiti. Student ambassadors such as David Cletus of Nigeria spoke directly to their classmates. In the Institute of Peace, Leadership and Governance, where Cletus is studying, the

students and staff contributed more than \$100.

Since Zimbabwe was in the grip of a summer heat wave in February, the student ambassadors began selling ice cream to raise money, and the chaplaincy took up a special collection for Haiti in the weekly community worship service. A Student Ambassadors Merit Awards event celebrating the diverse gifts of Africa University students added to the coffers.

The students recently presented a \$500 check, given in memory of the Rev. Sam Dixon and the Rev. Clinton Rabb, to the United Methodist Board of Global Ministries. Dixon and Rabb, two United Methodist mission leaders, died of injuries received in the earthquake.

"We saw this as a catastrophic situation, and we wanted to show our love," said Mvumina Muyenge, a graduate student from the Democratic Republic of Congo.

*Stevens is director of information and public affairs at Africa University.

Global News

Ivoriens celebrate radio station with hope

By Tim Tanton*

ABIDJAN, Côte d'Ivoire (UMNS)—Methodists showed how to throw a party with the daylong celebration of a new radio station—a celebration so joyful and energetic that it could not be dampened by downpours outside.

“We are happy that God has inspired the church to build this radio station to serve the glory of his name,” Bishop Benjamin Boni declared, standing outside the station’s brightly polished wooden doors March 14.

What is the frequency, and what will be the name of the radio station as a symbol of the living God? Boni asked, reading from a prepared text.

The station’s name is The Voice of Hope, and its frequency is 101.6 FM, replied the Rev. Michel Lobo, administrative secretary of the United Methodist Côte d'Ivoire Conference. The name, he explained, came from the 2008 General Conference theme, “A Future With Hope.”

The small crowd repeated the name and frequency—“La Voix De L’Esperance, FM 101.6”—three times, concluding with “Amen!”

As the consecration continued, the Rev. Larry Hollon, top executive of United Methodist Communications, uncovered a large plaque bearing the names of the station’s key partners: Boni, Bishop Janice Riggle Huie of the denomination’s Texas Annual (regional) Conference, Hollon, and the Rev. Jerome King Del Pino, top executive of the United Methodist Board of Higher Education and Ministry.

A four-hour worship service followed next door at Jubilee United Methodist Church, where nearly 1,000 people filled the sanctuary and overflowed into outside seating. The choir, a praise band and a brass ensemble created a mighty sound of

soaring French hymns and music that poured out through the open windows and doors. Precious breezes blew back in, cooling those inside.

The choir, decked in maroon robes and mortarboards, waved white handkerchiefs in vigorous yet graceful movements as they sang, frequently dabbing the moisture that glistened on their faces.

Edouard Okoue, the project coordinator who led the development of the station, recognized the dignitaries and overseas guests and gave glory to Jesus Christ for the station. He thanked the church members who contributed “beyond what they had to do.”

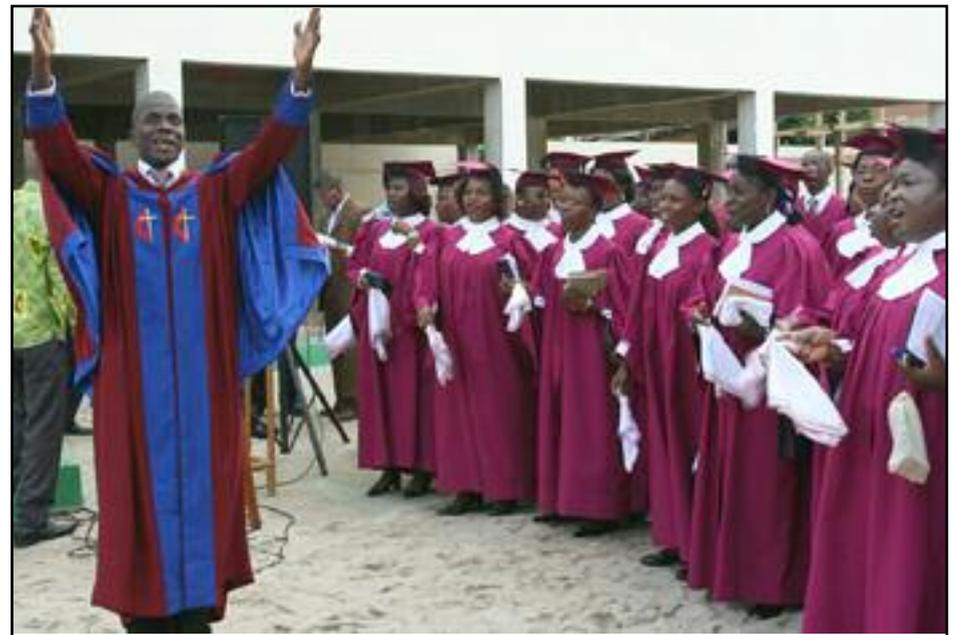
He commended the station’s director, Lydie Acquah, who has led the development of the staff and programming for the past four months. “Mrs. Acquah, you have worked hard with your team,” Okoue said. “We put our confidence in you, and we want to surrender you to the Lord.”

Acquah embodied the spirit of the day, dancing to the music frequently. She urged people to give to the special collection for the station near the end of the service.

“The baby is born,” she said. “The baby needs shoes and garments.”

She ticked off specific needs—computers, cars, vans, supplies—and the people responded, dancing as they placed money in the offering baskets at the front of the sanctuary. A shout of acclamation rang out when a former prime minister, Pascal N’Guessan Affi, announced he was donating a car. Joel Ackah, an insurance executive and president of the conference board of investments, offered insurance for the building and car. The day before, his brother, Emmanuel Auguste Ackah, ambassador to Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire Conference lay leader, had brought a power generator for the station.

Throughout the service, speakers



A UMNS photo by Isaac Broune.

Members of the Jubilee United Methodist Church Choir bring in the baskets of offerings after a special collection for the new Voice of Hope radio station. Earlier, the congregation sang and danced to the offering baskets at the front of the sanctuary. The March 14 worship service followed the consecration of the station next door.

expressed gratitude for the partnerships that created the station, and representatives from the two United Methodist agencies along with government ministers offered words.

Hollon spoke on behalf of his agency and for Bishop Huie—flight problems prevented the Texas delegates from arriving in time. He reminded the congregation of the Apostle Paul’s instructions to the Philippians, to “provide people with a glimpse of good living and of the living God” and to carry light into the world.

“What you have undertaken with creating this radio station is a very visionary thing to do,” he said. “It’s a very Methodist thing to do, to take the good news into the world. It’s a very faithful thing to do, to go into all the world with messages of hope, healing, peace and reconciliation.

“This is your station,” he said. “It speaks through your voice, and it is your voice on behalf of all United Methodist Christians. Through it, you convey the message of

Jesus Christ, and you carry the hopes of all United Methodists.”

Taking the podium, Ken Yamada, staff executive with the Board of Higher Education and Ministry, noted that the weather outside the worship service had changed.

“It is raining,” he said. “God is joining us in blessing this radio station.” The congregation applauded.

Yamada said he hopes the station will be an important educational and communications resource for the people of Côte d'Ivoire.

“The General Board of Higher Education and Ministry has already begun working with Bishop Boni and Dr. Yed Angoran (advisor to Boni) on establishing a distance-education center at the United Methodist university in Côte d'Ivoire,” he said.

*Tanton is on staff at United Methodist Communications.



A UMNS photo by Tim Tanton.

Lydie Acquah, director of 101.6 FM in Abidjan, sees the radio station as a means of combating poverty and empowering people in C'te d'Îvoire.

Church growth

Continued from page 19

“if you don't do x you will die” type of scare tactic hoping that this will make a difference. Yet, like our children, churches at some point stop responding to scare tactics and bluffs.

Something does have to change. But I am unsure that the something is our worship style, our preaching techniques, and our gatherings. I know in me it is my attitude. I cannot fear the career formula. Instead I can only continue to be present for all of God’s people, hear their stories, remind them of the larger story, and invite them to claim the story as their own. Doing these things makes church incarnate, changing the way that church is done in most places today. The focus of the gathering is empowerment for the mission of active/incarnate proclamation in the world. This way of being church

might not, numerically and/or financially, benefit the local congregation but it does benefit God’s kingdom.

I’m tired of the death talk. We talk, and talk and talk some more. We complain that young people are not coming, that they do not have the commitment needed. We complain that they are not as religious, understanding, and moral. We spend inordinate amounts of time hearing, studying, pondering, reflecting, on what will work, all in the comfort of our four sacred walls (local or not)! I wonder when we are going to get out there, to heal, feed, clothe, and bring back to life? When are we going to take a chance on what God’s Spirit is doing in our communities, even if it does not grow our church?

(Rev. Huertas is pastor of Squyres UMC in Ragley, La. Reprinted with permission from the Day 1 blog, www.day1.org)

Health Care Reform

Resolution

Continued from page 7

Indian Health Service, federal and state employee systems, health care for retired military personnel, Medicare and countless programs of the various private insurance companies: HMOs, PPOs, Medicare Supplemental Plans, etc. These entities rarely communicate in similar terms: neither to patients, to physicians, or to hospitals, thereby complicating efforts of providers and patients to properly file and receive payments on legitimate claims.

- Premium increases are driven by requirements to show a profit rather than rises in actual costs of treatment. High premiums to support the high profit margins of private health insurance companies force people to choose between health insurance and sustenance, housing, or other needs of a family, making even basic health insurance too expansive for an average individual or family. High co-payments and uncovered costs lead to significant impoverishment.

- Costs are shifted to the consumer through increasing deductibles and co-payments for care.

- Ever smaller insurance pools are promoted, with increasing portions of risk borne by the patient. The culmination of this trend is promotion of personal policies, with high deductibles and extraordinarily high premiums of thousands of dollars per month, that an average family, much less the working poor, simply cannot afford.

- Annual or lifetime limits are often imposed on policies, whether individual, group, or institutional, as a means of limiting the risk of private insurance companies. These harsh policies simply pass the risk back to individuals at the very time they can least cope with it, leaving the lingering worry that with a catastrophic illness or injury such limits may be reached, abruptly stopping all insurance benefits and leaving the policy beneficiary completely uninsured.

- More than half of all personal bankruptcies are now the result of illness. Even individuals with ostensibly good insurance, let alone those who are uninsured, find themselves in situations where they must sell and/or spend all assets, including homes, financial holdings, lifetime savings accounts, etc., in order to qualify for Medicaid and restore any medical coverage at all.

Increased costs of health care inevitably impact state and federal resources available for Medicaid, often leading to reduction in the number of providers willing to participate, and ultimately to decreased access to health care for the poor and the physically or mentally challenged.

More and more Annual Conferences and even congregations are feeling the burden of providing health care to their clergy and their lay staff. Small churches, even multiple point parishes, have difficulty paying for increasing health premiums for clergy.

Funds going to this purpose are in effect diverted from other important ministries.

■ The vision of health care for all

The United Methodist Church is committed to health care for all in the United States and therefore advocates for a comprehensive health care delivery system that includes access for all, quality care, and effective management of costs.

1. Access for All. In a just society, all people are entitled to basic maintenance and health-care services. We reject as contrary to our understanding of the gospel, the notion of differing standards of health care for various segments of the population. The American Health Care system must serve and be sensitive to the diversity of all people in the United States and its territories. Regional planning processes should coordinate the services rendered by all health-care institutions, including those funded by governments, to create a more effective system of health services in every area. Priorities should be established for the provision of health services, such as preventive care, mental-health services, home care, and health education. Corrective measures should be taken where there is maldistribution or unavailability of hospital beds, intermediate care and nursing home care, home-delivered care, neighborhood health centers, community mental-health centers, and emergency care networks.

2. Quality Care Health care should be comprehensive, including preventive, therapeutic, and rehabilitative services. The American health care system should provide comprehensive and portable benefits to everyone; including preventive services, health promotion, primary and acute care, mental-health care, and extended care. It should promote effective and safe innovation and research for women and men in medical techniques, the delivery of health services, and health practices. It should assess the health impacts of environmental and occupational safety, environmental pollution, sanitation, physical fitness, and standard-of-living issues such as housing and nutrition. Professional health-care personnel should be recruited and appropriately educated to meet the health-care needs of all persons. Especially urgent is the need for physicians trained in geriatric medicine. Special priorities should be established to secure among the professional group at least proportional representation of women and minorities who are now seriously under-represented. We encourage development of community support systems that permit alternatives to institutional care for such groups as the aging, the terminally ill and mentally ill, and other persons with special needs. We encourage medical education for laypersons that will enable them to effectively evaluate medical care they need and are receiving. Religious and other appropriate forms of counseling should be available to all patients and families when they are called upon to make difficult medical choices, so that responsible decisions, within the context of the Christian faith,

may be made concerning organ transplants, use of extreme measures to prolong life, abortion, sterilization, genetic counseling, institutionalization, and death with dignity. We support the medical community in its effort to uphold ethical standards and to promote quality assurance.

3. Effective Administration of Care and Management and Financing of Costs. The American health care system must incorporate an equitable and efficient financing system drawn from the broadest possible resource base. It must reduce the current rapid cost inflation through cost-containment measures. It must provide services based on equity, efficiency, and quality, with payments to providers that are equitable, cost-efficient, and easy to administer and understand.

The System must be sensitive to the needs of persons working in the various components of the health care system and gives special attention to providing not only for affirmative action in the recruitment, training, and employment of workers, but also for just compensation for all workers at all levels and for retraining and placement of those displaced by changes in the health care system.

■ Advocacy steps

Globally, the church has a continuing duty to provide, in many parts of the world, the ministry of health care that government is unable to provide. In the United States, however, government has the capability to provide health care for all; doing so will extend health care to many who presently have no access, and doing so without the wastefulness of the current system will represent far better stewardship of resources than at present. The United Methodist Church supports a three-tiered approach to health care advocacy:

1. Single Payer. We call for swift passage of legislation which will entitle all persons within the borders of the United States to the provision of health care services, the cost of such services to be equally shared by American taxpayers, and the government to distribute the funds to providers in a coordinated and comprehensive manner. This concept, known as “single-payer,” would extend health care to all persons in the United States. Choice of private doctor and other health care providers would be maintained. Public funds would make payment, and these funds would be generated by individual premiums and payroll tax. Studies have shown that this method can be achieved with no increase over what is already being spent on health care from all sources. It therefore not only accomplishes the objective, but it best exercises our stewardship of public resources.

2. Incremental Steps toward Single Payer. We recognize that much of the cost savings of “single payer” flow from the virtually total elimination of the health insurance industry. We cannot wait to overcome the current barriers to a single payer plan, and therefore support all initiatives that move segments of our population closer to

a single payer system. Particular incremental steps that we support include the State Child Health Improvement Program (S-CHIP), which should be extended to achieve health care for all children. We do not support legislation that requires individuals to choose to purchase health insurance from multiple insurance companies, because such bills radically waste resources through duplication of service, burdensome administration, marketing costs, and profits. They inherently promote “adverse selection” in which the sickest people sign up for the plans with the best benefits. Such plans drive up the costs, while healthy young workers sign up for plans with the poorest benefits, therefore removing them from the risk pool.

3. Recognizing that the nation is deeply divided nationally on the philosophical bases for addressing America’s health care delivery problems, we support state-level initiatives in which individual states, at their own initiative become laboratories for trying out varying approaches to providing health care for all. We support in particular efforts at the federal level to support state-based efforts through necessary waivers of federal regulations.

Bringing America’s health care crisis under control will call upon the efforts of every sector of society and demand both personal and social responsibility. We therefore call upon all United Methodist persons and entities to do their part:

- Individuals. We call upon United Methodist individuals and families to pursue a healthy lifestyle, preventing many health problems before they start and strengthening physical capacity to combat problems which do arise.

- Health Care Institutions. We call upon United Methodist affiliated health care institutions to adopt, reaffirm, and strengthen policies supporting care delivery which is Christ-like, compassionate and wholistic rather than fee driven and compartmentalized. We call upon such institutions as a requirement of their affiliation, to develop United Methodist standards of care which distinguish them from profit-driven, secular institutions.

- Seminaries. We call upon United Methodist seminaries to develop curricula linking sound biblical theology with clergy self-care and advocacy for universal health care.

- General Agencies. We call upon all Agencies, Commissions, and Annual Conferences of the United Methodist Church in the United States to adopt principles and support policies which are consistent with this resolution.

We charge the General Board of Church and Society with primary responsibility for advocating health care for all in the United States Congress and for communicating this policy to United Methodists in the USA.

ADOPTED 2008, Resolution #108, 2004 Book of Resolutions; Resolution #95, 2000 Book of Resolutions
See Social Principles, ¶ 162V.

Christian Conversation

The difference between Walgreens and the church



By Cynthia Weems

Samuel showed up on a Wednesday evening about the time we were beginning our fellowship meal, insisting he and I sit at a table by ourselves.

He told me that he was possessed by a demon that had plagued him for much of his life. Some of his family members experienced the same thing. He made a fist around his ear lobe, indicating the kind of excruciating pain it caused.

But then a smile appeared on his face. “Last week, when I attended your prayer service, the pain stopped. I felt a relief from it that I have never felt before.”

I was speechless (an oddity for me). “Really?” I asked, “Last week? At our prayer service?” I looked around to see if anyone was overhearing this conversation. My clergy ego told me to take pride. My modern mind told me to beware.

I proceeded in a very mainline Protestant

kind of way by asking questions. “Have you seen a doctor?” He had, but to no avail. “Are you taking any medications?” No. “Are you experiencing stress?” Not particularly. “Have your family members ever felt relief from their pain?” He shook his head.

“Pastor, I have never tried church before. In all this time, I have never tried church. Will you pray for me again? My pain has returned but I remember what it felt like to have it lifted.”

There seemed to be an amazing clash of wills at work as Samuel and I sat together. His hope was met with my suspicion. Did he need Jesus or did he need a pharmacy? I wondered where all my skepticism came from. Was I tired? I had already spent significant time that week “fixing” things: an overdue water bill for one man, a needed prescription for a woman’s sick child, a new I.D. card for a homeless man. I began to think of Samuel’s situation as just another one to be fixed by human hands. Or, better yet, by Walgreens.

In Mark’s gospel we are told of a leper

“As leaders, the simple-yet-complex act of choosing is at the heart of what we do too. We choose to make ourselves available. We choose to listen. We choose to trust that the source of any solution lies not merely in our hands but in God’s, and the ways the Lord works in and through individuals and community for healing.”

who came to Jesus begging, “If you choose, you can make me clean.” Jesus, moved with pity, stretched out his hand to touch him and said, “I do choose. Be made clean!” (Mark 1:40-41)

Stories of Jesus’ “choosing” underlies the gamut of our faith. Over and over again Jesus chooses -- to heal, to cleanse, to listen, to pray, to proclaim. Jesus chooses to be in relationship in nearly every form that takes.

As leaders, the simple-yet-complex act of choosing is at the heart of what we do too. We choose to make ourselves available. We choose to listen. We choose to trust that the source of any solution lies not merely in our hands but in God’s, and the ways the Lord works in and through individuals and community for healing.

The modern pharmacy represents the best solution to many of our everyday

crises. I am truly grateful one is located on nearly every corner in downtown Miami. But the availability of scientific “remedies” to everything from illness to anger often leads us further away from the One who chooses us. And we find even us leaders asking, “Really?”

It was refreshing to see the hope in Samuel’s eyes. “I’ve never tried church.” I am sure he had already been to Walgreens. As a Christian leader I am called to choose to sit with Samuel and pray for his healing while guiding him to scripture and practices of the Christian faith that I believe will bring wholeness to his being.

That is what I will choose.

(Cynthia Weems is senior pastor of First UMC in Miami, Fla. Reprinted with permission from the Call and Response blog of Duke Divinity School)

No more church growth!

Focus of the gathering is the empowerment for the church’s mission, numbers may or may not follow



By Juan Huertas

I am one of those small church pastors out there. I laugh every time someone calls asking for the senior pastor, I feel compelled to explain to them

that I am the pastor, not Sr., just the pastor. I do the same thing when people ask about our youth director, Christian education person, or secretary. “I’m the pastor,” I say, and go on to explain that there is no one else here but me!

My congregation is one of those small membership congregations out there. I am not sure what this means exactly, other than the fact that there are not a lot people sitting on the pews. On average we might have 60 or so people a week. We gather to pray, sing, hear, and gather around table. Then there are the other times of gathering: funerals, showers, the occasional bible study that 3 or so people attend, and the annual communal festivities.

Often when the “leaders” gather there is much talk about growth. They want to have a better church, bigger church, a church that offers more things for their people, a church that would need a real sanctuary. Then reality sets in, bills are talked about, concerns are brought, what ifs become prevalent. Maybe we won’t be able to get there after all.

I wonder what “get there” means?

It’s not only them. I have my own agen-

da, my own desires, my own dreams. I would like for this congregation to grow also. It would be nice to have more people here, maybe that way I will not be alone during the week, I could preach to more people, I might even get to worship in an actual sanctuary!

Then there are the pressures of the judiciary. Reports outlining your growth, how much increase has there been? In worship, in membership, in giving? How about the formula that keeps me up at night:

No Growth = bad pastoral leadership!

Would it be a bad thing if I do not want more people in church?

See, the truth is that there are some proven ways to get more people in a place. I remember my days in retailing when we would have all sorts of tricks to increase traffic, from lower prices to glitzy windows, we would work hard at making sure that more people came. The more people that walked through the door the better opportunity we had to make more sales. Unfortunately I am not sure that this necessarily works in the church.

I do want more people to experience the gracious love of God. But I know that this might not translate into more people in my church. Plus I am not sure that my own congregation has good reasons why they want more people. Survival seems to be the main reasons why more growth is wanted. The conversations are about our death and demise as a denomination and local church. I’ve been guilty of using the

See Church growth on page 17 ...



Abstain from abstaining

Editor, *The Current*:

As we approach the time of Annual Conference, I would like to offer some free advice to all members, clergy and lay. Just say no to abstinence. Relax; I am not talking about drugs, alcohol or sex. You can continue to abstain from them. It is using the electronic device to vote to “abstain” that I am asking you to refrain from doing.

Since we have stepped up to electronic voting we have three choices each time we vote. We can vote yes, no or abstain. The problem with pushing the button to abstain is that it has the very same effect as voting no. This was shown in the 2009 Conference when we voted on a motion regarding the CMT budget. 369 favored the motion; 363 opposed; 23 abstained. Because 23 pushed the button to abstain the motion failed even though it received more yes than no votes. This is because the recorded tally was 755 votes, and 369 is not a majority of 755. It is only about 49 percent. No motion can pass without a majority of votes by our rules. Since votes to abstain are counted in the vote total, the motion was effectively defeated by the abstentions.

I do not doubt that the 23 people who voted to abstain had good reasons. They probably felt that they did not have sufficient information to say yes or no. Yet in

effect they brought about the defeat of the motion, though unintentionally, by pushing the button to abstain.

Here is my suggestion: If you do not feel strongly enough about an issue to vote yes or no, simply refrain from pushing any button. That is an abstention, but it does not skew the outcome of a close vote. Another possibility would be to make a different arrangement on how the votes are recorded and totaled in the electronic devices. But I do not know whether that is feasible. I certainly would not the computer electronics of how to go about changing the system. The simple solution is: when it doubt, don’t.

Jonathan Dixon

Pastor, Riverton UMC

Sangamon River District

Editor’s note: The vote to which Rev. Dixon refers was to request that the Equipping and Connecting Team budget being published in the 2009 Conference Journal and that the budget be presented to the 2010 Annual Conference session as a legislative item.

The ECT budget is available online for download along with the overall conference budget proposed by the Conference Council on Finance and Administration. It will also be a part of the pre-conference packet that will be mailed later this month in advance of annual conference.

Conference News

CCFA proposes 2011 budget *Spending plan is 2.33 percent less than 2010, cuts used to offset direct bill increase*

By Paul Black

The conference Council on Finance and Administration approved an \$11.5 million budget plan for 2011, which will be forwarded to the 2010 Annual Conference session for action.

The budget plan provides a plan to fund an additional \$2.9 million in payments to the General Board of Pensions and Health Benefits due to the downturn in the economic markets in 2008 and early 2009. The \$2.9 million in additional payment is over and above the \$3.2 million already paid annually for pensions.

At the same time, CFA members balanced the interest of keeping the cost to the local churches at or near 2010 levels.

In order to address the \$2.9 million shortfall, the conference will take advantage of a "holiday" being offered by the General Board of Pensions for payments on clergy and spouse death and disability insurance. The holiday is possible due to the overfunding of the plan. The General Board is foregoing billing the conference

for years 2010, 2011 and 2012. The spending plan calls for using two years of the holiday in 2011 for \$1.6 million of savings that can be reallocated to address the crisis.

Another \$258,189 will be realized through an increase in the CRSP defined benefit portion which will increase to \$7,260 for a full-time pastor – up from the current \$6,720. Churches served by part-time pastors would be proportional with churches with half-time pastors receiving an increase of half the full-time increase.

In an effort to hold churches harmless, CFA's budget is \$276,813 less than the 2010 budget, so while the direct bill increases for local churches, there will be a corresponding decrease in apportionments.

Among the budget cuts being recommended:

- \$100,000 for the SA&E/District Mission Fund. This increase was added to the budget in 2010 as transitional funds to assist churches with the move to direct-bill of pension payments. It was never intended to be funded more than one year.
- \$154,000 from Pastoral Care Office.

By mutual agreement, the Pastoral Care office agreed to use existing reserve funds to operate the ministry in 2011

- \$138,550 from Congregational Development. Congregational Development will be using existing reserves to fund parts of their budget for 2011.

- \$78,887 from the Conference Benevolence budget, which includes decreases in support to health and welfare ministries, specialized ministries, higher education and campus ministries, and interdenominational ministries.

- \$170,425 from the Equipping and Connecting Team budget, with cuts coming in camping and retreat ministries, leadership development and life cycle ministries.

Increases to the budget include areas in which contractual agreements, anticipated expenses or figures supplied by the denomination come into play:

- \$55,543 in general church apportionments, which include World Service, Ministerial Education Fund, Africa University Fund, Black College Fund,

Episcopal Fund, Interdenominational Cooperation Fund, Jurisdictional Conference Fund.

- \$50,000 to establish a fund which will be used to host the 2016 Jurisdictional Conference. The last jurisdictional conference in Illinois was held in Peoria in 1968. The fund will be used to offset expense incurred by the hosting of the conference.

- \$1,146 increase for Archives and History which is paid to MacMurray College on contract.

The remaining \$806,800 will be drawn from the post-retirement benefit reserve fund, which currently has a \$9 million balance but a projected liability of \$44 million.

To view the budget, along with the Benevolence and Equipping and Connecting Team line-item budgets, visit www.igrc.org, click on Downloads from the right-hand column, Administration from the left-hand column and select 2011 Proposed budget. These items will be a part of the Pre-Conference workbook sent out in April.

Passionate worship

Continued from page 1

ture a concert by Mike Rayson and liturgical dancers from Springfield Grace UMC is scheduled for Thursday evening.

The retirees recognition, which will feature video addresses by the Class of 2010 will be combined with a Service of Commissioning on Thursday afternoon and the Service of Ordination will be held Friday evening.

Each day will begin at 8:30 a.m. each morning with adjournment scheduled for 8:30 p.m. Final adjournment is set for noon on Saturday.

A new floor plan

Most noticeable will be that members of the annual conference will be sitting in a chevron floor plan at rectangular tables as opposed to the round tables that have been a part of annual conference for the past several years. With the floor plan change, less space is needed for the bar of the conference.

The need for less space allowed the floor plan to be rotated 90 degrees counter-clockwise, putting the stage along the back wall of Exhibit Halls B and C, meaning the distance from the front to the back will be much shorter. The shorter distance, combined with carpeting in the center aisle and pipe and draping around the perimeter should address some of the difficulty with audio concerns expressed in the past.

Web streaming

The Communications Ministry Team will be web streaming parts of the annual conference live on the IGRC website, enabling persons who are unable to attend to join in the festivities.

The Communications Team will be working with Carmel, Ind.-based Omniculture for Public Media to provide

this live broadcast that will also be archived for playback on demand. A more complete schedule will be provided in the May pre-conference issue of *The Current*.

The Daily Current

For the second year in a row, *The Daily Current* will be produced as an electronic newsletter and emailed at the conclusion of each day to those who subscribe to *The Current Week in Review*.

Subscribers to *The Current Week in Review* need not do anything in order to receive *The Daily Current*. Persons wishing to subscribe to *The Daily Current* may do so by visiting www.igrc.org, click on E-news in the right-hand column and select *The Daily Current*. Persons with emails that are a part of the IGRC database will be sent a note to update their subscriptions where they can check or uncheck the publications they wish to receive. First-time subscribers are subscribed to the publications they check when entering their email address.

More information will be included in the May issue of *The Current*.

Reminders

Continued from page 1

ing to: P. O. Box 19207, Springfield, IL 62794.

Photos should be either glossy photos suitable for scanning or if providing digital photos must be of a resolution of at least 300 dpi in order to be used.

Courtesies: Anyone having a guest at Annual Conference may contact Annual Conference Secretary Alice Shirley to request they be introduced to the Conference by the Courtesy Committee. Requests must be submitted in writing to Shirley at 3801 7th St., East Moline, IL 61244, along with basic biographical information about the guest.

Two more finish at 100%

Homer UMC, located in the Iroquois River District and Nokomis UMC, located in the Embarras River District, have become the latest congregations to pay 100 percent of apportionments for 2009.



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