

CIRCUIT



Writer



Rev. Randy Cooper endorsed by Memphis Conference delegation as nominee for bishop



The Memphis Conference delegation to the 2012 General and Jurisdictional conferences has endorsed the Reverend Randy Cooper as their episcopal nominee.

Cooper will join nominees from other conferences under consideration for the episcopacy at this summer's Southeastern Jurisdictional Conference at Lake Junaluska, N.C.

Currently pastor of Martin First UMC in Martin, TN, Cooper has been a delegate to three Jurisdictional Conferences and one General Conference. He is the Chair of the 2012 Memphis Conference delegation.

In 2008, Cooper was the lead clergy delegate from the Memphis Conference and the Memphis Conference-endorsed nominee for the episcopacy. He speaks of his second candidacy as "a form of obedience within the church."

Ordained a deacon in 1976 and an Elder in 1981, Cooper has served in ministry for 33 years with rural and small town United Methodist churches in Kentucky and Tennessee. Additionally, he served the West Delhi Presbyterian Church in upstate New York from 1978 to 1980 while a United Methodist Deacon.

Cooper has held several leadership positions with the Memphis Conference. For a full eight years, he has served as Chair of the Order of Elders and has held a seat on

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Evangelism Workshop for Memphis Conference 'Telling Your Faith Story'

TWO OFFERINGS:

SATURDAY, JAN. 28
Covington First UMC
145 W. Church Rd., Covington, TN

OR

SATURDAY, FEB. 18
Union City First UMC
420 E. Main St., Union City, TN

COST: \$15 includes lunch

Registration: Mail check and complete contact info (name, address, phone number and email address) to Memphis Conference, 24 Corporate Blvd., Jackson, TN 38301. Links for online registration are located in this event's listing on the Memphis Conference Web site at www.memphis-umc.org.

SCHEDULE:

8:30 - 9 am – Registration & Gathering
9 - 9:30 am – Introductions & Worship
9:30 am - noon – Teaching Session with break
Noon to 1 pm - Lunch
1 - 3:30 pm – Teaching session with break
3:30 - 3:45 pm – Closing Remarks & Dismissal

LEADERSHIP:

Rev. Tom Albin, The Upper Room

Rev. Kwasi Kena, United Methodist General Board of Discipleship

Mid-South Food Bank recognizes Memphis Conference Churches for work with hungry

Memphis Conference United Methodist churches were among those recognized in September by the Mid-South Food Bank for their work in providing food to hungry and needy people.

Bread of Life Community Outreach Ministry at Covington First UMC in Tipton County was named 2011 Pantry of the Year while Moscow Community Food Pantry, which operates out of Moscow UMC in Moscow, TN in Fayette County, received the 2011 Outstanding Performance award.

The awards were presented at the Mid-South Food Bank's 2011 Agency Conference.

The Mid-South Food Bank, based in Memphis, is an independent, nondenominational 501(c)(3) Tennessee corporation that works to fight hunger through the efficient collection and distribution of wholesome food, and through education and advocacy.

Bread of Life Community Outreach Ministry

Bread of Life Community Outreach Ministry serves more than 1,000 households, distributing 175,389 pounds of food last year. Food distribution takes place on Saturdays at Covington First UMC in Covington and at the Trust Company Bank building in Brighton.

Bread of Life has a volunteer base of 200 people who perform all duties, including

procuring the food from Mid-South Food Bank and other sources, getting it ready for distribution, greeting and qualifying clients and taking food bags to cars.

Volunteers come from all over the community, including six area churches, the Rotary Club, two Boy Scout troops, two FFA chapters and the National Honor Society chapter. A successful fund raising effort allowed Bread of Life to purchase a panel truck to pick up food at Mid-South Food Bank.

Bread of Life also partners with community groups to provide free health screenings, a coat closet and other services. In the spring, they distribute information to each food pantry client about local USDA summer feeding programs.

Rev. Grace Phelps, Minister of Small Group and Program Ministries at Covington First UMC, serves as director of Bread of Life Community Outreach Ministry.

Moscow Community Food Pantry

Moscow Community Food Pantry provides food to hungry and needy people in Fayette County and also works with clients to help those in need access available resources.

On the fourth Monday of the month, Moscow Food Pantry hosts Mid-South Food Bank's mobile pantry, which brings one or

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UTM Interfaith Student Center's 'Empty Bowls Soup Supper' raises \$2,500 for local food bank

The Nov. 17 "Empty Bowls Soup Supper" raised \$2,500 for the We Care Ministries Food Bank in Martin, TN that serves Weakley County.

The fundraiser took place from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. at the Interfaith Student Center at the University of Tennessee at Martin (UTM), a sponsor of the event.

The Interfaith Student Center is a cooperative ministry of the United Methodist, Episcopal, Roman Catholic, Cumberland Presbyterian, Mission Baptist and Presbyterian (USA) churches.

The "empty bowls" theme served as a reminder of "empty food bowls" in Martin and Weakley County and around the world.

A donation of \$5 secured a soup supper while a donation of \$10 secured a soup supper AND a hand-crafted bowl, made and donated by local potter Dr. David McBeth and UTM students.

"(The handmade bowls) were loved by all," reported April Merritts, intern at the Interfaith Student Center. She said some Soup Supper supporters chose to eat out of their handmade bowls.



Empty Bowls Soup Supper raised \$2,500 for Weakley County, TN food bank. Submitted photo



Hand-crafted bowls were given away for donations to the food bank fundraiser. Submitted photo

Mark Griffy shows off a PET (personal energy transport), a three-wheeled, hand-powered vehicle for persons unable to walk due to disability or injury. Photo by Lane Gardner Camp

PET Memphis seeks volunteers for Jan. 2012 trip to Dominican Republic

PET Memphis is seeking volunteers for a January 2012 trip to the Dominican Republic.

The trip, scheduled for Jan. 19-26, will be to distribute the first 50 PETs (personal energy transportation devices) produced by the Memphis Chapter of PET International.

The PETs are being delivered to the Dominican Republic by the U.S. Navy.

The trip will cost approximately \$1500 per person which will include all transportation costs, food and lodging.

Volunteers for the trip also must have valid passports.

For more info about being a volunteer or if you would like to support this trip with a financial donation, contact Mark Bogan at McBogan@bellsouth.net or Mark Griffy of Ellendale UMC in Ellendale, TN near Memphis at Adgrif@aol.com.

Learn more about PET Memphis at the organization's Web site at www.petmemphis.org.

Briefly ~ Briefly ~ Briefly

America's Sunday Supper is Jan. 15

In honor of Martin Luther King Jr. Day, United Methodist Communications (UMCom) and the United Methodist Board of Church and Society (GBCS) are urging communities to join in America's Sunday Supper on Jan. 15. It will be a nationwide night of simultaneous dinners and discussions shared in churches, homes, community centers and kitchens to promote positive change in the world. For more info, visit www.rethinkchurch.org.

Sunglasses Sunday is set for Feb. 12

Sunglasses Sunday is set for Feb. 12 this year – and a new year-round collection component is being added to the campaign which is sponsored by Project 20/20 of the Memphis Conference. Watch for more information about the eyeglasses/sunglasses collection campaign and new specially-designed community collection boxes. Learn more about Project 20/20 at www.project2020.org or by contacting Nevin Robbins at 901-372-4830 (home), 901-490-3601 (cell) or jnrobbins@att.net.

Stanford talks about 'Living with HIV' in UMCom video

For years, Rev. Shane Stanford, Senior Pastor at Christ UMC in Memphis, lived with a secret. When he graduated from seminary and told people he was HIV-positive, even churches turned their backs, which tested his faith, he says in a video from United Methodist Communications. View the video at www.umcom.org.

Free 2012 planning calendar is available

A free 2012 planning calendar is available for church staff, committees, leaders, teachers and musicians from the United Methodist General Board of Discipleship (GBOD). The calendar contains lectionary readings, holidays, seasons and special days. Download the calendar as PDF file for free at <http://bit.ly/rpf1XS>.

Read Conference Web site in other languages

Information on the Memphis Conference Web site at www.memphis-umc.org is available not just in English, but more than 50 other languages. That's because the site has a language translation tool. On the left side of pages of the Web site is a small box that says, "Select Language." Clicking on this brings up a list of language choices. "This is a useful tool for sharing ministry information and creating conversations among people who speak different languages," said David R. Reed, Chair of the Communications Action Team of the Memphis Conference. ☩

Milburn UMC in Arlington, KY in the Paducah District is looking for a church bus. Call 270-562-2017.



This January-February, 2012 issue is the fourth issue of a new bimonthly printable newspaper distributed electronically to churches and other recipients to print/email in whatever quantity they choose at no cost. This newspaper covers news of the **Memphis Conference of The United Methodist Church**. The Memphis Conference includes West Tennessee and Western Kentucky.

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Email communications.mcumc@eplus.net.

Call 731-664-8480. **Fax** 731-660-5712.

Write Communications, Memphis Conference, 24 Corporate Blvd., Jackson, TN 38305.

Other FREE Memphis Conference news sources:

- **Web site:** www.memphis-umc.org
- **eNews (weekly):** Sign up on the Website or email communications.mcumc@eplus.net
- **Facebook:** facebook.com/memphisumc
- **Twitter:** twitter.com/um_memphisconf

Thanksgiving came early to Brownsville First UMC with largest single gift ever received

By Rev. Phillip Cook, Brownsville First UMC

The largest single gift ever received by Brownsville First UMC in Brownsville, TN was approved in November at the church's 2011 Charge Conference.

It all began at a called meeting of the Board of Trustees of the church in October. A representative of an anonymous donor and two architects unveiled plans for the gift of a free-standing, full-size gymnasium with restrooms and a covered drive-through, all covering 8,408 square feet.

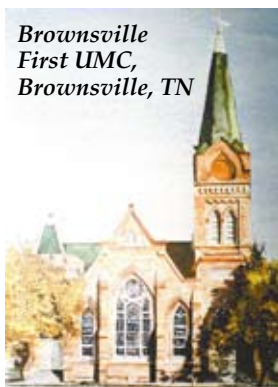
The Trustees were told the building will complement the church's current buildings and be constructed of concrete block and bricks that match present structures.

The vote by both the Trustees and the Charge Conference was unanimous.

The church has already begun the planning process that will utilize the structure not only as recreational space for the church members, but also as an outreach ministry to the Brownsville community through after-school activities, including mentoring, guided recreation, an arts and music program and an expanded scouting program.

The congregation is obviously humbled that someone would have the vision to empower the church to meet the challenges of today's children and families.

The congregation is likewise thrilled at the gift and recognizes the grand opportunity and great responsibility that has come to us in caring for the kingdom's work in our community. ✠



Brownsville First UMC, Brownsville, TN

'Blessing of the Animals' event at Calvary UMC in Mayfield is community outreach event

A total of 27 pets were blessed at a "Blessing of the Animals" event on Saturday, Oct. 22, at Calvary UMC in Mayfield, KY.

"I must say that it was not only the animals that received a blessing," commented Don E. Conley, Calvary UMC's Web Servant.

All pet owners were presented with a print copy of the lyrics to the song, "Bless the Beasts and the Children," a song that was played during the event.

The handout included the URL of Calvary UMC's Web site where pictures of the "Blessings" event could be viewed and they could receive an invitation to the church's "Trunk or Treat" event.

In addition to the blessing offered by the church's pastor, Rev. Joel D. Jackson, dogs and cats received \$5 rabies vaccinations and free nail trimmings from Mayfield Veterinary Clinic.

A total of 32 pets had their nails trimmed and 23 received rabies shots.

Mayfield/Graves County Animal Shelter provided microchip services with ten pets receiving

this service for a one-time fee of \$10 per pet.

"Plans are already started for the second annual "Blessing of the Animals," said Conley. ✠



Rev. Joel D. Jackson, left in photo above and right in photo below, administers blessings to pets at "Blessing of the Animals" event at Calvary UMC. Submitted photos



Now available: small group resources about risk-taking mission

Some or all of the following resources on the topic of "risk-taking mission" are now available in all of the Memphis Conference district offices in varying quantities.

To learn more or to borrow these resources at no charge, contact your district office.

If you need additional assistance, call the Conference Connectional Ministries office at 731-664-8480.

Change the World

By Mike Slaughter
Small group study book
ISBN-13: 9781426712098
Small group DVD
ISBN-13 9781426711404

Crazy Enough to Care: Changing Your World Through Compassion, Justice and Racial Reconciliation

By Alvin C. Bibbs
Small group study book
ISBN-13: 9780830821150

Five Practices – Risk Taking Mission & Service

By Bishop Robert Schnase
Small group study book
ISBN-13: 9781426700040



Justice for the Poor: Love God. Serve People. Change the World

By Jim Wallis
Small group study book
ISBN-13: 9780310327875
Small group DVD:
ISBN-13: 9780310327868

Start Becoming a Good Samaritan

By Ashley Wiersma and Michael R. Seaton
Small group study book
ISBN-13: 9780310285045
Small group DVD
ISBN-13: 9780310285069

Radical: Taking Back Your Faith from the American Dream

By David Platt
Book ISBN-13: 9781601422217

The Hole in the Gospel: What Does God Expect of Us? The Answer that Changed by Life and Might Just Change the World

By Richard Sterns
Book ISBN-13: 9780849947001 ✠

Randy Wilson concert raises money for Memphis Conference ministries

"Ring the Banjo from Africa to Appalachia" was the theme of a concert by folk artist Randy Wilson that raised \$650 for two ministries of the Memphis Conference.

Memphis Conference Disaster Relief and Reelfoot Rural Ministries shared \$650 in proceeds from the Sept. 16 event at The Strand Theater in Tiptonville, TN in the Dyersburg District.

Wilson is director of the Folk Arts Education Program at the Hindman Settlement School in Hindman, KY.

Wilson's visit to the Dyersburg District was at the invitation of Rev. James Luvane, pastor of three Dyersburg District churches: Ross UMC in Dyersburg, Hughlett UMC in Tigrett and Lighthouse UMC in Alamo.

"Rev. Luvane and the congregations of Ross, Hughlett and Lighthouse designated that the proceeds should go to both disaster response and Reelfoot Rural Ministries," reported Vicki Dunagan, Administrative Assistant for the Dyersburg District.

Each ministry received a check for \$325. ✠



Folk artist Randy Wilson of Hindman, KY performed benefit concert. Photo By Rev. Michael Blake



Concert attendees learned about the history of the banjo. Photo by Rev. Michael Blake

St. John's UMC artisans are 'on a mission'

By Steve Garcia, St. John's UMC

The way we encounter God comes in many forms. For some, it's through silent prayer. For others, it's through family and friends gathered around a dinner table. God is experienced through our greatest joys, our deepest pains, and everywhere in between. And the possibilities of how we choose to express our faith are as varied as the number of stars in the sky.

The people of St. John's UMC in Memphis approach their spiritual formation in a way that allows for the arts to be a primary means for outwardly expressing their inner faith. Music, poetry, visual arts and handcrafts... you name it – anything to share the grace of God in ways that draw on the passion and creativity we have in each of us.

Renee Dillard, St. John's Pastor of Disciple Ministries, offers: "Our St. John's Artisans, a group of talented artists and all-around creative types, have set a strong precedent for using their gifts to promote mission and ministry. Their example of faith through the arts has trickled down to our younger artisans, and now our 'Artisans on a Mission' ministry includes a 'Little Artisans on a Mission' component."

ARTISANS ON A MISSION

In 2006, some members of St. John's were having lunch and one of them remarked that their congregation seemed to have an unusually large number of talented artists/crafters. Then, one Sunday a few weeks later, their senior pastor at the time offered the following words from Frederick Buechner: "Vocation is where our greatest joy meets the world's greatest need." In other words, there are many ways to "minister" and effect change in the world, even through something like painting or knitting.

Soon after, a group of artists (painters, knitters, quilters, jewelry-makers, etc.) came together and called themselves Artisans on a Mission (www.stjohnsmidtown.org/artisansonamission). The group's goal was/is to channel their artistic passions toward serving our community. In their first year as an organized group, they set up a booth at the Cooper-Young Festival in Memphis to sell their artwork and handcrafted items. They made over \$1,000 and applied the money toward various service projects.

The group continues to sell items at the Cooper-Young Festival in September each year with a goal of helping others, with funds typically used for unanticipated needs that become evident. For example:

- One year, Artisans on a Mission used their proceeds from the Cooper-Young Festival to buy hundreds of Compact Fluorescent Light bulbs (CFLs), which they gave away to people in the community and to members of St. John's. Operating on the statistic that one CFL lasts as long as at least five incandescent bulbs, they figured they were getting a two-fer: positively impacting our environment while saving money for people.
- Another year, the Artisans used proceeds to help "green" the church's soup kitchen

by purchasing reusable plates, which eliminated the cost and garbage generated by the disposable styrofoam plates that the soup kitchen had been using each week. Again, a "two-fer."

- Funds generated by the Artisans on a Mission sales have also purchased thermal underwear for guests of St. John's soup kitchen, diapers and toiletries for the St. John's food pantry guests, items to support a mission trip to Nicaragua and numerous other projects.

LITTLE ARTISANS ON A MISSION

Throughout the year, the children at St. John's engage in art activities that show them how to tell their Christian story in ways that reflect their spiritual hopes and the human condition. Their art invites all children, young and old, to be in faithful relationship with the world and to be adamant about showing love, compassion, forgiveness and joy to one another.

Last summer, the kids spent their Sunday mornings making a variety of art and crafts – everything from spin tops to decorative crosses. They also made picture frames, jewelry and note cards. Every item they made was then sold or auctioned, with all proceeds going to support the reading program at Multi-National Ministries, an organization well-known to St. John's for its commitment to teaching the Gospel to God's children.

Dillard adds: "The children work all summer, creating art and crafts that are purchased by members of the congregation. The kids love creating and selling their art, as well as learning about other children in our city who have come from around the world to make Memphis their home."

ARTISAN STORE

With the success of its festival sales and increased interest by both artists and customers, St. John's opened its Artisans on a Mission Store.

The Artisan Store, which is located within the church, is open every Sunday after worship and during church office hours during the week. The Artisans on a Mission Fund receives a commission from sales, and the artists receive the balance. There are items that make perfect gifts for different occasions, all of which support the ministry efforts of St. John's and its local artists.

What's for sale? Members of St. John's exhibit original art work and prints for sale in the artisan store. Also featured are embroidered



St. John's UMC artists and crafters support missions with their creative work. Photo by Collins Dillard

Midtown t-shirts and knitted items, glass pendants and earrings, beautiful gemstone necklaces and bracelets, carved wooden bowls, quilted items, one-of-a-kind notecards, and elaborately tie-dyed t-shirts and socks. The store also offers organic, fair trade coffee and chocolate from UMCOR (United Methodist Committee On Relief), as well as books written and CDs recorded by members of the congregation. There is truly something for everyone!

BLESSED

Artists of all ages at St. John's have a great time learning what it means to be in ministry with their prayers, presence, gifts and service! Their imaginations and love of Christ are in full swing as they put their talents to work in service to others. Their work is, indeed, a calling to a faithful relationship with God and the global community in which we are all blessed to serve.

For more information about the ministries and artistic opportunities at St. John's, call (901) 726-4104 or visit the church's website at www.stjohnsmidtown.org. ☩

DEATHS

STEWART, Marjorie (wife of Rev. Charles E. Stewart) died Nov. 9. The funeral service was held Nov. 11 in Memphis.

JOHNSTON, Earl A. (retired elder) died Nov. 18. A memorial service was held Nov. 23 in Memphis.

ELDER, Steven L. (provisional elder, incapacity leave) died Nov. 24. The funeral service was held Nov. 28 in Rossville, TN.

RAINS, Lillie Maie (wife of the late Rev. Elbert B. Rains) died Dec. 2. The funeral service was held Dec. 10 in Memphis.

WALLER, Donna Dickens (wife of the late Rev. Morton Finch Waller) died Dec. 8. The funeral service was held Dec. 12 in Memphis.

MOORE, Rufus H. (retired elder) died Dec. 25. The funeral service was held Dec. 28 in Cayce, KY.

'The Corners' in Memphis organizes as nonprofit to address poverty, health care, unemployment, underemployment and holistic activities for children

Submitted by organizers of 'The Corners'

The Corners of Highland Heights Community of Shalom is now officially organized as a nonprofit corporation in the State of Tennessee.

Rev. Fred Morton, Memphis Conference retired elder and convener of the group, commented to the group, "You are now licensed to do good. Next step is to do it."

After months of careful preparation, including pro-bono legal assistance from Linda Warren Seeley at Memphis Area Legal Services and organizing assistance from Amy Moritz, National Shalom Trainer and Director of the Center for Transforming Communities, The Corners' largest group gathered since its initial organizing meeting 18 months ago.

Incorporation

Twenty one persons attended the Oct. 23 meeting in Memphis to provide input and approve final steps, including adopting bylaws and electing a board of directors.

With collaboration a key principle in the Communities of Shalom model, The Corners celebrates the participation of neighborhood residents and stakeholders from six organizations in taking this important step in their work together.

Member organizations

Organizations represented at the meeting included Highland Heights UMC, Jacob's Well (a UM congregation), FirstWorks (ministry for hungry, homeless and displaced citizens in downtown Memphis started at Memphis First UMC), Christ

Community Church, Highland Heights Baptist Church and Mitchell Heights Neighborhood Association.

After eight months of discernment and training through the Communities of Shalom program, The Corners of Highland Heights was commissioned Nov., 6, 2010 as an alliance of churches, businesses, and individuals committed to building a connected and cohesive community, which promotes safety, exemplifies tolerance, and works together in unity to realize a higher quality of life in the Highland Heights/Mitchell Heights community in Memphis.

A mission of good work

Although incorporation and adopting bylaws will help in securing funding for its work, Moritz emphasized that this group has not hesitated to do good even without a license.

Over the past 12 months, the initiating group has already begun to address the pressing issues of poverty, health care, unemployment, underemployment and the need for holistic activities for neighborhood children. The vision that mobilizes this group is that their community will be a place energized by the Spirit of God where all persons find fulfillment and well-being.

As Moritz said, "You don't need a license for this!"

And yet, pursuing this vision will be greatly aided by the ability to secure charitable gifts and grants. Hence, the step of nonprofit incorporation and the need for a board of directors consisting of Fred Morton, President; Linda Burgess, Secretary; Parker Harness, Treasurer; and members at large; Rev. Willie Woods (New Tyler AME Church) and Rev. Rich Cook (Highland Heights UMC).

At the direction of those gathered on Oct. 23, the directors will add more members to represent major stake holders in the community over the coming months.

More information

For more info about The Corners of Highland Heights and how to support this work of seeking the shalom of the city, contact Morton at (901) 377-1964 or fmorton97@yahoo.com. The website is

www.thecornersof-highlandheights.org.

For more information about Communities of Shalom and how your church can begin one, contact Moritz at the Center for Transforming Communities at 901-324-3005 or amy@ctcmidsouth.org. The website is www.centerfortransformingcommunities.org.

Center for Transforming Communities

Center for Transforming Communities serves as the Regional Shalom Resource Center for the Communities of Shalom program, an initiative of The United Methodist Church and administered since January 2008 by the Theological School of Drew University in consultation with the National Shalom Committee.

Center for Transforming Com-



Stakeholders attended Oct. 23 meeting to provide input, adopt bylaws and elect board of directors for The Corners. Photo compliments of 'Focus for the Good.'

munities board of directors is approved each year at the Memphis Annual Conference. Twenty five percent of the Center's directors must be United Methodist and one of CTC's stated purposes is to provide a vehicle for the United Methodist Church Memphis Annual Conference to continue special emphasis for ministries within major urban centers (Resolution #181) as well as foster new Communities of Shalom (See Social Principals 162R).

Amy Moritz, Executive Director of the Center for Transforming Communities, serves as the Shalom Coordinator for the Memphis Conference. ☩

Here are three important deadlines in January for Memphis Conference

Jan. 5 is deadline for 2011 apportionment payments

The Memphis Conference treasurer's office will receive payments through Jan. 5 for credit on 2011 apportionments. Church treasurers should mail contributions to the usual lockbox address: Memphis Conference Treasurer, United Methodist Church, Post Office Box 10667, Jackson, TN 38308-0111. Payments received after Jan. 5 and marked for 2011 can be credited as paid for a prior year, but will not appear as such on the 2011 statistical report. Questions? Contact James Finger or Alea Morris at 731-664-5540.

Jan. 9 is deadline for nominations for officers for new Quadrennium

Every member of every church is eligible to serve. Consult pages 5-37 of the 2011 Memphis Conference Journal for a list of volunteer service opportunities. Nominate yourself or someone else by completing a Nominations Worksheet (also called "interest form") that you may receive from the Memphis Conference Web site or from your district office. Questions? Contact Dr. John R. Bonson, Director of Connectional Ministries, at 731-664-8480 or director.mcumc@eplu.net.

Jan. 15 is deadline to enter 'Call to Action' goals on dashboard

The Call to Action/Vital Congregations "dashboard," accessible through the Memphis Conference Web site, is now ready to receive each church's adopted goals in five key areas: Worship, Disciples, Small Groups, Mission Participants and Mission Giving. Questions? Contact your District Superintendent or Dr. John R. Bonson, Director of Connectional Ministries, at 731-664-8480 or director.mcumc@eplu.net.



Community members gather for final work to incorporate 'The Corners.' Photo compliments of 'Focus for the Good.'

MID-SOUTH FOOD BANK *continued from page 1*

more truckloads of perishable and non-perishable food and other groceries to Moscow UMC for same-day distribution to more than 200 qualified families.

Moscow Community Food Pantry is supported by 15 area churches and has more than 110 lo-

cal volunteers. Seven local schools support the Pantry with food drives as well as local businesses and the annual postal service Stamp Out Hunger food drive.

Nancy Leggett is the program director and Mike Jaeger coordinates the mobile pantry. †



Mid-South Food Bank VP of Programs Tonya Bradley, left, presents 'Pantry of the Year' award to Grace Phelps of Bread of Life Ministries of Covington First UMC. Submitted photo



Moscow Community Food Pantry director Nancy Leggett, right, accepts 'Outstanding Performance Award' from Tonya Bradley, Mid-South Food Bank VP of Programs. Submitted photo

Churches invited to purchase Scouting patches to observe Scouting Ministries Sunday in 2012

Many churches in the Memphis Conference will observe Scouting Ministries Sunday in February and March of 2012.

In recognition of these Sunday observances, churches may want to purchase a Scouting patch designed by the National Association of United Methodist Scouters (NAUMS).

Designed for boys, girls and registered leaders, the patch buttons onto boys' and leaders' uniform pockets. Girls may permanently affix the patch to vests or sashes.

Proceeds from sale of the \$3 patch benefit The Philmont Bible Project to raise funds to purchase Bibles for scouts hiking the trails



at Philmont Scout Ranch in New Mexico.

For more information or to purchase patches, email Memphis Conference Scouting leaders Teresa Rector at trector@colliervilleumc.org or Philip Craig at plcmcs@yahoo.com. †

JOBS

Jobs, like the ones below at press time, are posted on the Memphis Conference Web site at www.memphis-umc.org. Each posting includes information about the job and how to apply. At the bottom of the home page, click on "Positions Available." Check back often for new postings.

- Part-time Secretary, Bells/Cypress UMCs, Bells, TN
- Part-time Director of Youth Ministry, Mullins UMC, Memphis
- Part-time Youth Associate, Jackson First UMC, Jackson, TN
- Pianist, Beech Bluff and Mt. Pleasant UMCs, Beech Bluff and Henderson, TN

St. Paul UMC women 'Sail into Fashion' at annual benefit fashion show, sponsored by UMW

*By Janice McCallen
St. Paul UMC, Lakeland, TN*

St. Paul UMC's United Methodist Women (UMW) held its 18th annual Fashion Show Saturday, Oct. 1, at the church in Lakeland, TN.

"Sailing Into Fashion" was the theme of the show, with decorations depicting everything about sailing.

All kinds of sailboats were constructed from scrapbook paper, dowels and styrofoam.

One large, hand-crafted sailboat served as a receptacle to collect non-perishable food items for several local food banks.

Forty-one models showcased 61 beautiful fall fashions – from pajamas to evening gowns – sponsored by J.C. Penney Wolfchase.

A delicious luncheon of pasta chicken salad, orange congealed salad, rolls and chocolate chip cake was served to nearly 200 guests.

A silent auction with over 50 items kept guests' busy bidding for that special holiday gift. Live music kept everyone entertained before and during the show.

Proceeds from this year's show will go to several local missions, including the Kairos prison ministry, United Methodist Neighborhood Centers, and the Church Health Center.

St. Paul UMC is located at 2949 Davies Plantation Rd. in Lakeland, TN. For more information about this event, the church or UMW, call 901-387-0007 or visit the church's Web site at www.stpaul-lakeland.org. †



Erin Purcell showed a touch of sophistication in this brightly-hued, leather-accented sheath dress. Submitted photo



Leah Atkins, daughter of Rev. Tim Atkins, modeled a holiday party dress. Submitted photo

Church floats are winners in Christmas parades

At least three Memphis Conference churches had winning floats in local Christmas parades in November and December. Newbern UMC in Newbern, TN took first place in the Religious/Civic category of the Dyersburg Christmas Parade on Nov. 29. The float (pictured below) had as its theme, "Happy Birthday, Jesus." A float entered in the same

parade by Rehoboth UMC in Dyersburg, TN took third place. Reidland UMC in Paducah, KY also won a first place in the "religious float" category in the Paducah Christmas Parade on Dec. 3. *Photo compliments of Dyersburg State Gazette.*



United Methodist connection leads to pipe organ donation

By Cathi Johnson, Vice President of Advancement, Memphis Theological Seminary www.memphisseminary.edu

Editor's Note: This article was first published in the Spring 2011 issue of The Lamp, the magazine of Memphis Theological Seminary (MTS). It is reprinted here with permission from MTS.

Memphis Theological Seminary is located in mid-town Memphis on five acres at the corner of East Parkway and Union Avenue. Only three blocks away, one of the oldest and finest organs in the South silently rested in the sanctuary of Union Avenue UMC.

Installed in 1924, this Moller pipe organ has been carefully repaired and restored over the years. A new console was customized and added in 1978. It has both delighted and inspired audiences and congregations with music from its 27 ranks of pipes for more than 80 years.

Over the past decade, Union Avenue UMC struggled with declining membership and increasing financial woes. Earlier this year, a difficult decision was made to sell the building and find a new home for the cherished organ.

As a testament to the importance MTS plays in preparing faith leaders for church and lay ministry in this community, city

and region, and in particular for The United Methodist Church, the Union Avenue congregation and the Memphis Conference donated the Moller organ to MTS to become an integral part of the free-standing chapel, which will be built on the MTS campus within the next one to two years.

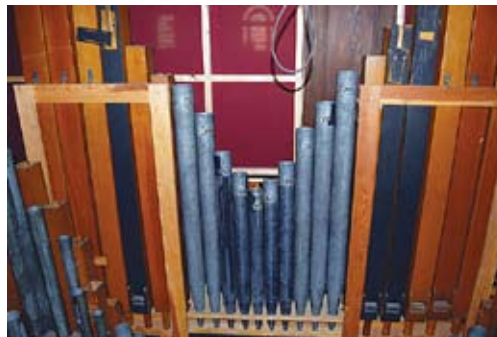
The chapel will be designed to provide maximum acoustical benefit for the organ. In addition, the organ may be the centerpiece for a new certificate or degree program in church music.

About The M.P. Moller Organ Company

Established in 1875, The M. P. Moller Organ Company was once one of the largest makers of pipe organs in the world. In the company's lifetime, it built more than 12,000 organs of imported woods, metals and animal products from around the world. Skilled craftsmen made sure each pipe had the correct tone, color, transparency and timbre.

Fathers passed on to their sons the skills involved in building the custom-made organs. Moller organs were installed at West Point, the U. S. Naval and Air Force Academies, the National Shrine

Union Avenue UMC's Moller pipe organ has found a new home at Memphis Theological Seminary. Submitted photo



Skilled craftsmen made sure each Moller organ pipe had the correct tone, color, transparency and timbre. Submitted photo

of the Immaculate Conception and the Lincoln Center. Even the chapel at Camp David has a Moller organ, which was dedicated in 1991 to President George H. W. Bush. The following year, the plant was shut down because of increasingly bitter labor relations. It never reopened, but left an amazing musical legacy to the world.

According to Greg Koziel, nationally-acclaimed organ builder formerly employed by the Moller Company, "If you were to try

to replace this organ, you could expect to spend at least \$550,000 and you wouldn't be getting the same quality of materials and music."

There are times when music can express what words cannot. What could be grander than a fine pipe organ to stir the soul and heal the heart! We invite you to be seated on the front row when the old Moller organ is played once again and its chimes and pipes are ringing to the glory of God. †

At-risk youth in FirstWorks program learn to serve

By Sandra Mathias, FirstWorks Board Member

Youth enrolled in the FirstWorks after-school program learned the value of service and the importance of giving back this Thanksgiving.

FirstWorks is for at-risk children and youth living in zip codes surrounding the intersection of Highland and Summer Avenue in Memphis.

The program meets twice a week for dinner, tutoring, life skills enhancement and career advice.

Twice monthly, the children are treated to Saturday outings to visit museums, go skating or fishing, or attend ball games.

The youth were invited by FirstWorks Executive Director Frederick Cunningham to help serve dinner on Wednesday, Nov. 23, at Highland Heights UMC in Memphis.

The hall was packed with hungry families who attended the "Jacob's Well" outreach program, housed at the church.

The kitchen was filled with volunteers arranging an abundance of food as they formed an assembly line to feed several hundred citizens who came to enjoy a traditional Thanksgiving dinner with all the trimmings.

Cunningham showed FirstWorks youth Keyonte Morris-Loper, 13, how to wear plastic gloves and where to stand when serving. He also taught him a very valuable life lesson.

"I believe," said Cunningham, "it is important that the children at FirstWorks are taught moral values.

"It is vital they learn that even though they don't have a lot of material possessions and many of them come from near-poverty themselves, that whatever our circumstances, we all must give back.

"Generosity and kindness are not hereditary – it is learned behavior that must be taught. Inviting them to help serve this Thanksgiving dinner helped to teach them the importance of giving back."

To find out more about FirstWorks, to volunteer, or donate, visit www.firstworks.org. †



Frederick Cunningham, FirstWorks Executive Director, second from left, shows FirstWorks youth and others how to serve others at the Thanksgiving dinner held at Highland Heights UMC in Memphis. Submitted photo



2012 Memphis Conference Delegation: Front row from left: Sandra Burnett, Sandra L. Clay, Selena Henson, Randy Cooper, Michael Blake. Back row from left: Roger Hopson, David R. Reed, Sky McCracken, Mary A. Mooney, Solomon Christian, Gary D. Lawson, Jr., Beth Brown, David P. Comperry. Not pictured: Madison Lane

Memphis Conference Delegation to 2012 General and Jurisdictional Conferences was elected in 2011

The Memphis Conference delegation to the 2012 General and Jurisdictional Conferences was elected at the 2011 Memphis Annual Conference in Paducah, KY in June 2011.

These elected delegates will represent the Memphis Conference at General Conference (Tampa, FL) and the Southeast Jurisdictional Conference (Lake Juanluska, NC) in 2012.

The complete elected delegation from the Memphis Conference includes:

- **Lay delegates elected to General Conference:** Selena Henson, Collierville, TN; Sandra Burnett, Paducah, KY.
- **Clergy delegates elected to General Conference:** Rev. Randy Cooper, Martin, TN (head of the delegation); Rev. Sandra L. Clay, Memphis, TN.
- **Lay delegates elected to Jurisdictional Conference:** David R. Reed, Martin, TN; Dr. Solomon Christian, Memphis, TN.
- **Clergy delegates elected to Jurisdictional Conference:** Rev. Sky McCracken, Paducah, KY; Rev. Roger Hopson, Lebanon, TN.
- **Lay alternates:** Beth Brown, Union City, TN; Mary A. Mooney, Millington, TN; Madison Lane, McKenzie, TN.
- **Clergy alternates:** Rev. David P. Comperry, Memphis, TN; Rev. Gary D. Lawson, Jr., Eva, TN; Rev. Michael Blake, Martin, TN. ☩

'Order of Elders' has two new co-chairs: Suddarth, Waldrop

The Memphis Conference Order of Elders has two new co-chairs after Rev. Randy Cooper resigned from the position on Nov. 3.

Cooper, who served as chair for eight years, stepped down to be able to better focus on his candidacy for bishop in 2012. (See article page 1.)

Replacing Cooper until the end of his term at Memphis Annual Conference in June are Rev. Deborah C. Suddarth (now serving St. Paul UMC in Lakeland, TN) and Rev. H. Gregory Waldrop (now serving Foundation Avenue UMC in Paducah, KY).

The Order of Elders is a covenant community within the

church, providing mutual support, care, accountability, and nurturing for those ordained as Elders. All Ordained Elders of the Memphis Conference are members, including those who are retired and those serving beyond the local church.

"Randy's work served to organize the group mandated by the United Methodist Discipline; his Biblical insight and practical care have been a source of great strength to the Elders of this Conference as we have intentionally developed committed bonds among the Elders and with the Order of Deacons and the Fellowship of Local Pastors," said Waldrop. ☩

Conference as a means of grace – Jurisdictional Conference elects bishop

By Rev. Gregory Waldrop, Fountain Avenue UMC, Paducah, KY and member of Randy Cooper Election Committee

Means of grace are the regular and repeated activities that bend our lives in line with our Lord, Jesus. Means of grace are the traditional ways we Methodists are invited to wait for the Lord to work within and among us. In the language of the youth, the means of grace are where we hang out to hook up with the divine lover, Jesus. The means of grace encourage us to go where Jesus is sure to be found; the more regularly we partake of the means of grace the more they do their holy work and the more fully we find ourselves shaped by God into holy vessels.

The last means of grace that Wesley himself added to the other four more traditional means of grace (Communion, Bible Study, Fasting and Prayer, and Worship) was conference. Wesley reminded the people of God that often things were made divinely clear by gathering people together and talking candidly and heartily about confusing matters that lay ahead. Methodists have organized our church lives and time by conference. Every year we have a charge conference in order to talk about our local church matters; also regional church leaders gather once a year for an Annual Conference in order to gain a wider perspective and conversation; every four years Jurisdictional and General Conferences are convened to discern issues that deserve the full breadth of our denominational wisdom and discernment. Thus the conference is one of God's special gifts to Methodism and, through Methodism, to the world.

We United Methodists elect Bishops at our Jurisdictional Conferences. In the various regions of the United States and the world,

delegates—half clergy, half lay folk chosen from local churches—scrutinize prospective candidates and elect new Bishops by secret ballot. Once elected, new Bishops are consecrated to their special work.

Conferring together is the way we find our way forward, confident that God works through our conferencing to make straight our paths. Conference is what we ought to call our board meetings and our other "business" sessions because our main work is to find God's work and join in it. Conferencing is the way we help each other discover God's work among us. Conference is not trying to get our own way but rather to insure that God's way is welcomed as our way. In genuine conferencing, we are not so much making our case; instead we are listening for the case God is making for us to follow through those with whom we are conferring. Conferencing includes many of the people often left out of important conversations. In the church that includes the children, the youth, the homebound, and the disaffected. Full conferencing graces the church broadly.

Haven't you been involved in conversations that were clearly holy and a means of grace? This is the gift God yearns for us to live out and that God invites us to share. It is a gift of hearing rather than dominating, a gift of discerning rather than deciding, a gift of faith rather than fact. Conferencing makes room for other people and other perspectives and even other opposing ideas so that God's will might find its full fruit. Conference is a means of grace; conferring is one of God's ways to be deeply present with us. ☩

General Conference
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The methods of Methodism: A distinctly United Methodist way to make a bishop

By Rev. Gregory Waldrop, Fountain Avenue UMC, Paducah, KY
and member of Randy Cooper Election Committee

Do you know our uniquely United Methodist recipe for a Bishop? Have you ever wondered how we make Bishops in our denomination? Sometimes Bishops, good Bishops, have been made through unsightly processes and worldly ways. Other times, good Bishops emerge through clearly spiritual methods and practices. God works in many ways, human and divine. All United Methodist Bishops arrive through a distinctly Methodist process which centers on the quadrennial Jurisdictional Conferences which happen next in July of 2012. Every four years at Lake Junaluska, North Carolina, the representatives of all fifteen Southeastern Annual Conferences elect the pool of Bishops from which our Memphis Conference Bishop arises.

Did you hear the good news that a candidate for Bishop has emerged here in the Memphis Conference? We, the Annual Conference, identified and discerned The Reverend Randy Cooper as one whom we sense has the special abilities of a Bishop. He did not come to the Conference seeking the position; his work in the local church satisfies him deeply. His pastoral qualities have been affirmed at each of his pastoral appointments in Kentucky and Tennessee, currently in Martin, Tennessee. People describe his preaching as spirited and fresh and penetrating. He knows well his appointed business of Word and Table. Randy Cooper lives for the church and its vital work. However, many of his clergy colleagues and several of the lay folks with whom he has served, recognized a growing breadth in his thought. Clearly his work and words showed themselves worthy of a wider hearing. His fresh, Biblically-based leadership, easily and naturally, spread to Conference and Regional levels. One day, very nearly in unison, many of us looked up and saw in Randy Cooper the latent spirit and character of a Bishop. We asked him to consider standing for Bishop.

We hope you know Randy Cooper or that you will get to know him. He grew up the youngest child of a farm family

immersed in the United Methodist Church in Humboldt, TN. He still loves the land with all its Biblical distinctiveness and centrality. Randy and his wife, Gayle Emro Cooper, have recently celebrated their 38th wedding anniversary. They have raised two daughters, Rachel and Margaret, to adult lives of faithfulness, marriage, and call. He and the cluster of people who surround him are worth hearing and getting to know—knowing him, you will sense his humility, his compassion, and his deep Biblical roots, all essentials in strong Bishops.

Recommending and adequately supporting a candidate for Bishop requires much from a United Methodist Conference. We must continually uphold Randy in prayer as well as pray for the entire process into which together we now enter. Several of us are working to get his preaching and writings out to larger circles—perhaps you are an able editor or printer who can provide the necessary skill to help that happen with excellence. Others are preparing a DVD to introduce Randy Cooper to the delegates of the Southeastern Jurisdictional Conference—can you help us? Many whose spiritual gifts include generosity will send money to the conference office to undergird Randy Cooper's candidacy—it will take several thousand dollars to fund this effort fully. Maybe you know neighboring United Methodists in Conferences across the southeast and can recommend Randy to them and to their Jurisdictional Conference delegates. Many ways remain to support Randy Cooper as our Memphis Conference candidate for Bishop this quadrennium.

It is time to consecrate five new United Methodist Bishops in the Southeastern Jurisdiction. In our midst, a fine candidate has arisen; we have discerned his gifts and graces; we recommend him for this humble, holy work of leadership; we now work faithfully for his election.

Godspeed the United Methodist Church and Randy Cooper, a candidate for Bishop from our delegation of General and Jurisdictional Conference delegates! †

REV. RANDY COOPER *continued from page 1*

the Conference Board of Ordained Ministry.

Among Cooper's missional commitments are seats on the Boards of Directors of the Interfaith Campus Ministry of the University of Tennessee at Martin, TN, and We Care Ministries in Martin, TN, an ecumenical program that provides assistance to families of his community. He serves, too, on the Board for the Memphis Conference's Reelfoot Rural Ministries, a ministry to the rural poor in west Tennessee. He also was an early endorser of the Ekklesia Project, an ecumenical network of Christians who have found friendship in their common love for God and the church.

Cooper, now 58 years old, received his Bachelor's degree in Religion from Lambuth College in Jackson, TN in 1975. His Master of Divinity from Union Theological Seminary in New York City in 1979 included a year studying the New Testament at the University of Aberdeen in Scotland. He obtained a Doctor of Ministry degree from Memphis Theological Seminary in Memphis, TN in 1994. For eight years, while still serving as a pastor, he participated in the continuing education work of the Pastor Theologian Program of the Center of Theological Inquiry in Princeton, NJ.

Soon after Cooper and his wife, Gayle, married, they lived in residence with mentally-challenged women in Jackson, TN as part of a two-year ministry. From 1987 to 1993, the couple served as co-directors of Plowshares Chapel House, then located in Trenton, TN, a retreat house dedicated to the work of prayer and peace.

Today Gayle works as a physical therapist assistant.

The couple has two daughters and three grandchildren. Daughter Margaret is a church organist in Chicago. Daughter Rachel is a pediatric nurse practitioner in Birmingham, AL, and her husband is a baseball coach at Birmingham Southern College. †

Election committee forms to support Randy Cooper episcopal candidacy

An election committee for Rev. Randy Cooper was formed and began meeting last fall to plan and organize efforts to support Cooper's candidacy for bishop in The United Methodist Church.

The Memphis Conference delegation to the 2012 General and Jurisdictional conferences endorsed Cooper as their Episcopal nominee last year. (See story page 1.)

Cooper will join nominees from other conferences under consideration for the episcopacy at this summer's Southeastern Jurisdictional Conference at Lake Junaluska, N.C.

Members of the election committee, according to Cooper, are Rev. Scottie Brafford, Beth Brown, Sandra Burnett, Rev. Jerry B. Carr, Bob Carroll, Cathy Farmer, Rev. Gail W. Gaddie, Rev. Autura Hampton, Rev. Jerry L. Jeffords, Rev. Gary D. Lawson, Sr., Joe Pevahouse, David R. Reed, Rev. Brad Thomas, Gary Wake and Rev. Gregory Waldrop.

Co-chairs are Sandra Burnett and Rev. Brad Thomas.

Fundraising and other activities in support of Cooper's candidacy are currently being planned by the committee, which already has established the "Friends of Randy Cooper (episcopal nominee)" Facebook page at www.Facebook.com. †



Randy Cooper Election Committee: Seated from left: Hampton, Burnett, Lawson, Cooper, Jeffords, Brown, Pevahouse. Standing from left: Reed, Waldrop, Carroll, Thomas, Wake. Not pictured: Carr, Farmer, Gaddie.



Rehoboth UMC's 2011 Fall Fest attracted church and community members. Submitted photo

Fall Fest at Rehoboth UMC brings out church and community members

More than 100 people attended Rehoboth UMC's Fall Fest on Saturday, Oct. 29.

Rehoboth UMC is located in Dyersburg, TN.

"We have come a long way in the past few years in our membership and bringing folks from our community to the church for different events," reported Lynn Parker.

"This year's Fall Fest hayride required a cotton trailer," said Parker, "while just several years ago a 16-foot-trailer was big enough. Next year we plan to have two hayrides ... so everybody gets to ride."

'Carpenter's Table Food Pantry' at Memphis First UMC helps working poor and seeks donations

By Sandra Mathias Memphis First UMC

Since its inception in 2010, pre-screened clients known as "the working poor" are welcomed into the Pepper Building of Memphis First UMC two Saturdays a month to shop for groceries and hygiene supplies.

Under the leadership of Senior Pastor Rev. Dr. Scott Alford, this unique ministry, called "The Carpenter's Table Food Pantry," lends support to citizens who are gainfully employed, but challenged to make ends meet.

Essentially, they make too much money to qualify for most food pantries or other kinds of assistance, but not enough to feed their families adequately.

To qualify, clients must be referred by a non-profit organization such as the Workers Interfaith Network, the Church Health Center, Caritas Village or neighboring churches.

Clients may shop for non-perishable groceries, hygiene supplies, cleaning supplies and infant items.

Additionally, the pantry offers free "gently read" children's books available to take home.

Once accepted into the program, clients may set up three visits.

Donations may be delivered Monday through Thursday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. or Sundays from 9:30 a.m. to noon.

The delivery location is 204 North Second Street, Memphis, TN 38105.

Monetary donations are also welcome and may be made through PayPal on the Memphis First UMC web site at www.firstchurchmemphis.org.

The Carpenter's Table strives to be an encouraging force in the community to keep citizens in

the workforce by helping them to put food on the table in these hard economic times.

For more information, call the church office at 901-527-8362, Monday through Thursday, from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. ☩



Memphis First UMC members work at Carpenter's Table Food Pantry. From left are Diana Baker, William Cooper, Betsy Kay, Debbie Buck and Jeannie Johnson. Submitted photo

'The Gathering' is name of new worship service at Colonial Park UMC in Memphis



In the second half of 2010, Colonial Park UMC in Memphis started what it calls "a new modern, come-as-you-are" worship service on Sundays at 9:30 a.m.

"The Gathering is not just a worship experience but rather the building and development of a new faith community which meets people and uncondi-

tionally accepts people as they are and where they are," according to church communications.

The Gathering includes a praise band and meets in the church's gym at the corner of Park and Estate in Memphis.

Church communications describe the new service as seeking to "impact, encourage and develop relationships with Jesus Christ" and provide a "focused, life-application message with spiritual solutions to help (people) navigate life and help get through every day."

For more info about The Gathering, email the church at cmartin@colonialpark.org or call 901-683-5286 or visit the church's Web site at www.colonialpark.org. ☩

Chamness receives Clay F. Lee award from General Board of Pension and Health Benefits

Bishop Benjamin Chamness was named the 2011 recipient of the Clay F. Lee award from The General Board of Pension and Health Benefits at the GBPHB Board of Directors' leadership awards presentation in November in Massachusetts.

Chamness currently serves as Interim Bishop for the Nashville Episcopal Area of The United Methodist Church. The Nashville Area includes the Memphis and Tennessee Conferences.

This award, which recognizes exemplary service in caring for the pension and benefits needs of those who serve The United Methodist Church, was presented by Board Chairperson, Bishop B. Michael Watson, and General Secretary, Barbara A. Boigegrain. ☩



Bishop Benjamin Chamness and his wife, Joye.

For news and events of the Memphis Conference, visit www.memphis-umc.org where you also may sign up for free weekly eNews. Also follow the Memphis Conference on Facebook and Twitter.



Methodist Healthcare and The West Clinic form partnership

Methodist Healthcare and The West Clinic have entered into a partnership, effective Jan. 1, 2012, to transform cancer care in the Mid-South area.

The West Clinic, the region's premier cancer practice and a nationally-recognized leader in cancer research, is joining forces with Methodist to create a comprehensive, fully integrated cancer service for the benefit of Mid-South residents.

"The West Clinic is a world-class center of excellence for medical oncology, hematology, oncologic imaging, and other advanced medical care. Together, our two leading organizations will be exceptionally well positioned to take cancer care to the next level," said Gary Shorb, president and CEO of Methodist Healthcare.

In another move that will further position this partnership for success, the University of Tennessee Health Science Center (UTHSC) plans to move its Oncology Fellowship Program to The West Clinic. Methodist and The West Clinic will provide UTHSC \$5 million annually over seven years, for a total of \$35 million, to enhance cancer research, care programs, and innovation.

"It is important to note that this is not a sale of The West Clinic," affirms Erich Mounce, CEO. "The West Clinic and its physicians will remain independent and autonomous. This is a novel partnership that will build upon the strengths of both Methodist Healthcare and The West Clinic to transform the way cancer care is provided in the Mid-South."

With eight locations across the Mid-South, The West Clinic includes 33 physicians and 400 employees. The East Memphis, Collierville, Mid-Town, Brighton and Southaven locations will be part of this partnership. The West Clinic's Corinth, Miss. operation will not be affected by this partnership.

About Methodist Le Bonheur Healthcare

Methodist Le Bonheur Healthcare (MLH) is an integrated healthcare delivery system based in Memphis. Founded in 1918 by

The United Methodist Church to help meet the growing needs for quality healthcare in the Mid-South, MLH has grown from one hospital into a seven-hospital system that also includes a home health agency, ambulatory surgery centers, outpatient facilities and physician practices serving the Memphis and Mid-South area.

Affiliated with the Memphis, Mississippi and Arkansas Conferences of The United Methodist Church, Methodist Healthcare combines a dedication to the art of healing with a Christ-centered commitment to minister to the whole person. ☩

Centenary UMC in Memphis celebrates 146 years of history, faith and hope

By: Dr. Marie A. Milam,

Chair of Media/Public Relations Committee, Centenary UMC

Centenary UMC in Memphis celebrated 146 years of history, faith and hope when former pastor Dr. James M. Lawson delivered a message at the church on Sunday, Nov. 13.

"Audacious Living in These Days" (Matthew 5:38-48) was the title of Lawson's message.

Lawson is known throughout the United States and in other countries as the foremost strategist of nonviolence during the turbulence of the 1960s and is an incomparable speaker, counselor and minister.

Under Lawson's leadership, the march through Mississippi originated at Centenary UMC.

Recognized as a National Civil Rights Museum Civil Rights Icon at this year's Freedom Awards,



From left: Dr. James M. Lawson; his wife, Dorothy; and current Centenary UMC pastor, Dr. Deborah Smith. Submitted photo

Lawson recalled historical moments in church history and challenged members to continue the fight for justice.

Church History: In 1865, the Freedman's Bureau sent a Rev. Hawkins to the city to open a school and the school and the church began simultaneously on Raburn Avenue, now Third Street. Since Methodism in America was 100-years-old at the time, the church became a part of the Centenarian movement in Methodism, and was christened "Centenary," like all Methodist churches founded that year. In 1866, the church moved to South Avenue, which is now Calhoun Street and the first frame building was erected.

A Litany of Firsts: The first black school for African Americans in the city was established at Centenary UMC; children attended day classes and adults attended night classes. The oldest African American Boy Scout troop in the city was founded at the church, Troop 188. The first kindergarten for African American children was established at the old Centenary UMC parson-

U of M Lambuth Campus is adding degree programs this semester

The University of Memphis Lambuth Campus in Jackson, TN is adding eight new degree programs for the spring 2012 semester. They include:

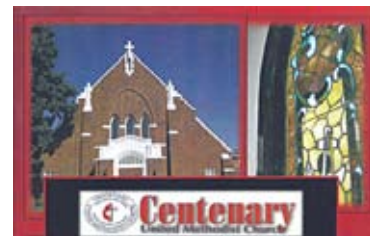
- Bachelor of Arts in English
- Bachelor of Arts in Communications
- Bachelor of Arts in Criminal Justice
- Bachelor of Arts in Psychology
- Bachelor of Arts in Public Relations
- Bachelor of Arts in Social Work
- Bachelor of Business Administration in Accounting
- Bachelor of Professional Studies in Entertainment Music Industries

The eight additional degree programs join the nine undergraduate and six graduate degree programs already offered on the campus of the former Methodist-affiliated Lambuth University.

The University of Memphis began offering classes at Lambuth in August 2011 after the school ceased independent operation in May 2011, following 168 years of higher education service to West Tennessee.

In the fall of 2012, two more undergraduate degree programs will be added: a bachelor of science in biology/pre-med and a bachelor of science in nursing for transfer students.

More information about registration, the academic calendar, and courses and degree programs offered at the University of Memphis Lambuth Campus is available online at www.memphis.edu/lambuth or by phone at 731-427-4725. ☩



Centenary UMC in Memphis celebrated 146 years of "history, faith and hope" in November. Submitted photo

age. One of the first community education forums to discuss issues of concern to African Americans was held at the church, The Golden Hour. It was an hour set apart in the life of the church to present views on such topics as: The Economic Conditions of our People, The Spiritual Value of the Ballot and Self-Improvement.

From the beginning, the old Centenary Chapel, as it was first known, made a definite impact on the community. Students of the school became some of Memphis' first Black teachers and many others made significant contributions to the nation.

Under the outstanding leadership of current pastor, Dr. Deborah Smith, Centenary UMC continues its legacy of service-rooted in history, faith and hope.

To learn more about Centenary UMC, visit the church's Web site at www.centenary-umc.org. ☩

90-year-old time capsule from Union Avenue UMC is opened

By Robyn Bray

Editor's Note: This article was first posted on the Web site www.examiner.com on Oct. 5, 2011. The story is reprinted here with permission from the author, Robyn Bray.

Wednesday, Sept. 28, 2011, was a historic day in the life of a historic church. Members of Union Avenue UMC in Memphis opened a time capsule that had been sealed within the cornerstone of their church when it was built close to 90 years ago.

Because the physical building of this historic church was recently demolished, some people mistakenly assume the church died the day the bill of sale was signed, transferring the property to CVS Pharmacy in March of 2011. But they are wrong.

The people and the spirit of Union Avenue UMC are alive and well, joining their hearts and resources with brothers and sisters in faith at St. Luke's UMC on South Highland in Memphis.

Together, they work to keep alive the vision and ministry that burned in the hearts of the early members of both these congregations when they were founded so many years ago.

The time capsule was in the form of a sealed copper box that had withstood the test of time so well that it had to be cut open with special tools by St. Luke's facilities manager Tim Taylor.

After the cut was made, the box was handed to Rev. Birgitte T. French, the last pastor of the Union Avenue congregation, who now serves alongside Rev. Mark Matheny at St. Luke's.

Everyone attending this historic event at St. Luke's was so very curious to see what was inside the box, but it was members from former Union Avenue UMC, along with Rev. French, who approached the table to have the first look at the contents.

As French lifted the lid, necks were straining and every eye was glued to the box in her hands.

As the contents were removed from the box, various church members described the

items and held them up for all to see.

The box contained church newsletters, a pastoral calling card, a business card from the contractor, some coins from the year 1922, a letter written by the Methodist Women's Missionary Society, and a photograph of those in attendance at the sanctuary groundbreaking, dated March 19, 1923.

Also included were newspapers from the time period, one of which included an article about the proposed building and a drawing and plan showing how the structure, completed in 1924, should look.

Marvin Richardson, 82, said, "This is an important moment for me. I grew up in that church since I was a tiny thing. It holds a lot of memories for me."

French recalled how she had asked the demolition workers to look for the time capsule, and had been told there wasn't one.

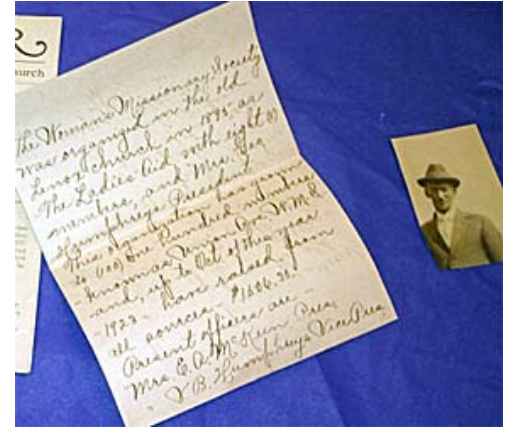
She protested, "But I know there was one. We have note of it in our records."

She expressed her concerns to contractor Ricky Chandler, who personally went to look in the cornerstone for the time capsule.

He noticed a separate concrete compartment behind the cornerstone and cracked it open to reveal the copper box, which he then delivered to French. She expressed her gratitude that he had taken the time and made the special effort to retrieve this precious piece of history.

"This box contained treasure," said French. "There wasn't any gold. It was treasures from the heart."

Money from the sale of the Union Avenue UMC church property has been invested in



The Union Avenue time capsule contained a 1923 letter written by the Methodist Women's Missionary Society. Photo by Carla Taylor and Robyn Bray

many ongoing charities and ministries in the Memphis area. The members of Union Avenue and St. Luke's UM Churches believe the church founders would be proud.

The historic cornerstone can now be found at St. Luke's UMC, 480 South Highland.

Other items have also been saved and are being evaluated for possible reuse and placement.

To learn more about the history of the Union Avenue UMC or view the artifacts, contact Rev. French at St. Luke's UMC at 901-452-6262. ✠

Thompson event attracts almost 150 laity and clergy of the Memphis Conference

"Habits for a Whole Heart: Designing & Strengthening a Personal Rule of Life" was the name of a Nov. 3 event in downtown Jackson, TN that drew almost 150 lay and clergy participants from throughout the Memphis Conference.

Sponsored by lay and clergy leadership of the Memphis Conference, the event was facilitated by Marjorie J. Thompson and took place at Jackson First UMC.

Describing the day's activities, Memphis Conference Lay Leader Sandra Burnett of Paducah, KY, said, "Marjorie Thompson, in her quiet but powerful manner, led us into examining our personal rule of life.

"She skillfully presented background material and gave us much food for thought. The day was well balanced between her presentation and time allotted for participants to do self-examination, along with table talk."

Rev. Randy Cooper, then-chair of the Memphis Conference Order of Elders and pastor of Martin First UMC in Martin, TN, added, "We clergy and laity of our conference need to be ever reminded of the fundamental work of prayer and devotion.

"We simply cannot ignore the basics and daily work of attentiveness to God. Marjorie Thompson helped us form and strengthen our 'rule of life' as we seek to be wholehearted and deep-hearted followers of Jesus." ✠



Marjorie Thompson helped participants develop a "personal rule of life." Photo by Gary Wake



Members of Union Avenue UMC open time capsule from cornerstone of demolished church building. Photo by Carla Taylor and Robyn Bray

Memphis-area churches employ self-help methods for more than just beating addiction

By Brown Burnett / Special to The Commercial Appeal

Editor's Note: This article was first published by The Memphis Commercial Appeal on Oct. 22. It is reprinted here with permission from The Memphis Commercial Appeal.

On a warm October evening, more than 100 hungry souls are filling Jacob's Well, a recovery ministry that meets in the basement of Highland Heights UMC in Memphis.

Many are down on their luck, facing various forms of addiction, homelessness, hopelessness. As they eat, a gospel band plays from the small stage, and lyrics of hope and recovery are projected onto a screen.

"We're all broken," says Rev. Jamey Lee, the ministry's 33-year-old founder, a recovering addict himself. "What are you afraid of? There is good news here. Your fear doesn't have to determine your future."

The crowd issues several "amens."

"In rehab," Lee says, "we all have to face our fears."

This isn't rehab. It's church.

Lee's year-old ministry is one of several Christian ministries in the Memphis area that employ the Twelve Steps of Recovery, first put forth by Alcoholics Anonymous in 1939. AA's Twelve Steps are used by more than 150 recovery groups worldwide, helping people who suffer from addictions that include narcotics, gambling, smoking, food and sex.

In recent years, however, churches have started using the Twelve Steps as a spiritual discipline, as well as a form of evangelism.

"Many people in recovery have been hurt by the 'church' over the years," said Dr. Scott Morris, founder of the Church Health Center and associate minister at St. John's United Methodist Church, which hosts another year-

old recovery ministry called The Way, led by Rev. John Kilzer.

"The 'church' has not been a very affirming, accepting place for people in recovery. We should be open to all people in recovery, and if that doesn't work for you, that's fine. You need to be on another path to recovery."

The roots of AA, which still describes itself as "a fellowship," can be traced to the Oxford Group, a Protestant religious movement that practiced a formula of self-improvement by performing self-inventory, admitting wrongs, making amends, using prayer and meditation, and carrying the message to others.

AA's program of recovery, known as the Twelve Steps, includes references to "a Power greater than ourselves" and "God as we understood Him," but the organization is open to all believers and nonbelievers alike.

Ward Ewing, a retired Episcopal priest now living in the Knoxville area, serves as a nonalcoholic trustee for Alcoholics Anonymous.

"I'm not an addict or an alcoholic, but the Twelve Steps became my spiritual program many years ago," he said after a recent AA Service meeting in Memphis. "They allowed me to live through some really tough times in my ministry and gave me a way of operating I don't think I could have gotten any other way."

But Ewing says churches need to be careful about connecting the gospel and the Twelve Steps too closely.

"When you do that, you're going to turn some people off," he said. "Some say, 'We like the Twelve Steps, but you're going to have to believe the way we believe.' I think they're damaging their ability to reach out to the alcoholic or to other addictions."



Jimmy Naramorn holds up his hands in praise during a hymn at Jacob's Well, a recovery ministry hosted by Highland Heights United Methodist Church. Photo by Kyle Kurlick

Some church-based recovery programs are more intentionally evangelical. Celebrate Recovery, pioneered by California megachurch pastor Rick Warren, uses a Christ-centered Eight Principles instead of AA's more spiritually generic Twelve Steps.

"AA and NA (Narcotics Anonymous) talk about 'a Higher Power of your understanding,' but the Higher Power within (Celebrate Recovery) is Jesus Christ," said Kelley Hendrix, who leads the four-year-old weekly CR service and meeting at Highpoint Church in East Memphis. More than a dozen Memphis-area churches are using CR.

"We don't have a problem with AA," said Hendrix, who says he has been clean and sober for seven years. "We believe that AA is a tool God uses to get people sober so they can actually make a decision on who they believe God to be."

Lee, who grew up in Louisiana, said he had addiction issues of his own before having a "strong conversion" at age 19. He went into recovery, got clean and sober, then studied to be a minister.

A few years ago, he participated in a Bible

study at Christ UMC in Memphis, where he was on staff. The study leader kept talking about the Twelve Steps. That's when Lee started thinking about starting a recovery ministry that employs the Twelve Steps.

"The Twelve Steps are laid out in such an all-encompassing way," Lee said. "They're themes and principles that have been in the Christian tradition for thousands of years. We're trying to help people get back on their feet ... and we believe the Twelve Steps point the way, no matter what the addiction or problem you might have in your life."

Lee opened Jacob's Well (a name drawn from John 4:6) one year ago. The ministry reaches out to the poor, the homeless living on the streets, many of whom suffer

from alcoholism and drug addiction. It's standard procedure for members of Jacob's Well to seek out people living in parks or under bridges, give them food and shelter, and work with them to get control of their lives.

"We work with about 50 men at a time who are at a turning point in their lives, some just out of prison or in treatment, and they need positive role models as well as connection to resources and mentors," Lee said.

"For example, there was a guy who'd been living in an abandoned house, and he would come here every Saturday. Some would say, 'He's drunk; why do you let him in?' We got him into detox, and he's in a rehab program now and doing well, and we see that happen several times a year." ☛

Book of Discipline is online

The 2008 edition of the Book of Discipline, The United Methodist Church's official lawbook, is available online at no cost at Cokesbury.com.

A link to this "read and search only" version also is located in the Resources section of the Memphis Conference Web site at www.memphis-umc.org.

General Conference, the denomination's top legislative body, revises and approves the Book of Discipline every four years. It will be revised next at the 2012 General Conference.

More than 550 attend Ripley First UMC's annual Harvest Dinner

By Annie Laura Jennings, Ripley First UMC

To raise funds for church projects, Ripley First UMC in Ripley, TN hosted a big Harvest Dinner on Thursday, Nov. 10, at the church.

This event has been happening at Ripley First UMC since the early 1940s, approximately 70 years. Every year it has been a success.

This year's event fed 550 folks from all parts of the community.

More than a time to eat, the Harvest Dinner is a wonderful time of fellowship. Tickets were in high demand, selling out by meal time.

This year's menu required 22 turkeys, 18 huge pans of sweet potatoes, 70 recipes of cornbread to make 20 pans of dressing, approximately 90 pies, cans and cans of cranberry sauce and green beans, and dozens of rolls.

"Everyone works so hard and makes my job look so easy," commented Linda Jennings, chairperson of the Harvest Dinner for the past several years. "Everyone is so cooperative and the previous chairperson, Carol Walker, had it organized down to the last detail."

Preparation for the event is timed down to the final clean-up after 7 p.m.

Volunteers like Bob and Bobbie White, Allison Garner and Courtney Nix arrived at the church at 9 a.m. on the day of the dinner to begin mixing the dressing. This was only after the cornbread and white bread were crumbled the day before.

Men of the church got in on the act by arriving early to carve the turkeys and help in other ways throughout the day.

All volunteers knew their jobs and when to do them.

Missions have always benefited from Ripley First UMC's Harvest Dinner. According to church history, the first dinner in 1976 raised money to buy a bicycle for missionaries in Zaire.

Proceeds from other dinners have been used to update and decorate the church's children's wing and make financial gifts to many local ministries.

Ripley First UMC is located at 145 South Main in Ripley. For more info, call 731-635-0821. ☩



Rev. Diane Harrison, standing at back, Executive Director of Grace Place Ministries, was the guest speaker at tea benefit for the prison ministry. Submitted photo

Tea raises \$900 for Grace Place Ministries in Memphis

More than \$900 was raised for Grace Place Ministries by the ladies of Beech Bluff (Beech Bluff, TN) and Mt. Pleasant (Henderson, TN) UMCs in the Jackson District when they hosted an afternoon tea on Sunday, Aug. 7, at Beech Bluff UMC.

Grace Place, a ministry of Good Shepherd UMC in Memphis, serves women incarcerated at Mark H. Luttrell Correctional Center for Women in Memphis.

Rev. Diane Harrison is executive director of Grace Place and was the guest speaker for the Aug. 7 event.

Approximately 60 ladies were in attendance. They wore hats, boas and jewelry, and enjoyed a menu of cucumber and pineapple cream cheese finger sandwiches, fruit, scones and clotted cream and various sweets.

A collection of teapots and tea cups also were on display.

Tables were set with fine china, crystal and fresh floral arrangements.

Entertainment was provided by Daphne Johnson, Kim Huckabee and Becky Fisher.

Michelle Harrison, wife of current pastor Rev. Hiram Harrison, presented a check to Grace Place Ministries on behalf of Beech Bluff and Mt. Pleasant UMCs. ☩

Ladies wore hats for Aug. 7 tea benefit for Grace Place Ministries. Submitted photo



Members of Ripley First UMC prepare for annual Harvest Dinner. Photo by Linda Jennings.



More than 550 turned out for annual Harvest Dinner at Ripley First UMC. Photo by Linda Jennings.

Every church must have 'Safe Sanctuaries' policy and provide appropriate training

"Safe Sanctuaries" is an overt expression of a congregation in making a congregation a safe place where children and youth may experience the abiding love of God and fellowship within the community of faith.

The United Methodist General Board of Discipleship (GBOD) offers resources about Safe Sanctuaries. Visit www.gbod.org.

Two online training workshops are being offered in January: "Writing Your Safe Sanctuary Policy" and "Safe Sanctuary Training for Workers with Children and Youth." Learn more at www.beadisciple.com.

For more information about "safe sanctuaries," contact your district superintendent. ☩

Lambuth/Oxley Sabbatical Cottage at Lakeshore gets a face lift; donations sought for more improvements

By Rev. Gary D. Lawson, Sr.,
Executive Director, Lakeshore United Methodist Assembly

Formerly the Arthur D. Oxley Biological Field Station, this facility on the campus of Lakeshore United Methodist Assembly in Eva, TN was once a thriving piece of the former Lambuth University's ecology study program.

A home away from home for many Lambuth students prior to the early 1990s, the Oxley Field station enabled students to explore the depth of life and its habitat on and around the Tennessee River.

From the late 90s to the late 2000s, the field station became home to the Camp Hope Series of programs offered to at-risk youth during the summer camp season. Since the end of the 2008 camping season until now, the Oxley Field Station sat idle and continued to grow in disrepair.

With the closing of Lambuth University in Jackson, TN earlier this year and the availability of our United Methodist NOMADS, Lakeshore has taken steps to renovate this quaint and valuable piece of history.

NOMADS (which stands for "Nomads On a Mission Active in Divine Service") are organized mission volunteers who provide volunteer labor for United Methodist organizations. Read more at www.nomadsumc.org.

Lakeshore's goal is turn the field station into a place for clergy and committed laity to utilize for sabbatical, study and just plain rest – to be called the Lambuth/Oxley Sabbatical Cottage.

Once renovated, persons (not groups) wishing to use the facility will simply make a reservation with the Lakeshore office. The recommended donation for its use will be minimal and subject to being waived upon request for anyone in need.

The facility will feature two bedrooms and one and a half baths. It will sleep a traditional family of mom, dad and two children.

Complete with a kitchen, dining area and living area, we believe that persons will find it extremely com-

fortable for the purpose of meaningful time apart.

NOMADS this past spring completely gutted out the lower level of the field station, reworked the plumbing, painted the interior and upgraded the kitchen. Another group of NOMADS in the fall repaired, scraped, and painted the entire exterior, applying a beautiful coat of greenish tones. The group renovated the upstairs bedrooms with fresh paint and completely new flooring.

Although the cabin is usable at present, we hope to accomplish the following additional improvements to enhance the stay of our guests.

- Acquire new furnishings for the living area complete with a sofa sleeper and/or futon to allow for families with more than the traditional number of children.
- Install Central Air/Heat (\$7000) that will help the cabin with climate control issues.
- Acquire a queen-size bedroom set for the adult bedroom.
- Install a wireless connection and some form of television reception (Cable or Direct) to help our guests feel less isolated and at least mildly connected with the outside world.
- Do some landscaping and tree trimming to allow a little more sunshine upon the building and an opportunity for the grass to grow in the spring.

We are thrilled with the changes we are seeing at the present time and look forward to this facility being available to the Memphis Conference as a support for our clergy, laity and families needing respite or a place apart.

The only thing holding us back from completion is the funding to make these hoped-for additions a reality.

Persons wishing to make a contribution to the renovation of the Lambuth/Oxley Sabbatical Cottage at Lakeshore may do so by sending funds to Lakeshore UMA, 1458 Pilot Knob Road, Eva, TN 38333. You may call us at 731-584-6102 for any additional details.

We are able to receive donations as honorariums, memorials, and as gifts in honor of a hard-to-buy-for person on your Christmas list.

Persons wishing to come by and check out the cabin are welcome. Please call ahead, though, to make sure someone is here to greet you. ☪

This is an exterior shot of the Lambuth/Oxley Sabbatical Cottage at Lakeshore United Methodist Assembly.

Submitted photo



By Alys Drake

Churches can join social revolution

Editor's Note: This guest commentary was first published by the Memphis Commercial Appeal on Sept. 17. It is reprinted here with permission from the Memphis Commercial Appeal and the author, Alys Drake. A United Methodist in the Memphis Conference, Drake is communications manager for Howell Marketing Strategies in Memphis.

We live in an amazing time. Information is spread at lightning speed via social networks like Facebook and Twitter in a way I could not have imagined even two years ago.

Even corporate marketing has joined in the social networking revolution, using blogs, Facebook fan pages, Twitter feeds, Google+ accounts, Foursquare check-ins and other platforms to connect with customers to tell their companies' stories.

We have come a long way from the static Web page of the 1990s!

How can churches and other houses of worship join the social networking revolution and reach younger generations who use their smart phones for everything?

Here's a social media primer:

Blogs: Blogs are simply online personal journals with reflections. It's a great way for ministers to share their thoughts. Pastor Tullian Tchividjian, pastor of Coral Ridge Presbyterian Church in Fort Lauderdale and the grandson of Billy and Ruth Graham, has an excellent example of a blog at thegospelcoalition.org.

Visit blogger.com, wordpress.org, tumblr.com or any of several other free blogging platforms to start your own.

Twitter: A Twitter account is also known as a microblog; updates (tweets) are limited to 140 characters. Congregations can use the account to keep followers updated on upcoming events. Trusted members can even "live-tweet" the sermon and share the service with those who cannot be there. Christ United Methodist Church in Memphis (@cumcmemphis) does an excellent job of utilizing this tool.

Go to twitter.com and start your own account.

Flickr and Tumblr: Along with Twitter, there are a variety of photo and video sharing services like Flickr and Tumblr. You can post and share photos of worship services, children's ministry, youth programs, outreach services and other ways your congregation is working in the community.

Go to flickr.com or tumblr.com and start sharing photos or videos.

Facebook: This is another great way to make a real connection with people. I have had the opportunity to watch my friend Rev. Steve Stone use this tool in a fabulous way over the past year. He has consistently used his personal Facebook page to reinforce the message of love and acceptance he preaches at Heartsong UMC. The interaction there is powerful and meaningful.

Go to facebook.com and start your own personal page or your congregation's own fan page.

Geolocation: Foursquare and other digital tools that allow you to track by geography are being used by many retailers to attract new customers. Why not a church? People are using these tools to find locations they want to visit, and congregations should be ready to welcome these users.

Check out foursquare.com.

These are just a few of the growing number of digital tools available. Others include YouTube, Ustream, Vimeo, podcasting, QR codes, Google+. Who knows what's next!

The point is that these are free tools that churches can take advantage of now to cast a wider net in this day of the viral Internet. ☪



This is an interior shot of the Lambuth/Oxley Sabbatical Cottage at Lakeshore United Methodist Assembly.

Submitted photo



Youngest member of Winans family brings message to Yada Sisterhood

By Priya Narapareddy

Editor's Note: This article was first published by The Jackson Sun on Nov. 18. It and the above photo are reprinted here with permission from The Jackson Sun.

Debbie Winans-Lowe brought her message of "Raising the Standard" to the Yada Sisterhood Nov. 17 at Northside UMC in Jackson, TN.

Winans-Lowe is the youngest member of the Winans family of gospel singers. She led the group's worship session, spoke and sang "It Must Be Love" by Babbie Mason.

"It's an oldie but goodie," Winans-Lowe said.

Winans-Lowe said she is originally from Detroit and has been singing for more than 20 years.

"My family is my biggest influence (musically)," she said. "Aside from that, Andrae Crouch. His music is a key influence to every artist – gospel and secular."

Winans-Lowe said this was her first performance with the Yada Sisterhood.

"Music is such a great uplifting tool," she said. "I love what music does to me, and I love what I feel as I am singing the words."

Lisa Clements, coordinator of the Yada Sisterhood, said the ministry program was founded in her living room in October 2004.

"Our motto is "Bring a dish, bring a friend," she said.

The Yada Sisterhood meets on the third Thursday of each month excluding June, July and December. Meetings are at 6:30 p.m. in Northside UMC's Hope Hall. There is free admission to each Yada night. Yada nights include a

potluck dinner, playing the Yada game, door prizes and a special guest speaker and worship leader. Clements said the Yada Sisterhood is open to women 18 and older of all denominations. She said the oldest Yada sister is 92. Clements said the group is meant to share wisdom and spiritual truths.

"It doesn't matter if you are 18 or 80," she said. "The message speaks to everyone. Two hundred women came during our first month. Women often show up unchurched. Our mission is to encourage women in their relationship with the Lord."

The Yada sisterhood will resume at 6:30 p.m. Jan. 19 featuring Stella Parton as the night's speaker and worship leader. For more information about the Yada sisterhood or to reserve a table, visit www.yadasisterhood.com. †

Fleece donated at 2011 Annual Conference in Paducah is made into blankets and delivered to Red Bird Mission in SE Kentucky

By Sue Engle

Lay Resource Leader, Paducah District
Intentional Discipleship Action Team Leader, Memphis Conference

When a group of Paducah District youth leaders gathered in 2010 to discuss a conference-wide youth event to be held in conjunction with the 2011 Memphis Annual Conference, it was decided that the youth event should also have a mission focus.

That focus became Red Bird Mission with the idea to make and deliver prayer blankets made of fleece.

Red Bird Mission is an institution of the General Board of Global Ministries of The United Methodist Church. It is located in the Red Bird Missionary Conference in the Appalachian Mountains of Southeastern Kentucky.

Delegates to the 2011 Memphis Annual Conference were invited to donate fleece that volunteers

would cut, tie and pray over before delivery to Red Bird Mission.

As annual conference registration began, a large box to collect fleece seemed a little ambitious.

But after the first hour, the fleece was spilling over the top. Soon delegates were piling fleece on the floor beside the box.

Broadway UMC in Paducah agreed to store the fleece until it could be sent out to Paducah-area churches for cutting and assembly. At the end of Annual Conference, 14 fleece-filled boxes were stored!

It took eight hours to sort and match the fleece at the Paducah District Office. As stacks filled the district filing room, an SOS went out asking for help in cutting and tying the fleece to make the prayer blankets.

During the Paducah District's clergy family picnic in the summer, four blankets were tied and prayed over.

Grace, Concord, Broadway, Benton First and Lone Oak UMCs all helped with cutting, tying and preparing the blankets to warm bodies and hearts at Red Bird Mission.

Stuffed animals were donated and tied into each prayer blanket.

In the end 40 blankets were packed into seven large boxes and delivered to the support staff at Red Bird.

The generosity of the Memphis Conference, matched with the gracious service of Paducah District churches, resulted in gifts of warmth, love and prayers for those we may never know.

The Paducah District youth leadership thanks everyone who shared their gifts that encouraged others to share their gifts and touched people we may never meet.

When we respond to the love and grace God pours out for our sake by pouring ourselves out for others, everyone is blessed!

God's grace is always multiplied as it is shared!. †



Delegates to 2011 Memphis Annual Conference contributed fleece to make prayer blankets for Red Bird Mission. Submitted photo

February and March youth events are happening at Lakeshore

The Memphis Conference has four retreats for youth scheduled for February and March. All events are at Lakeshore United Methodist Assembly in Eva, TN.

Brochures about these events are being mailed after Christmas and will be posted on the Memphis Conference and Lakeshore Web sites, according to Sammy Tillman, Memphis Conference Associate for Young Persons Ministries.

- **Feb. 2-5:** Confirmation Retreat, "The Basics"
- **Feb. 24-26:** 30-Hour Famine
- **March 9-11:** Jr/Sr High Winter Retreat, "Occupy Lakeshore"
- **March 23-25:** Confirmation Retreat, "Wesleyan Uniqueness"

For more info about these events, email Tillman at youth.mcumc@eplus.net.