

HOOSIER UNITED METHODISTS together

February 2008
Volume 38
Number 2

Open hearts. Open minds. Open doors.
The people of The United Methodist Church®

Flooded Indiana areas get United Methodist relief

By Daniel R. Gangler
dgangler@inareaumc.org

MONTICELLO, Ind. (UMNS) – United Methodists are joining other faith groups to provide relief for hundreds of northern Indiana flood survivors whose homes were heavily damaged by muddy waters.

The three northern Indiana communities of Remington, Monticello and Delphi were hard hit by early-morning flood waters on Jan. 8. Indiana Area United Methodist Bishop Mike Coyner visited with pastors of each community on Jan. 19 and toured flood-ravaged areas in Jasper, White and Carroll counties.

As of mid-January, three United Methodist churches in the area had distributed more than 500 flood buckets, received \$10,000 from the United Methodist Committee on Relief to meet immediate needs of flood survivors, and coordinated help from volunteers across the state.

Coyner toured Remington with the Rev. Mary van Wijk and trustees of Remington United Methodist Church. Street curbs throughout the community were lined with water-drenched mattresses, furniture and appliances.

Most homes had a dumpster filled with debris sitting on the driveway.

More than 200 homes were affected in Jasper County, according to van Wijk.

The hardest hit residents were

57 families who lived in a trailer park.

Government authorities permitted only 35 families back in their homes.

Two senior residents, Harry and Lois Alberts, were awakened by the fire department on the night of the flood. They, along with 200 Remington residents, spent the rest of the night in the First Christian Church.

The last of 30 residents were still living at the shelter 10 days later.

The public shelter has since been closed.

The Alberts sustained more than \$25,000 in damages due to a flooded basement. Coyner and van Wijk prayed with the elderly couple in a house across the street from their home, where vacationing neighbors welcomed the Alberts until their house is repaired.

"I am used to giving to people, so receiving all this help is a bit overwhelming," said Lois Alberts. "We are so fortunate friends and family help us."

Coyner visited the American Red Cross Center set up in the Remington Public Library to help residents complete forms for government assistance once the area was declared a disaster. Red Cross volunteers also handed out United Methodist-supplied flood buckets filled with cleaning supplies.

At Monticello, 30 miles east of Remington on U.S. 24, Coyner and van Wijk toured



Furniture and household items destroyed by an early morning flood on Jan. 8 sit outside a home near Lake Freeman in northern Indiana. United Methodist churches are working with other faith groups to provide relief to hundreds of Indiana residents whose homes have been damaged by floodwaters.

flooded areas along the Tippecanoe River between Shafer and Freeman lakes, where more than 300 homes were affected. Accompanying them were the Revs. Brian Beeks and Alex Hershey of Monticello United Methodist Church and the Rev. Todd Ladd of Delphi United Methodist Church.

They walked through the home of an elderly single woman who lost all her belongings when flood waters reached six-feet deep. The house was being mucked by a volunteer group from Indiana University in Bloomington. The volunteers received their assignment through the Monticello church, which is cooperating with 12 other area churches to assist survivors.

Ladd said more than 30 volunteers worked out of the Delphi church during the past week to provide assistance to area residents. More than 300 families were affected by the flooding in Carroll County.

Southern Baptist and Presbyterian Church USA relief groups also worked with United Methodists and other faith groups in flood relief in the three counties.



United Methodist Bishop Michael Coyner of Indiana visits with Harry and Lois Alberts whose Remington home was damaged by flooding on Jan. 8. United Methodist churches are working with other faith groups to provide relief to hundreds of residents in northern Indiana.



Bishop Michael Coyner of Indiana discusses flood relief efforts with American Red Cross volunteer Karen Bashman at the relief center at the Remington (Ind.) Public Library. The center was distributing United Methodist-provided flood buckets to hundreds of residents affected by early morning floods on Jan. 8 in northern Indiana. United Methodist churches are working with other faith groups to assist flood survivors.

Churches can help flood survivors in northern Indiana

Churches wishing to make monetary donations to assist survivors of the recent flooding in North Indiana may send funds to:
North Indiana Conference UMC
PO Box 869
Marion, IN 46952
Note for Flood Relief in North Indiana – Account 030401

What do you say?

Recently, I was traveling and the person seated next to me asked me what I do for a living. What should I say at such times? If I say that I am a bishop that usually leads to odd questions about the Roman Catholic Church until I explain that we, United Methodists, also have bishops. If I say I am a minister that often leads to an awkward silence. Either way there is no short answer to explain what I do for a living.

What do you say when asked about your faith, or your church or your Christian beliefs? Do you know what to say?

The media does not help us, because the various media seem often to portray Christians as either religious zealots or as irrelevant fools who are out of touch with the real world.

Really, when was the last time you saw a Christian portrayed on any TV show or movie in a positive light? No wonder people ask us awkward questions about our faith, our church and our beliefs.

What do you say?

I am convinced that most of us United Methodists say far too little. We seem embarrassed to talk about our faith. We seem unsure of what The United Methodist Church believes, and we seem afraid of getting into discussions about the Bible.

Fortunately, we can learn how to share our faith in ways that are helpful and not condemning. We can practice expressing our own

faith journey in a way that is genuine and not offensive. The laity of our conferences



Life together retreat invitation from Bishop Coyner

I am glad to invite all United Methodist clergy in the Indiana Area to come together for a special two-day "Our Life Together" retreat on April 14-15 at St. Luke's United Methodist Church, 100 W. 86th Street in Indianapolis. This will be our first experience of being together as North and South Conference to get to know one another as clergy. There will be lots of worship, fellowship time, learning, and fun.



Jones

Our theme is "Living the Wesleyan Way in a New Day" and we will have Dr. Greg Jones, Dean of Duke Divinity School, as our keynote speaker. We will all be focusing upon how to live as faithful disciples of Jesus Christ in the Wesleyan tradition.

Please plan on attending this retreat and join together with your sisters and brothers from across Indiana. More information will be coming soon. — Bishop Mike Coyner

UMCOR begins fourth year of tsunami assistance

The United Methodist Committee on Relief is working to help tsunami survivors find a "new normal" more than three years after one of the world's worst natural disasters killed an estimated 230,000 people and displaced millions in 11 countries.

In Indonesia and Sri Lanka — the countries most affected by the tsunami — UMCOR offices continue to work daily to help survivors recover whatever possible. UMCOR also provided relief and recovery assistance in Somalia, India and Thailand.

United Methodists and others have contributed approximately \$42 million to UMCOR's tsunami relief response since the Dec. 26, 2004, disaster.

UMCOR emphasizes a shared approach that encourages participants to take ownership of their recovery and to act as project partners in an effort to empower survivors to restore their lives.

UMCOR officials offer this update on their ongoing work in the two hardest hit countries:

Indonesia

In Aceh Province, UMCOR has helped 40,000 people directly through housing and infrastructure reconstruction, community development, income generation and livelihoods programs, and education. The agency also worked with the Methodist Church of Indonesia in Banda Aceh to help the church be a place of service to their community. (See story on page 8.)

In addition to the work in Aceh Province

on the island of Sumatra, UMCOR is expanding its relief to Nias Island, which was also heavily damaged by the 2004 earthquake and tsunami. In March 2005, the island was nearly leveled by a second earthquake.

In Nias, an area where many families are without access to safe water, UMCOR is conducting a large-scale water research project, which will result in a master water supply plan for South Nias and at least one water supply infrastructure project on the island.

Sri Lanka

UMCOR's recovery efforts in Sri Lanka have involved collaboration with the Methodist Church of Sri Lanka, including helping Sri Lankan Methodists expand their own capacity to respond to disaster. The work is interrupted from time to time by ongoing political and military conflict in the tsunami zone.

The challenge spurred UMCOR to seek ways to overcome the causes of the violence, a determination enhanced by a partnership with Muslim Aid, an aid agency based in the United Kingdom.

UMCOR's programs support survivors of both the tragedies of tsunami and civil strife, providing homes and food, improving agriculture production, rebuilding infrastructures, and generating jobs and business development. Rural reconstruction and development ranks high on the list of priorities. More than 100,000 people have been helped through these projects.

— UMCOR

are planning a special retreat during LEAP Day weekend, February 29 to March 1, that will include helpful input about sharing our own stories. (See page 3.)

Likewise, the clergy of our two Indiana conferences are invited to join in the "Our Life Together" retreat on April 14-15 where we will focus upon strengthening our understanding of "Living the Wesleyan Way in a New Day." (See announcement on this page.)

All of us need to remember the Palm Sunday story, when the disciples of Jesus were shouting for joy and the religious people of that day told Jesus to keep them qui-

et. Jesus replied (in Eugene Peterson's *The Message* paraphrase of Luke 19:40), with these words: "If they kept quiet, the stones would do it for them, shouting praise."

These are not days to keep quiet about our faith. These are days to share our story, to invite our friends and neighbors to church and to let the world know that we are followers of Christ. We have answers to offer, and we have a faith to share.

Bishop Michael J. Coyner

Indiana Area of

The United Methodist Church

"Making a Difference in Indiana and around the world"

HOOSIER UNITED METHODISTS

together

February 2008 Vol. 38 No.2

MISSION STATEMENT: To reflect the teachings of Christ through stories and pictures, thereby sharing key moments and concerns in the life of his Indiana church and its people. To share joy, to share personal faith, to share challenges, and to refresh the spirit.

Indiana Area Bishop/Publisher: Michael J. Coyner

Editor: Daniel R. Gangler

Editorial Assistant: Erma Metzler

Printed by: HNE Printers, Columbus with soy-based inks on recycled/recyclable paper

Editorial Offices:

Hoosier United Methodists Together
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Indianapolis, Indiana 46208
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Hoosier United Methodists Together (ISSN-1544-080x) is a monthly (except June, August and December) publication of Indiana Area United Methodist Communications, 1100 W. 42nd St., Indianapolis, IN 46208, for clergy, laity and seekers. Periodicals postage paid at

Indianapolis, IN. Printed in the U.S.A. copyright 2005 Indiana Area of The United Methodist Church.

Postmaster: Send address changes to *Hoosier United Methodists Together*, 1100 W. 42nd St., Suite 210, Indianapolis, Indiana 46208

Subscription Information: Call 317-924-1321. One-year subscription, \$12, single copy \$1.50

Change of Address: Send the mailing label with your new address to: Erma Metzler, *Together*, Indiana Area UMC, 1100 W. 42nd St., Suite 210, Indianapolis, Indiana 46208 or e-mail emetzler@inareaumc.org

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CORRECTIONS

The correct address of Jim Ottjes, North Indiana Conference General Conference Delegate is 418 N. Mishawaka St., Akron, IN 46910-9108.

Correction on Death Notice

WILBURN E. CROPPER, retired pastor (SIC), died Dec. 20, 2007. A memorial service was held Dec. 27 at Laws-Carr-Moore Funeral Home in Milan, Ind. Survivors include: his wife Irene Cropper, 7007 S Bearwallow Rd, Maysville, KY 41056; one daughter, Jeannine Applegate; two sons, James Cropper and Dennis Cropper; 6 grandchildren; 4 great-grandchildren and 2 great-great-grandchildren.

Hopefully, what happens in Fort Worth won't stay in Fort Worth

The United Methodist Church joins together in a global denominational assembly once every four years and has been doing so since 1784, when the church was founded in America. That assembly, called General Conference, convenes again this year at the Fort Worth (Texas) Convention Center from April 23 through May 2.

United Methodists will be represented by an equal number of lay and clergy delegates elected last year during annual conferences. The North Indiana Conference will be sending 10 delegates. The South Indiana Conference will be sending 12 delegates. (See January issue.) They will be part of a legislative body numbering 992 delegates from around the world. These delegates represent the 11.5-million member church worldwide.

For those who want all the particulars of General Conference, log on to the 2008 General Conference Web site at www.gc2008.umc.org.

This legislative body represents

who we are as United Methodists and sets the pace for what the church does during the next four years.

In this issue on pages 6 and 7, there is a story which outlines the highlights of the upcoming conference presented to heads of delegations and conference communicators. More than 200 delegates and communicators attended the pre-GC briefing in Fort Worth last month. I was there with the Rev. Frank Beard and Kayc Mykrantz, heads of the North Indiana Conference delegation, and the Rev. Ann Glass and Ike Williams, heads of the South Indiana Conference delegation.

The questions of many communicators including myself were:

- ◆ Will this General Conference be business as usual?
- ◆ Will this General Conference make a difference in the lives of United Methodists around the world?

Conference officials said, "no," to the first question. They have planned an opening day of wor-

ship and celebration. New this General Conference is an address by the youth of our denomination. In fact there will be six youth and plenty of media to inform and challenge. Planners have placed all major addresses to be given on day one of the 10-day conference. All of the plenary sessions will be streamed live in both audio and video at www.gc2008.umc.org.

Denominational leaders will not be bringing a customary four-year emphasis to rally United Methodists around a particular set of causes. Four areas of focus being proposed to lead us during an unspecified time are:

1. Engaging in ministry to the poor,
2. Stamping out killer diseases by improving global health,
3. Creating new places for new people by starting new congregations and renewing existing ones, and
4. Developing principled Christian leaders for the church and the world.

Leaders expressed reality by

saying, "We will only succeed if we operate in an uncommon spirit of collaboration...and transcend our disagreements. We as a people must open ourselves to a new way of thinking about how we embody our faith."

That leads to my second question: Will this General Conference make a difference in the lives of United Methodists here in Indiana and around the world?

I believe what happens in Fort Worth this spring will only make a difference if United Methodist delegates take the decisions they make and the programs for which they hope and live them out in their conferences and encourage conference and congregational leaders to do the same.

We can only grow and remain vital as The United Methodist Church and faithful to our goal of making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world if pastors, lay leaders and the rest of

us truly open our hearts, minds and doors by inviting, welcoming and accepting all people into the life, mission and ministry of the church. We will grow if each congregation welcomes more new members than



the number of members who die, become inactive or transfer their membership elsewhere.

We have so much to offer by telling our faith stories and by doing good works for the common good of all

by volunteering in mission, advocating for social justice, teaching Sunday school, sponsoring youth groups and giving our financial resources in abundance, to mention a few. We must be passionate daily about our faith in response to God's love through Jesus Christ.

Hopefully, what happens in Fort Worth won't stay in Fort Worth. Otherwise in four years, we will be singing the same chorus we sing this year.

Welcome, Daniel R. Gangler

A two-day event in sharing faith through personal stories

Fox, Reisman to lead LEAP convocation Feb 29-March 1

To assist both United Methodist laity and clergy in sharing their faith stories with others, the lay leaders of both the Indiana North and Indiana South conferences are sponsoring an Indiana Area convocation to be held in Indianapolis.

Kayc Mykrantz, lay leader of the North Indiana Conference, and Ike Williams, lay leader of the South Indiana Conference of The United Methodist Church, invite both laity and clergy to a unique **LEAP Year Event – Let's Establish A Priority to Tell Our Story** – the weekend of **Feb. 29–March 1** at United Methodist-related University of Indianapolis.

They will be joined by Dr. Eddie Fox of The World Methodist Council and the Rev. Kimberly Reisman, nationally known North Indiana Conference Evangelist, in

a two-day event leading participants to become confident in sharing their faith through personal stories.

LEAP will run from opening workshop at 7 p.m. Friday, Feb. 29, through closing worship at 3:30 p.m. on Saturday, March 1, at Ransburg Auditorium in Esch Hall. Registration will open at 5 p.m.

Indiana Bishop Mike Coyner will lead opening worship followed by a presentation by Fox.

The Christ United Methodist Church Choir of Franklin will provide special music for the evening.

Cost is \$50 per person including materials and Saturday lunch. A brochure including a registration form is available online at www.inareaumc.org. Printed brochures were mailed to lay leadership across the state in January. A

registration form also is provided with this story.

LEAP event leaders Kimberly Reisman

The Rev. Kimberly D. Reisman serves as the North Indiana Conference Evangelist of The United Methodist Church and executive director of Next Step Evangelism Ministries, where her focus is empowering others to take the next step of faith on their spiritual journey. Reisman



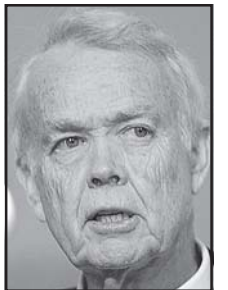
Reisman

provides faith shaping ministries through her writing and in the context of retreats, seminars, workshops and revivals both nationally and internationally. She is a native of Gulfport, Miss., and lived in California, Tennessee, Georgia and Connecticut before moving to Indiana in 1993 with her husband, John and three children.

Eddie Fox

The Rev. Dr. H. Eddie Fox is the World Director of Evangelism of The World Methodist Council. He is responsible for leading 16 Regional Secretaries of World Evangelism in developing indigenous evangelism on every continent. The World Methodist Council, an association of churches belonging to the Methodist-Wesley-

an tradition and representing more than 76 million constituents in 138 countries, through its Division of World Evangelism is challenging member congregations to Offer Christ Today. As the World Director, Fox preaches World Evangelism missions, develops holistic models of evangelism ministry of word, deed and sign, teaches, and encourages lay and clergy to be about the ministry of sharing the good news of Jesus Christ.



Fox

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Heart month

As many of you know, I was diagnosed with a heart condition. Feb. 1 was GO RED DAY sponsored by the Heart Association. Heart Disease is now the # 1 killer of women. A number of you have had heart-related diseases, have had by-pass surgery, and one of you has actually had a heart transplant. To those of you touched by this, whether having gone through heart disease or lost someone to it or suffers through it with someone, think of this month. How many Valentines will be sent out for Valentine's Day? Ponder

about the "heart-relations" you have with the special people in your life. Let us pray for our best health, the strength from one another that we can give and the love of God that transcends all "heart-related" maladies, while healing us in love and joy for love and joy are heart-related too.

You are part of a red-letter day and month. I'm wearing red to honor my sisters that share similar issues, as well as for the men who do too.

May God be with us this February.

Char Harris Allen
Walkerton, Ind.

LEAP Registration Form

To register for the LEAP to Tell Our Story event, please complete this registration form and send it with a check for \$50 per person to the Indiana Area of The United Methodist Church, attn. Lisa Timmerman, 1100 W. 42nd Street, Suite 210, Indianapolis, IN 46208. Thank you.

Name/s _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ ZIP _____

Phone number (AC _____) _____

Cell phone (AC _____) _____

e-mail address _____

Local church _____ of _____ District

Imagine Indiana continues with focus on service to local churches

The Imagine Indiana Design Team continued its work in January. If the goal of The United Methodist Church is to “Make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world,” the center of that activity is at the local church or congregational level. The Imagine Indiana Design Team continues to focus on that goal and how to assist congregations in achieving it as the 12-member team writes its report to come before both annual conferences later this spring.

According to the Design Team’s draft report introduction, “Creating a new Indiana Conference is all about these five practices of a fruitful annual conference (adapted from the book, *Five Practices of Fruitful Congregations* by Robert Schnase)”:

1. Focus on Mission

The team plans to recommend each local church become a part of a Ministry Cluster of four to nine congregations to cooperate, collaborate and hold one another accountable.

2. Resource Local Churches

The team plans to recommend a focus on providing resources to start new faith communities, to strengthen existing churches and to provide effective leadership for all local churches, and that conference staff and resources will be deployed to respond to local churches and clusters.

3. Streamline Conference Structure

The team plans to recommend a streamlined structure of one Conference Center for the bishop and other leaders and with

five Resource Centers across the state to support the work of 10 districts as they resource our more than 1,200 local churches. This is a change from a former plan of 9 districts with three Resource Centers. The new 10-district plan was recommended by both cabinets meeting in a retreat last month and adapted by the Imagine Indiana Design Team.

4. Care for Clergy

The team plans to recommend a combined benefits structure which protects current eligibility, raises clergy benefits to the



higher levels of either preceding conference, and provides support systems to enhance effective clergy leadership. In addition, the team will further recommend that all clergy participate in Covenant Groups and plans for a “Well-Lived

Pastoral Life” program that are being developed with a grant from the Lilly Endowment to help our clergy.

5. Make a Difference

The team believes that the new Indiana Conference can provide a vehicle for all of us to make a difference here in Indi-

ana and literally around the world.

Using these principles of organization, the Imagine Indiana Design Team hopes to complete its draft report in February for review before releasing it in March.

The Imagine Indiana Design Team plans to introduce its plan throughout the state during a Palm Sunday afternoon, March 16, hour-long presentation video streamed over the Indiana Area Web site. The team also plans to provide video locations in each of the Indiana Area’s 18 districts for those who do not have good Internet access. Churches interested in hosting the video-streamed presentation can contact the Rev. David V.W. Owen at the Indiana Area office at 317-924-1321 or by e-mail at imagineindiana@inareaumc.org.

Indianapolis pastor preaches barefoot with a passion

INDIANAPOLIS – The Rev. Andrea Leininger, pastor of Old Bethel UMC in Indianapolis, preached barefoot on Sunday, Jan. 27 to promote a challenge and cause to provide shoes for children in African countries. She also encouraged her congregations and other area congregations as well to come to worship without shoes and socks.

She was joined on Jan. 24 by IUPUI Men’s Head Basketball Coach Ron Hunter who coached in his bare feet at home against Oakland.

All the bare feet were done to raise awareness for children around the world who don’t have shoes. Samaritan’s Feet (www.samaritansfeet.org), found-

ed by Emmanuel Ohonme, is a humanitarian relief organization created to provide hope and shoes to impoverished children throughout the world. Ohonme, a native of Nigeria, grew up very poor. He received his first pair of shoes at the age of 9 from a missionary, who also taught him how to play basketball. These shoes helped him get better at sports, specifically basketball. Eventually he earned a scholarship to play basketball at the University of North Dakota.

Pastor Leininger and Coach Hunter’s goals are to raise awareness for Samaritan’s Feet and 40,000 pairs of shoes in honor of the 40th anniversary of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.’s death.

In addition to the IUPUI and Bethel UMC events, Leininger and Hunter held a pizza, concert and shoe donation at the New Augusta Middle School in Indianapolis with a pair of new athletic shoes as the price of admission.

Ohonme spoke at a tip-off luncheon on Thursday at noon at the University Place Conference Center on the campus of IUPUI. He also attended the IUPUI vs. Oakland game. Those attending the game were encouraged to bring a new pair of shoes.

Photo by Linda Hoopes
Samaritan’s Feet founder
Emmanuel Ohonme speaks at IUPUI about the shoe-less kids of the world.



Anderson pastor named community’s ‘Person of the Year’

ANDERSON, Ind. – At the close of 2007, *The Herald Bulletin* named the Rev. Reginald Lee as Anderson’s Person of the Year.

Lee is senior pastor of the New Hope United Methodist Church in Anderson and directs the West Side Hope Community Development Corporation.

The Person of the Year honor is given to someone the editorial board feels has made a positive effect on the Madison County area in the past year, according to the newspaper’s story.

The Herald Bulletin reported that “Lee was in the forefront on several progressive programs including starting an ex-offender reentry program, helping at-risk youths gain trade skills and initiating a pre-school and day care for low-income families.”

The newspaper gave The

Woodall House, at 14th Street and Madison Avenue, as an example of Lee’s collaborative work in the community. The house is home a faith-based skills training program for ex-offenders. Lee was given credit for leading the way for forward-thinking projects.

The community development corporation also made progressive steps with its new Bishop Woodie W. White Family Life Center located at 13th and Hendricks streets. Beginning this coming August the center also will serve as a day care, preschool for low-income families and offer some adult learning classes such as technology and a culinary school.

Planning for the future, the development corporation hopes to purchase land across the street from the center to build low-cost senior housing.

Pull tab bill has a chance to pass Indiana General Assembly

INDIANAPOLIS – Under legislation passed by the Indiana House last week, more than 7,000 bars, taverns and restaurants across the state would be allowed to offer the pull tabs and other forms of low-stakes gambling (*Indianapolis Star*). The bill now moves to the Senate, where it already has received support from some key lawmakers. This marks the second consecutive year that state legislators have considered proposals that would expand gambling in Indiana.

Last year, they voted to allow slot machines at the state’s two horse tracks. Some legislators argue that expansion was offset by another bill under which 16 law enforcement officers were hired to crack down on illegal electronic gambling machines commonly found in bars across the state. As a result, many of those machines, known as Cherry Masters, have been removed from Hoosier taverns. But to help appease those upset by the crack-down on Cherry Masters, lawmakers decided in 2007 that they would allow American Legions

and other nonprofit organizations to offer pull tabs and other paper games. And now, Indiana’s bars want the same treatment.

“We’re behind this because we think it’s a fairness issue,” said Brad Klopfenstein, executive director of the Indiana Licensed Beverage Association. “They created a disparity between the not-for-profits and the for-profits. We want to even that out.”

Rep. Brian Bosma, for one, doesn’t. The Indianapolis Republican, who serves as the House minority leader, said Indiana has become too addicted to gambling and the revenue it generates. “I feel gaming in this state is the crack cocaine of public policy. We simply can’t get enough gaming,” said Bosma, who voted against HB 1153. “I’m saying, ‘No.’ I want off the cocaine. I’m done with it.” — *Howey Politics Indiana*

Editor’s note: Contact your representative and senator TODAY by e-mail. To find their e-mail addresses, log on to www.in.gov/cgi-bin/legislative/contact/contact.pl. Don’t know your legislators, www.in.gov/apps/sos/legislator/search/.



Two Clinton churches join forces to provide community service to youth in the Terre Haute area

By Crystal Garcia
Tribune-Star, Clinton

CLINTON, Ind. – Two Clinton churches are breaking down denominational walls with a common denominator – youth.

On Friday nights from 6 to 10 p.m., kids can go to a large metal barn next to the First United Methodist Church in Clinton to skateboard, scooter and ride their bikes on a half-pipe, a quarter-pipe and various fun boxes and ramps.

This outreach began when Glenn Parrish and his wife began

talking to the children and teens they saw out late at night.

Parrish said they were trying to find out what their interests were and what they'd like to see in Clinton. Most importantly, he said they wanted to know what the youth were doing out so late.

"They just didn't have anywhere to go," Parrish said.

Thus, Christian Street Invasion, or SCI Clinton, was formed. Parrish and his wife belong to a Pentecostal congregation, New Life Family Foursquare Gospel Church.

A common thing he and his

wife heard the kids want was a skate park, so he had a half-pipe built and put in this driveway for them to ride on instead of damaging private property around town with their bikes, boards and scooters.

Between 15 to 20 children regularly showed up at the Parrishes, but when First United Methodist Church got involved things really started to take off for this special ministry to kids.

With a large, empty barn next to the church, the Parrishes approached First UMC's officials to ask if they could put the half-pipe

in the barn to get the children out of the elements.

That was three months ago. Since then there has been an average of 95 kids utilizing the facility, Parrish said, with a high of 127 kids one time.

By joining together, Parrish said the two churches are "breaking down denominational walls."

CSI Clinton even has its own MySpace page, although Parrish said he won't add the kids as "friends" until he's checked their pages and made sure there's nothing offensive on them.

Adults supervise inside and

outside of the facility. Theresa Rennick, First UMC lay leader, said more volunteers are needed to supervise.

Rennick said the church wants to add heating and air conditioning and expand the facility so it can be used for other community events such as basketball, meetings and wedding receptions.

"It's not about anything but to glorify God," said Parrish.

This story is abridged from a longer story published in the Jan. 12, 2008, issue of the Tribune-Star of Terre Haute, Ind. Used by permission. Tribune-Star © 2008.

Proposal to divest church funds from Caterpillar, based in Illinois with a plant in Lafayette, Ind.

United Methodists explore divestment proposals

FORT WORTH, Texas (UMNS) – Would divestment from companies connected to the Israeli occupation of Palestinian land help bring about change in the Middle East?

United Methodist speakers explored that question during a Jan. 25 panel discussion on "Divestment, the Middle East and Sudan" during the Pre-General Conference News Briefing sponsored by United Methodist Communications.

The Rev. Steve Sprecher, a director of the United Methodist Board of Church and Society, called divestment "a time-honored policy" within The United Methodist Church.

Sprecher was part of the committee of the General Board of Church and Society that led the social action agency to send a petition to General Conference recommending divestment from Caterpillar Inc., the heavy-equipment manufacturer based in Peoria, Ill., with a plant in Lafayette, Ind. and other plants in the United States and other countries. The petition charges that the company profits from illegal Israeli occupation of Palestinian land and contributes to the occupation by supplying Israeli Defense Forces with heavy equipment.

The petition charges that the company profits from illegal Israeli occupation of Palestinian land.

About \$5 million of the denomination's estimated \$17 billion pension portfolio is invested in Caterpillar stock.

He stressed that the action against Caterpillar is proposed because the company's bulldozers and other equipment are being used to clear Palestinian land, destroy Palestinian homes and olive groves and help erect the "wall of separation," some of which is on Palestinian land.

The Rev. W. Douglas Mills, an executive with the United Methodist General Commission on Christian Unity and Interreligious Concerns, noted that divestment is not such a simple solution and could have a negative impact for a denomination that places a high value on Christian-Jewish relations, the horror of the Holocaust and the quest for peace in the Middle East.

Mills said he likes processes that foster dialogue and is "a big fan of shareholder advocacy."

Dave Zellner, chief investment officer with the United Methodist General Board of Pension and Health Benefits, noted that his agency is recognized as "the leader among denominations" on investor advocacy. He called for advocacy, rather than divestment, with Caterpillar. "With our partners, we are very effective in making change."

A position paper issued by the pension board on investments in companies doing business with Israel states that the agency "views divestment as a policy of last resort."

The Rev. Timothy Bias, a General Conference delegate and pastor of First United Methodist Church in Peoria, where 70 percent of the membership has employment ties to Caterpillar, questioned Sprecher on whether directors or staff from Church and Society had spoken directly with Caterpillar executives before passing their proposed resolution.



UMNS file photo by Mike DuBose

Palestinian farmer Abu Houli stands in front of what remains of his home, orchard and well house in 2000 after the Israeli Army bulldozed parts of his family farm near Deir El Balah in the Israeli-occupied Gaza strip. The United Methodist Board of Church and Society is sending a resolution to General Conference calling for divestment from companies producing products or services used for "illegal destruction" in Palestine.

Sprecher acknowledged they had not, although Jim Winkler, Church and Society's chief executive, recently met with Jim Owens, chairman of Caterpillar, who also is a United Methodist.

Bias noted that delegates to General Conference are being urged to engage in "holy conferring" on divisive issues and

questioned why the board did not engage in the same practice of dialogue and listening with representatives from Caterpillar. "It just seems to me that we would serve ourselves much better ... if we would have conversations before we pass resolutions," he said.

For the complete story, log on to www.umns.umd.org.

UIndy presents 2008 Showers Lectures-Symposium March 27

The University of Indianapolis will present the 2008 Showers Symposium "Christian Missions in the United Methodist Church: Past, Present and Future" on Thursday March 27, from 8:45 a.m. to 4:15 p.m.

Topics and participants include: "Mission and the Quest for the Homeland: The Legacy of the Evangelical United Brethren" with J. Steven O'Malley of Asbury Theological Seminary; "Evangelism Without Apology" with Stephen Graham of the University of Indianapolis, who will speak about E. Stanley Jones; "Affection

Without Attachment: Toward a Theology of Christian Mission" with Thomas Thangaraj (Church of South India) of Candler School of Theology; and "No Bootstrap Theology: Grace and Holiness in Mission" with Beth Felker Jones of Huntington University.

The Showers Symposium is free, however those who wish to register to participate in one of the lunchtime discussions need to contact Cindy Tyree at 317-788-2106 or e-mail her at ctyree@uindy.edu. An event brochure is available by logging on to <http://eip.uindy.edu/>.

TechTalk Workshop looks at technology and congregations

As society becomes more and more technologically savvy, congregations are finding ways to use technology to complement their work. Computers, internet, email, social networking, database systems, and multi-media are all part of the picture. Center for Congregations staffers Nancy Armstrong and Aaron Spiegel will help your congregation explore technology so you can decide what best fits your community. The goal is godly service, not technological glitz.

Co-authors of the book *40*

Days and 40 Bytes: Making Technology Work for Your Congregation, Armstrong and Spiegel are uniquely qualified to help you think about the role of technology in your congregation. They worked with more than 100 congregations in the Center's innovative Computers and Ministry Grants Initiative to help congregations address the challenges they face when using computer technology in their ministries.

TechTalk is 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Wednesday, March 5, at St. Paul's

United Church of Christ, 2227 W. Michigan St. in Evansville, and Thursday, March 6, at Scottsburg United Methodist Church, 616 S. Honey Run Parkway.

The cost is \$30 a person (\$25 for congregational teams of three or more). The fee includes lunch, parking and a copy of the book, *40 Days and 40 Bytes*. Registrations received by Feb. 27 guarantee lunch and a copy of the book.

For more information on registration, log on to www.centerforcongregations.org or call 317-237-7799.

A look at the upcoming General Conference in Fort Worth

News briefing offers glimpse into assembly changes

By Marta W. Aldrich

FORT WORTH, Texas (UMNS) – When United Methodists convene this spring for their worldwide legislative assembly, they can expect wider international representation, a denominational budget built around four new areas of focus, and carefully choreographed opening sessions aimed at fostering unity through common ministry instead of gridlock over divisive social issues.

The 2008 General Conference will meet for 10 days – two fewer than the 2004 gathering in Pittsburgh and with no break – but still must sort through more than 1,500 petitions, which is about the same amount of business conducted at the previous assembly. In addition to hearing opening addresses from a United Methodist bishop and lay person, delegates will hear the first-ever Young People's Address – delivered jointly by six teens and young adults who promise a presentation “different from anything that's ever been presented to General Conference before.”

The new approaches are among a bevy of changes outlined during the United Methodist Pre-General Conference News Briefing, an informational session attended by more than 200 delegation representatives and church journalists. The Jan. 24-26 briefing, sponsored by United Methodist Communications, was held near the Fort Worth Convention Center, where General Conference will open on April 23.

“This is going to be an historic event,” said Mary Brooke Casad of this year's opening sessions, which will feature intricate staging and multimedia effects in delivering a message of unity and hope in mission and ministry.

“We've never done it this way before. It's not going to be just business as usual,” said Casad, executive secretary of the Connectional Table – itself a new entity formed by the last General Conference to coordinate mission, ministries and resources for The United Methodist Church.

A new agenda

Weary of decades of the church's top legislative meeting being consumed by debate over homosexuality and other hot-button issues, the Council of Bishops and other denominational leaders have shaped a new church-wide agenda with the overarching purpose of “making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.” The agenda includes four areas of focus:

- ◆ Engaging in ministry with the poor; and
- ◆ Fighting the killer diseases of poverty such as malaria, tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS.
- ◆ Creating “new places for new generations” by starting new churches and renewing existing ones;
- ◆ Developing principled Christian leaders for the church and the world;

Church leaders believe this approach will help United Methodists unite to address the world's core needs, reclaim the church's Wesleyan heritage, start a movement and, as a bonus, reverse decades of declining membership trends.

“This is about alignment – with the Council of Bishops, the Connectional Table, what's happening in annual confer-

“We've never done it this way before. It's not going to be just business as usual.”

– Mary Brooke Casad, executive secretary of the UMC Connectional Table

ences – and saying we're going to coalesce (and) combine to make a difference,” said the Rev. Dr. Jerome Del Pino, chief executive of the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry, which will oversee the leadership initiative.

It also is hoped that, when the 992 delegates leave General Conference to return to their home districts and churches, they will know the four areas of focus by heart and, with a new clarity about “what my church is doing,” spread that vision and sense of identity to the people in the pews.

Delegates at the briefing said it's time for Jesus Christ to “do a new thing with our church.”

“I'm not hearing as much about the more controversial issues so far,” said the Rev. Henry Frueh, a second-time delegate from the Troy Annual Conference in New York. “There's more talk about the church positioning itself to be more effective in the world. I think there's a sense that if we don't change the way we do church, we're going to lose the opportunity,” he told United Methodist New Service.

The Rev. Tom Berlin, a delegate from Herndon, Va., said many people in his generation (ages 30 to 45) are disenchanted by past General Conferences that have focused on discordant social issues that “are so predictable in their outcome” – and not enough on substantive issues of need in the world. The result, he said, is that ordained and lay leaders are tempted to cocoon themselves in their local churches “because it's just not worth the emotional energy.”

Berlin told one panel group, “Friends, we're going to have to lay down our arms on these other issues if we want to deal with the (new) ones.”

Building a better budget

The briefing featured a session on the \$642 million, four-year spending plan for the denomination beginning in 2009 – and the new processes and criteria for developing the budget proposal. For the first time, the plan was built on an “outcome-based” model that much of the business world already follows. Church agencies were asked to shape their funding requests around the four new areas of focus. Also for the first time, the General Council on Finance and Administration shared the budget-building process with the Connectional Table.

“We're trying to do something different,” said Bishop Lindsey Davis of the North Georgia Area, a member of the council's board. “We're trying to do something in a more collaborative fashion together.”

Davis said the previous budget process was “more competitive than it should have been” among various groups within the church contending for their “fair share” of the pie.

“What we're trying to do ... is to begin to align this budget not only with the areas of focus ... but with a church that is beginning to think very specifically about outcomes, about being productive and effective and actually changing the world,” he said.

The \$642 million plan represents a 1.2 percent annual increase for a total increase of 4.8 percent over four years. “All of us know inflation is more than that,” Davis said. “In terms of real dollars, it represents less money for all our boards and agencies and less money for the general church at large.”



Together photo
The Rev. Dr. Ann Glass and Ike Williams, head clergy and lay delegates to General Conference representing the South Indiana Conference delegation at the General Conference news briefing in Fort Worth.



Together photo
Kayc Mykrantz, and the Rev. Dr. Frank Beard, head lay and clergy delegates to General Conference representing the North Indiana Conference delegation at the General Conference news briefing in Fort Worth.

He also emphasized that the budget represents only 1 percent of the net spending of the entire denomination and cautioned against skimping on mission and ministry done at the denominational level. “Ninety-nine percent of all the resources of our denomination are spent at the local, annual conference and jurisdictional level,” he said.

New faces, new rules

With United Methodist membership shrinking in the United States and growing in Africa and the Philippines, the makeup of General Conference delegates will reflect those trends. Central conferences (those in annual conferences outside the U.S.) will have 278 delegates, 100 more than in 2004. Annual conferences in U.S. jurisdictions have elected 714 delegates.

Church leaders who oversee delegate training asked the U.S. delegates to show patience and understanding in working with overseas delegates, who need time for translation services and are unfamiliar with parliamentary procedure used in the United States.

“If we're going to be a global church, we need to hear each other's voices, and we need to be attentive to each other's voices, and we need to be understanding that the American way is only one way,” said the Rev. Gere Reist, secretary of the General Conference.

Reist urged delegates to carefully read proposed rule changes that will be voted on at the beginning of the assembly. “There are significant changes this time around,” he said. He cited proposals to elect all subcommittee chairs by ballot, merging the Commission on General Conference with the Committee on Rules, and using parliamentarians in all legislative committees.

Continued on page 7



Together photo

More than 200 delegation leaders and church journalists attend the United Methodist Pre-General Conference News Briefing, an informational session on issues and processes of the denomination's upcoming assembly in Fort Worth, Texas.



The Fort Worth Convention Center is the site of the 2008 General Conference of the United Methodist Church, which will meet April 23-May 2. The Conference is the top legislative body of The United Methodist Church.

Continued from page 6

The proposed rules also prohibit talking on cell phones and using laptop computers on the convention floor.

The Rev. Gary Graves, petitions secretary, reported that more than a quarter of the 1,564 petitions filed are related

to the change saved money and trees and shaved about two months of production time off the petitions process.

Educational setting

The news briefing was designed to be informational,

to the Board of Church and Society, the church's social action agency. Delegates will get their first look at all the petitions after receiving *The Advance Daily Christian Advocate*, which publishes petitions and other information related to General Conference and was scheduled to be shipped Feb. 7-8.

Graves thanked petitioners for "making the transition to digital submissions."

"I know that it was like pulling teeth for some people, and others can't figure why it took us 20 years to catch up with everybody else," he said. He noted that

not legislative in nature, said the Rev. Larry Hollon, chief executive of United Methodist Communications, who welcomed participants to Fort Worth. "We are taking a conversational approach," he said.

Briefings ranged from hot-button issues such as Middle East-related divestment to strategies encouraging healthier lifestyles by pastors and church employees. Other panel discussions included ethnic initiatives in the church, proposals to change United Methodist structure to reflect the worldwide nature of the church, a new Social Creed up for consideration, the State of the Church report and how to navigate General Conference. Breakout sessions for delegates addressed "holy conferencing" – practices designed to set a more civil tone of discussion and listening in the legislative process.

Participants also toured the convention center and received an update on the challenges of housing all delegates in downtown Fort Worth's tight hotel market. Many of the 1,500 delegates and staff members will be housed in outlying hotels and must commute daily to the convention center. Two to three thousand visitors also will attend parts of the meetings and worship services.

Marta Aldrich serves as news editor of United Methodist News Service.

Four candidates run for bishop in North Central Jurisdiction

Northern Illinois delegation endorses Pickens for bishop

The Northern Illinois United Methodist Conference General and the North Central Jurisdictional Conference delegations recently endorsed **the Rev. Dr. Larry Pickens** for bishop.

Pickens has been a member of the Northern Illinois Conference for 23 years, having been ordained as an Elder in 1987. He has served as associate pastor at St. Mark UMC, and senior pastor at Gorham, Maple Park and First Elgin UMCs. Pickens has served on the United Methodist Judicial Council and as the General Secretary of the General Commission of Christian Unity and Interreligious Concerns, from July 2004 to Dec. 2007.

Pickens has been and continues to be a delegate to the United Methodist Church General Conferences in 2000 and 2008, and a delegate to three World

Methodist Conferences. He has been a board member and General Assembly delegate for the National Council of Churches and a member of the Central Committee as well as a delegate for the World Council of Churches in Australia and Brazil.



Pickens

Pickens joins three other previously announced candidates for bishop from other conference delegations to the 2008 North Central Jurisdictional Conference coming July 15-19 in Grand Rapids, Mich. They include:

The Rev. Randolph Cross of the Dakotas Conference. As a pastor with 28 years of experience in a wide range of ministry settings, he has held appointments across both North and South Dakotas and currently serves as both the Lower James River District Superintendent and Dakotas Conference Director of

Pickens joins three other previously announced candidates for bishop.

Leadership Development and Connectional Ministries.

The Rev. Dr. David Alan Bard of the Minnesota Conference. Bard is senior pastor of First United Methodist Church of Duluth, Minn., and has served as superintendent of the conference's Northwest District (1998-2005). He was ordained an Elder in 1986.

The Rev. Dr. Timothy Bias of the Illinois Great Rivers Conference. Bias is directing (senior) pastor of First UMC in Peoria, Ill. He was ordained an Elder in 1981 by the West Virginia Conference and has served churches in West Virginia and Illinois and as Director of Evangelism Ministries, General Board of Discipleship, Nashville, Tenn.

A candidate must gain the votes of at least 60 percent of the delegates to be elected as bishop. Bal-

loting is held until there is an election. Once all elections are completed, the jurisdictional committee on episcopacy begins the work of assigning bishops to episcopal areas based upon the missional needs of the conferences and the gifts and graces of each bishop.

This is the same conference that elected Bishop Mike Coyner in 1996. He was assigned first to the Dakotas Area in 1996 and to the Indiana Area in 2004. He is expected to return to the Indiana Area this year.

The North Indiana and the South Indiana conferences delegates to the North Central Jurisdictional Conference plan to meet

separately this month to discuss candidates for bishop. They have met jointly in December and January at the Plainfield UMC.

A vacancy occurred in mid-2007 when Illinois Area Bishop



Christopher

Sharon Brown Christopher announced her retirement effective Sept. 1. She has served three four-year terms as bishop. A newly elected bishop will succeed her following the NCJ Conference. Bishops begin their new four-year assignments on

Sept. 1.

The North Central Jurisdiction of The United Methodist Church is composed of 12 conferences, including the two Indiana conferences, in a nine-state region. It comprises the north central states from Ohio in the east to the Dakotas in the west.

For more information about the 2008 North Central Jurisdictional Conference, log on to www.ncj2008.org.

Church opposes cloning humans to produce babies

By United Methodist News Service

WASHINGTON (UMNS) – An announcement that scientists have created human embryos through cloning stands "in stark opposition" to The United Methodist Church's position, said an executive with the denomination's social action agency.

"The United Methodist Church position on this issue is very clear," said Linda Bales, director of the Louise and Hugh Moore Population Project at the United Methodist General Board of Church and Society. "Our opposition to such developments is based on a belief that God is the creator, and our identity as hu-

mans is much more than our genetic inheritance, our social environment, or the sum of the two."

Scientists at Stemagen, a biotechnology company in San Diego, announced on Jan. 18 they used skin cells of two men to create cloned embryos. It is not clear whether the embryos would have been viable if implanted into a womb, said Dr. Samuel H. Wood, chief executive of Stemagen. Wood, a fertility doctor who started the company in 2005, was one of the donors used as DNA sources.

The stated intent for the cloning is to create cells that could be used by patients suffering from various diseases, Bales said. According to news reports,

the company's chief executive said that the cloning of human babies is "unethical and it's illegal, and we hope no one else does it either."

"We don't know the full ramifications of such research and the long-term consequences," Bales said. "As with any technological discovery, we are compelled to ask the hard questions applying our Christian teachings and principles. This is not easy; but yet, it's our mandate."

The 2004 United Methodist Book of Resolutions, in Paragraph 103 on human cloning, includes a definitive statement on cloning for purposes of research: "We call for a ban on therapeutic, medical, research, and commercial proce-

dures which generate waste embryos" and "on all nations to ban human cloning and to identify appropriate government agencies to enforce the ban.

"Appropriate social and governmental bodies must monitor and guide research and developments in the field. Concern for profit and commercial advantage should be balanced by consideration for individual rights, the interest of wide constituencies, and the common good of future generations."

The United Methodist Church "welcomes" the use of genetic technology for meeting fundamental human needs for health, a safe environment and an adequate food supply, according to the So-

cial Principles. Paragraph 162(M) on genetic technology declares, though: "We oppose the cloning of humans."

The General Board of Church and Society convened a 10-member task force in 2005 to examine issues related to genetic technology, namely genetic testing and artificial reproductive technologies.

The task force has developed a print and Web resource on these issues, to be released in March, titled "Spiritual Discernment: A Guide for Genetic and Reproductive Technology."

Information for this report was provided by the United Methodist General Board of Church and Society.

Banda Aceh Methodist Church celebrates dedication of restored buildings financed by Indiana Area

By Bill Imler

BANDA ACEH, Sumatra, Indonesia – The ribbon was cut and the doors were flung open Sunday morning, Jan. 20, for the grand celebration and dedication of the restored and improved buildings of the Methodist Church of Banda Aceh. The event was just over three years after the buildings were severely damaged by the tsunami of Dec. 26, 2004.

Under the theme, “From Mourning to Dancing” (Psalms 30:12), several hundred people gathered to give thanks and praise to God for not only the rebuilt sanctuary but also the countless miracles of blessing that have occurred in this once-remote province at the northern tip of the island of Sumatra.

The tsunami swept away more than 200,000 residents. When it hit early on a Sunday morning after a violent earthquake in the sea to the southwest, Pastor Tahir Wijaya had just arrived at the church, along with his wife and their two-week old infant. Feeling the earthquake, Tahir jumped on his motorbike and went to offer help to some of his parishioners.

When the flooding sea water overtook him he abandoned his bike, climbed a coconut palm tree, and barely managed to survive. Meanwhile, his wife, carrying the baby, led early worshipers and Sunday school children to the third floor of the education building, and saved their lives. Even so, out of this small congregation of 100 members, 38 people were lost.

One of the miracles from the aftermath of the disaster is that this church, in the heavily Muslim

Bishop Mike Coyner suggested that Hoosier United Methodists provide the funding.

province of Aceh, has grown to 300 members.

Soon after the tsunami, when the United Methodist Committee on Relief announced its intention to assist the rebuilding of the church, Bishop Mike Coyner suggested that Hoosier United Methodists provide the funding. Offerings for UMCOR-Banda Aceh MC were received, and to date \$200,000 has been provided. UMCOR provided approximately \$50,000 to cover costs of clearing and removing debris. When Dr. David Wu of General Board of Global Ministries-UMCOR first visited the site shortly after the disaster, he was unable to enter the building due to the wreckage and dead bodies left behind when flood waters receded.

Ribbon cutting

At the recent ribbon cutting, seven elementary-age girls in full Aceh-Chinese ceremonial dress presented a welcoming dance. The Rev. Fajar Lim, president of the new Provisional Conference of the Methodist Church of Indonesia and a former pastor of the B.A. church, led a procession of honored guests, including 30 pastors who made the 12-hour bus trip from Medan. The Rev. Sam Dixon, deputy general secretary of UMCOR, gave the sermon. The Rev. Bill Imler greeted



Photo courtesy of the Imlers

Bill Imler, right, hands a copy of Bishop Coyner's prayer offered in the Banda Aceh Methodist Church dedication to church leaders.

worshipers on behalf of Indiana United Methodists, and offered a prayer of blessing provided by Bishop Coyner.

The restored sanctuary is striking in its beauty and symbolism. Walls are in tones of sun-enriched earth. The design in the front of the chancel area represents ten stones of the commandments. Twelve embedded columns represent the disciples, and a high window above the balcony symbolizes the Holy Trinity. Twelve or more windows of clear glass, embellished with light colored symbolic panels, look outward. In his sermon, Dixon declared them to be mission windows, for from this sanctuary members were reminded to look outward to the fields of mission and evangelism that surround them.

The presentation copy of Coyner's prayer was handed to

Lim, and a copy also to Wijaya.

Historic connection

Indiana United Methodists have an historic connection with this church. At the time of its founding in 1957, primarily as a Christian presence serving the Chinese ethnic community in Aceh, the district superintendent was our own Rev. Gusta Robinet, lifelong missionary to China and Indonesia from Columbia City, Ind. Robinet was one of the earliest women to be ordained, and in Sumatra she became the first woman superintendent of The Methodist Church in the world. Along with the late Rev. and Mrs. Newton Gotshall, missionaries in the 1920s and 1930s, Indiana has had a vital connection to what is now the autonomous Methodist Church of Indonesia.

During two days preceding, the

Imlers, along with Dixon and Wu, were given an extensive tour of the area, to see a number of UMCOR related projects. These were often in cooperation with other non-governmental organizations and especially with UNICEF. Schools have been rebuilt, including the largest elementary school in Aceh province. More than 500 houses have been built for survivors who lost their homes. By UMCOR philosophy, homes are considered complete only when wells, sanitation system and basic furniture including a treadle Singer sewing machine have been provided, in contrast with some non-governmental agencies who left the area after constructing walls.

UMCOR's programs in Indonesia are directed toward economic, social and educational improvement. In general, the programs are in cooperation with the Indonesian government and other international aid organizations such as UNICEF, USAID, Church World Service and Hope International.

The tsunami washed away thousands of lives and millions of dollars worth of property. Miraculously, as aid has poured in from governments and agencies from around the world, this once-contentious, closed society that sought independence from Indonesia, is now open, welcoming visitors, embracing the aid that is offered, and apparently undergoing far reaching social and economic change.

The Rev. Bill Imler is a retired pastor of the North Indiana Conference. His wife, Dona Lou, is chairperson of the NIC Committee on Africa University. They live in Angola, Ind.

Church's social action agency announces legislative priorities

WASHINGTON (GBCS) – The United Methodist General Board of Church and Society (GBCS) has set seven legislative priorities for 2008 in which the faith community can bring a unique and much needed voice to the debate. The priorities target two kinds of legislation – those already being considered by Congress, and those which should be considered to address issues of justice and inequality.

The 2008 legislative priorities of GBCS, the public witness and advocacy arm of the denomination, cover a broad spectrum: global warming, poverty, health care, drug sentencing reform and ending the war in Iraq. All of these priorities support emphases of the GBCS Board of Directors, and further specific objectives adopted by the board at its annual meeting.

“They either are objectives that we think can be accomplished this

year,” explained Mark Harrison, director of GBCS's Peace with Justice Program, “or issues that are so important that they need to be emphasized regardless of our hopes to accomplish them this year or not.”

Here are the 2008 priorities:

- ◆ **Increase Affordable Housing** – GBCS will focus its support in 2008 on the “National Affordable Housing Trust Fund Act” (S.2523). John Hill, director of Economic and Environmental Justice, said this is a companion bill to legislation that passed the House of Representatives last fall.
- ◆ **Reduce Global Warming Pollution** – GBCS supports comprehensive legislation to reduce global greenhouse gas emissions, according to Hill. GBCS

supports efforts to strengthen the “Climate Security Act of 2007” (S.2191). Hill said this is a bipartisan effort to reduce U.S. global warming pollution.

- ◆ **Protect Children's Health** – To protect the health of all children, the Rev. Cynthia Abrams, director of GBCS's Alcohol, Other Addictions and Health Care program, said GBCS will encourage Congress to support three pieces of legislation: H.R.1108/S.625, which provides for regulation of tobacco by the Food and Drug Administration; full funding for the “STOP Underage Drinking Prevention Act” (Public Law #109-422); and reauthorization of the “State Children's Health Insurance Program” (CHIP).
- ◆ **Re-authorize the President's AIDS Plan** – President Bush's current AIDS funding expires

at the end of 2008 and “must be reauthorized,” declared Linda Bales, director of the Louise and Hugh Moore Population Project at the board. Bales noted GBCS will work in collaboration with other faith-based and other groups to achieve funding for prevention, care and treatment. She said the U.S. contribution to the Global Fund for AIDS, TB and malaria is crucial to have any chance to achieve the goal.

- ◆ **2nd Chance Act** – Bill Mefford, director of GBCS's Civil and Human Rights Program, said the “Second Chance Act” (S 1060) will reduce recidivism and will strengthen families of ex-offenders through providing critical programs in the areas of employment, housing, and substance abuse and mental health treatment.

- ◆ **End Global Poverty** – GBCS supports the “Global Poverty Act.” Harrison said this bipartisan bill requires the president to develop and implement a comprehensive strategy to further the U.S. foreign policy objective of promoting the reduction of global poverty.

- ◆ **End the War in Iraq** – GBCS will support legislation that requires a date certain to remove U.S. military forces from Iraq. Harrison said the legislation should specify that no permanent military bases should remain in that country.

Hoosiers on the General Board of Church and Society include: Albert Bohnstedt (NIC) of Fort Wayne, Ind.; the Rev. Marie Lang (SIC) of Greenwood, Ind. and Ike Williams (SIC) of Carmel, Ind. For more information, log on to www.umc-gbcs.org.

Change is inevitable, and change is hard

By Cyndi Alte
calte@clarian.org

Scientists are studying the behavior of bees to determine if there are any parallels between the habits of bees and the habits of people. One particular experiment intrigues me.

After identifying an active hive, scientists placed a bowl of sugar water 50 feet from the hive. Within a few hours, the bees were busy drawing nourishment from the sugar water. The next day scientists repeated the process, this time putting the sugar water 100 feet from the hive. The same result was observed as the bees spent time around the sugar water. The following day the bowl was placed 150 from the hive. The bees traveled the 150 feet. This pattern continued until the bowl was placed 300 feet away. The bees followed it each day. On the last day, the scientists arrived, ready to move the bowl to 350 feet. To their amazement, the bees were swarming at the 350 foot mark, waiting to be fed at the new nourishment site.



Alte

While the verdict is still out about whether or not there are parallels between the behavior of bees and the habits of humans, this study reminds us that a change in behavior takes time before it becomes second nature.

Perhaps you are in the midst of the process human behaviorists call “the cycle of change.” It may be related to a decision you made at the beginning of the year to engage in more devotional time, lose weight, spend

more time with the family, etc. A month into it and where are you?

Most human behaviorists identify seven stages within the cycle of change. This amalgamation of change cycles may help in gaining understanding of where you have been, where you are and where you may be headed.

1. Pre-contemplation – In this stage, there is no personally convincing evidence for a change to take place.

2. Contemplation – While the need for change is evident, there is ambivalence at this stage about whether or not a person wants to make a change.

A change in behavior takes time before it becomes second nature.

3. Preparation – Information is gathered and assimilation of what the change may mean occurs.

4. The Danger Zone – This is the pivotal place where a choice is made to move forward to act on the change, discovering the new opportunities available *or* to not make a change, returning to old habits.

5. Action – Action, what is most often thought of when considering lifestyle change, is seldom successful without the previous stages.

6. Lapse/Relapse – A return to old habits and behaviors is intrinsic to the cycle of change and should not be regarded as a failure; instead, the goal at this stage is to not let the lapse or relapse become permanent.

7. Integration – The change has been integrated by learning and practicing that change is possible.

This is what behavioral scientists have to say about change.

More importantly, what does this say to you about being in the midst of change (and we are all in the midst of change)?

Maybe it says that you are progressing along just fine. Maybe it says that you are stuck. Maybe it says you are relapsing and coming back. Whatever it is saying to you, I hope you are hearing two things: **change is inevitable** and **change is hard**.

In personal life, in church life and in conference life, we are all changing. While this may make for some stressful and difficult times, it is also an opportunity for

us to grow into people who rehearse the reign of God.

An African proverb reminds us that “Smooth seas do not make skillful sailors.” There may be rough seas ahead as we navigate the changes around us – and if we do not enter those seas, how will God make a new thing in and of us?

I am still thinking about bees and hoping that behaviorists are finding parallels between their habits and ours. I am hoping that we will be the kind of people who so desire to see God’s new vision that we will be found waiting for the future, ready for the nourishment God has for us.

Cyndi Alte serves on the pastoral care team of Clarian Health at Methodist Hospital in Indianapolis. She is a clergy member of the South Indiana Conference.

Henderson Settlement is struggling financially

God works in wondrous ways

By Jean Brindel, Capital Fund Team
North Indiana Outdoor Ministry Project
jbrindel@sbcglobal.net

God works in ways that are wondrous to us. A case in point is the Henderson Settlement, a community outreach mission agency of The United Methodist Church in the Red Bird Missionary Conference based near Frakes, Ky.

I have learned that Henderson Settlement is struggling financially. The settlement is even having problems making payroll. So, any of you who love Henderson Settlement and have not given lately to this important mission, this is the time.

In my work as the chairperson of the North Indiana Conference Capital Fund Team for the Epworth Forest Project, I work with the fundraising consulting firm of Cargill – Doug Morrow. The firm also works with the Henderson Settlement, a very important United Methodist mission of the North Indiana Conference.

Doug Morrow and I were visiting the other day, talking about this and that and he mentioned to me that he was working with Henderson Settlement and wondered if I’d ever heard of it. Well, hello! This IS North Indiana and most United Methodists here have either taken a mission trip there, sent money or supported the settlement in other ways. North Indiana hearts pump blood to missions and one of the major veins is Henderson Settlement.

He then told me about the financial problems the Henderson Settlement is currently experiencing. The new director, Mark Lemons, struggles with cash flow and short fall issues and needs our help. If you or your church have been thinking about sending missions monies to the Henderson Settlement, this is the time. This would be a great Lent or Easter mission project.

Donations can be made online at www.hendersonsettlement.org, directly to Henderson

Settlement, P.O. Box 205, Frakes, KY 40940, by credit card by calling the Advance Special office in New York City toll-free at 888-252-6174, or through your North Indiana local church using the Henderson Settlement Advance project number 10901. With Advance Special giving, 100 percent of gifts will go to the ministry chosen. No exceptions.



Brindel

It’s great to be a United Methodist. We are connected to help build the kingdom of God – to be the church making a difference in the world. Who would have thought that a meeting about building Epworth Forest would end up being about Henderson Settlement, a major mission site dear to our hearts? So this month, this viewpoint about the needs for the Project at Epworth Forest at North Web-

ster is a word about Henderson Settlement – God works in mysterious ways, wonders to perform.

Jean Brindel, CFRE, AFP, serves as senior pastor of Saint Mathew United Methodist Church in Frankfort, Ind.

Artwork needed for both Indiana annual conferences

The theme for both North Indiana and South Indiana Annual Conferences will be “Friends with Christ,” based on John 15:15.

You can help both Annual Conferences by submitting art entries before March 1 for original artwork for the banner to Gloria J. Nelson 107 W Campbell St., Edinburgh, IN 46124 Church: 812-526-5840, Fax: 812-526-8617, e-mail: gnelson@sicumc.org or revgjnelson@aol.com.

The South Indiana Conference also needs an original song or new words to a non-copy-written melody to Lynn Renne Aldersgate UMC 5130 Lincoln Ave. Evansville, IN 47715, Church: 812-477-7816, Fax 812-477-8658, e-mail lrenne@aol.com

BODY, MIND & SPIRIT

The biggest loser

By Todd Outcalt
toutcalt@calvaryunited.org

I don’t watch much network TV, but I am aware of the fact that in the last decade the rise of the “reality show” has been a major phenomenon in entertainment. There are shows about surviving, dancing, boxing, getting a job (or getting fired) and treasure hunting. There also is a show called “The Biggest Loser,” geared around watching people lose weight.

I’ve never seen this show, but I have to believe that it takes a great deal of courage to go on national television, open one’s life to millions of viewers and let people see the failures and successes one has with dieting and exercise. The idea behind this show is that the one who loses the most weight will gain the most in prize money.

We certainly live in a time when people are learning that less can be more; success is often paved with failure; and our meaning can be found in what we sacrifice. Sacrifice, however, is never easy – and sometimes our sacrifices involve others.

I know that, over the years, whenever I have taken a new pastoral appointment, my wife has had to sacrifice her job; my children have had to make new friends and attend a new school. Pastors, and their families, are often called upon to sacrifice – to lose so that others might gain. Many in the parish experience similar sac-

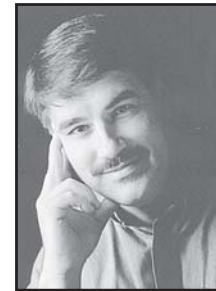
rifices in their work and transitions. Others must make far more difficult decisions that involve even greater sacrifice.

But we might also discover that in the life of faith our greatest sacrifices involve the giving of our time, talent or treasure. I know I’ve seen this faith lived out in thousands of ways – people, who visit the sick, take dinner to a neighbor, forgo a vacation to care for an aging parent, often write or call with their concerns.

Jesus once said, “Whoever loses his/her life for my sake will find it” (Mark 8:35). Jesus could have been addressing martyrdom, but I think he was addressing a way of life – a way of life that involves sacrifice and simplicity for the sake of others. It’s a radical theology.

During this Lenten season, we often focus on the sacrifices that Jesus made on our behalf. But Lent also is a time of self-searching and repentance – of forfeiting our pride and ideas of self-reliance. Here we revisit themes of giving, serving and even dying. In essence, we learn that by losing ourselves in God’s love, we gain much more. As Jesus demonstrated in his life and teaching, the biggest loser also receives the crown of victory.

Todd Outcalt serves as senior pastor of Calvary UMC in Brownsburg, Ind. His new blog is toddoutcalt.blogspot.com and some of his latest writing can be found in digital form on www.Amazon.com.



Outcalt

One of the national workshops to be held in Indianapolis

United Methodists invited to see if God is calling

NASHVILLE, Tenn. – The United Methodist General Board of Discipleship, based in Nashville, Tenn., is sponsoring “Turn Aside and See: Is God Calling?” March 8, from 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., in **Indianapolis**; Tempe, Ariz.; Philadelphia, Pa.; Brentwood, Tenn. and Dallas, Texas.

The agency is harnessing the power of the Exodus story of Moses and the burning bush to help churches discern God’s call and strive to make disciples of Jesus Christ.

“The church is in such a time of change. We need space and

opportunity for reflection and discernment around God’s call to us – who we are as disciples and what are we called to do in this place,” said Carol Krau, GBOD team leader, Congregational Leaders Team.

“Turn Aside and See” (www.gbod.org/turnaside) invites participants to hear God’s call through a free one-day study and discussion of Exodus 3 and 4. Moses’ encounter with the “Burning Bush” is the inspiration for the event’s theme and title of the core curriculum for Discipleship University, GBOD’s

groundbreaking new initiative that addresses the denomination’s leadership needs.

Pastors, laity, church staff, individuals or teams from churches may attend the event being offered simultaneously in the following locations.

- ◆ North Central USA: St. Luke’s United Methodist Church, Indianapolis,
- ◆ Western USA: First United Methodist Church, Tempe, Ariz.,
- ◆ Northeastern USA: Tindley Temple United Methodist Church, Philadelphia, Penn.,

- ◆ Southeastern USA: Brentwood United Methodist Church, Brentwood, Tenn., and

- ◆ South Central USA: St. Luke’s Community United Methodist Church, Dallas, Texas.

“This event is a preview of the Discipleship University Core Curriculum. It will assist local churches in becoming places of disciple making through focusing on discipleship systems,” said the Rev. Vance P. Ross, executive for GBOD’s Leadership Ministries.

In addition to a deep Scripture study and reflection, participants will receive help in discovering

God’s call, naming excuses that prevent congregations from answering God’s call and identifying ways to answer God’s call despite the current reality.

Attendees also will receive resource materials to lead a study in their own congregation and an introduction to other opportunities for training local church leaders.

A copy of the Bible study and lunch will be provided. Travel and lodging will be at the expense of participants. For more information, contact Mary McDonald, mmcdonald@gbod.org, or call toll-free 877-899-2780, ext. 1760.

Seminary dean gives good advice to transitional churches in new book *Keep the Call: Leading the Congregation...*

By Daniel R. Gangler

Congregational leadership in a transition church can be a difficult task, however Jill Y. Crainshaw’s, recent book *Keep the Call: Leading the Congregation Without Losing Your Soul*, gives useful advice to both newly ordained or seasoned ministers and is well worth the read. The book is one of the Bishop’s Bundle of Books recommendations by Bishop Mike Coyner. Crainshaw serves as associate dean for vocational formation at Wake Forest’ Divinity School in Winston-Salem, N.C.

From the beginning after reading the title, I was not drawn to the book. I think it’s mis-named. A better title comes as a kicker on the back cover – “Keep Faith with your call to ministry while becoming an engaged and effective congregational leader.”

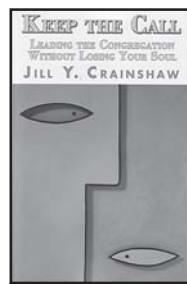
Crainshaw **doesn’t give answers** in how to keep one’s faith while strengthening a faltering congregation in a transitional neighborhood, but **gives readers a process** to follow to revitalize waning congregations in socially-transitional areas. First and foremost, she believes each established congregation and neighborhood has its own personality and

culture that needs to be understood.

For her, there are no easy answers for transforming congregations. If a pastor, no matter how smart or experienced, applies changes to strengthen a congregation without listening to the congregation and the community, he or she will probably fail. Crainshaw believes a different approach is needed and spends 116 pages outlining a process used in two transitional inner-city congregations.

With a conventional three-point sermon style, she outlines what she sees as three aspects of congregational ministry: Ministry as proclamation, ministry as formation and ministry as transformation. She begins where unsuccessful newly appointed pastors don’t begin – by listening, which she describes as “hearing God’s voice.” At one point, she literally instructs readers to walk their neighborhood and listen to the sounds. She writes, “Theological reflection is central to the process.”

This is uniquely important to United Methodist pastors who are appointed not only to a congregation, but to a community. What does the community sound like? Are the sounds of the congregation in tune with the sounds of the



Members and pastors need to ask themselves, who are we, and what are we to do as people of God?

community?

If not, how does a congregation tune itself to the community? Without this tuning together, there will be no growth and the congregation will probably die as the members no longer can keep up with the financial challenges of a dwindling congregation.

Crainshaw sees a congregation tuning itself to the community through a sharing of the stories of faith. She says the role of pastors is two-fold in this process – “They must listen theologically and pastorally to congregations, biblical traditions, and broader cultural soundscape. At the same time, they must seek the authenticity of their own voices (p.17).”

Having set the foundation for her process to strengthen transitional congregations, she unfolds a process with questions and exercises for congregations to do to

seek their potential in ministries that lead to transformation. In this process, she does not accept that declining congregations necessarily mean a declining income to keep the parish alive and vital.

According to Crainshaw, once a pastor and congregation hear their neighborhood, their community, the process of formation can begin. Members and pastors need to ask themselves, who are we, and what are we to do as people of God? She says when those two are in sync, congregations flourish. She believes that formation happens when people of faith share their personal stories, which lead to communal stories as a congregation in transition begins sharing its stories with the community coupling stories with biblical stories. She believes congregations that are in transition, spend too much time sharing the stories of what the

congregation used to do, rather than telling new stories about what the congregation is doing now.

Formation, finally leads to transformation. She instructs her readers to watch for four threads that lead to vitality – transformation, just values, responsibility and possibility, and imaginative questions. These four threads will lead the congregation beyond its walls to the community and world.

She ends with the claim that transformation only becomes reality with short-term and long-term goals. To a great extent, congregations determine their own destinies even if they are in the midst of transitional communities.

Keep the Call is worth the read even if a congregation is already vital in a growing neighborhood or community. The process the author outlines and the questions she asks are questions every congregation can consider for its own well-being. *Keep the Call* is about making a difference in the lives of people, words very familiar to us as Hoosier United Methodists.

For online conversations about *Keep the Call*, log on to www.keepthecall.blogspot.com.

United Methodist CTS student receives LIFE Scholarship

INDIANAPOLIS – Lauren Hacker, a Master of Divinity student at Christian Theological Seminary, was recently named the 2007 recipient of the LIFE (Lacy Institute For Ecumenism) Scholarship.

Hacker, a United Methodist and native of Indiana, currently serves as the youth director at the University Heights United Methodist Church, across the street from the University of Indianapolis. She also has previous experience as an Impact Camp counselor for the North UMC of India-

napolis.

She graduated in 2005 from the University of Indianapolis with a B.A. degree in Pre-Theology and Youth Ministry.

The Lacy Institute for Ecumenism is directed by the Rev. Donald Lacy of Muncie, Ind. Gifts to the LIFE Scholarship Fund can be made to Christian Theological Seminary and sent to Charles H. Webb, Jr., director of Alumni Relations, Christian Theological Seminary, 1000 W. 42nd Street, Indianapolis, IN 46208.

Together freelancer called to write for Mississippi newspaper

Sharon Dunten, a United Methodist freelance writer for *Together* and the Disaster News Network, plans to move from Indianapolis to Hattiesburg, Miss. She has accepted a reporter position with the *Hattiesburg American* newspaper.

She told *Together*, “I have felt a calling to the Gulf Coast for some time, but I did not know exactly what I was supposed to do or where to go. Well, God informed me today where I am supposed to serve Him.”

Dunten served both as a volunteer in mission and disaster

Looking back, it is amazing to see God’s hand in all of this.

news reporter/photographer to the Gulf Coast since November 2006 and has made several trips south since then.

She writes, “I am sad to leave Indiana, but I am excited on what lies ahead in Mississippi. Looking back, it is amazing to see God’s hand in all of this. I just had to ask, keep my eyes open, and it

was revealed to me. I realize it is not always that easy. Even the journey is unknown, I do not walk alone. I have felt embraced by the people of the Gulf Coast and supported by my family and friends in Indiana.”

Together wishes her God’s speed as she packs and leaves in a couple of weeks.

APPOINTMENTS

Bishop Michael J. Coyner has announced the following changes within the Indiana Area. All dates effective 2008 unless otherwise noted. These appointments are based on Cabinet reports received by Indiana Area Communication during the month of January 2008.

North Indiana Conference
 Andrews, Greg from Supply, Huntington to Local Pastor, Huntington, 1/1
 Boggs, Tamara first appointment to Lowell, Calumet, 1/1
 Bradford, Gregory from no appointment to Liberty Mills, Huntington, 1/1
 Burke, Fred E. Jr. from no ap-

pointment to Alexandria Joyce Chapel, Marion, 11/25/07
 Davis, Carl W. from New Waverly, Kokomo to Reynolds/Yeoman, Lafayette, 1/16
 French, W. Edward from Liberty Mills to Retirement, 12/31/07
 Inskip, Dave from Reynolds/Yeoman, Lafayette to Stidham, Lafayette, 1/1
 Johnson, Vera from Christ, Calumet to Fifth Ave., Calumet, 1/1
 Nunemaker, Donald first appointment to Richland Center/Burton, Warsaw, 1/1
 Reyes, Janie G. from Fort Wayne: Christ, Fort Wayne to Fort Wayne: Inglesia Cristiana, Fort

Wayne, 1/1
 Smith, Jeffrey from Jackson Hts./West Pt., Lafayette to West Point, Lafayette, 1/1
 Stahlman, Chris from Fort Wayne: Taylor Chapel, Fort Wayne to Pleasantdale, Marion, 2/16
 Tague, Chester from Romney, Lafayette to Romney and Jackson Heights, Lafayette, 1/1
 Thornton, Joyce from Epworth, Marion to Epworth/Alexandria First, Marion, 1/1
 Williams, Darren from Pleasantdale, Marion to Brushwood, Calumet, 2/1
 Williams, Keith A. from no appointment to Eaton, Muncie, 1/1/

South Indiana Conference
 Brinegar, Raymond from Bedford: Grace, Bloomington to retirement, 1/15
 Buttery, Wendy from no appointment to Greens Fork, Rushville, 9/1/07
 Kirts, Robert from Leesville, Bloomington to Bedford: Grace, Bloomington, 1/15
 Modlin, Mary Jane from no appointment to Conners: New Life, Rushville, 8/1/07
 Pelc, Charles M. from Benson Chapel, Lafayette, North Indiana Conference to New Hope, New Albany, 2/1
 Reynolds, Hugh W. from Tunnelton:

Bono/Tunnelton, Bloomington to no appointment, 11/30 /07
 Skiba, Ann Elaine from no appointment to Nobles Chapel, Evansville, 12/1/07
 Stiles, Kevin from Indianapolis: Cumberland, Indianapolis East to Shirley-Wilkinson Community, Rushville, 1/15
 Taylor, Seth from Rushville: Wesley, Rushville to no appointment, 12/31/07
 Underwood, Harold E. from Clarks: Ohio Falls, New Albany to no appointment, 1/1
 Walker, Ronald Dean from Columbus: Asbury, Columbus to Leave of Absence, 1/31

DEATHS

PHYLLIS COY, mother-in-law of the Rev. Bob Denney, pastor of Fairview and Bellefontaine United Methodist churches in the Muncie District (NIC), died Jan. 27, 2008. A memorial service was held Friday, Feb. 1 in Portland, Ind. Condolences may be sent to Bob and Donna Denney, 1126 S. Como Road, Portland, IN. 47371-8535.

DOROTHY MAISH, mother of retired minister and former district superintendent the Rev. David Maish (NIC), died Jan. 30, 2008.

Condolences can be sent to the Rev. David Maish, 344 DaVinci Pass, Kissimmee, FL 34759-3129, or by e-mail to dmaish@verizon.net.

PHYLLIS MATTOX, wife of retired pastor, Alvin Mattox (SIC), died Jan. 21, 2008. A Memorial service was held Jan. 26 in Charlestown, Ind. Survivors include: Husband, Alvin Mattox, 8506 Hickory Dr, Charlestown, IN 47111; two daughters, Sally Lesley and Alice Sims, and three sons: Richard Mattox, George

Mattox, and Michael Mattox.

ROBERT McBRIDE, 83, died Jan. 19, 2008, retired professor of philosophy and religion and director of graduate studies at the University of Indianapolis (1954-1966). He also was academic dean and vice-president for academic affairs at Albright College in Reading, Pa. (1966-1979) and president of Simpson College in Indianola, Iowa (1979 through retirement in 1987). Survivors include: Wife, Luella Hart McBride; children, Judith Bentley of Seattle, Wash., Ronald McBride of Indianapolis and Steven McBride of Denver, Colo.; six grandchildren and one great-grandchild. A memorial service was held Jan. 25. Memorials can be made to Simpson College, Indianola, Iowa in the name of the McBride Distinguished Lectureship, or to the University of Indianapolis, in the name of the Robert E. McBride and Luella K. McBride Scholarship Fund. Condolences may be shared with the family at:

www.gherrmann.com.

ROBERT RUSSELL ROWLAND, retired Elder of West Chester, Ohio, who held several positions in higher education (SIC), died Jan. 30, 2008. Survivors include: Wife, Naomi. A memorial service was held Feb. 4 in Fairfield, Ohio. Condolences may be sent to Mrs. Naomi Roland, 8364 Waterbury Court, # 102, West Chester, OH 45069. He retired in 1982.

MARTHA SEARCY, widow of Hubert Searcy (SIC), died Jan. 20, 2008. Survivors include: Daughter, Lisa Holt; and 4 grandchildren. Memorial contributions may be sent to Hospice of Volusia/Flagler, Port Orange, FL 32127. Private memorial service.

THELMA SHEPHERD, widow of the late Rev. Garth Shepherd who died in 1996 (NIC), died Jan. 26, 2008. A memorial service was held on Jan. 30 at the Downing-Glancy Funeral Home in Geneva, Ind. Condolences can be sent to Paul Moser, 3692 Juillerat Dr., Portland, IN 47371. Memorials can be

made to the donor's choice.

RONALD G. THOMAS, Associate Member (SIC), Sunday, Feb. 3, 2008. A memorial service was held Feb. 8 at the United Methodist Church in Hope, Ind. A second memorial service was held Feb. 9 at the United Methodist Church in Carbon, Ind. Survivors include: Wife, Sandra Thomas, 429 Washington St., Hope, IN 47246; daughters, Karen Barker, Kim Finnerty and Kelly Jones; and 8 grandchildren.

HOWARD EARL WRIGHT, 85, retired minister and former district superintendent (SIC) died Jan. 25, 2008. He was preceded in death by his wife, Mary Elizabeth Thomas Wright. A memorial service was held Feb. 9 in Indianapolis. Memorial gifts may be made to Roberts Park UMC, Indianapolis, Ind, Speedway United Methodist Church, 5065 W. 16th Street; Indianapolis, IN 46224 or Sumption Prairie United Methodist Church, 24535 Roosevelt Rd. South Bend, IN 46614.

One Great Hour of Sharing offering to be received March 2

The One Great Hour of Sharing offering is essential to UMCOR: gifts to this offering underwrite UMCOR's "costs of doing business." That helps us keep our promise that 100 percent of every other gift you make to a specific UMCOR project can be spent on that project – not on home office costs and assisting UMCOR programs that have not been fully funded through design-



nated Advance gifts. Free offering envelopes and DVD's are available for the One Great Hour of Sharing offering by calling toll-free 888-346-3862, by fax at 615-742-5499 or online at www.umcgiving.org/ss. Other resources include bulletin inserts, litany of hope, songs and Scripture which can be downloaded from www.umcor.org/how_to_give/one_great_hour_of_sharing. – UMNS

North Indiana Conference to host VIM team leader training at Kokomo

The Mission Volunteers Resource Team of the North Indiana Conference have scheduled a Volunteers in Mission Team Leader Training event for Saturday, April 12, from 9 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. at St. Luke's UMC, 700 East Southway Blvd. in Kokomo, Ind. Penny Krug will be the trainer for this event.

Leaders and/or participants of VIM work teams and youth leaders need to attend this important event.

The cost is \$10 person, which includes lunch and basic materials, plus \$25 for a VIM Training Manual (only one needed per church). Topics include:

- ◆ How to plan a mission trip?
- ◆ Where to go when your church

wants to send a team

- ◆ Spiritual enrichment
- ◆ Being a team member
- ◆ Cultural sensitivity
- ◆ Insurance and liability forms regardless of where you go, issues of risk and answers to questions.

For more information: Contact Bonnie Albert, bonkay@hotmail.com, or phone 219-464-1447.

Registration deadline is Friday, April 4. To register, send name, address, phone number with area code, church, city. Make checks payable to North Indiana Conference, memo VIM training and mail to P.O. Box 869, Marion, IN 46952. For registration form, log on to www.nicumc.org.

Together reader's Sunday school class contributed to CJ's bus

Joyce Poland, a Sunday school teacher of Blythe (Ind.) Chapel United Methodist Church, told *Together* she was surprised to see the story about CJ's Bus (Nov.-Dec issue), a portable childcare facility used in communities hit by disaster.

She said the Saturday before she read the story, her Sunday school class of girls ages 3 to 9 years made fleece blankets as a Christmas project for the children who would use CJ's Bus. Elderly residents of a local nursing home also helped the girls make the blankets. They made 13 blankets in a couple of hours.

Kathryn Martin, mother of CJ who was killed in the Evansville tornado two years ago, was pleased with the blankets and said that her son CJ had a blanket like the ones Poland's class made.



Photo courtesy of Joyce Poland
 Pictured with blankets for CJ's bus are Aubrey McCoy, Kathlyn McCoy, Taliyah Teel, Trianna Teel and Trista Teel.

"God works in wonderful ways to lead us to do good," said Poland.

The story of CJ's Bus can be read online at www.inareaumc.org, click on Together and go to the Nov.-Dec. 2007 issue.

Diversity and Making Disciples: Are You Different or Am I?

It's not just about color – Diversity training can help change lives. The objective is to educate and broaden perspectives. Come learn and share ways of communicating with each other for the purpose of effective disciple making. As a community grows it becomes more diverse. If we are to be true to our Christian mission we will need to look at ways to better relate to people who are different from ourselves. Participants will have an opportunity to: increase their ability to reach more people and share the love of Christ; identify personal prejudices; increase understanding of the necessity to work effectively with others, regardless of the background; become more intelligent about the differences in the local church community; will learn to celebrate the many gifts that others have to share. No type of

diversity training is ever complete. A positive response to diversity training is continued conversation and willingness to be open, honest and sensitive to others.

- ◆ **March 29**, Saturday 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Registration Closes March 21
- ◆ **Epworth Forest** in North Webster, Ind.
- ◆ **Leader: The Rev. Sharon White**
- ◆ **Fee: \$75** (\$60 Appointed NIC ministers, full or part-time)

The Rev. Sharon White received an M. Div. degree from Gammon Theological Seminary in Atlanta, Ga. in 1994. Upon ordination she moved to New Castle, Ind. in the South Indiana Conference where she served several churches. She currently serves as SIC associate council director providing leadership in diversity training.

Still in Process- "Millennial" Generation Communication

Strengths and Gifts of the 'Millennial' Generation – (born between 1981 and 1999)

This seminar will challenge pastors and lay church leaders to think in new ways about the millennial generation plus the strengths and gifts they bring to ministry and the church. Time will be spent understanding the characteristics and challenges this generation faces as they leave high school to enter college or the work force. The seminar will feature a young adults panel sharing ministry.

- ◆ **March 15**, Saturday, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Registration Closes March 7
- ◆ **Tipton Kemp UMC** in Tipton, Ind.

- ◆ **Leader: The Rev. Susan Hay**
- ◆ **Fee: \$75** (\$60 Appointed NIC ministers, full or part-time)
- ◆ Clergy/Church Leadership welcome

The Rev. Susan Hay serves as a deacon in the Tennessee Conference and is certified in Christian education and youth ministry. She has been in youth ministry more than 30 years and continues to enjoy the excitement and energy of working with youth. For the past 15 years she has served the General Board of Discipleship conducting research in generational theory, effective practices of youth ministry, discerning sense of call and leading seminars in youth ministry.

SAVE THIS 2008 DATE!

April 11-12

MOUNT OLIVE UMC, Marion, Ind.

Rick & Mick are internationally known Christian comedy and contemporary music artists who have performed in all 50 states and in 14 countries.



They recognize the importance of investing in the lives of young people and we ask you to come join us in a time of their sharing their ministry in a time of training. Learn how you too can have an impact in the lives of young people.

Rick and Mick and guest presenters will train pastors and laity how to reach youth in their local communities.

Registration Fee: \$75 Clergy/Laity
Registration is limited.

CHECK THEM OUT AT
www.rickandmick.com

To register for these events,
call Diane Kelley at 800-783-5138
or e-mail diane@nicumc.org.

North Indiana Conference † United Methodist Church † Post Office Box 869 † 1105 North Western Avenue
Marion, Indiana 46952 † Web address: www.nicumc.org † e-mail address: info@nicumc.org † 800-783-5138



Each summer Outdoor Ministries provides quality Christian camping experiences for youth and adults alike. Whether you attend a traditional cabin camp this summer or embark on an out of state adventure, one fundamental premise exists, all campers are accepted for who they are and are provided with a nurturing environment where they can truly appreciate Christ's unconditional love.

For more information about summer 2008 and for campsite specific details, please call or visit our website.

(800) 919-8160

www.outdoor-ministries.org

Take advantage of the
**Early Bird Registration Discount and register
before April 30, 2008 and receive a \$15 discount.**