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. The center was distributing 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 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.

A Together photo by Dan Gangler

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.

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
From the Bishop
February 2008
Vol. 38 No. 2

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.

HOOSIER UNITED METHODISTS
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.

Bishop Michael J. Coyner
Indiana Area of The United Methodist Church
“Making a Difference in Indiana and around the world”

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 more than 11 million 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 provides 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 livelihood programs, and education. The agency also worked with the Methodist Church of Indonesia in Banda Aceh to help the church become a place of service to its community. For a 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 have no 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 infrastructure, 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 is 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 quiet. What do you say?

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”

Correction on Death Notice

WILBURN C. 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 Bearwalk Rd, Maysville, KY 41056; one daughter, Jeanine Applegate; two sons, James Cropper and Dennis Cropper; 6 grandchildren; 4 great-grandchildren and 2 great-great-grandchildren.

Correction:

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 C. 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 Bearwalk Rd, Maysville, KY 41056; one daughter, Jeanine Applegate; two sons, James Cropper and Dennis Cropper; 6 grandchildren; 4 great-grandchildren and 2 great-great-grandchildren.

Correction:

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 C. 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 Bearwalk Rd, Maysville, KY 41056; one daughter, Jeanine Applegate; two sons, James Cropper and Dennis Cropper; 6 grandchildren; 4 great-grandchildren and 2 great-great-grandchildren.

Correction:

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 C. 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 Bearwalk Rd, Maysville, KY 41056; one daughter, Jeanine Applegate; two sons, James Cropper and Dennis Cropper; 6 grandchildren; 4 great-grandchildren and 2 great-great-grandchildren.

Correction:

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 C. 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 Bearwalk Rd, Maysville, KY 41056; one daughter, Jeanine Applegate; two sons, James Cropper and Dennis Cropper; 6 grandchildren; 4 great-grandchildren and 2 great-great-grandchildren.

Correction:

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 C. 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 Bearwalk Rd, Maysville, KY 41056; one daughter, Jeanine Applegate; two sons, James Cropper and Dennis Cropper; 6 grandchildren; 4 great-grandchildren and 2 great-great-grandchildren.

Correction:

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 C. 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 Bearwalk Rd, Maysville, KY 41056; one daughter, Jeanine Applegate; two sons, James Cropper and Dennis Cropper; 6 grandchildren; 4 great-grandchildren and 2 great-great-grandchildren.

Correction:

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 C. 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 Bearwalk Rd, Maysville, KY 41056; one daughter, Jeanine Applegate; two sons, James Cropper and Dennis Cropper; 6 grandchildren; 4 great-grandchildren and 2 great-great-grandchildren.

Correction:

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

**Hoosier United Methodists together**

**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 our denominational conferences and assemblies. 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 Kaye 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 worship 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 unprecedented two years 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 differences.”

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. Ganger

---

**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 else, how many Valentines will be sent out for Valentine’s Day? Ponder 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 others 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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name(s)</th>
<th>Address</th>
<th>City</th>
<th>State</th>
<th>ZIP</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phone number</td>
<td>(AC______)</td>
<td>Cell phone</td>
<td>(AC______)</td>
<td>e-mail address</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local church of</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

**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.

Kaye 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 – Let’s Establish A Priority to Tell Our Story – the weekend of Feb. 29–March 1 at United Methodist-related University, Indiana University, in Bloomington.

They will be joined by Dr. Edie 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 World Methodist Church Choir of Franklin will provide special music for the evening.

Cost is $50 per person including materials and meals. 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** 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** 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-Wesleyan tradition and representing more than 76 million constituents in 138 countries, through its Division of World Evangelism is challenging members 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.

---

**LEAP Year**

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 Kaye 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 worship 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 unprecedented two years 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 differences.”

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. Ganger
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 was to send “dis- ciples of Jesus Christ for the trans- formation of the world,” the cen- ter 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 lat- er this spring.

According to the Design Team’s draft report introduction, “Creating a new Indiana Confer- ence is all about these five prac- tices of a fruitful annual confer- ence (adapted from the book, Five Practices of Fruitful Congregations by Robert Schneid):”

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 dis- tricts as they re- source 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-dist- rict plan was rec- ommended by both cabinets meeting in a retreat last month and adapted by the Imagine In- diana Design Team.

4. Care for Clergy
   The team plans to recommend a combined benefits structure which protects current eligibil- ity, raises clergy benefits to the higher levels of ei- ther preceding conference, and provides support systems to en- hance effective clergy leadership. In addition, the team will further recommend that all clergy partici- pate 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 pro- vide a vehicle for all of us to make a difference here in Indi- ana and literally around the world. Using these principles of orga- nization, the Imagine Indiana De- sign 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 W.V. Owen at the Indiana Area office at 317-924-1321 or by e-mail at imagineindiana@inareaumc.org.
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. 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 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 serves as the director of First UMC, 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.

Over 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.

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 has not added 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, meet and greet events.

“It’s not about anything but to glorify God,” said Parrish.


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 explorers explored that question during a Jan. 25 panel discussion on “Divestment, the Middle East: The Quest for Justice” 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.

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

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

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

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

About $5 million of the denomination’s 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 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.

“He has our support. 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.

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 conferencing” 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.umc.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 Ashbury 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 Mission” with Thomas Thangaraj (Church of South India) of Candler School of Theology; and “No Bootstrap Theology: How to Be Missional in Mission” with Beth Felker Jones of Huntington University.

The Showers Symposium is free, however those who wish to register must do so by March 17.

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 a tee lunch and a copy of the book.

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

TechTalk Workshop looks at technology and congregations

Days and 40 Bytes: Making Technology Work for Your Congregation, Armstrong and Spiegel will 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 Scobberton 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 a tee lunch and a copy of the book.
Methodists unite to address the world’s core needs

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 conferences – 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.”

“We’re 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 News 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.”

He also emphasized that the budget represents only 1 percent of the net spending of the entire denomination and cautioned against skipping 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.
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 de- legations 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 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 Leadership Development and Connectional Ministries.

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

The Rev. Timothy B. Nicholas of the Illinois Great Rivers Conference. Nicholas 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 to be elected as bishop. Balloting 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 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 to the east to the Dakotas in the west.


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 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 every- thing. He noted that 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, not legislative in nature, said the Rev. Larry Hollow, chief executive of United Methodist Communications, who welcomed participants to Fort Worth. “We are taking a different approach,” he said.

Briefings ranged from hot-button issues such as Mid- dle 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 Congregations” – practices designed to set a more civil tone of discussion and listening in the legislative process.

Participants also toured the convention center and re- ceived an update on the challenges of housing all delega- tion groups in downtown hotel market. Many of the 1,500 delegates and staff members will be housed in outlying hotels and must commute daily to the conven- tion center. Two to three thousand visitors also will attend parts of the meetings and worship services.

Marta Aldrich serves as news editor of United Method- ist News Service.
WASHINGTON (GBCG) – 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 of issues including global warming, poverty, health care, drug sentencing reform and ending the war in Iraq. All of these priorities support empowerment of local United Methodists and Global Ministries-UMCOR (SIC) of Carmel, Ind., the Rev. 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 #104-208); and reauthorization of the “State Children’s Health Insurance Program” (SCHIP).

- **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 Meford, 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 base should remain in that country.

Hoosiers on the General Board of Church and Society include: Albert Bohnstedt (NIC) of Carmel, 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
cate@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 aspect of this experiment intrigues me. After identifying an active hive, scientists placed a bowl of sugar water about 50 feet away. 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 near the sugar water. The following day the bowl was placed 150 feet 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 swarmed to the 350 foot mark, waiting to be fed at the new nourishment site.

Henderson Settlement is struggling financially
By Jean Brindel, Capital Fund Team
North Indiana Outdoor Ministry Project
brindel@ibcglobal.net

God works in wondrous ways.
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 Frankfort, Ky. We believe that Henderson Settlement is struggling financially. The settlement is even having problems making payroll. So, any of you who love Henderson Settlement, this is the time. By Jean Brindel, CFRE, AFP, serves as senior pastor of Saint Matthew United Methodist Church in York City.

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.

I don’t watch much network TV, but I am aware of the fact that in the last decade the reality show, “The Biggest Loser,” 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.

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. As 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.

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.
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 life or to choose 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.

More importantly, what does this say to you about being in the midst of change? 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 hear 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 do not give in, who 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.
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 LRF (Lahey Research 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 Indianapolis.

She graduated in 2005 from the University of Indianapolis with a B.A. degree in Pre-Theology and Religious Ministry. The Lacy Institute for Ecumenism is directed by the Rev. Donald Lacy. The University of Indianapolis, Indiana, among other institutions, will receive the LIFE Scholarship monies.

“Bible study and reflection are key to the scholarship,” said the Rev. Robert C. Vail, director of the Harry R. Bopp Dakota Fund for American Missionaries. “LIFE is intended to motivate the student to be ready to assume a pastoral position by providing the student with a good understanding of human relationships and the basic skills needed to be a pastor.”

United Methods 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?” for 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 lead, 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, Pa.,

♦ Southeastern USA: Brentwood United Methodist Church, Brentwood, Tenn.,

♦ 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 transitional area can be a difficult task, however Jill V. 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’s Divinity School in Winston-Salem, N.C.

Crainshaw doesn’t give answers in how to keep one’s faith while strengthening a flailing congregation in a transitional neighborhood, but gives readers a process to follow to revitalize waning congregations in socially-transitioning 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 transitioning 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 neighborhood? 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.

One of the national workshops to be held in Indianapolis

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

By Daniel R. Gangler

“Keep the Call: Leading the Congregation Without Losing Your Soul” by Jill V. Crainshaw has been a helpful resource for congregational leaders who are transitioning in the United Methodist Church. The book provides guidance on how to lead congregations through a process of reflection, consultation, and action.

Crainshaw emphasizes the importance of listening to the community and the congregation before making any changes. She suggests that pastors and church leaders should ask themselves questions about their personal stories and how they relate to the community's stories.

One of the key concepts in the book is the idea of a “theological reflection.” Crainshaw suggests that theological reflection is central to the process of leading a congregation. This involves listening to the sounds of the community and then aligning the church's ministry with those sounds.

Another important aspect of Crainshaw's approach is her emphasis on the importance of storytelling. She encourages congregations to share their stories in order to build a sense of communal identity.

In conclusion, “Keep the Call: Leading the Congregation Without Losing Your Soul” is a valuable resource for congregational leaders who are in a transitional phase. The book provides practical guidance on how to lead congregations through a process of reflection, consultation, and action, while also emphasizing the importance of listening to the community and the congregation.

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 where 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 relief and 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.

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

DEATHS

Phyllis Coy, mother-in-law of the Rev. Bob Denney, pas-

ty of Fairview and Bellefontain 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 dis-

North Indiana Conference to host

VIM team leader training at Kokomo

The Mission Volunteers Resource Team of the North Indiana Conference has scheduled a Vol-

unteer 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 Burke, Fred E. Jr. from no appointment to Liberty Mills, Huntington, 1/1

47111; two daughters, Sally Maish, 344 DaVinci Pass, Indianapolis, IN 46224 or Sum-

North Indiana Conference

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. Supply, Huntington to Local Pastor, Hun-

Eaton, Muncie, 1/1
Reynes, Janie G. from Fort Wayne: Christ, Fort Wayne to Fort

Wayne, 1/1

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 offer-

Newly appointed Advance gifts.

Free offering envelopes and DVDs are available for the One Great Hour of Sharing offering by calling toll-

of VIM training and cultural sensitivity to the family at:


Robert Russell, 83, retired Elder of West Chet-

ter, Ohio, who held several posi-

tions in higher education (SIC), died Jan. 30, 2008. Survivors in-
clude: Wife, Naomi. A memorial service was held Feb. 4 in Fairfield, Ohio. Condolences may be sent to Mrs. Naomi Roland, 8364 Water-

bury 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 grand-

children. Memorial contributions may be sent to Hospice of Volu-

sia/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., Port-

land, IN 47371. Memorials can be

to make 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 Method-

ist Church in Carbon, Ind. Survivi-
ors include: Wife, Sandra Thom-

as, 429 Washington St., Hope, IN 47246; daughters, Karen Bark-
er, Kim Finnette and Kelly Jones; and 8 grandchildren.

Howard Earl Wright, 85, retired minister and former dis-

Apointments include: Wife, Sandra Thomas, 429 Washington St., Hope, IN 47246; daughters, Karen Bark-
er, Kim Finnette and Kelly Jones; and 8 grandchildren.

North Indiana Conference to host

VIM team leader training at Kokomo

The Mission Volunteers Resource Team of the North Indiana Conference has scheduled a Vol-

unteer 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 leader-

s need to attend this important event.

In order to help us keep our promise that 100 percent of every offer-

gie of the Rev. Bob Denney, pas-

ty of Fairview and Bellefontain 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 dis-

Eastern United Methodists together

World Christian Fund, 1310 S. Howes, Lafayette, 1/1
Johnson, Vera. from Christ, Calu-

mec, 1/1
Johnson, Tampa first appointment to

Lowell, Calumet, 1/1/07
Skiba, Ann Elaine. from no ap-

pointment to Nobles Chapel, Evansville, 12/1/07
Stiles, Kevin from Indianapolis: Cumberland, Indianapolis East to Shirley-Willkinson Commu-

nity, Rushville, 1/1
Taylor, Seth. from Rushville: Wesley, Rushville to no appointment, 12/31/07
Underwood, Harold. E. from Clarks: Ohio Falls, New Al-

bany to no appointment, 1/1
Walker, Ronald Dean from Co-

lumbus: Asbury, Columbus to

Leave of Absence, 1/31

Roni Schwartz, plus $25 for a VIM Training

event. Krug will be the trainer for this

Blvd. in Kokomo, Ind. Penny

11 Great Hour of Sharing

www.inareaumc.org
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;
- 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


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.
- 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

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.