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The people of The United Methodist Church

April 2006
Volume 36
Number 4

University of Indianapolis inaugurates new president

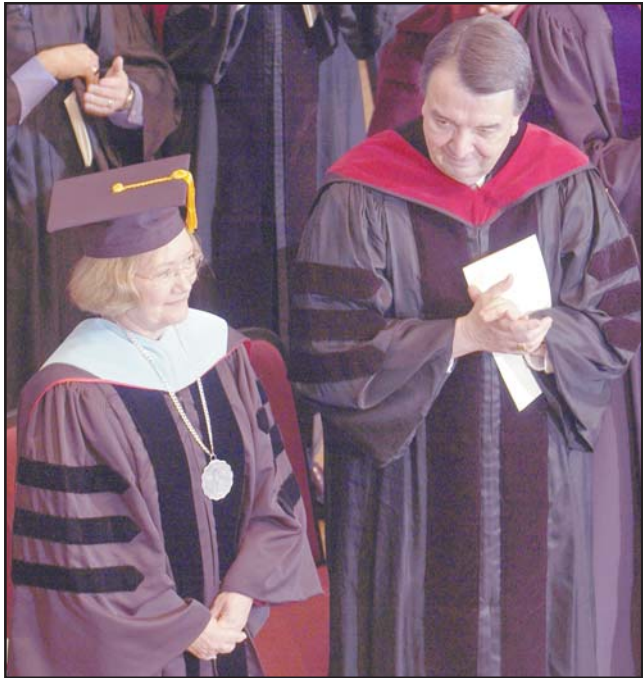


Photo courtesy University of Indianapolis
Bishop Coyner and other dignitaries applaud Dr. Pitts following her inauguration as UIndy's 8th president on March 29.

INDIANAPOLIS – Under the theme “Passport to Possibilities,” the University of Indianapolis inaugurated Dr. Beverly J. Pitts as its eighth president on March 29. The late-afternoon investiture ceremony in the Christel DeHaan Fine Arts Center culminated a day of activity that included volunteer service projects in the community and recognition of ten students awarded international study travel grants.

Pitts joined the university this past July after serving as provost and interim president of Ball State University in Muncie.

Highlights of the Day

Morning – “Passport to Service” volunteer work

Volunteer work was part of the day's activities at various locations around Fountain Square and the university. In keeping with the university motto, “Education for Service,” about 200 faculty, staff and student volunteers spent the morning performing community service projects. Pitts read to children at the UM-related Fletcher Place Community Center preschool on Prospect Street and dropped in on students, faculty and staff as they painted the basement at St. Patrick's Roman Catholic Church on Prospect Street.

A “Passport to the World” luncheon for international study travel grant winners was held at Schwitzer Student Center on the UIndy campus. Ten UIndy students were

awarded \$4,000 grants to cover travel and housing costs for learning opportunities at the university's Athens campus or other affiliated overseas locations. At this luncheon, Pitts hosted the grant recipients and their families.

The Investiture Ceremony was held late afternoon in the Ruth Lilly Performance Hall at the Christel DeHaan Fine Arts Center on campus. Representatives of the central Indiana community, including Bishop Mike Coyner, and various campus constituencies brought greetings to President Pitts. Board of Trustees Chair Christel DeHaan performed the rite of investiture, and Pitts offered her inaugural address.

In the address, she said she would like the United Methodist-related institution to be one of the top private, doctoral-granting, mid-sized private universities in the Midwest. In addition, she talked about the university really being a focal point of the Southside of Indianapolis. She said she thinks UIndy has a commitment to being a good neighbor, to being a good landmark on the city's southside.

Afterward, the campus community and guests celebrated with a reception in Schwitzer Student Center, featuring refreshments, international hors d'oeuvres, live jazz music and a visual presentation highlighting the university's overseas affiliate campuses.

For more information, log on to www.uindy.edu.

Mission volunteers come to Mississippi to be the hope

By Kathy L. Gilbert

BILOXI, Miss. (UMNS) – Six months after one of the worst storms to ever hit the United States, houses are rotting in mold, bent and twisted church signs stand vigil over places where thriving congregations once worshipped and people are in deep grief.

The Rev. Elijah Mitchell, a United Methodist regional storm disaster coordinator, knows many of the people along the Gulf Coast in Mississippi feel forgotten in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. He makes it his daily mission to let them know someone cares.

“I am responsible for 98 square miles of destruction,” he says, describing his job. He puts devastated homeowners together with groups eager to help.

He was assigned to the region by Mississippi Bishop Hope Morgan Ward in October after his two churches, St. Rock United Methodist Church in Waveland and Seashore Mission in Biloxi, were destroyed by the storm.

Working out of a small office in Gulfport's Gateway United Methodist Church, Mitchell and his wife, Miriam, send teams out to homes, churches and camps.

On this day in March, Mitchell has more than 100 people

sleeping in Gateway's Sunday school rooms, halls and sanctuary. A typical day for him starts at 4:30 a.m. and doesn't end until late at night.

The Rev. David Jones, a friend and pastor from Oklahoma, has come to Gulfport to help Mitchell but so far hasn't been able to relieve him from the long days and nights.

“I will do the devotions tonight; that will help him some,” Jones says.

Mitchell is a storm victim as well as the disaster relief coordinator, having suffered the loss of

his parsonage in Biloxi. “Fortunately, I did have a second home,” he says.

The day the storm hit, he was at his second home because he was “just too tired to drive back to this end of town,” he says. He and his family helped evacuate as many church members as possible before the hurricane struck.

“I can remember the first five days after hurricane,” he says. Days of no electricity, of standing in the hot sun for hours to get water, ice and food.

Though many of the stores and restaurants are still out of business

he says, “It has gotten a lot better. If you look at the traffic today you could never tell we were in a crisis state.”

Mitchell worries about the next hurricane season and is trying to prepare. Warehouses were hard to find after Katrina, he says, and they are needed for storing building materials and supplies such as forklifts. Finding housing for volunteers is also a challenge.

A team of volunteers from the Indiana conferences is helping with that problem.

Hoosiers to the rescue

United Methodists in Indiana pledged to build a facility behind Heritage United Methodist Church in D'Iberville, Miss., that will house 40 volunteers. The 50-by-75 foot steel structure was buzzing with folks putting bunk beds together and installing walls the first week of March.

Mitchell says this team from Indiana is helping with one of his biggest headaches-finding room for the thousands of volunteers wanting to come to the state to help.

“People are staying all over the church right now,” says Gary Walla, part of the Indiana team working at Heritage Church. He fears that after a year, the “welcome” might wear off. “They need their

church back,” he says.

Three to six teams will be working to finish the Seashore District Volunteer Center by the end of April. It will probably be needed for relief work for five years, then will become part of Heritage United Methodist Church, organizers say.

The Mississippi Conference has pledged to raise the \$200,000 that will be needed to finish the structure. As of April 5, \$91,060 has been received from Indiana churches as well as several other states, including Mississippi. More than 240 volunteers have registered to work on one-week builds.

Looking ahead

Mitchell says his work has three phases: emergency, relief and long-term recovery. Today, Mississippi is in the second phase. As the teams go out to work, Mitchell tells them the key to success is flexibility. Giving people time to work through their grief is one of the most important tasks mission teams will do, he says.

“I tell them you might not nail a single nail today; you might just listen to their stories.”

Kathy Gilbert serves as a United Methodist News Service news writer based in Nashville, Tenn.



A UMNS photo by Mike DuBose

The Revs. Jim Gentry (left) and Elijah Mitchell (right) discuss construction of the Seashore District Volunteer Center.

Jesus on the loose

On Easter, we are celebrating the fact that Jesus is “on the loose.”

That phrase happened during one of those wonderful serendipitous moments in a children’s sermon. While I was talking with children about Easter and how the women found the empty tomb, I asked them, “What did it mean that the tomb was empty?”

One of the children replied enthusiastically, “It means Jesus is on the loose!”

That child was right. Easter is not about worshipping a Risen Christ who is captured in our stained-glass windows, wonderful choir cantatas, beautiful Easter lilies or even in dynamic sermons proclaiming “Christ is Risen.” No, Jesus cannot be contained in our own celebrations of Easter. He is on the loose! He is out ahead of us! He is already leading the way into new life.

In fact, the message of Easter seems to be, “You just missed him. He was here, but he is already gone again.” The women found an empty tomb, and were told, “He is not here. He is risen.” Peter and the other disciple also ran to the tomb, only to discover that Jesus was already gone. Certainly

Thomas had that experience of missing Jesus, but fortunately got a second chance a week later when Jesus appeared with His disciples.

The whole Easter message is: Jesus is not here; He is not where you expect to find Him; He is already ahead of you, so get going and follow Him!

The disciples were told that Jesus will “meet you in Galilee” just as He had promised. But don’t get out your map. “Galilee” is not just a northern province of Israel where Jesus spent so much of His early ministry with His disciples around the Sea of Galilee. No, “Galilee” is where it always has been – it is the place where Jesus is at work, ministering to people.

Over and over again in the early days, the disciples had to run to catch up with Jesus as He preached, taught, healed and challenged. Why would it be any different after Easter?

Once again, the disciples are told, “You missed Him. He was just here, but He is gone already. He is out working and ministering ahead of you – just like always.”

What do we do with such a Jesus? He



He is out ahead of us! He is already leading the way into new life.

won’t stay long in any one place. He is always moving on to the next place of need. It is just as He always said, “The Son of Man has no where to lay His head.” Jesus is not contained in our best religious expressions; He is on the loose; He is out in front of us, leading us into ministry wherever our “Galilee” might be.

I heard a story a few years ago about a church that voted to open its building to a homeless shelter. This caused quite a controversy in that staid, respectable, religious congregation. In fact, one woman who opposed the idea confronted her pastor in great anger by yelling, “If Jesus knew you were letting those dirty people into our church, He would roll over in his grave!” She had missed the whole point of Easter. Jesus isn’t in His grave. He is on the loose. And He is leading us to do ministry in hard

places, with difficult people, in circumstances that are not easy.

Perhaps the whole history of the church is a long story of our failure to domesticate Jesus. We keep building nice buildings, developing beautiful music and liturgies, and writing impressive theological treatises. We want to understand the Gospel, and even more, we want to contain and control Jesus. But Jesus is “on the loose” – He is alive – He is not here – we just missed Him – already He goes before us.

So, let’s take time to celebrate Easter. But then let’s hurry on to try to catch up with Jesus, because He is still on the loose.

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

Calling all young clergy

This message is for all of the young clergy of The Indiana Area of the United Methodist Church. You are a “young clergy” if you are young in age or young in years of ministry. You are a “young clergy” if you think you are.

I am inviting the young clergy to meet with me for conversation prior to our two Annual Conferences in June. In particular, I want to hear from our young clergy – their thoughts, hopes, dreams and concerns about the recommendation coming to each Annual Conference for a kind of “test vote” on merging to form a new Indiana Conference. Since it will be the young clergy who have to live with whatever plans are made, I want to meet with our young clergy and to hear from them.

So, here are two options, and young clergy are welcome to attend either time:

◆ Thursday, May 18, 10 a.m. to 12 Noon, at the South Indiana Conference Office in Bloomington

◆ Thursday, May 25, 9:30 to 11:30 a.m., at St. Lukes UMC in Kokomo (700 East Southway Blvd.)

I look forward to meeting with our young clergy at one of these two gatherings.

Bishop Mike Coyner

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HOOSIER UNITED METHODISTS

together

April 2006 Vol. 36 No.4

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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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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The miracles of Easter continues as we give of ourselves for others

Watching the Seashore District Volunteer Center come into being through e-mail and pictures sent from D'Iberville, Miss., has been a delight. Seeing the energy of more than 150 volunteers to date run wire and pipes, construct walls and beds, hang doors and windows, and finish floors during these months of Lent has been a resurrection story fully known by those who have given a week of their lives at their own expense. The building of the center has been a resurrection story.

Completing the center during the Easter season will be the beginning – a resurrection story lasting for years to come as volunteers, who have given of themselves so freely, use the center to help the people of Mississippi rebuild their homes and their lives.

Hopefully, by the end of the project later this month, this new center will be paid for through the

The Seashore District Volunteer Center becomes a miracle that will ignite more miracles for years to come.

generous gifts of thousands of Hoosiers and hundreds of churches as an example of what happens when we pull together. As we go to press, more than \$100,000 is still needed to complete the project.

The lives of volunteers, who have traveled south, not only for the volunteer center build, but also to assist other Hurricane Katrina survivors rebuild their homes, have changed. Our collective gratitude could never express enough our indebtedness to these who have placed their energy in the lives of others first unknown to them, now lifetime friends.

This whole Hurricane Katrina recovery experience has been and

will continue to be a rich example of God's reign in our lives – light to the darkness experienced by our brothers and sisters in Mississippi, Louisiana and Alabama.

Jesus performed more than 30 miracles as recorded in the New Testament Scriptures. If we reason that a miracle is an unexplained action out of the ordinary for the good of another, the Seashore District Volunteer Center becomes a miracle that will ignite more miracles for years to come. We have made a difference in the name of Christ.

Hoosiers have been involved with other miracles this Lent as well. Here are a few:

- ◆ Darfur moves slowly towards peace from actions of the international community sparked by people of faith (see page 6);
- ◆ There has been no expansion of legalized gambling by the General Assembly;
- ◆ More communities this year than last year across Indiana have become smoke-free in their public and work places;
- ◆ Katrina evacuees here in Indiana sponsored by United Methodists statewide are putting their lives back together;
- ◆ The dream of a new home for homeless women to gain control and direction of their lives is becoming a reality at Ruth's House in Evansville (page 4);
- ◆ A former Indiana basketball



- coach has established a Web service to help place high school athletes in university program (page 7), and
- ◆ A sense of hope for the future of the church in Indiana emerges in shared ideas between our two annual conferences as we consider the emergence of a new conference during each annual conference session in June (page 5).
Easter ushers in a season of hope, new life and vitality.

Join in the celebration as you read the pages of your *Hoosier United Methodists Together*. We are about miracles as we, members of Christ body, give of ourselves for the furtherance of God's reign. Christ is risen.

Welcome.
– Daniel R. Gangler

Volunteer center work project continues to be on schedule

By Gary Walla

D'IBERVILLE, Miss. – By the end of March, volunteers completed inside painting, basic heating and air conditioning, installed phones, wi-fi and TV, and painted all the bunk beds. The installation of the cabinets is partially complete along with electrical and plumbing. With its new coat of paint, the facility is taking on a new personality.

The last week of March, Heritage United Methodist Church was home to 130 volunteers, including 31 from Indiana, most of them were working on damaged homes needing major repairs and renovation. Construction was ahead enough on the center project that several of the people spent time helping hurricane survivors in the surrounding area of the church repair their homes.

The stories are heartbreaking

and volunteer help highly appreciated. One woman, "Miss Nellie," kept calling the volunteers her "Angels from the Lord." Her home had been severely damaged, and she had no way to repair it until the volunteers from the UMC came to help her. The stories of thankfulness and renewed hope are endless.

Members and staff of the Heritage UMC have given much to the community by opening their church to volunteers and arranging to help those in need. The church's sanctuary and Sunday school rooms are filled with volunteers needing a place to sleep. The Volunteer Center, being built by Hoosier United Methodists, will take off the pressure by providing a place to live for the volunteers that will be needed to help people in this community return to normal lives. The center is a gift that will be appreciated for many years.



Photo courtesy of Gary Walla

Work continues this month on the Seashore District Volunteer Center in D'Iberville, Miss. More than 160 volunteers have each given one week.

Al Dalton, project manager, recently reviewed current costs and future estimates, and has confidence that the project will be able to be finished within the original cost estimate of \$200,000.

Dalton said, "We are thankful for all the people and churches that have given money to the Indiana UMC Foundation for this project to date and are prayerful that gifts collected during the Lenten peri-

od are forwarded quickly so we can pay our suppliers in a timely manner. Dalton said it would be appropriate to say, "We are paying from hand to mouth."

The project continues to be on schedule for an end of April finish. The project has had wonderful participation by volunteers from all parts of Indiana and some beyond Indiana. The volunteers have been a wonderful group of people working together. The facility is beautiful thanks to our experienced and talented painters and will be quite functional.

It has been a joy to work with all these very giving people and to visit with the volunteers from other states that are helping rebuild this community.

Gary Walla, a member of St. Luke's UMC, Indianapolis, serves as one of three construction coordinators for the volunteer center build.

Bishop, Foundation thank congregations for support

Indiana Area Bishop Coyner and the Rev. Jim Gentry, executive director of the Indiana Area United Methodist Foundation, thank these congregations (in order of service) who have sent vol-

unteers to build the Seashore District Volunteer Center in D'Iberville, Mississippi during the month of March. April volunteers will be listed in the next issue of *Together*.

Included in March were 34 congregations: **Calvary Chapel**, Danville; **St. Luke's**, Indy; **Louise**, Louise, Miss.; **Mt. Zion**, Crawfordville; **Avon**, Avon; **North**, Indy; **Southport**, Southport; **Brownsburg Christian Church**, Brownsburg; **Trinity**, Arcadia; **Castleton**, Indy; **Plainfield**, Plainfield; **First**, Clinton; **Acton**, Indy; **Meridian Street**, Indy; **New Hope**, Salem; **Cross Plains**, Cross Plains, Tenn.; **Park Place**, Anderson; **Paoli Presbyterian Church**, Paoli, Pa.; **Adams**, Adams, Tenn.; **Old Bethel**, Indy; **Paw Paw**, Kokomo; **Denver**, Denver, Ind.; **First**, White House, Tenn.; **South Whitley**, South Whitley; **Irvington**, Indy; **Forest**, Forest; **First**, Sheridan; **Salem**, Evans-

ville; **Bradley**, Greenfield; **Covington**, Covington; **Webb Chapel**, Logansport; **Elk River**, Elk River, Minn.; **West Street**, Shelbyville; and **Bible Church**, Brownsburg.

Coyner and Gentry also extend their thanks to these congregations, districts and conference for their generous contributions to financially support the Seashore District Volunteer Center. They include in chronological order of giving (church and city): **St. Luke's**, Indy; **First**, Logansport; **Walkerton**; **Red Bird Missionary Conference**; **Heritage**, D'Iberville, Miss.; **Carmel**; **Kniman**, Monon; **First**, Elmwood; **Plainfield**; **Shiloh**, Jasper; **Acton**, Indy; **Trinity**, Rockport; **Solomon Creek**, Syracuse; **Liberty Cen-**

ter, Denver; **Forest**; **First**, Connersville; **Trinity**, Arcadia; **St. Mark's**, Bloomington; **Central**, Evansville; **Twelve Mile**; **Seelyville**; **Bicknell**; **Mt. Sinai**, Aurora; **Lawrence**, Indy; **First**, Noblesville; **Huntertown**; **Brookside**, Indy; **Cromwell**; **Demopolis (Ala.) District**; **St. Paul**, Bloomington; **Trinity**, Berne; **Indianapolis West District**; **Chapel Hill**, Indy; **Center Chapel**, Muncie; **College Ave.**, Muncie; **First**, Mooresville; **Solomon Creek**, Syracuse; **Richvalley**, Wabash; **Castleton**, Indy; **Mulberry**; **First**, Bluffton; **Acton**, Indy; **Salem**; and **McGrawsville**, Amboy. Numerous individuals also contributed to this project, but because of privacy laws, cannot be printed here.

Volunteers needed in South Indiana to rebuild after tornado

The Rev. Randy Anderson, chairperson of Southwest Indiana Long Term Recovery Committee, is organizing volunteers for construction work. Skilled workers are needed in all areas of construction from laying the foundation to the finish work.

There are buildings that need to be rebuilt, including Baker's

Chapel UMC, resulting from the Nov. 6 tornado.

If you are interested in working as a volunteer on these projects, contact the Rev. Randy Anderson or Bridget Noss at the Disaster Recovery Office at 812-490-6806 located at Epworth UMC in Newburgh, Ind. Anderson said that all areas are cleared except one.

What makes compulsive gamblers continue?

By Robin Russell

The Rev. Janet Jacobs, director of Gambling Recovery Ministries in the South Indiana Conference, says it's a combination of the feeling of excitement and well-being they get.

"It's the sounds, the sights – and their sense of peace and escape. You get all that wrapped up at one time," she said.

Jacobs is the "go-to" person in the UMC for help with gambling recovery. She trains clergy and laypeople to help with gambling addictions. It's difficult to treat, because it doesn't involve a substance like alcohol or drugs.

"It's a mind addiction. They build up a tolerance to the high. It gets to the point where the higher the risk, the higher the thrill."

When it becomes pathological, a gambler shows signs of magical thinking: Their next bet will wipe out all their debts.



Jacobs

Compulsive gamblers struggle constantly to hide their habit and find money to pay their debts. It all comes crashing down when a gambler finally hits bottom. That's when the real work of recovery begins, she said.

"The trust level of the family, the employer has been totally blown out of the water. It's very, very difficult. Then there's the money they owe, which exacerbates the whole thing. Money can be replaced, but trust is harder.

Those who enter Gamblers Anonymous have the most success in recovery, she said.

"There is no cure. Relapse is always possible. Once you are addicted, you have that problem for the rest of your life. But life can be so much better in recovery. It's bringing that abundant life to so many folks."

Here are some resources:

- ◆ Louisiana Association on Compulsive Gambling operates

"There is no cure. Relapse is always possible."

– Janet Jacobs

C.O.R.E., a state-financed, in-house treatment program for addictive gamblers, in Shreveport. Call 877-770-STOP.

- ◆ Gamblers Anonymous has meetings nationwide, as well

as a list of 20 questions to determine if you're a compulsive gambler. See www.gamblersanonymous.org/ or call the hotline, 504-431-7867.

Casino study details cost, benefits to state

Riverboat casinos cost Indiana \$1 million worth of crime each week, according to an analysis of Indiana's casino industry commissioned by state lawmakers. Overall, however, the study found the state's 10 gambling boats provided a net benefit of more than \$700 million for the fiscal year that ended in June 2005 (*Indianapolis Star*).

The analysis, intended to present a neutral view of gambling in Indiana, concluded what many in the industry have long contended:

the costs, including bankruptcies and poor mental health, are significant but are far overshadowed by the \$763 million of additional yearly tax revenue that the casinos generate. But, considering the relatively short amount of time given to Indianapolis-based consultant Policy Analytics LLC to do the study – seven months – the results likely are not the last word in Indiana's ongoing debate over legalized gambling.

The state had the fourth-largest casino revenue in fiscal year

- ◆ Gambling Recovery Ministries has treatment programs for compulsive gamblers and recovery training for church leaders. See www.grmumc.org/.

Robin Russell serves as managing editor of The United Methodist Reporter based in Dallas, Texas. This story is reprinted with permission from the March 17, 2006 issue of The United Methodist Reporter © 2006.

2005, behind Nevada, New Jersey and Mississippi. (*Howey Political Report DailyWire*).

The report, "A Benefit-Cost Analysis of Indiana's Riverboat Casinos for FY2005," was presented March 7 in the Indiana House of Representatives by Rep. Peggy Welch of Bloomington and Rep. Ralph Ayres, a United Methodist, of Chesterton. Both requested the study last year. A PDF copy of the report is available online at www.in.gov/legislative/igareports/agency/reports/IGC02.pdf.

Recovery residence for homeless women planned for Evansville

EVANSVILLE, Ind. – An Evansville faith-based organization plans to build transitional housing for drug and alcohol addicted, homeless women.

The Reflecting Waters ministry is taking on the mission of creating a compassionate environment where addicted individuals can rebuild their lives. The residence, called Ruth's House, will help women meet the difficult challenges of recovery.

The new home will house each year up to 24 women living out a recovery lifestyle. The six-month

Each resident will find a stable and supportive environment...

program includes: counseling, finding and maintaining employment, learning the discipline of money management, and developing a strong support system through local 12-step programs. The model was designed from the highly successful Samaritan Inns of Washington, D.C. As partners with Samaritan Inns, Reflecting

Waters will benefit from that organization's 20 years of experience and expertise.

At the present time, alcohol and drug professionals have few housing options for their clients in the Evansville area — a problem common to many other communities, as well. Ruth's House, to be built at the corner of Governor and



Photo courtesy of Reflecting Waters

Here is an architect's drawing of Ruth's House for homeless women which organizers hope to begin building in August.

Walnut Streets, will fill a need in the Greater Evansville area for transitional housing. Organizers say Ruth's House will be more than just living space. Each resident will find a stable and supportive environment where her hopes for becoming a physically and spiritually strong woman can be

freer to be all God created her to be. Reflecting Waters, Inc. began with the vision of the Rev. Ruth E. Milgate, an Indiana United Methodist pastor who is now retired. Upon her first retirement, Ruth spent a

year as a live-in innkeeper in a women's residence of the Samaritan Inns in Washington. As an innkeeper she was part of a community of caring people who assisted 21 out of 26 women in reclaiming their lives. Upon returning to Evansville, and after much meditation and prayer, Milgate realized that instead of another retirement, God was calling her to begin a ministry like the Samari-

tan Inns in Evansville. After four years, Reflecting Waters has become incorporated and has its own 501(c)3 tax exemption status. The property on which Ruth's House will be built also is tax exempt.

Reflecting Waters' "Shared Hope" goal is raising \$600,000 during the next six months. Organizers hope to begin building in August. This amount covers the building, furnishings and first year's operating expenses.

Reflecting Waters has received \$170,000 to date with another \$50,000 pledged. The Evansville District of The United Methodist

Church has designated this ministry as a mission outreach project. Milgate told *Together* that donations, prayers, questions, calls and contributions are welcomed.

For more information, contact Reflecting Waters, P.O. Box 4204, Evansville, IN 47724, call 812-455-2007, e-mail ruthshouse@reflectingwaters.org or log on to www.reflectingwaters.org.



Milgate

United Methodists to celebrate Native American Ministries Sunday, April 30

Kendra Juarez, 10, loves her church family, and she shows it. Whether she is singing at worship or enjoying a cookout with her church friends, Kendra's attitude says, "I know I am a child of God, and that's wonderful!"

"We want to give our children

a spiritual message – and to help them maintain their culture," notes Betty Weston, co-coordinator, Native American United Methodist Gathering in Tempe, Ariz. "We try to give our children guidance and to be examples for them. As they become more involved in the church, their voices are heard."

The Native American Gathering provides a spiritual base and a support system for Kendra and her family, whose heritage is of the Pima Tribe.

Kendra's mother struggles with the daily challenges of parenting. Weston assures her: "I encourage her to continue to believe and to praise God. I tell her: Your church family is here for you, and I am just a phone call away."

Your offering on Native American Ministries Sunday

"See what God has given us, that we should be called children of God"

(1John 3:1a).

nurtures outreach with persons of all ages and provides scholarships for United Methodist Native American seminarians.

"See what God has given us, that we should be called children of God" (1John 3:1a). Help Native Americans like Kendra experience God's love in their lives. Give generously on Native American Ministries Sunday, April 30. Your gift makes a world of difference. Thank you!

For more information on this or other Special Offering Sundays, log on to www.umcsgiving.org.

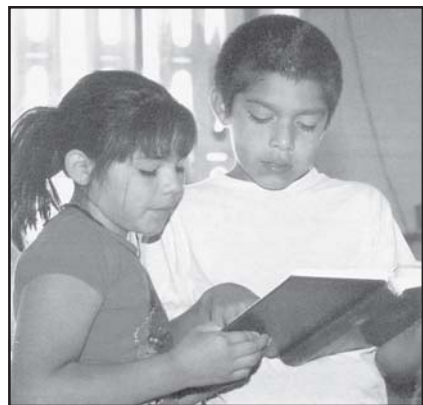


Photo courtesy of UMCOM

Kendra Juarez and Isiah Lopez sing at the Native American United Methodist Gathering in Tempe, Arizona.

South Indiana Conference highlights stewardship during June 8-10 conference at I.U. in Bloomington

BLOOMINGTON, Ind. – “Stewards of God’s Grace” will be the theme for the South Indiana Conference as the 690 United Methodist congregations, their pastors and lay members meet 9 a.m. Thursday, June 8 through Noon, Saturday, June 10 at the Indiana University Auditorium in Bloomington.

According to the tentative agenda of the conference, on site registration begins at 7 a.m. at First United Methodist Church for clergy and I.U. Auditorium for lay members.

The Clergy and Laity sessions will begin respectively at 9 a.m. in the sanctuary of First UMC and the auditorium.

The Rev. Dr. Susan W.N. Rauch, director of conference spiritual leadership development of the United Methodist General Board of Discipleship, will preach during a 1:15 p.m. Thursday memorial service to commemorate the lives of pastors and laity who

have died since the previous annual conference.

Indiana Area Bishop Mike Coyner will open the 38th Annual Session at 2:30 p.m. followed by the usual roll call, rules, Cabinet resolutions and Cabinet reports.

Visual reports will be clustered into five groups during the three-day session including: Administration, Church Growth and Evangelism, Connectional Ministries, United Methodist-related Institutions and Discipleship. Most of the clustered reports will be adjacent to a five-minute Bible Study led by Coyner.

Highlights of the sessions will include: a Carrie Newcomer Concert (www.carriewcomer.com)



Rauch

Thursday evening at 7 p.m., followed by a Missions Event at 8 p.m. featuring Bishop Hans Vaxby, residing bishop for UMC’s Eurasia Area based in Moscow, Russia, and the Rev. Darryl Tate bringing words of thanks from New Orleans.

During the Friday morning worship service at 10:45 a.m., Bishop Coyner will be introducing Course of Study Graduates, Deacons and Elder



Newcomer

candidates, plus recognizing retirees. The Commissioning, Ordination and Passing of the Stole during the Celebration of Ministry Service is scheduled for Friday evening at 7:30 p.m.

A celebration of the 50th Anniversary of Full Clergy Rights for Women in the Methodist Tradition is scheduled for Friday afternoon.

Two Bible studies with Dr. Randy Maddox, a professor of Theology and Wesleyan Studies at Duke



Vaxby

University Divinity School in Durham, N.C., will be held Friday and Saturday mornings. (See January issue page 5 of *Together*.)

An All Conference Dinner will be held in Alumni Hall, Solarium on Thursday at 5:30 p.m.

For more information about the South Indiana Annual Conference Session, log on to www.sicumc.org or call 800-919-8160.



Maddox

South Indiana Conference invites laity to submit sermons for contest

Each year the South Indiana Conference Board of Laity offers the opportunity to all laity of the South Indiana Conference to express thanks and praise to God by submitting a sermon manuscript for judging. The theme is “One in Spirit, All in Ministry: In the Spirit of Worship.”

Manuscripts are judged on how well the theme is followed and developed; how well stories and illustrations are used as well as the use of creative writing techniques. The author will present the winning manuscript at the Laity Session of the South Indiana Annual Conference on Thursday, June 8.

Two other manuscripts will be given Honorable Mention. By sharing your stories of faith, discipleship and commitment with

our Conference, we can honor Christ and His mission. Please share this opportunity with your congregation members and encourage others to participate.

For more information, please contact Bob Pimlott, contest chair, at 812-273-3081 or e-mail apimlott@venus.net. Manuscripts are to be sent to Ike Williams, Conference Lay Leader, 1515 Cool Creek Drive, Carmel, IN 46033-2318. Include your name, address, phone number, local church name and district name on a cover letter.

Manuscripts will be assigned a number and judged anonymously by the selection committee. The winners and two runners up will be notified by May 21. **All entries must be postmarked by April 25.**

South Indiana to quilt ‘Our Life Together’ for Conference

Each church in the South Indiana Conference is invited to send a six-inch square of fabric to be symbolically joined with those from the other churches and made into an altar table covering used at the South Indiana Annual Conference June 8-10 in Bloomington.

Please consecrate it during a worship service, with prayer that together as a body of Christ throughout the South Indiana Conference, we might be able to do great things. This also is an

opportunity to tell people about the connection we all have with each other.

The fabric square, of any color or pattern, can be sent to Lynn Renne, Aldersgate UMC, 5130 Lincoln Ave., Evansville, IN 47715, or brought to “Our Life Together” in Bloomington on April 25, when the offering of the fabric squares will be used during the worship service.

Any questions? E-mail Lynn at L.Renne@aol.com or call her at 812-477-7816.

North Indiana Conference considers stewardship during annual gathering June 1-3

The North Indiana Conference of The United Methodist Church has chosen the theme “Stewards of God’s Grace” for its annual session at West Lafayette, June 1-3 in Purdue University’s Elliot Hall of Music.

According to the tentative schedule for the session, clergy and their spouses will meet the evening before conference on May 31 in the Purdue Memorial Union Ballroom for a clergy dinner followed by a closed session for clergy and a spouses’ gathering.

A “Before You Begin” seminar for newcomers is scheduled to be held at 7 a.m. on Thursday, June 1 in room 84C of the Union. Registration opens at 8:30 a.m. in Elliott.

Indiana Bishop Mike Coyner will call the first plenary session to order at 9:30 a.m. The opening session will include “Teaching Moments” by Dr. Randy Maddox, professor of Theology and Wesleyan Studies from Duke University in Durham, N.C. Maddox, a

Wesley scholar who will be teaching throughout the three-day conference.

Maddox presentation will be followed by the Memorial and Communion Service to celebrate the lives of conference members who have died since last conference. The Rev. Jean Brindel will be preaching.

Thursday afternoon will be spent in conference groups. Each group will discuss the camp design team, futuring including merger discussions and “John Wesley and Stewardship” with Maddox.

The second plenary session will be held Thursday evening at 7 p.m. in Elliott.

For supporters of Operation Classroom, Friday will begin early with a 7 a.m. breakfast in the Union. The third plenary session begins at 8:30 a.m. in Elliott with Maddox teaching “John Wesley’s Understanding of Grace.” Much of the morning session will be spent on futuring discussions.

The fourth plenary will begin

at 2 p.m. with another teaching moment by Maddox – this one about “John Wesley’s Understanding of Salvation.” An hour-long presentation will follow by the Camp Design Team with a vote on the proposals presented during the presentation. Other shorter reports and presentations also will be presented.

An All Conference Celebration is scheduled for Friday at 6 p.m. in the Union Ballroom. Conference Lay Leader Kayc Mykrantz will speak.

The fifth session begins Saturday at 8:30 a.m. with a report on the Louisiana recovery process and a major report by the Council on Finance and Administration. Retiring clergy will be recognized at the close the session.

After lunch, a commissioning and ordination service is scheduled for 1 p.m. with an outdoor reception for new retirees and ordinands.

For more information about the North Indiana Conference session, log on to www.nicumc.org.

North Indiana Conference pension plan changes coming in January

Beginning January 1, 2007, all clergy appointed to churches in the North Indiana Annual Conference who are now in the Ministerial Protection Plan (MPP) will be enrolled in the Clergy Retirement Security Program (CRSP). CRSP replaces MPP effective January 1, 2007.

The Conference Board of Pension is hosting workshops for Participants on the new CRSP and UMPIP programs twice this Spring and twice in the Fall. We

invite Active Clergy to attend one of these workshops to learn more about the benefits of the New CRSP program. General Board of Pension and Health Benefits personnel will be leading the workshops and will illustrate and answer questions about the Plan Benefits of both the Clergy Retirement Security Program and the new United Methodist Personal Investment Plan. In addition, we have included some brief informa-

tion about CRSP.

More information will be available at the workshop and at the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits Web site, www.gbophb.org. Here are workshops locations, dates and times. April 19 – Dayton UMC, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.; April 20 – Hanfield UMC, Marion, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.; Nov. 8 – Valparaiso First UMC, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.; and Nov. 9 – Columbia City UMC, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.

Trips to Africa also being planned for this year

Operation Classroom plans ingathering at each Indiana annual conference session this spring

Operation Classroom, a mission outreach of the Indiana Area to Liberia and Sierra Leone, plans to hold an ingathering of supplies during each of the two Indiana Annual Conferences June 1-3 at Purdue University in West Lafayette for the North Conference and June 8-10 at Indiana University for the South Conference. The truck will be parked near each conference site and will be open all day Thursday, Friday and until 10:30 a.m. on Saturday.



Supplies needed are white anti-dust chalk, copy paper, YES (elementary and secondary) and ET kits, notebooks, and other school supplies. Also needed are medical supplies including vitamins, Tylenol, Band-Aids, cough medications, rolled bandages, toothbrushes, toothpaste, light blankets, soap, etc. For more information, check the Operation Classroom Web site at www.operationclassroom.org.

VBS Mission Projects

Operation Classroom also announces that the Vacation Bible School mission projects selected for this year will be:

1. Soccer balls, kickballs, volleyballs and basketballs (please, no baseballs, softballs or footballs),
2. Table tennis sets (tables can be built in West Africa),
3. Bible story coloring books and crayons,
4. Construction paper,
5. Children's scissors and school glue,
6. Spiral notebooks,
7. Hand-held solar calculators,
8. Band-Aids.

Churches can choose one or more of these projects. For more details, check the Web site www.operationclassroom.org or write to ocmission@frontiernet.net.

Upcoming Trips

Here is a schedule of upcoming trips being planned for Operation Classroom:

- ◆ June 19 – July 8 to Fergusson Memorial School, Moyamba, Sierra Leone, contact Monty Barker at 317-856-6056.
- ◆ June 29 – July 22 to Baoma, Sierra Leone, contact Kay Hess at 765-847-2748.

- ◆ July 7 – 23 to Itabuna, Brazil, contact Carolyn Wagner at 765-436-2805.
- ◆ Oct. 1 – 19 to WPL Brumskine School, Buchanan, Liberia, contact Mona Morgan at 317-844-3759.
- ◆ Oct. 22 – Nov. 7 to Ganta, Liberia, contact Kay and Lamar Ziegler at 317-773-6620.

Those wanting more information and/or application forms relating to any of these teams can contact Carolyn Wagner, co-coordinator of Operation Classroom, at 765-436-2805 or ccwagner@hotmail.com.

Darfur observer shares horrors of modern genocide

By Matthew Oates

FORT WAYNE, Ind. – For six months from September 2004 to February 2005, Brian Steidle was an eyewitness to genocide.

Steidle, a former U.S. Marine, served as an observer with the African Union to monitor the unsteady peace treaty in the Sudan and the situation of Darfur – an area the size of Texas located in western Sudan. “We were there to monitor a ceasefire that was non-existent.”

During his six months in Darfur, he wrote more than 80 reports of which four of them reached the United States government regarding ethnic cleansing, continual brutal attacks against tribes by government-supported militias and a mounting refugee crisis.

Steidle made these statements – complete with graphic photographs, video and audio recordings – during a presentation at Aldersgate United Methodist Church in Fort Wayne on April 2. Steidle was finishing a tour across Indiana that weekend as he continues traveling across America, talking to groups informing them on the situation in Darfur as part of a campaign to raise one million voices to stop the genocide. His tour will culminate at the “Rally for Darfur” in Washington, D.C. on April 30.

Throughout the more-than-an-hour talk, Steidle shared events and stories of those who have no

In 1998, more than 100,000 people were killed and 250,000 starved to death.

voice: from one of his first reports of locating refugees of a 15,000-member village that was attacked who were located an hour away seeking shelter under a giant tree from the hot African sun. During that time, Steidle and others were assessing the humanitarian needs,

even though they were not supposed to do that.

“We felt it was necessary,” said Steidle as the observers were taking notes observing how even newly orphaned one-year-olds were shot, beaten and bruised.

Sudan has had only seven years of peace in

its history since becoming independent from Great Britain in 1956. During the recent 20-year civil war, more than two million people have been killed and more than four million have been displaced. In 1998, more than 100,000 people were killed and 250,000 starved to death, according to Steidle.

He said the primary fighting is between the Sudanese government, which is Arab and based out of Khartoum, and black African tribes throughout the oil-rich south. The government is sponsoring militias called the Janjaweed, who are well-equipped and well-trained.

“Whole tribes have been wiped out,” said Steidle. “The scale of this – those numbers are unfathomable. This is a large scale military operation for the purpose of wiping out all black Africans in Darfur.”

Secondary fighting also continues between two rebel groups, the Sudan Liberation Movement/Army (SLA) and the Justice and

Equality Movement (JEM), against the government. Those two groups are fighting for equal rights in the government. But, they are no match and are ill-equipped and ill-trained.

The actions of the Janjaweed and the Sudanese government against civilians are equally as chilling as the images in Steidle's program and upcoming documentary. Soldiers use sexual assaults and castration on civilians, regardless of gender or age, as well as pluck out eyes and cut off ears in addition to looting, plundering and burning villages and property.

“They do the most horrific things to these people. They do not even look at these people as humans,” he said.

In addition, Sudanese law calls for women who are raped to be punished for having sexual relations outside of marriage. “Rape brings with it all other types of issues,” says Steidle, explaining how the Janjaweed taunt the black Africans for having “lighter-skinned” children, as well as carrying the dishonor of the rape and the child with them.

Refugees abound, not only in Darfur, but also flowing into neighboring Chad. Government soldiers and Janjaweed will go through refugee camps in Chad and internal displacement camps throughout Sudan and harass the Darfurians and destroy the camps.

Current options

According to Steidle, a multinational force from the African Union cannot do the job, as part of the AU charter has to ask permission before entering a country. The United Nations, however,



UMNS photo courtesy of USAID

Two displaced women in North Darfur wait for food. The United Nations estimates 1.6 million have been pushed from their homes in Sudan.

does not have to ask permission. Steidle believes a NATO-sponsored force would be best, with support from the United States.

Even simple steps such as making sure there is security on the ground, hold the leaders accountable in Khartoum and proper nation-building with new leaders by investing in the country and education could start the healing process.

Economic sanctions would be difficult, though. The United States does not do business with the Sudan. The French have larger interests in Chad, which is in a fragile position and could introduce resolutions or even lead a multi-national force.

China receives about five percent of its oil from the Sudan and runs seven out of Sudan's eight oil fields, so economic sanctions at the United Nations would not work since China has veto power.

Grassroot solutions

Steidle is encouraging people of all socio-economic, religious and professional backgrounds to help the Darfurians. The actions are relatively quite simple. He encourages people to write elected officials, especially a handwritten

letter, which has a greater chance of being read.

One of his goals of advocacy is to raise the support of one million people to call on the world to stop the genocide through the “Million Voices for Darfur” campaign, located online by logging on to www.millionvoicesfordarfur.org.

He also encourages people to advocate targeted investment programs, such as the one that helped end Apartheid. Some states and public pension funds are already divesting themselves of companies that do business with the Sudan. The thought is that normally embargoes and divestments hurt people they are intending to help.

“These people already have nothing. There is no difference between any of these two people and any of us,” said Steidle as images of children were shining on the screen behind him. “I honestly believe she should have the chance to be a doctor or a lawyer. She should not have to fear because of the color of her skin.”

Matthew Oates serves as a correspondent to the Hoosier United Methodists Together and is a member of Trinity United Methodist Church in Lafayette.



Former coach continues to make difference in lives of student athletes

By Daniel R. Gangler

Basketball has been his life's occupation. Bringing youth to church is his calling.

Through a new Web site service, this former basketball coach continues to make a difference in the lives of high school athletes and also give them an opportunity to hear the Gospel of Jesus Christ, especially those who have not heard the Gospel or experienced unconditional love and the blessings of Christian living.

Coach Mike Walker, 66, a member of the Middletown United Methodist Church southeast of Anderson, has created a Web site that intends to bring together high school athletes with college and university athletic recruiters. The site, www.PostYourT.org, has something for all involved in the process including: high school athletes, parents, coaches, athletic directors, college and university recruiters and high schools. He says he is in contact with more than 1,000 colleges and universities.

Walker told *Together* during a recent interview, "PostYourT is designed to help all interested high school athletes and college scouts through the recruiting process. Everything possible has been done to make the Web site safe and secure for all players."

Here's how it works

According to Walker's Web site, a High School athlete comes

to the Web site and gives key contact information. The athlete associates him- or herself with a high school in the site's database, if the high school has been sponsored. The student athlete then enters at PostYourT.org information including SAT (college entrance exam) scores, grade point average, activities and college plans. PostYourT then collects the athlete's stats, sends an e-mail to the athlete's high school to



Walker

inform the school the information has been entered. The high school verifies accuracy of the information. PostYourT enters the information, where upon college and university recruiters can search validated student athletes and contact their high school about them.

Part of the show-and-tell for student athletes to display their talents to college and university recruiters will come during the Indiana East-West All Star Basketball Games. Walker is working with organizers to hold these games Friday and Saturday, July 7 and 8 at a place yet to be announced. The tournament will allow 160 of Indiana's top boy and girl players to show their talent in all four classes: 1A, 2A, 3A and 4A. The tournament also will feature prep bands and cheerleaders.

Ron Hecklinski, head boys basketball coach at Anderson High School and a supporter of Walker's program says, "The East/West All-Star Games is a great way for some of the top high school players in the state to

"I believe this ministry will help provide financial resources for educational opportunities to youth who may not otherwise have access to them."

— Jeff Landon, pastor, Middletown United Methodist Church

showcase their talents."

Where's the church?

Where is the church in all of this? Walker realizes that many small-membership United Methodist churches have a weak or no youth programs. He hopes PostYourT will help pastors get involved with their community's high school.

Walker also asks local United Methodists to provide the registration cost of \$100 for their local high school to sign on the PostYourT Web service.

He says, "By so doing, hundreds of students will have the opportunity to post their individual talents to the Web site at no cost to the parent, the student or the schools. Naturally, since the local United Methodist church is the sponsor, their name will be noted in all PostYourT releases as well as posted on the Web site. Consequently, the local pastor and youth leaders will have excellent opportunity to reach out to the un-churched in their high school."

His pastor, the Rev. Jeff Landon, told *Together*, "I believe this ministry will help provide financial resources for educational opportunities to youth who may not otherwise have access to them."



ment on-line services.

Walker also says he is working with the Fellowship of Christian Athletes leaders in the state to sponsor the Saturday morning Coaches Clinic during the weekend of the East/West All-Star Basketball Games this summer.

"The thought here is FCA will be a witness to the coaches," he said. But he assures, "Our program/project is not in any way a part of the FCA. We are working on being 'teammates' to present the Gospel along with the FCA. It is a great organization."

In addition it demonstrates the Church's interest in their lives. I see this as a wonderful method for evangelism and a new pedagogy for the church.

"To me, this is about reaching our youth 'where they are' and being involved in their interests. From there on, with God's grace, our example will be testimony to our message and lead them to Christ."

Landon fully supports Walker's ministry and has counseled him in the spiritual aspects of his recruit-

About Coach Walker

Mike Walker, holds both B.S. and M.A. degrees from Ball State University. He wore three hats while developing the physical education and athletic department of the four-year Clearwater Christian College in Clearwater, Fla. Besides being athletic director and head of the physical education department, he coached soccer, basketball and spring sports.

His high school coaching journey took him and his wife, Linda, and their three children to Florida, California and then back to Indiana, their home. Walker was a first team All-State player on the Crawfordsville, Ind., basketball team that played in the Final Four 1958 Championship Game.

In his own words, he says, "The reason I have a real passion for helping high school players get into college is because, as one of six kids growing up in Crawfordsville, my mom and dad were great parents, but as far as education went, they both dropped out of school in the eighth grade to go to work. My coaches were the only people who encouraged me to dream that I could actually go to college. We also would like to present the Gospel to as many unchurched kids as possible because, personally, I did not attend church until I met my wife, Linda, in college. I am sure there are thousands of kids out there who are in the same boat that I was in. All they really need is a chance, whether that chance is going to college or hearing the Gospel. We want to give them that chance."

Indianapolis youth appears on state's Disabilities Awareness Month poster

INDIANAPOLIS — Connor Wantz, a seventh-grader at Northview Middle School in Indianapolis and the son of the Rev. John and Tami Wantz of Meridian Street United Methodist Church, appeared in March on the governor's March on Disability Awareness Month posters (www.in.gov/gcpd).

Some days, the younger Wantz can't move the left side of his body. Other times, he's as active as any other 13-year-old, playing sports in the Carmel Dads' Club or Allisonville Little League Challenger Baseball League.

Connor Wantz suffers from Alternating Hemiplegia of Childhood, a rare neurological disorder that's been diagnosed in about 100 people in the United States, according to his mom. It causes paralysis on the left side of Connor's body and seizures that are relieved by sleep.

"We don't make a big deal of it," his mom recently told reporters. "He loves life."

March was Disability Awareness Month, and the Governor's Council for People with Disabilities theme was "Band together. Everyone plays a part." Pictured with Connor and constantly by his side is his assistance dog Amali.



Students will hone leadership skills at annual forum

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (UMNS) — Student Forum will not explode overnight, but the chairwoman of the denomination's student movement believes the event will

grow each year now that the annual gathering is not limited to conference delegations. And letting more students explore and hone their leadership skills is a good thing, said Ana Kelsey-Powell, chairwoman of the United Methodist Student Movement



steering committee.

The steering committee plans and organizes the annual gathering, set for May 25-28 at Adrian (Mich.) College. The theme of the conference, which

is planned and organized by college students, is "True Disciples: Learning to Fish." The conference will include leadership training, spiritual formation and networking. To learn more or to register online, visit www.umsm.org/studentforum.

New Liberian president addresses U.S. Congress

WASHINGTON (UMNS) – Addressing a joint session of the U.S. Congress, Liberian President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf asked for continued support as she vowed to show the world “the difference which one woman with abiding faith in God can do.” An active United Methodist, Sirleaf is the fourth African head of state and the eighth woman to address a joint meeting of Congress. She referred to her faith several times during her 35-minute speech on March 15. She is scheduled to meet at the White House March 21 with President George W. Bush and first lady Laura Bush – fellow United Methodists. Mrs. Bush led the U.S. delegation to the Liberian presidential inauguration Jan. 16, along with Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice.



Sirleaf

Africa University, Clemson work together on food production

BLACKVILLE, S.C. (UMNS) – Africa University in Zimbabwe and Clemson (S.C.) University have joined hands to help small farmers in the region improve vegetable production, protect the environment and fight hunger in Africa. “The goal is to help the small farmers increase yields of leafy greens, be good stewards of the environment and produce foods without excessive pesticide residues,” said Gloria McCutcheon, entomologist at Clemson’s Coastal Research and Education Center at Charleston, S.C. The partnership is teaching farmers how to identify the families of insects that are important in biological control of plant pests.



Ethics course has students reflecting on universal themes

MUTARE, Zimbabwe (UMNS) – The Rev. Rosetta E. Ross is focusing on Christian ethics and values during her stint as a visiting lecturer in the Faculty of Theology at Africa University. She is at the university from January to May while on sabbatical from Spelman College in Atlanta. Her Christian Ethics and Values class is one of four core courses – the others are African Studies, Communications Skills and Information Technology – that every undergraduate student must pass to receive a degree. “One of the things that I would hope for all my students is that they would think that having a sense of integrity matters, even though we live in a world where all kinds of people do all kinds of things and they get by, they get what they want,” Ross says.

Young person or group sought for General Conference address

Advance giving program undergoes leadership transition

EL PASO, Texas (UMNS) – The Rev. William T. Carter is preparing for retirement in June after 27 years as the top staff member of the 60-year-old Advance for Christ and His Church, the mission-giving program of the United Methodist Church. Two other veteran staff members retired in late February. “The church owes enormous gratitude to Bill Carter for his leadership of the Advance across almost three decades,” said the Rev. R. Randy Day, chief executive of the United Methodist Board of Global Ministries, which houses the Advance. Carter announced his retirement at the March 9-11 meeting of the Advance Committee, which oversees the program.

United Methodist board creates global education fund

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (UMNS) – The United Methodist Church’s Board of Higher Education and Ministry is creat-

ing a global fund that will help Methodist schools around the world develop leaders and become more effective. The more than 720 Methodist educational institutions outside the United States are looking to the agency and the denomination’s University Senate for assistance in collaborative programs and peer review. The board seeks to raise \$3 million to \$4 million over the next three years for the Methodist Global Education Fund to provide technical support and scholarship aid to those schools. The global education initiative was launched as an unfunded mandate by the 2004 General Conference and was designated as a World Service giving special of the denomination.

UMCOR responds to Midwest tornadoes

NEW YORK (UMNS) – About 100 tornadoes touched down across the Midwestern United States March 12, causing damage across five states. At least 10 deaths were attributed to the storms. The United Methodist Committee on Relief is in contact with the affected annual conferences, offering assistance and emergency funding where needed. Following the tornadoes, Tom Hazelwood, director of UMCOR’s domestic disaster response, contacted each disaster response coordinator in the affected annual conference to support them in their efforts, ensure they have what they need to respond to their communities, and to offer assistance that can come in the form of funding and additional personnel. Donations to the United Methodist relief effort can be marked for “UMCOR Advance #901670, Domestic Disaster Response,” and placed in church offering plates or sent to UMCOR, P.O. Box 9068, New York, N.Y. 10087-9068. Contributions also can be made by phone at 800/554-8583.

Older adults face growing threat of poverty, committee warns

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (UMNS) – Many working men and women will retire after a lifetime of service and come face to face with the shocking reality that the pension

they thought would support them for the rest of their lives isn’t worth the paper it is printed on. The United Methodist Committee on Older Adults is waving “a cautionary flag” before the church, asking that attention be paid to actions that will increase poverty among older Americans and their families. A resolution approved by the committee during its March 11-16 meeting urges “widespread notice and study of the threat to pension benefits throughout the church.” The committee also approved a resolution calling for the church to observe an Older Adult Recognition Day, preferably during May, “to recognize and celebrate the gifts, talents and contributions older adults make within and beyond the local church.”

People of faith pray for peace in Iraq

WASHINGTON (UMNS) – Hundreds of people of faith from Jewish, Catholic, Protestant, Muslim and Sikh traditions gathered March 13 on the west front lawn of the U.S. Capitol to pray for peace and justice in Iraq. Led in prayers from the many religious traditions represented, participants expressed sorrow at the loss of Iraqi, American and U.S. Allies’ lives and made a commitment to be a healing presence in the world. “Our spirits are uneasy. We yearn for the bombings to stop, for the rhetoric to end, for people to be able to move freely through the streets, for the silencing of the tears,” said the Rev. John McCullough, a United Methodist and executive director for Church World Service, during his devotional reflection at the prayer vigil.

Commentary: News stories under-represent women

Women constitute 52 percent of the world’s population, but they make up only 21 percent of people featured in the news. The gender deficit in stories analyzed by a Global Media Monitoring event is a call for restoring women to their rightful place in human interactions, writes Glory E. Dharmaraj, executive secretary for justice education for the Women’s Division, United Methodist Board of Global Ministries.

Volunteers boost spirits in Mississippi

GULFPORT, Miss. (Disaster News Network) – “This all has touched my heart. I’ve gotten so much out of it.”

Those are words from Ed Blakeslee, director of Mississippi United Methodist Hurricane Katrina Response (MUMHKR). Blakeslee is a native of southern Mississippi – his own home was damaged during the hurricane last fall. He said he continues to receive strength through all those who donate their money and time to the recovery effort.

“The people that come here say they get more out of it than us, but that’s hard to imagine,” he said. “This will all take a while, nobody was prepared for this. This is my home.”

Because it was home, responding to his neighbors in need was natural for Blakeslee. A retired power company worker, he re-

“We estimate that 60,000 people lost homes or had major damage down here.”

– Ed Blakeslee

turned to the area to help with the power restoration after evacuating. Then he started organizing relief volunteers out of his own church, Trinity United Methodist.

Since then, Blakeslee has helped spearhead a huge response from the United Methodist Church. The response involves coordinating volunteers, managing casework and organizing home repairs.

Volunteers are busy repairing homes around the region, with more than 17,000 having donated their time in the response since last fall. Some even helped build shower units for the hard-hit resi-

dents of Pearlinton, Miss.

Blakeslee added that part of the MUMHKR effort is reaching out to populations that are not receiving as much help.

“We’re trying to reach out to the Hispanic community with our own Spanish speakers,” explained Blakeslee. “Many Hispanics make up our workforce and we want to know how we can help them.”

The response is also directed at children affected by the disaster. “They’re traumatized by this. They’ve lost their homes, their toys. They may be displaced. So we’re providing emotional support for them.”

Much of the support behind the response comes from 30 Mississippi churches, he noted. Many of those churches house volunteers, and so some of the work has been installing showers in the churches to make them more functional as volunteer housing. Another move is to build a Methodist volunteer village. “We don’t want to burn out our churches with the volunteer housing, we don’t want to use up their support,” said Blakeslee.

Part of that village idea is the construction of a 2,000-square-foot warehouse that would be used to store relief supplies. Blakeslee said the facility would be offered for use to the local churches when the response is done, but would instantly become a disaster response coordination site when another disaster strikes – not that this response is expected to end anytime soon.

“We estimate that 60,000 peo-

ple lost homes or had major damage down here,” explained Blakeslee.

The stories of hurricane survivors and their plight touch Blakeslee, who said he’s not afraid to tear up when talking to people or when recounting their stories. “I spoke with one lady who had water up to the eaves of her home,” he said. “She has two kids and her husband is in the Army serving in Iraq. She didn’t know what to do. I told her, ‘We’ll have to gut your house.’ She told me that she had no money, and I told her, ‘Don’t worry, it’s free.’ Well, then she started crying and so did I.”

Blakeslee does not hesitate when saying who deserves all the credit thus far in the response. “The heroes are the local churches. It’s all denominations and faith groups. They’re doing the work here.” (See page 3.)

My life as a missionary

By Katharine Lehman Walker

As women in The United Methodist Church observe and celebrate the 50th anniversary of full clergy rights for women in the Methodist tradition, we have been remembering the variety of influences which have brought us this far. The task for today is to tell you about my experiences as an unofficial missionary and to remember others who have blazed



Walker

the path for my colleagues and me. I have been privileged to serve God in two countries other than the United States, Antigua and India.

Upon graduation from Indiana University, I went to Antigua, in the Caribbean, where I lived with a Moravian missionary family from Pennsylvania. I taught school at Sunnyside Tutorial School. I was not officially connected to the Mission Board (as it was then called) of The United

The wonderful diversity of people I met and the wide variety of tasks I was called to do would inform and strengthen my skills in ministry.

Methodist Church or other denomination, but my relationship with the Moravian pastor and family gave me a similar reputation. My students were from around the world, including the children of those who were stationed on the US Navy Base. They knew me as a Christian teacher. I did not identify myself at that time as a missionary, yet as I reflect on my call to ministry, I can see its roots in my experiences in Antigua.

In the winter of 1977-78, I was re-evaluating my life and seeking a direction for the future. The earlier call from God was renewed, and I prayed heartily about it. Just as I decided that seminary would be my next adventure, God's decision for me was different. I learned that there was an opening for a residence supervisor at a school in India, so I applied and

was accepted for that work.

From 1978 until 1981, I was a residence supervisor for high school and junior high school girls at Woodstock Christian International School, in Mussoorie, India. During the years in India, my call into ministry was confirmed. I realized that God could actually use women as well as men in pastoral ministry.

The wonderful diversity of people I met and the wide variety of tasks I was called to do would inform and strengthen my skills in ministry. I counseled girls who were far away from their parents; I loved the students through any of the discipline that was enforced; I learned to listen carefully between the words to hear what a person was trying to communicate; I discovered the wonder of God's creation in every culture, language, and race.



I am not alone in the North Indiana Conference as an ordained Elder with missionary experience. The Rev. Ellen Studley, the first female Elder in the Conference, was a missionary in China and a very special friend to me. The Rev. Susan Messenger was one whose journey touched mine. Both of these women offered me insight into the expectations and joys of being in fulltime ministry.

The ministry I have been privileged to participate in as part of the North Indiana Conference has been enriched, empowered and emboldened by my experience, unofficial as it was, as missionary in other places and cultures.

The Rev. Katharine Lehman Walker serves as pastor of the Williamsport United Methodist Church.

BODY, MIND & SPIRIT

A healthy clergy?

By Todd Outcalt

It happens every year when the staff-parish committee reviews the cost of our continually rising health insurance premiums: Eyes widen, gasps go up around the table and inevitably someone asks, "How much did you say?" You've been there, too. You've seen the figures.

There was a time when I used to think that clergy were some of the healthier people in society.

But no longer. The fact is, as a group of United Methodist clergy in Indiana, we are overall a very unhealthy group. Only a small percentage of our pastors go to the free health screenings provided by the South Indiana Conference. Most don't exercise. We work long hours and take few breaks.

I'm guilty, too. There was a time when I would go to the gym every morning and lift weights, do a half-hour on the treadmill, eat right and sleep soundly. But as I've gotten older, I've forfeited many of my earlier healthy disciplines. Already, through the first three months of 2006, I've paid out \$2,500 in health related costs (my portion) that our insurance didn't cover. Why? In part because I have neglected my own health in exchange for the demands of the church.

I don't have to tell anyone that most of us pastors work long hours. We often carry the weight of counseling people through broken marriages, financial disasters, illness, death, joblessness and a growing list of needs that require us to raise lots of money, visit lots of peo-

ple, attend many meetings and care for a wide array of institutional needs. And, all of that, in addition to trying to be attentive spouses and parents.

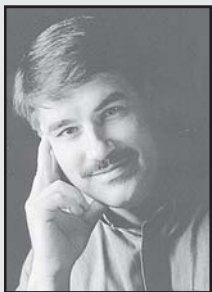
Exhaustion sets in and we just give up on attending to our own needs.

Will you join me in making a change? The fact is, when we don't take care of ourselves, we also are hurting the church and those we love. When we don't eat right, exercise regularly or take vacation and study leaves, we are essentially saying, "The world and the church can't exist without me. I'm the glue that holds everything together."

I challenge my colleagues in pastoral ministry to set a new course. I know I need to do this! I've set a goal to lose 20 pounds by July, to get back to the gym, to make sure I take my time off and vacation days, even if some folks in the church don't like it. Whenever there is a complimentary health screening, I'm there. I'm taking walks with my wife. I'm spending time with my children. I'm getting some fresh air. I'm going to strive to make my health disciplines equal to my spiritual disciplines.

But then, as John Wesley once noted, perhaps this is just another way of being concerned for the whole person and the body of Christ.

Todd Outcalt serves as senior pastor of Calvary United Methodist Church in Brownsburg, Ind. This column can be downloaded as a bulletin insert from www.inareaumc.org by clicking on e-HUM logo in left column, then click on Downloads.



Outcalt

Historical Society recognizes women clergy celebration

INDIANAPOLIS – Roberts Park United Methodist Church, which traces its history back to seven members of a class organized by William Cravens in 1821 (the first religious congregation of any kind in Indianapolis) and which hosted the General Conference in 1856, will host the annual meeting of the Indiana United Methodist Historical Society on Saturday, April 29. The meeting will be a celebration of the 50th anniversary of the granting of full clergy rights to women in the Methodist tradition. Registration for this annual meeting will be at 10 a.m.

In the morning session, the Rev. Howard Boles, pastor of Roberts Park UMC, a native Hoosier, and holder of an M.A. degree in church history from the University of Iowa, will present a lecture on the role of women in Methodist ministry, examining in depth the effect of official ordination on

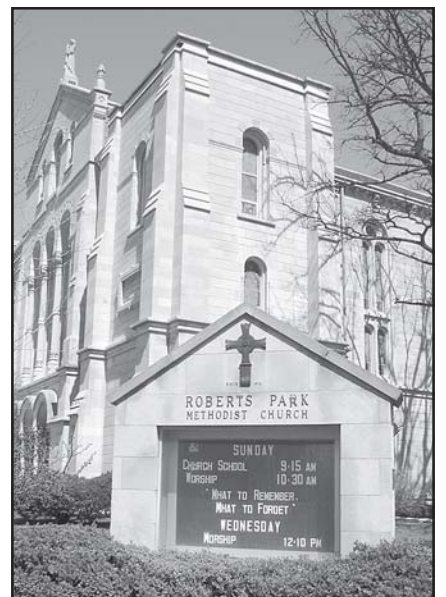
their status and their lives. Boles' other degrees are from the University of Evansville and Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary. A clergywoman will augment Boles' presentation.

After lunch, the history of Roberts Park UMC will be presented in the sanctuary of the church - a church which is a scion of the first church on what is today Monument Circle (Wesley Chapel, built in 1829) and which in subsequent moves of only a few city blocks remained at the city's center.

A fee of \$12 for members of the Indiana United Methodist Historical Society and \$15 for non-members will cover both registration and lunch. Registrations will be accepted by Lois G. Shelton, IUMHS Treasurer, 4189 Troy Road, Washington, IN 47501.

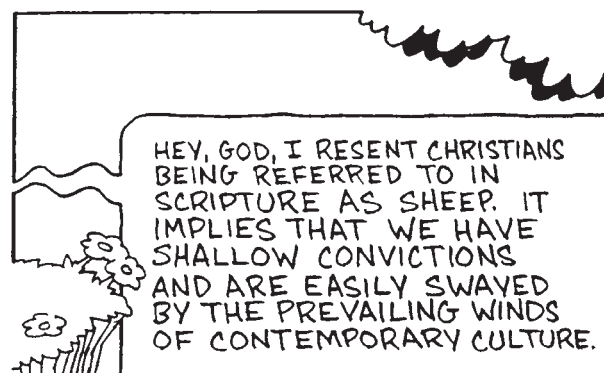
Make checks payable to: IUMHS/Annual Meeting.

For more information, call Phil Williams at 317-787-7110 (home) or 317-615-2513 (business).



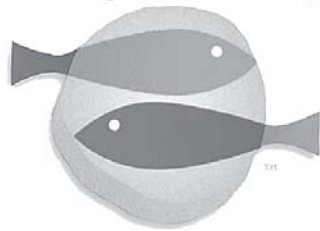
Roberts Park UMC

Pontius' Puddle



Special Sunday Offerings support multitude of ministries

Sharing God's Gifts



Here is a list of the remaining 2006 United Methodist Special Offering Sundays coming your way. Remember, these important offerings fund mission and ministries that depend solely on your generosity.

◆ **April 30 – Native American Ministries Sunday**, to recognize the contributions of Native Americans to society, of-

fering funds, Native American ministries, Urban Initiative and Native American seminary scholarships.

◆ **June 11 – Peace with Justice Sunday**, to call the church to action for peace with justice; offering funds for conference and General Board of Church and Society peace with justice ministries.

◆ **Oct. 1 – World Communion Sunday**, to call the church to be universal and inclusive; offering funds for Crusade and Ethnic Scholarships and Ethnic-In-Servant Training.

◆ **Nov. 26 – United Methodist Student Day**, to call the church to support students as they prepare for life in uniting

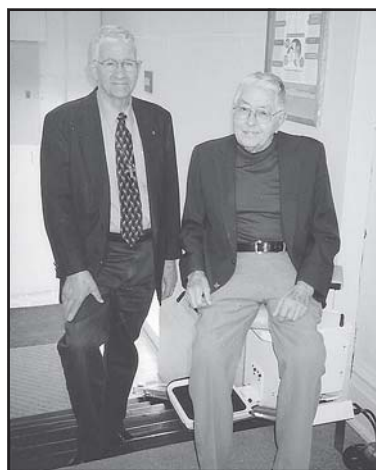
faith with knowledge; offering funds for student scholarships and loans.

Other optional offerings at times determined by conferences and congregations include: Chris-

tian Education Sunday, Disability Awareness Sunday, Golden Cross (health and welfare) Sunday and Rural Life Sunday. Option Sundays without offerings include: the International Day of Prayer for the

Prosecuted Church and Men's Ministry Sunday.

For more information and resource materials about Special Offering Sundays, log on to www.umcsgiving.org.



Greenfield church dedicates new chair lift

Faith United Methodist Church in Greenfield dedicated a new chair lift on Feb. 28. Those who have difficulty climbing stairs now have a smooth ride to and from the worship areas and the fellowship hall. Pastor Marc

Photo courtesy of Faith UMC
Jerry Collier takes a ride as church trustee Glenn Alldredge enjoys seeing the new lift put to use.

Bundy said, "The stairs in our building can no longer take away from people's worship experience or even prevent them from coming to church altogether. We're very pleased with how easy the lift is to use and with how little space it takes up." The lift was purchased entirely from funds given to the church in memory of deceased members.

South Indiana Conference seeks Associate Council Director

With the appointment of the Rev. David V.W. Owen to serve as Executive Assistant to the Indiana Area Bishop, the staff position of Director of Congregational Development for the South Indiana Conference has been reconfigured by the Conference Council on Ministries and the Conference Executive Committee as an Associate Council Director position with a focus on church growth and church development. After receiving recommendations about that position from the CCOM, CG&E and the SIC Human Resources Committee, Bishop Mike Coyner has confirmed the Rev. Gary Schaar in this newly configured Associate Council Director position.

The position now open on the South Indiana Conference staff is the Associate Council Director position previously held by Schaar. The job description and portfolio of this position has included: Conflict management for local churches, and also staffing these conference agencies and groups: Board of Discipleship, Board of United Methodist Men, Ethnic Local Church Concerns Committee, Commission on Religion and Race and the Committee on Native American Ministries. It also has included work with Natural Church Development. The gifts of the candidate to this position will be considered as responsibilities are shared.

Those interested in applying for this Associate Council Director position should send a cover letter and resume to Pat Shidler, chairperson, Conference Council on Ministries, South Indiana Conference Center, 1520 South Liberty Drive, Bloomington, IN 47403-5167 on or before Monday, April 17. Cover letters and resumes may be faxed to 812-336-0216.

Hoosier honored at Black Methodists conference in Dallas

At the 39th Annual National Meeting of Black Methodists for Church Renewal (BMCR) held March 22-25 in Dallas, Texas, Delores H. Casey, a member of Forest Manor United Methodist Church, became the second person from the South Indiana Conference to receive the David L. White Laity Award.

Each year the award is presented to both an outstanding lay person and clergy person exemplifying a demonstrated commitment to the advancement and involvement of the laity within the church. Each recipient receives a commemorative medallion, especially designed for this program which symbolizes the set apart nature of those who do truly superlative service on behalf of The United Methodist Church.

This is the highest award give by National BMCR.

Avon UMC receives matching grant for local media campaign

The Avon United Methodist Church in Avon, Ind. is receiving a matching grant from The United Methodist Church to launch a local advertising campaign designed to reach out and welcome people into the church.

The local initiative accompanies a \$1.7 million national advertising campaign which begins March 29 on 18 cable networks and continues through April 15. A new television commercial entitled "The Prayer" is the latest component of The United Methodist Church's "Open hearts. Open minds. Open doors." media campaign, and will air for the first time during Lent.

The local campaign by Avon United Methodist Church will include cable TV advertisements totaling \$2,497 and is expected to reach more than 30,000 viewers.

Flat Rock church damaged by high winds

The roof of the 58-member Flat Rock United Methodist Church was blown off by high winds that crossed Indiana on Friday evening, March 31. Flat Rock is a small rural town 40 miles southeast of Indianapolis. According to Rushville District Superintendent Ida Easley, the roof damaged the parsonage next door to the church. The house was pushed in six inches on one side. Currently, the sanctuary looks to the sky. Members removed pews and other furniture on Saturday. Damages are being assessed. No one was injured.

Wheeler church celebrates parsonage mortgage burning

The Wheeler (Ind.) United Methodist Church, located in the Calumet District near Valparaiso, celebrated Feb. 12 the retirement of a mortgage on its four-year-old parsonage, as members burned the mortgage with Pastor Gary and Connie Allan and current Pastor David and Jackie Banning joining in the celebration.

This church, founded in 1833, has been worshipping on the corner of Third and North Streets since 1872. The current building was constructed in 1914. In 2001, the church decided to build a new parsonage about two miles from the church. The former parsonage, built with the church, was razed to provide room for a parking lot. Ground was broken in May 2002 and the parsonage, built primarily by volunteers, was dedicated in November 2002.

APPOINTMENTS

Bishop Michael J. Coyner has announced the following changes within the Indiana Area. All dates effective 2006 unless otherwise noted. These appointments are based on Cabinet reports received by Indiana Area Communication during the month of March 2006.

North Indiana Conference

Arnold, David from Huntington Trinity, Huntington to Muncie College Ave., Muncie, 6/16
Axel-Adams, Robin from Gas City First, Marion to attend school, 6/16
Ballinger, David L. from Fort Wayne Trinity, Fort Wayne to Huntington Trinity, Huntington, 6/16
Beeks, Brian from Osceola,

Michiana to Monticello, Lafayette, 6/16
Davies, Douglas from Harlan, Fort Wayne to Gas City First, Marion, 6/16
Farrer, James from Muncie College Ave., Muncie to Christ, Lafayette, 6/16
Heller, Denise from no appointment to LaGrange First, Michiana, 2/1
Hollandsworth, Judy L. from Oak Grove, Muncie to no appointment, 1/8
LaSuer, Craig from Lafayette Christ, Lafayette to Marion District Superintendent, Marion, 6/16
Mikesell, Carolyn from no appointment to Jalapa, Marion, 2/19
Overmeyer, David L. from War-

saw Trinity, Warsaw to North Manchester, Huntington, 6/16
Retter, John R. from no appointment to Oak Grove, Muncie, 1/29
Reynolds, Cindy from Director of Ministries, North Indiana Conference to District Superintendent, Warsaw, 6/16
Siefert, Bobby Joe from no appointment to Emmanuel/PawPaw, Kokomo, 1/1

South Indiana Conference

Alte, Cyndi D. from Memorial, Terre Haute to Extension Ministry: Clarian Health, Program Manager Health Ministries, Terre Haute, 4/1
Beauchamp, Eugene T. from Bloomfield Wesley Chapel and Midway, Evansville to Mid-

way, Evansville, 7/1
Burton, Laurel A. from Greencastle Gobin Memorial, Terre Haute to retirement, 6/30
Garrett, Betty A. from Indianapolis Aldersgate, Indianapolis West to Fountain/Oak Grove, New Albany, 4/1
Howell, Glenn B. from The Turning Pointe, Evansville to District Superintendent, Evansville, 6/1
Hubbard, Gilbert H. from Tell City, Evansville to Jeffersonville: Wall Street, New Albany, 7/1
Modlin, Mary Jane from Rushville Wesley, Rushville to no appointment, 7/31/05
Owen, David V.W. from Director of Congregational Development, South Indiana Conference

to Bishop's Executive Assistant, Indiana Area Office, 7/1
Pressel, Richard W. from no appointment to Carbon, Terre Haute, 2/1
Stewart, Roy E. from New Castle Wiley, Rushville to no appointment, 6/31/05
Stewart, Roy E. from no appointment to Rushville Wesley, Rushville, 8/1/05
Voelkel, Jane E. from Jeffersonville: Wall Street, New Albany to attend school, 7/1
Walker, Steven E. from Christ Westfield, Indianapolis East to The Turning Pointe, Evansville, 6/1
Wesler, Mark D. from Richmond First, Rushville to Westfield Christ, Indianapolis East, 7/1



Photo courtesy FUMC Hagerstown, Ind.

Hagerstown volunteers pictured roofing are Lorna Peelle, Amanda McConnell, Ben Davis, and Jeff Blansett.

Hagerstown volunteers give week to help residents of Slidell, La. get back on their feet

A volunteer in mission team from the First UMC of Hagerstown, Ind., spent a week participating in a work camp at Slidell, La., this January. Team members were assigned to five work stations which included four houses and a tree clearing crew. After removing drywall, they sprayed studs and sills with a fungicide to prevent mildew from reappearing. They also installed drywall, roofed and cleaned debris from property.

Up to 35 volunteers with ties

to Hagerstown worked in the recovery efforts.

Cynthia Rhoades, missions chairperson, said the experience opened their eyes to the fury of nature and the hopelessness that residents must feel. "Now the TV news and stories in the papers are much more meaningful, as we watch the recovery process ... which will take years," she said.

First UMC also sent a work team to Newburg, Ind., in February to assist with tornado recovery there.

Gift Planning Seminar

Who needs a gift plan?

People develop gift plans for a variety of reasons. For many, the prime objective is to leave a significant gift to the church and/or other charities that they love.

Each individual or family has unique goals and objectives. Several gift-planning tools can be utilized to help meet these unique goals and objectives. In addition to meeting their objectives, gift-planning tools can help them:

- ◆ Increase their income,
- ◆ Provide additional income for a loved one,
- ◆ Reduce their current income tax costs,
- ◆ Avoid or reduce the capital gains tax on appreciated assets,
- ◆ Reduce estate administrative

expenses (probate costs),

- ◆ Reduce federal and state death taxes,
- ◆ Create a family legacy and
- ◆ Provide financial support to family, friends, their church and other favorite charities.

Gift planning should achieve a unique goal and objectives. Planning could result in several (or all) of the above benefits. The benefits listed are not a multiple-choice list where you choose one. They all can be accomplished in a single plan. Encouraging the members of your congregation to include the church in their plans is a good way of returning to God a portion of the assets that He has enabled them to accumulate dur-

ing their lifetime.

The Ft. Wayne District sponsored Gift Planning Seminar is on Saturday, May 13, 2006, 8:30-11:30 a.m. at Sunrise at Aboite UMC. We are privileged to have Royce Ruckman, Executive Director of the North Indiana United Methodist Foundation as our leader for the seminar. Royce will be available to answer questions of general interest and to address specific concerns individually.

Reservation deadline is May 3 and is required. The \$15 fee will cover refreshments, and binder with related reference materials. Reservation forms available online at: www.niumf.org/images/PDF/Dist.Seminar%20promos.pdf.

Faith, health professionals team for free conference on gun violence, suicide

INDIANAPOLIS – According to the Centers of Disease Control and Prevention and the American Red Cross, Indiana's suicide and gun deaths are higher than the national average. Also, 60 percent of troubled people turn first to their pastors for help.

To assist pastors and congregational leaders with counseling and prevention programs, faith and mental health leaders will present an April conference in Indianapolis about firearm violence and suicide prevention.

The Faith Communities Educa-

tion Project of the National Alliance on Mental Illness in Indianapolis is joining with the Indiana Partnership for Prevention of Violent Injury and Death to offer a conference for clergy and congregational leaders related to mental health awareness, prevention of firearm violence and suicides.

The "Mending the Mind and Soul" conference will be held Tuesday, April 25 from 8:30 a.m. to 3:15 p.m. at Christian Theological Seminary, 1000 W. 42nd St. Speakers scheduled are the Rev. Kevin Armstrong, senior pastor of North UMC;

Judge Barbara Collins; Dr. Anantha Shekhar and panelists including survivors of suicide, mental health and suicide prevention resource specialists.

Both clergy are invited including: pastors, counselors, parish nurses, Stephen Ministers. Invite your colleagues in ministry. The conference and lunch are free but registration is required due to limited seating.

For more information and reservations, contact Joyce Weidner at CTS 317-931-2399 or Lori Lovett at llovett@iupui.edu.

DEATHS

DONALD D. ABBEY, retired pastor (NIC), died March 23, 2006. A memorial service was held on March 26 at the Pineville Chapel of McEwen Funeral Services in Charlotte, N.C. Survivors include: wife, Dorothy; and daughters, Carolyn Rearick and Donna Glass. Condolences may be sent to Dorothy Abbey, 7110 Graburn Road, Charlotte, NC 28226 or online condolences may be directed to www.lifeunwrapped.com. Memorials may be made to the ministry of the Rev. Abbey's grandchildren: Life Unwrapped, c/o Dawn & Daniel Glass, P. O. Box 471342, Charlotte, NC 28247.

CHARLES WILLIAM (BILL) ASKREN, retired pastor (SIC) died March 20, 2006. A memorial service was held March 24 at Bethany UMC in New Middletown, Ind. Memorial contributions can go to Hospice and Palliative Care of Southern Indiana, 624 E. Market St., New Albany, IN 47150.

PHYLLIS BUCKLEY, widow of the late Rev. Bruce Allen Buckley (SIC), died March 13, 2006. A memorial service was held March 17 at Avon United Methodist Church with burial at Walnut Ridge Cemetery in Jeffersonville, Ind. Survivors include: Son, Mark Buckley, 295 Sycamore Ridge Court, Avon, IN 46123; daughter, Melissa Simic; and 3 grandchildren. Memorial contributions can be made to Avon United Methodist Church, 6850 E.

US 36, Avon, IN 46123.

CAROL BURRIS, wife of retired pastor the Rev. Steve Burris (NIC), died Feb. 6, 2006. A memorial service was held Feb. 9 at the Simpson United Methodist Church, in Fort Wayne, Ind. Survivors include: Husband, Steve Burris, and six children: Lisa, Mark, Susan, Paul (pastor of South Whitley United Methodist Church), Deborah and John; 12 grandchildren and two great-grandchildren. Condolences can be sent to the Rev. Steve Burris, 22117 Maple Ct, Woodburn IN 46797-9679. Memorials may be made to "Matthew 25," 413 East Jefferson Boulevard, Fort Wayne IN 46802.

CHURCHILL COX, retired pastor (NIC), died March 5, 2006. A memorial service was held March 11, at New Life United Methodist Church in Mexico, Ind. Survivors include: Wife, Anne; daughters; Kathy, Rebecca, Hannah and son; Andrew. Condolences may be sent to Anne Cox, 5415 N. Eel River Rd., Peru, IN 46970. Memorials can be directed to the Alzheimer's Association or the American Heart Association.

RICHARD L. GIRTON, pastor of the Otterbein United Methodist Church at Atwood, Ind. (NIC) and North Indiana Conference Secretary, was found dead March 5, 2006. A memorial service was held March 10, at the Russiaville United Methodist Church in Russiaville, Ind. Survivors include: A son, Alan; and

a daughter, Kelly. Condolences may be sent to Alan Girton, 404 S Ohio St, Converse, IN 46919

MARIANNE GREEN, part-time local pastor (SIC), died March 4, 2006. A memorial service was held March 7 at Mount Zion UMC in Brownstown with burial at the church. Survivors include: Phyllis Green, 416 Kelly Dr., Brownstown, IN 47220; brothers Richard A. Green and J. Patrick Green.

C. RICHARD HEATH, retired Elder of South Indiana Conference of Greenwood, died March 11, 2006. A memorial was held March 15 at the Singleton Community Mortuary and Memorial Center in Indianapolis, with burial at Round Hill Cemetery. Survivors include: Wife, Sue Heath, 295 Village Lane #152, Greenwood, IN 46143; daughters, Maryalis Brindley of Augusta, Ky. and Didi Shepherd of Naples Fla.; four grandchildren; and two great-grandchildren. Memorial gifts can be sent to Christian Ministry Fund Crew Staff, 24850 Old 41 Rd., Bonita Springs, FL 34135-7087.

MABEL MOREHEAD KISTLER, spouse of retired pastor the Rev. Richard E. Kistler (NIC), died March 15, 2006. A memorial service was held March 18 in the Amanda Reid Memorial Chapel at

Wesley Manor in Frankfort, with burial in the Salem Church cemetery, near Wilmot, Ind. Survivors include: Husband, Richard; four daughters, Cheryl Targgart of Churubusco, Lucinda Merrill of Russiaville, Nina Peery of Goshen, Renny Yeoman of Elkhart; and two sons, Lanny Kistler of Goshen and Leslie Kistler of Mishawaka. Memorial can be made to Wesley Manor, 1555 N. Main St., Frankfort, IN 46041 or to the North Indiana U.M. Conference, P. O. Box 869, Marion, IN 46952. Condolences may be sent to the Rev. Richard E. Kistler, 1555 N. Main St., Frankfort, IN 46041-1167.

KATHLEEN KLOSTERMAN, mother of the Rev. Susan Beckett (NIC), died Sunday, April 2, 2006. A prayer service was held on April 7 at the Miller-Long & Folk Funeral Home in St. Marys, Ohio followed by a memorial service held at the Holy Rosary Roman Catholic Church in St. Marys, Ohio. Condolences can be sent to Rev. Beckett at P.O. Box 214 Brook, IN 47922.

ANCILE F. OVERMYER, widow of the late Rev. C. Samuel Overmyer (NIC), died March 17, 2006. A memorial service was held March 21 at the Good Family Funeral Home in Rochester, Ind., with buri-

al in the Bruce Lake Cemetery. Survivors include: Three daughters, Martha Ann Frain of The Villages, Fla., Mary Ann Spranger of Zionsville, Ind. and Marcia Parsons of Goshen, Ind.; seven grandchildren; and two brothers: Walter Linn of Warsaw, Ind. and Wayne Linn of Mexico, Ind. The Rev. Kenneth Overmyer, retired, of Shippshewana is a brother-in-law and the Rev. David Overmyer, pastor of Warsaw Trinity UMC, is a nephew. Condolences may be sent to Marcia Parsons, 64321 Limberlost Dr., Goshen, IN 46526. Memorials can be made to the Oakwood Foundation, 702 E. Lake View Road, Syracuse, IN 46567 or to the North Indiana Conference, Outdoor Ministries, P.O. Box 869, Marion, IN 46952.

THOMAS WEIGAND, pastor of Richville UMC near Ligionier (NIC), died March 13, 2006. A memorial service was held March 18 at Trinity United Methodist Church in Elkhart, Ind. Memorials can be given to the Juvenile Diabetics Foundation, 2004 Ironwood Circle, Suite 140, South Bend, IN 46635 or to Seminary Student Scholarships, North Indiana Conference, P. O. Box 869, Marion, IN 46952. Condolences can be sent to Lois Weigand, 51289 Channel Ct., Elkhart, IN 46514-9235.



SOUTH INDIANA CONFERENCE UNITED METHODIST WOMEN

A Community Of Women

Faithful

- providing opportunities for spiritual growth
- emphasizing prayer and in-depth Bible study in our life and our life in God
- affirming the love of God for all humankind
- challenging persons to practice faith in personal and societal relationships.

**Spiritual Growth Retreat
Silent Retreat
Spiritual Growth Books on
Reading Program,
Prayer Calendar**

Purposeful

- knowing God
- experiencing freedom as whole persons through Jesus Christ
- developing a creative, supportive fellowship
- expanding concepts of mission through participation in the global ministries of the church.

**Vessels for Mission Training
District Officers Training
Reading Program**

Supportive

- offering Christian friendship
- affirming the potential of every woman
- seeking diversity in age, family situation, race, income and employment
- standing by one another in times of change and crisis
- encouraging the development and use of leadership skills.

**Friday Before and UMW Annual
Meeting,
Reading
Program.**

Unique

- more than a million women
- organized for over a hundred years
- spanning the globe with local units
- circling the globe with networks
- combining the individual's spiritual journey with a global perspective and outreach
- assuring ministries to women and ministries to children - globally
- supporting the mission of the church through its own channels of undesignated giving.

**UMW Luncheon at Annual Conference.
Young Women's Event**

Global

- focusing on the mission outreach of the church everywhere
- learning what is happening to people
- supporting mission personnel with prayer and offerings
- working with ecumenical organizations
- joining with women worldwide to fulfill God's mission.

**School of Christian Mission
Reading Program**

Responsive

- celebrating the joys and responding to the hurts and pains of others
- engaging in study of broad social issues
- breaking barriers that separate persons
- advocating legislation that affirms every person's human rights
- working with other organizations for the common good.

PURPOSE

The organized unit of United Methodist Women shall be a community of women whose PURPOSE is to know God and to experience freedom as whole persons through Jesus Christ; to develop a creative, supportive fellowship; and to expand concepts of mission through participation in the global ministries of the church.

For more information contact Vickie Newkirk 317-861-1525,
bvnewkirk@iquest.net

North Central Jurisdiction United Methodist
Volunteers in Mission Presents

Rx ConneXion Consultation VI

INDIANAPOLIS – MAY 5-7

Come and see what the excitement is
all about in Medical Missions!

The Rx ConneXion, medical mission arm of United Methodist Volunteers in Mission of the North Central Jurisdiction, invites you to the Sixth Annual Medical Mission Consultation to be held May 5-7 at St. Luke's United Methodist Church, 100 W. 86th St. in Indianapolis.

Special guest will be Dr. Roger Boe, Consultant for United Methodist Fellowship of Health Care Volunteers (UMF/HCV), our national medical mission group.

This gathering is designed for people interested in learning about UVMIM Medical Mission Teams and about how to volunteer locally. There will be informative workshops, time to visit with team

leaders, highlights of recent trips and announcement of future trips. There will be something for everyone in this weekend session of problem solving, learning new ways to be in medical mission, getting "insider information" on supplies and team logistics, learning from each other and sharing experiences and ideas. Whether you are an experienced volunteer or a newcomer to the medical mission field you will want to attend this event in Indianapolis. Come join in and make this valuable "ConneXion" with one another.

For more information and registration forms, log on to
www.gbmg-umc.org/northcentralvim/rxconnexion.html.
Or call Lorna Jost, NCJ VIM Administrator, at 605-692-3390.

