



UM MEN

The magazine of United Methodist Men

General Conference 2012

A letter from the General Secretary

This issue is dedicated to the work that will take place in April and May in Tampa, Florida.

Every four years about 1,000 delegates and scores of other representatives meet to re-write the Book of Discipline and the Book of Resolutions. There is also great worship, wonderful celebrations, and since many of the delegates have been there before, it is also similar to a family reunion.

On a personal note, these are the unhealthiest two weeks of my life; each time I have gone I wonder why we collectively put ourselves through this. The days are long, the nights are very short and the pressures are great. Not only do you need to shepherd the work from your committee through the process, but you have to read and be ready to vote on all the other pieces of legislation, some of which you will not see until they are created on site.

As you have heard or read, there are several "hot button" issues this time around. I've been a delegate since 1996, and each year there are multiple issues in the area of human sexuality.

In addition, there are several proposals that have different ways to implement the recommendations of the Call to Action report. One of those proposals comes from the Connectional Table, but that is one of several that will be considered. This issue of UM Men magazine will inform you on the complexities of a few of the major issues to be discussed in Tampa. I am pleased that in all the legislation I have seen, GCUMM continues, but some proposals remove our funding. Our funding and its history is in a separate article.

As the general secretary of GCUMM, one of the frustrations I have is the challenge of getting the good news of our work to the general church. As a reader of this magazine, you see the multiple ministries, the wonderful mission, and the small-group resources that are making disciples.

One of the measures we use is the growth of charters in the U.S. Twenty nine annual conferences increased the number of charters from 2009 to 2010, and 30 annual conferences increased the number of charters from 2010 to 2011. We celebrate those increases.

We also have a constant demand for our materials and assistance from congregations large and small. Although there are many areas of the church that are in decline, men's ministry and scouting ministry through the commission are growing. Please spend the word!

Thank you for your continued support, and I covet your prayers as we approach General Conference. Write, call or email me if I can be of assistance to you and your ministry to men.



*Striving to be His servant,
Gilbert C. Hanke
General Secretary
General Commission on
United Methodist Men*



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Editor's note: This magazine includes articles from individuals who hold diverse opinions. We hope all articles are thought provoking; they are not necessarily the opinions of the General Commission on UM Men.



Hope and fear accompany General Conference

We hope that delegates to the legislative body will focus on the reconciling spirit of Jesus Christ.

We fear the delegates will focus on polarizing issues.

We hope delegates will fine tune a structure in order to strengthen ways in which general agencies can provide significant resources for local churches.

We fear delegates will advocate change for the sake of change.

The denomination needs to address membership losses and it must examine ways to revitalize local churches.

However, delegates must not assume that accepting a proposal from the Connectional Table is the only way address these issues and reduce costs.

The Connectional Table is proposing a new structure that would drop 524 people from governing boards of the Connectional Table and nine general agencies.

The Connectional Table suggests this will save \$9 million in meeting costs over the 2013-2016 quadrennium. That savings will be offset by the costs of the proposed 15-member Center for Connectional Ministry and Mission, meeting costs of the 45-member General Council for Strategy and Oversight, the cost of an executive general secretary, and potential legal costs.

If you round off the new costs to \$5 million and subtract the meeting costs from the last quadrennium of \$9 million, you have a savings of \$4 million.

On the other hand, if delegates were to defeat the structure proposed by the Connectional Table and accept recommendations from the agencies, most of the present structure could be retained and there would still be 266 fewer board members in the 2013-2016 quadrennium.

If the Connectional Table estimates that eliminating 524 directors would save \$9 million, then reducing the size of agency boards by 266 directors should save \$4.5 million, and we would not incur the costs of un-incorporating general agencies, the new costs of a Center for Connectional Ministry and Mission and the costs of an executive general secretary. It may well be that defeating a proposal from the Connectional Table and accepting proposed board reductions from the agencies could save more money.

Delegates also need to ask themselves if a 45-member council, meeting only once a year, can provide any substantive guidance to the 15-member committee. And they need to ask if an executive general secretary and a 15-member committee can administer the ministries of nine general agencies with some 450 staff members?

And what guarantee do we have these ministries will continue in any significant manner?

Even if General Conference reduces general church apportionments by 6.4 percent, I expect local churches will face an increase in apportionments because of inflation and rising health-care costs.

Only 2 cents of every dollar donated to a local church goes to support the seven general church funds; 8 cents goes to districts, annual conferences and jurisdictions.

Individuals, agencies and caucuses will go to Tampa with alternative proposals. Members of the Connectional Table and those who oppose the proposed structure are now rehearsing speeches to be delivered in Tampa.

Final decisions will be made in an early plenary session.

All the rest of us can do is pray that delegates will make decisions that will fulfill our hopes and prove that our fears were unwarranted.

Rich Peck, editor

The 2012 General Conference

General Conference, the top legislative body of the UMC, will meet April 24-May 4 in Tampa, Fla.

Nine hundred and eighty-eight delegates from around the world will set policy and direction for the denomination.

The 2012 event has been planned by the 25-member Commission on the General Conference, led by Randall Miller of Emeryville, Calif. A local committee from the Florida Annual Conference under the leadership of Bishop Timothy Whitaker will host the event. Marilyn Swanson is chairperson of the Host Committee.

Some 4,000 people will serve in a variety of volunteer roles such as greeters, registration officials, marshals, pages, translators, hosts and hostesses, guides, drivers, musicians, technicians, reporters and emergency-response volunteers.

Delegates

Before 1812, all traveling preachers attended an annual General Conference of The Methodist Episcopal Church.

Today, equal numbers of lay and clergy delegates are elected from each annual conference. Every annual conference is guaranteed one lay and one clergy delegate. The total number of delegates is limited to 1,000. This year, the conference will be composed of 988 delegates.

Delegates to the 2012 assembly were elected during 2011 annual conference sessions. Lay members vote for lay delegates and clergy for clergy.

The number of delegates from each annual conference is determined by a formula based on the number of clergy and local church members in the conference.

Groups of churches in Africa, Asia and Europe are known as "central



conferences." Central conferences will have 372 delegates, up 96 from the 2008 assembly and up 186 from the gathering in 2004. Two hundred eighty-two of the central conference delegates will be from Africa, up 90 from 2008. The 24 annual conferences in the Philippines will have 48 delegates. An additional 10 delegates will come from "concordat" churches with which the denomination has a formal relationship: four from Great Britain and two each from Puerto Rico, Mexico and the Caribbean & the Americas.

The Site

Sites for the international gatherings, held every four years, are rotated among the church's five regional U.S. jurisdictions. The 2000 conference was held in Cleveland, Ohio (North Central Jurisdiction), the 2004 conference was held in Pittsburgh, Pa. (Northeastern Jurisdiction), and the 2008 conference was held in Fort Worth, Texas (South Central Jurisdiction). The 2012 conference is being held in Tampa, Florida, (Southeastern Jurisdiction). The 2016 General Conference will meet in Portland, Oregon (Western Jurisdiction).

The Tasks

During the 11-day session, delegates will revise The Book of Discipline, a book of law that regulates the manner in which local churches, annual conferences and general

agencies are organized. The book sets policies regarding church membership, ordination, administration, property and judicial procedures.

Most disciplinary paragraphs may be amended by majority vote, but the Constitution can only be amended by a two-thirds affirmative vote, followed by a two-thirds affirmative vote of the aggregate number of members voting in annual conference session. Delegates may not revoke or change the Articles of Religion or the Confession of Faith unless two-thirds of the delegates agree to change this provision and three-fourths of the annual conference members also agree.

Delegates also revise The Book of Resolutions, a volume declaring the church's stance on a variety of social justice issues. The book contains more than 300 resolutions that are considered instructive and persuasive, but are not binding on members.

In addition, the assembly approves plans and budgets for churchwide programs for the next four years and elects members of the Judicial Council and the University Senate.

The Process

In the months preceding General Conference individual members, churches, agencies and annual conferences send petitions to amend the Book of Discipline or the Book of Resolutions.

The petitions secretary assigns petition numbers. The numbers indicate the legislative committee, the chronological order, and the source. Each petition is assigned to a legislative committee.

All petitions are printed in the Advance Edition of the Daily Christian Advocate and mailed to delegates. Some

1,600 individual petitions are expected to be filed for the 2012 gathering.


Each petition is assigned to a legislative committee. That group of some 100 delegates reviews all petitions regarding a particular paragraph; they then agree to approve, amend, combine or reject them, and sends their recommendation to a full plenary session for final action.

If the proposal does not involve the Constitution, the Articles of Religion or finances, once it receives support from a majority of delegates it is approved. If it involves finances, the legislative proposal is referred to the Connectional Table, the General Council on Finance and Administration and the Financial Administration Legislative Committee for a final recommendation to the full conference. Frequently, the groups will propose the manner in which the proposal is to be funded.

If the legislation calls for a change in the Constitution or the Articles of Religion, the proposal must be ratified by the annual conferences before it becomes law.

All other actions are printed in the 2012 Book of Discipline or the 2012 Book of Resolutions.

Bishops

Retired and active bishops attend the conference but do not vote and may not speak in plenary sessions without permission from the assembly. Individual bishops preside over business sessions, normally serving for one morning, afternoon or evening period. All bishops, active and retired, attend the entire conference. Presiding bishops are selected by a General Conference committee. Each presiding bishop selects a bishop to serve as a parliamentarian. 

For the sake of a new world, we see a new church: A call to action

*Look! I'm doing a new thing: now it sprouts up; don't you recognize it?
I'm making a way in the desert, paths in the wilderness.*

Isaiah 43:19

We see a new church. It is a renewed church that is clear about its mission and confident about its future, a church that is always reaching out, inviting, alive, agile, and resilient.

We see a church that is hope filled, passionate, nimble, called of God, and courageous.

It is a church that is passionately committed to the doctrine, mission and vision of the Wesleyan movement.

This church takes risks to reach new people for Jesus Christ, and it searches continuously for creative ways to help each person grow in grace, love, and holiness.

While this church is not yet here, we see a thousand signs of its emerging.

We see it in radical hospitality, where spiritually hungry people everywhere are offered a saving relationship with Christ.

We see it as the hearts of people are warmed by the awakening of renewed spiritual presence.

We see it in passionate worship, where new generations sense the power and presence of the Holy Spirit.

We see it in small groups embodying intentional faith formation.

We see it in pastors who find ways to reach young people and in annual conference leaders who dare to try different ways to serve congregations.

We see it in general agencies learning new ways to network our Connection.

We see it in the Council of Bishops opening itself to evaluation and establishing episcopal learning groups. We see it in risk taking mission and justice.

We see it in the efforts to end deaths from malaria, to start new faith communities, to participate in ministry with the poor, and to develop new leaders. We see it in extravagant generosity, as people share their resources in response to disasters.

Especially in Africa and Asia, we find multiple examples of Wesleyan evangelism,



discipleship, and witness for social justice.

In the U. S. and Europe, however, we recognize that our church's strength and vitality have diminished over the last several decades. Both Europe and America face cultural trends that are very difficult.

We confess that at times we have lost our way, substituting maintenance for mission, bureaucracy for vision, and passivity for passion.

The Book of Discipline is clear: "The mission of the Church is to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. Local churches provide the most significant arena through which disciple making occurs" (§1120). We also know that local churches are a significant arena for community and world transformation.

Our Constitution is equally clear: "The annual conference is the basic body in the Church" The annual conference is the most important vehicle for creating and sustaining vital congregations" (Discipline ¶133).

We have studied our church and used independent consultants to give us information we needed about our church in the U.S. Our operational assessment identified a growing lack of trust among the parts of our connection. It told us we have significant deficiencies and will have future difficulties because of our current pattern of economic contributions. It recommended more defined leadership roles, streamlined connectional structures, and better management systems.

Our congregational vitality study used our own data to identify vital congregations and what drives them. The Council of Bishops and Connectional Table both endorsed this core challenge: "To redirect the flow of attention, energy, and resources to an intense concentration on fostering and sustaining an increase in the number of vital congregations effective in making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world."

We can see a new church, and to get from here to there the Connectional Table and Council of Bishops urge the people of

The United Methodist Church to make several strategic commitments:

- Engage in a return to our spiritual roots to reclaim the soul of our churches through intentional commitment to practice the means of grace.
- Give the highest priority to 10 years of energetic and sustained effort to increase and sustain the number of highly vital congregations.
- Invest in raising the standards of performance and results of leadership at all places in the UM Connection and employ key metrics as important contributing tools for cultivating continuous learning and improvement.
- Redirect our investments of talent, time and money in ways that demonstrate an emphatic emphasis on building blocks for vital congregations, including:
 1. At least \$5 million from the 2013–16 General Administration or World Service Funds for use in theological education in the Central Conferences.
 2. At least \$5 million from the 2013–16 General Administration or World Service Funds for use in developing lay leadership under 35 years old.
 3. Up to \$50 million from the 2013–16 General Administration or World Service Funds for use in recruiting and theologically training UM clergy under age 35 and for use in creating "new places for new people" across the UM mission field.
- Streamline and realign the governance and staff structures of program and administration agencies in order to increase focus on support of annual conferences in increasing and sustaining the number of vital congregations and provide for more integrated, efficient, nimble, and responsive operations.
- Reform the Council of Bishops

The most important changes will not result from legislative action but require

different actions and patterns of leadership by bishops, clergy, and laity in their conferences. These changes must be grounded deeply in the spiritual disciplines of prayer and fasting. These changes have already begun, and the Call to Action is already starting to be employed in many congregations and conferences.

Among the non legislative actions that are required are the following:

- The Council of Bishops reorder its work and internal processes to:
 1. Make the work of supporting resident bishops in fostering congregational vitality the central agenda for the council.
 2. Support Jurisdictional and Central Conference Committees on Episcopacy in adopting stronger and more transparent measures (metrics) and procedures for the accountability of bishops.
 3. Work with appropriate general church offices, seminary leadership, and Boards of Ordained Ministry to strengthen support for our seminaries, addressing curriculum requirements and clarifying expectations.
- Annual conferences strive to improve their recruitment and support of the most fruitful and effective young clergy.
- Bishops and cabinets strengthen their clergy recruitment, formation and appointment processes to improve vitality. But some steps require legislation at General Conference. Therefore, the Council of Bishops affirms and approves the direction recommended by the Connectional Table and the Interim Operations Team.

We urge the General Conference to take the following actions:

- Give annual conferences freedom to organize their structures for greater fruitfulness.
- Permit the mid quadrennium reallocation of money from the general church funds

for a sum up to \$60 million for purposes related to the challenge of creating and sustaining an increase in the number of vital congregations.

- Provide for the Council of Bishops to elect a non residential bishop as president of the council to help reform the council and focus its energies on the core challenges.
- Create a UMC Center for Connectional Mission & Ministry under one board of directors to combine the functions of the Connectional Table and nine general agencies: GBCS, GBGM, GBHEM, GBOD, GCAH, GCFA, GCORR, GCSRW, and UMCOM. They will be organized into offices of shared services (functions such as GCFA, UMCOM, and GCAH) and offices of congregational vitality, leadership excellence, missional engagement, and justice and reconciliation. This will help us align resources for greater effectiveness and efficiency.
- Move the functions of GCCUIC to an office of the Council of Bishops, clarifying what have been overlapping responsibilities and improving our ecumenical efforts.
- Set aside UMW and UMM as self funding official UM membership based organizations.
- Provide a support system for collecting consistent information for all annual conferences about their financial practices and recommend to resident bishops and others strategies for reducing costs and increasing effectiveness.

We see a new church. It is a church that is clear about its mission and confident about its future, a church that is always reaching out, inviting, alive, agile, and resilient.

We ask all United Methodists to join us as together we work to do the “new thing” God intends for our church and discover the path God is making for our future.



Proposed changes to church structure and funding will affect UM Men

The Connectional Table is asking delegates to General Conference to approve a new church structure.

The recommended structural changes come out of the multiyear Call to Action study which found a “perceived distance” between general agencies, annual conferences and local congregations.

Members of the Connectional Table believe the proposed structural changes will reduce sense of distance, reduce costs, and strengthening the connection.

The proposed structure would consolidate nine of the denomination’s 13 general agencies into five offices that will be part of a new UM Center for Connectional Mission and Ministry:

1. The Office of Justice and Reconciliation would encompass the essential functions of the General Board of Church and Society, and the General Commission on Religion and Race and the General Commission on the Status and Role of Women.
2. The Office of Congregational Vitality would encompass the functions of the General Board of Discipleship and multicultural ministries.
3. An Office of Leadership Excellence would encompass ministries now done by the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry.
4. An Office of Missional Engagement would be responsible for much of the work now done by the General Board of Global Ministries.
5. A fifth office in the new center would deal with shared administrative services that support the work of the other four, including

the functions of the General Council on Finance and Administration, UM Communications and the General Commission on Archives and History.

The center, which coordinates the day-to-day work of the five offices would be led by an executive general secretary and a 15-member board of directors.

Long-term strategies will be established by a 45-member General Council on Strategy and Oversight. That council will have the right to appoint and remove members of the 15-member board of directors of the center.

If the recommendation gains General Conference approval, the plan calls for the transition to be implemented in two phases over a two-year period.

UM Men to be a separate agency

The General Commission on UM Men is not one the agencies proposed to be subsumed under the new center. The proposal calls for UM Men and UM Women (now a division in the General Board of Global Ministries) to become separate membership-based boards.

The General Board of Pension and Health Benefits and the General Board of the UM Publishing House would also continue as separate agencies with no World Service funds.

The proposed timeline

The existing Connectional Table will meet immediately after General Conference to name 15 persons to the governing board of the newly created Center for Connectional Mission and



Costs and savings

In their petition to General Conference, the Connectional Table estimates the plan will save \$9 million by eliminating twice-a-year meetings of 10 agencies. That savings would be offset by meeting costs of the Center for Connectional Ministry and Mission (\$627,500) and the General Council for Strategy and Oversight (\$495,000). Legal costs of changing incorporation documents could total \$2-\$3 million.


Questions to consider

How will the new structure increase the number of vital congregations?

Does the proposed structure increase the possibility that a person could file suit against the entire denomination?

Can a smaller group be representative of many ethnic groups and various ideologies?

What will be lost by having the daily work of agencies supervised by a 15-member board of directors and long-term planning done by a 45-member General Board of Strategy and Oversight?

General agencies are already proposing legislation that would decrease the size of their governing boards by 266 members. Is this a sufficient savings? 

Ministry. The center will hold its first meeting on or before July 31, 2012.

Once these members are named, the Connectional Table will be replaced by the 45-member General Council for Strategy and Oversight. Membership will be composed of 21 members elected by jurisdictions; 7 members from the seven central conferences; 5 bishops; 5 representatives from the five ethnic caucuses; 4 persons from the Advisory Committee on Ministries with Young People; and the chief executives of the General Board of Pensions and Health Benefits, UM Publishing House, UM Men and UM Women. The Council of Bishops will name the chairperson.

Within 90 days of the close of General Conference, the governing boards of the nine general agencies named in the legislation will meet to transfer responsibility and property to the center.

Once the governing boards are in place, the work of evaluating and aligning resources begins.

Related proposals from the Connectional Table

- *Give annual conferences freedom to organize their structures for greater fruitfulness.*
- *Provide for the Council of Bishops to elect a non-residential bishop as president of the council to help reform the council and focus its energies on the core challenges.*
- *Move the functions of General Commission on Christian Unity and Interreligious Concerns to the Council of Bishops, clarifying what have been overlapping responsibilities and improving our ecumenical efforts.*

A United Methodist Pope

by the Rev. Tim McClendon

There has been much fanfare about the restructuring plan for the UMC that will be presented to the 2012 General Conference. I just had a conversation with someone who recently came back from a meeting with a general agency of the church where the plan was explained. We had a wonderful conversation about the history of the UMC and our polity as it relates to the proposed legislation.

I have to admit that I am personally involved in this process as both a member of the Connectional Table that approved the proposed new structure and as a member of the Legislative Writing Team that composed the proposal.

Although I disagree with key sections I have been faithful in my responsibility to write good legislation with the hope that holy conferencing and the wisdom of General Conference will correct the troublesome parts.

A primary concern for me is that we are allowing a business model to dictate ecclesiology.

I know we're in terrible economic times but that doesn't give us license to overturn our polity for the sake of saving money. Actually I think the money-saving is a smoke-screen to hand more power over to the Council of Bishops.

Separation of powers

Our polity is based on the separation of powers. Our two constitutional powers in the UMC are episcopacy and conferences. They



The Rev. Tim McClendon and Carolyn Briscoe share Holy Communion during the 2008 United Methodist General Conference in Fort Worth, Texas. A UMNS photo by Mike DuBose

must be held in perpetual tension and balance. Judicial decisions are clear in this matter:

The Constitution clearly states that "The Annual Conference is the basic body in the Church and shall have reserved to it the right to vote... on all matters relating to the character and conference relations of its ministerial members." (§136) The separation of authority and decision making is integral to the United Methodist Constitution and law. While the boundaries can become hazy in any particular situation, the preservation of the separation of powers must be observed.

1993 Judicial Decision 689

The separation of authority and decision making is integral to the United Methodist Constitution and law.

2010 Judicial Decision 1156

In addition, ¶140 of the 2008 Book of Discipline states, “Under the constitution and disciplinary procedures set forth in this Book of Discipline, “The United Methodist Church” as a denominational whole is not an entity, nor does it possess legal capacities and attributes. It does not and cannot hold title to property, nor does it have any officer, agent, employee, office or location.”

¶2509 of the Discipline says that we are a non-jural entity, that we cannot be sued as a denominational whole because we do not exist as a denomination! Rather, our polity has affirmed since our very existence that we are a movement, a group of separately incorporated mission outposts for the Kingdom of God!

Unfortunately, the proposals for restructuring will set up a 15-member Center for Connectional Mission and Ministry. This certainly overturns ¶140 of the Discipline by creating both an office/location and an officer.

Litigation issues

Another frightening thought is that this center’s only oversight will come from a 45-member General Council for Strategy and Oversight that will meet just once a year. Its chair will be the same set-aside bishop who will either lead or be a member of the Center for Connectional Ministry and Mission.

For legal and fiduciary protection this is a wrong-headed idea. Legal counsel has already observed that having a denominational center and officer leaves the denomination open for wholesale litigation possibilities. This is a streamlined business model to be sure and saves a ton of money by

reducing the costs of separate boards and agencies having to send 565 people to meetings but the cost to our historic polity, balance of powers, and core value of diversity will be greater than any savings.

A 15-member center can hardly be inclusive of all the voices of the UMC. If the purpose of the legislation is to make the denomination more nimble and connect it more closely with annual conferences and local churches then this widens the chasm in my opinion.

Voices absent from table

Voices will not be at the table and will not be heard. Having a quasi-pope from the Council of Bishops may make business sense, but it violates our historic separation of powers.

We are a spiritual movement that needs bishops who will be leaders but not with one set-aside bishop. We need all the bishops to be set-aside in their annual conferences! We all know how little time bishops actually spend time in their annual conferences.

Where are the teaching days? Where is the personal contact and interaction across annual conferences and in local churches? If we want local churches to be mission outposts then bishops must see their primary duty as being in their episcopal areas.

How about a promise not to spend more than 21 days outside the annual conference? How about a promise to spend teaching days with laity and clergy in every district at least twice a year? How about a promise to spend time in each district staying in homes getting to know people and scheduling time with every clergyperson in each district over a quadrennium or maybe even twice every four years? How about

a promise to be in each charge over a quadrennium?

All these things and more come to my mind as a way for United Methodism to regain some of its relevance. It will be possible through personal connections. Personal connections make United Methodist connectionalism work.

Bureaucratic quagmire

There are cost-savings with the proposal but more centralization into smaller less diverse entities does not offer the hope for change that I'm looking for.


It changes us from a spiritual movement into a more bureaucratic quagmire than we already are.

I say free up our bishops to lead on the local level. Don't vote for a constitutional change that would allow one of them to be set-aside for quasi-papal duty.

Don't vote to abrogate the power of General Conference to set budgets and let the Council of Bishops be able to do it between sessions of the General Conference.

Would you want your pastor to have the authority to change your local church's budget? Heaven's no!" Our connectionalism works best when the distance between leadership and people is bridged not widened.

Connectionalism works best and is more theologically sound when it is horizontal not top down. We have tried top-down and it doesn't work.

May God be with us as we discern together! 



Tim McClendon is superintendent of the Columbia District of the South Carolina Annual Conference and a member of the Connectional Table.

Pray for General Conference

Upper Room Ministries provides a free prayer guide for General Conference (www.gbod.org/prayer_initiative).

"I'm personally convinced that the one thing that every United Methodist can do to influence the outcome of this General Conference is to lift it to the Lord in prayer," said Tom Albin, dean of The Upper Room Chapel.

"These devotions have been written by persons who have been members of previous General Conference delegations and others throughout the connection," said Sandra Jackson, director of Connectional Laity Development at discipleship board. "They were recruited by the design team for the prayer initiative to provide devotions that can be used at delegation meetings."


Prayer Center in Tampa

During General Conference, there will be a labyrinth, a prayer room and prayer stations at different places in the convention center.

"My vision is that prayer will really be a foundation for General Conference," said Frances Jennings chair of the Florida Conference Spiritual Formation Task Team. "I pray that the prayers of God's people will undergird the entire General Conference, and regardless of which side of the issues we are on, we will pray and seek God's will for each thing that we do."

Trained spiritual guides

As a part of the Florida Conference Prayer Ministry Team, trained spiritual guides will be present for delegates and staff members.

"These spiritual guides are lay and clergy skilled and trained to help others discern God's will," Albin said. "We all want God's will, but we are not always ready to listen. The volunteers will come at their own expense to help an individual or delegations discern God's will for our church." 

Ethnic-minority groups troubled by restructuring plans

The Inter-Ethnic Strategy Development Group opposes the proposed new structure.

Members believe that the concentration of power in the hands of a 15-member board will reduce the participation of racial and ethnic minorities

“The proposed restructure of our church and the legislation ... is too drastic a change,” said the group. “It minimizes and will exclude the participation of racial ethnic persons, and works against the principle of inclusiveness that we see as one of the important values our church has to offer to the multicultural, multiracial society in which we live and do ministry.”

Ethnic minority delegates to General Conference from the Northeastern Jurisdiction say they are also troubled by the proposals. “With this new structure, a small number of voices will guide the church, and it seems to me that many voices will be missing from the table,” said the Rev. Varlyna D. Wright, a district superintendent in the Greater New Jersey Conference.

“As a woman of color, it frightens me. I am not sure that the people who will be put in these positions are aware of the issues that impact people who might be different from them, or that they are sensitive to the voices of people who are not at the table,” said Wright.

“Equity should be as much of a value driving decision-making as economy, efficiency and effectiveness,” said Erin Hawkins, top staff executive of the General Commission on Religion and Race.

Plan defended

Illinois Area Bishop Gregory V. Palmer, convener of the eight-member




M Bishops Felton May (left) and Marcus Matthews (center) join with Erin Hawkins for worship during a gathering at Turning Point UMC in Trenton, N.J., for ethnic delegates to the 2012 General Conference. Hawkins is top staff executive of the General Commission on Religion and Race. A UMNS photo by Kevin W. Wortham.

Interim Operations Team that drafted the proposal, argues that the new structure will not mark a retreat from the denomination’s commitment to diversity and inclusiveness.

“We actually think it increases the opportunity because it will build into the system a greater collaboration,” he said. “It is possible for a smaller group of people to represent the diversity we care about as United Methodists.”

According to the proposals, the 15 directors of the Center for Connectional Mission and Ministry would be accountable to a 45-member General Council for Strategy and Oversight. The council would meet annually to review and evaluate the work of the center.

Legislative proposals call for five members of that council to be named by racial ethnic caucuses, and not less than 30 percent of the 21 persons elected through the five U.S. jurisdictions must be members of racial/ethnic groups. 

Proposed budget reductions will affect men's ministry

The Connectional Table and the General Council on Finance and Administration will ask General Conference delegates to approve a \$603 million budget for seven general church apportionments during the 2013-2016 quadrennium.

That proposed amount calls for a 6.04 percent reduction from the previous four years and marks the first time since the 1968 formation of the UMC that a smaller budget will be proposed to General Conference. Other proposed quadrennial budgets increased the dollar amounts, but they did not keep pace with inflation.

The \$603 million sounds like a whopping amount, but it is only 3 percent of the total expenditures of the denomination.

Slightly over a penny of every dollar given by local church members supports the ministries of all general agencies.

Only one half of one percent (0.5%) of that World Service penny is allocated to ministries of UM Men. In 2011, the General Commission on UM Men raised 75 percent of its own budget, but it relied on World Service dollars for the remaining 25 percent.

Each year of the 2009-2012 quadrennium, the commission received around \$340,000 from World Service. That amount would decline by 6.5 percent in the 2013-2016 quadrennium (a loss of \$22,100). The amount given to the commission could decrease by another 10 percent if the budget were to be reallocated after General Conference (a loss of an additional \$31,790).

If the legislative assembly were to approve both recommendations, the commission would have to raise an additional \$53,890 per year beyond its normal budget. That does not factor in inflationary costs.

Additional cuts possible

While those cuts would severely limit funds for scouting and men's ministry, there are also proposals that would entirely eliminate World Service funds for the commission, resulting in an annual deficit of \$340,000.



Proposals to drop general church funds for the commission result from a proposal that would make UM Women and UM Men into "membership-based" organizations apart from the five offices that would fund nine general agencies.

The elimination of World Service monies would alter the presence of the commission within the connection, and the elimination of funds would come after the commission reallocated resources to provide additional assistance to local churches and districts through men's ministry specialists, scouting ministry specialists and deployed staff.

Factors that go into general church apportionment projections include: church membership, inflation, per-capita disposable income, "giving elasticity" (the percent of giving from increased revenue), net spending and the U.S. gross domestic product. The recent volatility in the U.S. stock market illustrates why the long-term prospect for giving is often difficult to anticipate.

General Conference may adjust the recommended budget.

Constitutional amendment proposed

Delegates will be asked to begin the process of amending the Constitution to empower a unit of the denomination to make budget adjustments between conference sessions. At present, after General Conference adjourns, no entity can make changes to the allocated budgets.

To be ratified, constitutional amendments must win a two-thirds majority of General Conference delegates and two-thirds of the aggregate number of members voting

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during the following sessions of annual conferences.

If the constitutional amendment and the proposed new structure is approved, the Board of Directors of the UM Center for Connectional Mission and Ministry may recommend to the 45-member General Council for Strategy and Oversight, reallocating \$60 million during the 2013-2016 quadrennium.

The proposal calls for the center to use the funds to support development of young people's lay leadership; theological education in central conferences, recruiting and training ministerial students under the age of 35, and creating vital congregations

Agency staff reductions


General agencies have been reducing the size of their staffs over the last decades. In 1971 there were 3,139 staff members in 11 general agencies. In 2010, there were only 1,384 staff members in 13 general agencies.

In 1997, the first year of the General Commission on UM Men, there were 11 staff members. In 2012 there are seven full-time staffers and one part-time. This paid staff is supplemented by volunteers, including four deployed staff members, 29 men's ministry specialist and 130 scouting ministry specialists.

If proposed reductions are passed by General Conference, there will be fewer agencies and fewer staff members. There will also be some 350 fewer board members to oversee the remaining staffers.

Study group recommendations

The General Council on Finance and Administration did not support two study group proposals: One to combine the seven general apportioned funds into one fund and to shift the apportionment formula from an expenditure-based model to an income-based model.

The council did support a study group's recommendation to emphasize stewardship as a spiritual discipline. 

The minister was preoccupied with thoughts of how he was going to ask the congregation to come up with more money than they were expecting for repairs to the church building.



Therefore, he was annoyed to find that the regular organist was sick and a substitute had been brought in at the last minute.. The substitute wanted to know what to play.

"Here's a copy of the service," he said impatiently. "But, you'll have to think of something to play after I make the announcement about the finances."

During the service, the minister paused and said, "Brothers and Sisters, we are in great difficulty; the roof repairs cost twice as much as we expected and we need \$4,000 more. Any of you who can pledge \$100 or more, please stand up."

At that moment, the substitute organist played "The Star Spangled Banner."

And that is how the substitute became the regular organist!

Finance agency proposes reductions in the Episcopal Fund

The General Council on Finance and Administration will recommend a 2013-16 budget of \$90 million to support the denomination's 157 active and retired bishops, a decrease of \$4 million from the 2009-2012 budget.

The Episcopal Fund, one of seven apportioned funds, supports the salaries, housing, travel and other expenses of active bishops as well as the salaries and benefits of some of their support staff. The fund also provides for retired bishops, surviving spouses and minor children of deceased bishops.


Meeting the bishops' expenses in the next quadrennium will require drawing down \$6 million from the Episcopal Fund reserves now totaling \$12 million.

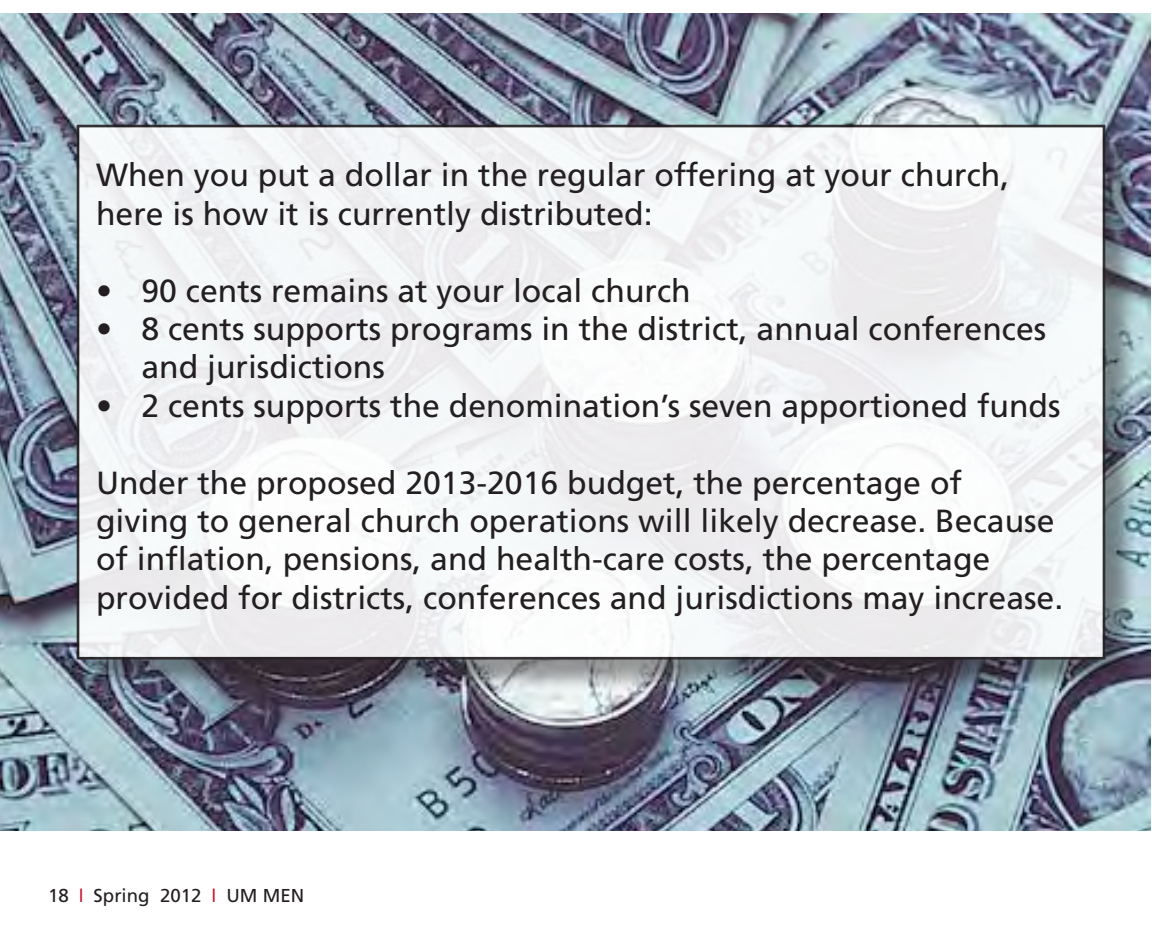
The UMC now has 48 active bishops and 69 retired bishops in the United States and 17 active and 23 retired bishops in the central conferences of Africa, Europe and the Philippines.

The four-year cost of an office for a U.S. bishop is \$1.25 million and the cost of a central conference bishop is \$750,000.

In 2009, U.S. bishops voted to forego a raise in 2010; their annual pay dropped from \$125,658 to \$120,942. The savings became part of the Episcopal Fund reserves.

The bishops' salaries were restored to the original projected amount in 2011.

All U.S. bishops receive the same salary, and the amount is determined annually by the finance agency. 



When you put a dollar in the regular offering at your church, here is how it is currently distributed:

- 90 cents remains at your local church
- 8 cents supports programs in the district, annual conferences and jurisdictions
- 2 cents supports the denomination's seven apportioned funds

Under the proposed 2013-2016 budget, the percentage of giving to general church operations will likely decrease. Because of inflation, pensions, and health-care costs, the percentage provided for districts, conferences and jurisdictions may increase.

Funding the General Commission on UM Men

by Gilbert C. Hanke

I am frequently asked, “Since you promised to be self-funded when the GCUMM was formed at the 1996 General Conference, why do you still get apportionment funds?” I hope this explanation will answer that question.

The legislative gathering in Denver moved funding for men’s ministry and scouting from a division within the General Board of Discipleship (GBOD) to an independent commission.

The legislation was based on two expectations.

First, the assembly called for reserve funds, office space and equipment to become the property of the new commission. Although the commission did receive a small amount of reserve funds and the equipment, we continued to pay rent for office and storage space until we moved to our own building in 2006. Since moving into our building—which we own free and clear thanks to a generous gift—many of our operating expenses have been reduced with smaller contracts that cover just the services we need.

The second expectation was that the local churches would embrace this new commission and that most churches would annually charter. The number of charters in many annual conferences have increased, but not at the expected level.

The authors of the legislation understood that this was a leap of faith, and if the expectations regarding property from the GBOD and chartering by local churches were not realized, we would need continued funding from the World Service apportionment.

The legislation stated that if we were not self-funded in four years, the next General Conference could do with us

as they pleased. The 2000, 2004, and 2008 General Conferences continued apportionment funding.

The proposed amount of funding for the commission in the 2013-16 quadrennium is nearly the same amount that UM Men received prior to becoming a commission.

We are the only general agency that raises 75 percent of its own budget; we only get 25 percent from apportionments. Our share of the apportionments is the smallest of any program agency in the church, less than one half of one percent of the World Service Fund. Several national plans receive more apportionment funds than the commission. Many of the other agencies spend more on consultants than we receive in apportionment funds.

We want to continue to receive apportionment funds for several reasons.

- We work every day to raise the funds needed for this ministry and without the apportionment funds our mission and ministry would be reduced.
- Receiving apportionment funds places us at tables within the connection.
- Receiving apportionment funds increases our accountability to the church. If we get off track, the church has leverage and we welcome that accountability.
- Across this great church, men’s ministry and scouting ministry are growing. Our model of ministry is making disciples and training them as effective Christian leaders within our church and communities.
- A vibrant men’s ministry that welcomes all the men of your church and community clearly adds vitality and grows the church. 

Proposals from the Study of Ministry Commission

The 2008 General Conference asked this 27-member commission to propose legislation that addresses the ordering of ministry, the separation of ordination and conference membership, and a streamlined process toward ordination.

During the quadrennium the commission listened to a number of concerns including:

- The aging of clergy and the need to recruit young adults as new leaders.
- The lack of full-time appointments available for elders.
- An unwieldy, inconsistent and inhospitable candidacy process.
- The need for leaders who can recognize where God is moving and join in the transformation of the world.

Noting that the percentage of elders and deacons younger than 35 is too low to meet current and future needs for ordained leadership, the commission encourages each annual conference Board of Ordained Ministry to help young people recognize an “inward call” from God that must be affirmed by their communities. The commission calls for each candidate to be assigned a mentor as soon as possible after discerning a call to ministry. And the commission recommends that each conference appoint a vocational-discernment coordinator to train mentors.


Saying there is confusion about the meaning of “commissioning,” the commission recommends that certified

candidates be ordained upon completion of all educational and other requirements and recommends the elimination of commissioning. A candidate would be ordained when elected to provisional membership in an annual conference.

In order to address situations in which there are more pastors than available appointments, the commission calls for the creation of a system that would allow elders in good standing to serve in less-than-full-time appointments or be granted transitional leaves.

Either the clergyperson or the bishop may request a leave if he or she does so 90 days prior to the annual conference session. A leave of up to 24 months must be approved by the Conference Board of Ordained Ministry and a conference clergy session.

Clergy on transitional leave would have no claim on conference funds, but they could participate in a conference health plan at their own expense and they may serve on conference committees. With the permission of the bishop, elders on leave may preach, teach, conduct marriage services and sacramental services in the parish in which they hold their charge conference membership.

The commission recommends that a 12-15-member “Strategic Focus Team on Ministry Issues” be formed for the 2013-2016 quadrennium. At least one-third, but no more than one half of the new team would be members from the 2009-2012 commission. 

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There was a very gracious lady who was mailing an old family Bible to her brother in another part of the country.

**“Is there anything breakable in here?” asked the postal clerk.
“Only the Ten Commandments.” answered the lady.**

What pastors think about their preparation and deployment

by the Rev. Dan Dick

What pastors think about their preparation and Let me share a few pieces of information from a study I did in 2005 that included more than 400 pastors from West Michigan, Iowa, California-Pacific, and Tennessee conferences. First, some statistics:

- 91% of ordained clergy thought their candidacy program was “poor” to “very poor.”
- 82% of ordained clergy do not feel that seminary adequately prepared them for pastoral ministry.
- 74% of ordained clergy feel that their congregations expect them to do ministry for the church instead of equipping the members to be in ministry together.
- 68% of ordained clergy feel that the ordination interview process is designed to make sure candidates fit preconceived roles and types.
- 66% of local pastors feel that they are treated as “second class” pastors.
- 51% of pastors feel that the ordination process should be more rigorous.
- 7% of pastors feel that the ordination process helped them improve as pastoral leaders.
- 4% of pastors think that their conference takes continuing education seriously.


Next, some observations that the respondents thought should frame any study of United Methodist ministry.

- Practical considerations — why more young people are not pursuing ministry.
- If you want to professionalize ministry, make it competitive to other careers—quit pretending that money doesn’t matter.
- If you want to improve the credibility and restore the relevancy of ministry,

raise the bar (don’t lower it).

- Make the academia fit the vocation—address the pompous seminary attitudes that say “we don’t train pastors, we create academicians!”
- Don’t spend time trying to figure out how to get rid of pastors who should never have been ordained in the first place; create systems that put the right people in the right vocation to begin with.
- Student pastor debt load.
- As long as you “bad-mouth” second career leadership as inferior to young leadership you will effectively lose both.

I will close a critique from an associate general secretary of a United Methodist general agency:

“We really can’t see the forest for the trees any more. Everything we envision is tiny. We want to find the simplest solution to enormous problems, and it boggles the mind. How can so many smart, dedicated, well-meaning people keep coming up with such bad ideas? And the saddest thing? When this all falls apart these same people won’t have a clue how it happened. They won’t see that rearranging the pieces isn’t really doing anything of value at all. All the time, all the money, all the effort — all aimed at the wrong things.” 



The Rev. Dan Dick is the director of connectional ministries for the Wisconsin Annual Conference. This article is reprinted with the author’s permission from his blog, United Methodeviations.

Committee seeks ways to underscore worldwide nature of the church

During the 1968 conference that united the Methodist Church with the Evangelical United Brethren Church, delegates received a report from a group that studied the relationship of the U.S. church with churches in other nations.

A member of the 1964-68 Commission on the Structure of Methodism Overseas said, "We are in reality not a world church in structure but an American church with overseas outposts. . . If we are to be a world church with a world mission, our structure must reflect our nature and task."

That issue has not changed much in the last 44 years.

In 2009, annual conferences refused to ratify 23 constitutional amendments to create separate regional conferences proposed by the 2005-2008 Task Force on the Worldwide Nature of the Church. Some opposed the plan because they were uncertain about whether the Social Principles and structures would be required in each of the regional conferences.

The 2012 General Conference will again address issues related to the worldwide nature of the church.

On Monday, April 30, the Committee to Study the Worldwide Nature of the UMC will coordinate a one-hour discussion with delegates gathered in four geographical areas (Europe, Asia, Africa and the United States). The bishops will gather as a fifth group, and concordat and affiliate church representatives will meet as a sixth group. Each group will discuss how regional groups can serve and be served by the denomination.




Clergy from the Côte d'Ivoire and Texas conferences celebrate Holy Communion at Jourdain UMC in Adidjan. The two conferences distributed 855,000 mosquito bed nets to the families in the area. A UMNS photo by Mike DuBose.



Bishop Scott Jones

After consulting with United Methodists around the globe, the committee is recommending:

- The creation of a worldwide covenant and litany
- A declaration specifying which areas of ministry and organization are adaptable by central conferences.
- A clarification of how general agencies are to function in a worldwide rather than United States-centric church.
- A process for annual conferences to study a proposed new model for a worldwide church. This study could result in petitions for structural change at the 2016 General Conference.

"We believe our church must move forward to more clearly reflect its worldwide presence," said Kansas Area Bishop Scott J. Jones, chair of the committee. "After all, John Wesley looked upon all the world as his parish." 

Legislative Committees

All petitions and resolutions are assigned to one of 13 legislative committees prior to consideration by the full assembly. The chair of the committee and other officers are elected by committee members. Delegates select the committee on which they wish to serve. Generally, those elected first have first choice, so some delegate do not get to serve on the committee that they want, but every delegate serves on a legislative committee.

Each committee will act upon assigned petitions and resolutions. They may ask the plenary session to approve or disapprove the proposal. Frequently a committee will address several petitions as one amended proposal.

Recommendations from legislative committees are called "calendar items," and committee officers present their proposals to the full assembly for final consideration.

1. Two Church and Society legislative committees will address social justice issues. The first group will review 100 petitions and resolutions concerning the Board of Church and Society and the Social Principles with the exception of paragraphs 161 and 162 of the Book of Discipline.
2. The second group will deal with 140 petitions dealing with two paragraphs concerning the nurturing community (marriage, divorce, human sexuality and abortion) and social community (rights of racial/ethnic persons, aging, women, immigrants, sexual orientation and health care).
3. The Conferences Committee will review 80 petitions related to composition and activities of the general, jurisdictional, annual, provisional, missionary, and district conferences.
4. The Discipleship Committee will review 40 petitions related to the work and concerns of the General Board of Discipleship.
5. The Faith and Order Committee will



delegate passes out ballots for a legislative committee vote at the 2008 United Methodist General Conference in Fort Worth, Texas. A UMNS photo by Paul Jeffrey.

review 30 petitions related to doctrinal standards and "Our Theological Task," "The Ministry of all Christians," and the meaning of ordination and conference membership.

6. The Financial Administration Committee will review 90 petitions and resolutions related to the work and concerns of the General Council on Finance and Administration (GCFA), the Board of Pension and Health Benefits, and the United Methodist Publishing House. The group may propose amendments to the budget proposed by GCFA.
7. The General Administration Committee will review 110 petitions related to the Connectional Table. This will include the proposed new structure.
8. The Global Ministries Committee will review 60 petitions and resolutions relating to the work and concerns of the General Board of Global Ministries.
9. The Independent Commissions Committee will review 40 petitions and resolutions relating to six independent commissions, and ecumenical agencies and concerns.
10. The Judicial Administration will consider 100 petitions related to the Judicial Council and all investigations, trials and appeals.

11. The Local Church Committee will consider 80 petitions and resolutions related to the organization of local churches.
12. The Ministry and Higher Education Committee will consider 180 petitions and resolutions related to ordained

ministry, higher education, schools of theology and chaplaincy.

13. The Superintendency Committee will consider 50 petitions affecting bishops, superintendents and the appointment process.



Weaver to deliver the Episcopal Address

Bishop Peter D. Weaver of the Boston Episcopal Area has been chosen to deliver the Episcopal Address at the 2012 General Conference in Tampa.

The Council of Bishops elected Weaver to prepare and deliver the address on behalf of the entire council, which comprises 69 active bishops and 90 retired bishops from the U.S., Africa, Europe, and Asia. The bishops provide spiritual leadership for the 12-million member denomination.

“There is a lot to celebrate as we try to live out our mission of making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world and continue our work around the four foci,” said Weaver. “It’s also a time of change and challenge, and we will invite the General Conference into prayer and decision making that helps us be a more effective

instrument of God’s mission in our world.”

Weaver, president of the council from 2004-2006, said that the development of the address began with a listening process.

“Bishop Sharon Brown Christopher set a new model of collaboration in the development of the episcopal address, which I expect to follow,” said Weaver. “There will be collaboration with bishops which has traditionally happened, but also boards and agencies, local churches and annual conferences. It’s out of that collaboration that in a sense we corporately try to listen for God’s word to lead us forward.”



Church Systems Task Force

Responding to a crisis in clergy health and the human and financial costs in our denomination, the 2008 General Conference established a Church Systems Task Force to examine itinerancy and appointment-making systems and recommend procedures to support clergy health.

The task force was also asked to recommend improvements to supervisory systems; address processes for entering and exiting ordained and licensed ministry; and provide guidelines for sustaining a healthy work/life balance during ministry.

The group encourages annual conferences to assume greater responsibility for the health and wellness for clergy

families and asks clergy to take advantage of conference services.

Based on their research, the task force recommends that tenure in appointments become longer and that conferences make greater use of interim assignments in conflicted situations.

The report also highlights the need for spiritual direction that can be given by someone other than the district superintendent and that mentoring be made available throughout the life of a clergyperson.

Finally, the task force concurs with the Call to Action about the need to develop a process for graceful exit for clergy who cannot perform the duties of ministry.



Homosexuality is likely topic



Some delegates and visitors to the 2008 United Methodist General Conference in Fort Worth, Texas, stand in response to a vote on homosexuality, while others remain seated. A UMNS file photo by Mike DuBose.

While secular media attending General Conference are likely to focus on issues related to homosexuality, United Methodists need to be reminded that these discussions and demonstrations will occupy only a small portion of delegates' attention during their 11 days in Tampa.

Bishop Larry M. Goodpaster, president of the United Methodist Council of Bishops, encourages "thoughtful, prayerful dialogue about sensitive and challenging issues.

"We call this holy conferencing," Goodpaster wrote on behalf of the council's executive committee. "We are committed to embody this in our own life as a council and lead the church in doing the same."

During their Tampa meeting, General Conference delegates will participate in a 50-minute holy conferencing on human sexuality. Bishop Dyck, chair of the Bishop's Unity Task Force that planned the event, said plans for this discussion were aided by a previous gathering of representatives from groups with opposing views on homosexuality.

"The purpose of the gathering is to discuss how we can live together in spite of our differences on homosexuality," said Dyck.

Retired bishops seek change

Thirty six of the 85 retired bishops have asked General Conference to change denominational policy stating that "homosexuality is contrary to Christian teaching" and to change legislation prohibiting the ordination and appointment of self-professed practicing homosexuals.

Most of the retired bishops are from the United States, but signers include Bishops Daniel Arichea of the Philippines, Joseph C. Humper of Sierra Leone and Franz W. Schäfer of Switzerland.

Neither active nor retired bishops are allowed to vote at General Conference.

Delegates to several General Conference sessions have defeated calls to change the position of the denomination, and the strongest arguments against change have been made by Central Conference delegates. Bishop Eben K. Nhwatiwa of Zimbabwe said, by and large, people in

conference stand by what the Book of Discipline says about homosexuality.

"Africa should not be pushed on this issue," he said. "The position of The United Methodist Church right now is the position that is in sync with the context of the African church right now."

Bishop John Innis of Liberia agreed. He said he respects the retired bishops, but he must stand with the Book of Discipline.

"We are all created by God," he said. "A person who practices homosexuality can be my friend, but I cannot condone that behavior."

Bishop Robert T. Hoshibata of the Oregon-Idaho Conference is among those who endorse the retired bishops' statement.

He believes "good, biblical people" are on both sides of this issue. "But ... in the context where I am doing ministry, there are many persons that I know—gay and lesbian and transgender—who are good people, good Christians, who the church is neglecting or turning away from," he said.

Bishops support church law

After more than 1,000 UM clergy signed a document saying they would bless same-gender unions, the Council


of Bishops acknowledged deep disagreement exists over homosexuality, but in a letter, released Nov. 11, they promised to uphold church law banning same-gender unions.

Altogether, the denomination has about 44,400 clergy and 7.8 million members in the United States, and more than 12 million members worldwide.


Bishop Dyck drafted the letter that was later approved by the full council.

"I hope that the statement from the (Council of Bishops) will underscore for the church that we recognize the deep division within the church and the U.S. culture regarding homosexuality," said Dyck. "People are hurting on all sides of this issue and not just in the church."

The letter from the bishops urges United Methodists to work together across the theological divide.

"As the bishops of the church, we commit ourselves to be in prayer for the whole church and for the brokenness our communities experience. Furthermore, we 'implore families and churches not to reject or condemn lesbian and gay members and friends. We commit ourselves to be in ministry for and with all persons' (§1161F). 

Can you find 16 books of the Bible?

I once made a remark about the hidden books of the Bible. It was a lulu; kept people looking so hard for facts and for others it was a revelation. Some were in a jam—especially since the names of the books were not capitalized. But the truth finally struck home to numbers of readers. To others, it was a real job. We want it to be a most fascinating few moments for you. Yes, there will be some really easy ones to spot. Others may require judges to help them. I will quickly admit it usually takes a minister to find one of them, and there will be loud lamentations when it is found. A little lady says she brews a cup of tea so she can concentrate better. See how well you can compete. Relax now, for there really are sixteen names of books in the Bible in this story. 

Prisoners provide free labor to UM camp

By Cal Skinner

WILLIAMS BAY, Wis. —

Seventeen years ago retired Williams Bay restaurateur Jeff Fry began volunteering at the Wesley Woods, a Northern Illinois Conference Center.

The camp, located on 17.5 acres of pricey Lake Geneva lakefront, was in decline.

Fry easily found ways to fill his 20-hour weekly commitment.

Soon, he was working full-time.

When the maintenance position opened, Fry took the job. He figured he was doing much of the job anyway.

There was way too much to do, so Fry asked UM Men to help.

That's when he happened upon a more consistent source of manpower.

Free help

The Walworth County Jail allowed local companies to use prisoners, paying them minimum wage.

The sheriff told Fry that since the camp was a not-for-profit organization, he would be able to receive free labor from those sentenced to community service. Other prisoners were rewarded a day off their sentences for every 24 hours worked.

"How many men do you want?" asked the sheriff; he had sixty men he was trying to place.

Fry accepted five men, the number that would fit in his van.

He picked the inmates up for their ten-hour stint, fed them lunch and dinner, and even gave them an hour



Stone Lodge at Wesley Woods

off at the end of the day to do as they wished.

Destination of choice

Wesley Woods soon became a destination of choice.

“You wouldn’t believe what they feed us,” one prisoner commented.

The men did dry walling, carpentry, and they removed 19-truck loads of old leaves that had accumulated near the water’s edge.

One day Fry asked what the men did before they went to jail.

One was a diesel mechanic.

Fry asked if he could fix a donated boat.

An hour later, the man handed Fry a motor part and said the boat would run, if he could get a replacement.

Another inmate had come north from a Texas oil pipeline-welding job to attend a concert when he ran afoul of the law.

In less than two days, the Texan changed a log-splitting machine from one that would only fracture huge trunks horizontally to one which could be fed vertically, eliminating the need to lift logs off the ground.

Replacements

As men were released from prison, Fry told them they had to recommend their own replacements.

That succession plan came from his experience running a rib-pizza house. When a dishwasher told Fry he would like to become a pizza cook, Fry told him, “Sure, but you have to find a replacement.”




A prisoner drywalls a building at the Wesley Woods Conference Center.

The replacement wanted to please the guy who got him the job.

The same system still worked.

When new men arrive, veterans train them in the proper way to apply drywall mud.

Now the camp director, Fry figures that Wesley Woods gets the equivalent of about \$100,000 a year in free labor as they work from Labor Day to Memorial Day.

“A job is 50 percent liking what you a doing, 25 percent feeling good about yourself and your productivity at day’s end and 25 percent making enough money to pay your bills,” said Fry. 

Cal Skinner is a member of UM Men at Crystal Lake, Ill.



Across the Nation

WANCHESE, N.C.—

Men give devotional books to Sheriff's department

Dare County Sheriff Doug Doughtie told the men's group at Bethany UMC about crime in the Outer Banks and the response of his department.

Following his presentation, UM Men President Douglas Drummond presented the sheriff with a copy of *Strength for Service to God and Country* and asked if he would like a supply of the devotionals for the 65 men and women in his department. After receiving an enthusiastic "yes," Bethany men raised funds to purchase the books.

"This was done with joy to show our appreciation to those who so unselfishly serve," said Drummond.



UM Men of Bethany UMC in Wanchese, N.C., present copies of Strength for Service to God and Country books of daily devotionals to Dare County Sheriff's Department employees. From left: Johnnie Robbins, a member of UM Men, Sergeant Padilla, Sheriff Doughtie, Deputy Walston, and Douglas Drummond.

CARMEL, Ind.—

Men distribute 41,000 pounds of potatoes

Thirty volunteers from Carmel UMC distributed 41,000 pounds of potatoes to food pantries and individuals in need. The potato drop was part of the Saint Andrew Society's food distribution program.

Some 38,000 pounds were picked up by 28 area service agencies including seven UM church pantries. The remaining potatoes were shared among 126 families. UM Men President Dave Martin led the effort.

SAN ANTONIO, Texas—

Men receive Gold Anniversary Charter

Men of Saint Paul UMC received a Gold Anniversary Charter from General Secretary Gil Hanke. The certificate is given to groups that have been chartered for at least 50 years; the Saint Paul group was first chartered in 1949. The group has sponsored an annual men's day and selected a "man of the year" since 2003.

The church also celebrated its 145th anniversary and it was recognized by the State of Texas as the oldest African American church in San Antonio.



Men of Saint Paul UMC celebrate men's day with a gospel extravaganza.

NATCHITOCHEs, La.—

Men distribute 7,000 pounds of potatoes

Men of Natchitoches UMC picked up

7,000 pounds of sweet potatoes from the Dawson Farm near Delhi, La. Buzz Hortman delivered 5,400 pounds of the potatoes to the Natchitoches Council on Aging, and the council distributed them to area families.

FULTON, N.Y. —

Men host silent auction and send greetings to service men and women

Men of First UMC in Fulton raise funds to send Christmas greetings to men and women in the armed forces. Each year, the men sponsor a craft fair, silent auction, and chicken barbecue.



TUNNEL HILL, Ga.—

Bishop presents award to Cub Scouts

Bishop Mike Watson presented the Bishop's Award of Excellence to a Cub pack related to Smith Chapel UMC.

Thirteen members of the pack participated in God and Country Award studies. They also removed weeds and spread mulch over the church playground and picked up eight bags of trash on a road to the church. In addition, Cub Scouts and their families gathered material to make 12 UM Committee on Relief school kits.



Bishop Mike Watson presents the Bishop's Award of Excellence to Cub Scouts Bobby Balser and Jaycob Stockburger (with cap) and Cubmaster Rial Sloan.

WICHITA, Kans.—

Church shelter hosts drunks when substance-abuse treatment center closes

The Warming Souls men's shelter at St. Paul UMC suddenly had to deal with drunks that were formerly sent to the Parallax substance-abuse treatment program.

The tax-supported in-patient detox center closed last October because of lack of funds. Wichita hospitals and homeless shelters were forced to deal with increasing numbers of persons struggling with substance dependence.

EVANS, Ga.—

Church in warehouse hosts Stop Hunger Now event

Two hundred and seventy members of Mosaic UMC, a 5-year-old congregation that meets in a warehouse, packaged 55,000 Stop Hunger Now meals for children in Zambia.



The congregation targets low-income adults at two nearby subsidized apartment complexes. A food pantry is open twice monthly, and the church offers a 12-step ministry for people with addictions and other life-compromising issues.

CORNELIUS, N.C.—

Church gives \$2,628 for Strength for Service books

Mt. Zion UMC raised a whopping \$2,628 to provide Strength for Service to God and Country books for members of the armed services at a September 11 service. The 1,600-member congregation also gave 160 books to local police officers, fire fighters and emergency medical technicians, and they gave 100



copies to the USO of North Carolina.

On Sunday, November 13, the church honored military veterans and invited them to a lunch

"Those at Mt. Zion UMC responded to this wonderful ministry as we recognize and pray for those who serve others all to the glory of God," said the Rev. Tim Reimer, associate pastor.

MONTGOMERY, Ala.—

Church sponsors run

Frazer Memorial UMC sponsored Ryan's Run. The 5K race is named in honor of Ryan Colburn, a 24-year-old who died in 2011 of Spina bifida. His courage won him many fans, and the decision to name the 3.1-mile run for him was an easy one.

"He was a huge sports fan, especially when it came to Auburn," said Ann Vinzant, who helped coordinate the event. "Ryan cared so much for young people, especially when it came to youth worship."

"One of Ryan's joys in life was advocating programs for those with disabilities," said Susan Colburn, Ryan's mother. "He also worked at the church as well as at a YMCA. Despite his physical situation, he remained active and we were always so proud of him."



FLOWER MOUND, Texas—

Honey Dudes are on call

Men of Trietsch Memorial UMC have organized themselves into the "Honey Dudes," a name derived from the "honey do" list of chores to be done around the house.

Honey Dudes do chores for widows, single mothers and the wives of deployed troops.

"A lady in need will either call into the church office or email, and we dispatch two guys," says Kevin Cummings. "It could be anything from moving boxes, mowing the yard, or fixing a plumbing leak."

CHARLOTTE, N.C.—

Men host Christmas shopping spree

For over two decades men of Cokesbury UMC have hosted children from Bethlehem Center for Christmas shopping spree and birthday party for Jesus.

A couple of weeks before Christmas, 20 first, second, and third graders are each given \$20-\$25 to buy presents for others at the Family Dollar Store. Each child has a personal shopper to help select appropriate gifts. Then it's back to the church to wrap and tag each gift.



When the gifts are all wrapped, it's time for pizza, soft drinks, and cookies, followed by a Christmas story or a Christmas video. Santa then visits with each child; photos are taken and gifts are given.

Bethlehem Center is related to the General Board of Global Ministries and ministers to low-income children and families.

IOWA CITY, Iowa—

Men provide 42,000 pounds of potatoes

Every year, men of St. Mark's UMC provide potatoes for the Salvation Army and other area service centers. The effort is coordinated by Art Kistler, a hunger-relief advocate for the Society of St. Andrew.

This year's truckload of 42,000 pounds of Russet potatoes came from Wisconsin. A local rental company provided a forklift, and the men gave \$2,000 to pay trucking expenses.

NEW MILFORD, Conn.—

UM Men light up village green

For 45 years, UM Men of New Milford have raised funds and installed Christmas trees for the annual Festival of the Lights on the village green. The men are joined by other church members to cut down trees each November, set them up, string the lights, and take them down in January.

WICHITA, Kans.—

Little brother becomes pastor to big brother

Cliff Fanning served as a big brother to 10-year old Kevass Harding after he stole candy from a candy machine.

That relationship through the Big Brothers Big Sisters organization helped Kevass develop spiritually and physically.

Today, the Rev. Dr. Kevass Harding is pastor of Dellrose UMC in Wichita, Kans., and he serves as Cliff's pastor; as such, Harding performed Cliff's wedding and baptized his children.

Harding now serves as a big brother to James, making him a third-generation little brother.



*The Rev. Dr.
Kevass Harding*

PALM HARBOR, Fla.—

Craftsmen create 25,000 toys

Some 50 members and friends of East Lake UMC construct toys for children who are in hospitals and shelters around the world.

ToyMakers purchased a building in 2007, and since that time they have built 25,000 toy cars and planes that have been distributed to children in Nigeria, St. Croix, Jamaica and local ministries.

The shop is open four days a week and some people like John Little, a retired major general, report for work every day the shop is open. "This is probably as much fun, working with these retired guys, as anything I've done before," said Little.

Wood and paint for the toys are donated by local companies.

The group also refurbishes bikes.

BUXTON, N.C.—

Men give whopping \$81,898 for emergency assistance

Men of Cape Hatteras UMC gave \$81,898 for emergency assistance during 2011. That money helped 143 families. The food pantry also helped 3,832 people with over 81,000 meals.

ANDALUSIA, Ala.—

Men plant 80 shrubs at campground

Eleven men from the Fairhope (Ala.) UMC planted 80 ornamental shrubs at the Alabama-West Florida Conference Blue Lake Campground. The men planted camellias, magnolias, sweet olives, Indian hawthorn, encore azaleas and Scarlet's peak hollies in the assembly's three campgrounds.

Other UM Men units have updated lighting in cabins, installed window screens, built wheelchair ramps, recovered gables, installed benches at for physically challenged campers, main-

tained individual cabins, replaced and repaired doors, and aided Blue Lake workers in rehabilitating rooms and the camp's largest kitchen.

In addition to serving Blue Lake, the men of the Fairhope UMC also sponsor an annual softball tourney to support the conference's UM Children's Home.



ANDERSON, Ind.—

Ministry specialist seeks chaplain for district troops

John Dockery, a scouting ministry specialist, is recruiting and training chaplains for the 52 Boy Scout troops in the Sakima District.

"We're trying to teach them, as they move out into the community, that religion is important in their growth," said Dockery.

ANSONIA, Ohio—

Twenty years of picking up highway litter

The Ohio Department of Transportation honored men of Ansonia UMC for 20 years of picking up litter along a state road in Darke County. On average, 20 men spend 90 minutes every three months picking up six large trash bags of litter for the Adopt-A-Highway project.



**VIRGINIA BEACH, Va.—
Scouts prepare 24,000 meals**

Five Scout units sponsored by St. Andrew's UMC prepared 24,000 dehydrated meals for Haitians during a March 5, 2011 Stop Hunger Now packaging event.

A Boy Scout troop and a Cub Scout pack joined with three Girl Scout troops to package dehydrated high-protein meals for Haitians following the devastating earthquake in that island nation.

The church received a Shepherd Church Charter Recognition from the General Commission on UM Men for sponsoring the scouting units.


In addition to the meal packaging event, the Boy Scout troop engaged in a spring cleaning day at St. Andrew's UMC and

landscaping at Emmanuel Episcopal Church. The Cub Scout pack sold popcorn with proceeds going to aid Midwest tornado victims, and Cubs assisted with a painting project at an elementary school library and a tree planting project. Girl Scouts participated in a "Stockings for Kids" program, and a "Santa for Seniors" program. They also participated in a fall cleaning day at an elementary school.

Seven scouts received God and Country awards.

**PARKERSBURG, W.Va.—
Church delivers 40,000 pounds of potatoes**

Forty-five UM Men of the Little Kanawha District delivered 40,000 pounds of potatoes to 50 food pantries in eight counties last January.

"We've been doing this for at least 10 years and are thankful we are able to help in any way we can," said Monty Craig, a member of Stout Memorial UMC. The potatoes are provided by the Society of St. Andrew and churches in the area paid transportation costs. 

Former inmate changes teams to play baseball


BOONVILLE, Mo. —

Erik Bolton was one of eight prison inmates that worked with UM Men of Nelson Memorial UMC and the baseball team of Central Methodist University to build a gazebo at a local park last September.

In the 16th year of sponsoring the annual week-long Community Service Project (CSP), this is the first time a man from the Boonville Correctional Center will change teams to become a player on the Central Methodist University baseball team and a member of the church.

This fall, Bolton will again participate in a work project, but this time, the former inmate will be a baptized and confirmed member of the church and a member of the baseball team.

Coach Fred Smith recruited Bolton to join the team following his April 2012 release from prison.

"This is the capstone of our prison ministry," said Tom Maxwell, chair of the church's prison outreach team. 



Members of Nelson Memorial UMC join Erik Bolton, a future member of the Central Methodist University baseball team, at the conclusion of a Nov. 8 worship service at the Boonville Correctional Center. Bolton, a baptized and confirmed member of the church receives church sermons by mail and participates in a Bible study at the prison. From left: Daryl Spady, CSP supervisor from Pilot Grove, the Rev. Nick Campbell, pastor of Nelson Memorial UMC, Erik Bolton, Elvin Farquhar, CSP program manager, and Tom Maxwell.

President Obama honors former prison inmate for prison ministry

Life of crime began at age 5

FORT WORTH, Texas —

Lonnie Bingmon, a man who has been youth detention centers nine times and in jails or a prison six times, received The President's Volunteer Service Award for his ministry in prisons.

"Your volunteer service demonstrates the kind of commitment to your community that moves America a step closer to its great promise," said President Barak Obama in a 2011 letter announcing the honor.

Lonnie understands the needs of those in prison since he has spent years behind bars. His life of crime began at age 5 when he was with two 10-year-old boys who threw a rock through a Dallas bank window. That was the first of his many brushes with the law.

Introduced to Jesus

"One day at age 9, I was going through alley and saw a tree with pears on the upper branches," said Lonnie. "When a little white lady saw me looking at the pears, she got a broom and started knocking some down for me."

Still today, Lonnie gets a little choked up as he recalls the lady who "was nice to a little black kid."

The woman invited Lonnie into her house and introduced him to Jesus.

"One day you will be a mighty man of God," she said.

Lonnie returned to visit her on five occasions. "She read the Bible to me, and she sure could cook. Both of her sons were behind bars at that time. Billie Joe was in prison and Jerry was in the county jail."

While Lonnie wanted to be a "mighty man of God," he was still



Lonnie Bingmon (right) with Royston Bailey, president of UM Men of New York Conference

under the influence of other boys who showed him quick routes to money and nice things.

A tattered old Bible

In 1979, Lonnie saw some inmates tearing pages out of Bible to roll cigarettes. "Even a crook like me knew nobody should light up Luke or roll up Romans," he said. "I stole that Bible that night and when I was sent to a Midway, Texas, prison for armed robbery, I took that raggedy Bible with me."

"I read the story of the prodigal son in that old Bible," said Lonnie. "My foreign land was prison, and I knew that I could be welcomed home."

During the four years Lonnie spent in prison, he read from the Bible with the missing pages and later he read a new Bible provided by the prison



Lonnie Bingmon (first row third from left) serves as one of the leaders of a Kairos ministry in a Texas prison.

chaplain.

Bob Hayes, former 100 meter Olympic champion sprinter and Dallas Cowboys football player, was in prison with Lonnie. One day, Lonnie told him, "You may be the fastest man on the planet but you couldn't outrun God."

"You're right," Hayes replied.

Hayes may have been denied entrance to the NFL Hall of Fame because of his imprisonment for illegal drug use.

While in prison, Lonnie became a certified welder. "I had 876 hours of welding time," he reports.

In 1981, after being released from prison, Lonnie received a job as a welder after he voluntarily repaired a damaged gate. "I was glad to show what I could do," he recalls.

Shot in head

On Jan. 15, 1982, Lonnie got out of a cab and saw his little brother, Paul, and George McAlister going into Caesar's Palace. "I asked the doorman if I could speak to the men who just walked in,"

said Lonnie. "Before I knew it a guy pulled a gun and we started tussling and as I tried to leave I was shot in the right side of my head."

Rushed to the hospital by ambulance, members of Lonnie's family were told they should make funeral arrangements.

"My father, a three-time loser who had also been shot in the back and later became an ordained pastor, said, 'If God can deliver me, he can deliver my son.'

"I recall seeing a shining figure on the other side of the room," said Lonnie. "He said, 'Peace . . . Be still . . . It's not your time. . . . You have work to do.'"

Lonnie lost his left eye and he is partially paralyzed on the left side, but he proved the physicians wrong and his father right. It is still difficult for him to walk and he has trouble lifting his left arm.

His early attempts to find a church home were disappointing. "You should be with your own kind," some church members told him. "You just don't fit in."

For 18 months, Lonnie wandered

the streets. His mother suffered a heart attack and 13 family members died in a 15-year period.

"I was angry, frustrated and depressed," said Lonnie.

Work in food pantry

After finally refusing to take any more drugs, Lonnie walked into Calvary Baptist Church, and told them he wanted to someone to pray with him. "I

Dixie Gross managed the food and shelter center. "I've come for prayer, not food," said Lonnie. At that point Dixie and her three children, ages 5, 8, and 10, placed their hands on him and prayed for him. "God, give Lonnie another chance," they prayed.

Lonnie worked in that food pantry for the following three years. "I even asked God to forgive the guy who shot me," he said.



Lonnie Bingmon (left) is welcomed by the Rev. Ebenezer Aduku as a guest speaker at Madison Ave. UMC in New York City

know you are here to see Dixie," said a church member.

Move to Fort Worth

In 2000, after his mother died, Lonnie moved from Dallas to Fort Worth where he found his way to Alliance UMC. It was there that he engaged in a life-changing Walk to Emmaus in 2003.


It was also in the Alliance church that Lonnie met Mike Springer, chairman of the Texas State Chapter of Kairos Prison Ministry.

When Mike asked Lonnie if he would be interested in participating in a prison ministry team, Lonnie responded. "Brother, I've been looking for this my whole life."

"And I've been looking for you," said Mike.

"In 2004, I went to my first Kairos meeting and I've been rolling ever since," said Lonnie.

A mighty man of God

The lady with the pear tree promised Lonnie that someday he would be a mighty man of God. Even President Obama now recognizes that her promise has come true. 

A father was approached by his small son who told him proudly, "I know what the Bible means!"

His father smiled and replied, "What do you mean, you 'know' what the Bible means?"

The son replied, "I do know!"

"Okay," said his father. "What does the Bible mean?"

"It stands for 'Basic Information Before Leaving Earth'."



HUMOR

How should you invest in a down economy?

If you are under 50 years of age, you may be certain that the stock market will go up at some time in the future. The money you are now investing will grow as the market rises.

Investing is more difficult if you are over age 50.

"Don't pull all your money out of the stock market," says Kurt Brouwer, a Tiburon, Calif., financial planner. "Don't throw all of it in, either."

Men over 50 are also encouraged to keep saving to ameliorate previous losses. You might want to increase the percentage of your salary invested in your 401K to make up for previous losses. Perhaps you are currently saving 7 percent. Consider stepping that up to 10 percent.

Note that you have more than 15 years to make up your losses. Even if you retire at age 65, you will only withdraw enough to live on that year—not your entire retirement kitty, says John Markese, president of the American Association of Individual Investors. With luck, you'll live another 20 years, and that's plenty of time to make up your losses.

If you're 60 or older

If you are over 60 years of age,




you have less time to recover your losses. Any withdrawals now will reduce your account and limit gains when the market recovers.

If you haven't already started receiving Social Security benefits, postpone them as long as

possible. Each year you put off starting your benefits between ages 62 and 70 you increase your Social Security payments by 8 percent. "For many people I's the sole source of lifetime income, and the longer they wait, the larger that benefit will be," says Jean Setzfund, AARP director of financial security.

If you have already started receiving Social Security benefits, you may pay back the benefit that you received in previous years and get a higher benefit at a later age.

You may also consider reducing the amount of money you need for the present and perhaps take a part-time job. The extra income will reduce the amount you withdraw from your accounts and allow time for the market to rebound.

Finally, if you can't sleep at night, consider moving some funds out of the stock market into insured certificates of deposit, bonds, or other safer investments. 

Take a daily inventory of health

By Dr. Bryant Stamford

I heard a talk recently by a high-powered business leader. He told the audience that, each night as he is preparing for bed, he takes an inventory of what he achieved that day in his business dealings, and where he failed. Then he makes a mental, step-by-step plan for the next day, with goals and resolutions.

It takes only a few minutes, he said, but it's highly effective, because each day is important, and the impact of even one day should not be underestimated.

A daily inventory? What a wonderful idea. I, of course, was thinking of health.

Bits and pieces

Unless you are involved in a severe accident or some other form of trauma, your health is not likely to be lost quickly. Instead, health is lost in bits and pieces, fragments lost each day. The degree of daily loss is directly proportional to the kinds of decisions you make.

Eating, for example: At three meals per day, that's 54,750 meals over 50 years. The 50-year mark is a good reference point, because by then many of the chronic diseases that disable and kill us — heart disease, cancer, and stroke — begin to surface.

These diseases develop slowly, the result of relentless daily assaults. A major assault is what you put in your mouth, and if each of these 54,750 meals is a disastrous collection of sugar and sludge, the accumulated impact can be lethal.

I like to envision each bad meal you consume as a pebble. With each bad meal see yourself tossing a pebble into a huge container that is hung around your

neck with a chain. At first, when you are young, the container is light and not a problem to support. But as the years go by and the pebbles accumulate, the container weighs on you, pulling you down. And when the container is very heavy, each additional pebble, tiny as it is, adds a jolt that is felt in every fiber of your body.

Now, envision each good meal you consume as allowing you to remove one pebble from the container. If you have been following a lousy diet for decades, it will take quite a while to lighten the load around your neck. Even so, each pebble you remove is worth the effort.

The same concept can be applied to exercise, smoking cigarettes, and excessive worrying.

Each day you make the choice of whether to be physically active or sedentary, to smoke or not smoke, to worry about something over which you have no control or simply let it go.

Put in this perspective, each day is critical because you make a series of choices, each one a possible pebble that goes on the pile.

The problem is, we don't often think in these terms because we don't pay enough attention to what we are doing. Perhaps a daily health inventory could help us determine whether our daily choices are destroying our health, or promoting it.

Cycles

Taking care of your health is a lot like business cycles. Some times are good, others are not. There are times when you are coasting along, making choices that promote health. Your food choices

are good, you are in the exercise mode and your moods are positive. Few pebbles are added to the pile.

Then, one day you wake up and your good habits have been replaced by lousy ones. What happened?

You are in a downward health cycle. The problem is, you didn't realize it until you had the insight that things had turned sour.

What prompted the insight? Who knows? It could have been a new special on TV, a chance conversation, pants that feel a little too tight, the sudden death of a friend or relative. The problem is, unless something stimulates you to turn you around, you stay rutted in the downward cycle. Here's where the daily health inventory idea comes in as a lifesaver.

Although my health habits are pretty good, and living a healthy lifestyle is a major priority of mine, I am just like everyone else. I have ebbs and flows. At times I ease into bad habits. Recently I had drifted back into drinking copious amounts of coffee, because I was working late at night to meet some deadlines.

I wasn't paying attention to what I was doing. Then, not long ago, I stopped myself on my way to finishing off a pot I had brewed earlier. Holding the empty pot in my hand caused me to pause and think about what I was doing. Now, I've shifted back to drinking green tea again.

If I were taking a daily health inventory, I'd have to acknowledge my excessive coffee consumption as a concern.


I may choose not to dump the habit immediately, choosing (OK, rationalizing) instead to believe that I'll just keep it up until I meet my deadlines and quit having to work late at night.

But eventually the impact of seeing my excessive coffee drinking coming up each night in my health inventory would act to weaken my obvious rationalization and nudge me back to where I want and need to be.

The bottom line

A journey of a thousand miles begins with one step. Similarly, chronic diseases grow bit by bit, going unnoticed until they are advanced and can no longer be ignored.

Take steps to stop the accumulating effects. Count the pebbles that you either toss into your container — or pull out — as an index of whether you are slowly but surely, day by day, destroying your health or promoting it.

Reprinted by permission from the Courier Journal, Louisville, Ky. Dr. Stamford is an exercise physiologist and director of the Health Promotion and Wellness Center at the University of Louisville. 

A Sunday school teacher began her lesson with a question,

“Boys and girls, what do we know about God?”

A hand shot up in the air. “He is an artist!” said the kindergarten boy.

“Really? How do you know?” the teacher asked.

“You know - Our Father, who does art in Heaven... “



HUMOR

Prevent the top seven threats to your health

by Mayo Clinic staff

Do you know the greatest threats to men's health? The list is surprisingly short — and prevention pays off. Consider this top seven list of men's health threats, compiled from statistics provided by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and other leading organizations to reflect men's health risks in the United States. Then get serious about reducing your risks.

No. 1: Heart disease

Heart disease is a leading men's health threat. Take charge of heart health by making healthier lifestyle choices. For example:

- **Don't smoke.** If you smoke or use other tobacco products, ask your doctor to help you quit. It's also important to avoid exposure to secondhand smoke.
- **Eat a healthy diet.** Choose vegetables, fruits, whole grains, high-fiber foods and lean sources of protein, such as fish. Limit foods high in saturated fat and sodium.
- **Manage chronic conditions.** If you have high cholesterol or high blood pressure, follow your doctor's treatment recommendations. If you have diabetes, keep your blood sugar under control.
- **Include physical activity in your daily routine.** Choose sports or other activities you enjoy, from basketball to brisk walking.
- **Maintain a healthy weight.** Extra pounds increase the risk of heart disease.
- **Limit alcohol.** If you choose to drink alcohol, do so only in moderation. Too much alcohol can raise your blood pressure.

- **Manage stress.** If you feel constantly on edge or under assault, your lifestyle habits may suffer. Take steps to reduce stress — or learn to deal with stress in healthy ways.

No. 2: Cancer

Various types of cancer are of particular concern to men, including lung cancer, skin cancer, prostate cancer and colorectal cancer. To reduce the risk of cancer, consider these general tips:

- **Don't smoke.** Using any type of tobacco puts you on a collision course with cancer. Avoiding exposure to secondhand smoke counts, too.
- **Maintain a healthy weight.** Losing excess pounds — and keeping them off — may lower the risk of various types of cancer.
- **Get moving.** In addition to helping you control your weight, physical activity on its own may lower the risk of certain types of cancer.
- **Eat plenty of fruits and vegetables.** Although making healthy selections at the grocery store and at mealtime can't guarantee cancer prevention, it may help reduce your risk.
- **Protect yourself from the sun.** When you're outdoors, cover up and use plenty of sunscreen.
- **Limit alcohol.** If you choose to drink alcohol, do so only in moderation. The risk of various types of cancer — including cancer of the colon, lung, kidney and liver — increases with the amount of alcohol you drink and the length of time you've been drinking regularly.
- **Take early detection seriously.** Consult your doctor for regular cancer screenings.

No. 3: Accidents

Motor vehicle crashes are a leading cause of fatal accidents among men. To stay safe on the road, use common sense. Wear your seat belt. Follow the speed limit. Don't drive under the influence of alcohol or any other substances, and don't drive while sleepy.

No. 4: Chronic lower respiratory diseases

Chronic lung conditions — which include bronchitis and emphysema — also are a concern for men. To protect your respiratory health:

- Don't smoke. If you smoke, ask your doctor to help you quit. Also avoid exposure to secondhand smoke.
- Steer clear of pollutants. Minimize exposure to chemicals and outdoor air pollution.
- Prevent respiratory infections. Wash your hands often and get a yearly flu vaccine. Ask your doctor whether you need a pneumonia vaccine as well.

No. 5: Stroke

You can't control some stroke risk factors — such as family history, age and race — but you can control other contributing factors. For example:

- Manage chronic conditions. If you have high cholesterol or high blood pressure, follow your doctor's treatment recommendations. If you have diabetes, keep your blood sugar under control.
- Don't smoke. If you smoke or use other tobacco products, ask your doctor to help you quit.
- Make healthy lifestyle choices. Eat a healthy diet, being especially careful to limit foods high in saturated fat and cholesterol. Include physical activity in your daily routine. If you're overweight, lose excess pounds.

- Limit alcohol. If you choose to drink alcohol, do so only in moderation.


No. 6: Type 2 diabetes

Type 2 diabetes — the most common type of diabetes — affects the way your body uses blood sugar (glucose). Poorly controlled diabetes can lead to heart disease, eye problems, nerve damage and other complications. To prevent type 2 diabetes, get serious about your lifestyle choices. Eat a healthy diet. Include physical activity in your daily routine. If you're overweight, lose excess pounds.

No. 7: Suicide

Suicide is another leading men's health risk. An important risk factor for suicide among men is depression. If you have signs and symptoms of depression — such as feelings of sadness or unhappiness and loss of interest in normal activities — consult your doctor. Treatment is available. If you're contemplating suicide, call for emergency medical help or go the nearest emergency room.

The bottom line

Understanding health risks is one thing. Taking action to reduce your risks is another. Start with healthy lifestyle choices — eating a healthy diet, staying physically active, quitting smoking, getting regular checkups and taking precautions in your daily activities. The impact may be greater than you'll ever know. 

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Speakers selected for 2013 National Gathering of UM Men

An 11-year veteran NFL player, a UM bishop, and the president of Man in the Mirror will headline 11th National Gathering of United Methodist Men.

Don Davis

Don Davis, 39, a regional director of the National Football League Players Association and an 11-year player with four different NFL teams, will be one of three major speakers at the July 11-14, 2013, event at Belmont University in Nashville.

After registering 238 tackles as a student



athlete at the University of Kansas, Davis played for the New Orleans Saints, Tampa Bay Buccaneers, St. Louis Rams and New England Patriots. He played for the Patriot when

they won two Super Bowl championships in 2004 and 2005.

After retiring from the Patriots in 2007, Davis joined Patriot Coach Bill Belichick's staff as assistant strength and conditioning coach and team chaplain. The following year, he became director of NFL programs for Pro Athletes Outreach, a ministry to pro athletes. In 2010, Davis was named regional director of the National Football League Players Association, the organization responsible for the players' wages, hours and working

conditions.

"When people think of ministry often times they think of a church," said Davis. "That is not what ministry is. I believe ministry is sharing your life with others so that each party can benefit from the experiences, life lessons and mistakes that have formed one's thinking."

Davis loves to quote a Baptist preacher who told him, "It is a sin to bore people with the Gospel of Jesus Christ."

"I am dedicated to keeping the message cool and relevant, but at the same time making sure that the message is completely Christ-filled and doctrinally sound," he says.

Don and his wife, Yanette, have two daughters.

David Delk

David Delk, president of *Man in the Mirror*, has a great talent for helping people remember vital truths from God's Word. His use of humor, illustrations and unique visual aids help men apply biblical principles to life.

He is the author or co-author of five books, including *The Marriage Prayer*, *The Dad in the Mirror*, and *No Man Left Behind*.

He has had articles published in numerous magazines.

Delk was named emerging leader of the year by the National Coalition of Men's Ministries, and he has served as a visiting



lecturer in biblical studies at Reformed Theological Seminary.

A Phi Beta Kappa graduate of Furman University and the Reformed Theological Seminary in Orlando, Fla., Delk was formerly a senior consultant with Energy Management Associates where he developed software and managed consulting projects with large public utilities.

He lives in Orlando with his wife, Ruthie, and three children.

Bishop James Swanson

The Rev. James E. Swanson Sr. is a graduate of Southern Bible College, Houston, and C. H. Mason Seminary, ITC, Atlanta.

The bishop was ordained an elder in the South Georgia Conference and served as pastor of St. Mary's Road UMC in Columbus, Ga., for 14 years. Under his leadership, that church grew from 16 active members to 950 with an average Sunday morning attendance of 525.



While at St. Mary's Road, he was a co-chair of the Mayor's Task Force on Gang Activity where he helped erode the influence and growth of gangs. In 2001, he was appointed superintendent of

the Savannah District.

Swanson served as a delegate to the 1992, 1996, 2000, and 2004 General Conferences, and he was elected to the episcopacy in July, 2004, by the Southeastern Jurisdictional Conference and was assigned to the Holston Area.

He is a trustee of Emory & Henry, Hiwassee, Tenn.; Wesleyan College, Macon, Ga.; and Andrew College, Cuthbert, Ga.

He was a founding member of the

Steering Committee for the Convocation of Pastors of African American United Methodist Churches.

He is married to the former Delphine Yvonne Ramsey. They are parents of six children: Karen, James, Jr., Shondell, Carlton, JaNaé and Joshua, and they have ten grandchildren.

The Rev. Shane Bishop

A former history teacher and coach, the Rev. Shane Bishop is pastor of Christ UMC in Fairview Heights, Ill. He is a graduate of Southern Illinois University, Carbondale, and Candler School of Theology of Emory University in Atlanta.

Under his leadership, since 1997, the number of people in worship at Christ UMC increased from 400 to over 1,000. In



the last three years, 200 people have joined the church by profession of faith.

During that 15-year period, Illinois Great Rivers Annual Conference has recognized Christ UMC with its Award for Church Growth and Evangelism for Large Churches four times. Bishop was presented the Denman Evangelism Award in 1996 and was inducted into the World Methodist Evangelism Council's "Order of the FLAME" in 1999. In 2010, the conference named him Distinguished Evangelist of the Year.

"The church is not an institution among institutions, a charity among charities or a good cause among good causes," says Bishop. "We are the hands and feet of Christ entrusted with the transformation of the world."

Shane and Melissa have two grown children and two grandsons.

American Idol star to sing at National Gathering

Phil Stacey, one of the top five finalists on season six of the American Idol television show, will be the featured singer for the July 11-14, 2013, National Gathering of UM Men in Nashville.

“From the inside out,” the theme of the 4-day gathering, comes from one of Stacey’s hit songs. The song is a prayer for Christ to change us from the inside out.

Stacey’s powerful voice caught the attention of more than 30 million television viewers each week, and he combines that musical gift with passionate heart for God.

“I was incredibly shocked that out of 103,000 contestants I got that far,” he says.

“I’ve always wanted to sing Christian music and I almost signed with a label when I graduated from college, but God had a plan for me, and God is anything but predictable,” Stacey says.

For Stacey, ministry is a family tradition. “Both of my grandfathers were pastors and my father is a pastor; not only were they pastors, they were incredible Christians, great examples of integrity,” Stacey says. “They weren’t religious people, they were relationship people. They had a great relationship with Jesus. I saw that and I wanted that in my life. I got saved when I was

very young.”

Stacey grew up singing in church and later attended Lee University in Cleveland, Tenn., where he became part of the acclaimed Lee Singers. “The Lee Singers were famous to me,” says Stacey, who remembers how he felt when he first found out he’d made the cut. “I was shocked. I thought, ‘I’d better register for classes.’ I took out loans and went to college basically to be in the choir.”

After college, he and his wife, Kendra, moved to Denver where he took a job as a music minister, and he later served in the Navy and was lead vocalist of the Navy Band Southeast.

“I think that as a recording artist and as a member of the body of Christ, there’s nothing that I could do that’s more powerful and more awesome than just being a part of what the local church is already doing to reach their community for Jesus Christ and I keep that in my vision,” says Stacey.

“I don’t feel any particular pressure to release the greatest musical project in history; I just want to do what God has put me on this earth to do.”



Former UMM conference president becomes Circuit Rider

AUSTIN, Texas —

Paul Diehl, 69, the former president of UM Men of Southwest Texas Conference, says he joined the Society of Circuit Riders because it provides a “long-term investment in men’s ministries in the UMC.”

The Circuit Rider Society is composed of men who pledge to provide at least \$1,500 for men’s ministry annually. “I have benefitted greatly from these ministries and want them to be available for future generations,” said Diehl.

Diehl, a 1964 graduate of Bowling Green (Ohio) State University (BS in chemistry), married Janice (Jan), and went to work for

Firestone Tire and Rubber in Akron shortly after graduation. Four years later he was promoted to chief chemist and they moved to Costa Rica.

In 1970, Diehl moved to Costa Mesa, Calif. to become director of development for tire retreading materials for the AMF Voit in Santa Ana, Calif.

Four years later he became technical sales representative for Harwick Chemical Corporation in Pico Rivera, Calif. (now Harwick Standard Distribution Corp). He was promoted to the post of sales manager of the Dallas District in 1977 and vice president and manager of the Memphis (Tenn.) District in 1986.

In 1991, he moved back to Akron as vice president of national accounts and assistant sales manager, and in 1987 he was named a director of the company, a post he held until his retirement in 1998.

Church involvement

Diehl grew up in Tod Avenue Methodist Church where he was active in church school and youth fellowship. During this time he enjoyed attending father/son activities of the UM Men. He says he drifted away from regular attendance while he was in college, but he returned to church in 1972.

As a member of Mesa Verde UMC in Costa Mesa, Calif. he served on several church committees and assisted Jan in teaching a fourth grade Sunday school class. It was in that church that he first attended a few UM Men activities.

While in Plano, Texas in 1979, Diehl and his family attended a Reformed Church in America congregation before transferring their membership to Custer Road UMC in 1981. In that congregation he served several positions and again became active in UM Men. Once again he helped Jan with various teaching assignments.

While living in the Memphis area in 1986, the Diehl family attended St Mark's UMC in Germantown. There he served on the church council and was active in UM Men. In 1988, the family transferred to Capleville UMC in Memphis where he again served on the church council and was active in men's ministry. It was there that he also attended his first conference UMM retreat and went on his walk to Emmaus.

In 1991, when Diehl returned to Ohio, the family attended Hudson UMC where he once more held a position on the church council, but he was not active in a UM Men organization.

It was after his 1997 move to Austin that Diehl fully hit his stride as an active UM Men participant. While attending Westlake UMC, Diehl served on numerous committees, as lay leader, a lay member of the Southwest Texas

Annual Conference and president of the local UM Men unit. He would later be elected district president and finally conference president (2006-2008).

"Presently

I volunteer in a homeless men's clothes closet operated by the Austin District UM Men, and serve at large on the district and conference UM Men steering committees," said Diehl.



Paul Diehl, former president of Southwest Conference UM Men, and a member of the Circuit Rider Society, stands in front of the Sidney Opera House during a 2010 trip to Australia.

Belief in men's ministry

"I believe very strongly in the need for men's ministries," said Diehl. "Just as men have their own physical and emotional needs, they have their own spiritual needs. While blended worship (gender and age) is good and necessary, men need a place and way to address their needs in a manner for them."

Diehl says the Westlake congregation has no "meet-and-eat" organization, but the men engage in Bible study and prayer groups along with other volunteer opportunities. They also utilize UMM resources from district and conference events.

Diehl has been married to his Jan for 47 years. They have three professionally successful adult sons and five grandchildren.

Circuit Riders

The Circuit Rider Society is composed of a special group of UM Men who are committed to providing a long-term ministry designed to touch the lives of men both within and beyond the local church.

If you are interested in joining Diehl as a member of the society, contact Larry Coppock (lcoppock@gcumm.org) (615-620-7261).

UM Men Awards

Edward A. Cox

World War II pilot inducted into John Wesley Society

COLUMBIA, Tenn.—

Edward Cox, 90, a former B-17 co-pilot who flew 35 missions over Germany during World War II, was inducted into the John Wesley Society by UM Men of First UMC in Columbia.

Based some 60 miles outside of London in 1942, Cox was part of a nine-member crew that flew 35 bombing missions together. The plane was severely damaged on the 34th mission and forced to crash land in Holland, but the crew was uninjured. "I still have phone conversations with my navigator who lives in Iowa," said Cox.

In 1944, Cox became an instructor for future aviators. In 1945, he entered Tennessee Tech and after graduation, he received a graduate degree in agricultural education from the University of Tennessee in Knoxville.

He taught at Central High School in Columbia for 10 years and was later named superintendent of schools in Maury County, a position he held for 22 years. He finished his career as commissioner of education for the state of Tennessee, based in Nashville.

Cox has taught Sunday school classes and Disciple Bible classes at First UMC.

Now living at the Bridge, an assisted living community, he is the father of three and grandfather of three.



Edward Cox (left) receives a John Wesley Society plaque from Waymon Hickman, a former inductee into the society (center) and Chaz Molder, president of UM Men of First UMC, Columbia.

Don Boylls

Church honors music director
AURORA, Colo.—

Men of Burns Memorial UMC presented Don Boylls with a life membership in UM Men for revitalizing the local organization.

"Several years ago some of the most influential leaders of the UM Men organization had died, men were dropping away from meetings, and the

organization was floundering," said the Rev. William Morris, pastor of the church.

"Don had served in several capacities

on the leadership team, but he stepped up and agreed to serve as UM Men president in order to breathe new life into the group."

Under Boylls' leadership the group was chartered, they now meet every first Saturday of every month, and they engage in a monthly Bible study.

Boylls, the director of arts and music at the Aurora church, also coordinates Bowl-a-thons to provide financial support for Kairos Prison Ministries.

Clarence Beckner

Sixty years of waking early

On March 10, 1952, ten men met for breakfast with their pastor, Adrian Edgar, at First UMC in Norfolk. They later named themselves the Early Risers for Christ.

Sixty years later, the 60-member group honored Clarence Beckner, 92, one of the founders of the weekly meetings.

Men from some 20 Norfolk congregations meet every Thursday at 6:55 a.m. for breakfast and devotions, and they have provided \$1,200



The Rev. William Morris (right) presents a life membership certificate to Don Boylls.

for several mission projects.

Beckner, the only charter member of the group still participating, received a life membership in UM Men presented by Nebraska Conference UM Men President Dave Mendyk, local UM Men President Ron McKeever, and the Rev. James Brewer, pastor of First UMC.

Beckner has been an usher at First UMC for 62 years, and has sponsored youth groups and coached softball teams.

"I feel like I've been inducted into the United Methodist Men's Hall of Fame," said Beckner.

Oliver Bruce

Honored as man of the year
SAN ANTONIO, Texas —

St. Paul UMC named Oliver Bruce, a former school teacher and former chair of the church's finance committee, as the man of the year 2011. A lifelong member of St. Paul, Bruce owned a bookkeeping and income tax business form more than 30 years.



Oliver Bruce

The organization also honored Shiquille Correll, a high school honor student and football player for outstanding service in the church and community.

Kent Lundy

UM chaplain named Airman of the Year
FORT WAYNE, Ind. —

Captain Kent A Lundy, chaplain of 122nd Fighter Wing, Indiana Air National Guard, was named 2011 Airman of the Year.

Chief Master Sgt. James Salway described Lundy as "responsible, trustworthy and



Pictured (from left): Ron McKeever, president, Early Risers for Christ; Dave Mendyk, president, Nebraska Conference UM Men; Clarence Beckner; and the Rev. James Brewer, pastor, Norfolk First UMC.

empathetic."

While deployed in the winter of 2010-2011 to the Contingency Aeromedical Staging Facility at Ramstein, Germany, Lundy covered 179 medical missions and created a ministry of presence for 5,000 patients from Iraq and Afghanistan wars. He frequently provided copies of *Strength for Service* books to patients.

His deployed commander rated Lundy as his most outstanding chaplain in history of the facility.

Lundy, pastor of Columbia City UMC, is an Eagle Scout and served as a chaplain at the 2010 National Scouting Jamboree.

Kevin Keith

Teacher cleans up with life award
VIRGINIA BEACH, Va.—

Kevin Keith received a life membership award from the men of Community UMC,

During his 14 years with the church, Keith chaired the Finance and Audit Committee, served as secretary of UM Men, and he is a member of the administrative board.. He is taking a Wesleyan Building Brothers course, and he has taught Basic Christianity and leads a men's Bible class.

He regularly helps serve meals at UM Men meetings and helps clean up afterward.

"Although I was raised in the church, like a lot of young men, I left the church when I left home," said Keith. "However, again like many other young men, I returned to church after personal crisis. I have never looked back."

Keith met his wife, Penny, in a Sunday School class and they have been happily married for over 12 years.



Chaplain Kent Lundy



Kevin Keith

Electrical engineer named scouting ministry specialist in Missouri

BRANSON WEST, Mo. —

Dr. J. Derald Morgan, a 50-year adult leader veteran of scouting, is helping six churches in the Ozarks South District of the Missouri Annual Conference develop effective ministries to youth through scouting.

A scouting ministry specialist, Morgan has led boys on two Philmont treks in New Mexico, and two high adventure trips on the water ways of the Northern Tier in Minnesota. He has also served on the staff of two national scouting jamborees in Virginia. He is scheduled to again serve on the staff at the 2013 jamboree in West Virginia.

He has received several scouting awards, including the Scouters Award (1969), Scouters Key (1971), Award of Merit (1976), Silver Beaver (1982), Webelos Den Leader Award (1990), and the Robert Burt Boy Scout Volunteer Award from the Sons of the American Revolution (2007). He is also an Order of the Arrow inductee.

While his list of awards is long, he takes greatest pride in the fact that his son, his oldest grandson, and a son-in-law are all Eagle Scouts. Two other sons-in-laws are a cubmaster and troop committee member.

While serving as president of his own electrical engineering firm, Morgan has still found time to attend the Philmont training for wilderness survival and Wood Badge Beaver Patrol training. He is also an active member of Kimberling City UMC where he is the Charter Organizational Representative and Unit Commissioner for the Pack.

Teaching career

A 1962 graduate in electrical engineering



Dr. J. Derald Morgan, a scouting ministry specialist in the Missouri Annual Conference, stands near the entrance to the Summit Bechtel Family National Scout Reserve in West Virginia, the future site of the National Scout Jamboree. Morgan will be on the staff at that July 15-24, 2013, event which will be attended by some 45,000 Scouts.

from Louisiana Tech University, Morgan began a teaching career as an instructor at the University of Missouri-Rolla (now the Missouri University of Science and Technology) in 1963 after working for Eastman Kodak following graduation. After completing a master's degree at that school, he moved to Tempe, Ariz., in 1965 as a Ph.D. candidate and an instructor in the engineering department of Arizona



Dr. J. Derald Morgan

State University. After receiving his PhD, he returned to teaching in Rolla in 1968 and was named chairman and Emerson Electric professor of electrical engineering in 1978.

In 1985, Morgan was invited to serve as professor and dean of the College of Engineering

at New Mexico State University in Las Cruces. And in 1999, he was named vice president at University of Alabama in Huntsville and executive director of the Alabama Huntsville Foundation; he became special assistant to the chancellor of the University of Alabama in 2008.

In his professional life he has been elevated to fellow of the National Society of Professional Engineers, a fellow of the Institute of Electrical and Electronic Engineers and a fellow of the National Academy of Forensic Engineers.

In all the moves, Morgan became an active member in a local United Methodist congregation. He has served as a teacher, youth leader, and chair of the administrative board, chair of the board of trustees and finance chair. While serving as the finance chair at Madison (Ala.) UMC, the church completely paid for a \$2 million remodeling project.

Role as scouting ministry

Morgan is currently helping churches in Branson, Kimberling City, Forsyth, Reeds Spring, Nixa and Ozark develop their scouting ministries.

“It is important that our pastors and congregations understand that the scouting programs — Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, American Heritage Girls and other value-based youth programs — are ministries. They are opportunities for expanded youth ministry in every UM congregation,” says Morgan.

“UM churches should adopt the position that these programs are not just an obligation or something we have always done but rather incorporate them into the entire youth ministry effort.

“We have one of the greatest opportunities of all time today to advance the development of youth with values of their faith demonstrated in character-building scouting programs. One thing that has declined over my life has been the number of men assuming responsibility for the faith and values development of their children,” says Morgan. “I challenge UM men to meet their full responsibility to children. I also challenge pastors to teach the PRAY (Programs of Religious Activities with Youth) programs for their church youth.”

If you are interested in becoming a scouting ministry specialist, please contact LaNisha Sayles (LSayles@gcummm.org or call 615-620-7260).

Scouting spokesman visits grave of scouting founder

NYERI, Kenya — Alvin Townley, the scouting spokesman for the UMC, visited the grave of British General Lord Robert Baden-Powell, the founder of scouting in 1907.

His gravestone bears a circle with a dot in the centre “,” which is the trail sign for “going home,” or “I have gone home.”

Townley, the author of *Fly Navy*, *Spirit of Adventure* and *Legacy of Honor*, also visited South Sudan, Vietnam and China.



Alvin Townley (center), is joined at the gravesite of Lord Robert Baden-Powell by Samuel Ndukwe, an executive with Atlanta-based Habitat Aid Initiative (left) and Peter Kimita, commissioner of the 323,000 Scouts in Kenya.

Scouting Awards

Colorado church honors two Scout leaders

COLORADO SPRINGS, Colo.— Sunrise UMC presented Cross and Flame Awards to two Scout leaders.

Glenn J. Barr, a retired Army helicopter pilot who flew rescue missions in the Balkans, Kuwait and the U.S., was honored for his service as a Cub Scout leader and chair of Troop 62 Committee, chartered by Sunrise UMC.



Glenn Barr

Barr encourages Eagle Scout candidates to select projects that will benefit the church and he has led Bible studies for men. He also served as a confirmation mentor for five years and leads a group of middle-school youth on

Wednesday nights.

“Glenn is the kind of man who selflessly serves his God, his church and his community,” said Robert Hardwick, Troop 62 chaplain.

The church also presented a Cross and Flame Award to Richard Hunt, a 25-year police officer who has served as assistant scoutmaster and merit-badge counselor; he now serves as charter organization representative.



Richard Hunt

“Rick’s biggest contribution to Troop 62 is saving it from extinction,” said Hardwick.

Hunt became the charter organization representative in 1997 when there were only 17 Scouts. He then stepped up to the scoutmaster position and now there are over 100 Scouts in the troop.

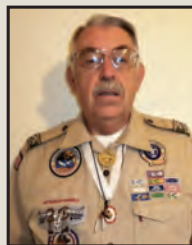
Hunt also serves as chair of the Sunrise Safety Team and leads delivery of Angel Tree gifts to children of incarcerated parents.

He has led five Philmont treks, and, as secretary of UM Men, he leads fund-raising efforts for Philmont Bibles.

Scouting ministry specialist honored by American Legion

SIERRA VISTA, Ariz. —

James Larson, a scouting ministry specialist, received the American Legion Square Knot Award for his scouting leadership. He is the eighth legionnaire in Arizona to receive the award.



Jim Larson

Larson has been especially active in promoting the Program of Religious Activities with Youth awards program to the 31 churches in the South District of the Desert Southwest Annual Conference.

Boys honored for aiding burned brother

EVANSVILLE, Ind. — **J**ayden and Austin Pont were awarded Good Samaritan Awards for their quick action following an accident in which their brother, Carson, was badly burned.

Methodist Temple UMC presented the awards to Justin, a 14-year-old Star Scout and Jayden, a 12-year old First Class Scout. Carson was 11 at the time of the July, 2011, accident.

Jayden and Carson were breaking up a cardboard box to provide fuel for a fire when a ball of fire suddenly shot 30 feet into the air burning Carson.

Jayden and Austin quickly poured bottled water on Carson to extinguish the fire and continued to pour water on his burns. A next door neighbor also provided bottled water. Carson’s parents arrived ten minutes



Austin Pont



Jayden Pont



Carson Pont

later and rushed him to the hospital.

Carson's burns were so severe that he was later transported to the Burn Unit of Shriners Hospital for Children in Cincinnati.

One week later, Carson was on the road

to recovery. If he uses sunscreen and limits his sun exposure, he may now swim and engage in other outdoor activities.

"We are grateful that the Boy Scout first-response team was able to assist with the burn injury Carson had," said Dr. Richard Kagan, chief of staff at the Shriners Hospital Burn Center. "If it was not for the team's quick response, the burn injury could have been a third-degree injury or a deep second, which could have required grafting."

Four Georgia Scouts honored for Uganda partnership

ATLANTA, Ga. —

Four Scouts of St. James UMC Troop 370 received Good Samaritan Awards following two trips to Uganda and one return trip to Atlanta by 13 Ugandan Scouts.

The troop served as trailblazers for a new "Bridges of Mission" initiative of the North Georgia Conference.

The initiative is designed to join American church groups with those abroad. Troop 370

named its part of the initiative "Scouting Bridges: Uganda."

Two-time Bridges participant Sam Cimowsky received a Good Samaritan Award for delivering and installing a wireless computer lab at the Humble School in Uganda.



Harrison Evans, Michael Huber, and David Boyd received the same award for their active involvement in the Bridges program, which included building a latrine for a Ugandan family..

Church honors two church women

LONGVIEW, Texas —

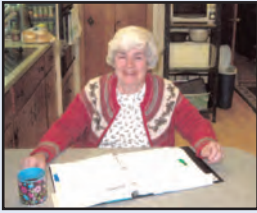
Winterfield UMC presented Cross and Flame Awards to Doris Rowland and Linda Smitherman.

The oldest of 11 children, Rowland serves as president of Winterfield UMC Women, helps with the church's Thanksgiving meal, feeds students at Kilgore College, fills flood buckets for UMCOR, and prepares meals for Vacation Bible School and the Fall Fest.

Smitherman served both Boy Scout and Cub Scout troops and helped three sons earn their Eagle Scout rank. She now serves as pack treasurer. A professional dietician, she



Doris Rowland wears a vest that shows some of her favorite activities.



Linda Smitherman reviews accounts from Cub Scout popcorn sales

installed a hospital bed in her home where she cared for her mother, her husband's aunt, and his uncle prior to the days when they met their maker. She also accepted three teen-age boys into her

home until they were able to work through some family troubles. "She is the most caring and giving people I have known," said David Perkins, a Scout leader who presented the awards.

Girl Scout aids fire victims

ELGIN, Texas —

When a massive September, 2011, wildfire destroyed 1,386 homes in Bastrop County, Erin Ramirez, a senior at Elgin High School, drove to Wal-Mart at midnight to pick up toiletries, underwear, baby food and other items for persons who were forced to quickly abandon their homes and move to a temporary shelter.

The following day, she organized an impromptu Facebook drive for additional bedding and clothing. Members of First

UMC brought three truckloads of items to Erin's house. By 3 p.m. that day, she led a caravan of vehicles to the drop-off site. Over the next few days, she continued to check families into the shelter, serve food, clean up and run errands. She also recruited her teammates on the Elgin High volleyball team to organize donations to the shelter.

Now working on three large collages for a new community center at Morris Hospital for her Girl Scout Gold Award, Erin continues to serve on the Outreach Committee of First UMC and participates in mission trips. She also teaches a summer Sunday school and coaches a second-grade basketball team.

First UMC presented her with a Good Samaritan Award.



A fire in Bastrop County destroyed 34,000 acres and 1,386 homes, Erin Ramirez, a Girl Scout helped provide clothing and personal items to some of the 5,000 people who were forced to leave their homes.

A CALLING CARD

A pastor went to visit church members. At one house, it was obvious someone was home, but no one came to the door even though the pastor knocked several times. Finally, the pastor took out a card and wrote "Revelation 3:20" on the back of it and stuck it in the door.

Revelation 3:20: "Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with me."

The next day, a card turned up in the collection plate. Below the pastor's message was the notation: "Genesis 3:10."

Genesis 3:10: "I heard your voice in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked and I hid myself."

HUMOR

Teen aids disabled and homeless vets

By Shawn Cetrone

ROCK HILL, N.C.—

Emilie Miller, 16, collected mounds of clothing, stacks of books and bundles of soap and laundry detergent for Alston Wilkes Society, a Columbia charity that serves disabled and homeless military veterans along with former prisoners and at-risk families.

The Girl Scout launched the effort as her community service project leading to a Gold Award, the highest honor a Girl Scout can receive.

The high school senior said she received a lot more than a Gold Award for the project.

“I didn’t really think I was going to become this passionate,” she said. “It just made me realize how I could help people that I don’t even know. It made me more confident in who I am. I see now that I can do something for somebody else.”

“It’s typically not youth who have an interest in veterans,” said Erin Roberts, a staff executive with the Alston Wilkes Society. “This is kind of unique.”

Emilie recalls a tour through Alston Wilkes buildings where she met veterans. “The guys didn’t even know what I was doing, but they were so nice to me,” she said.

Rides with Rolling Thunder

When Fort Mill Marine Staff Sgt. Thomas

Joseph Dudley was killed during a battle in Afghanistan, Harvey Mayhill, a rider with the Rolling Thunder, invited Emilie to ride along to escort Dudley’s casket from the airport to his home.

“Emilie is the type of person that in her adult life will make changes in the world because of what she’s doing today,” Mayhill said. “She’s going to touch many lives as she matures into a young adult.”

Good Samaritan Award

Emilie serves as a youth representative on the Aldersgate UMC Council, and the church presented her with a Good Samaritan Award.

“Emilie is one of the most amazing, committed Christian youth I have ever encountered,” said the Rev. Pamela

Ledbetter, Aldersgate pastor. “Her involvement and leadership shows a maturity and a level of commitment I have not seen before.”

Shawn Cetrone is a reporter for The Herald, a McClatchy publication in Rock Hill, S.C.

A revised copy of this article is published courtesy of that publication.



Emilie Miller sits with items she has collected for homeless and disabled veterans.

The Herald Photo by Andy Burris

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