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UM MEN

The magazine of United Methodist Men



**Comfort those
who mourn.**

A letter from the General Secretary

What tool do you use first?

One of my Christmas presents this year was a great set of different size screwdrivers, so after we took the tree down, I joyfully put them in my tool bag in the trunk of my car. I have made a habit of carrying tools in my car, because if I am at work or church or helping a friend, I have at least some of the tools I might need.

As I prepared a sermon for January 31st I was struck anew by one of the lectionary readings for that day—1 Corinthians 13, often referred to as the “love chapter.”

It was probably read at your wedding and a majority of weddings you have attended. This part of Paul’s letter needs no interpretation, no “let’s understand the context” and after we hear it read, no one has to say, “Let me tell you what this really means.” The meaning is clear, challenging, direct, powerful and timeless. There is no hidden meaning, no cultural difference to understand, no update to this century to perform. Love is not weak, or timid, but strong and passionate. It is, “the greatest of these.” As I took some notes on what I might say, a challenging question came to me. Do we “lead off” with love? Is that the first tool we grab?



In my bag in my car, I have tools that twist, that cut, that crush, that make holes, that scrape, and pinch.

Regardless of your setting as a layperson or clergy, large church or small, urban or rural, preparing for General Conference, or a local church planning session, talking to a bishop or the homeless person holding a sign on that corner. What tool do you select first? Because our words do what my tools do: they crush, cut, twist, puncture, or remove what I see as unwanted.

I am committed to read that chapter more often, before a meeting or phone call, before I listen to the news or what will become an endless season of political ads. As the general secretary of the commission, and a delegate to General and Jurisdictional Conferences, am I leading with love in my words, even when others are not? It is particularly difficult when others lead with tools other than love, because if they have a hammer, I want one too. But that is not what this scripture calls us to do. Love continues to be our greatest tool; it always fits; it always completes the task; it always makes all things whole.

Gil Hanke



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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.

United Methodist Men exists to declare the centrality of Christ in every man’s life.



The theme of this issue is the result of a gift from the Rev. Walter Albritton, pastor of congregational care at St. James UMC in Montgomery, Ala.

Walter, a frequent columnist for this magazine, sent me a copy of *233 Days*, a touching book about the death of David, his 3-year-old son, while Walter was attending Vanderbilt Divinity School in Nashville.

While going through the agonizing process of watching his son die of lymphocytic leukemia, Walter shares what he now considers his “brash and foolish” actions targeting Dr. Nels Ferre, his New Testament professor. Walter says, he disliked Dr. Ferre because he was a “liberal.” But he later found Dr. Ferre, who had also lost a child, provided care for the couple during the last months of David’s life and brought comfort to the couple within hours of David’s death.

Walter and I have never met, but I consider him a close friend who provides me valuable insights into how to live an authentic Christian life. He shares both his stumbles and his perfect landings on the pathway to discipleship.

“Comfort those who mourn.”

At some point in our lives we will need to provide comfort to those who have lost loved ones and, if we live long enough, we will need the comfort of others.

Walter helps us realize that we may be in danger of misjudging the action of others while we are in need of restora-

tion or while we are striving to provide care for others.

Of course, there are times when we are too comfortable with injustices around the planet, but this issue addresses those times when either we, or others near us, need a healing touch.

While we usually think of mourning in relationship to death, there are other occasions for mourning such as the loss of a job, the loss of health, and the loss of a relationship. At times such as these, we may be tempted to hide our situation from others. But, when we attempt to heal ourselves, we generally fail.

I’ve always been intrigued by the ending of the Gospel of John: “Jesus did many other things as well. If all of them were recorded, I imagine the world itself wouldn’t have enough room for the scrolls that would be written” (John 21:25).

Assuming John is correct, the gospels only provide information about a tiny fraction of appearances and teachings of Jesus. If that were true in the first century, I cannot conceive of what John might say after billions of people have encountered the living Christ over the last 2,000 years.

If we are in mourning, we dare not confine ourselves to personal prayers and study of Scripture. There is a treasury of comfort and insights to be found through others.

We cannot heal ourselves.

Comfort those who mourn and graciously receive comfort from others when you are in mourning.

Rich Peck

When death claims someone you love

By Walter Albritton

I was taking classes at Vanderbilt Divinity School in Nashville and working part-time at the Methodist Publishing House. My wife, Dean, was serving as a secretary at a Methodist Church when our 2-year-old son, David, became ill.

The first diagnosis was chickenpox, but when the usual remedies failed to work, the pediatrician said he wanted to test the bone marrow.

A few days later he asked us to meet him in his office.

“I’m afraid I have some bad news for you,” he began. “David has acute lymphocytic leukemia.”

“There is nothing we can do to stop it,” he continued. “All we can do is to try to make David as comfortable as possible until the end.”

With my vision blurred by tears, I asked, “How long does he have?”

With obvious compassion, the doctor said, “I don’t really know. I would guess he has from two months to possibly two years.”

Until that diagnosis Dean and I had no more than a casual relationship with God. Our faith was orthodox, but untested. We believed in biblical tenets with the same detachment that we believed water was wet and sugar was sweet.

Then all hell broke loose.

We were suddenly crushed, angry, disillusioned, bewildered and broken. Our Sunday school God was not enough.

Lessons from Vanderbilt

During the last six months of David’s life, I was taking a course in systematic theology taught by Dr. Nels F.S. Ferre.

Nobody struggled more desperately to understand how the suffering of the innocent could fit into a system that defined God as love.

My struggle was compounded by a

negative attitude toward Dr. Ferre.

I was born in the Bible belt, nurtured by Bible-believing Methodists and called to preach under the influence of solidly conservative preachers. I was suspicious of liberal preachers and theologians. And Dr. Ferre was a liberal.

Even before I saw him, I disliked him.

Dr. Ferre required us to read and report on his books. In my reviews, I took special pains to blister him with my perceptive insights into his gross theological errors, his radical departure from New Testament faith, and his lackadaisical ivory-tower style.

I wrote, “Reading this book, I get the impression that the author wrote this while sipping lemonade under a shade tree since his observations have little relevance for hurting people in the real world.”

In ignorance, I made fun of Dr. Ferre, only to learn later that he had lost a child and that he suffered from the crippling pain of rheumatoid arthritis. I was a brash and foolish young man, yet thought I was a true Christian and Dr. Ferre was a phony.

My foolishness still embarrasses me.

Dr. Ferre made no response to my hypercritical reports and consistently gave me high grades. He was gracious, kind and obviously concerned for David, Dean and me.

I was forced to face the uncomfortable fact that his spirit had all the earmarks of a deeply authentic Christian.



Dr. Nels Ferre

Play on a linoleum floor

The clinching evidence came when one day he called on us and sat on the floor to play with David in our dingy rented house. It was while he was sitting on the floor playing with a sick child, not expecting anything in return for his kindness that I began to realize what a big man he was. I can still see that handsome Swede, his smile a mile wide, sprawled on that linoleum floor sharing the love of God with our dying boy.

Since that afternoon, I have had very little concern about whether a man is a liberal or a conservative. I saw through tears that the only thing that really matters is whether Christ is in the heart.

Within hours after David died, Dr. Ferre arrived at our house. With one arm around Dean and the other around me, hugging us close, he said, "I know how much your hearts hurt, I just wanted to come and tell you that God hurts just as

you hurt right now.

The thought leaped into my mind, "I can love a God like that."

Dr. Nels Ferre helped liberate me from my narrow-minded conservatism. He did it by ignoring my reprehensible behavior and offering me his unconditional love.



This article is adapted from 233 Days by the Rev. Walter Albritton, pastor of congregational care at St. James UMC in Montgomery, Ala.

The book is dedicated to Dr. Nels Ferre (1908-1971) and is

available from Amazon.com. A free copy of the book is available to any pastor requesting it by contacting Walter at walteralbritton7@gmail.com.

Give devotional books to those coping with loss

There are times when we cannot be present with those coping with the loss of colleagues.

We can't be there when military units experience high casualties.

We can't be there to comfort police officers following mass shootings.

We can't be with first responders when they agonize over losing a patient.

We can't be there when fire fighters suffer losses in forest fires.

At that time, providing copies of Strength for Service books may be one

of the only ways we have of reaching out to those public servants.

Books have been given to the Ocala (Fla.) Police Department following the accidental shooting of Officer Jared Forsyth; they were given to 200 first responders following the killing of eight students and a professor in Roseburg, Ore.,

and they were given to 200 first responders who had the difficult job of identifying remains of victims following a landslide that buried a community at Oso, Wash.



A eulogy for Alex

Ten days after his son, Alex, was killed in a 1983 car accident, Reverend William Sloane Coffin delivered this sermon to his congregation at Riverside Church in New York City.

As almost all of you know, a week ago last Monday night, driving in a terrible storm, my 24-year-old Alexander, who enjoyed beating his old man at every game and in every race, beat his father to the grave.

Among the healing flood of letters that followed his death was one carrying this wonderful quote from the end of Hemingway's "A Farewell to Arms":

"The world breaks everyone, then some become strong at the broken places."

My own broken heart is mending, and largely thanks to so many of you, my dear parishioners; for if in the last week I have relearned one lesson, it is that love not only begets love, it transmits strength.

When a person dies, there are many things that can be said, and there is at least one thing that should never be said.

The night after Alex died I was sitting in the living room of my sister's house outside of Boston, when the front door opened and in came a nice-looking, middle-aged woman, carrying about 18 quiches. When she saw me, she shook her head, then headed for the kitchen, saying sadly over her shoulder, "I just don't understand the will of God." Instantly I was up and in hot pursuit, swarming all over her. "I'll say you don't, lady!" I said.

For some reason, nothing so infuriates me as the incapacity of seemingly intelligent people to get it through their heads that God doesn't go around this world with his fingers on triggers, his fists around knives, his hands on steering wheels. God is dead set against all unnatural deaths.

Christ spent an inordinate amount of time delivering people from paralysis, insanity, leprosy, and muteness. Which is not to say that there are no natural-caused deaths — I can think of many right here in this parish in the five years I've been here — deaths that are untimely and slow and pain-ridden, which for that reason raise unanswerable questions, and even the specter of a cosmic sadist.

But violent deaths, such as the one Alex experienced — to understand those is a piece of cake. As his younger brother put it simply, standing at the head of the casket at the Boston funeral, "You blew it, buddy. You blew it."

The one thing that should never be said when someone dies is "It is the will of God." Never do we know enough to say that. My own consolation lies in knowing that it was not the will of God that Alex die; that when the waves closed over the sinking car, God's heart was the first of all our hearts to break.

When parents die, they take with them a large portion of the past. But when children die, they take away the future.


Because Alex and I simply adored each other, the wound for me is deep, but clean. I know how lucky I am! I also know this day-brightener of a son wouldn't wish to be held close by grief (nor, for that matter, would any but the meanest of our beloved departed) and that, interestingly enough, when I mourn Alex least I see him best.

And of course I know, even when pain is deep, that God is good. "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" Yes, but at least, "My God, my God"; and the psalm only begins that way, it doesn't end that way.

As the grief that once seemed unbearable begins to turn now to bearable sorrow, the truths in the "right"

biblical passages are beginning, once again, to take hold: "Cast thy burden upon the Lord and He shall strengthen thee"; "Weeping may endure for the night but joy cometh in the morning"; "Lord, by thy favor thou hast made my mountain to stand strong"; "For thou hast delivered my soul from death, mine eyes from tears, and my feet from falling"; "In this world ye shall have tribulation, but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world"; "The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it."

And finally I know that when Alex beat me to the grave, the finish line was not Boston Harbor in the middle of the night. If a week ago last Monday, a lamp went out, it was because, for him at least, dawn has come.

So I shall — so let us all — seek consolation in that love which never dies, and find peace in the dazzling grace that always is. 



Dr. William Sloane Coffin Jr. (1924 – 2006) was chaplain at Yale University (1958-

75) and senior minister at Riverside Church in New York City (1977-87). The death of his son Alexander in a 1983 car accident was the occasion for this sermon.

Comforting words from Scripture

Matthew 5:4 – Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.

Romans 12:15 – Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn.

John 14:2-4 – My Father's house has many rooms; if that were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am.

2 Corinthians 5:1 – For we know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, an eternal house in heaven, not built by human hands.

Joshua 1:9 – Be strong and of good courage; do not be afraid, nor dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go.

Psalm 23:4 – Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me.

Psalm 16:11 – You make known to me the path of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence, with eternal pleasures at your right hand.

Psalm 30:5 – Weeping may endure for a night, but joy comes in the morning.

John 16:33 – "I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world."

Philippians 4:7 – And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Isaiah 40:31 – but those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint.

1 Corinthians 13:4-8 – Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered; it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, and always perseveres. Love never fails.

Five stages of grief

Grief is a natural response to loss.

It is the emotional suffering one feels when something or someone the individual loves is taken away. Grief is also a reaction to any loss. Individuals may grieve the loss of a job, the end of a friendship or the loss of health.

Every step of the process is natural and healthy. It is only when a person gets stuck in one step for a long period of time that the grieving can become unhealthy, destructive and even dangerous.

While all people grieve differently, in 1969, Elisabeth Kübler-Ross described the five steps many people experience following the death of a loved one.

1. Denial and Isolation

The first reaction to learning of terminal illness or death of a loved one is to deny the reality of the situation. We block out the words and hide from the facts. This is a temporary response that carries us through the first wave of pain.

2. Anger

As the masking effects of denial and isolation are replaced by reality. We respond in anger. Anger may be aimed at physicians, the situation related to the death, friends, family, and even God. We may feel guilty for being angry, but that only intensifies our anger.

3. Bargaining


If we or loved ones are coping with a terminal diagnosis, we may want to strike a deal with God in an attempt to postpone the inevitable.

4. Depression

Just dealing with the selection of a casket, burial site and funeral service and the accompanying cost can be depressing. A greater sense of depression accompanies the final farewell to a life companion and the accompanying loneliness and sense of abandonment.

5. Acceptance

Coping with loss is a deeply personal experience. Coming to a point of acceptance is moving beyond depression, but sadness continues. Those who are terminally ill may reach a stage where they accept the inevitable without anger or denial. Terminally ill patients may go through a period of withdrawal, a natural stage at which social interaction is limited.

Not everyone goes through these steps, the best thing any of us can do is to feel grief as it comes over us. Resisting it only will prolong the natural process of healing. 

Son's death plunges bereaved couple into abyss of grief

By Tafadzwa Mudambanuki

In August 1998, I arrived in Dayton, Ohio, from Zimbabwe to pursue a graduate degree in religious communication. The only way to communicate with my Mutare-based family was with frequent phone calls. After a Thanksgiving lunch, I placed a call to my family. I received dreaded news that our son, Wesley, had fallen ill to a mysterious illness. His body temperature was bread-oven hot from head to waist and the fever alternated between there and his waist to his toes for 10 days. Wesley was our first child. Hearing that he had contracted a mysterious illness devastated me.

On Dec. 4, 1998, Community UMC in Brookville, near Dayton, bought a ticket for me to go and bring Wesley to the United States for medical treatment.

I arrived in Zimbabwe mid-morning Dec. 5, and Bishop Christopher Jokomo and Dr. Bill Humbane and his wife, Maria, were at hand to receive me at the Harare airport.

Whisking me away from the crowd as soon as I claimed my luggage, they surrounded me and held my hands. Through prayer, Bishop Jokomo delivered to me the news of Wesley's death. I stumbled – breaking the wall of hands they had formed to prevent me from falling. There was a thud as I fell and wailed loudly on the Harare airport tarmac.

Wrenching and incomprehensible

The death of Wesley was wrenching, unexpected and incomprehensible. Children are supposed to live longer than their parents do. When they do not, the pain is unimaginable. I sobbed the

entire three-and-a-half-hour drive from Harare to Mutare. I thought life was not worth living because of the intense pain I endured from losing Wesley.

As soon as I arrived at the Hilltop UMC parsonage where we lived, people started wailing, the Zimbabwean custom for paying last respects. We mourned together. Family members and friends accompanied me to the morgue to collect Wesley's body for an overnight vigil.

The thought of living my life without Wesley was frightening. I began re-examining priorities and questioning belief structures. People poured into the parsonage and the memorial service to offer their condolences.

Although well-meaning and attempting to console us, many pastors said words that were unhelpful to my wife, the Rev. Ever Mudambanuki, and me when we lost Wesley. Here is some of what we heard during our son's funeral:

- "It is all part of God's plan; just accept it as believers."
- "God wanted another flower in his garden; please be comforted Wesley is in a better place."
- "I know exactly how you feel."
- "You can have other children."
- "Put this behind you for God has another plan for you."
- "You have to get on with your life."
- "Wesley was not yours to send to the grocer's store."
- "God gave you and so God has taken Wesley back."

- As the church community tried to comfort us, some even said, "Since you are preachers, God is preparing you to be more empathetic to others."

'Cry hard when you feel like crying'

One pastor said, "You need counseling to get over this."

I thought to myself, "Why counseling? Can this bring back my Wesley?" I did not feel right about counseling, but those Goliath-like voices were so insistent on counseling that I almost accepted it. At times, we felt like a pariah couple. We did not have other children, so that made the grief harder. "Look at the man who just lost a child," said some sympathizers. I felt a lump on my throat, and tears welled up in my eyes.

I realized that we, as Christians, are not taught how to deal with death and what to say. I sincerely think people are not callous and unfeeling when they say unintentionally hurtful words when death occurs. People have no clue of what to say when a tragedy happens.

Those who had lost children made empathetic – and helpful – comments.

The Revs. Forbes and Nyaradzai Matonga checked on us daily by phone and made frequent visits to our home.

"My fellow brother, cry hard when you feel like crying," Forbes said. "This is what helped me grieve when we lost our baby." Wesley was a healthy boy, and this sudden death made it hard to accept that his life was cut short. "There was so much unfilled potential still ahead of him," he said.

Empty space


The most painful part was when all family members, relatives and friends went home, and we could only stare at an empty cot in our bedroom. The death of a child interrupts the natural order of life. Ever and I had reached rock bottom – the



Tafadzwa (left) and his wife, the Rev. Ever Mudambanuki, pose with their toddler son, Wesley.

lowest place we could go. And, yet, we found out that we could stand on Jesus Christ, the Rock that never fails. With a firm belief in Jesus, we started to climb out of the abyss of grief.

I grieved intuitively and took solace in sharing pleasant memories of my son. I arrived back in Ohio a month later. Wanting to do something constructive, some bereaved couples established a garden of flowers in his memory.

Wesley's death forced us to find a new normal. I had to learn to let go of things I could not control. During my grieving period, I realized when I talked to the Matongas about the death of our son, I felt good, and they could see a palpable look of relief and gratitude over my face as we chatted. 

Tafadzwa Mudambanuki is coordinator of central conference content for United Methodist Communications. He, his wife, Ever Mudambanuki, and their second son, Kingsley, 15, live in Hermitage, Tenn.

How to help children through the mourning process

By Tom Tozer and Bill Black

Sometimes it seems as though the entire world is in mourning. We are bombarded by news of gun violence, road rage, domestic disputes, unexplainable loss, and on a larger scale, the threat of terrorism and nuclear weapons in the hands of sworn enemies. More than once, we have hung our heads in sorrow and seeming hopelessness. While we are charged to comfort our hurting friends and neighbors, we ourselves sometimes need comfort.

Many of us have learned how to perform emotional triage and separate the calamities into major and minor. Our experience has also taught us simply to dismiss many irritations altogether.

But what about our children? Sometimes they need comforting.

Let's look at three challenges that can cause children to mourn.

1. Bullying

Name-calling, bigotry, physical assaults, ridicule, and vicious gossip can plague our children. A young and immature person puts others down for many reasons, some of which are based on negative home influences, peer pressure or faulty internal wiring. A big step in opening the eyes of a bully can be to ask, "How would you feel if you were the recipient rather than the perpetrator of your mean-spirited behavior?" Dad, you must ask your teen again and again how he or she treats his siblings or someone at school.

The person who is bullied mourns, sometimes to the extent that life becomes unbearable. Those who witness it have to

step up, demand that it stop and befriend the one who is being antagonized. We must teach our young people to get involved—and we adults must set the example.

2. Depression

Our children can be subject to depression. According to the World Health Organization, 121 million people worldwide suffer from it. How many times have we experienced the gut-wrenching news of a mass shooting carried out by someone who found life to be so devoid of hope that he resorted to the unthinkable? How often have we been jolted by the self-inflicted death of a celebrity who appeared to have the perfect life—only to discover that he or she lived a private existence of mental torment?

The 2012 Depression Facts & Statistics points out that 2.5 percent of children and 8.3 percent of adolescents suffer from depression. Today the average age of people in the U.S. stricken with depressive disorders is 14.5. Fifty years ago, the average age was 29.

What should grown-ups look for?

Dr. Ellen Slicker, professor of professional counseling at Middle Tennessee State University and a private-practice psychologist, says parents and other adults should look for signs of depression in their children: sadness, lack of energy and withdrawal from friends, family and activities.

"The child or adolescent may make statements about feeling hopeless or worthless," Slicker notes. Symptoms could include sudden lower grades, sullenness

or grouchiness. "The adolescent could also participate in cutting, which rarely indicates intentions of suicide but combats feelings of numbness they may be having," she says.

Slicker adds that alcohol and drug use can mask real feelings and worsen the depression.

Parents, teachers and other responsible adults need to take these signals seriously. "If you suspect that your child is depressed or sad, it is valid to ask if he or she is thinking of hurting him- or herself. The first stop might be the family physician/pediatrician. Getting the adolescent into therapy and joining him or her in therapy as concerned parents should also happen sooner than later," Slicker advises.

3. Parent's illness


Illness of a loved one or close friend can jar a child's world. When a parent becomes seriously ill, the kids need patience, understanding and a listening ear. Teachers and other responsible adults should watch for problems with a child's schoolwork, sleeping habits, social withdrawal or unusually aggressive behavior. Two resources can help kids who are dealing with a parent's illness: KidsKonnected (<http://www.kidskonnected.org>) provides counseling, camps and workshops for children whose parents have cancer. Gilda's Club (<http://www.gildasclub.org>) offers quality programs and activities for kids who are dealing with a parent's cancer. Teens can volunteer to help in club programs as well.

Comfort tools

Here are a few "comfort tools" when your children are hurting:

- Ask questions without being accusatory or confrontational.

- Talk about the problem. After all, others will—from the media to your child's social circles. Create a climate at home where your child can talk freely and openly about his/her feelings.
- Banish blame. Help your child cope with a hardship rather than focus on fault.
- Give hugs. Be supportive and assure your child that he or she is safe.
- Be patient. Children's minds run wild with emotions. It takes them much longer to process them.
- Seek help. Dad, you cannot fix everything.
- Serve as an example. The way you approach a problem—your tone, demeanor, actions—will be a model for your children.

There is a time to mourn. And there is a divine call to comfort. We are commissioned to be our brother's keeper. Let's be there for our kids. 



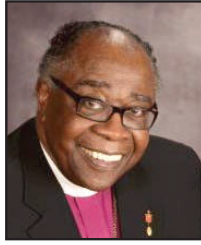
Tom Tozer and Bill Black write a syndicated column on fatherhood and are

authors of *Dads2Dads: Tools for Raising Teenagers* <<https://wwwcreatespace.com/4178123>>. They are available for workshops.

Contact them at tomandbill@dads2dadsllc.com. Like them on Facebook and follow them on Twitter at [Dads2Dadsllc](https://twitter.com/Dads2Dadsllc).

Bishop William Wesley Morris

Retired UM Bishop William Wesley Morris, 78, died Jan. 14 at home, following a massive heart attack.



Bishop William Wesley Morris

Morris was elected to the episcopacy in 1992 while serving as pastor of First UMC in Gallatin, Tenn. He served the Alabama West Florida Area for eight years before being assigned to the Nashville Area in 2000. He retired in 2004.

In 2005, he served as interim general secretary of the General Commission on UM Men, following Joe Harris' decision to accept an appointment as assistant to the bishop and communications director for the Oklahoma Annual Conference. Morris served as top executive of the commission during the 2005 National Gathering at Purdue University, the move of the commission staff to a new building on Music Row in Nashville, and the election of David Adams as general secretary.

"I'll always remember his beautiful baritone voice and how he would conclude powerful sermons with a hymn to drive home the message," said Larry Coppock, director of scouting ministries for the commission. "With a heart of a servant leader, he always brought a sense of calm to commission meetings as he helped us through some critical times."

"I can still hear his voice when he prayed and when he preached," said Gil Hanke, who served as president of the commission when Morris was interim executive. "Bishop Morris used that remarkable voice mostly in praise of God."

Hanke was elected to the general secretary post in 2010.


Far into retirement, Morris taught Sunday school at Clark Memorial UMC in Nashville.

"The United Methodist Church has lost a giant and Clark Memorial has lost a giant," said the Rev. Herbert L. Lester Jr., the church's pastor.

William was born in Baltimore on Aug. 7, 1937, and attended the Baltimore public schools. He was a graduate of Ohio Wesleyan University, Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary, Scarritt College, and Vanderbilt University, where he earned a doctorate of ministry degree.

He was ordained a deacon in 1959 and an elder in 1961. He served Bethany Methodist Church and Union Avenue Community Methodist Church in Chicago; Stanley Methodist Church in Chattanooga, Tenn.; John Wesley UMC in Nashville; and First UMC in Gallatin, Tenn. He twice served as a district superintendent, leading the Clarksville and Murfreesboro (Tenn.) Districts.

Morris served as president of the UM Board of Pension and Health Benefits from 2000 to 2004. He was a trustee of Emory University in Atlanta.

He was married to the late Mary Head Morris of McMinnville, Tenn., and they had four children. He married Princilla Smart Evans in 2006. 



Bishop William W. Morris, takes aim at an inflatable football game during a 2006 visit of the Souper Bowl of Caring while he was serving as interim top executive of the General Commission on UM Men.

Questions John Wesley asked of people who wanted to become members of a class meeting

1. Have you been forgiven of your sins?
2. Have you peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ?
3. Have you witnessed God's Spirit declaring you to be a child of God?
4. Is the love of God in your heart?
5. Does sin have no dominion over you?
6. Do you desire to be told of all your faults?
7. Do you desire that every one should tell you whatsoever is in his heart concerning you?
8. Do you want us to tell you whatsoever we think, whatsoever we fear, whatsoever we hear, concerning you?
9. Do you desire that in doing this we should come as close as possible, that we should cut to the quick, and search your heart to the bottom?
10. Is it your desire and design to be entirely open, so as to speak everything that is in your heart, without exception, without disguise, and without reserve?




The following questions were asked of every member at every meeting.

1. What known sins have you committed since our last meeting?
2. With what temptations have you met?
3. How were you delivered?
4. What have you thought, said, or done which you question whether it is a sin?
5. Have you nothing you want to keep secret?

Accountable Discipleship: Living in God's Household by Steven Manskar, Nashville, Discipleship Resources, 2000, pp. 90-97.

Wesley asked his preachers to do four things:

- Invite
- Convince
- Offer Christ
- Build up 

Paraphrased from The Works of John Wesley, Volume 9 (The Methodist Societies History, Nature, and Design), Edited by Rupert E. Davies, Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1989, pp.77-78.

District builds 153 handicap ramps

Since 2011, four teams in the Indiana District of the Western Pennsylvania Annual Conference have built 153 ramps for the elderly and people with handicapping conditions.

“Ramps of Hope” is a ministry



The ramps are built as modules so when a ramp is no longer required, the ministry can move it to another site.

Photos by the Rev. Sharon Waltenbaugh

composed of two teams in Armstrong County and one each in the Indiana and Jefferson counties.

Doug Hilliard, a director of the Indiana County ministry, says the team built 50 ramps in 2015; 10 were recovered and repaired for future installation. The team has received requests for nine additional ramps.

The ministry is primarily funded

through the district which gives \$500 towards each ramp. If the material cost exceeds this amount the recipient is encouraged to contribute. If financially unable to donate, funding is explored through other sources such as private gifts, grants, churches and other community organizations

“Over the four years the ministry has been in place, we have seen on numerous occasions where God’s timing and provision have always come through,” said Hilliard.

Grant from Discipleship Ministries

The ramp ministry received a \$2,500 grant from the Committee on Older Adult Ministries of Discipleship Ministries; \$1,000 was used to purchase tools and the balance was used to purchase materials.

That grant was part of a series of grants to 31 churches in the U.S., Africa, and the Philippines by a sub-committee of the Older Adult Ministries Committee.

“The original purpose of the grants was to help churches address older adult poverty in their communities, said Dr. William Randolph, director of the Office on Aging for Discipleship Ministries. “We wanted to partner with churches to develop models which can be easily



Families and individuals who receive ramps are grateful, and the ministry is a blessing to volunteers who work together.




Ramps of Hope is one of 31 projects that received a grant from the Older Adult Ministry Committee, an interagency ministry related to Discipleship Ministries.

adapted by other churches, whose communities face similar circumstances. The grants are also designed to call attention to the many forms of hidden

poverty, and opportunities for older adults to serve their neighbors, communities, and church.”

Additional teams planned

Ramps of Hope teams have received requests for 19 new ramps along with requests for no-longer-needed ramps to be removed. In order to address those needs the district ministry hopes to form second teams in Indiana and Jefferson Counties.

Ramps of Hope provide more than hope for people who are coping with difficult health conditions. The ramps provide a way for people to make their own way out of their homes and they enable recipients to regain independence. 

Expressions of appreciation

“I wanted to express my sincere thanks for the wonderful ramp that was provided for my family. My father can enter and exit with his wheelchair with ease, enabling him to go to doctor appointments without fear of injuring himself or his caregiver. My daughter who is also using a wheelchair can easily go to school and summer camp. The Ramps of Hope ministry has significantly improved the quality of life for our family.”

“The Ramps of Hope ministry is one of the greatest life-changing programs for many like me. I had an accident falling 20 feet out of a tree. After a month in the hospital it came time to be released, but being in a wheelchair I needed a ramp to go home or I had to be moved to a

personal care home, words that were devastating and neither of which I could afford. I then learned about Ramps of Hope. I can’t thank you enough for helping me to get my life back. May God bless all those involved in this ministry.”

“We praise God for the ramp that was provided every time we have to take our daughters to appointments. A few days ago one of our girls had to be transported by ambulance and the ramp made the paramedic’s job much easier.”

“I thought God was mad at me, but then he provided this ramp which has been a true blessing and has taken away a huge burden.”

A pastoral aptitude test



By Rich Peck

Give this test to your pastor

Do you occasionally have doubts about your vocational calling? The following examination will help you know whether you have made the right decision. You have three hours to complete the following questions. Begin immediately.

1. General Aptitude

Walk on water. Any body of water more than six feet deep will do. If no water is available, you may move a mountain instead.

2. Sermon Preparation

You have been given *Strong's Concordance*, the 12 volumes of *The Interpreter's Bible* and the 13-volume *Works of Wesley*. Contrast the role of law in the Old Testament with that of the New Testament and compare these with the attitudes of Wesley. Now relate these to the lectionary reading for this Sunday.

3. Theology

Compare Philo Judeus' concept of creation with that of Karl Barth. Do not use any secondary sources.

4. Education

Recruit a sane teacher for the seventh grade Sunday school class. Now, get that person to return for a second Sunday.

5. Calling

Convince two Mormon missionaries to join your church.

6. Preaching

Five hundred members of Good News are meeting with an equal number of MFSA members. Harmonize the concerns of these groups. You may speak in either Greek or Aramaic.

7. Finances

Get your 200-member congregation to pay off the \$500,000 mortgage while paying all apportionments and your fair-share payment to the pension fund drive.

8. Conflict Resolutions

You will be issued one Christian militiaman and one Shite Muslim. Get the pair to agree on whether the name is Abraham or Ibrahim ibn Azar.

9. Parsonage Life

Convince the parsonage committee to paint your living room in a color you like that is not on sale. If you do not live in a parsonage, you must convert water into wine for an equal score.


10. Pastoral Care

Using only nondirective techniques, counsel each inmate in the state prison. Now arrange for them to be released into your custody.

11. General Administration

Memorize and explain the *Discipline*. Do not omit any paragraph. Be brief.

Conclusion

Score 10 points for each correct answer. If you score 90 or below, you do not qualify for the pastoral ministry. Find a position on the cabinet. 



PLANO, Texas —

Church enters float in parade

The UMC of Plano entered a float in a homecoming parade. Some 30 church members rode the float or walked the parade route handing out information about "Trunk or Treat" and a UM Men breakfast.



CONWALL ON THE HUDSON, N.Y.—

New York men gain new insights

Gil Hanke, top staff executive of the General Commission on UM Men, helped 13 men from 12 New York Conference churches discover ways to heighten the spiritual lives of men in their congregations while introducing activities to attract men without church homes.



Standing from left: John Hamilton, Thomas Mendenhall, Herb Brown, Graham Greaves, Gil Hanke, Johnnie Droughon, Robert Miller, and Royston Bailey. Seated: Benjamin Nelson, Eric Williamson, Gene Jones, John Lemon, and Clem Westney. Photo by Malcolm Hall, conference scouting coordinator.

Johnnie Droughon, a men's ministry specialist, assisted in the October presentations at Camp Olmsted overlooking the Hudson River,

"This was a very interactive training, which was too short," said Royston Bailey, president of New York Conference UM Men.

"This was one of the most enriching training I've ever attended," said, John Hamilton, vice president of Jamaica First UM Men.

ENOLA, Pa.—
Eagle Scouts receive devotional books

Don Holley Jr., assistant scoutmaster and a member of the Northeast Fire and Rescue Company, presented copies of *Strength for Service to God and Community* to six Eagle Scouts as part of October Fire Prevention Month.

VIRGINIA BEACH, Va.—
Christmas tree sales expand ministries

UM Men of St. Andrew's UMC celebrated their 40th year as a chartered fellowship and their 38th year of selling Christmas trees to support the church and outreach programs. Each year, 80 to 100 men sell trees to raise \$12,000.



Each man who purchases a tree receives a free ticket to the January men's fellowship breakfast. If he can't use the ticket he is encouraged to give it to someone who will.

The organization supports a Boy Scout troop, a camp for cognitively challenged youth, the youth fellowship, a scholarship fund, a puppet ministry, housing for people with special need, a jail ministry and the pastor's discretionary fund. The men also raise a garden that provides 1,200 pounds of produce for a food bank; they pack 1,437 bags of supplemental food for children in two local schools, and they participate annually in a Stop Hunger Now food packaging event.

Nineteen members have received Life Membership Awards.

TUCSON, Ariz.—
100 cars race down track

For the sixth year, more than 100 cars raced down the Pinewood Derby track at O'Rielly Chevrolet during the 6th annual All-Business Pinewood Derby Championship.



Doug Wright, a scouting ministry specialist and a member of the General Commission on UM Men, chaired the judges' panel.

MADISONVILLE, Ky.—
Church provides water, popcorn and prayer

The city of Madisonville celebrates "Friday Night Live" in June, July and August. During those events, men of Parkview UMC sponsor a booth at which they give out free water, popcorn, candy, and pamphlets about the church. Residents were invited to leave prayer requests in a box, and some people asked for prayers about pressing concerns.

Several new people attended the church on following Sundays.

CAMDEN, S.C.—
Church holds charter ceremony

The UM Men's unit at First UMC conducted a charter ceremony during regular worship service. Herman Lightsey, conference president, said the chartering was "significant because this is the first time the 149-year old congregation had chartered their men's ministry."

MILTON, W.Va.—
Church honors fire fighters who saved church building

In November, the Vitality Team of the Milton UMC hosted a dinner for local volunteer firefighters and their families.

The Reverend Lynn Cartwright, pastor, presented Milton Fire Chief Brent Taylor with a plaque as an expression of the congregation's appreciation to fire fighters who saved

the historic church building from a fire a few months earlier. Chief Taylor introduced an associate who, as a new assistant fire chief, commanded the department in extinguishing the blaze.

UM Men President Brad Stewart, a retired fireman, presented fire fighters with copies of *Strength for Service to God and Community*.



From left: Fire Chief Brent Taylor, Pastor Lynn Cartwright, and UM Men President Brad Stewart

GOLDEN, Colo.—
Church leaders invited to combine a Wesleyan practice with modern technology

Gil Hanke, top staff executive of the General Commission on UM Men, invited leaders of men's ministry from several denominations to use technology to implement transformative class meetings practiced in 18th century Methodist societies.

In a 12-minute address to the "2015 Reload Leadership Summit" at Flat Irons Community Church, Hanke told the 150 participants how small accountability groups can help men become effective disciples of Jesus Christ.

In one of 10 "Ed Talks," Hanke suggested leaders use *The Class Meeting*, a book by Kevin Watson, as a way to help groups of 8-10 men engage in conversations about their souls.



In a 10-minute "Ed Talk" Tim Wright speaks about society's "boy crisis" at "Reload 2015."

Noting the hectic schedules of most men, he suggests they hold electronic meetings where no travel is required.

GREENSBURG, Pa.—
Girl wins trip to UM Camp

Rebecca Blackburn, 14, of Greensburg won a drawing for a 4-day stay at UM Camp Allegheny in Stoystown, Pa.

Rebecca says she thoroughly enjoyed the Western Pennsylvania Conference camp and thanked UM Men of Middletown UMC for the gift.



UM Men of Middletown UMC raised funds to provide a young person with a scholarship to attend Allegheny Camp.

LAFAYETTE, La.—
Men provide support to 50 homeless people

Members of the Louisiana Executive Committee of UM Men took time out from their meeting to participate in giving food, socks and other items to some 50 homeless people.

The "Brown Bag Project" is a ministry of Louisiana Ave. UMC.



The Rev. Robert Johnson (green shirt), pastor of Louisiana Ave. UMC, asks a homeless man if he needs shoes to replace the sandals he is wearing. Johnson later provided him with a new pair. Members of the UM Men Executive board donated \$195 towards the ministry. Photo by Barney Babin

**COLUMBIA, S.C.—
'Teaching church' brings wisdom
despite rising floodwaters**

In spite of heavy rain and rising floodwaters, a core of committed men headed to Journey UMC for the last of five UM Men teaching church events held in August, September and October in various locations across the state.

The event was titled: "Facing the Future without Fear: Creating a Culture that Attracts, Wins and Sends."



The Rev. George Ashford, pastor of Journey UMC, was the principal speaker. He encouraged participants to develop systems that move their congregations from "come and see" to "go and tell."

The Rev. William Chaney of Discipleship Ministries Path 1 spoke on new church starts across the denomination, and Tony Grant of Grant Business Associates spoke on "funding your dream."

**BATON ROUGE, La.—
Men serve breakfast to homeless
veterans**

Men of First UMC prepared breakfast for 34 homeless veterans at the Raven House Outreach Shelter.

Men prepared a breakfast at First UMC Denham Springs the night before Veterans Day. In the morning, they heated and transported the meal to the shelter.

Most of the volunteers were also veterans,



so they sat with their homeless colleagues from the same branches of service.

"As usual, the volunteers were blessed as much, if not more, than the shelter veterans were," said Barney Babin, one of the volunteers.

The Louisiana church leader discussed the principles of helping men become disciples of Jesus Christ.

**PACIFIC PALISADES, Calif.—
National prayer advocate encour-
ages men to become men's ministry
specialists**

At a November weekend retreat at Aldersgate Retreat Center, Joe Kelley, national prayer advocate, encouraged 30 southern California men to become men's ministry specialists.



Joe Kelley, national prayer advocate, invites California men to become men's ministry specialists.



From left: The Rev. Lou Fry, Joe Kelley, Dennis Olson, Bob Divine, and Reginald Grant

Participants included men from Fountain Valley UMC, the executive board of the California-Pacific Conference UM Men, and men from other southern California churches.

The event included a video greeting from

Gil Hanke, top staff executive of the General Commission on UM Men, and worship experiences led by Jerry Wilhoit.

**NEW ORLEANS, La.—
Judge Carl Stewart hosts ceremony**

Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals Chief Justice Carl E. Stewart hosted a December ceremony designating the John Minor Wisdom U.S. Court of Appeals Courthouse as a National Historic Landmark.

After serving as a court house and post office, the building was closed in 1963. It opened as a school in 1965. After extensive repairs in 1971-72, the Court of Appeals became the only occupant.

In 1994, the 100-year-old building was renamed to honor John Minor Wisdom, a respected judge who served on court from 1957 until his death in 1999. Wisdom issued landmark decisions supporting school desegregation and voter rights.

In 1984, Stewart was elected to a six-year term as a judge for Caddo Parish, and in 1990, he was elected to the Louisiana Second Circuit Court of Appeals. He was appointed to the Fifth Circuit U.S. Court of Appeals by President Clinton in 1994, and elected chief justice in 2012.

An active Scout leader, Stewart served as chair of the UM Men Scouting Ministry Committee in the 2009-2012 quadrennium.



Chief Justice Carl Stewart, a member of St. James UMC and an active Scout leader, stands before the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals. Advocate staff photo by Matthew Hinton.

**GLADWIN, Mich. —
Men donate 154 pairs of boots**

In December, men of Gladwin UMC gave 154 pairs of boots and socks to students at

the Gladwin Intermediate School.

For the last 11 years, UM Men have cooperated annually with UM Women and the Kiwanis Club to provide footwear for elementary- and middle-school children.

The program was started by Bob Shaffer, then president of the UM Men; he died in 2014, but the project he loved continues.



Members of UM Men of Gladwin (from left): Bill Moore, Terry Cameron, Dick Simmons, Charley Clore, Tim Stegeman, Danny Pahl, and Joe Remenar.

**PRATTVILLE, Ala.—
Grandmother grateful for new
kitchen**

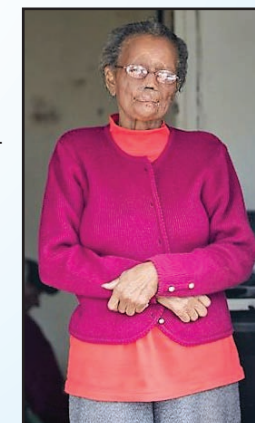
Rosa Hall, 85, is grateful to UM Men for fixing up the 53-year-old house she shares with four grandchildren.

Men of the Montgomery/Prattville District of the Alabama-West Florida Conference usually build ramps for people with handicapping conditions, but they assist with rebuilding projects when needed.

Since 2013, men in the district have been working under the title "River Region 33."

UM Men provide the labor and "Rebuilding Together Central Alabama" (RTCA), a secular organization, provides the supplies.

"The folks whom we help are generally those who would fall through the cracks from other programs," said Mike Harris, a



Rosa Hall

founder of River Region 33.

RTCA and UM Men joined forces to update the plumbing in Hall's bathroom, repair her sagging kitchen floor, and tear down a back building.

Hall has had more than her share of difficulties. She supports her grandchildren with Social Security and meager retirement money. At age 15, someone threw acid on her face, leaving her disfigured, and in her mid-30s she was tied to a tree and beaten by the KKK.

NEOSHO, Mo.—

Men unload 40,000 pounds of potatoes

Neosho UM Men received and unloaded 40,000 pounds of potatoes from the Society of Saint Andrew. The potatoes were donated to several food banks.

For 35 years Neosho UM Men have been selling potato soup with the proceeds going to feed hungry people. Through the years their efforts have expanded from an in-church benefit to one where they deliver soup to local businesses.

ANCHORAGE, Alaska—

Men build 48 seating units for PET vehicles

UM Men of Alaska built 48 seating units for PET (Personal Energy Transportation) vehicles.

Led by Del LaRue, men from St. John UMC, Turnagain UMC, Willow UMC and the Palmer UM Fellowship contributed 250 hours of sawing, sanding and drilling lumber for the wooden seat bases and backs. They upholstered the seats and backs with foam padding and vinyl, and they painted the exposed wood.

They then attached metal seat brackets and shipped them to



the Inland North West PET Shop in Spokane, Wash.

PET has shipped 53,000 hand-cranked carts to assist the handicapped poor in 100 nations around the world. Since 2007, UM Men and others in Alaska have built and shipped over 550 seats to assist the Spokane shop.

Walt Hays, a 12-year PET volunteer, says, "This hands-on project during the holiday season brought a lot of joy to the volunteers as they could envision the difference their efforts will make in bringing mobility, dignity and a chance for a better life to members of the human family who are poor, disabled and largely forgotten."

MIDDLEVILLE, Mich.—

Men prepare Nativity scene

Men of Middleville gather early in Advent to raise a manger scene, site of a live Nativity that has graced the city for more than 50 years.



UM Men of Middleville meet for food and fellowship as they raise the Nativity scene for the 2015 season. They gathered again to put the materials back in a barn for 2016.

SAN ANTONIO, Texas —

Men support food deliveries

UM Men of St. Paul UMC support "Feed My Lambs," a ministry that provides food for 100 to 150 families every Saturday.

Men transport food from the San Antonio Food Bank to the church campus prior to distribution.

The men raise funds for missions and college scholarships by providing parking for events at the Alamodome and quarterly



St. Paul men provide free lunches at the "Feed My Lambs" food bank.

Sunday breakfasts. They also conduct career expos and outings for young people along with men's day celebrations and workshops.

ARLINGTON, Tenn.—

Scouts build handicap ramp

Scouts and leaders of Troop 452, chartered by Arlington UMC, built a ramp for a child under hospice care at the LeBonheur Children's Medical Center in Memphis, Tenn. A local area home-improvement store donated treated lumber for the project.

Scouts also provided Thanksgiving and Christmas events for three families with children battling cancer.



From left: Eagle Scout Simon Knauss and leaders Kit Crisp and Matt Durkee work on handicap ramp for child under hospice care.

JASPER, Ga.—

Scout troop participates in 15 service projects

BSA Troop 1883 received the Bishop's Award of Excellence for participating in Scout Sunday services, PRAY (Programs of Religious

Activities with Youth) classes, and 15 community service projects.

Seventeen Scouts helped package 10,000 dehydrated meals for "Stop Hunger Now."

They also helped maintain the trail at Fort Mountain State Park and the grounds of a horse rescue farm. They placed flags on graves, directed parking at a "Stop Child Abuse" event, moved books and shelving at an elementary school, and they worked concessions at an educational play day for children.



Scouts collect trash at the Great Lake Allatoona Cleanup.

COLUMBUS, Miss.—

Church members honor first responders

Three times a year, members of First UMC hold a "Be the Church" event where they clean up public grounds, assist those unable to handle simple chores, visit shut-ins, provide books and supplies to children, and offer encouragement and appreciation to first responders.

At one of the events, the downtown congregation distributed copies of *Strength for Service to God and Community* to fire fighters and police officers. After the presentation the congregation provided their guests with a catfish dinner.



RICHMOND, Texas—

Churches adopt elementary schools

The Rev. Ben Trammell, pastor of Faith UMC and a member of the General Commission on UM Men, leads his congregation in a cooperative ministry with 15 neighboring churches.

When 16 churches lock arms to focus on improving their communities, they can effectively be 'Christ Together,'" says Trammell.

Pastors preach the same 3-week sermon series, hold joint worship services, and sponsor "Saturdays of Service."

The churches adopted nine elementary schools.

Faith UMC put in a track for students and an ice machine for the teachers at a partner school. "This is a people-helping-people movement," says Trammell.



MARSHALLTON, Pa.—

Flower sale nets \$69,000

Twenty years ago, the Men's Fellowship of Marshallton UMC started a weekend spring flower sale; that sale generated \$1,000.

The men then decided to use a one-quarter acre yard at the former parsonage to grow their own flowers.

Starting a week before Mother's Day and continuing the following three weeks, the annual flower sale is accompanied by a UM



Women's bake sale.

In 2015, the church had gross sales of more than \$69,000 that provided \$32,098 for mission projects.

PUYALLUP, Wash.—

Shelter for the homeless

"Freezing Nights" is ministry of 10 Christian churches that provide shelter for the homeless.

Puyallup UMC serves an average of 70 guests each night from early November through March.

Each week, 23 Puyallup UMC men and women make 28 trips in a Puyallup UMC van and a Puyallup Nazarene Church van to transport the guests.

Puyallup UMC provides nearly \$4,000 for gas and maintenance of the vans along with clothing and bedding.



FORT CAMPBELL, Ky.—

400 devotional books given to troops

On Jan. 28, Larry Coppock, executive director of the Strength for Service team, presented 400 books to 101st Airborne troops deploying to Iraq.



From left: Staff Sergeant Alan Cripps, Larry Coppock, Chaplain Bowlus and Chaplain Craig Hornbarger

MOSS POINT, Miss.—

Men aid tornado victims

On Dec. 23, 2015, a violent tornado killed two people and destroyed homes in Holly Springs, Miss. The EF4 storm continued along a path that destroyed homes in Ashland.

UM Men of St. Paul UMC of Moss Point presented a \$200 Lowe's gift card to clergy in the disaster area.



From left: Hermon Rose, president of St. Paul UM Men, and the Rev. Robert E. Pittman, pastor, present a check to the Rev. Dan Stallworth, associate pastor of the Greater Antioch Missionary Baptist Church of Pascagoula, Miss. Victor Martin (not shown) served as the event coordinator.

CYPRESS, Texas—

Pastor welcomes parents to troop

Twenty years ago, a group of parents asked Pastor Bill Haywood if Good Shepherd UMC would be willing to charter a Scout troop. Haywood, the father of three boys, quickly agreed and Troop 533 was established.

Twenty years later, with two boys in the troop's Eagle Nest, Haywood wrote a cover letter for the *Troop Parent Handbook* to welcome parents to the troop. "In the past 20 years I have seen many, many young men travel the road to Eagle Scout and still others greatly influenced by the wonderful program put on by the leaders of the troop," he wrote. "The programs for advancement, camping, service and character development will be life-changing for you and for your Scouts."

ST. FRANCISVILLE, La.—

UM Men receive top honors

Wayne Prejean, president of the Louisiana

Conference UM Men, presented the St. Francisville UM Men with a certificate of appreciation for being the most active men's group in the conference.

"With humility, Joe Kelley and John Ritchie accepted the recognition of past accomplishments on behalf of the United Methodist Men of St. Francisville," said the Rev. Ashley McGuire, pastor. "I was blessed to be the pastor who stood with and prayed for them."



From left: Joe Kelley, national president of UMM prayer advocates, the Rev. Ashley McGuire, John Ritchie, president of St. Francisville, UM Men, Wayne Prejean and Jerry Beauchamp, treasurer of UM Men.

NATCHITOCHES, La.—

Men provide bikes

Coy Birdwell repairs old bikes for youngsters and supplies new loaner bikes for Wesley Foundation at NW State University at Natchitoches. He has had as many as 21 bikes in his pickup at a time. Shreveport men furnished 10 new bikes, and Natchitoches men furnished four new dirt bikes for the foundation according to Claire Carter, director. Value of the bikes was \$1,600. They are used weekly by students. Locks and helmets are provided for safety.



Join the effort to provide 100,000 daily devotions to public servants and military personnel

NASHVILLE, Tenn.—

The Strength for Service board hopes to provide police officers, fire fighters, first responders and military personnel with 100,000 copies of *Strength for Service* on or before the 15th anniversary of the Sept. 11 attack upon the World Trade Center and the Pentagon.


The 12-member board invites churches to purchase *Strength for Service God and Community* devotionals to present to fire stations and police departments in their communities.


Churches are also encouraged to purchase *Strength for Service to God and Country* to give to neighboring military bases as a way to remember Sept 11 and Dec. 7, the 75th anniversary of the attack on Pearl Harbor and the 75th anniversary of the origin of the book of daily devotions.

Devotionals ordered before May 1, 2016, will be discounted by 35 percent. The military devotional will come boxed 48/case for \$275 and the first responder devotional will come boxed 52/case for \$300.

If ordered by May 1, the books will be shipped on or before July 1 in time for presentations on September 11.

Individual copies are available on Amazon.com for \$11.95 each.

Additional Information and order forms are available at www.strengthforservice.org, or call 615/620-7261. 

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World Wide Technology Provides 30,000 SFS Books

ST. LOUIS, MO—

World Wide Technology, Inc. (WWT), a global systems integrator servicing the technology needs of large public and private organizations, including many of the world's best-known brands, is providing 30,000 copies of *Strength for Service* books.


David L. Steward, founder and chairman of WWT, worked with Larry Coppock, to provide the spiritual and inspirational books for first responders and military troops.

In 1990, Steward co-founded a small company that resold PCs and other technology products. Twenty-five years later that company has more than 3,700 employees around the globe. With annual revenue now exceeding \$7 billion, WWT ranks 51st on Forbes' "Largest Private Companies" list and 28th on Fortune's "100 Best Companies to Work For" list.

Steward holds a bachelor's degree in business management from Central Missouri State University, and he also received honorary doctorates from both Harris Stowe State University in 2002, and Lindenwood University in 2010.

Ebony magazine named him as one of 100 most influential Black Americans, and *Success* magazine named him the 14th best American entrepreneur.

Following service on the executive committee of the Boy Scouts of America Central Region, Steward currently chairs the BSA Council for the Greater St. Louis Area and is on the National BSA Board.

When Steward was a member of Union Memorial UMC, the pastor asked him to start a Sunday school class for business people. He called the study, "Doing Business by the Book." The lessons later resulted in the publication of *Doing Business by the Good Book—52 Lessons on Success Straight from the Bible*. 



David Steward

World War II veteran provides free storage for *Strength for Service* books

NASHVILLE, Tenn.—

With a gift from World Wide Technology, the Strength for Service Corporation needed a place to store 30,000 copies of books for military troops and first responders.

"We want all our funds to be used to provide free books—not for storage," said Larry Coppock, executive director of the corporation founded by UM Men. "We were getting storage quotations that hovered around \$300 a month when the Dennis Paper Company stepped up to provide free storage in its 71,000 square-foot warehouse in Nashville.

"The reason I wanted to provide the space," says Ronald Dennis, president, "is because my father is a World War II veteran, and these books were first published for World War II troops."

Ronald's father, Dennis, 89, volunteered for the Navy at age 17.

His tour of duty would include serving in the amphibious division piloting a LCPV landing craft carrying troops and supplies to the beaches of France. His unit was the replacement unit immediately following the Normandy invasion. How could such a young boy advance so quickly to such

responsibility? The reason would serve to be the foundation of success for the rest of his life. He volunteered for the risky position while no one else would because to him it was a job that needed to be done.

During his sixteen months on LST 58, he would complete 45 missions between England and France before being transferred to the newly commissioned Destroyer 866 USS Cone. As boatswains mate his responsibility included overseeing the deck and personnel mid-ship to

bow. After six months serving on the USS Cone and a total of two years in the Navy, he would return to his home in Nashville and a job at Bond Sanders Paper, a company later purchased by Champion Papers.

He later worked for

Athens Paper before starting his own company in 1969. In 2004, Morris was named "Person of the Year" by the Printing Industry Association of the South. The association presented Morris with the "Founders Award" in 2009, and in 2015, he was presented with the "Stanley O. Styles Industry Excellence Award," the "Pulitzer Prize" of the printing industry.

This year marks Morris's 70th year in the paper industry. 



Larry Coppock (left), chief executive officer of Strength for Service, and Morris Dennis at the office of the Dennis Paper Company.

UM team provides gift of hearing to 80 Haitian children

PORT AU PRINCE, Haiti—

The four-member Hope of Hearing team, led by Gil Hanke, top staff executive of the General Commission on UM Men, tested 359 students in four days at three different schools.

Hanke and three audiologists fit 80 students with 142 hearing aids, and referred two for medical treatment.

The Dec. 6-12 trip was scheduled at a time when the elections for the president of Haiti had been completed. "I've been to Haiti just prior to elections and political demonstrations can really impede your movement to worksites," said Hanke who has made 25 annual trips to the island nation.

When the team arrived they found that the elections were being contested, but political demonstrations were easily avoided and interruptions to their work were minimal.

The team placed their travel safety in the hands of staff members of the Methodist Guest House in Port au Prince. "Driving in Haiti is a contact sport," said Hanke. "It is something I would never attempt. The Guest House always serves as our base camp and is run by the Methodist Church of Haiti with some coordination by UM Volunteers in Mission."

"The team had an amazing week," said Hanke. "Three weeks before leaving the U.S., final confirmations from schools were slow in coming. But, in God's time, everything fell into place. The first two days the team tested children in two different schools for the deaf, and, when appropriate, fit them with one and sometimes two hearing aids. The equipment was donated from several sources."



Gil Hanke tests a Haitian child.

This is the first time the team has had a sufficient number of quality hearing aids to provide for both ears of some children.

The next two days the team screened children at Respire Haiti, a 4-year-old school serving 500 vulnerable students. This was the first time the team had visited that school.

Hanke said the Respire school is a result of faith, miracles, and the creative work of young persons in the U.S. partnering with a community in Haiti. The story of this school is captured in the book, *Miracle on Voodoo Mountain*, available in several U.S. stores.

The team plans to return later this year to work in a large school in a more isolated part of the nation.

These trips are supported by generous gifts from UM Men, UM churches, and Rotary Clubs.

UM Men Awards

Greg Belles *Former president provides audio, video services*

CARY, N.C.—

Men of First UMC presented Greg Belles with a Life Membership Award following three one-year terms as president of Cary UM Men.

He now serves as a vice president, operates the public-address system, and provides Power Point announcements of UM Men programs on the church's dining room projection screens.

"When we have special project, he is always there to help," says David Crittenden, president of UM Men. "Annually he assists in transporting hundreds of 'Baskets of Hope' to Burlington, N.C."

Edward R. Frank *Still volunteering at age 96*

EAST POINT, Ga.—

Men of First Mallalieu UMC presented Edward R.

Frank, a U.S. Army veteran, with a Life Membership Award for exceptional service to the church and the community.

"Ed has worked diligently with UM Men for decades," says UM Men President Larry Few. "Ed was always first to volunteer for any effort the UM Men established. At 96 years of age, Ed proves that age is only a number."



UM Men President Larry Few (right) honors Edward R. Frank.

Larry Booth and Al McKinley *Florida church taps two for life membership*

COCOA, Fla.—

Men of First UMC presented Life Membership Awards to Larry Booth and Al McKinley.

The lay leader of First UMC, Booth is a certified lay speaker who takes Communion elements to those confined to their homes or hospital beds. A teacher of an adult Sunday school class, he was one of the founders of the food pantry, and he helped renovate the playground, paint the nursery, and update the sanctuary video system. Known as the "IT man," Booth troubleshoots computer problems.

McKinley chaired the church council for three years and served as chair of the finance committee. He is an usher and greeter, and he helped renovate Sunday school rooms and a thrift store. "He has knocked down walls, framed doorways, built shelving, built stairs and has done countless other projects," says Carlton Hibbard, president of UM Men.

Toney Dollins *Former Navy officer chairs church council*

VIRGINIA BEACH, Va.—

Heritage UMC presented a Life Membership Award to Toney Dollins following his service as chair of the church council and the finance committee.

"Toney serves as an example to others whether he is on the softball field, in the choir, or mowing the church lawn," says Chris Hase, president of Heritage UM Men.

Dollins retired from the Navy and the Navy Reserves to go to work for the Department of Defense.

Allan Leach *Former UMM president teaches about finances*

GREENSBORO, N.C.—

Men of Pisgah UM Men presented Allan Leach with a Life Membership Award following his service as president of UM Men in 2011 and his contributions to the finance committee. He

also leads “Financial Peace” courses and semi-annual pancake breakfasts.

“Allan honors his Lord with his time, talents, and the blessings God has bestowed upon him,” says David Sharp, Lifetime Awards chairman for Mt. Pisgah UM Men.

Georgia Jones **Church leader receives Susanna Wesley Award**

BATTLE GROUND, Ind.—

Battle Ground UMC presented Georgia Jones with a Susanna Wesley Award.

Women who continue the tradition of Susanna

Wesley by providing for the spiritual nurture of their families and who contribute to the UMC around the world are presented with Susanna Wesley Awards.



Frances Wilkinson **Church honors chair of missions committee**

PENSACOLA, Fla.—

Men of Cokesbury UMC presented Frances Wilkinson with a Susanna Wesley Award at a November UM Men breakfast meeting.

A 32-year church member, Wilkinson chaired the Missions Committee for 16 years, and she has led eight mission trips. She served on the church’s

Children’s Center Board, taught Sunday school classes for children, and assisted with Vacation Bible School. She and her



Frances Wilkinson receives the Susanna Wesley Award of Excellence from Ralph A. Lockhart, president of Cokesbury UM Men. Frances is accompanied by her daughter, the Rev. Ashley Wilkinson Meyer, associate pastor of Cokesbury UMC.

husband, George, started and led a college-age Sunday school class.

Ralph A. Lockhart **Navy captain honored**

PENSACOLA, Fla.—

Cokesbury UMC honored Ralph A. Lockhart, 72, with a Life Membership Award.

During his 42-year career in the U. S. Navy, Lockhart served on submarines and a hospital ship. He also served with the U. S. Marines. After retiring as a Navy captain, Lockhart worked with the Veterans Administration for eight years, and he helped build medical clinics for Navy and Air Force veterans.

He served for two years as president of Cokesbury UM Men and as an usher. He has been on several mission trips to Henderson, Ky.



Ralph A. Lockhart with his wife, Gloria, in Alaska.

Chad Ellis **Lifetime member receives Life Membership Award**

MECHANICSVILLE, Md.—

Mt. Zion UMC presented Chad Ellis with a Life Membership Award. This is appropriate because Ellis began attending Mt. Zion before he was born.

He’s been active in the “SHARE” program since the age of six, and he has been a workhorse for the “Hungry Team.” He transports people to and from church, and he assists with church yard sale, auctions, “Christmas in April,” the “WARM” program, the “Good Old Days Country Fair,” church dinners, mulch sales, and church clean-up days. He also assists with the UM Youth Fellowships, serves in the



Chad Ellis receives a Life Membership pin from his mother, Jane.

hand-bell choir, ushers, and operates the sound system.

Forrest Van Voorst **Men honor longest serving president**

PALM HARBOR, Fla.—

Men of Curlew UMC honored Forrest Van Voorst, their longest serving president, for 20 years of devoted service.

Winn Ellenwood, newly elected president, purchased a copy of “I am a United Methodist Man,” a parchment written by Neil Brown.

Gulf Central District UMM President Chet Klinger presented the framed parchment and Pastor Bette Jo Foster presented Forrest with a Curlew Church “Rock Leaf” to be added to the “Tree of Life” mounted on the church wall.



Forrest Van Voorst is overcome with tears of joy following the presentation.

Bill Wykes and Gary Lupton **Community UMC honors two leaders**

VIRGINIA BEACH, Va.—

Men of Community UMC presented Life Member Awards to Bill Wykes and Gary Lupton.

A Stephen minister, Wykes served as both vice president and president of Community UM Men. He served on the Nominations Committee and the Witness and Outreach Committee. He also served as coordinator of church ushers and sang in the Men’s Choir. He is still an active participant in



Gary Lupton

UM Men activities when he is not spending time with his three grandchildren and three great grandchildren.

A certified lay speaker, Lupton has served on the Administrative Board, Council of Ministries, Finance Committee, District Stewardship, Audit and Trustees, and the Virginia Annual Conference. He also chaired the Community UMC Staff-Parish-Relations Committee, Stewardship Committee, and serves as coordinator of the Elizabeth River District Disaster-Response Committee. He is a member on the Virginia Beach Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) and the Virginia Beach CERT Foundation.

The Rev Ted Matkin **Former pastor named life member**

Glenn Wintemberg, former president of the National Association of Conference Presidents of UM Men, presented the Rev. Ted Matkin, pastor emeritus of Mount Zion UMC, with a Life Membership in UM Men.

“It was back in the middle ‘80s that Ted became the newest pastor to lead Mount Zion,” says Wintemberg. “For 13 years we saw a growth in many areas which brought Mount Zion—among other things—a new sanctuary, which was well over due. Ted brought something else with him from his previous church (Marvin Park UMC) and that was a strong belief in men’s ministries which we had been missing from Mount Zion since the late ‘60s.”



From left: the Rev. Rev Keith Janis, pastor; Ted Matkin; and Glenn Wintemberg.

State representatives honor eight Cub Scout leaders

COVINGTON, Ga.—

Georgia State Representative Dave Belton and his predecessor Doug Holt surprised eight Cub Scout leaders from First UMC with a state resolution commending their dedication and leadership to Cub Scout Pack 1824 (named for the year in which the church was established). In addition, the Rev. Jan McCoy, associate pastor, and Ken Royston of UM Men presented them with Cross and Flame Awards.

During its ten-year existence, volunteers in the pack built a Pinewood Derby track, received blue ribbons for Christmas parade floats, bridged more than 100 Cub Scouts into the Boy Scouts, and enabled 30 to receive “God and Me” awards.

The pack has taken trips to Red Top



From left: The Rev. Jan McCoy, Jim Manowski, Robert Neph, Assistant Cub Master Dana Green, Joan Holder, David Clark, Jesse Holder and Ken Royston.

Mountain, the Sea Turtle Center on Jekyll Island, the Yorktown Aircraft Carrier, and the Space Center in Huntsville, Ala.

Scouts retire U.S. flags



Webelos Scouts Dalton Spahn and Chris Gunzel prepare to retire a flag during a retirement ceremony developed by Bridgeport UM Men.

Photo by Ann Polk.

BRIDGEPORT, Ill.—

For the last seven years, Bridgeport UM Men have instructed Webelos in Cub Scout Pack 251 in the proper way to retire U.S. flags.

People bring them tattered flags. In 2015, the Scouts retired 130 full American flags and 100 grave flags.

Prior to the retirement ceremony, UM Men teach the Scouts about the history of the flag and the reasons for the burning.

Each year, grommets from the flags are retrieved from the cooled ashes and given to Webelos during Blue and Gold Banquets.

North Georgia Conference expands scouting opportunities

CUMMING, Ga.—

There are over 450 Boy Scout units in the 900 congregations of the North Georgia Annual Conference.

No single individual can meet the needs of those 450-plus units, nor can any single individual challenge the 670 congregations that do not use scouting as a way to minister to their communities.

Barry Herrin, scouting ministry coordinator for the conference, is drafting scouting ministry specialists (SMS) to serve on the nine Scout councils and the 12 districts within the conference.

More than a cool patch

“Some people sign up to become SMSs just because they get a cool Scout patch,” says Herrin. “My team uses that SMS list to prospect for people who will serve on Scout council religious relations committees, to provide services conference-wide on our UM Committee on Scouting, and to act as ‘religious unit commissioners’ to provide service and support to existing units and to meet with church leaders who are considering dropping or adding a pack or a troop.”

Herrin says having a conference representative on each of the nine Scout councils within the conference helps both the scouting movement and local churches respond to needs and provide resources. “While I was attending the Atlanta Area BSA Council Religious Relations Committee meeting, I found they wanted a ‘Messengers for Peace’ project for a Duty to God Encampment,” he says. “I contacted the UM Committee on Relief for information about flood buckets and provided that information to the encampment leaders.”

Herrin reports that, as a result of that information, the 200 campers at the 2014 September encampment prepared 15 flood buckets.

Herrin also recalled a district Scout executive telling him a local church was about to discontinue three Scout units. He immediately sent a SMS to discuss the issue with church leaders.



Barry Herrin

Plugged into training

Herrin regards the scouting ministry specialist program as a major ally as it keeps volunteers plugged into the training and resources provided by the General Commission on UM Men.

Tapping into a \$2,500 annual budget from the North Georgia Board of Laity, the Conference Scouting Committee is able to provide scholarship funds for people who attend national training events on scouting ministries and for churches who are not able to fund recognition awards for deserving Scout units or leaders.

Herrin also developed recognition coins that team members use to recognize UM leaders in scouting, Scouts receiving their Eagle award as a part of a troop chartered to a UM congregation, and others.

“The North Georgia Conference serves as an example for other annual conferences,” says Larry Coppock, director of scouting ministry for the commission. “I especially appreciate the coins they present as tokens of appreciation to their volunteers.”

“SMSs not only create and service units but they provide ministry opportunities that serve as entry points to make disciples. Barry and his North Georgia colleagues understand the value of being servant leaders for Christ through scouting.”



The back and front of a coin presented to Eagle Scouts and scouting volunteers by the North Georgia Scouting Committee

Former “Tenderfoot” becomes scouting ministry specialist

CARMEL, Ind.—

As a young person Ken Steppe only spent one year in Boy Scouts, and he only achieved the rank of “Tenderfoot.”

But, as an adult, Ken became a scouting ministry specialist, a scoutmaster, a troop chaplain and a district chaplain. In addition, he serves as a leader of Disciple Bible Course, a certified lay speaker and liturgist at Carmel UMC. He serves as a substitute preacher in district churches and leads a biweekly Bible study with adults from Troop 131 at Carmel UMC.

Scouting career begins as Den Leader

Ken married Harlana in 1980, and they have two sons, ages, 28 and 24.

“I have been a Scout leader since 1994 when my oldest son joined Tigers leading to his becoming an Eagle Scout,” says Ken. “I served as a den leader for each son, then cubmaster, commissioner, district committee, assistant scoutmaster, then scoutmaster and now chaplain for Troop 131, and also chaplain of the Del-Mi District and chaplain of a chapter of the Jaccos Towne Lodge ‘Order of the Arrow.’”

Over his 20-year career in scouting, Steppe has received a Cross & Flame Award, the Silver Beaver Award, a Distinguished Commissioner Award, a District Award of Merit, Vigil Honor, and several training awards.

Relations with other faith groups

Ken works with the chaplain’s aides of three patrols at Carmel UMC, and Roman Catholic chaplains at St Mark’s UMC and Noblesville First UMC.

He gets along well with Roman Catholics.

“I served as an altar boy during my eight years in elementary school at St. Leonard’s Parish,” he says. “My history is Catholic to age 18 following my parent’s religion, then those rebellious college years and early adult prodigal waywardness, until 1981 when Bishop Michael Coyner, then serving as my



Ken Steppe

newly married wife’s pastor in South Bend, showed me the way to accepting Christ as my personal Lord and Savior.”

Ken also shares a history with members of the LDS Church. His senior patrol leader was a member of the LDS church when he served as director of a six-day Wood Badge course for LDS Scout leaders.

While leading PRAY (Programs of Religious Activities with Youth) classes for youth in several packs and troops, he provides training and resources for chaplains and religious emblem coordinators who serve members of Roman Catholic, Islam, Judaism, Hindu, and LDS faith communities

“This, of course, requires me to constantly study other faith belief systems to stay informed on their traditions, holidays, and how to be respectful in my interactions with Scouts of that faith,” says Ken “My own troop has had members from each of those faith traditions, except LDS.”

As a member of the Crossroads of America Council Chaplain Corp, Ken also organizes inter-faith training events which include speakers from the major faith communities.

“I also work with the district executive to encourage churches to charter packs and troops,” he says. “I can show how scouting can benefit the church and their youth in our ‘Duty to God’ program.

Claims specialist

A graduate of Indiana Wesleyan University (BS) and Walden University (MBA)

Ken serves as a worker’s compensation complex claims specialist for Liberty Mutual Insurance Company.

“My cases are among those most severe in the company, para- and quadriplegics, traumatic brain injuries, psychological/PTSD injuries, severe burns, amputations, etc. with multi-million dollar reserves and payments,” he says.

“I have prayed over the phone with them, or promised to do so at the end of a conversation,” he says. “I have recommended frustrated workers forced to sit at home to go to their church and fold bulletins or stuff envelopes.”

Language devotee

Asked about his interests, Ken says, “My primary interest is studying foreign languages. I always found beauty in the Latin mass as a youth, then studied Spanish in high school, then German and Russian in college. I paired with a preacher to take New Testament Greek and I am currently studying Old Testament Hebrew. I studied Japanese with my oldest son, and I learn courteous vocabulary of people where I travel, including Hawaiian, Aruban Dutch, Papamianto, Italian and French.”

Jamboree chaplain

Ken served as a chaplain for the 2013 National BSA Jamboree at the Summit Bechtel Reserve in West Virginia. During that week, he helped recovery efforts of an Orthodox Jewish camp that lost dining shelters and tents during an afternoon thunder storm. “It was the Sabbath, so they could not help themselves,” he says.

“I solicited help from other Scouts to erect tents and shelters. Their leaders could tell us what to do, but they could not hold a loose bolt in their pockets for fear of accidentally performing ‘work.’”

Ken hopes to again be accepted as a chaplain

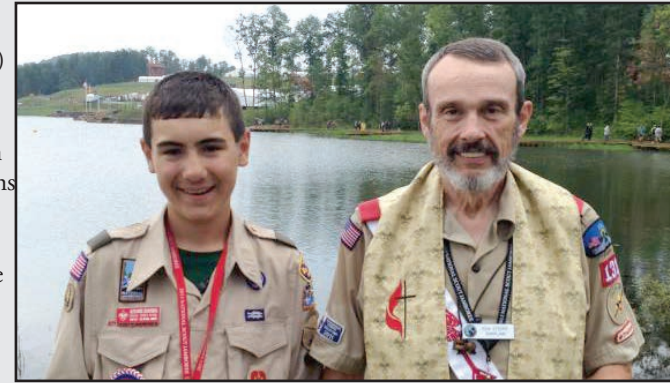
at the 2017 jamboree. “As I am not ordained, I had a bit of difficulty getting in for 2013, and was honored that they made the exception for me and one other lay servant among the elders selected.”

Other activities

Ken participated in a 53-mile hike on the Appalachian Trail, a 50-mile Northern Tier Boundary Waters Canoe trip, a sailing trip out of the BSA Florida Sea Base and a week of whitewater rafting, riding a zip line, and shooting at the Summit.

When not engaged in language study or trips to Scout camps, Ken says he enjoys cycling the bike-friendly streets of Carmel. “A warm-up ride is 10 miles, but 25 is comfortable. I did lead our Troop’s 100 mile cross country bike-camp trip.”

Following 15 years of camporees, Ken says he still enjoys backpacking and camping “especially the serenity of the woods and God’s best cathedral of nature.”



Ken Steppe and Chaplain’s Aide Alexander Spanenberg serve sacrament elements to Scouts attending the United Methodist Communion Service during the 2013 National Jamboree at the Summit Bechtel Reserve in West Virginia.

Future pastor introduced to church through scouting

ACWORTH, Ga. —

When Scott Pickering was 8 years old, he attended a worship service on Scout Sunday.

One of the leaders of that service noted that one-fourth of Scouts are members of the charter organization, one-fourth of Scouts belong to another denomination, and one-half of Scout are unchurched.

“While I really did not understand what was being said,” says Scott. “I did know to which group I belonged—the unchurched.”

Scott received a God and Church (now P.R.A.Y) Award, and went on to achieve the rank of Eagle.

Search for a church

Following the death of his father, Scott’s family decided it was time to become involved in a church. It is no surprise that his family joined the church that chartered his troop.

That was the beginning of Scott’s pilgrimage to becoming a United Methodist pastor.

“Through gentle nudges, God used the leadership skills I developed in scouting for His kingdom.”

As an advocate for scouting units, Scott began serving on several church committees, and in 1992 he was one of 42 Scouts given a National Eagle Scout Association Scholarship.

Following his graduation from Georgia Southern University, he attended Candler School of Theology where he received a Master of Theological Studies degree and was ordained elder in the North Georgia Annual Conference. He later received a Doctor of Ministry degree in the Church Leadership Excellence track at Wesley Theological Seminary.

He now serves as pastor of County Line UMC in Acworth, Ga.

Active in scouting

Scott served as a staff member of the Order of Arrow’s Shows Committee, a director for 11 Order of the Arrow conferences and four National Boy Scout Jamborees. He also

attended a 2014 United Methodist Scouters training experience at Philmont Scout Ranch in New Mexico.

He laments that too frequently there is little connection between scouting units and churches.

“Most church members have no idea how many Scouts are involved in the program or who the leaders are within the units. That is why it is critical to seek ways for the church to connect with the Scouts and their families. This has to be done intentionally, and it cannot be taken for granted.”

Relate your church to Scout units

Scott sites several ways in which County Line UMC relates to its chartered scouting units:

1. P.R.A.Y. (Programs of Religious Activities with Youth)

Many pastors want to find ways to help members come to a relationship with Jesus Christ and to gain an increased understanding of God and the Holy Spirit. One of the ways to lead children, youth, and adults in a deeper experience of God is through P.R.A.Y. classes “That is why I always make myself available to lead God and Country classes,” says Scott.

2. Scouting for Food

County Line UMC invites Scouts to pass out bags the Sunday before the drive. The congregation bring back full bags the following Sunday. United Methodist Men hope to host a cookout for the Scouts after the next



The Rev. Dr. Scott Pickering.

drive to celebrate their accomplishments.

3. Stop Hunger Now

In the autumn of 2014, County Line UMC collected enough money to package 10,000 meals through “Stop Hunger Now.” They invited Scouts and their families to join them in the packaging event. “The event demonstrated how easy it is to develop new friendships in a short period of time while engaging in an activity that benefits thousands of people,” says Scott.

4. Express appreciation to community servants

To celebrate National Law Enforcement Appreciation Day in January, County Line UMC presented 100 copies of *Strength for Service to God and Community* to police officers along with “Cop’s Survival Kits” filled with candies and goodies. “The event was a huge success, and the officers made many friends while enjoying snacks and a basketball game,” says Scott.

5. Honor Eagle Scouts

The church is starting to present “Good Samaritan Awards” to Scouts following Eagle projects that benefit the church. “As these

Scouts and their projects are honored, more Eagle projects focus on the needs and mission of the church,” says Scott. The church presented the scouts with the *Strength for Service Scout* edition at a Scout Sunday service.

The church also has a plaque with all the names of the Eagle Scouts in the chartered troop to display the importance of scouting ministry.

6. Attend training events

Invite a church leader and a scout leader to attend a BSA training event on “Scouting in the United Methodist Church.” The next event will be at the Summit Bechtel Reserve in West Virginia, June 19-24, 2016. The course will explain how you can become a scouting ministries specialist and/or a unit religious emblems coordinator.

“Finally,” says Scott, “remember that relationships do not form overnight. Small steps can lead to large rewards when both parties work together to promote values that will last a lifetime. Do not let these opportunities to shape young boys into young men pass you by.”



Members of County Line UMC express appreciation to police officers.

Bank executive serves as scouting ministry specialist

JESUP, Iowa—

Albert Duroe, a former farmer and current chairman of the board of Farmers State Bank, serves as a scouting ministry specialist.

Following two years at Wartburg College and two years at Iowa State University (B.S. in Agriculture Business), Duroe engaged in graduate studies at the University of Northern Iowa, the University of Wisconsin, and Harvard University.

In 1972, he became president of a family-owned bank he first entered in 1959.

He now serves as chairman of the bank board, and his Eagle Scout son, Rodney, currently runs the bank which has moved to Waterloo, Iowa. His daughter, Danielle, is a vice president.

“I also farmed for 30 years while running the bank,” says Duroe.

Involvement with scouting

An eight-year veteran of the Marine Corps Reserve, Duroe has served as a committee member of Troop 95 for 50 years. Over that period of time, he has also served as a cubmaster and scoutmaster.

He has served on the Winnebago BSA Council board for over 35 years, and was president of that board for three years. He then became BSA area president with more than 15 councils in several states. He also served three years in Area 7, two years as co-president and four years as president of Area 1 (Iowa, North Dakota, South Dakota, and Minnesota). When he completed his area work he became vice president of program for the Central Region (one-fourth of the United States).

The infatigable Scout leader has served at five National Jamborees, including two as a sub-camp chief and one as a regional chief. He also was on the National Jamboree Committee for four years.



Albert Duroe

He also served as a central regional contingent leader for World Jamborees in Thailand and England.

He currently serves on the National High Adventure Northern Tier Board, a position he has held since 2010.

Following years of service as a pack and troop leader with his son, he became a den leader with his grandson and 12 other boys. He moved up to assistant scoutmaster and Eagle coach when his grandson joined Troop 95.

Duroe shows no sign of slowing down as last summer, he took 12 younger Scouts to a summer camp in South Dakota.

“I am pleased to serve as a scouting specialist because of my deep love for scouting and service to youth,” said Duroe. “Being a Scout as a youth gave me much that I could use throughout my life. I also have worked with 4-H and was pleased to serve on the State of Iowa 4-H board for several years with one year as president.”

Scouting Awards

Stephen Overton

The water flows again

KNOXVILLE, Tenn.—

Stephen Overton received a Good Samaritan Award from Fountain City UMC following his Eagle Scout project to restore a dormant water fall behind the Gresham Middle School.

Pumps that activated the water flow broke 20 years ago and the Gresham Gardens pond at the end of the falls was overgrown with weeds and filled with debris. The high school junior purchased new pumps, cleaned the pond, and got the falls flowing again.

In addition, he led Troop 55 in laying a new brick floor for the outdoor classroom, refurbished the gazebo, and trimmed the bushes.

Stephen is a member of the Order of the Arrow and a den chief with Troop 55.

a Cross and Flame Award.

David Wickham

Twenty-three years and counting

MELBOURNE, Fla.—

St. Paul's UMC presented David Wickham with the Torch Award following 23 years of service as a Scout leader.

Following 1992-96 service as a Cub Scout and Webelos leader, Wickham became assistant scoutmaster of Boy Scout Troop 300, and he served as charter organization representative, and God and Country mentor.

He also chairs committees selling Christmas trees and wreaths.

In 1999 to 2001, he chaired the Building Committee for the Kempfer Ranch Scout Building.

The Rev. Peter Vaught

Church sponsors six scouting units

SIERRA VISTA, Ariz.—

The Sierra Vista UMC hosts a Boy Scout troop, a Girl Scout troop, a Venturing troop, a Cub Scout pack, a Varsity team and a Scout crew. It is one of the few churches that sponsors that many scouting units.

The Rev. Peter Vaught, who served as Sierra Vista pastor from 2004 to 2013, helped expand the church's scouting ministry.

The church presented the retired pastor with

Glenn Cook

Church honors scoutmaster

PORT DEPOSIT, Md.—

Hopewell UMC presented Glenn Cook with a Cross and Flame Award for serving as scoutmaster of Troop 143.

Nine members of his troop achieved the rank of Eagle.

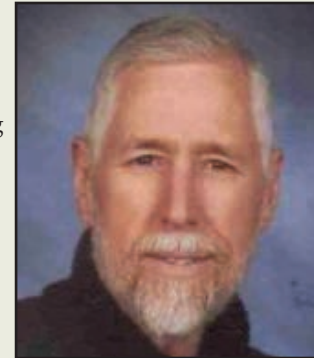
“Hard working procrastinators” is how he described the nine new Eagles. “This is the fulfillment of six years of working towards a goal” said Cook. “I got to watch them grow from 11 year-old boys to 18 year-old men.”

Barry Herrin

Conference scouting coordinator receives volunteer award

ATLANTA, Ga.—

Barry Herrin, an attorney and scouting ministry coordinator for the 450 Boy Scout units in the 900 congregations of the North Georgia Annual Conference, received the Robert E. Burt Boy Scout Volunteer Award from the



The Rev. Peter Vaught



Barry Herrin

National Sons of the American Revolution.

Over his 38-year scouting career, the scouting ministry specialist has received the Eagle Scout Award, the Silver Beaver Award, the International Scouter Award, and other recognition for his service in Cub Scout, Boy Scout, Exploring, and Venturing programs.

He currently serves as a member of the Religious Relations Committee of the Northeast Georgia Council of the BSA.

Michael Shoultz Scout refurbishes gazebo

GROVE CITY, Ohio—

UM Men of Trinity UMC presented Michael Shoultz with a Good Samaritan Award after he refurbished a gazebo on church grounds.



As an Eagle project, Michael also trimmed all the shrubs and plants and reestablished a gravel walkway to the prayer garden.

Czech Scout troop wants to connect with U.S. troops

CZECH REPUBLIC—

After a stormy history, 60 young people are now Sea Scouts in this land-locked European nation.

Petr Kudrna, a Scout leader for the last 50 years, says the original Sea Scout troop was founded during World War II.

“In 1944, they purchased vessels and paddles and started travelling the Czech rivers,” says Kudrna.

In 1948, Czechoslovakia became a one-party Communist state and scouting was forbidden. “Scouts were replaced by pioneers and youth organizations whose task was to raise kids as Communists,” says Kudrna.

Except for a three-year period from 1968-71, scouting was an illegal activity.

The Communist regime collapsed in the 1989 Velvet Revolution, and a multiparty parliamentary republic was formed. At that time scouting again became legal, and in 1993, Czechoslovakia peacefully dissolved, with its constituent states becoming the independent states of the Czech Republic and Slovakia

“Now we have a well-equipped troop of 60 girls and boys,” says Kudrna. “I tell our young Scouts that we are a member of a big Scout family and that there are millions of Scouts all over the world.”



Sea Scouts return from camp in 1946.



The 2016 Sea Scouts of the Czech Republic receive instructions before sailing.

Kudrna bought a large world map and wants to display all the places that have scouting. He invites troop leaders to send him patches so he can post them on the map.

If you would like your troop patch included on Kudrna’s map, please send it to: Petr Kudrna, Karla Tájka 1503/B, Brandýs nad Labem, 25001, Czech Republic.

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