



UMM MEN

The magazine of United Methodist Men



God's call to care for creation

A letter from the General Secretary

I grew up with folk songs, and, as I considered this issue of the magazine, some of those lyrics have recaptured me.

“They took all the trees and put ‘em in a tree museum. And they charged the people A dollar and a half to seem ‘em. They paved paradise and put up a parking lot.”

— *Big Yellow Taxi, by Counting Crows*

“And daddy won’t you take me back to Muhlenberg County Down by the Green River where Paradise lay? Well, I’m sorry, my son, but you’re too late in asking Mister Peabody’s coal train has hauled it away”

— *Paradise, by John Prine*

As many of you know, I travel to do mission work in Haiti every year. The impact of clear cutting of most of the forests has serious impacts on water, top soil, farming, transportation and health. The use of charcoal for cooking and no real pollution standards for vehicles combine to explain why a country, once one of the richest in natural resources in the Caribbean, is now consistently listed in the five poorest countries in the Western Hemisphere.

By comparison, one of my favorite photos, I took one morning off the Blue Ridge Parkway as the Appalachian Mountains peaked through the clouds. Just a few minutes later, I saw several elk as I began my hike. In that area, care



was taken. Long-term benefits curbed short-term greed. Yes, there were bumps along the way, and challenges from natural and human causes continue. But, the land was looked at as God’s gift, and for the most part was, and is, managed carefully.

What are you doing to protect your part of God’s gift? Do you recycle? In our community,

they don’t accept glass in the regular recycle containers that are picked up monthly. So, we have a separate container for glass that I gladly carry to the recycling station along with all those boxes that come from our on-line shopping. When I kayak on a river or lake, I have a plastic bag to pick up trash along the way. As a former Boy Scout, I continue to leave places on hikes or paddles cleaner than I found them. We have a long way to go. There is an “island,” in the Pacific Ocean that is trash; mostly plastic bottles. It is estimated to be the size of the state of Texas. How do we clean that up? How do we keep that from happening again?

This issue will cause us to ask and answer some real questions. Our responsibility to care for the environment is stated in the Bible, in our Social Principles, and is just plain common sense. Mother Nature is not like our mother who, after asking you to clean your room a dozen times, may have given up and picked up the really nasty stuff herself.

I also hope that this issue causes you to act. This is the only planet we have.

Gil Hanke

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



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UM Men

Fall 2018

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Cover photo by Gil Hanke.

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.



I had the joy of working with the Rev. Paul Slentz during the 18 years he served as pastor of Sixty-first Avenue UMC, a faith community that provided spiritual and physical

nourishment to residents of the inner city of Nashville.

I was disappointed when Paul left that vital spiritual community in 2015 in order to engage in a creation-care post with the Tennessee Annual Conference and receive training to be an “earth keeper” through the General Board of Global Ministries.

I now see how Paul’s ministry is still caring for the Nashville inner city by protecting the future of our children and grandchildren. He is also protecting all successive generations by pointing to ecological risks in the future and steps we can take in the present to reduce projected environmental damage to our planet.

As a director of a creation-care ministry, Paul now provides information and resources to Tennessee churches and other faith traditions as well as leading community projects that ensure a better

future for the city of Nashville and the state of Tennessee.

It is partially because of Paul’s ministry that I elected to devote this issue of UM Men magazine to the issue of creation care. Paul also provided me with a long-distance introduction to the Rev. Pat Watkins who is also engaged in an environmental ministry. Pat provides us with some lessons from Scripture about caring for God’s creation.

Leah Schade, a professor at Lexington Theological Seminary, adds a compelling story about falling off a bicycle in order to avoid a more painful collision. That experience taught her something about the need for us to fall away from our current lifestyles before we collide with global ecological disaster.

I later discovered some efforts by UM Men organizations to address issues related to climate change.

I hope these articles will jump-start your men’s organizations to clean streets, recycle electronics, restore waterways, increase insulation, plant trees, install solar panels, and sponsor Earth Day activities.

God has blessed us with a remarkable, but fragile planet. God also asked us to care for this abundant garden.

Rich Peck

Why we should care for creation

All creation is the Lord's, and we are responsible for the ways in which we use it or abuse it.

Water, air, soil, minerals, energy resources, plants, animal life, and space are to be valued and conserved because they are God's creation and not solely because they are useful to human beings.

God has granted us stewardship of creation. We should meet these stewardship duties through acts of loving care and respect.

Economic, political, social, and technological developments have increased our human numbers, and lengthened and enriched our lives. However, these developments have led to regional defoliation, dramatic extinction of species, massive human suffering, overpopulation, and misuse and overconsumption of natural and non-renewable resources, particularly by industrialized societies.

This continued course of action jeopardizes the natural heritage that God has entrusted to all generations.

Therefore, let us recognize the responsibility of the church and its members to place a high priority on changes in economic, political, social, and technological lifestyles to support a more ecologically equitable and sustainable world leading to a higher quality of life for all of God's creation.

From The 2016 Book of Discipline

Proposed statement for 2020 Social Principles

The Church advocates for policies and practices in industry and government that

reduce the emission of greenhouse gases and seek to restore balance.

Seek end to dependence on fossil fuels

We support conservation of fossil fuels and their rapid replacement with clean and renewable energy.

We call for an end to investment in technologies and infrastructures that continue humanity's dependence on fossil fuels for present and future generations.

We urge governments to require mandatory reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, to support programs for conservation and renewable energy, and to move toward a 100% renewable economy.




Nuclear power is not an option

We also support development of renewable sources of power. Nuclear power is not a just solution to avoid carbon dioxide emissions because the permanent storage and containment of nuclear waste pose grave and irreversible risks to communities, ecosystems, and all forms of life.

Cautious use of geoengineering

We urge precaution in employing geoengineering to mitigate the effects of climate change by altering the earth's biosphere in ways that may have unintended and irreversible effects. Instead, we promote widespread cooperation with the earth's natural healing processes through the restoration of ecosystems.

We call on Church and society, industries and governments, to respond proportionally to the magnitude of the climate crisis, through changes in personal practices and public policies that reflect care for creation. 

God's call to care for creation

By The Rev. Paul Slentz

"The Earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof." (Psalm 24)

The Earth is not ours, but God's. We have been given its use for a time as a wondrous expression of God's love. In thanksgiving, let's take good care of it.

- Share the gift (especially with the poor, other creatures and future generations).
- Protect it from harm.

And, I have come to see that care for God's wider creation and the commandment to love our neighbor, especially those Jesus called "the least of these," go hand in hand. It is quite clear that it is the poor, both in this country and throughout the world, who are hit first and hardest when the Earth is degraded. The terrible tragedy of lead in the water of low-income residents of Flint, Michigan is just one example. For this reason, I am convicted that care for all of creation is not a peripheral concern for Christians, but rather is central to our faith and one of the great callings of this time in human history. Indeed, the Social Principles in the *Book of Discipline* state this clearly (see page 5).

Full time service in care for creation

Because of this awakening of my spirit, while still pastoring in the local church, I began looking for ways to engage with other people of faith in working to care for the gift of creation. In 2012, several UM pastors and laypersons led by District Superintendent John Collett formed the Nashville District Creation Care Ministry. In 2017, that ministry became a conference-wide one, and we added "Stewards of God's Earth" to our name to make our focus clear. In the meantime, in June of 2016, I was appointed full-time to the Ministry of Creation Care and Environmental Justice, and in the fall of 2016, I became an "Earthkeeper," through a program of the General Board of Global Ministries.

The deadly 2010 Deep Water Horizon oilrig explosion was the tipping point for me. I had been disturbed by the mistreatment of God's creation all of my adult life, even writing about care for the environment for my college application essay in the winter of 1971. And, as I watched the threats to the Earth grow over the ensuing decades, there had always been a disquiet in my soul. But, it was the under-water footage of hundreds of millions of gallons of oil pouring into the Gulf of Mexico day-after-day, week-after-week, along with the photos of oil-soaked pelicans, dying dolphins, and tar-covered sea turtles, that really woke me up and led me to making care for creation a top priority of my Christian discipleship.

Four actions

It has become clear to me that creation is a wonderful gift from God (see Genesis 1 and 2 and Psalm 104). As a faithful response to that gift, I believe we are to do four things:

- Give thanks to the Giver,
- Delight in the gift.

Care for creation is now my daily work.

The Tennessee Conference Creation Care Ministry coordinates with hands-on creation care efforts, such as an annual Recycle Day focusing on the recycling of difficult items like electronics and recycling at annual conference (see pages 9 and 10). However, most of what we do is to equip and encourage local churches to take action in their own setting. And some amazing things are going on in local congregations.

Energy stewardship

Many UM churches in Tennessee and indeed throughout the world have focused their creation care work on the stewardship of energy. Production of electricity is globally the greatest source of greenhouse gas emissions, which scientists say is causing dangerous climate change in the present and potentially catastrophic climate disruption over the next several decades if we continue business as usual. Furthermore, coal-burning electricity-producing power plants are a primary source of air and water pollution. The particulate matter from coal-powered plants is especially dangerous for the millions of children and adults who suffer from asthma. Natural gas is also a greenhouse gas and it too contributes to climate change and air pollution. And so, churches of all sizes are finding ways to reduce their energy usage as a way to be good stewards of creation and save money from lower utility bills. This includes installing solar panels.

Christ UMC in Franklin, Tenn. through the leadership of Business Manager Michael Deweese and the support of their recently formed Environmental Concerns Committee chaired by Steve Vining, has taken strides for good energy stewardship. Changing their lighting has been the most important step. By switching first to more efficient CFL bulbs and now to LEDs, the church has reduced its

annual energy usage by over 100,000 kilowatt-hours. That is equivalent to about 50 tons of carbon dioxide not polluting the air. In addition, those lighting efficiency measures along with other energy-saving measures have resulted in lowering the church's annual energy bill by more than \$12,000. Christ UMC is presently installing a 30-kilowatt solar array on two of its roofs. This will further reduce their carbon footprint and will lessen their annual energy costs by several thousand dollars. "This is good for the church budget and a way to care for God's good creation," says Deweese. Vining adds, "Every intentional act of caring for the earth that God has entrusted to our care can be an active form of worship and Christian discipleship."

Smaller churches are also energy stewards.

Cavit Cheshire, an elderly member of Blakemore UMC in Nashville, says the Depression taught him not to waste resources. He knows that every dollar saved on bills can be used for ministry. Therefore, he has led the effort to change sanctuary lighting to efficient, long-lasting LED bulbs and has personally caulked leaky windows. "God has let us borrow the many resources that we need to live for a while," says Cheshire. "We are to be responsible stewards of them while we are alive and pass them on in good shape to future generations." He says that that includes clean air and a stable climate, and so he is supportive of a clean-energy solar array that the church has just installed. Blakemore members Ron and LaDonna Merville, leaders in solar industry, donated solar panels to the church, and they are exploring ways to help other UM congregations take the same step.

Stewardship of grounds

Local churches are also responding to the call to be good stewards of creation

in the way they use and care for their grounds. After all, according to Genesis 2, the very first vocation God gave to humankind was to “till and keep” the Garden of Eden.

Franklin (Tenn.) First UMC has been a leader in this work of good stewardship of the land. In 2007, the church purchased 107 acres of land as a future site for a new building. While money was being raised to build a new facility, members of the rapidly growing congregation began thinking of ways to utilize the land in a bedroom community of Nashville.

Some members planted a pumpkin patch for kids, and over the years, that modest beginning has evolved into what the church now calls the “Giving Garden.” That five-acre garden now sits next to a new church building. In 2017, nearly 30,000 pounds of organic vegetables, cut flowers and herbs were distributed to more than 20 hunger organizations, congregations, and schools in middle Tennessee. Franklin Farmer’s Market added another 10,000 pounds of food to the effort. This remarkable ministry was achieved by countless hours of work in the field by church members and community residents.

Volunteer gardeners use creation-friendly organic gardening practices, including using compost from the city rather than chemical fertilizers. In the past couple of years, a donation of stingless bees from a local beekeeper has aided pollination.

Beyond the five-acre garden, other steps have been taken to assure that the land will be welcoming to other of God’s creatures, including wild turkey, deer, and fish in the stream that runs through the property.

Lynn Wallace, a retired environmental engineer, and production team leader of the Giving Garden, says, “Christ commands us to feed the hungry, that’s more than 65,000 daily in the Nashville metro area — one in five is a child — that’s

unacceptable in the wealthiest county in Tennessee. There is plenty of out-of-date food available but not enough fresh veggies; the Giving Garden’s mission helps fill that need.”

Tree planting

Members of Hillcrest UMC, a medium-size congregation in Nashville, learned about the important connection between trees and water quality. They decided to apply these principles to the Sorghum Branch Creek, a stream that runs through the church property. Church member Richard Spry states, “We believed that it was one concrete thing that we could do as part of our responsibility to care for the earth and its resources as God has directed us to do.” Therefore, one cold Saturday in February 2015, Spry and 75 other church and community volunteers planted 400 trees along the creek bank. This project was part of a campaign to plant 50,000 trees across the state led by the Tennessee Environmental Council. The Forestry Division of the State of Tennessee provided seedlings and helped to coordinate the project. Three years later, the seedlings have grown several feet high and Spry reports that the water quality of the stream has visibly improved, evidenced by water clarity, healthy vegetation, and healthy fish.

UM Men urged to take action

As the above examples show, congregations of all sizes are taking tangible steps to be good stewards of God’s good creation. They demonstrate hands-on opportunities that would be great projects for UM Men organizations.

Energy conservation and land stewardship may be good places to start, but there are many other activities for which UM Men could take the lead. These include:


- A recycling program;
- Helping the church move toward using reusable, recyclable, or

compostable dinnerware at church gatherings;

- Serving organic, Fair Trade Coffee at UMM meetings and other church fellowship times;
- Organizing a day to collect electronics and other hard-to-recycle products;
- Working with the pastor to plan creation-care centered worship services.

There are many UM groups throughout the country (and indeed, throughout the world) who can provide ideas and guidance. One central source is the General Board of Global Ministries Earthkeeper's Program, which trains UMs in ways to live out their calling to be good caretakers of

God's creation. For more information, contact the Rev. Jenny Phillips, Creation Care Program Manager at jphillips@umcmmission.org. One very fine interdenominational resource is the *Greening Congregations Toolkit*, which is available for a small fee in on-line form from Earth Ministry based in Seattle, Washington at earthministry.org.

My recommendation is to start small and see where the Spirit leads. 



The Rev. Paul Slentz is an ordained elder in the Tennessee Annual Conference appointed to the Conference Creation Care Ministry (Stewards of God's Earth).





Churches sponsor spring recycling day


NASHVILLE, Tenn.—

The Creation Care Ministry (Stewards of God's Earth) of the Tennessee Conference organized a spring Creation Care Recycling Day.

Members of eight UM churches, three churches from other denominations, and members of Ohabai Sholom, a Jewish congregation, helped Nashville area residents

shred documents and dispose of non-working electronic equipment and batteries.

Volunteers also accepted donations to Goodwill and disposed of prescription medications with the help of the Nashville Police Department.

Volunteers recycled more than 5,500 pounds of electronic equipment. 



Local churches find ways to care for creation

LOS ANGELES, Calif.—

Church breaks ground for solar installation

St. John's UMC observed Earth Day by breaking ground for a MegaWatts Solar Project, a 6 kilowatt solar installation that is the first phase of a larger solar power project provided by Watts Clean Energy and Air Committee.



The April 21 event included an Earth Day fair in the church parking lot.

In partnership with Grid Alternatives, the Sierra Club, Los Angeles Department of Water and Power, and other environmental organizations, the event included music and information booths with treats.

Participants received information on how to get paid for training for green jobs, composting, tree planting, low-income weatherization techniques, and information about financial rebates for electric vehicles.

During the regular Sunday, April 22, worship service, Pastor Larry Dozier preached on "This Air I Breathe" and the Dozier Singers sang "What a Wonderful World" by Louis Armstrong.



As part of Earth Day celebrations, the Watts Clean Energy and Air Committee set up a craft center for children to plant seeds, draw pictures and to create various clean-energy items. Photo by Corey Burns.



Girl Scout Leader Michelle Merritt (right) prepares her lunch as she and a visitor examine the healthy food choices. Michelle's Troop 973 posted the flag and led the Pledge of Allegiance to start the day's events. Photo by Corey Burns.




A representative of "Tree People" joins 64th Assembly Member Mike Gipson (second from left), St. John's Pastor Larry Dozier (second from right) and Housing Authority Commissioner of Los Angeles John King (right) during Earth Day events at the parking lot of St. John's UMC. Photo by Corey Burns



One hundred seedlings are set in place ready to plant.

HACKETTSTOWN, N.J.—
Men clean up river and plant trees

On two Saturdays in April, UM Men of Trinity UMC worked with the Musconetcong Watershed Association to remove more than 40 bags of garbage, tires, and bedsprings from the Musconetcong River.

They later planted 100 trees and bushes along the edge of the river. 



Bill Blaskopf, president of UM Men of Hackettstown, plants one of 100 trees in Alumni Field near the Musconetcong River.

-HUMOR-

A family crisis

A boss wondered why one of his most valued employees had not phoned in sick one day. Having an urgent problem with one of the main computers, he dialed the employee's home phone number and was greeted with a child's whisper. "Hello?"

"Is your daddy home?" he asked.

"Yes," whispered the small voice.

May I talk with him?"

The child whispered, "No."

Surprised and wanting to talk with an adult, the boss asked, "Is your Mommy there?"

"Yes."

"May I talk with her?"

Again the small voice whispered, "No."

Hoping there was somebody with whom he could leave a message, the boss asked, "Is anybody else there?"

"Yes," whispered the child, "a policeman".



Wondering what a cop would be doing at his employee's home, the boss asked, "May I speak with the policeman?"

"No, he's busy," whispered the child.

"Busy doing what?"

"Talking to Daddy and Mommy and the fireman," came the whispered

answer.

Growing more worried as he heard a loud noise in the background through the earpiece on the phone, the boss asked, "What is that noise?"

"A helicopter," answered the whispering voice.

"What is going on there?" demanded the boss, now truly apprehensive.

Again, whispering, the child answered, "The search team just landed a helicopter."

Alarmed, concerned and a little frustrated the boss asked, "What are they searching for?"

Still whispering, the young voice replied with a muffled giggle . . . "ME."

A mission to God's creation

By the Rev. Pat Watkins

Many years ago, my wife and I served as missionaries in Nigeria; we lived in an isolated village; without electricity, phone, television or the Internet.

Life off the grid

For the first time in my life, I was forced to live the way most people on this planet live.

We could eat mangoes when they were in season. When they weren't, we couldn't go to the grocery store and buy one from South America.

In our part of Nigeria, there was a rainy season and a dry season. During the rainy season, the rivers flooded and, without bridges, we couldn't get out of our village. We had to structure our lives around the way the Earth is structured.

For people who grew up on farms, this reality might not have been as significant, but for me, as a city boy, it was a new found way of being. It was a new relationship with the Earth.

A personal question

As time went on I not only learned to tolerate such an existence, I began to feel there was something wonderful about it. I asked myself, "Is there a connection between my relationship with the Earth and my relationship with God?"

That question remained upon my return to the U.S.

I did two things to answer that question. I searched the Bible for texts related to my relationship with God through Christ and my relationship with God's creation. I had a theological education, but I felt the need for additional environmental science education, so I enrolled in a Master of Science program in order to elevate my heart-and-mind conversation with science and theology.

After a long and exhaustive quest, I answered that fundamental question with a resounding "Yes." There most certainly is a connection between my faith as a Christian and my relationship with God's creation.

Lessons from Scripture

Caring for the Earth is not a political issue for me; it is part of what it means for me to be a disciple of Jesus Christ, and I base that totally on Scripture.

There is not enough space in this article to do an exhaustive Bible study, but perhaps I can whet your appetite a little.

Adam and Eve

Adam was created "out of the dust of the earth" and breathed the very breath of God. We have a relationship with the earth because we were created out of it and we have a relationship with God because we breathe the breath of the one who created the universe.

Many think the next thing God did was take the rib and create Eve, but that is incorrect. God created all the animals, and Adam named them all before the creation of Eve. Could it be that God had some notion of partnership between Adam and the animals? Adam's God-given vocation was to "to farm and take care" of the garden.

When Adam and Eve were kicked out of the garden, God cursed the land because of their disobedience. Human disobedience resulted in negative consequences for the land.

Cain and Abel

After the eviction from the garden and the birth of Cain and Abel, it was the voice of Abel's blood from the ground that notified God of the murder.

As his punishment, Cain was driven from the soil. Cain could no longer see the face of God. Cain's relationship with the land and his relationship with God were so connected that he could not have one without the other.

Noah

God could have decided to wipe out all the animals in the flood and then create them all over again but, no, God decided to preserve what God had already made and chose a human to do the preserving. Then God made the covenant, not only with Noah and his descendants, but also with all the animals and the earth itself.

If God loves and cares that much to make a covenant with the earth and I am a person of God, then I have to make a similar covenant with the earth.

Other environmental issues in the Hebrew testament

The agricultural laws in Leviticus, the land Sabbath, the gleaning directives all care for the land.

The Psalms depict creation praising God.


The prophets rail against injustice in land use.

The New Testament

The writer of John's gospel understands Jesus to have been present with God at creation and that everything that has ever been created was created "through Christ and for Christ." Almost all the parables have to do with the natural world. Jesus demonstrated power over creation and creation responded to the death of Jesus.

Paul believed Jesus to be the redeemer, not just of humanity, but of all creation.

Revelation speaks of a new heaven and a new earth, of a new Jerusalem "coming down out of heaven." It is not all about the sweet bye and bye but about life here on earth in the present.

I have barely scratched the surface here, but I encourage you to embark on your own study to examine the myriad ways Scriptures urge us to care for God's creation. 



The Rev. Pat Watkins is a clergy member of the Virginia Annual Conference, serving as a missionary assigned to the care of God's creation. He and his wife, Denise Honeycutt, live in a small passive solar house in Pittsboro, N.C.



Never mind

A man is walking along when suddenly he got his foot caught in some railroad tracks. He tried to get it out, but it was really stuck in there well. He heard a noise and turned around to see a train coming. He panicked and started to pray, "God, please get my foot out of these tracks and I'll stop drinking!"

Nothing happened, it was still stuck, and the train was getting closer! He prayed again, "God, please get my foot out and I'll stop drinking AND swearing!"

Still nothing...and the train was just seconds away!

He tried it one last time, "God please, if you get my foot out of the tracks, I'll quit drinking, swearing and smoking."

Suddenly his foot shot out of the tracks and he was able to dive out of the way, just as the train passed. He got up, dusted himself off, looked toward Heaven and said... "Thanks anyway God, I got it myself."

--HUMOR--



Falling off the bike: Veering from ecological crisis

By Dr. Leah D. Schade

When I was 11 years old, my dad took me to our hunting camp in the woods of Huntington County, Pa. I loved to ride my dirt bike along the rutted roads and mountain paths. I was a bit of a tom-boy in those days. So it was with a total sense of invincibility that I rode up to what I considered to be the most promising challenge of my dirt-bike-riding career.

It was a gravel road that ran down a hill to another cabin.

I sat at the top gazing down at what I was sure would be the glory of my pre-adolescent life – riding down this hill at top speed. The road had dips and uneven grades, all of which promised a fantastically bumpy ride. At the bottom was the *pièce de résistance*: a small bridge that crossed over a gully with a ramp-like rise where the bridge intersected with the main dirt road below, which would send me flying into airborne ecstasy. Then I would land and skid my bike in a cool Evel-Knievel move just short of a wall of packed dirt on the other side of the road.

Ready to ride

I took a deep breath, pushed back my hair (helmet? what helmet?), and pushed off. Within seconds I knew I had made the biggest mistake of my pre-adolescent-dirt-bike-riding career. The slope turned out to be much steeper than I had



anticipated. Dips and rocks sent my bike pedals spinning so fast, there was no way to get them back under control. I knew I was either going to miss the bridge like a bowling ball in the gutter and go right into the gully, or I would indeed go airborne and smack head first into the hillside at the bottom. I was terrified, realizing what a stupid, horrible mistake I'd made. What was I going to do?

Then in a split second, one word popped into my head. Looking back now, I believe it was the voice of divine intervention. That voice said one word:

Fall!

I had to fall off the bike now or face a much worse fate at the bottom of the hill. So I leaned to the right, the wheel caught a rock, and down I went, tumbling knees first into the gravel. Oh, the pain! My knees were red with blood and embedded pebbles. My elbows were scraped and raw. But, miraculously, my head and the rest of my body were fine. I was able shakily to stand up, pick up my bike, and slowly, painfully, crying-all-the-way, make my way down the hill and back to camp.

Show us your scars

Every trip back up to camp after that when we drove past that steep hill, everyone would say, "Yep, there's Leah's Hill. Show us your scars!" It was legendary.

Leah's Hill taught me two of the most important lessons of my life. First, just because you think you can pull off something really awesome – but also very risky – doesn't mean that you should actually do it. Your perspective may be clouded by immature thinking and unrealistic expectations. And second, when things are careening down a hill at out-of-control speeds, the best thing to do is fall.

A fast technological ride down the hill

The history of human progress can be compared to the immature thinking and unrealistic expectations of an 11-year-old daredevil. Like a pre-adolescent, we stood at the top of the hill looking down on a world we felt confident we could conquer. Poised on the wheels of human invention in the areas of science, technology, energy production, capitalist economics, and industrialization, we thought that our plan would work out gloriously. Certainly, there would be some bumps along the road, but they would make the ride even more exciting. And the prospect of hitting that ramp and soaring into the air – free from any concerns but our own pleasure and exhilaration – well, such a promising future would be foolish (and unpatriotic) to ignore. Right?

The difference, of course, is that it was not just one 11-year-old on a bike.

It's been the entire Western society, on a gigantic bulldozer retrofitted with jet-fuel packs, built by the subjugated labor of non-white persons and the poor, bought with the blood of military conflict, which is stripping the entire landscape as it careens down the mountainside, crushing any life-form that gets in the way. All the while it is spewing noxious exhaust into the air, spilling toxic fluids into our neighborhoods and waterways, exploding all around us in industrial accidents, and poisoning the land, water and air from equator to pole. An ecological crucifixion.


When it comes to extreme energy extraction such as mountaintop removal and fracking, just because we think we can pull off something really awesome, but really risky, doesn't mean we should actually do it. We are careening down a bumpy hill and we're on a collision course with global ecological disaster.

I know it's depressing. But telling the truth about the state of our world is like a form of biblical lament. Walter

Brueggemann tells us that lament achieves three things: it recognizes the reality of injustice, loss, and grief; names that injustice as intolerable; and ultimately, moves us to action to follow God's call to make it right again.

Can you hear the voice calling to us as we are now realizing that the machine is going too fast and we are out of control? Can you hear the word? The word is: "fall." Fall off the machine. Better to do it now in order to avoid the worst-case scenario. Yes, it will hurt. It will hurt to give up our lifestyles of comfort and convenience, relinquishing our attitudes of personal and institutional privilege. Yes, it will bruise us to stop living beyond the earth's means. Yes, our knees will be scraped and bloodied when we fall into a downwardly mobile, yet ecologically healing way of life. But as leaders in the church, we must proclaim both the law of the lamentation and its gospel as well.

"But you, O Lord, reign forever . . . restore us to yourself, O Lord, that we may be restored." (Lamentations 5:19, 21)

When we proclaim the truth that God is bigger than the machine we have created, bigger even than the beautiful suffering planet we are killing; when we proclaim the truth about the mercy of God, we offer hope that ecological repentance is possible. God's grace will move us to action on behalf of this planet. And it is in that promise of grace that we may be restored. 



Leah D. Schade is assistant professor of preaching and worship at Lexington (Ky.) Theological Seminary and author of Creation-Crisis Preaching: Ecology, Theology, and the Pulpit (Chalice Press). She is the EcoPreacher blogger for Patheos: <http://www.patheos.com/blogs/ecopreacher/>.

You need a customer-service relationship with your wife

By Jane Ives

The ability to effectively make and respond to complaints is essential for maintaining healthy relationships. No matter how deeply you love your wife, she has a history, habits, and preferences that are different from yours.

I can guarantee there are times when you will miss a cue or make an assumption that ignores or discounts your wife's needs and desires. And, there is no doubt that she will sometimes do the same in relationship to you.

Dr. Stephanie Welland Knarr, author of *A Customer Service Approach to Minimizing Conflict and Creating Lasting Love in Your Relationships*, urges couples to model their relationship maintenance and repair after the customer-service counters found in most business establishments.

Customers need to know where they can take their complaints. They expect to be heard and to have their dissatisfactions resolved.

Husbands and wives also need to know

that they will receive attentive concern from each other when they are disappointed, hurt or unhappy.

Unfortunately, many of us have developed an automatic defensive reaction to complaints.

What would happen to a business if its customer-service representatives told people with complaints that they should not feel the way they do or reminded them of all the things the company has done right?

Even worse, what if the customer-service representative "jumped over the counter," as Dr. Stephanie puts it, and started enumerating complaints of his or her own? Sadly, bringing a complaint in marriage often triggers negative reactions and results in a quarrel over who is right and who is wrong. That practice discourages an unhappy partner from even mentioning an unfulfilled wish or disappointment. Couples thus learn that they cannot count on each other to listen deeply to concerns and to try to make



things better.

When couples—or people in other kinds of relationships, such as parents and children, siblings, friends, and colleagues—do not feel safe in bringing up their needs and feelings, they often withdraw and cease “doing business” with each other. The lack of an effective customer-service counter can destroy a business—or a relationship. Just as we encourage our congregations to bring both petitions and confessions before God, we can encourage them to serve each other effectively by “speaking the truth in love” and by listening with compassion and with a desire to understand.


Dr. Stephanie gives clear directions for expressing and responding to complaints.

How to make a complaint

- Decide before you speak what would best resolve your complaint.
- Start by saying something positive or expressing appreciation for your wife and ask if this is a good time to discuss an issue.
- Calmly communicate that you know she did not intend to hurt you.
- Calmly describe your complaint in no more than two or three sentences, and then stop.
- Describe the resolution you have in mind and ask if your wife would be willing to do it.
- If she agrees, express your appreciation. If not, take time calmly to explore other options that might work for both of you.

How to receive a complaint

- Assure your wife that because you want her to be happy, you want to understand the complaint. If this is not a good time for this conversation, state your willingness to listen later, set a time, and be sure to follow through.
- Listen without interrupting while she elaborates about the complaint. When she stops, ask if there is more or ask specific questions if you are unclear about anything that was said.
- Reflect back what you have heard her say and invite correction if you have misunderstood any of what was said.
- Ask how you can resolve her concern.
- Negotiate a solution that works for you also.
- Ask her if the concern has been fully resolved

Common resolutions for complaints include apologies; new “agreements” about handling chores, time management, finances, parenting, vacation planning, etc.; some action to make up for the grievance; or promises and plans for behavior change. How people express and respond to complaints can have more impact on the relationship than the actual resolution. 



This article is based on a posting at the Discipleship Ministries website. Jane P. Ives is a Marriage and Family Ministries Consultant.



Across the Nation

SHREVEPORT, La.—

Men give out yams

UM Men joined with the Baptists to sponsor a yam drop during Louisiana Annual Conference sessions. Buzz Hortman delivered the yams from an Iota farm to Centenary College, site of the annual legislative gathering.



David Poston (left), treasurer of Natchitoches UM Men, and Coy Birdwell of Marthaville UMC, hand out 10-pound bags of yams.

VIRGINIA BEACH, Va.—

Twenty-one life members of UM Men

The 80-member St Andrew's UMC men's organization has presented Life Membership Awards to a whopping 21 members.

During their 42 years of existence, the organization has given more than \$500,000 to various mission projects. Most of the money comes from Christmas tree sales.



St Andrew's UM Men support Boy Scout Troop 417 where 53 boys have achieved the rank of Eagle.

SEONIA, Ga.—

Troop produces 30 Eagle Scouts

Boy Scout Troop 49, chartered by Seonia UMC, has enabled 30 young men to achieve the rank of Eagle since 1984.

Virgil Brooks assumed the role of scoutmaster in 1997 and 21 Scouts have achieved the rank under his leadership; eight more are on the track to Eagle.

Virgil began his scouting career when son Robin joined Cub Scouts in 1979, and Virgil has been involved in scouting ever since.



Virgil Brooks leads Troop 49 on a hike up Blood Mountain, the highest peak on the Georgia section of the Appalachian Trail.

LAFAYETTE, La.—

Pastor provides drive-through prayers

For the past five years, the Rev. Robert Johnson, pastor of Louisiana Avenue UMC, has led a team offering drive-through prayers on Good Fridays.



A UMM prayer advocate offers prayers with a driver on Good Friday.

TAYLORSVILLE, N.C.—

Men serve breakfast to district women

The 17-member UM Men organization of First UMC served breakfast to 150 UM Women attending an Appalachian District Prayer Breakfast.

The men also provide monthly community breakfasts and conduct Boston butt sales and chicken barbecue sales to raise funds for various mission projects.

They support the Alexander County Sheriff's Department Youth Explorers, a local rescue squad, an animal shelter, and a domestic violence resource center. They also provide funds for construction teams going to Guatemala and northern Alabama.

"We are blessed to have such a group of dedicated men who work together to help others," said Glenn Fox, secretary of UM Men.



UM Men serve breakfast to women attending a district prayer breakfast.

KERRVILLE, Texas —

UM Men grill hamburgers and hide eggs

UM Men of First UMC grilled nearly 200 hamburgers and 400 hotdogs for a Palm Sunday picnic. The event included an Easter egg hunt for children.



From left: Allan Howard, Dwight Goode, Dan Magee, David Oehler and Pastor David Payne grill hotdogs and hamburgers for a Palm Sunday picnic. UMM President Mark Justice is missing from the photo as he was taking burgers to the serving line.

GLENDORA, N.J.—

Good Friday breakfasts serve men from several denominations

Chews UM Men, a chartered UM Men organization since March 1946, has held Good Friday breakfasts for men from several churches for 30 years.

In 2018, the group served 160 men from 20 churches.

“We praise God for the opportunity of breaking bread and worshipping with all these men,” said Rick Walker, president of Chews UM Men.

ATLANTA, Ga.—

Scout leaders offer training

Chris Karabinos, scouting coordinator for the North Georgia Annual Conference, and Yolanda Wareham, course director, led a training event for church leaders who wanted to expand their ministries to youth through scouting.

Larry Coppock, Susan Lawyer, and Caroline Rudisill spoke on scouting as ministry.

Zach Nikkonovich-Kahn discussed Big Brothers Big Sisters and Malcolm Wills talked about Programs of Religious Activities with Youth (PRAY) at the April event at Peachtree Road UMC.

Inman UMC and Duluth UMC agreed to start Cub packs.



Church leaders meet at Peachtree Road UMC to learn about scouting as ministry.

GOLDSBORO, N.C.—

Front porch meetings expand beyond expectations

It started with some younger men hanging around the porch of the Rev. Jim Harry, pastor of Saint Paul UMC. Chew-the-fat sessions gradually slipped into discussions about faith journeys.

Discussions became prayers following the cancer diagnosis of a daughter.

Men attending front-porch gatherings wanted other church members to experience small-group ministries and they wanted to find ways to put their faith into action.

They soon latched onto fast/pray/give, a WesleyMen program of the World Methodist Council that encourages men to fast a meal a week, pray during that time, and give what they would have spent on that meal to alleviate world hunger.

For information, visit WesleyMen.org.



Members of Saint Paul UMC package dehydrated ingredients for Rise Against Hunger, a Raleigh-based organization that has provided 375 million nutrient-rich meals for 74 nations.

LAKWOOD, Ohio —

Church members pack food boxes

UM Men of Lakewood UMC sponsored a Volunteer Day at the Greater Cleveland Food Bank. During the April event, church members packed 1,250 30-pound boxes of nonperishable food items for senior citizens in the Cleveland area.



MIDLOTHIAN, Va.—

Bishop encourages churches to launch Scout troops

Virginia Bishop Sharma D. Lewis encouraged church leaders to use scouting as a way to serve neighboring families.

“The values taught in scouting are the same Christian values that we desperately need to instill in our youth today,” said Lewis during an April Bishop’s Dinner for Scouting at St. Mark’s UMC. “Scouts learn that they have a responsibility to God, family, neighbors and community.”



Bill Chaffin, scouting coordinator for Virginia Annual Conference, coordinated the April Bishop’s Dinner for Scouting at St Mark’s UMC.

WICHITA, Kans.—

Discipleship leader encourages men

The Rev Junius Dotson, top staff executive of Nashville-based Discipleship Ministries, encouraged participants in the Fourth Annual Christian Men’s Gathering to maintain their identity in Jesus and to spiritually reproduce other followers.

The men raised \$1,400 for scholarships for students attending Christian colleges in Kansas.



The Rev. Junius Dotson speaks to a men’s meeting in Wichita.

GLEN BURNIE, Md.—

Ten thousand meals in 90 minutes

Members of Glen Burnie UMC and neighboring congregations packaged 10,152 dehydrated meals in 90 minutes.

UM Men sponsored the event in cooperation with Rise against Hunger, a 20-year old organization, formerly named Stop Hunger Now.

Participants mixed rice, soy, dehydrated vegetables and a flavoring in plastic packages. Each package can feed a family of six. The effort provided food for 60,912 hungry people in Puerto Rico and St. Martinique.

“Teams of all ages staffed the various prep stations and in no time were working like well-oiled machines,” said Richard Campbell, organizer of the event. “With background music and constant chatter, it was a worthwhile and fun experience.”



From left: Bonnie Titus, Carol Simmons, and Paul Shaffer help pack 10,152 meals at Glen Burnie UMC.

FLORENCE, S.C.—

Men aid oratorical contest

Delta Kappa Lambda chapter of the Alpha Phi Alpha fraternity held an oratorical contest for high school seniors at Central UMC.

Dr. Gregory Mingo, a member of the fraternity and chair of the oratorical contest, is a member of St. James UMC, Darlington. Dr. Joseph Heyward and Lonnie Davis, members of Cumberland UM Men, helped organize debate on “Second amendment rights versus the need for gun control.”

The Rev. Will Malambri, senior pastor

of Central UMC, served as the lead judge. The Rev. J. Derrick Cattenhead, associate pastor, served as master of ceremonies.



From right Dr. Gregory Mingo, Derrick Cattenhead, and Craig Washington. fraternity chapter president. Contest winner, Zacuan McNeil, is at far left.

CENTRAL CITY, Neb.—

Take back the baton, says Kelley

Joe Kelley told 68 men from 20 churches in the Prairie Rivers District they can't quit just because they passed the baton of faith to one other man. "Take it back and keep working and mentoring younger men . . . each one bring one," said Kelley, president of South Central Jurisdiction UM Men.

The March dinner meeting at Central City UMC included greetings from John Forbes Jr., president of Prairie Rivers District UM Men, and Charles File, president of Great Plains Conference UM Men.



Nebraska men contribute \$647.00 for two UM camps.



"Has anybody told you you're loved today?" asks Joe Kelley. "Well, Jesus Christ and I do!"

ALTON, Ill.—

Men sponsor monthly barbecues

Men of Main Street UMC sponsor monthly barbecues for the Alton community from May through September.

"We have pork steak, bratwurst, and hot dog platters. Each comes with baked beans, potato salad and cole-

slaw," said Men's Ministry President Terry Steward. Members of the military and first responders receive discounts.



Proceeds from monthly barbecues provide scholarships for men's retreats, funds for outreach ministries, and money for other church needs.

MACON, Ga. —

Youngsters earn bikes by sweat equity

At 5 p.m. each Tuesday and Wednesday, young boys and girls eagerly wait for the door to the Learn and Earn Bike Shop to open. They are there to earn bikes by putting in 10 hours of sweat equity into the youth training and mentoring program cosponsored by Campus Clubs, an after-school program, and Nathan Watson, a member of Vineville UMC.

During the 10-hour training program, students disassemble and reassemble a child's bike and a 21-speed bike. They then select a bike of their own.



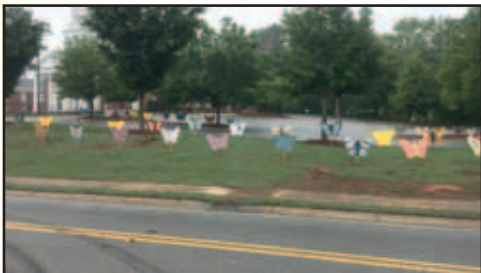
The Rev. Jon Brown, associate pastor of Vineville UMC and a volunteer at the Learn and Earn Bike Shop, helps a child repair a bike.

SMYRNA, Ga. —

Bethany Men promote hand-painted Easter butterflies

Every Eastertide since 2005, hand-painted butterflies grace the front lawn of Bethany UMC.

Originally there were only 20 butterflies, but over the years the UM Men have cut out, primed, and encouraged members to decorate 140 butterflies.



Bethany UMC, "The Friendly Church at the Crossroads," is also known as "The Butterfly Church."

SWANSEA, S.C. —

Men present scholarships

For nine years, Men of Swansea UMC have presented annual scholarships to graduating high school students. Scholarships are named in honor of Billy Etheredge, a long-time church member.



Ken Parkman, president of the Swansea Community UM Men, presents \$500 checks to Madison Lloyd and Andrea Knight. Both women plan to attend the University of South Carolina to pursue careers in nursing.

NAPERVILLE, Ill.—

Men help build Habitat House

Men from Grace UMC in Naperville help construct a Habitat House in Aurora.

This is the second year the men have joined with other churches to build a house.



Men of Grace UMC in Naperville use a mobile crane to raise a gable at a Fox Valley Habitat for Humanity house. Photo by Al Benson.

DILLON, S.C. —

Men build ramps, provide funds

In 2017, Main Street UM Men built 15 handicap ramps and donated \$62,000 for ramps and food.

In 2018, they completed five ramps, for a grand total of 68 ramps.

They also raised \$27,000 for the American Red Cross at an April golf tournament.



Project Manager Ronnie "Catfish" Carter is a man on the go, leaving the Rev. Henry Altman behind.

SHEPHERDSVILLE, Ky.

Bishop tours camp

Steve Bays, Kentucky Conference scouting coordinator, invited Louisville Area Bishop Leonard Fairley to join him on a tour of Camp Crooked Creek.

The bishop toured Cub World, an ecology center, the pool, and archery, rifle and shotgun ranges. He also visited the COPE (Challenging Outdoor Personal Experience) course and other merit-badge course areas.

Bays told the bishop 83 churches in the Kentucky Conference sponsor 143 scouting units. Fairley said he would like to present Bishop's Awards of Excellence to troops at the 2019 annual conference session, and he invited Bays to give a report at that time.



Bishop Leonard Fairley visits Cub World day campers and leaders.

ARLINGTON, Tenn.

Scouts camp and canoe in Minnesota

Four Scouts and two leaders of Troop 452, chartered by Arlington UMC, took a long canoe trip and camped in the wilderness of northern Minnesota and Canada.

The troop received a Bishop's Award of Excellence during the Memphis Annual Conference.



Levi O'Neill, a Life Scout candidate, enjoys fishing on the wilderness trip. Photo by Andrew Jerden.

AURORA, Ill.

Fourth becomes forth after merger

Fourth Street UMC and Flowing Grace UMC merged to become Flowing Forth UMC.

The Rev. Derek Rogers, former pastor of a church in Oswego, Ill., was named pastor of the merged congregation. "We stand on the brink of a new adventure," said Rogers, at the July 1 opening service



The Rev. Derek Rogers, a newly wed of 23 days, greets young people attending the inaugural worship service of Flowing Forth UMC in Aurora. Photo by Al Benson.

UM Men expand book distributions

ALLIANCE, Ohio—

Church honors first responders

Union Avenue UMC honored members of the Alliance and Sebring police and fire departments by giving them 150 copies of *Strength for Service to God and Community*.



The Rev. Coralee Cox, pastor of Union Ave. UMC, shakes hands with Ray Harris, chief of the Sebring Police Department, and welcomes Sean Mark of the Alliance Police Department. Kay Hettler (left) is chair of the Missions Committee.

OMAHA, Neb.—

Church leader provides devotional books for VA patients

Craig Nordaker, secretary of UM Men of Great Plains Annual Conference, arranged for the delivery of 58 copies of *Strength for Service to God and Country* for patients at the VA Nebraska-Western Iowa Health Care System.

Craig, a member of St James UMC in Bellevue, Neb., and former president of Nebraska Conference UM Men, gave the books to Chaplain Boyd (Cliff) Short, a retired Air Force officer.

Cliff is one of some 800 chaplains of all faiths who serve VA hospitals and clinics across the nation. Each chaplain sees some 20 patients a day.

World Wide Technology provides free Strength for Service books for VA hospitals.



Chaplain Cliff Short holds a copy of Strength for Service to God and Country, a historic book he hand delivers to patients at the VA Hospital.

MOBILE, Ala.—

Ministry sends devotional books following death of officer

The Strength for Service team sent 58 copies of *Strength for Service to God and Community* to the Mobile Police Department following the shooting of Officer Justin Billa.

Justin, 27, was fatally shot Feb. 20 while assisting in the apprehension of a man who had just murdered his ex-wife.

A two-year member of the Mobile Police, Justin is survived by his wife, Erin Elizabeth, and a one-year-old son.



A Mobile Police officer receives a Strength for Service



Officer Justin Billa.

NASHVILLE, Tenn.—

Strength for Service forms partnership with organization providing homes for veterans

Larry Coppock, executive director of the Strength for Service Corporation, formed a partnership with Operation Finally Home, a non-profit national organization that gives mortgage-free homes to disabled veterans and their families.

The Texas-based organization builds about 25 homes a year. Since the 2005 formation of the organization, they have built 230 homes in 33 states.

"We provided copies of *Strength for Service to God and Country* to the 230 families in previously built



Larry Coppock gives a copy of Strength for Service to God and Country to Rusty Collier, executive director of the Franklin, Tenn. office of Operation Finally Home.

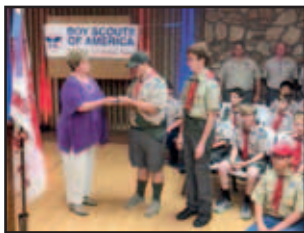
homes, and we will provide books to the families receiving homes in the future,” says Larry.

St. Louis-based Worldwide Technology provides the books.

LUMBERTON, Texas—

Grandparents provide Scouts with devotional books

Barbara and Richard Marshall, grandparents of a member of Boy Scout Troop 9, provided Scouts with copies of *Strength for Service to God and Community* during a May Court of Honor.



AJ Brian presents *Strength for Service to God and Community* books to Jacob Turner and Trevor Veron, representatives of Troop 9.

A J Brian, a member of the Strength for Service Board of Directors, told Scouts about the origins of the books.

Lumberton experienced torrential rain and flooding from Hurricane Harvey. The storm damaged property, delayed the opening of school, and prohibited work on some Scout projects.

FRONT ROYAL, Va.—

Men honor police week

Front Royal Police Chief Kahle Magalis spoke to a May 14 meeting of UM Men during National Police Week.



Front Royal UM Men President Bob Cullers presents a copy of *Strength for Service to God and Community*

CORAL SPRINGS, Fla.—

Additional books delivered following shooting

Police Chaplain Ken McLymont distributed 104 copies of *Strength for Service* books to members of the Broward County Sheriff's and Fire Departments following the killing of

17 students at Marjorie Stoneman Douglas High School. This is the second distribution since the February shooting. Ken distributed 52 books earlier.

“I want to say ‘thank you’ to *Strength for Service* donors on behalf of the Coral Springs Police and Fire Departments,” says Ken. “You do more than you think or imagine.”



Chaplain Ken McLymont (center) presents *Strength for Service* books to Coral Springs Fire Department Officers Ames (left) and Flesher. The Steward Family Foundation and Kingdom Capital provided the books. SFS supporters paid shipping costs.

OKLAHOMA CITY, Okla.—

Conference holds workshop on ministry to first responders

Members of Oklahoma Annual Conference received a special offering for *Strength for Service* and conducted a workshop titled “First-Class Ministry to First Responders,” led by the Rev. Sam Tucker, chaplain of the Tinker Air Force Base Firefighters.



Chaplain Sam Tucker, left, and Fire Chief Terry Ford discuss *Strength for Service to God and Community* at Tinker Air Force Base. Ford leads the 85-member civilian firefighting service at Tinker Air Force Base. Photo by Holly McCray.

At the conclusion of the May Conference, Tucker was appointed pastor of Wickline UMC in Midwest City, Okla. He said the church and the Tinker crew will work together.

Oklahoma churches were also encour-

aged to purchase copies of *Strength for Service to God and Community* for their local fire and police stations. These books have a special Oklahoma Conference back cover.

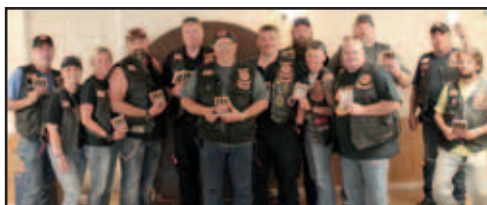
SHREVEPORT, La.—

Firefighters receive devotional books

The Percy Johnson Burn Foundation gave 104 copies of *Strength for Service to God and Community* to Shreveport firefighters.

The firefighters support the “I’m-Still-Me” camp for young burn victims.

Captain Percy Johnson, a ten-year veteran of the City of Shreveport Fire Department, died on duty in 1984. The foundation named in his honor ensures the availability of services for burn patients and supports the camp for burn victims.



A burn foundation named after a Shreveport firefighter presents Strength for Service books to city firefighters.

SANTA FE, Texas —

Church distributes books following school shooting

Aldersgate UMC distributed 52 *Strength for Service* books to first responders following fatal shooting of eight students and two teachers at Santa Fe



Jared turned 17 two days before a gunman opened fire May 18 at Santa Fe High School.

High School.

One of the students, Jared Conard Black, was a member of the church.

“As we move forward, we will remember you and all who reached out during a time of grief to help us when we needed it most,” said Bartina Gonzales, administrative assistant at the church.

SAN DIEGO, Calif.—

Books and laughter delivered to veterans

Dr. Emily Vance, director of a “laughter ministry,” delivered laughs and three cases (174 copies) of *Strength for Service to God and Country* to veterans at the San Diego VA Hospital.

“It is great that SFS can assist in post-war ministry with victims of PTSD,” said Emily.

Doug Wright, a member of the SFS Board of Directors and the brother of Emily, facilitated the delivery of the books provided by World Wide Technology.



Dr. Emily Vance hands the historic book of daily devotions to a patient at the San Diego hospital.



United Methodist Men set plans beyond St. Louis

NASHVILLE, Tenn.—

The General Commission on UM Men, meeting August 2-4 at their office on Music Row, set no plans for the special General Conference session next February in St. Louis.

Instead, the 20-member commission established ways to expand their ministries to men, scouting and other youth-serving agencies.

Introducing the elephant

In a morning devotion, Amanda Vogt, former president of the National Venturing BSA program, said, “When you see an elephant in the room, introduce it.” She introduced the elephant as the 2019 special session to be held in St. Louis, near her Ballwin, Mo., home. “We are going to make it passed February,” she said. “My challenge to you is: reach out, take new paths, build new relationships and take new pathways to peace.”

Addressing the three options to be considered by General Conference delegates Bishop James E. Swanson, Sr., president of the commission, said, “I really don’t care who wins, I care more about being faithful to the man who loved me enough to die on the cross. Love the Lord and it will be fine.

“Every piece of me loves the UMC,” said the bishop.” It picked me up and allowed me to live out my calling.”

Gil Hanke, top staff executive of the commission and a delegate to the St. Louis meeting, said the commission will not advocate for any particular position. “We only want men and youth to have an ‘on-growing’ relationship with Jesus Christ, and we want to accomplish this in practical ways.

“We’ve seen this church at its best,” said Hanke. “We’ve seen healing and wholeness. Don’t lose heart. We’re going to get through this and bring men and youth to Jesus Christ.”

New opportunities in scouting ministries

Lee Shaw, director of National Alliances for Boy Scouts of America (BSA), told the Scouting Ministries Committee there are 234,386 youth involved in 9,344 scouting units in United Methodist churches. At the moment, that number is second to the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter day Saints, but that church has established a new international program and will drop BSA at the end of 2019. Steven Scheid, director of the commission’s Center for Scouting Ministries, just concluded a trip in the Mountain Sky Conference encouraging UM churches to welcome LDS Scouts when their church departs the program.

The Scouting Ministries Committee heard reports on a record 46 participants in a July 15-21 UM Scouters Conference in Philmont, a “Jesus and Me” study for kindergarten through first grade from Programs of Religious Activities with Youth (PRAY), and several Bishop’s Dinners for Scouting.

Expanding men’s ministries

An estimated 400 men are now engaged in “Amending through Faith,” an eight-week study designed to help men combat a male culture that treats women as sexual objects, an orientation that permits and promotes violence against women. With the encouragement of local church presidents of United

Methodist Men, the curriculum could reach 4,000 men by June 2019,” said the Rev. Dr. Rick Vance, director of the Center for Men’s Ministries.

With the support of 34 certified men’s ministry specialists and national and regional leaders of UM Men, the Center for Men’s Ministries is working to expand people’s understanding of men’s ministry as more than the small group that meets for meals and Bible study. The ministry includes men from various geographical areas gathering electronically in “Class Meetings,” and men building hand-crank carts for Mobility Worldwide. The ministry also includes men engaged in building handicap ramps, packing produce for hungry people through the Society of St. Andrew, operating Upper Room Prayer lines, leading Scout troops, working out at the gym, and playing softball.

Reports from individuals and affiliate agencies

- Central Congo Bishop Kasap Owan reported that four of the 52 district superintendents in his episcopal area of five annual conferences now have motorcycles to travel to their churches, but he needs an additional 48 (\$1,200 each).
- Cary Loesing, a leader of UM Men

in the Southeast Jurisdiction and now director of operations for Mobility Worldwide, reported via video chat that 28 shops in the U.S. and Zambia constructed 6,307 hand-crank carts in 2017. Seventy thousand carts have been delivered to 104 countries since the ministry was organized as PET (Personal Energy Transport) International in 1994.

- Larry Coppock, director of Strength for Service Inc., told the commission that so far in 2018, the ministry has sent its daily devotional books to first responders following school shootings and disasters in Maryland, Texas, Florida, Tennessee, and Kentucky. In addition, cases of the historic military book have been sent to 27 military installations, 2 FBI offices, and 13 VA Hospitals.
- Wade Mays, a staff member of the Society of St. Andrew, thanked the men for their support of Meals for Millions, a ministry that provided 42.5 million servings of food. While hunger remains a critical problem in the United States, Mays said the percentage of hungry people dropped in 2018 from 14 percent to 12.7 percent.



Members of the Commission on UM Men joined the World Council of Churches’ “Thursdays in Black Campaign”, an international effort to oppose rape, gender injustice, abuse, and gender-based violence. The commission also supports an 8-week study designed to reduce incidents of domestic violence.



Witness the Holy Spirit in prison

By Steve Kennedy

It was because of repeated invitations of a friend that I finally relented and became a volunteer for the Kairos Prison Ministry.

I didn't really want to go. I was just too busy, but the agreement to attend was one of the best decisions of my life.

It was only out of an obligation to a friend that I became a reluctant participant.

Since the first time, I have served on five Kairos weekends, and I've returned for 3-hour monthly reunions. Each time has been a spiritual blessing for me and for the "men in blue."

A recent experience

Let me tell you about the last time I was blessed to serve as leader for "God's Special Time." It truly is.

There is a lot of prep work, including five all-day team meetings.

On the weekend of the event, we entered the prison at 2 p.m. on Thursday. We slept at a local church on air mattresses each night. We returned to the prison at 7 a.m. on Friday and Saturday. We left about 8 p.m. On Sunday, we are there from 7 a.m. until the closing ceremony at 5 p.m.

Walls crumble

All I did was show up. I watched walls crumble as the men received agape love, forgiveness and acceptance. For some it was the first time in many years, for others, it was the first time ever.

Men, who originally came for the food we brought, received something much more and admitted it. They found faith through love.

Both team members and participants felt God's work through the Holy Spirit in a mighty way soon after we were together for the first time.

Some inmates had been behind the same walls for years, but they had never spoken to one another. It wasn't long before they began sharing deep feelings.

One person claimed, "I forgot where I was, but I found whose I was and that I am not alone."

Love is the Kairos way

Listen, listen — Love, love is the Kairos way.

Gentlemen, I am a better man because of the Kairos experience. It made me realize

that we as men are very similar. We all want love and acceptance. We all have desires, hopes and dreams. We all make mistakes, and, as broken vessels, we all fall short of the mark for which we were intended.

Forgiveness is a big issue.

Can you imagine what can happen when we accept forgiveness?

Can you imagine the response when we point to what God has done through the life, death and resurrection of Jesus?

God is doing mighty things through the Kairos ministry. Seventy-five percent of those that go through the program do not

go back to prison after they are released.

Kairos changes lives.

If you want to be in the presence of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit while they show the love, forgiveness and acceptance Jesus wants us to show to every one of His children, volunteer for a Kairos weekend.



Steve Kennedy is president of Southwest Florida District UM Men.

In Memoriam

In memoriam — James Allen Hardin Sr.

Jim Hardin, 82, a former member of the UM Scouting National Advisory Committee (1998-2005), died April 4.

Jim was born in Providence, Ky. His parents, brother Robert and sister Nancy preceded him in death. He is survived by his wife Joanne, James Jr., three grandchildren, and two great grandsons.

Following a 13-year career with the UM Publishing House, Jim joined the Advertising Department of Genesco Incorporated in 1968. He retired in 1992.

He was a 50-year member of Belle Meade UMC in Nashville where he taught Sunday school and served on the Administrative Council for 28 years.

His 56-year career in scouting included service as chair of a Cub pack and scouting coordinator and charter organization representative for the church. He also served as district and conference scouting coordinator. He held a doctoral degree in commissioner science and was the proud recipient of the District Award of Merit and the Silver Beaver Award.



He was a fellow in the John Wesley Society and a recipient of the UM Cross and Flame Award, the UM Silver Torch Award, and the God and Service Award.

UM Men Awards

Norman Veldhuizen

Men honor past president

ALTOONA, Iowa—

Norman Veldhuizen, past president of Iowa Annual Conference UM Men, received a Life Membership Award during the 2018 annual gathering of Iowa UM Men.



Iowa Conference UM Men President Scott Knudson (left) presents a Life Membership Award to Norman Veldhuizen during an April gathering of Iowa Conference UM Men.

Eddie Warren and Keith Hall

Men honor two volunteers

CONOVER, N.C.—

UM Men of First UMC presented Life Membership Awards to two church volunteers.

Eddie Warren, a 45-year church member, has served in many positions in the church and currently serves as treasurer of UM Men. He also leads the Good Timers group.

Keith Hall, a 40-year church member, serves as secretary of UM Men. He volunteers for all UM Men events and provides supplies for some 3,700 meals served annually by the organization.



Eddie Warren (right) receives the 2015 volunteer of the year award from the Eastern Catawba Cooperative Christian Ministry.

Keith Carr

Chair of Worship Committee honored

SAN ANTONIO, Texas—

George Hampton, president of UM Men of Northwest Hills UMC, presented a Life Membership Award to Keith Carr.

Keith serves as chair of the Worship Committee, and he is a member of the hospitality team, a greeter, and an usher. He also serves as secretary of UM Men and serves in other capacities in the church.



George Hampton (left) presents a Life Member Award to Keith Carr.

Bill (Brownie) Brown

Men honor president

XENIA, Ohio—

United Men of Faith Community presented a Life Membership Award to Bill (Brownie) Brown. Now in his third year as president of the men's organization, Brownie also serves as treasurer of the Double I Sunday School Class.

He has served on a mission team to the Henderson Settlement and a team that helped renovate a house of United Theological Seminary.



Wayne Cook (right), vice president of UM Men, presents a Life Membership Award to Bill Brown.

Howard Draper

Church usher serves several UM Men offices

VIRGINIA BEACH, Va.—

UM Men of St. Andrews UMC presented Howard Draper with a Life Membership Award for his service in several posts in the UM Men organization.

Raised in the home of a pastor, he also serves as an usher.

“Howard is a great example for other men to look up to and pattern themselves after,” says Ed. Brazle, president of UM Men of St. Andrews UMC.

Lynn Hunt

Music teacher provides hayrides

CHESAPEAKE, Va.—

Men of Deep Creek UMC presented Lynn Hunt with a Life Membership Award following his service as president of UM Men, vice-president of programs, and chair of annual barbecues. He also provides tractor hayrides during spring and fall church festivals.

An award-winning music teacher, Lynn served as minister of music for the Deep Creek congregation for 25 years.

Theodore S. Douglas Jr.

Son follows in father's footsteps

CALEDONIA, Mo.—

In 1952, Ted Douglas was a member of the team that established a Methodist Men organization at Caledonia Methodist Church. His son, Ted Jr., later served as president of Caledonia UM Men.

The younger Douglas received a Lifetime Membership Award during a meeting of men from the Gateway Region and the Southeast District.



From left: Bill Mooney, past president of Missouri Conference UM Men; Roger Wooden, vice president; the Rev. Rick Lasley, pastor of Caledonia UMC; Ted Douglas, Jr., John Robinson III, president of Gateway Region & Southeast District; and Glenn Wintemberg, president of UM Men Foundation.

-HUMOR-



The congregation responds

Speaking from the pulpit, a United Methodist pastor said, “I think there is something wrong with my mike.” Unable to hear, but knowing what he usually said at this point in the service, the congregation responded: “And also with you.”

A reason to cry

After the baptisms of his baby brother, Jason began crying on the way home.

“What’s the matter with you,” asked his dad.

“That preacher said he wanted my brother to be brought up in a Christian home, and I want him to stay with us.”

Record number attend national scouting conference

CIMARRON, N.M.—

A record 46 participants learned about scouting ministry during the July 15-21 UM Scouters' Conference at the Philmont Training Center.

Despite forest fires that forced the cancellation of the traditional backpacking season at the high adventure base, 46 scouters spent a week learning about the intersections of scouting, ministry, service and the church.

"It was a fantastic, busy, hectic, wonderful week," said course director Cliff Coan. "We had people from Georgia to Alaska; newbies to 50-plus years of experience, and all sorts of positions in the church and in scouting."

The 46-member class broke an attendance record set in 1998.

Topics in the conference included the new Family Scouting orientation, Church Conference Scouting, the role of Charter Organizations, PRAY (Programs of Religious Activities with Youth) and UM scouting awards, the Strength for Service program, scouting ministry specialists, recruiting and social media.

Service project

In a new extra-curricular service project, the class donated some \$2,500 of goods and cash to the Shared Table ministry of El Pueblito UMC in Taos. The tiny (average attendance on Sunday is around 45) church has sponsored a food distribution pantry since 1994. On alternate Wednesdays, anyone in need can come and help themselves to food commodities, basic health care items, and even school supplies for children.

El Pueblito collaborates with Taos Presbyterian and Ranchos Presbyterian churches to deliver Shared Table's services. In 2017, Shared Table distributed free food and items to approximately 14,000 people.

"The generosity of the group was overwhelming," said Coan. "We just tossed the idea out in an email, and they filled my SUV with donations. People who flew into New Mexico and couldn't physically bring items donated cash."

This year's conference had a record-setting staff, necessitated by the large number of participants.



Leaders and participants from Georgia to Alaska gather for a formal National UM Scouters' Conference photo.



Steven Scheid, director of the Center for Scouting Ministries, presents to a classroom full of UM scouters from Georgia to Alaska.

Dream staff

“I had a ‘dream team’ staff,” said Coan. “Much of what I did was make it possible for them to present and stay out of their way.”

The Rev. Scott Pickering served as assistant course director, with Caroline Rudisill, Chris Karabinos, Debbie Caraway, Susan Lawyer and Susan Park serving as “shepherds” (small group leaders). Steven Scheid, director of the Center for Scouting Ministries, and Phil Howard, chairman of the UM Scouting Ministry Committee, represented the General Commission on UM Men.

David Rico, BSA field director, represented the national organization. Other presenters included John Anderson, Bill Chaffin and Jim Marchbank.

Special “drop-in” presenters included Ellie Morrison, national commissioner of the BSA, and Jason Noland, chief executive officer of the PRAY organization.

Wrapped around the classroom activities were traditional Philmont Training Center programs for all ages. Attendees, spouses and children participated in tours, crafts, hikes, special dinners and all-day activities.

BSA reaffirms its commitment to Duty to God programs

DALLAS, Texas—

The 2018 National Executive Board of Boy Scouts of America adopted a resolution that reaffirms Duty to God programs.

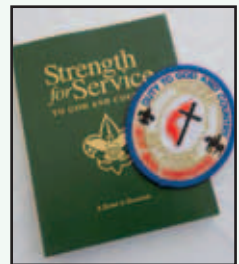
Duty to God has been one of the most important principles of Scouting from the beginning. In 1916, James E. West, the BSA’s first Chief Scout Executive, helped install a “Declaration of Religious Principle” into the BSA constitution.

That declaration states, “The recognition of God as the ruling and leading power in the universe and the grateful acknowledgement of His favors and blessings are necessary to the best type of citizenship and are wholesome precepts in the education of the growing members. No matter what the religious faith of the members may be, this

fundamental of good citizenship should be kept before them.”

Noting the 12th point of the Scout Law (A Scout is reverent) and the historical “faith-based tenets,” the BSA board underscored the importance of religious training that affirms a Scout faithfulness to his or her religious duties while respecting the beliefs of others.

The board reaffirmed “its unequivocal commitment to the Declaration of Religious Principle as a fundamental component of the mission of the Boy Scouts of America.”



Scouting as evangelism

By the Rev. Luis Ortiz

DECATUR, Ga.—

As a United Methodist pastor for the last 25 years, frequently I am asked: “How can we get new kids in our church?”

It is clear the programs we have used for the last ten years no longer reach the youth in our communities. These evangelism efforts are internal and not external.

Need foot traffic

One of the secrets to growth is new foot traffic. If a mall has no new foot traffic coming in and out, the mall will eventually close. The church is no different. If the church stops having new foot traffic, it also will close its doors.

As I begin a new church appointment, I evaluate the youth programs to see how much new foot traffic they have.

I hear members tell me they want more kids in the church, but the truth is they are not doing anything different today than they have been doing for the last ten years to produce new growth. Somewhere along the line, they stopped connecting with kids in the community.

My secret weapon

I am going to share with you one of my secrets to gain more kids in your church and increase the foot traffic. Are you ready? Here it is: SCOUTS. That’s right, it’s that easy. Scouting is one of the easiest ways to have new foot traffic in your church.

Scouting should not be viewed as just another program. Scouting is an evangelism tool that will bring new kids and parents onto your church campus. Many of these are families who would never think about coming inside your church.

Every church to which I was appointed had no Cub Scout program. Many had only a small number of Boy Scouts. I have been blessed to help launch five Cub Scout packs and one Boy Scout troop in these churches.



Scouts proudly show the ribbons they won at the Pinewood Derby

I served as cubmaster and a den leader in all the new packs.

At one church, I served as the cubmaster and the leader of two Webelos dens. A few years later we launched a Boy Scout troop, and I became the scoutmaster.

PRAY classes

I always incorporate PRAY (Programs of Religious Activities with Youth) classes with the scouting program. Classes are held on church grounds with members of UM Men and UM Women serving as leaders.

Talk about a powerful evangelism tool, Scout programs frequently mean you have parents and kids all weekend on the church property for the first time. As you start to communicate with the parents, you build relationships and begin to disciple them.

Slow start

When beginning a new scouting program, remember it may start out slow and you may not see new disciples right away. But as you engage with the Scouts and their families you will find this is an effective way to make new disciples for Christ.

Scouting has provided an opportunity to connect with Hispanic families and groups

with which the church seldom connects.

Do you have a scouting program in your church?

If you don't it's time to launch one.



The Rev. Luis Ortiz is senior pastor of Morrow First UMC in Decatur, Ga. He was the owner of Ortiz Construction from 1985 until 1994. In 1991, he accepted the call

into ministry and graduated from Gammon Theological Seminary. In 1994, he closed his construction company, and he and his family moved to Commerce, Ga., where he accepted his first pastoral appointment. He later served Barnett Memorial UMC in Enterprise, Fla., St. James UMC Church in Toccoa, Ga., Hoschton (Ga.) UMC, and Lawrenceville Road UMC in Tucker, Ga. He is working on a doctoral degree at Regent University in Christian leadership and church renewal.

Scouts honor leaders

Scout Sunday honors seven leaders

ELGIN, Texas—

First UMC celebrated Scout Sunday by presenting Cross and Flame Awards to Melissa and George (Trey) Ramsay III, Suzanne Hayes, Benjamin Kanten, and Brenda Brittain.

They also presented Good Samaritan Awards to Bella Kanten and Hunter Hayes.

Bella was recognized for a school-wide collection of toiletries and other items for the homeless.

Hunter was honored for helping a fellow Scout dealing with a mental health issue while at the San Isabel Scout Ranch in Colorado. Hunter stopped the boy from running into the forest; he held the boy until he could be driven to a hospital. The action saved a search-and-rescue effort and probably saved his life.



First UMC in Elgin honors Scouts and leaders in Cub Scout Pack 471, Boy Scout Troop 472, and local Girl Scout Troops. Eighteen Scouts served as greeters, ushers, and readers.

Bishop's Dinner honors ten Scout leaders

YORKTOWN, Va.—

Virginia Area Bishop Sharma Lewis and Bill Chaffin, scouting coordinator of Virginia Conference, honored Chestnut Memorial UMC and 10 Scout leaders at a May bishop's dinner at St. Luke UMC.



Bishop Sharma Lewis and Bill Chaffin present Cross and Flame Awards to five Virginia Scout leaders.

Catriona Sixbey, a member of the Girl Scouts and a Venturing troop, spoke about why scouting is important; her father, the Rev. Brian Sixbey, spoke about how scouting helps youth find a church home. Catriona received a Good Samaritan Award and Brian and Sharon Sixbey received Building Faith in Youth Awards.

Jim Chaffin, Leah McGlynn Graybeal, Jennifer McGowan, Dana Mott and Zackary Oman received Cross and Flame Awards.

Garnett Knabe and Rev. Robert M. Chapman II received God and Service Award.

Chestnut Memorial UMC received the Shepherd Church Charter Recognition and its Scout troop and pack received the Bishop's Award of Excellence.

The Yorktown event was the first of four Bishop's Scouting Dinners. In all the dinners, Bishop Lewis encouraged church leaders to look at scouting as an agent of change in their churches.

Bishop honors Tennessee troop

PADUCAH, Ky.—

During the Memphis Annual Conference, Bishop William McAlilly presented the Bishop's Award of Excellence to Boy Scout Troop 452 and Cub Scout Pack 452 at Arlington (Tenn.) UMC.



Bishop McAlilly (right) presents the Bishop's Award of Excellence to the Rev. Larry Woodruff, pastor of Arlington

Church presents awards to 25 youth

BETTENDORE, Iowa—

Asbury UMC presented PRAY (Programs of Religious Activities with Youth) awards to 25 Cub and Girl Scouts and other church youth.

The Rev. Realff Ottesen, a Silver Torch recipient who served as a chaplain at the 2005 and 2010 National Jamborees, led the Scout Sunday service.



The Rev. Realff Ottesen leads Scouts in singing Scout Vespers.

Church receives Shepherd Church Recognition

PARKERSBURG, W.Va.—

The UM Office of Scouting Ministries presented Stout Memorial UMC with a Shepherd Church Charter Recognition for its support of a Cub Scout pack, a Boy Scout troop and a Venture crew.

Cub Scouts participated in lunchtime recruiting presentations at three elementary schools and they cleaned up the grounds around a Scout office. They also gathered toys for children and sang Christmas carols at senior centers.

Boy Scouts improved the grounds around an elementary school, assembled bears for children in hospitals and installed commemorative bricks and planted trees at a veterans' park.

Girl Scouts provide hygiene tote bags for underprivileged girls and built benches for an outdoor classroom at a local historical site.



Cub Scouts and parents plant flowers.

Bishop honors troops and packs in two churches

GREENVILLE, S.C.—

Bishop Holston presented Bishop's Award of Excellence to Cub Scout and Boy Scout packs 518 and Girl Scout Troop 2323 at Red Bank UMC, and Cub Scout Pack 22 at Trinity UMC, Spartanburg.



Herman Lightsey, president of South Carolina UM Men (left), and Bishop Holston (fifth from left), congratulate Scouts and leaders from Trinity UMC in Spartanburg. Photo by Matt Brodie.

Scouting Awards

Catriona (Kat) Sixbey *Bishop honors leader of 'Faith Walk'*

HAMPTON, Va.—

Virginia Area Bishop Sharma Lewis presented a Good Samaritan Award to Kat Sixbey during a May Bishop's Dinner for Scouting.

Kat was honored for helping lead "Faith Walk," an opportunity for adults and youth to learn about different religions. She also works with missions, teaches children, and cares for them while their parents are in church meetings.

"This young lady is an example of how the UMC helps youth grow and understand their faith," said Tim Ewing, scouting coordinator for the York River District. Tim invited Kat to speak at the Bishop's Dinner.

Kat is the daughter of Sharon Sixbey and the Rev. Brian Sixbey, pastor of First UMC of Fox Hill.



Kat Sixbey receives a Good Samaritan Award and her parents, Brian and Sharon Sixbey, receive Building Faith in Youth Awards during a Bishop's Dinner for Scouting.

Kyle Jarrett *Scout refurbishes 20 computers*

MANASSAS, Va.—

For his Eagle Scout project, Kyle Jarrett, son of Scoutmaster Scott Jarrett, refurbished 20 computers for students at G.C. Round Elementary School.

None of the youngsters had previously owned a computer.

Roberto Vega *Scout builds fire pit*

OCALA, Fla.—

Roberto Vega designed and built a fire pit for Ocala West UMC.

The Eagle Scout project is one of many projects Eagle candidates of Troop 707 have completed for the church.

Scouts also support several UM Men fund-raising projects.



From left: Jean Vega, Roberto Vega, Jim Salmon, and Stephanie Salmon gather for a photo following the completion of a fire pit near a pavilion of Ocala West UMC.

Wade Fletcher *Church honors video team member*

COLUMBIA, S.C.—

Trenholm Road UMC presented a Good Samaritan Award to Wade Fletcher for serving as a member of a team that provides videotapes of Sunday services to WACH-TV in Columbia.

Wade has served as a camera operator, audio engineer, director of camera operations, and he has edited the hour-long service down to 30 minutes for broadcast purposes.



Wade Fletcher

“A few years back, Wade did extensive research into the equipment required to upgrade the TRUMC-TV cameras and control room and developed base-line cost figures for the church,” said Jerry Pate, video ministry leader.

Grant Skelton

Nine-year-old forms foundation

CAPE GIRARDEAU, Mo.—

Grace UMC presented Grant Skelton with a Good Samaritan Award following his creation of a 10-member Board of Directors for the Granting Grace Foundation.

The idea for the foundation began when Grant received \$75 from his grandparents with the stipulation he use the money to help someone.

Grant asked the Rev. Tom Sullenger, pastor of Grace UMC, for advice. Sullenger told Grant about a man living in a van. When Grant gave him the money, it made him feel so good he wanted to help others, so he created the foundation.

So far, he has collected \$2,000 from Grace members. He has given away about a third of that amount in gifts ranging from \$50 to \$75.



Grant Skelton, founder of the Granting Grace Foundation.

Larry Coppock

Former Scout executive receives three national awards

DALLAS, Texas—

Larry Coppock, former director of scouting ministries for the General Commission on UM Men, received three awards at the National Annual Meeting of Boy Scouts of America.

On May 22, the Religious Relationships Support Committee presented him with an award for 21 years of service to the BSA.

During a May 24 Duty to God Breakfast, Larry was one of four Scout leaders presented with a Duty to God Award.

The highest honor came May 25 when Larry was one of ten national Scout leaders who received the Silver Buffalo Award, the highest award offered by the national board.

Larry retired from the commission on June 1; he now serves as the executive director of the Strength for Service Corporation.



Larry Coppock receives the Religious Relations Award during the BSA National Annual Meeting.

Jarrett Hill

Scout builds walkway

ELIZABETHTOWN, N.C.—

Jarrett Hill, an Eagle Scout candidate of Troop 600 chartered by Trinity UMC, led the building of a walkway to Old Trinity Methodist Church.

Built in 1848, the sanctuary of the historic church continues to be a significant part of the ministry of Trinity UMC.

Jarrett's Eagle Scout project makes the 170-year-old building more accessible.



Volunteers join Jarrett in building a walkway to a church building that served as the Trinity home until a new building was constructed in 1954.

Bill Swilley **Seventy-five years in scouting**

ATLANTA, Ga.—

The North Georgia Committee on Scouting honored Bill Swilley for 75 years in scouting. He became a Cub Scout in 1943, earned his Eagle in 1953, and became an assistant scoutmaster in 1967 eventually serving as their scoutmaster for 30 years.

He served Troop 467 at Peachtree Road UMC for more than 50 years as scoutmaster, committee chair, and charter organization representative. He currently serves as conference coordinator of scouting awards and continues to mentor Scouts and adult leaders in the troop.



*Jim Carter (right),
cubmaster of Pack 3
congratulates Bill Swilley
for 75 years in scouting
while a Tiger Cub holds
the poster board honoring
Bill.*

Ryan Yiu **Band member operates dishwasher**

GLENDORA,
Calif.—

Glendra UMC presented Ryan Yiu with a Good Samaritan Award for countless acts of service to the church and community.

“The only time he cannot help is when he has practices and performances with the Glendora High School Band,” says the Rev. Dr. Hillary



*Ryan Yin shares his
musical talent with
Alzheimer patients and
volunteers at a Vacation
Bible School and a
Parent's Night Out.*

Chrisley. She tells of a waffle-bar fundraiser for the Sierra Service Project when Ryan spent the entire morning working the commercial dishwasher. “He set an example for younger church members who are learning that God calls us to serve in many ways, even when the job is a sink piled up with sticky dishes, trash bags that need to be taken to the dumpster, and floors that need to be vacuumed.”

Phil Howard **Receives Distinguished Eagle Scout Award**

INDIANAPOLIS, Ind.—

The Distinguished Eagle Scout Award Committee presented Phil Howard with its highest award.

The Distinguished Scout Award was established in 1969 to acknowledge Eagle Scouts who have received extraordinary national-level recognition, fame, or demonstrated eminence within their field, and have a strong record of voluntary service to their community.

Phil is chair of the Scouting Ministry Committee of the General Commission on UM Men and past president of Crossroads of America Boy Scout Council. A recipient of the Silver Antelope, and Silver Beaver awards, Phil has served on the faculty of several UM Scouter's Workshops, and he has served as a subcamp leader at National Scouting Jamborees. He was inducted into the John Wesley Society in 2000.



Phil Howard



Society of St. Andrew
GLEANING AMERICA'S FIELDS
FEEDING AMERICA'S HUNGRY



We know a few things about food & farmers. We're still working on the markets. For assistance, we picked you!



We are looking for a few good men who have an unmatched passion for helping with the very real issue of hunger in America. More than 40 million Americans sometimes don't know where their next meal will come from. With the help of our UMMen partnership, the Society of St. Andrew feeds millions of hungry Americans. Now we have another way to grow our efforts together. A new program that will help us do even more will open up brand new opportunities for UMMen all over the country, even in areas where SoSA does not have an existing operation. The Farmers Market program has few requirements. All you need is a farmers market in a nearby location and the desire to coordinate picking up the leftovers after the market closes. Transporting the food to a nearby food pantry, shelter, or church the same day is the second part. You can do this and we need you!

To learn more, and to make a group or individual commitment to feed the hungry, visit Endhunger.org/umm. Or contact Meals for Millions director **Wade Mays** at **800-333-4597** or **wade@endhunger.org**



Please share with all of the men of the church.



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