



NEWSCOPE

THE WEEKLY NEWSLETTER FOR UNITED METHODIST LEADERS

GLOBAL HEALTH

Starting a Congregational Health Ministry

Starting a health ministry can be as simple as cultivating a healthy environment at church to support positive lifestyle choices, says the Rev. Pam Harris, M.D., a physician and UM clergywoman. Harris, associate medical director of Kansas City Hospice and Palliative Care, started the health ministry at Leawood (Kan.) UMC where she serves as minister of health. Previously she started and led the health ministry at UMC of the Resurrection in Leawood. She will be among the speakers at the third annual National Congregational Health Ministries Conference Sept. 23–26 in Wichita, Kan., sponsored by the General Board of Global Ministries and the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits (see Forthcoming Events on page 4 for more information). Harris will lead workshops about laying the foundation for health ministry and using planning tools to develop action plans.

She recommends looking beyond the typical health ministry model of health education and medical screenings. “We’re trying to get folks to think about expanding the view of health ministry to look at whole person care—body, mind, spirit, all together and all in balance,” she says. “Everyone knows if you want to lose weight you need to decrease calories and expend more energy. Nobody loses any weight by knowing that,” she says. “Very often people need to do some work in time management, stress management, mental/emotional and spiritual care.”

Harris offers a few tips for starting a health ministry: 1) Find out what people want, present it in a non-threatening way, make it fun, and provide support; 2) Don’t limit leadership to medical professionals. Other members of the congregation may have a passion for healthy lifestyles; 3) Encourage church members to participate together in a health event in the community, such as a fundraising walk or run; 4) Offer healthy food alternatives, such as a bowl of fruit for fellowship hour or salads and vegetables trays at church dinners; 5) Learn about resources available from groups such as the American Heart Association or American Cancer Society. — *Deborah White* (Interpreter Online)

Youth Give 1 Million Pennies to Africa University

Youth in Birmingham, Mich., hope a penny saved is a life saved through their donation of 1 million pennies (\$10,000) to Africa University’s faculty of health sciences. The Penny Project, an interfaith effort to collect one penny for each of the 23 million Africans living with HIV/AIDS, was created by the youth of First UMC, Birmingham, when they decided to try making a difference in Africa’s HIV/AIDS pandemic. The youth decided to collect pennies, youth pastor Jeff Nelson said, when a teen noted that pennies are sometimes forgotten coins, often seen as having little value. They compare the coin to how people sometimes forget and devalue the people in Africa living with HIV/AIDS. Since summer 2005, the youth have sponsored a Penne Pasta summer, a World AIDS Day dance, a “Cent-O” de Mayo celebration, and other events. Other churches and organizations partner with the group. “It’s been incredible to see the way people have latched onto the idea,” said the Rev. Jack Harnish, First Church pastor. “It started with the [youth], but very quickly it became a passion of the whole congregation.”

Nine of the youth visited Ghana in June to spend time with people who are HIV-positive. In addition to fundraising, the group educates about the disease through speakers and fact sheets. The Penny Project

***A concise, late-deadline report compiled and edited by the staff
of The United Methodist Publishing House***

has raised more than 5 million pennies. The million pennies given to Africa University support comprehensive HIV/AIDS efforts, including work with orphans in Zimbabwe, a country with nearly 1.3 million children orphaned by AIDS. Visit <http://www.fumcbirmingham.org/pennyproject> to learn more about participating in the Penny Project. — *Ciona D. Rouse, freelance writer (Africa University Today)*

LEADERSHIP

Leaders Gather Around Older Adult Ministries

The UM Board of Discipleship's Symposium for Leaders of Conference Councils on Older Adult Ministries was held Aug. 16–18 at Scarritt-Bennett Center in Nashville, Tenn., and was jointly sponsored by the UM Committee on Older Adult Ministries and the Center on Aging and Older Adult Ministries of the General Board of Discipleship. Leaders were invited to attend the symposium “for the purpose of receiving resource information, training, networking support, and worshiping together to equip conference leaders in their ministry as conference councils on older adult ministries,” the Rev. Richard H. Gentzler Jr., director of the Center on Aging and Older Adult Ministries, told NEWSCOPE. Each conference was invited to send two leaders.

“Leaders had an opportunity to learn about the role of Conference Councils on Older Adult Ministries, including how to organize, who should serve on the conference council, and who are the primary and secondary audiences of the conference council,” Gentzler said. Attendants also participated in workshops “relating to starting older adult ministries in local congregations, spirituality and aging, resources, cultural and global aging, and health and welfare ministries related to older adults.” Bishop Rueben P. Job, retired, led a workshop on *Living Fully, Dying Well* (Abingdon Press, 2006), a study a resource about the theology of aging and living all the years of your life with faith and purpose.

A highlight of the symposium, said Gentzler, was the Outstanding Leadership Award presented to the Rev. Elbert Cole, founder and former CEO of the Shepherd Centers of America. “Started in Central UMC, Kansas City, Mo., this concept for caring for the needs of older adults spread across the country.” Gentzler told NEWSCOPE that the concept of Shepherd Centers has four main components for reaching the needs of older adults: life maintenance needs, life enrichment needs, life reorganization needs, and life transcendence needs. During the next quadrennium the emphasis of the UM Committee on Older Adult Ministries will be related to the two primary areas of Intergenerational Ministry and Caregiving Ministry, Gentzler told NEWSCOPE. “Both of these areas are critical for our congregations and our society as a whole. It is the intent of the committee to be able to provide grant funding to local congregations during 2009–2012 quadrennium concerning these two needs.”

ELIMINATION OF POVERTY

Project Creates Food, Income for Kenyan Families

John Boster, a member of Heritage UMC in Van Buren, Ark., made his first trip to Kenya two years ago as part of a Volunteers in Mission team from Oklahoma City. The volunteers built a library for a deaf school in Meru and got acquainted with the land, the proud Kenyan people, and their many needs. “I first thought about working in water wells,” said Boster, who raises cattle and chickens and has a construction business. “But the Lord didn't want me to do water wells. He wanted me to do chicken houses.” A veteran VIM leader, Boster asked for and received the

Editor:

Production Editor:

Editorial Director:

Publisher:

NEWSCOPE, 201 Eighth Ave. So., Nashville, TN 37203; ISSN 1073-4910.

For subscription concerns, call 1-800-672-1789.

To place a Positions Available announcement, send the information via e-mail to: umnewscope@umpublishing.org or fax: 615-749-6512.

For editorial matters, call: 615-749-6320; fax: 615-749-6512; e-mail: umnewscope@umpublishing.org; Web site: <http://www.umph.com>.

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NEWSCOPE © 2007 (USPS 961-360) is supported by subscription income and published by The United Methodist Publishing House. It is issued weekly except for the last two weeks of December.

Subscription: \$22.00 (periodical class), \$28.00 (first class), \$38.00 (foreign), or \$16.00 (electronic mail) a year. Single copy: 50 cents.

Permission to quote granted to newsletters and media of The United Methodist Church, with credit. Periodical postage paid at Nashville, Tenn.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to: United Methodist NEWSCOPE, P.O. Box 801, Nashville, TN 37202.

full support of his church. He returned to Kenya in January to meet with leaders of the Kaaga Methodist Church in Meru and the bishop of the region and to secure their backing and support of the chicken house project.

Boster is spearheading construction of a complete breeder system at Kaaga Methodist Church. “The young adults are very excited because they have a good education but no work, and they see how this can grow in their community.” The operation hopefully will spawn other family chicken operations that will produce not only food but income. The operation will likely produce 2,500-3,000 eggs per month. “We’ll be able to give so many eggs away,” Boster said. “We’ll be able to give to AIDS victims so they can get the protein they need.”

Heritage UMC continues to raise funds for the project. About \$40,000 is needed for materials and construction costs, with an additional \$30,000 needed to get the Arkansas volunteers to Kenya. The VIM team will return to Meru in January. “When we leave Meru this time, we hope it’s in operation,” Boster said, noting that a member of the Kaaga Church who has a degree in agriculture has been instrumental in assisting with the project and “was very interested in being one of the main people involved in it, and that will help a lot after we’re gone.” For more information, contact Heritage Church at 479-474-6424 or by e-mail at office@heritagevb.org. — *Jane Dennis, editor (The Arkansas United Methodist)*

Short Takes

- UM-related McMurry University is proud to be recognized as a top-ranked institution for the 12th consecutive year by *U.S. News and World Report Best College Guide*. McMurry competed with other institutions in the Western Region of the Comprehensive Colleges-Bachelor’s category for these rankings. McMurry also is pleased to be identified as a best value in the Great Schools, Great Prices category for the ninth time in 11 years and was recognized as one of the most racially-diverse universities in its region, ranking fourth. McMurry tied for 12th as a top ranked institution in the Western Region and was eighth in the Great Schools, Great Prices category.
— *Gary Ellison, Associate Director, University Relations, McMurry University*
- The Rev. Justo González was honored for his contributions and work at a banquet held Aug. 11—his birthday—during the annual meeting of Methodists Associated Representing the Cause of Hispanic Americans (MARCHA), the UMC’s Hispanic/Latino caucus. A prolific writer, González has more than 100 books to his credit, primarily on church history. His top selling three-volume work, *A History of Christian Thought* (1987), is published by Abingdon Press, an imprint of The United Methodist Publishing House, publisher of NEWSCOPE. Born in Cuba in 1937, he attended seminary there, then studied at Yale University, where he earned two masters degrees and a doctorate. From Yale, he went on to teach church history at the Evangelical Seminary of Puerto Rico. In 1969, he moved to Atlanta to teach at UM-related Candler School of Theology at Emory University, and he later taught at United Theological Seminary in Dayton, Ohio. He was ordained in the Rio Grande Conference. — *Amanda Bachus and Humberto Casanova (UMCom)*
- St. Luke’s UMC in Indianapolis was recognized at a Nothing but Nets in-arena night with the Indiana Fever on Wednesday Aug. 15 at the Conseco Fieldhouse. Kent Millard, senior pastor at St. Luke’s and a member of the Global Health Initiatives steering committee, and Bob Zehr, co-lay leader, presented \$82,000, the amount St. Luke’s has raised to date, to the Nothing but Nets campaign.
- Harriet Jane Olson has been elected deputy general secretary of the Women’s Division of the UM General Board of Global Ministries. “Today is indeed a significant day in the history of United Methodist Women organized for mission,” said Women’s Division President Kyung Za Yim. “We have all been praying for divine guidance and accompaniment during our period of discernment and as the time for decision-making approached. This day we make a choice to elect Harriet Jane Olson deputy general secretary of the Women’s Division.” Since 1996, Olson has served at The United

Methodist Publishing House as senior vice-president for publishing, editor for church school publications, and United Methodist Church book editor. Olson will assume the position Sept. 4. Women's Division deputy general secretary also serves in other leadership and management roles in the General Board of Global Ministries. The board's personnel committee and directors will vote on Olson's nomination in Sept. and Oct. meetings. — *Yvette Moore (GBGM)*

- The General Board of Discipleship (GBOD) invites UMs to participate in a survey of favorite and least favorite hymns. The Web site survey allows you to click on up to ten of your favorites and ten of your least favorite hymns and songs from *The United Methodist Hymnal* (The United Methodist Publishing House, 1989) and *The Faith We Sing* (Abingdon Press, 2000). All responses are anonymous and confidential. This information will help GBOD in planning future resources in congregational singing. To take the survey, go to <http://www.gbod.org/favoritehymns.html>.
— *Dean McIntyre, Director of Music Resources, GBOD*
- **Correction:** In the August 24, 2007, issue of NEWSCOPE, the story “The UMC Effort to Start New Congregations,” by Elliott Wright, included an error. The General Board of Global Ministries has issued a correction: The high point membership of the UMC is 11 million, not the stated 12 million.

Forthcoming Events

- The third annual National Congregational Health Ministries Conference will be held Sept. 23–26 in Wichita, Kan. Two scholarships per annual conference are available for the health ministries conference. To register or to learn more, go to <http://www.gbophb.org> and click on “Events and Education” or call Anne Green at 847-866-4560. The deadline for registration is Sept. 1.
- The General Board of Discipleship and the Texas Conference will co-sponsor a Wesleyan Institute, October 8-11, 2007, at Klein UMC in Spring, Texas. The Wesleyan Institute will explore the role spiritual disciplines play in forming persons as faithful disciples of Jesus Christ. The registration fee prior to September 14 is \$150 and \$175 after this date. To register, go to <http://www.gbod.org/WesleyanInstitute>; call Becky Caudill at 877-899-2780, ext. 7059; or e-mail at cdgroups@gbod.org.
— *Jeanette Pinkston (GBOD)*
- The Eastern Europe and Balkans Consultation IV, the fourth annual gathering of In Mission Together and Connecting Congregations Partnerships, will be held at Cherokee UMC in Johnson City, Tenn., Nov. 1–3, 2007. For more information, visit <http://new.gbgm-umc.org/news/events/index.cfm?i=7604>.

On the Record

“One vital sign of The United Methodist Church’s health, effectiveness, and prospects for growth that certainly bears reporting from annual conferences is our movement toward and away from the goal of racial/ethnic inclusiveness. We rejoice in the strides many conferences are making, including 20 or more conferences that focused on racism, racial healing, and inclusiveness in their session themes, resolutions, worship services, and activities. Yet, in the election of racial/ethnic delegates to the 2008 General and Jurisdictional conferences, we see a roughly 25% decline from 2003 and a paucity of Asian, Hispanic/Latino, Native American, and Pacific Islander delegates. We know much news about inclusiveness, good and bad, is not reported; but it should be. Transforming our predominantly white church into a more inclusive manifestation of God’s gift of diversity must be seen as a prerequisite to our efforts to teach and transform the world.” — *Erin M. Hawkins, incoming General Secretary of the General Commission on Religion and Race, written in response to an August 3, 2007, report in NEWSCOPE.*

Positions Available

Full-time director of student ministries, UMC in Maumee, Ohio. Contact: Rev. Scot Ocke, senior pastor; e-mail: scotocke@ameritech.net; Web site: <http://lifesongscontemporary.org/> or <http://maumeeumc.org/>.